



1899

Confidential. Monday pm  
11.45

The Solicitor has just been  
up to me. He says if I want  
him to be it will be that the  
women will be left in, be-  
cause it is very awkward  
putting in a disfranchising  
clause. I think he is com-  
ing round. He tells me ac-  
tion on the 1<sup>st</sup> day would  
& we must cut them out,  
on the second he was so far



the other way he suggested the  
 S.S. sh. vote one way he the  
 other!! The S.S. was interested,  
 & informed by Min. d. B's  
 letter, & Sanders read his  
 extracts fr. a letter "the hand  
 writing he told he recognized  
 across the room!"  
 He thinks it wd be better to  
 be on a line with the C.C  
 Pool Bodies, but he is in  
 a more reasonable frame

of mind. I have one idea,  
 wd we get the members (M. Ps)  
 of those <sup>in Vestries</sup> constituencies where  
 women do sit, to write to  
 Arthur asking they sh. be  
 retained, a steel better per-  
 haps the Chairman? I think  
 we are saved, but we must  
 not relax our watching &  
 judicious stoking. I shall  
 try to see A.J. soon, but I  
 don't want to bother <sup>his</sup> Dad  
~~my~~ repeat this, of even to  
 Mrs Amos, if it was sd +  
 my friendly ear. I told

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him of was devising a dinner  
of his where he sh. meet the  
twelve!! He says he always  
knew women such as Vestries,  
& that daughter's report of his  
conversation was wrong.  
I pretended to believe  
let us "walk away" tomorrow  
together

P

w/r

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in such proceedings they would have to bear the cost.

10.30 He desired on behalf of his constituency to tender his thanks to the right hon. gentleman for this long-expected measure, which would be cordially welcomed by all parts of London. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BURNS (Battersea) joined with members on both sides of the House in congratulating the right hon. gentleman on the tone, character, and temper of the speech with which he had introduced the Bill. He welcomed that speech because it gave London an opportunity of hearing from the Leader of the House, on behalf of his party, the last of any desire to smash the County Council or in any way to impair and undermine its efficiency. (Hear, hear.) The Bill was open to criticism on several points; and he could have wished that the right hon. gentleman had amplified its relation to the probable development of the equalization of rates. He appealed to him not to allow anybody to interfere with the County Council, being, as it now was, the collector and distributor of the equalization of rates, and he trusted if anything was done it would be rather in the direction of developing the theory of equalization than of diminishing it. He was glad that the Bill simplified the rating, and urged that there should be some better system of assessment than that which now obtained. While the Bill might tend to increase interest in local life in the 16 municipalities to be created, he was afraid that some of the smaller areas would regard it as an instrument for diminishing local life, increasing the apathy in the citizens, and destroying the incentive to that public spirit which was so prevalent in some small areas. With regard to the title of mayor, if it would stimulate a dormant sense of duty and attract better men to the Council he should be glad of it, but he was very doubtful that it would have this result. He was sorry it had been con-

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equalization of rates dates from the great Act of Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, now Lord Cranbrook, in 1868. (Hear, hear.) My hon. friend the member for the Strand Division has asked me whether I hope to take the second reading before Easter. Certainly, I hope to take it. We have got so much Supply to take that I cannot make an absolute pledge on the subject, but my Parliamentary experience tells me that it is extremely inconvenient not to read the principal Bill of the Session a second time before the Easter holidays. (Hear, hear.) I shall regard it as a great misfortune if we are not able to carry out that intention. I hope the House will now permit us to take the first reading of the Bill. (Cheers.)

Mr. LOUGH desired to ask just one or two questions before the Bill was brought in. The first was in reference to the position of women. Would they have seats on these new local bodies? (Some cries of "No" and laughter.) Did the 72 members which was to be the limit of the corporations include the aldermen or not?

Mr. BALFOUR.—Yes.

Mr. LOUGH also desired to know whether these bodies would have the power of assessment as well as of rating, and whether the vestry elections would take place this year or not.

Mr. BALFOUR was understood to say that they would take place this year.

Mr. LOUGH.—And what about the women? (Laughter.)

Mr. BALFOUR made no audible reply to the question.

The Bill was then brought in by the First Lord of the Treasury and read a first time amid cheers. The second reading was put down for this day fortnight.