

mittee have received the following letter from a lady, whose name if she would permit its publication, would carry weight. They commend it to the attention of their supporters:—

“I advise raising a good sum to spend in working up the country during the next three years. I will contribute £100 a year for three years on condition that £900 a year more is promised.

“I think £1,000 a year is not in the least too much to spend just now.

“Would it be worth while to have a Self-denial Suffrage Week, say in November or December, of each year, in which friends all over the country shall deny themselves all luxuries and put the proceeds into our fund? . . . We must find ways of making it recognised that we care VERY MUCH on the subject.”

The aid of women is constantly invoked in election contests, and it is surely reasonable to ask those who desire such help to take part in obtaining for women the right to exercise quietly by their votes the political power which they are urged by all parties in turn to exert in their favour by canvassing or other more conspicuous methods.

Women are called on now more imperatively than they have ever been called on before to make their views known to the men who are likely to have the power of carrying them out, and by this means lend the most effective form of co-operation to the efforts of their friends in the House of Commons as well as to the efforts of the Committee, who will do their utmost to secure the introduction of a Bill next session.

B15466528 ✓

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

OCCASIONAL PAPER,

Issued by the Central Committee, 10, Great College Street, Westminster.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

CURRENT NOTES	3
PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE (Text of the Bill)	6
STATISTICS OF WOMEN VOTERS	7
RECENT MEETINGS	7
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN NEW ZEALAND AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA	14

25th March, 1892.

10, GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W.

London:

PRINTED BY VACHER & SONS, WESTMINSTER.

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OCCASIONAL PAPER,

25th March, 1892.

CURRENT NOTES.

WITH the introduction of a new Bill (the text of which has just been printed), the Executive Committee desire to place a brief statement of the present position and prospects of the Women's Suffrage question before their members and friends.

THE announcement appeared early in January, that Sir Algernon Borthwick, Bart., M.P., had consented to bring in a Bill this Session for the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women. The effect of the Bill would be to enfranchise those women who already vote in County Council, School Board, Town Council, and Board of Guardians elections.

This announcement caused a great increase of hope that some definite step might be achieved in the Session of 1892.

ON the first day of the Session the Parliamentary Committee, consisting of Members of Parliament supporters of Women's Suffrage, held a meeting in one of the Committee rooms of the House of Commons, to consider the best steps for promoting the Bill for the Enfranchisement of Women. The Members present were:—Mr. Woodall (in the chair), Sir Algernon Borthwick, Baron Dimsdale, Mr. Lewis

Fry, Mr. Penrose FitzGerald, Mr. Haldane, Mr. W. Johnston, Mr. M'Laren, Mr. Byron Reed, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Ernest Spencer, Mr. A. Williams, Viscount Wolmer.

It was resolved to support Sir Algernon Borthwick in introducing his Bill, and agreed that a number of Members should ballot for a day for the second reading.

IN the subsequent ballot, the best place was drawn by Sir Albert Rollit, who stood eleventh on the list. Sir Albert Rollit has secured Wednesday, April 27th, for the second reading of the Bill, which stands first on the orders of the day, and is backed by Sir Algernon Borthwick, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. Walter M'Laren, Mr. Penrose FitzGerald, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Burt, and Mr. Ernest Spencer.

Mr. WALTER M'LAREN obtained the next place, and has also set down a Bill for second reading on May 18th, which is backed by Sir Algernon Borthwick, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Sir Edward Watkin, Baron Dimsdale, Dr. Cameron, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Lewis Fry, Mr. Webb, Mr. Byron Reed, and Mr. Maclure.

THERE are thus two Bills before the House; one introduced by a Conservative, the other by a Liberal, and each backed by Members of all parties. The text of Sir Albert Rollit's Bill will be found below.

AT a Special Meeting of the Executive Committee, held at 10, Great College Street, Westminster, on

February 11th, it was resolved:—"That this Committee rejoices to hear that a favourable day has been secured for the second reading of the Bill for extending the Parliamentary Franchise to Women. They will do their utmost to further the Bill introduced under the auspices of Sir Albert Rollit and Sir Algernon Borthwick, and they cordially thank all those Members who took part in the ballot."

THE effect of the Bill thus brought forward by Sir Albert Rollit will be to place on the Parliamentary register all those women who now vote in the various local elections. It will thus enfranchise those women who are already accustomed to voting, and whose numbers can be accurately ascertained.

THE Committee desire to remind their members and friends that the most valuable help that can be rendered to the movement between the present time and the date for the second reading, is to bring the question before the consideration of Members, either by means of letters or petitions, or by questions at meetings, or in conversation. They also would urge the value of keeping the subject before the attention of candidates, especially those candidates who seek for the help of women in canvassing and other political work preparatory to the General Election, yet would ignore their claim to the instrument by which the most effective political aid can be given, the quiet and silent instrument of the vote.

TEXT OF THE WOMEN'S FRANCHISE BILL.

[55 VICT.] *Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women).*

A

BILL

TO

A.D. 1892. Extend the Parliamentary Franchise to Women.

BE it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. This Act may be cited as the Parliamentary Franchise (Women) Act, 1892.

2. Every woman who—

(1) In Great Britain is registered or entitled to be registered as an elector for any town council or county council; or

(2) In Ireland is a ratepayer entitled to vote at an election for guardians of the poor;

shall be entitled to be registered as a parliamentary elector, and when registered to vote at any parliamentary election for the county, borough, or division wherein the qualifying property is situate.

(Prepared and brought in by Sir Albert Rollit, Sir A. Borthwick, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. W. McLaren, Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Burt and Mr. Ernest Spencer.)

Notice of opposition, that the Bill be read this day six months, has been given by Mr. Samuel Smith, by Mr. John Kelly, and by Mr. Radcliffe Cooke.

Short
title.

Extension
of parlia-
mentary
franchise.

STATISTICS OF WOMEN VOTERS.

The following table shews the number of women on the registers for the election of Town and County Councillors:—

	Town.	County.
England } . . .	243,448	{ 412,340
Wales } . . .		{ 29,414
Scotland . . .	54,678	61,445
Total . . .	<u>298,126</u>	<u>503,199</u>

The above voters consist of occupiers in either borough or county divisions, who are entered on the rate books as having paid their rates, and who have occupied a house, shop, warehouse or other tenement in the parish for twelve months previous to July 15th, 1891.

Note.—Occupiers of flats and joint occupiers are included in the above, also occupiers of part of a house, when occupied separately for carrying on any trade, profession or business.

For instance, a house might be occupied by a shopkeeper on the ground floor, a milliner on the first floor, and a photographer on the upper floors, each carrying on a quite separate business, and if the landlord were not resident on the premises each could be registered as a voter.

Owners or tenants of land of a clear yearly value of £10. Joint owners can vote when the value is sufficient, if divided, to give £10 to each. For instance, three sisters owning land or houses of the rental of £30 can each be registered as a voter.

There are no returns available by which to calculate the number of women ratepayers in Ireland. It is however probable that it would be somewhat less than in Scotland.

RECENT MEETINGS.

Several meetings have taken place since the opening of Parliament, the most important being those held in Birmingham, in Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, and in Bristol.

BIRMINGHAM.

A meeting was held in the Masonic Hall, New Street, on

February 23rd, under the auspices of the Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage, in support of the Women's Suffrage Bill now before Parliament. Mrs. Ashford presided; and among those present were Lady Sawyer, Lady Foster, Mrs. R. W. Dale, Mrs. A. C. Osler, Mrs. J. K. Reid, Mrs. Arthur Dixon, Mrs. W. H. Ryland, Mrs. Sonnenschein, Mrs. Barrow, Mrs. C. E. Mathews, Mrs. Fellowes, Mrs. Farrow, Mrs. Fred. Impey, Mrs. E. L. Tyndall, Mrs. G. C. Elkington, Mrs. C. D. Sturge, Mrs. C. Dixon, &c. Apologies for absence were announced from the Marchioness of Hertford, the Dowager Countess of Aylesford, the Countess of Aylesford, Lady Knightley, Mrs. C. Mallet, Mrs. H. G. Reid, Mrs. H. Chamberlain, Dr. and Mrs. Crosskey, &c. The President, at the commencement of the proceedings, proposed a vote of condolence with the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Queen, and the Royal Family in the loss they had sustained by the death of the Duke of Clarence. Lady Foster seconded the resolution which was carried in silence.—The President said that every lady present had been invited to attend that meeting, because it was known that she took an interest in the social problems of the day. A large majority of them, no doubt, had worked in some of the various elections in the city and neighbourhood, sometimes side by side, and sometimes on opposite sides. At the conclusion of her speech she proposed, "That this meeting heartily approves and supports the Women's Suffrage Bill introduced into the House of Commons by Sir A. Rollit, for the second reading of which he has secured the first place on April 27th, and calls upon those present to unite in urging on their various political associations the desirability of supporting this measure of justice to women." Mrs. C. E. Mathews seconded the resolution, which was supported by Mrs. Sheldon Amos and Mrs. Fawcett, who remarked that it was very natural that those who had been called upon in some measure to take up active political work should feel keenly the absurdity of their present position, and they also felt keenly the absurdity of the position of the men who asked them to do various kinds of hard and rough work connected with the conduct of an election, yet said in effect were not fit to quietly enter a polling booth and vote. All sides invited them to work for them, speak for them, do hard rough work for them, and help to find the money to conduct the political fights, but neither party as a party had yet thought fit to take up the question of the enfranchisement of women. The result was that platform-women had their full share, perhaps, of political power; but the quiet and typical domestic women, to whom an appearance on the platform was distasteful, and who felt that they could not take up active political life, were entirely excluded from any influence in political affairs. Lady Sawyer and Mrs. A. Osler supported the resolution, which was carried.

LONDON.

A large meeting in support of the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women was held in Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, on February 26th, under the auspices of the Central National Society for Women's Suffrage, 29, Parliament Street. A full report of this meeting appeared in the *Women's Herald*. The following is the speech of the Right Hon. Leonard Courtney, M.P., who presided.

Mr. Courtney said the friends of Women's Suffrage stood that day in a position upon which they might congratulate themselves (cheers). They had a good position from the Parliamentary point of view. They had been for several sessions now somewhat unlucky. The wisdom of Parliament was not always shown in its own procedure, and it was certainly a remarkable fact that the question what subjects it should take up and discuss, and what persons it should hear, should, for half of its sittings—those specially which are given over for the benefit of private members—be determined by pure chance. Luck and not selection rule the House. There might be some subject that a very large section, even a majority of the House of Commons, would wish to discuss; but if the persons who have put their names in the lucky box for the discussion of that question, do not get their names drawn in the first select few, all chance of discussion is gone. But now the wheel of fortune seemed to have turned, and two good places had been secured by two good friends of the cause, Mr. Walter McLaren (cheers) whom we saw there that night, and Sir Albert Rollit (cheers) whom he had the pleasure of seeing in the House of Commons just before he left, and who charged him to convey his regret that he was not able to come here. He did not think the malice of enemies could well take away both those days, and he thought the difficulty of taking away both would probably prevent all intrigues to take away either. It was, no doubt, true, that in one sense the Parliamentary future is doubtful. The lives of its members were numbered. The "blind Fury with the abhorred shears" might at any moment intervene and cut through the thin span of life. But even, he ventured to believe, the possibility of a Dissolution might be lost sight of when they looked to the days they had secured. The probability was great that they would be able to bring on the question; that they would get a good vote of the House of Commons upon it, and he was not without hopes that action would be carried farther, and that before that event happens, something may be done to secure to women votes in the approaching crisis. (Cheers.)

Though they had been thus unfortunate in trying the chances of Parliament during the last two or three years, there were compensating circumstances which cannot be overlooked. Those years had not been unfruitful. They had been remarkable

in a very extraordinary degree by the increase of the political activity of women. (Cheers.) Even before the present Parliament began, women had votes in the election of Town Councillors. They had votes in the election of School Boards; they had votes in the election of Boards of Guardians, and they might even sit upon School Boards and Boards of Guardians. Well, it was a pretty strong thing to say that women were qualified to vote in all these elections, but were not qualified to vote for Members of Parliament. It was an obvious remark that Members of Parliament had some interest in the last vote, and perhaps the gaiety of heart with which they enfranchised women in respect of other elections deserted them a little when their own particular prospects were involved. (Laughter, and hear, hear.) He never could see any reasonable defence of the anomaly; but so it stood at the commencement of this Parliament. They had added to that line of argument by giving women votes for County Councils, and in the Bill now before Parliament, giving County Councils to Ireland, the same principle was involved. But they had done much more. There was now no section of political life which had not enlisted the active co-operation of women. All had asked for their work; all had asked for their help; all had enlisted their zeal. The Primrose League was the first in the field, and dated before the present Parliament. But they had now Women's Liberal Associations and Women's Liberal Unionist Associations (cheers), and whenever there was an election, entreaties came faster and faster to the organisers of those associations to "Send the ladies down" to the district or districts where the elections are taking place, to aid in educating the voters and in bringing them to the poll. Now what does this amount to? It might not have been done with the hearty good will of every politician of every party, but it amounted to a confession by the leaders of each political party, that women are able at least to form an opinion upon political questions. They are able to do more. So excellent is their judgment that they may be trusted to guide others in the formation of their opinions (cheers), and they had now the singular spectacle, on the part of some politicians, of asserting that women may be trusted to instruct others how to vote; but they are not to be trusted to instruct themselves. Now, had they ever heard of such a contradiction as that? Generally those who teach are most expert in practising what they teach. Could they imagine a person teaching swimming who did not know how to swim, or teaching the rudiments of horsemanship who was entirely ignorant of riding? But here are the women sought for, and women's meetings held, and women appealed to, to "come here," and "send there;" "give us your literature," "give us your arguments," "give us your canvassers." But there the matter stopped. They could not add "give us your votes."

He believed it would be impossible to withstand the argument afforded by the experience of recent years, and now that all parties were indebted to the political co-operation of women, there was no ground for denying them participation in electoral rights. (Hear, hear.) There was only one suggestion, he thought, which could be raised; and that suggestion was sometimes, but rarely, avowed. Generally, it was almost indignantly disavowed. There was a feeling, no doubt, on the part of some persons, that if women had votes, those votes would be exercised against the party to which they belong. Well, if there were persons who held this opinion—and he knew, privately, at least, that there were a few—it was held privately by most, because it was an opinion people were ashamed to confess. (Hear, hear.) That women capable of voting, qualified to vote, having all the interests involved in a political crisis at heart, and being concerned in all questions of national welfare, should be denied their vote because it was thought the opinion of the majority of them might be adverse to this or that political party, was a doctrine too shameful to be openly avowed, and he hoped too cynical to be secretly acted upon. (Loud cheers.) But to reason with such persons on their own ground, he ventured to express the opinion that they were entirely deluded in their opinions. There was no reason for supposing, as between political parties, that the action of women would prevail more in favour of one than the other. They had seen something of it in municipal elections. They had seen more of it in School Board elections. In the questions which are dearest to women, he believed it was impossible for the keenest of party managers to say on which side the majority of women's votes are cast in the matter of those elections, and he did not believe that any person could speak with any confidence of the future as to the way women would vote with the majority,—Conservatives, or Liberals, or Nationalists, or Liberal Unionists, or in any other connection. Women were divided in their political opinions as men are. The one thing in which he thought they would be united, and with which they had in the past united, was something quite independent of party; a determination on their part to secure men of probity, of integrity, and of honour (cheers), to whatever political party they might belong. It was in the influence of the character of Parliamentary candidates and of Parliamentary representatives, that he believed the influence of women would tell; and he hailed, and was sure they would all hail, that influence if it was so exercised. (Cheers.) The reflex action upon women themselves he would not enter upon. It was a matter which to him had always been the prime motive for advocating this enfranchisement of women. To give them the vote would do something to enlarge the range of their sympathies, to raise the level of their character, and they, in their turn, would do much to elevate and purify political life. (Cheers.)

BRISTOL.

The annual meeting of the Bristol and West of England Society for Women's Suffrage was held at the offices of the society, 69, Park street, on February 27th. There was a good attendance. The chair was taken by Mrs. Beddoe, who, in opening the meeting, said it seemed that the crisis for which they had been working and waiting was now close at hand; it behoved them more than ever to put their shoulders to the wheel, and do their utmost to bring to the goal this measure which could no longer, at all events, be reproached as being a novelty (applause). In the ancient town to which she had now the honour of belonging, much interest was taken in the subject, as indeed there ought to be, for in the olden days it was not distrustful of women and of what are called their rights. History told them that for 500 years the affairs of Bradford-on-Avon were managed, and evidently very satisfactorily managed, by the Abbesses of Shaftesbury (hear hear.) Such a condition of things might well give courage to those timid politicians to whom the bare idea that at some unknown and remote period a woman might perchance sit in Parliament was such a bogie that they gave this as a reason for not doing the thing that was right and just; and within the last few days two debates had taken place in Parliament on matters of special interest to women. In one of these, a member, an opponent of women's suffrage, though a man they much respected, had carefully prepared statistics showing the attendance, in Liverpool and elsewhere, in Welsh Episcopal churches, also in Welsh Nonconformist churches. Now it would be different to what is usually the case if a majority of their worshippers were not women; yet Mr. Samuel Smith is one of those who would have them believe that politics do not concern women. Then, referring to Mr. Provand's Shop Hours Regulation Bill, she remarked that: If every place of business had to be closed at an appointed hour, it might be necessary to return to the Curfew Bell. But the question that concerned them was the proposal to legislate for the labour of adult women without giving women any voice in the matter. Some years ago she had had a good deal to do with the opening of a dwelling for day workers. Women and girls of all branches of industry in that had interviewed her, but the one stipulation that all made was that there should be no interference between them and their employers. They said "you ladies mean kindly, but we best understand our own affairs."

After the annual report had been read by the Secretary, Miss Blackburn, and adopted, Mrs. Harle moved, and the Rev. A. C. Macpherson seconded:—"That this meeting has heard with great satisfaction that Sir Albert Rollit has secured the 27th April for the second reading of the Women's Suffrage Bill, and earnestly trusts that the Bill may receive the support of the Government."

This was supported by Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, who said that the Prime Minister and Mr. Balfour were both in favour of this measure. She reminded the meeting that the Conservative Associations throughout the country, as represented by the delegates at the great Conference at Birmingham, were practically unanimous in favour of the change. Mrs. Hallett went on to refer to Mr. Provand's Bill for shortening the hours of labour of adult women in shops. Mr. Provand, in moving the second reading of his Bill, said it was "simply to bring women within the provisions of the Act," and the *Daily News*, in its comments, expressed satisfaction that as only women were included "the vexed question of regulating men's labour was not raised." Following in the same line the *Pall Mall* remarked that "all that this Bill discussed is a provision bringing adult women within the scope of the law." To read these statements people might suppose that to interfere with the bread-earning power of women was a matter of no consequence at all, and that to lessen their chances of employment was not a "vexed question" at all. Everyone who had considered the subject knew that the first result of such interference would be to drive women out of shops, replacing them by men, in London probably by foreigners. During the debate, members of Parliament said that they thought it absurd to defer such interference until women were enfranchised, seeing that such interference was for the benefit of women. But this was the whole vexed question. They had to determine whether such interference was or was not for the "benefit of women," and she (Mrs. Hallett) contended that until women were constituents of members of Parliament, it was impossible to secure serious and earnest investigation of subjects relating to their interests. They owed a debt of gratitude to the Home Secretary, Lord Cranborne, and Mr. Balfour, for their valuable speeches on this question, which speeches assured them that although the Bill had been permitted to pass a second reading, the clauses relating to adult women would have to be expunged. She concluded by urging that the friends of the Women's Suffrage Bill should exert themselves to secure the support of members of Parliament when the division took place on April 27th.

Brief mention may also be made of other meetings, including one at Broadway Hall, Hammersmith, the Rev. Prebendary Snowden in the chair; and in the Town Hall, Bradford-on-Avon, Canon the Hon. Sidney Meade in the chair. These were both addressed by Mrs. Fawcett, as also one at Southend-on-Sea, Major Rasch, M.P., in the chair.

A numerous attended drawing room meeting was held, by kind invitation of Captain and Mrs. James, at Lexham Gardens; and meetings of a similar character have been held in Porchester Terrace and at Wandsworth, by invitation of Miss Bell and Mrs. Shillington.

COLONIAL INTELLIGENCE.

NEW ZEALAND.

On August 24th Sir John Hall moved the second reading of his Women's Suffrage Bill, which provides that "In all purposes connected with and having reference to the right of voting in the election of the House of Representatives laws and Acts providing for the representation of the people importing the masculine gender shall include women." He concluded a forcible speech by saying that the principle had been affirmed in that House in 1880. It was again affirmed during the Premiership of Sir Robert Stout, on the motion of Sir Julius Vogel. In 1890 again there had been a large majority. On many occasions the principle had been affirmed, but they had been doomed to disappointment when it came to the practical application. He believed they were now near the end of their disappointment.

Mr. Pinkerton seconded the motion, which was opposed by Mr. Fish at great length, and a prolonged debate ensued, at the close of which the second reading was carried by 32 to 8—majority in favour 25. There were 12 pairs.

The Bill then went into Committee on September 3rd, when Mr. Cairncross moved the addition of the following clause:—"Every woman registered as an elector shall be qualified to be elected a member of the House of Representatives for any electoreal district." This was carried by 30 to 24. The division was a curious one, seven of the eight members who had formed the minority against the second reading voting in favour of the new clause, and fifteen of those who had voted for the second reading voting against the addition. This is of itself sufficient to shew that the new clause was added with sinister intent; but if there were any doubt on the subject that is removed by the admission of Mr. Cairncross himself, in the subsequent proceedings of the Committee, that, "Although he had proposed the new clause which had just been inserted in the Bill, he intended, should there be a division, to go into the lobby against the third reading of the measure. He might be told this was an inconsistent vote. Probably it was; but he admitted his intention was to render the Bill still more distasteful to the country than it already was." The Bill was then read a third time without a division.

On September 9th it was introduced in the Legislative Council by Mr. Fulton, and after an adjourned debate on the following day was thrown out—the "ayes" being 15, "noes" 17; majority against, 2. It is noticeable that the two Maori members of the Legislative Council both voted against the Bill.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

The Hon. J. Warren, on July 22nd, moved the second reading of the Constitution Act Amendment Bill, for placing women in the same position as men in the matter of voting for the Legislative Council. He pointed out that the Bill had passed in the Assembly in 1890, and also in the Council, and would have become law had it not been that some of the members of the Legislative Council were unavoidably absent on account of illness and other causes. He believed a large majority of the Council were in favour of the measure, which would place women possessed of property exactly on the same footing as men with a similar qualification.

The debate on the Bill was adjourned to 29th July, and again to August 5th, 12th and 26th, when the second reading was carried by 14 to 3. On September 2nd it went into Committee, when the Hon. W. Haslam moved to omit clauses 3, 4 and 5, and insert "In the Constitution Act and Electoral Act, 1879, and all other Acts amending the same respectively, the word *man* shall be taken to include *woman*, provided no woman shall be qualified or entitled to be elected as a member of either House of Parliament."

This was carried by 12 to 8, two of the Noes of the previous division voting with the Ayes, and four of the previous Ayes (including the introducer of the Bill, the Hon. J. Warren) with the Noes.

The third reading was passed on September 16th, by 10 to 9, when the President declared that inasmuch as there was not an absolute majority of the Council, the Bill did not pass.