

WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE LOST IN LOCAL LEGISLATURE

Continued from page 1.

back in 1886 when widows and spinners were given the right to vote in municipal and civic elections. When the proposal was made at that time grave fears were expressed that disastrous results would follow, but such had not been the case, a fair percentage of women had taken advantage of the franchise with much resulting good to the community.

Some opposed this bill on the ground that it was an entering wedge to a further extension of the franchise to women in future. The franchise granted to men had gradually been extended until finally full manhood suffrage had been established. It might be that finally the suffrage would also be extended in this country to full womanhood suffrage.

The Legislature is now asked to grant to widows and spinners what they feel is in justice due to them today, and to let future legislatures decide as to extensions in years to come.

Petition Not Confined to Women.

It was said this year by those who were opposed to this bill that it emanated only from some of the women of the City of St. John.

Some hon. member, "hear, hear." Mr. Munro said that it was not so, as the bill was backed by largely signed petitions from different sections of the province. The object of the bill was to give to women who own property and pay taxes the right to vote at the provincial elections.

These women surely could use as good judgment in exercising that franchise as they did in municipal elections.

The opponents of the bill also claimed that it was un-British, but in Australia and New Zealand there is full womanhood suffrage, and women exercise their franchise in a way that merits the approval of the public men of those countries. Norway and Finland, and some of the states of the American Union also had given women the franchise.

An Apt Quotation.

He believed that it was right that widows should be given the right to vote. A woman who was left, upon the death of her husband, with some property, and perhaps a large family to support, should have every privilege which the country has to place at her disposal.

"A mother is a mother all days of her life. But father is a father till he gets a new wife."

He quoted this to show the difference between man and woman. Man was entitled to vote and woman was not allowed the franchise. In his own town there were bachelor maidens who successfully carried on business which their fathers or brothers had carried on before them and there was every reason to believe that if they were granted the franchise they would exercise it properly. It was an injustice to such women in the province of New Brunswick that they were not given the right to vote.

The speech from the throne at the opening of this session, was full of

optimism as to the future of this country. He hoped that all the things which were mentioned in the speech from the throne would be fully realized and that New Brunswick was entering on an era of prosperity such as she never before enjoyed. He believed that this was an opportune time to allow women to come in and share the good things which are to come. It would give the women an added interest in the welfare of the country.

Mr. Munro then read from the speech delivered before the Carpenters and Joiners Brotherhood of the city of St. John by Mrs. Curry, of the St. John branch of the Canadian Suffrage Association, and expressed the wish that it was permissible under the regulations of the House for one of the ladies of the delegation who were present in the galleries today, to address the hon. members of the House on this subject, because he felt that she would be able to bring home to the hearts of the hon. members arguments in favor of their rights in this matter more convincingly than he could hope to.

He suggested that the quotation which had been so aptly used by the hon. member for Gloucester in seconding the address in reply to the speech from the throne might very well be changed to read:

"Breathes there a woman with a soul so dead, who never to herself hath said: 'This is my own, my native land.'"

Patriotic and Able Women.

There is, just as strong patriotism and just as strong feeling for the flag among the women of this country as there is among the men, and they are just as well able, and in many cases better able to exercise the franchise if it were granted to them, as are the men.

When the question of reciprocity was before the country a few months ago, the women were just as much interested, and just as well versed in what the question really meant to this country as were the men. In the question of education upwards of 80 per cent. of the teachers of this province were at the present time women, while only a few years ago such a small number of women were in the profession. There was not an army carried on by any country in the world which did not have its corps of Red Cross nurses and its every battle-field women did heroic work in looking after the comforts of the wounded. The women who carried this legislature today and asked that they be granted the limited franchise set forth in the bill which he proposed to introduce, felt they were coming to this House until they have their right redress. He trusted that all hon. members would give to this motion, in their own minds, the most honest consideration to which it was entitled.

Mr. Swim Endorses Petition.

Mr. Swim in seconding the motion said he desired to congratulate his hon. friend from Carleton on the able speech he had made in favor of this most important motion. Four years ago Mr. Hatheway, who occupied the seat in this House that the speaker of the assembly introduced a resolution along similar lines to that introduced by Mr. Munro. On that account Mr. Swim felt that responsibility devolved on him to only uphold the petition of the women, but also to uphold the reputation of the seat in the House that he now occupied, particularly as regards the question under consideration.

It seemed to him that women had proven themselves the equal of men. Whether the men of the country possessed great wealth or held no property whatever they were entitled to exercise their franchise in provincial elections.

This province had many women in business possessing property, and yet these women were forced to sit back and see men who had no property at all have the right to vote. This question was becoming more and more a big one throughout the United States and Canada, and more particularly in Great Britain. Honorable members must all admit that the day was coming when women would have the right of franchise. As an illustration, there was a case of the measure being put forward by the women in Great Britain, he was fully convinced that the time had arrived when women should have the same right to vote for members of the provincial legislature as they enjoyed in municipal and civic elections.

He failed to see why the women of New Brunswick who possessed the same qualifications to vote in municipal elections, should not be granted the equal franchise with men in the provincial election, and he trusted that the honorable members of the house would consider the fairness and justice of the claims of the women.

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show how many women wanted the right of franchise, and what claims they put forth, he should have proposed a bill. His honorable friend said he had many petitions in favor of the bill and he (Sheridan) knew that he had one from the County of Kent which was signed about six years ago. Many of these who had signed it were dead and gone and a good many of the petitioners had been boys, but "Every little movement has a meaning of its own." His honorable friend had failed to show the house what benefits women would derive from the right of franchise.

He considered that every honorable member who voted on this motion should vote honestly and if he did not believe in the principles of woman suffrage he should vote against the motion rather than give the ladies the impression that by voting for the motion he would vote for the introduction of the bill when introduced. If the women who hold property were accorded the right of franchise what would the honorable members say to the ladies of the province if they wanted the right to vote too?

A Cause of Divorce.

He had learned on good authority that more divorces had resulted in the United States from political differences in the home, due to the fact that women's suffrage was in vogue than from any other cause. A comparison of the methods pursued by Mrs. Rankin and Carrie Nation showed that the latter had undertaken to drive out saloons in the United States and she had the sympathy of a great many people, but Mrs. Rankin had undertaken to break the glass windows of the City of London, and instead of holding the sympathy of the people had landed in jail. He hoped that the honorable members would recognize the responsibility and vote against the motion.

"Commodore" Stewart's View.

Mr. Stewart (Northumberland) said he was very much interested in the address of his hon. friend from Kent, who had begun by dwelling upon the duties of the hon. members in regard to the motion, and after impressing upon them their responsibility of carefully considering the bill he (Sheridan) had begun by asking them to throw out the motion to introduce the bill. It seemed to him that the only way for the hon. members to discuss the question was to pass a motion enabling the bill to be introduced.

His hon. friend, among other things, had said that if women had any grievance in regard to taxation or property, they could rectify it by placing the right councillors in office, but he (Stewart) thought that there were many other questions which would demand the attention of women. Even if they had a small grievance as to whether their tax bills should be 15, 25 or more cents less, that was only a very small matter, but it was not merely a matter of dollars and cents.

Intelligent women of the country were beginning to realize that they should have a voice, not merely in the affairs of taxation, but in the whole broad sense of citizenship. If one went to the polls and cast his vote, it was the ruling influence. It was the man with the club. He was the lord and master, the woman was merely a slave, but after many years had gone by, the woman of intelligence began to arise and afterwards took the place of brute force. Women arose to become the rulers of the world, the world advancing along lines like these for ages. Every generation has extended more or less power to women than the preceding ages, because in justice to the intelligence of women, they could not deny them the rights previous generations had refused them. Statistics showed that there were fewer women getting married for a living and a growing number going in for earning their own livelihood. If men were not going to marry and support women, surely the time had arrived when women who supported themselves should have the right to vote.

Men owed a great deal to the energy and ability of women. Hon. members must realize that they learned their multiplication tables from female teachers who persistently taught and checked the tables into pupils, while hon. members also owed much of their education they had acquired to the energy of the ladies. It was that education that fitted them to take their place in public life today. What was the use of considering a bill for universal franchise when the bill it was desired to introduce provided for a limited franchise. It was a fact that a number of women were enabled to vote in municipal and civic elections because they were taxpayers, and this bill merely provided for the extension of this privilege to the vast mass of women in the provincial election. If men in the provincial election were not to give intelligent votes for their representatives in this House? He asked the hon. members as reasonable and intelligent men if they did not believe that if women were trusted with the vote in municipal elections they would not exercise that privilege honestly and equally as intelligently if granted provincial franchise. No reason had been advanced that could be advanced why women should not have the right of franchise in provincial affairs.

The women of the province were not ignorant of politics, but could take an intelligent part in the provincial elections. The motion merely asked leave to present a bill, and in all courtesy, even between man and man, he felt that the promoters should be permitted to have it introduced.

Mr. Tilley Opposes It.

Mr. Tilley said that the question was one that had presented itself from year to year and it seemed to be pretty nearly in the same condition today as it was fifteen or twenty years ago. He had decided after careful thought and consideration that it would be wise for him to speak in favor of the ladies. Some hon. member "hear, hear."

Mr. Tilley, continuing, said his hon. friend from Carleton applauded too soon because he (Tilley) desired to speak in favor of seventy-five to eighty per cent. of the women of New Brunswick who did not want, and

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did not ask for the franchise. These women were entitled to more consideration than the twenty per cent. who had much ability and energy and came before this House and asked for the franchise, but if the eighty per cent. who opposed it were to be assembled they would pack the Assembly Chamber and galleries and would form a line from the parliament buildings to the Queen Hotel. They were simply indifferent about the question of franchise but they trusted to their fathers and sons to speak against it on the floors of this House. He considered it somewhat of a slight to say that the men could not come to this legislature and protect the interest and welfare of the women. It seemed to him that the interest of women and children had always been considered first and foremost, and he felt that throughout Canada and the British Empire the interests of women were well protected and safeguarded.

Arguments Answered.

According to the brief which one of the ladies had given him there were several reasons put forward why women should vote. One was that women must obey the law and should certainly obey the laws of the land. Another reason why women felt they deserved the franchise was that women paid taxes but women did not pay taxes just as men do and very few of them paid taxes on their property.

If widows and spinners who held property were granted the franchise why should not wives who held property be granted equal suffrage. Another reason why women should be granted the franchise was that women had suffered from bad government. He would say that the women of the province once did suffer from a bad government but that was not the case today. The fourth reason was that the mothers wanted to make their children's surroundings better. But where else could they better improve the surroundings of their children than in their proper place, in the home?

The brief contained other reasons, including the fact that over 5,000,000 women in the United States were wage earners and their health and lives were endangered by evil working conditions that could only be remedied by legislation. That, however, was hardly a substantial reason for granting the

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Mr. Tilley, continuing, said his hon. friend from Carleton applauded too soon because he (Tilley) desired to speak in favor of seventy-five to eighty per cent. of the women of New Brunswick who did not want, and

suffrage to women because many labor unions saw to it that the interests of wage workers were looked after. The honorable gentlemen were also told in the brief that women should vote because women are consumers and consumers needed fuller representation in politics. However, a child of four or five years was a large consumer and he felt that the interests of the consumers, too, could be well looked after by men.

Asks House to Vote it Down.

His honorable friend, the mover, had referred to the right granted to women to vote in municipal and civic elections and he (Tilley) had no objection to that. His honorable friend had also made the statement that women should vote because provincial elections in his (Munro's) constituency at least were pure and wholesome and he (Tilley) was glad to learn that conditions in Carleton County were so superior to the rest of the province.

If the honorable members placed women on the same footing as men from a political standpoint they must naturally allow them to run for representatives of this house. If women were placed on the same level on a political basis, men could not respect which they deserve. He would say, "God bless women," and keep them in a position where men are proud of them and endeavor to raise their hats to them. He trusted that honorable members would vote against the motion and defeat it by such a substantial majority as to convince its supporters that the consensus of opinion of this house was wholly against granting the franchise to women and that it would be utterly unavailing to continue to press for this franchise.

On the motion being put it was defeated by 21 to 10, printed at the beginning of this article.

The house adjourned at 5.20 o'clock until Monday.

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