



### THE LAWS CONCERNING WOMEN

The Political Educational League of Manitoba is bringing in some amendments to the laws of the province, in order to protect women and children. Of course there are a great majority of women in the province who do not need protection from the laws. Laws are made only to protect those who would otherwise be unjustly treated. In order that a law may be effective, it must have behind it, a great force of public opinion. This can only be the case when the majority of people do not need law to make them do what the law demands.

During the suffrage campaign in Manitoba, many people heard for the first time the kind of laws under which some women suffer, and men and women alike were shocked. The mere fact that the women of the province now have the franchise has not made any change in the laws. Those must be changed by amendments, and at the coming session of the legislature, the amendments given below among others will be proposed.

It would be well for the women of the West, as well as the Manitoba women to read these laws, and where possible make suggestions or changes that seem advisable. Send these suggestions and changes to Mrs. E. M. Harrison, Preston Court, Winnipeg, Manitoba, who is the corresponding secretary of the Political Educational League, and she will bring the matter before the association. It is important that these laws should be the very best possible laws to cover the injustices, and yet not create other injustices.

The women of the West are very anxious not to ask for anything that would not be fair to men and women both, for a real suffragist always works for the rights of both men and women and special privileges for none.

#### Women and the Homestead

One of the greatest injustices to married women at the present time is the fact that no married woman has any claim on the property of her husband. As things are now, a woman may marry and start on a homestead with her husband, neither of them having anything. She may work until she is old and worn-out and her husband may put her out and sell the place, mortgage it, rent it or like a case I know of, bring another woman in to live, and when his wife protested, he told her she could get out if she did not like it. She certainly did not like it, but she had small children, and she stayed. In another case, the husband gave all his property to his sons, and left his wife, who was a second wife, without anything.

The amendment the league proposes to bring in to the legislature is that the husband will not be able to sell the homestead, rent it, mortgage it, or dispose of it in any way without the consent of his wife. By homestead is meant any place in which the family live or have lived, be it in the country or in the city. This will leave the man free to deal in any way he likes with his other property if he has any, but insofar as the homestead is concerned, he will have to realize that his wife has an equal claim on that.

This is the same law as has been in force in Saskatchewan, and I heard of a case there where a man wished to sell his place, and his wife would not consent. In order to get around that difficulty, he bought another place and made a very small payment on it, and moved his family into it. Then, because in Saskatchewan the law defines

the homestead as the place where the family is living, he was able to sell his first homestead without his wife's consent.



Mrs. ALICE HOLLING

It is the intention to have the Manitoba law define the homestead as all places where the family have made a home. In this way, a man will not be able to sell any place in which the family have ever lived without the consent of his wife. It may be necessary for her to file a caveat, before, before she moves from any home, in order to show her claim. I cannot be sure about that, but in future wives had better make sure of their claim before they consent to move from the homestead, into a rented house. By the law, the husband will not have the power to rent his place, mortgage it, sell it, or dispose of it in any way without the consent of his wife in writing.

Of course, this law has not been yet passed, and if it is passed, it will not make the slightest difference to the men who are doing what is right for their wives and families. It will merely be protection for the women whose husbands have not yet begun to realize that a wife is a partner in the home and not a servant or a slave.

A number of organizations of women have already considered this amendment, and think it good. The Educational League has had five hundred cop-

ies of the amendments to be brought in, printed, and will send copies to any organization that wishes to have them. It is important, very important, that every woman in the province should know what is being proposed, and should help by advice, if they have anything better to suggest.

The other amendments provide that a man cannot will all his property away from his wife, that the mother has an equal right to the children with the father, and that an illegitimate child and its mother have legal rights as child and parent. The particulars I will give next month.

#### Women and the Municipal Franchise

Many women, especially women in the country, are protesting very strongly because the municipal franchise is a property franchise, and the most of the women not having any property in their name, have no vote. The women feel this, particularly in school matters, for there is no mother who is not interested in the school, and when it comes to having an indifferent school board and the women have no vote to make a change, it hurts.

Some of the meetings I have addressed, I have asked the audience what would be a good solution of this difficulty. Would they be willing to make the municipal franchise, a residence franchise and not a property franchise? That is, would they be willing to let every man

and woman who had a vote in the provincial elections have a vote in municipal affairs? I was surprised to find pretty strong objection.

As the first step to getting women into municipal affairs, the Political Educational League and the Women's Civic League, are making representations to the government asking that all municipal offices be open to women, as well as men. At the present time the only positions open to women are school trustees, which is not enough.

The civic election in Winnipeg was interesting, especially because the women secured the promise of practically every candidate, that, if put on the city council, they would favor granting the full-citizen privileges to the women. This being done, the women will soon do something about the municipal franchise.

In Saskatchewan, I understand, a law will be passed giving to the wives of the men who vote in municipal affairs, the same right. This, of course, leaves out the unmarried women, which is not fair.

#### Burbank and Tobacco

Luther Burbank, that wonderful man who has experimented with flowers and plants and trees, until he has produced most remarkable results, and is known all over the world as a plant wizard, loves his plants and has infinite patience with his experiments. Mrs. McClung, when giving an address on her trip in the United States, spoke of the cactus in Texas, with its long spines. She said the cactus made good food for the cattle, but before letting them eat it, men went around with torches and burned the spines off.

But she said that Luther Burbank had by his experiments produced a spineless cactus, a cactus that would add millions of dollars to the wealth of that country. But it was not the wealth added, because of this man's wonderful work, about which I wished to write.

It is said that Mr. Burbank will not have a man in his employ who uses tobacco. He says that a man who smokes has not the steady hand necessary to handle small and very delicate plants. It is an interesting thing to get proof on proof that morals are merely good economics. The church has long preached about the evils of intemperance, and some about the evils of tobacco, but tobacco and liquor stayed, and will stay until they are proven to be economically wrong. It is when men find themselves unable to get good positions because they smoke and drink that smoking and drinking will become really unpopular.

Edison, the great electrical wizard, also finds it necessary to have men who have not used tobacco, when he is experimenting, and steady hands are essential. This is not a story with a moral. It is merely a few facts.

#### Mother and Daughter Graduate Together

It is a sign of the times, and a good sign, when in the report of an examination, the names of mother and daughter appear together. But what a shock it would have given our grandmothers, or some of them at least! In those times when a woman was married, it finished her career, as anything but somebody's wife, or mother. She never had any independent existence after that. Not so the modern mother. She lives her life as somebody's wife and somebody's mother, and her own as well, and lives it well.

Mrs. Holling and her daughter Clara, are Canadians by adoption. Ten years ago Mr. Luther Holling decided that in

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Miss CLARA HOLLING



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