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Woman Suffrage.

"THE GOOD OLD DAYS—AND NOW"

TRENCHANT REPLY TO CRITICISMS, AND FORCEFUL APPEAL FOR THE LIBERTIES WOMEN THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE ENJOY. BOERS AND NEWFOUNDLANDERS EXCEPTED.

One would expect a prominent city clergyman—one who hails from the great sister Dominion where women vote—to be the least little bit broad-minded; but alas no. We find him using last Sunday, "Mother's Day" as an opportunity to bore his listeners with the narrowest kind of a discourse. He evidently thinks a woman's only reason for existence is to bear children and to do the cooking. But the thinking woman of today knows that it is not enough to prepare children for the world, but feels it her duty to prepare the world for the children. She wants to ascertain whether the meat and milk she gives her family comes from tuberculous animals or not. If she has to buy bakers' bread she wants to make sure that it has not been dropped into the streets and handled by unclean hands. One would expect a man abreast of the times and show how the life of our Colony is hampered and hindered because the mothers of our land have not the vote.

"Equal Rights—Woman suffrage may be alright," he cries, "but give me the good old days when the house was chock full of children and mothers did all the cooking! When sometimes twelve, sometimes fourteen guests—all dear friends—would drop in to dinner. Oh! Those were the happy, happy days! And how the children used to love to help! Well, perhaps they did, but wasn't it rather rough on poor mother? She was supposed to have enough intelligence to prepare a meal for fourteen unexpected guests at a moment's notice, but as for gridding about—neglecting her home and children for five minutes once in every four years, whilst she cast her vote, why it would mean the downfall of the home, and women would have to come down off the pedestal that men have made for them. How sad! How extremely sad! And one would think that the Reverend gentleman would let poor mother have a little rest after supper, but not a bit of it. Let mother do all the cooking, stretch the table out—fill it with guests, and then in the evening, turn off the gramophone and listen instead to mother and the kids stinging. By all means let her sing, we say, if she has any song left in her! Could anything be sweeter? he asks emotionally. Well, really not in this household. You see we're awfully fond of mothers and all that sort of thing, but we simply couldn't listen to her stinging. We couldn't stand it, and all the kids take after mother. We'd much rather listen to Caruso or Galli-Curci! Oh my! " "Could anything be sweeter than the smile of a happy healthy baby?" asks the clergyman. And that is what every woman in Newfoundland will agree with him. That is what we suffragists are working for. So that every little child in Newfoundland may be happy and smiling. The woman who is opposed to Woman Suffrage is a traitor to her race. Women Suffrage is the root of every Reform Social Service—Girl Guides (why teach girls to be good citizens when by the law of Newfoundland they are classed with imbeciles and criminals) Child Welfare, etc., etc., are all branches of the Woman Franchise Movement. We are told, "A woman's place is in the home," by women who are never in their homes. The thousand and one societies and clubs in this town all have their women's auxiliaries. What for? To raise funds. There is never any objection raised to a woman's being out of her home all day as long as she is working for these Societies. Women work hard, cook and brew and make a lot of money but they are not asked how it shall be spent. The men take it and spend it as they think fit. How many women are there on the various school and church boards, and how many churches and schools would survive without the Women's auxiliaries? An interest in politics goes hand in hand with the welfare of the home. In St. John's women property owners have the Municipal vote, but the suffragists are working for the Parliamentary vote. Many splendid mothers own no property but could vote wisely at elections—as wisely as we suggest, as the seventy-five unfortunates from the Poor Asylum or as wisely as the Chinese laundrymen. What kind of justice allows this to continue whilst the women of our country have not the vote. Illiterate men and women should be given a certain time to learn to read and write. There are more illiterate men than women in Newfoundland. Corrupt politicians, vice interests, and all the forces that drag down, fear the woman's voice in politics for the reason that they know she would strip her powers against them. Straightforward representatives welcome the woman in politics because they have nothing to fear, and they know that the women will make every effort to cut out graft and

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squandering. Women are incensed that they and their families are taxed so outrageously on everything they eat and wear so that politicians and their families may travel on the most expensive steamers, and live abroad in the most expensive hotels instead of giving honest service at home in the departments for which they are paid; \$80,000 for scrip! If mothers had the vote some of this money would be spent on larger schools. Every school is overcrowded. Children are packed 50 in one room with one teacher. If women had the vote, some of this money would be spent on machines to clean up our filthy streets. Spring after spring we wade about ankle-deep in the mire and the only attempts to clean up are made by a few men with small garden hoses. As soon as the sun dries it up we are smothered with clouds of disease-spreading dust which blows into every crevice of our homes making five times as much work as is necessary to keep them clean. Watch our little babies out in perambulators. See the clouds of dust that cover the poor mites from every passing motor. If women had the vote, Miss Hurst—our child welfare representative—would not have the door of a Government department slammed in her face. She would be listened to with respect and her wishes carried out, because a vote means power. A vote is the greatest possession anyone can have because it safeguards his rights.

How absurd it is to hear people long for the good old days! This is 1923. Why long for the days when women lighted and had a dozen or more children. Look in the old cemeteries and see the rows of these small unfortunates died in infancy because these were the days when it was a sin to kill a fly—"poor little things, their day is short enough." Grandmas used to say as she hung little clover balls up to the ceiling for them. The days when milk and molasses remained uncorroded. The days before chloroform and anti-toxin and vaccine, when whole cities were wiped out by diphtheria and smallpox. The days before electricity and sewerage, before motors and trains and aeroplanes. When it took six weeks to cross the Atlantic! In those days daughters stayed at home and spun and made randles, etc., etc. They did not get to school or business or train for amusements. But in 1923 they do, and sending them to school and to earn their own living has taught them to reason or think. With the invention of machinery man took woman's work out of the home and woman began to follow her

work. The invention of machinery gave women leisure to go to school. When we think of the short number of years it is since the first woman entered college—not a hundred years ago—the marvel is that women have done so well. If men think conditions here cannot be improved upon and are content with things as they are we women decidedly are NOT, and if help does not come from within, the eighteen thousand Newfoundland women who signed the franchise petition are determined that it will come from without. The Women's International Suffrage Alliance is meeting at present in Rome, and the eyes of the world are turned on our little Dominion.

What a wonderful opportunity for the Liberal party with "the Premier worth while"—to bring Newfoundland into line with the rest of the world and grant this Reform, the greatest Reform that Newfoundland will ever know—franchise her women and remove the stigma that now rests upon her of being the only one of Britain's Colonies (except that of the Boers) where the women have not the ballot.

SUFFRAGIST.
St. John's, May 18th, 1923.

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12th May, 1923. may14,31,60

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