

# Ontario Shelves Woman's Suffrage

Measures to Enfranchise Women Now Consistently Voted Down—on April Fool's Day

RECENTLY "something fell" in the Ontario Legislature, as one daily oracularly puts it. No, certainly *not* a bomb. It was nothing at all like that—for all the women, 'gists not 'gettes, in the gallery on April the first. You heard it, the pin that traditionally drops (no matter how it may incommode the dropper), when a company waits a discussion with bated breath, that is to say, with breath bottled for spending later on.

Women's interests were triply under discussion on April Fool's Day by three bills, all of which had to do with extending the female franchise. The first bill, introduced by Mr. William MacDonald, member for Centre Bruce, aimed at giving the right to vote in provincial elections to widows and spinsters who now vote in municipal elections. An ardent supporter was Dr. James A. McQueen, of North Wentworth, who appraised women as factors in raising the standard of public life by the high status they socially occupy. He referred to the splendid work of women in solving social problems; to the legislation brought into effect through women's influence mainly, benefiting women and children workers in factories, offices and shops, to women's instrumentality in abolishing the bars in communities where local option holds. He also refuted the criticism that women, if they did obtain it, would largely neglect the vote, by facts and figures borrowed from several American States and New Zealand.

In which connection, Miss Anderson Hughes, of New Zealand, may be quoted, who lately addressed a large assembly of women in Winnipeg: "It was said that women of the colony (New Zealand) did not want the vote, yet the largest petition ever sent in contained only thirty thousand names, and the first enrolment numbered one hundred and nine thousand. And the number has steadily climbed. Of these, eighty-five per cent. voted. Enrolment is optional in New Zealand."

THE second proposal had to do with the interests of married women property-holders. A bill brought forward by Mr. J. C. Elliott, one of the leading members of the Opposition, was to give married women the right to vote as joint-owners of property with their husbands. A measure introduced by Mr. F. G. Macdiarmid, of West Elgin, aimed at giving wives the right to represent property instead of their husbands. But the Government, like the oyster of the old, old school, refused to have its mouth pried open in favour of the measure, despite the fact that Hon. W. J. Hanna, only a few weeks previously, had hazarded a whisper that it might.

Mr. Rowell, leader of the Opposition, who moved

Mr. Elliott's bill in the absence of that member, felt that the bill would relieve wives of an unfair handicap; it would place married women on the same basis as male persons, widows and spinsters in respect to the right to vote in provincial elections.

The third measure, the most far-reaching, which incidentally started applause in the gallery, was presented by Mr. Allan Studholme, the Labour member, and advocated the general enfranchisement of women in the province. Certain members of the Opposition were chafed at the Government's silence. Mr. Proudfoot, of Centre Huron, charged the Government with it; taxed it further with sloth and prejudice. It finally answered and, it is to be regretted, side-stepped certain issues.

The Government objected to giving women the parliamentary vote, which did not rest, it said, on a property basis. And why *should* property, only, be the basis in woman's case? Moreover, the Government did not explain its indifference to the bill *with* the property basis.

MR. STUDHOLME ably strove for his measure as one which would make for industrial and social betterment. The minimum wage was instanced, as was also the welfare of children. He showed the absurdity of the contention that "Woman's place is the home!" until progress made in social reform would render "home" not a banality to the eight million shop and factory girls in Canada and the United States. This, he contended, votes for women would sooner or later accomplish.

The platitude was again delivered that the time was not yet ripe. Women must show that they really want the vote, the Government said. This when all Canada palpitates with the equal franchise movement! Petitions proclaim it and deputations in every province, including progressive women. But the deputations, the many petitions, have proved consistently futile—in British Columbia, in Manitoba, and in New Brunswick, all in February. This, though scores of the sanest and ablest of public-spirited women have constituted those deputations and presented those petitions, the clauses conveying the opinions also of countless private women, in homes, in churches and in charitable organizations.

Women's clubs are springing up everywhere for the study of social science; several such exist right here in Toronto. A sanguine and sane preparation surely for intelligent use of the ballot when it is won. One such club has existed fifteen years. In Quebec that hypothetical faculty, "reason," was lately appealed to by means of a very ably-conducted woman's suffrage exhibit. And so one might go on multiplying examples. One must, indeed, be blind to conditions not only in Ontario, but in every



Mrs. Mary Riter Hamilton, the Famous Canadian Artist, whose Exhibition of Paintings in Victoria, B.C., Recently Provoked a Deal of Admiring Comment.

Canadian quarter, who cannot see that women want the vote, and want it at once.

The desire is not to snatch men's torch, politically speaking; but to kindle a woman's, for use concomitantly. Here are the words of a suffragette—none other than Olive Shreiner—with a moral:

"When man and woman shine together then is the most perfect light." Why, anyway, should the light be the spark that flies when flint meets flint in opposition? There should be no war called "The War of the Sexes" in England nor anywhere. Nor too much April Fooling in Canada.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that Mrs. Flora MacDonald Denison, President of the Canadian Woman's Suffrage Association, is divided from her colleagues in the opinion which she holds that partial measures would retard "the cause," rather than advance it. Personally, she declares against any legislative action which would fall short of the general enfranchisement of women, in Ontario, on equal terms with men.

## To Protect the Birds

THAT English woods should come to Vancouver was just about as unlikely as that Burnham wood should come to Dunsinane, which it did in Shakespeare. Yet 500 English birds are abroad in the trees of the Island, with cats and children predicted their only menace.

And, therefore, the little Sauls of Tarsus, the school-boys, who "breathe out threatenings and slaughter" on Nature's highways, are getting preventive homilies in the schools.

Sermons of a like nature are seasonable all over now when nests are in making in woods adjacent to all cities and also in parks. Songs natural to Canadian trees are as worthy conservation as music from the imported feathered throats. To know about birds is to love bird life and the sinister tendency to kill can be overcome largely by teaching.



Residence Bequeathed to the Local Council of Women, Halifax, by the Late George Wright, who Perished with the "Titanic." Portrait is of Mrs. William Dennis, wife of the Honourable Senator Dennis, and President of the Council.

The Inset