

FROM MONTH TO MONTH

BY SIR JOHN WILLISON

I

IN Ontario we have a Liberal party, a Conservative party, a Farmers' party, and a Labour party. New parties denounce the old political organizations with exceeding fervour and brand partisanship as the sin for which there is no forgiveness here or hereafter. But the farmers' organization will not permit its adherents to have even christian communion with any other group while the Labour party will have no dealing with a Labour Unionist who enters into fellowship with any other political body even if he adheres to the Labour platform. The thought intrudes that the new groups have a partisanship at least as exacting as the older organizations. Apparently the evils of partisanship lie in devotion to the cause to which one is opposed. This is not said in reproach but with simple devotion to historical truth and in grateful appreciation of the eccentricities of mankind. One who reads political speeches and discovers that where only two parties exist the triumph of either would ruin the country is disturbed at the prospect before a people who are menaced by four parties.

New and old
parties

II

THERE is much speculation over the votes of women in the Liquor Referendum. In the American States it is generally declared by politicians of long experience that woman suffrage multiplies the vote but that no appeal which is ineffective with male voters is influential with women. It is probably a mistake to think that in the past few women have influenced the votes of their husbands as it is a mistake to think that political differences prevail in many households. At any rate in the American States women are not regarded as a separate factor in public affairs even when what are described as "moral questions" have to be decided in the ballot boxes. In Australia the enfranchisement of women greatly strengthened the Labour party because the wives of the workers voted more freely than the women of other classes. This is not so true in many of the American States where 85 per cent. of the women go to the polls. In the rougher Western States women have been a conservative force in government. By equal suffrage the political influence of married men who constitute the most stable element of the population was doubled and the power of the less responsible elements diminished. In

Women in
politics