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Mrs Sembaluk's Vote

By S. G. Mosher

Cont'd from page 61

was so understood.

"I'll have a look around, and borrow a gallon or two if I find any," the driver said. "There's a big political meeting over at Three Pines this afternoon, and as these ladies are to speak, it is up to me to get them there on time."

For the first time Mrs. Sembaluk's arm stopped its rhythmic swing. Hands on hips she surveyed the two women, puzzled. "That man makes the joke when he says you speak at meeting?" she asked.

"Only this lady will speak," the younger woman replied. "She is a member of the legislature." Then, seeing that the Russian woman looked puzzled, she explained, "This lady helps to make our laws."

"How can that be, since a woman can not even vote at school meeting?" Mrs. Sembaluk asked.

The older woman leaned forward. "Do you not know that in this province women have had the full franchise for several years?" she asked.

"Then I can vote at Poltava, for councillor?"

"Certainly you can," was the reply. "Oh, Mrs. Plummer, could we not take her to the meeting?" the younger

it was not her intention to deceive. She merely meant that she had no power to transact business in her husband's absence, and

Natalka went on. "To a meeting at Three Pines I went, in a fine auto with two English ladies. One of the ladies made a speech, and the men listened. That lady says I may vote at the election at Poltava. If you will buy me the washing machine, and let me keep the egg money, I will vote for you—otherwise, not."

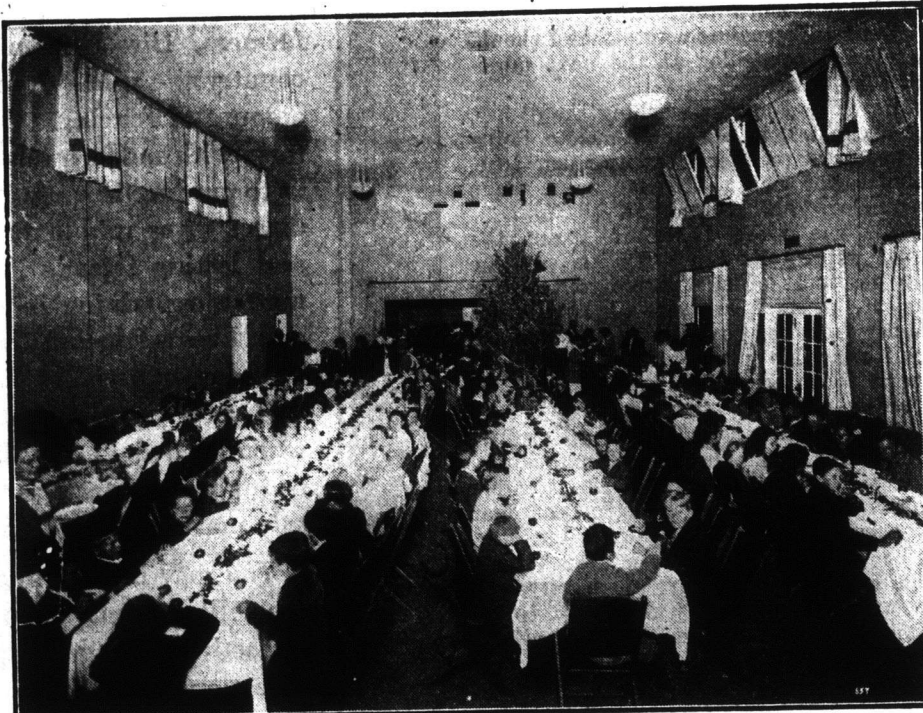
"I forbid you to go to that election," cried her husband, purple with indignation. "My wife shall not make of herself a joke before our people."

"Poof! At the English lady nobody at all laughed. Besides, for what did the government give me the vote?"

"If you go, you walk," snapped Kosten, as he flung off to bed.

Next morning his bad temper was gone, and he spoke quite amiably before starting on the day's electioneering. Natalka met him half-way, and Kosten thought the danger had blown over. But when the dishes were done and the house tidied, Mrs. Sembaluk wrapped up Wasyi, set him on his little sled, and crossed the fields to the house of her sister Domenica—she who had married the brother of Poli Ewasuk. After a prolonged visit she returned looking well satisfied.

That evening Kosten was more despondent than ever. He volunteered no information regarding election prospects, nor did his wife ask for any. But the next morning, when the sleigh stood at the door ready to take Kosten to the polling booth, she enquired if he meant to buy the washing machine.



From the kiddies' point of view, the Christmas season is particularly remarkable for its abundance of "good cats."

woman asked impetuously. "It might open new vistas for her. It is time these foreign women learned to use the vote. Think of the poor thing compelled to work outdoors on such a day!"

Mrs. Anne Plummer, M.P.P., smiled. "I am afraid the vote has not the magic power you credit it with, Helen, but she might like to go to the meeting."

So, abandoning her unfinished wash, Mrs. Sembaluk hastily wrapped little Wasyi up in shawls, and drove off in the luxurious auto. The meeting ended shortly after five, and the car deposited Natalka at her gate before her husband, still gloomy, reached home.

"For two hours have I argued with Poli Ewasuk," he told her. "Now that he is one of my family, it is his duty to vote for me, but he says that for Mr. Gibson he must to vote yet."

Poli's brother had married Ewasuk's sister, which, according to Russian ideas, made all the Ewasuks kin to the Sembaluks.

"Dmitri says one vote may turn the election," Kosten ended with a sigh.

"Then my vote and Domenica's might elect you," his wife remarked.

Kosten looked at her sharply. The fact that women could vote was well known to Chornahuz, and he had enlightened Kosten on this point, but they had decided to keep the knowledge to themselves. The older women would probably refuse to vote, and the younger ones might prove hard to manage.

"I learned something yet this day."

"I have said we cannot afford, and that settles it," he snarled.

"Then must I to vote for Mr. Gibson," Natalka said in a voice she tried to keep steady.

"Then ten miles will you walk to the polling booth," snapped Kosten, as he flung out of the house, slamming the door behind him.

But late that afternoon, Poli Ewasuk, accompanied by his wife and sister-in-law, called in a sleigh for Natalka and little Wasyi. Poli had advised waiting until the last moment, that the women's votes might come as a surprise to their opponents.

"A pity it is," he said, "for I would like it fine to have one of mine family councillor. But what must be, must."

There was some excitement when Poli's team stopped at the school where the election was being held. Natalka was glad to note that there were several women in the crowd. "Here's a lot of Sembaluk's women folks," she heard someone remark to Mr. Gibson. "All up with you now, Nat."

The big rancher laughed. "I won't worry, Tom," he replied. "Sembaluk is an honest fellow, and it is time these Russians were taking a hand in local affairs."

Poli was spreading blankets over his horses. In twenty minutes the poll would close. Natalka seized her sister by the arm. "Get Poli and his wife, and come over here," (Cont'd on page 63)

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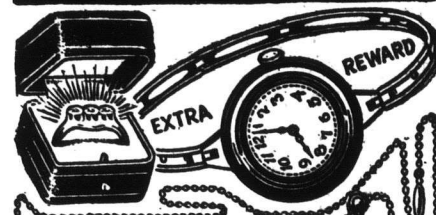
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