

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 1921

WOMEN ENACT HUMANE LAWS IN PARLIAMENT

Hon. Mary Ellen Smith
Thrills Crowd With Story
of Work Accomplished

(Ottawa Journal)
Women in parliament can promote more humane legislation than men have hitherto been disposed to enact, was the observation of Hon. Mary Ellen Smith, at a meeting Saturday evening in the Ottawa Women's Club. Mrs. Smith's subject was humane laws in her home province, British Columbia. She was introduced by Senator Richard L. Blain as the first woman cabinet minister in the world.

There should be no fences between the sexes, Mrs. Smith declared. The manhood of the country was behind the government when it enfranchised women. Men and women must forget sex when there was good to be done, and co-operate intelligently. Governments did not ask now whether men or women wanted something done.

"As I have remarked before, brains are sexless. We do not read in the Bible that Adam got more brains than Eve. In fact, I have often thought Eve got the better of Adam in the way of brains. Until we learn to forget sex and remember the needs of humanity we will never accomplish what we ought.

Brains, Not Sex.

"It may be that there are people still who think there is a place for men and a separate place for women. When it comes to political life of the country we should remember that sex doesn't count, but that brains and ability and desire to do the right thing do count."

Mrs. Smith had no doubt Ontario, the banner temperance province, would uphold its reputation in the referendum vote. She would not argue rightly or wrongly for the result in British Columbia, though great difficulty had been encountered in drafting legislation.

"The bill we have is as good as can be brought down, but we know it will not please anybody. It has not gone far enough for the modernist, and it goes too far for the prohibitionists. It is going to be 90 per cent administration and 10 per cent act."

The voter who did not exercise his or her franchise at the polls should lose the vote. The vote was the only reasonable method of reform. Yelling from the house tops that this was right or that was wrong never did much good.

British Columbia had received the greatest reforms in a few years of any province in the Dominion. If anyone doubted the efficiency of a woman in parliament, he could forever remove that doubt by viewing the example of the western province. Annual fruitless pilgrimages of women were a thing of the past.

Equal guardianship of children was one of the achievements of the British Columbia legislature. In Ontario women were still petitioning for such a measure. Last session in Toronto the bill was tabled for another session, and it had not yet been revived. Unless a deputation of women reminded the government it had probably been forgotten.

Minimum Wage.

A minimum wage law now applied to nearly 10,000 women, whose minimum wage, while not a fortune, would be increasing in value as the cost of living decreased. The marriage age had been raised from twelve to fourteen for girls, and from fourteen to sixteen for boys. An adoption of children's act made parents give their name to their foster child who shared as a natural child in any heritage. A companion measure provided a superintendent for neglected children.

As the result of a mental survey, the government was building on the bank of the Fraser river a modern institution for the care and training of sub-normal children. The B. C. Mothers' Pensions Act was declared to be the best in

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the country, providing for widows, unmarried mothers and deserted wives. Four bills had been passed in keeping with the Treaty of Versailles. One provided pre-natal care for the mother; another gave protection to women working at night; a third prohibited the selling of newspapers and other things on the streets by young children unless it was proven the revenue was necessary to the family; and the fourth was for an eight-hour day.

In the Legislature.

When I was first elected to the legislature of the Province of British Columbia," said the Hon. Mary Ellen Smith, addressing the members of the Women's Canadian Club at luncheon yesterday, "a good woman, so absolutely good that I wonder the Almighty hasn't taken her to heaven before this, said to me: 'You don't mean to say that you are going to the House or Parliament to sit alone with forty-seven men?'"

Mrs. Smith touched briefly on a number of subjects of interest to women, and told of some of the reforms in which she was interested.

"There is danger ahead to the Canadian home. Noble men and women have been raised in small homes in a country. But with the introduction of machinery, and the establishing of factories, women went outside the home for work, and the spinning wheel and the tallow candles were abolished. Home just became a place to sleep, and somewhere to eat, and they looked outside for amusement, to the movies and to the

white ways. Don't think I am condemning the movies; they are a wonderful industry, and they are here to stay, playing a big part in the national scheme. Canadian women can insist on having pictures placed on the screen of an ennobling character. The old-fashioned mother is pretty nearly dead, but what we want nowadays is the old-fashioned mother, rejuvenated and advanced, in ideals in progress."

Favors Equal Pay.

Mrs. Smith, in speaking of the unemployment existing in Canada today, said that women could help to lessen it, if they would insist on buying Canadian-made goods, provided price and quality were equal. Canadians should patronize Canadian magazines and periodicals rather than those published in the United States, and the nineteen millions spent yearly for American publications could be used to good advantage in the making of equally good Canadian magazines, thus giving employment for a great many men and women. Mrs. Smith is strongly in favor of equal pay for equal work, between men and women school teachers, as well as many of the other professions open to the sexes.

"As a member of the British Columbia legislature for many years, I have never yet been asked to take less indemnity than the men. I would raise an awful holler if I were."

Speaking of the Canadianizing of the so-called foreign citizens, Mrs. Smith said that Canada opened her doors to

Europeans, and after they came treated them as strangers.

"The time may come when we are faced with a menace from these people, and if I had my way, I would hoist the Canadian flag over every schoolhouse in the dominion."

Joseph Florio, arrested in Leominster, told the police that he had traveled all over the world. He said that he bought his shoes in Jerusalem, his hat in New York, his collar in Denver, Colo., his shirt in Chattanooga, Tenn., his coat in North Dakota, his waistcoat in Wheel-

ing, W. Va., his trousers in Pennsylvania and his socks in Sacramento, Cal.

By the use of high pressure water has been converted into a new ice so dense and heavy that it sinks in water instead of floating.

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