

You will, doubtless, follow with interest the test case taken in connection with the car service of this city; also the Bill that that bit of Scotch granite, by the name of Charlton, will probably again introduce into the Dominion House.

The next Department noted must be that of Hygiene and Social Purity, as in connection with it we obtained our one bit of legislation for the year.

WOMEN WAGE EARNERS.

It is said that there are nearly 150,000 women wage earners in our province. Two classes of this industrial army have claimed our attention for the last four successive Conventions, and it is with deep thankfulness we note the progress made toward a satisfactory settlement of the evils once apparently insurmountable.

In the year 1889, a single case of shameful neglect to provide for the comfort and health of the women employees of a large mercantile house came to the attention of one of our Local Unions. Not realizing the extent of the evil, and supposing that such a situation must be covered by existing law, for nearly a year a committee, charged with this individual case, were endeavoring to find a remedy. By the time the year closed three things were apparent:

1st—That they had unearthed a grievance which, in their own city alone, was of undreamed proportions.

2nd—That their city merchants were no more thoughtless or heartless in the treatment of their clerks than those of other municipalities; and, therefore, the wrong was as wide as the province.

3rd—That neither local nor provincial enactment could be brought to bear on it, for the "blind woman with the scales" had never even cast a sidelong glance in the direction of the long-suffering woman clerk.

To digress for a moment. Why is it, think you, that justice, who must needs be the embodiment of wisdom and impartiality, should be personified by a *woman*, when the sex has never been considered of sufficient mental calibre to have an opinion worth counting; or, having one, is supposed to lack the nerve and independence to express it? This may well be one of the puzzlers to the *feeble female mind*. It should, at least, be a consolation to us that our chivalric defenders, who so strongly object to our flesh and blood selves in the legislative hall, are tolerant of our marble or pictured representative. What if she is deaf and dumb and blind—one must not want the earth!

But to return to the point from which we digressed. It was plain to these local workers that no one society could cope with the situation, and they determined to call in the aid of the Provincial Union.

Therefore, we find the first provincial official utterance on the question of a law to protect mercantile employees was made at the annual Convention of 1891. The then Superintendent of Hygiene and Social Purity was authorized to collect, from all over the province, facts bearing on the situation, and in connection with the Sub-Executive to make an effort to procure from the Government the required legislation. Hundreds of letters were sent broadcast from Ottawa to Windsor, and, like a great drag net, gathered in the pitiful and often shocking details that were needed. Scores of religious societies were interviewed and promised assistance. Many members of