

# The Daily British Whig

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SECOND SECTION

## THE INFLUENCE OF WOMEN ON PARLIAMENT

By JAMES MUIR.

Copyright by Publishers Press, Ltd. Diagnose our bondage as we will. The woman's vote is still. —Thomas Moore.

It must not be taken for granted that because the woman's suffrage movement has been looked upon somewhat coldly by Canadian women generally, they are less interested in politics and the questions affecting the destiny of their own country than are the women of the United States and the old lands of Europe. It is true that none of our Canadian ladies have done such spectacular things as has Mrs. Cornwallis West, for example, but it is just as true of some of them as of her that their husbands and sons would never have achieved their present success in politics without their influence, and it is equally true that both political parties owe much to the work of their lady adherents. It is the same in politics as in every other walk of life.

Observe the progress of temperance reform. It is mainly a woman's move-



MRS. OLIVER

ment. In its social aspect alone it is of vast importance, and already it has had the effect of prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors in a huge area of this country. The prohibition has been made that before two decades have gone by Canada will be a prohibition country. Whether that will be so or not, of course, we cannot tell, but this much is certain, that the success accomplished by the women temperance reformers has been so remarkable that the prophecy is not unreasonable. They have forced the question into the arena of active politics, and in the result of most elections today it plays an important part. It is often remarked that the federal politicians at Ottawa are so fearful of its effect upon their standing in their constituencies that they lose no opportunity of impressing on the public the fact that the temperance question is one for the provincial legislature entirely. They shirk it whenever possible.

Last session of parliament the naval policy and H. H. Miller's anti-gambling bill were the features. So important did the newspapers consider the latter that it occupied as much space in their columns as the former. It caused tremendous excitement in many parts of the country, and on the floor of the House of Commons, as well as in committee, the debates were prolonged and bitter. This anti-gambling measure was in the main also a woman's movement, although the Lord's Day Alliance caused the bill to be introduced. It became law. Both Sir



LADY LAURIER

Wilfrid Laurier and R. L. Borden voted for it. Parliament could not afford to avoid recognition of the influence behind it.

These instances are sufficient to show that the influence of women on the Canadian parliament so far as legislation is concerned is pronounced. The legislation effected has been for the most part towards the betterment of our social conditions, and has been the direct result of the work of the National Council of Women and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The Sabbath day observance act, passed a year or two ago, is an excellent example of social legislation in which women took an active interest.

But the personal influence upon parliament, as distinct from the influence of organized bodies, is rather the purpose of this article.

There never was a better political campaigner than Mrs. George H. Perley, whose untimely death on a visit to England a few months ago caused deep sorrow. She had much to do with the election of her husband in the Quebec constituency of Argenteuil. She was an untiring canvasser, and took a real interest in the people of that county. The last time I saw her was at Finch, where Mr. Borden wound up his Ontario campaign. She was here, there and everywhere, speaking to this man and that woman, laughing and joking and making friends. She certainly made many votes that day for her party.

While parliament was in session at Ottawa she was the chief entertainer of the members, and at her dinner table was discussed many a programme of attack upon the government. She contributed her quota of advice. It is probable that Mr. Perley would not be chief conservative whip to-day, but for the fact that his wife was such a keen politician for he is not a parliamentarian of the pugnacious variety, and hitherto has confined his attention to matters affecting the social welfare and health of communities.

Another lady who has had a great deal to do with the success of her husband in politics is Mrs. Templeman, wife of the minister of inland revenue. The little story behind the appointment of the Hon. William Templeman will serve to illustrate this. Early in 1906, there being a vacant portfolio, the leading newspaper correspondents of the capital sent out the statement that Mr. Templeman would become minister of inland revenue. No appointment had been made, but the effect of the publication of the despatch was such that Sir Wilfrid Laurier had no option but to give Mr. Templeman the portfolio. It was a newspaper tribute to Mrs. Templeman, between whom and the newspaper fraternity there had always been a bond of sympathy. To the young reporter in his dark days and with hopes almost blasted she has been a faithful friend and adviser. She had never forgotten her husband's early struggle in newspaper work.

There is no more ardent worshipper at the shrine of politics than Lady Laurier. Every debate worth listening to finds her in her place in the front seat of the speaker's gallery, and she misses not a word uttered by the supporters or opponents of her distinguished husband's government. She has a most attractive personality, and wherever she goes you will observe young men and older men around her enjoying immensely her vivacious conversation. An unmarried member of the commons said to me last winter that he enjoyed a talk with Lady Laurier better than with any lady he has ever met. She still shows the same keen interest in her husband's work that she displayed in earlier years. It is rarely that she misses driving him home from his office on Parliament Hill, and she looks annoyed and anxious if he does not leave work aside for the day punctually at six

o'clock. It is related that on one occasion the premier had been kept unusually late over a matter of considerable consequence, and asked Lady Laurier not to wait for him. Accordingly she drove home alone. Eight o'clock came and Sir Wilfrid had not arrived. Ordering out the automobile again she drove to the premier's office and sent in this message: "Lady Laurier insists that Sir Wilfrid Laurier, come home to dinner." The premier came, and stayed dutifully at his house for the rest of the evening.

At the instance of Lady Laurier after the new western wing of the parliament buildings was completed, the wives and daughters—sisters when they had none—of the cabinet ministers arranged to hold weekly receptions in the parliamentary restaurant. These functions, it is said, have done much to solidify the government side of the house. Men, getting to know each other socially, learn to like their fellows the better, and loyalty becomes the stronger, apart from party loyalty. However, these gatherings have had the effect of bringing together members of the opposite side of the house, and while the tenacity of the parliamentarians to their own political views and leaders has not been diminished, some of the rancour of party struggle has been lessened and the standard of debate during these last few years has risen the higher.

The wife of the chief of the conservative is also a strong force in politics. Like the late Mrs. Perley she is a good campaigner and an excellent hostess. But just as Sir Wilfrid Laurier is too busy to attend much to the social duties of the session so is R. L. Borden. The two leaders have to be almost constantly in the house, or within easy call. Mrs. Borden attends the parliamentary debates more faithfully than any other lady. Almost every day she may



MRS. BORDEN

be seen in the speaker's gallery. She occupies the corner seat of the front bench on the left hand of the speaker, while Lady Laurier sits at the other end. Thus they occupy their same positions relatively as their husbands. It is said that Mrs. Borden has an extraordinary faculty for recognizing political ability in men. This intuition has been helpful to the government. However late the debates are in closing she remains to the end, and when the small hours of the morning have arrived, is frequently the only person in the gallery except the nodding attendants.

Probably the most noteworthy entrant into public life during the last few years is Charles A. McGrath, of Medicine Hat. He frankly confesses that he is not as keen a party politician as some, and that his chief reason for going into parliament was to please his wife and mother, who wanted him to play a more prominent part in legislating for the national weal. But for these two ladies it is unlikely that Canada would have the services in a political capacity of this great man.

Alexander Haggart, of Winnipeg, came into parliament at the last general election with one of the biggest majorities in the whole country. While, of course, there were other influences at work, it is admitted that Mrs. Haggart had a good deal to do with that majority. She is one of the "good angels" of Winnipeg. The hospitals, the poor and the needy, the unfortunate and the wayward, the down-trodden have in her a friend and helper. The remark of a young man as he left one of the polling booths at the election showed that she had found the way to some hearts: "There goes a vote for Mrs. Haggart."

Mrs. W. F. Maclean takes a deep interest in her husband's concerns. This is no easy task, for the "spoils of public ownership" is a man of many ideas and accomplishments. Mrs. G. P. Graham has contributed much to her husband's success, and one cannot think of Arthur Meighen, of Toronto, in France, in connection with the house of commons, without remembering Mrs. Meighen, who is a fervent politician. As she is the youngest wife in politics she has a

long career before her. She follows the debates closely.

Any reference to the women who exert an influence on parliament would



MRS. ALEX. HAGGART

be incomplete without a mention of Mrs. William Pugsley, wife of the minister of public works. None is better able to gauge public opinion. Her knowledge of politics is gained first hand, for she is a constant attendant at the house.

Mrs. John Stanfield, of Colchester, N.S., is as keenly interested in public questions as her husband, Mrs. Frank Oliver, wife of the minister of the interior, wields a considerable influence in politics, and has been a

to her husband. Indeed the wives of the western members are of a very high type, and have made things much more interesting at the capital since the last election.

The wives of most of the members of Quebec province are not as conspicuous as those of the English-speaking members. They are conspicuous by their absence and their husbands faithfully travel weekly to their quaint fireside amongst their habitual friends.

Mrs. H. B. McGivern did a great amount of hard work for her husband at the last election when he and Sir Wilfrid Laurier were returned as members for Ottawa, and Mrs. William Wright has considerably strengthened her husband in his constituency of Muskoka. Mrs. Gerald V. White, of North Renfrew, keeps a close eye on Mr. White's political affairs, and a pretty sum of money was paid her at a political dinner in Pembroke when one of the speakers said that if Mrs. White ran she would beat anybody around.

As I have said before Canadian women who are interested in politics have not done, and probably will not do the spectacular things attributed to many of the ladies of other countries, but in their own quiet way of working they are accomplishing much. What they have engineered is by no means the least important of our legislation. While it is not invariably the case it is sufficiently proved in politics as in everything else, that the wife contributes much towards the success or failure of the man she weds.

### The Worth of the Individual.

These are days of the social surge. We find ourselves thinking in terms of the mass, and not of the man. The overwhelming tendency is toward socialization. Conquest in these modern days comes by co-operation. The man apart is thrust to the wall. The things we do together are the things that win success. It is better so. The tendency is normal and of promise. It is part of the process whereby the new humanity is created.

But the danger connected with this tendency is very great. One is constantly tempted to emphasize the social, and to forget the individual.

It is absolutely necessary to insist upon the supreme worth of the individual, whatever may be the conditions by which that individual is surrounded. In the growing complexity of social relations, his importance becomes not a whit less. His power to will the good and the right is the fundamental dynamic of all progress.

### Tongue Twisters.

A London paper recently offered a series of prizes for the best tongue-twisting sentences. The following were the prize-winners:

The bleak breeze blighted the bright bloom blossoms.

Two toads totally tried to trot to Tedbury.

Strut, strong Stephen Stringer snarled slyly six sickly snakes.

Susan shined shoes and socks; socks and shoes shine Susan. She ceased shining shoes and socks, for shoes and socks shock Susan.

A haddock, a haddock, a black-spotted haddock; a black spot on the black back of a black-spotted haddock.

Oliver Ogletorp ogled an owl and an oyster. Did Oliver Ogletorp ogle an owl and an oyster. If Oliver Ogletorp ogled an owl and an oyster, where are the owl and an oyster Oliver Ogletorp ogled?

### Among the "Extras."

One of the things which help swell the traveller's expenses, both in this country and abroad, is the "extra." It may or may not be charged in the bill, but it is sure to be paid for. Probably even the most generous traveller, however, will have some sympathy for the gentleman in the following story, who was made to pay liberally for a certain annoying privilege.

During his stay at the hotel the weather had been very hot.

"Charles," said the landlord to the clerk, who was making out the bill to be presented to the departing guest, "have you noticed that the gentleman in No. 7 has consulted the thermometer on the plaza at least ten times every morning during his stay here?"

"Well," said the landlord, "charge him the price of one dinner a day for the use of the thermometer."—Youth's Companion.

### His Rare Talent.

In a reminiscent mood, Col. George E. Mapes, the veteran Napoleon of reform, told the other day what he said was the original story about Horatio C. Seymour, Seymour was an active figure in New York politics years ago when Dean Richmond was the democratic leader.

Richmond talked little, and when he did it was to the point. One night after the plans of Richmond had been successfully called out in a convention, the crowd called at Richmond's headquarters and demanded a speech. He refused, and said to one of his friends:

"Oh, send Seymour out. He can talk longer and say less than any man I know. If I went out there I'd say something, and then the fat would be in the fire."

### Trade in Sea-worn Pebbles.

A new industry is being started in Seaton which will provide employment for people in the winter. At present a large business is transacted in sea-worn pebbles, which are imported from the French coast, and it is hoped to capture part of this trade.

Trial orders from several large houses of the pebbles are on hand, and gangs of men are engaged in selecting the pebbles from the beach at Seaton and the neighboring villages.—London Daily Mail.

Regular dishonesty is easier to manage than irregular honesty.

Now is the period of time between ashle ago and after ashle.

## Backache, Headache Internal Pains.



MRS. JOSEPH LACELLE

121 Bronson St., Ottawa East, Ontario, Canada, writes:

"I suffered with backache, headache and dragging pains for over nine months, and nothing relieved me until I took Peruna. This medicine is by far better than any other medicine for these troubles. A few bottles relieved me of my miserable half-dead, half-alive condition."

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Mrs. Joseph Beaudoin, 29 Rue St. Olivier, Quebec, P. Q. Can., writes:

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