

each return  
Mrs John McNaughton

Piche Sack THE MONTREAL WEEKLY WITNESS

LETTERS FROM READERS.

Newspapers do not hold themselves responsible for the views expressed in letters from readers. The correspondence columns are for the very purpose of allowing free expression to diverse views.

VOTES FOR WOMEN

(To the Editor of the "Witness.")

Sir,—In all fairness, to those women members of the organizations represented by Mrs. H. A. Hamilton, President of the National Equal Franchise Union, Mrs. Albert Gooderham, President of the Daughters of the Empire, Mrs. F. H. Torrington, President of the National Council of Women, and by Mrs. E. A. Stevens, President of the Ontario W.C.T.U., will you publish in your valuable paper the following protest from one member against the stand taken by these ladies?

You have published the views of one side, and added the statement that the women of Canada did not thank those Liberals at Ottawa, under the leadership of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who protested most vigorously against that clause in the recent Franchise Act, which disfranchised the majority of the women of Canada. You also added that "nothing in a long time had given such pleasure to the people of Canada" as the brute force employed by the Conservative Government in applying the Prussian principle of the closure to stop all further discussion of this unjust act. These two statements I deny in toto.

Will you, in common fair-play, publish the views of those women who resent being disfranchised? "By their fruits ye shall know them." Are you a hide-bound Tory or a Liberal Conservative? The course you will take in regard to publishing this letter places you in one class or the other. The choice is in your own hands!

First, let me state I am the mother of a dear boy overseas whom I have not seen for three years, who, although a University student, enlisted as a private, later joining the Royal Flying Corps as an officer, and has been flying for one year in France, passing through many perilous adventures. The stand I took from the very start, when he desired to enlist, and when his father was

tence of being afraid of the Alien Women's Vote? A woman takes the status of her husband, and as the Government is disfranchising all these Aliens whom they mistrust, the wives of such men would, by that very Act, be disfranchised without further action on the part of the Government. Why seek to belound the issue? Why seek to "draw a herring across the track"? Why not fairly state, that it is not the alien women they fear, but that the Government distrusts the loyalty of the British-born women? Such an insult! An insult we will certainly remember.

(4.) Can it be they mean to brand as traitors the women of Quebec, because they choose to prosecute the war by different measures than those advocated by the Tory Party? Are we to have here in Canada, fostered by these so-called leaders of thought, the Prussian theory of "freedom of thought and action for none but the military class"? Those mothers in Quebec who have sent only sons to the war, those who having none to send have worked enthusiastically, what do they think of this stand? Many women, both in Quebec and throughout Canada are, unfortunately it may be, old maids—how can they send sons if they don't possess any, but still they work, what of them? What justice is there in this—when we remember that some men have enlisted rather than be sentenced to prison for some criminal offence, that the mother, wife, sister and daughter of such men—in many cases little better themselves than their escaped—jail-bird soldier husband—will be entitled to vote, to enjoy a right which is not granted to the mother or wife or sister of a peaceful and law-abiding citizen?

A SACRIFICE ON THE ALTAR OF POLITICS.

(5.) If upon consultation and investigation it was decided not wise to enfranchise the foreign women during the period of the war, why did not these four Conservative ladies lay stress upon this feature of the franchise, but, at the same time, urge upon the Premier that that should not be a deterrent, cause why the British-born woman, thoroughly patriotic and loyal, should not receive

blood, so that freedom may replace brute force, would endeavor if given the franchise to make German ideals and German domination possible in Canada. I think it would be well if Sir Robert would publicly disavow any such view as is seemingly attributable to him by the writer of the above article in "Woman's Century," entitled "Premier Borden and the Federal Franchise." I would like to ask these ladies, if, in the course of this interview in which, no doubt, they expressed a desire to help the cause of the Empire in whatever way the Empire—not your Canadian politicians—considered most effective, did they ask Sir Robert if, during the two months that he spent in England in the spring, discussing the war with the British War Office and the British Government, he had ever discussed with these the advisability or necessity of conscription being applied to Canada? If so, can these ladies tell us the answer given to them on this point by Sir Robert Borden, as it is an answer most eagerly sought after by the people of Canada as a whole? Do these ladies, who are so keen on securing the passage of this Conscription Bill that they are willing to go to the extent of giving up the franchise which they say they "long for"—are they aware of the fact that the Hon. Bob Rogers crossed the Atlantic from England on the same boat with Sir Robert Borden and that immediately upon his landing in Canada, Sir Robert Borden announced to an amazed Canada his Conscription policy? Are they aware, also, that on hearing the announcement of this policy, there was sent out directly from England a cable which was published in the Canadian papers, stating that Sir Robert Borden had not stated to them his intention of formulating and carrying out conscription in Canada? Does it ever yet dawn upon these four distinguished ladies, these dabblers in politics, that perhaps Sir Robert "listened more to the siren voice of the charmer," the Hon. Bob Rogers, anxious to save his party from defeat, than he listened to the wise counsels of those British statesmen who, judging from their own actions in exempting Ireland from conscription, showed a desire to be not simply a victorious empire after the war but a united empire as well? One of the chief planks of the Ontario Woman Citizens' Association is, 1st, citizenship; not partisanship; 2nd, justice; not favor; 3rd, co-operation for good

traducers of our greatest Canadian living is "Vive Laurier! Vive Canada! Vive l'Empire!"

If my letter were not already long, long as it necessarily has to be to answer every point raised by these four leading Conservative ladies, the figure-heads, ornamental or otherwise, of our women societies, I would have liked to have discussed the real troubles in the Province of Quebec. I myself, this summer, made a visit to that Province, and, upon questioning both Tories and Gristis alike, I found that Sir Sam Hughes was quite right when he made the following statement: "If I had been treated as badly as the people of Quebec have been in the matter of enlisting, and had been as insulted as they have been both in the House of Commons and out of it, I would not have enlisted myself!" At another time, if you will allow me the use of your valuable columns, I would be glad to tell to the people of Ontario, who apparently either do not know or do not wish to know, the true condition of affairs in the Province of Quebec, the true facts which I have learned this summer concerning the real causes which have hindered hitherto recruiting in that Province.

I should not feel satisfied to close this open letter of protest on behalf of the disfranchised women of Canada, if I did not first make to them this one suggestion for annulling the action of the Government as directed by these four Conservative ladies, my one suggestion being this: That each disfranchised woman promptly sets to work to influence one man, at least, and as many more as possible, whether in Canada, in England or on active service in Europe, to cast his vote at the coming election as she would have voted, had her vote not been so unjustly taken from her. Let her tell father, husband, son, sweet heart, or any man whom she can influence through ties of sentiment or blood, or influence by her logical reasoning as to the justice of her plea, let her tell them that they have had opportunities of voting at previous elections, and that now, in all justice, when she has been so unfairly deprived of her vote, they should for this one election vote as she would have voted!

EDITH KERR MACDONALD

The Maples, Cobourg, Ont.

Sept. 15th 1917.

case return

Mr. John M. Naughtan

Piche Sack

ture?—The course you will take in regard to publishing this letter places you in one class or the other. The choice is in your own hands!

First, let me state I am the mother of a dear boy overseas whom I have not seen for three years, who, although a University student, enlisted as a private, later joining the Royal Flying Corps as an officer, and has been flying for one year in France, passing through many perilous adventures. The stand I took from the very start, when he desired to enlist, and when his father was a bit doubtful whether to allow him to do so at the age of nineteen, was that I would prefer to have a dead son in France, having done his duty to the Empire, than to have with me in Canada a boy with a dead soul! Now, have I made it clear that I am heart and soul in this war but that I am, from the word go, absolutely opposed to "conscription of men" except as a last resort? Right here and now, I am in favor of securing as many more volunteers as possible and of conscripting fifty or one hundred million dollars, or "silver bullets" which Bonar Law says are now beginning to have as much importance as "the last reserves of men." I want to ask these four leading Conservative ladies, heads of the above-named Women's Organizations, the following questions:

#### WHO SPOKE FOR THE WOMEN SOCIETIES?

(1) What women, and what societies of women did they consult, and I desire to ask them to publish in the public press, over their own signatures, a full and complete list of those women and those societies so consulted?

I am a member, and have been for eleven years, of a large and very important Chapter of the Daughters of the Empire, having held different offices in the same, at one time filling the office of First Vice-Regent. The Regent of our Chapter has been several thousand miles distant from her home all summer; who then spoke for our Chapter? I, for one, frankly state that the first intimation I had that I, as a member of that Chapter, had been consulted, was when I read in the public press; that I, with other members of various women associations, had unselfishly (in the interests, no doubt, of the Conservative party, with which these so-called leaders of women are in such close touch) desired to be disfranchised. I don't

#### A SACRIFICE ON THE ALTAR OF POLITICS.

(5.) If, upon consultation, and investigation, it was decided not wise to enfranchise the foreign women during the period of the war, why did not these four Conservative ladies lay stress upon this feature of the franchise, but, at the same time, urge upon the Premier that that should not be a deterrent cause why the British-born woman, thoroughly patriotic and loyal, should not receive it? Why should the Women's Franchise be conferred upon the select few? Can it be that these four prominent Conservative ladies, upon due consultation with others of the same political brand, have very thoughtfully decided to offer up as a sacrifice on the altar—not the altar of their country, but on the altar of their political party—the votes of all women, British-born and otherwise, who might possibly vote against the bill on which their leader, Sir Robert Borden, hopes to be returned to power? It was a very thoughtful, unselfish act, but says too much of the unselfish, patriotic devotion to its country of Artemus Ward, who considered his duty in the Civil War was shown in the willingness with which he "sacrificed all his wife's relations." Can it be that, instead of consulting as many representative women societies as possible, these four Conservative ladies consulted their Conservative husbands instead? It is a well-known fact that the husband of one of these women, Mrs. E. A. Hamilton, recently almost inspired the Conservative nomination in Peel. It will be well for us disfranchised women to remember the old saying of "Beware of the Greek bearing gifts." We like not the appearance of this gift of disfranchisement, presented through the kindly efforts of four deeply disinterested leading Conservative ladies.

(6.) I read from the "Woman's Century," the official organ of the National Council of Women for Canada, the following, under the heading of "Premier Borden and the Federal Franchise"—"The women of Canada need their franchise; long for it, but they are more than willing to forego this advantage of citizenship for such length of time as will enable them to do their part in making German ideals and German domination impossible in Canadian

that perhaps Sir Robert "listened more to the siren voice of the charmer," the Hon. Bob Rogers, anxious to save his party from defeat, than he listened to the wise counsels of those British statesmen who, judging from their own actions in exempting Ireland from conscription, showed a desire to be not simply a victorious empire after the war but a united empire as well? One of the chief planks of the Ontario Woman Citizens' Association is, 1st, citizenship; not partisanship; 2nd, justice, not favor; 3rd, co-operation for good citizenship.

Ye gods! How different from the stand taken by these four ladies—partisanship, favoritism and lack of co-operation of the most flagrant description! Party before country, not justice, but favors to a special military caste. Co-operation for good citizenship! With whom, pray? Not with those cultivated, clever, patriotic women of Quebec whom they have branded publicly as traitors. Rather let these Tory ladies state that their platform is party, not principles, favor, not justice. The alienation and antagonizing of all women not for the Tory party! So be it!

#### PATRIOTIC LIBERALS LOVE THEIR CHIEF.

Before closing I would like to state that we as Liberals resent such statements as keep recurring in the Conservative press as the following: "Patriotic Liberals are lamenting that they have not now at the head of their party a man worthy to be successor of George Brown, Edward Blake and Alexander Mackenzie. None of these robust patriots would have made the question of re-entrusting our defenses conditional upon a referendum." I wish to utter a vigorous denial of the statement that patriotic Liberals are "lamenting their leader." Far from it! And let the Conservative party not delude themselves on that point. Never did they love their old chief more. Never did they realize as they do to-day that the one great outstanding statesman in Canada, as their leader, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who was not afraid to stand with his few true trusted lieutenants as sentinel over the old Liberal principles of freedom, tolerance, and the harmonizing and fusing into one great impelling force, the divergent opinions of different races and creeds. He stood almost alone, but he stood like a great

blood, of influence, by her logical reasoning as to the justice of her plea, let her tell them that they have had opportunities of voting at previous elections, and that now in all justice, when she has been so unfairly deprived of her vote, they should for this one election vote as she would have voted!

EDITH KERR MACDONALD,

The Maples, Cobourg, Ont.

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through the action of the Government, cast my vote against conscription.

(2) I admit with all due deference to these so-called leaders of thought, that I think they should have taken time "to think" a little longer, before thinking out such a very weak and poor reason why we British-born women should have the votes withheld from us. But before discussing this reason, I should like to ask my question number "2": Who spoke or answered for these women societies in the West which are now framing such vigorous resolutions of protest against the action taken by the Conservative Government, as directed by these four leaders of thought, who are doing my thinking for me, and for many other British-born women? If these societies acquiesced in the stand taken by these four Conservative ladies, why these resolutions of protest?

(3) How could the giving of the franchise to women have brought about any disastrous results to the carrying on of the war by the Canadian people, when the British-born women outnumber the foreign by at least four to one? How could the minority out-vote the majority, unless those four would-be representative women mean us to understand that in their exalted opinion the often illiterate foreign woman is so much more intelligent, more deeply interested in national problems, more intent upon using the privilege of the franchise than her so-called superior fellow-citizen, the British-born woman? These ladies have offered a dire insult to the intelligent and patriotic British women of Canada, when they take such a position and state it so publicly in the press.

Moreover, why this unnecessary pre-

man of Canada are willing to make any sacrifice for the winning of this War, even to the extent of unnecessarily giving up the franchise. I grant you the truth of the first part of the statement, that any necessary sacrifice all patriotic Canadian women are willing to make, but I deny the truth of the latter part, as they are willing to make an unnecessary one. Is it sensible? Would any intelligent man ask a Government to not allow him to vote for fear some one else might vote contrary? Can they by any rules of reasoning or logic prove that patriotic, British-born women, who outnumber the alien women by four to one would give up their votes, when all they would have to do, as intelligent women, would be to go to the polls and out-vote these alien women by a majority of four to one? They state we women of Canada "need" our franchise. Then why don't we use it if we need it? They state that we "long" for it: I should say, judging from the value they place upon it, the "longing" must be of a very mild nature, or else why give it up so easily, so unnecessarily? What is meant, what do they mean by stating that, by withholding the franchise from certain classes of patriotic British-born women they will succeed "in making German ideals and German domination impossible in Canadian citizenship?" Is this another insult so freely and gratuitously offered to the British-born women of Canada?

**POSITION OF SIR ROBERT BORDEN.**

At the informal meeting which they state they had at Ottawa with the Prime Minister, they state that "he went into all the difficulties which surround the granting of the woman's franchise at the present juncture." Can it be that Sir Robert Borden agreed with the statement that, "although unfortunately New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island would not be included, Quebec being omitted would safeguard the conscription issue so far as women are concerned, and thus prevent these Quebec women from making German ideals and German domination possible in Canada." I for one, although differing from Sir Robert Borden politically, have a personal regard for him, and consider him a man of honor, who would not for one instant agree with the unjust assumption that the women of Quebec, many of whose sons he buried in distant France, or who to-day are shedding their life-

well:

Quite the most able letter I have read in the press on the political situation is the one written over the signature of "Alexander D. Bruce," of Unionville, published in Saturday's "Globe" and Friday night's "Star." That letter, I assure you, sir, reflects the true attitude of thousands and thousands of Liberals and fair-minded men of both parties from one end of Canada to the other. When speaking this summer on conscription to a very prominent Conservative, a man who had run in his party's interests for member, I was charmed to hear from him, a life-long Tory, the following comment on our leader, Sir Wilfrid Laurier: "When I look at him all I can say to myself is what a figure of a man! It is useless for us as Tories, or for any one, in fact, to try to belittle a man of the stamp of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. As a statesman, he towers above any one we have in Canada to-day!" This, sir, is the generous tribute of a fair-minded party opponent, whose name I am withholding to give you if you desire it. And to think that we Liberals are asked by the Conservatives to allow ourselves to be induced to leave a man of honor like Sir Wilfrid, and to allow ourselves to be duped into allowing ourselves to be represented in the would-be Borden Cabinet after the election, by a pseudo-Liberal, a man who shortly after voting in favor of conscription, told a friend of mine, a former M.P., that he was daily in receipt of letters, telegrams and resolutions from his constituents, protesting against the stand he had taken in favor of conscription, adding "the old man (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) has us all on the run! I guess I made a mistake." But he is sticking to his mistake; is it from principle one sticks to a thing one acknowledges to be a mistake, or

**WAS HON. FRANK OLIVER CORRECT**

when on Friday last he spoke in the House of Commons of those so-called Liberals, who, like Judas Iscariot of old, had betrayed their Master for a price? Ye shades of Brown, MacKenzie and Blake! Those "robust patriots," acknowledged so to-day by the Conservative party, but, who during their lifetime were branded by them as disloyal leaders, as traitors! In the eyes of the Conservative party, the only really patriotic Liberal statesmen are the dead ones. The dead patriot of to-day was the so-called traitor of yesterday. The answer of all true Liberals and of all fair-minded patriotic men and women throughout Canada to the

