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Proceedings in the Provincial Legislature

Lively Discussion on Woman's Right to Vote on Husband's Property Qualification.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE May 1st. Afternoon Session.

THE HOUSE met at 4 p. m. PREMIER BELL—I have been asked to introduce a small bill if the House has no objection. I would ask that it be introduced without notice and that it go through second reading. It is an act to amend an Act for the protection of neglected and dependent children. The bill is to be introduced with the Dominion Act which says a child of eighteen years or under (and not sixteen as in our act) is dependent, and that such a child may be brought before a Stipendiary Magistrate and dealt with if necessary in the locality he or she may be at the time, without incurring unnecessary expense.

MR. STEWART—This Act is asked for by the Children's Aid Society? PREMIER BELL—Yes. The bill was read a first time. HON. MR. CROSBY introduced a short amendment to the Road Act providing that the road tax be reduced from \$2.50 to \$2.00. The bill was given first reading. HON. MR. MCDONALD moved the House into committee on an Act to amend the Statute Law which was passed without amendment.

The House in committee read the Appropriation Act a second time. Third reading was given to a number of bills and the House went into committee on second reading of the Act for the Protection of Neglected and Dependent Children.

HON. MR. JOHNSTON objected to the word "dependent" applied to a girl of eighteen years who in many cases supports herself. PREMIER BELL—it is a question whether the age should be raised to eighteen because it certainly involves a larger responsibility upon the province. Under our present law a child of sixteen is considered dependent and delinquent children of this age may be placed in some foster home where they will be taken care of and given a better example and education.

HON. MR. LEA suggested that the title be changed to "dependent and delinquent children." HON. MR. STEWART—We are dealing with an amendment and we cannot change the original act very well. I would suggest that we leave this matter until we have had time to go over it.

On motion of Premier Bell the Speaker took the chair and progress was reported. The House in committee resumed second reading of the Election Act.

MR. SPEAKER DUFFY moved an amendment to Sections 28 and 29 providing that as soon as possible after the issuing of election writs the returning officer shall divide his district into as many polling divisions as he deems convenient and shall fix upon suitable polling stations therein. This is in accordance with the Dominion Election Act.

MR. METHERELL suggested that arrangements should be made to enable committees to go ahead and adjust the polling divisions previous to an election. The returning officer is not appointed until about a month previous and a delay in the arrangements necessitates a great amount of work to be done in the short time before the election. The sheriff is generally appointed returning officer but would he have the power to make these arrangements before his appointment? He knew one polling division divided in two by a large river around which the voters had to drive a distance of about nine miles. This matter should be adjusted. There should be fifteen polling divisions in the local as in federal elections.

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PREMIER BELL—The only difficulty we would have is that it is not absolutely certain that the sheriff will be the returning officer. There is provision made in the Act for the appointment of a certain person as may be known to the returning officer. It is impossible to know in advance who the officer will be, but anything you can do to assist the returning officer to carve up the district into polling divisions will no doubt be very gladly accepted by him.

MR. STEWART—In this amendment you are following the Dominion statute, but with this difference, that in Dominion elections there is only one vote, while here we have two. The property voters as a rule are very much slower in polling than the franchise voters because they have two votes to poll. You don't want to make a provision whereby the polls will be overcrowded—don't go over 250 to a poll, at any rate.

MR. LEA—That is right. 250 is about as much as the average poll could get through in a day.

MR. HIGGS—in the next election we are going to have an exhilarator in the shape of the women voters. They will double the number and I think the polls should be enlarged to three hundred.

Clause 31 (1) of the Act provided the following qualification for electors for Councilors:—“(1) Every person, male or female, being a British subject, of the age of twenty-one years or upwards, who owns real property within the Electoral District in which he or she claims to have a vote of the value of Three hundred and Twenty-five dollars, and who has owned and been in possession of the same for a period of at least six months previous to the date of the writ of such election.”

MR. BRODIE maintained that a married woman on a farm should have the right to vote for Councilor, whether she had property in her own name or not.

MR. D. C. MCDONALD moved as an amendment to the clause that the wife of a property holder owning property to the value of \$1,000 or upwards should be entitled of right to the second vote.

PREMIER BELL—I am hoping to see the law amended in this direction, where two persons man and wife, work together and where the woman contributes to the accumulation of property it should be held jointly. This property will be held jointly, but this is a matter which we have to come up with in the future; it does not come particularly under this Act and at the present time we have no such law and for us to suggest it at this time would be deemed by owners of property as straining the law beyond the question.

MR. BRODIE—How would it be straining the law? PREMIER BELL—We ought to confine ourselves to the provisions of the old Act and simply give the woman the franchise vote. That is all they are asking for. The woman who owns property shall of course have two votes.

MR. DEWAR seconded the motion of Mr. McDonald that the clause be amended.

HON. MR. JOHNSTON—This amendment if it went through would be rather dangerous. By placing the woman's right to a second vote upon the value of her husband's property you come back to the old dangerous principle of making the right to vote depend upon the wealth of a person. A man's wife, if his farm was worth \$1,500, would be able to vote and another man's wife, who might be twice as intelligent, (if his farm was worth only \$300) would not have that right. The hon. members know that a great many people in this world accumulate their wealth by being miserly. I know quite a lot of rich men who never would have a cent if they were not skin-flints. Don't draw the line in this thing on the value of a man's farm! The Premier says he hopes to see some day a law passed making the man hold property jointly with his wife. This means that if he buys a piece of land he will have to divide it and give her half of it. Just imagine! I believe that when a man dies the wife should get a larger amount of his estate than she gets—but not while he is living. We don't want any radical changes like that at all and I think you had better leave the Act as it is and not monkey with it. Leave it at that until the time when there shall be in his province "one

France Increases Outlay on Navy

(Special to The Guardian)
PARIS, May 16—France will spend 325,000,000 francs more on her navy next year than this. The national budget 1923 was distributed to Deputies in the Chamber today by Count Delasteyrie. Minister of Finance. The increase in naval appropriations was the most striking feature.

man, one vote; one woman, one vote." PREMIER BELL—A woman has no interest in the property at all while her husband is living. I think that we give women a vote for their interest and one that they will do will be along the line I have suggested—of having all property held jointly by the husband and wife. In the home they purchase, say, a piano and it is paid for partly by the efforts of the woman who it may be saves up for on her own and egg profits. To whom does the piano belong? To the husband.

HON. MR. LEA—That is not real estate. PREMIER BELL—We are not talking about real estate, we are talking about property. Why does the piano belong to the husband? Because he is a man. It makes no difference whether it is a piano or a piece of land, it goes to the name of the husband and it is his to dispose of. This question is one which the women will certainly bring up when they get the opportunity.

MR. BRODIE—Why not make the change now? PREMIER BELL—We cannot make it now. We are dealing with another Act. When it comes up in the proper place it will receive the recognition of even the men of province.

MR. METHERELL—I think the men of this province should be big enough to not wait until the women come and force us to do this. If you want to save the constitution of the country in all fair play let us give it to them.

MR. MCDONALD—The women as a whole have not been asking for the franchise vote but they are getting it. Nine out of every ten property holders I have spoken to agree that their wives should have a property vote. We have a perfect right as a Legislature to give this vote if we think fit, and I am confident will press that amendment.

MR. DEWAR—Any married voter who has a property vote—let his wife have the same.

MR. MCINTYRE—I am not in favor of giving any one a property vote who has no property. The wife pays no poll tax.

A MEMBER—Oh, yes, she does. MR. MCINTYRE—No she does not, and I think the principle is a wrong one. You would be giving the woman a right to kill the votes of her husband, who is paying taxes and she is not. I am in favor of the franchise but not the property vote at this session.

HON. MR. JOHNSTON—Another thing. After you give the vote to the wife of the property holder, what will the young man say who is working on that farm and who has probably done as much as any one of the family in the way of work. You might as well start in and give the vote all round.

HON. MR. NASH—it is quite evident that we have not advanced very much. We are back to the same old question of equality between man and woman. I thoroughly agree with the proposition that our franchise should be just as broad as the federal franchise—one man, one vote; one woman, one vote. If you do anything else you must mix up the mothers and daughters and the sons and fathers inextricably.

HON. MR. COX—In what? HON. MR. NASH—Inextricably. (Laughter) We cannot give women the right to vote on their husbands' property at this session without taking a step which will be altogether too radical. When we dissolve the present government this will be a good thing to go to the country on—"One man, one vote; one woman, one vote."

MON. MR. LEA—I don't know how that would take with our people. We all know why we have a property and a franchise vote—it is because a man who owns property in this province should have a greater say in the laws of the land than a man who is perhaps only here temporarily and who has not so much at stake. I think the suggestion of Mr. Dewar is a good one—that if the husband is a property holder and has a property vote, the wife's right to vote on it should also be recognized.

HON. MR. JOHNSTON—Intelligence should be the basis.

HON. MR. LEA—If intelligence is properly used it is all right but

WASHINGTON HAS DECLINED

WASHINGTON, May 16—The State Department made public last night the text of a message to Ambassador Child of Genoa declining an invitation to participate in the new European Economic Conference at the Hague.

often intelligence does not get a man anywhere. HON. MR. JOHNSTON—Then it is not intelligence.

HON. MR. COX—The Attorney General opposes an amendment on several grounds; one of them, that the young men and young women on the farm would want the second vote too. But I think the mother who brought those young people up should have the vote and it is time for the rest to look for a vote when they have a family of their own. I know plenty of cases where the woman is the business head of the family and the man is the worker. I would strongly support Mr. McDonald's motion because I think it is only just and the right to the second vote.

HON. MR. HUGHES moved an amendment to the amendment of Mr. McDonald, that the wife of any man qualified under the act to vote for Councilor should receive the right to the second vote.

HON. MR. JOHNSTON—For living with some men they deserve a V. C.

HON. MR. CROSBY—I don't think a young man would have any reason to object if his mother were given the second vote—it wouldn't affect his franchise.

MR. STEWART—It has been said that the legal members will raise technical objections to this part of the bill but here is one lawyer who certainly will not do so. (Applause) I don't agree and I never did agree with that proposition of "one man, one vote" because I think the property vote is a great safeguard. The man who has intelligence and thrift enough to acquire property and has that much additional stake in the country should have another franchise; and what applies to a man applies to his wife. (Applause) Even from the legal standpoint there is no parallel between the case of the woman whose husband is the owner of the property because the woman has rights to that property which cannot be taken away. We have now a certain balance between the number of property and franchise votes. If we give all the women the franchise and do not give them their own names a second vote then we shall have destroyed that nice balance and the property votes will be very much multiplied proportionately. This is another strong argument, I submit, in favor of the amendment.

MR. SPEAKER DUFFY—I don't agree with that. It does away with the distinction between the property vote and the franchise vote. After the death of the husband the wife has a life interest in one third of the property. Now we propose to give them a vote on the same basis as if they owned the property jointly with the husband, and they are getting a decided advantage over the man because if the wife owns the property—the other way about—the man has a life interest in it. The property qualification for a man is \$225. Now two women could have a vote on that property because only one, the property holder, is entitled to it. Why therefore should one man and one woman be entitled to vote on it? It's the same thing.

HON. MR. LEA—There is a difference—it would be all in one family.

MR. SPEAKER DUFFY—It is a distinction without a difference. There was some reason in the first amendment—granting the vote to women whose husbands held property to the value of \$1,000 or over. One third of that would entitle them to vote anyway. What the women are looking for is to be admitted on an equality with the men. They should be granted this, but it would not be just to grant more property to one man than to another and if you do you will have all sorts of confusion. Personally I am in favor of "one man, one vote; one woman, one vote," but while the two votes exist we must be careful not to destroy the distinction between them. When the change was made in this province from two legislative chambers to one chamber, the property holders thought they were giving away a good deal and consequently they insisted that their rights should be protected by the election of coun-

Germans Pay 50,000,000 Gold Marks On Reparations

(Special to The Guardian)
BRUSSELS, May 16—The German Government yesterday deposited with the Belgian Treasury the final payment of 50,000,000 gold marks under the provisional moratorium granted by the reparations Commission.

cellors as well as assemblymen. Until we think the time ripe for making a change in the constitution of this Legislature I believe that we should give the women simply what they ask for. A man must own property worth \$325 to vote for a Councilor. Consequently if it was the woman who owns property to the value of \$325, the same right, we are doing all that we are asked to do.

MR. METHERELL—Could it not be possible to avoid all this—couldn't a man give his wife a title to certain portions of his land and then she would have the vote? MR. SPEAKER DUFFY—Certainly not. The husband thinks it fair for his wife to have a property vote it would be very simple for him to transfer \$325 worth of property to her.

HON. MR. LEA—We are giving the franchise that the women might have the right to pass on all legislation, therefore why should we restrict this? Only women having property in their own right in the country can vote. I think that that is ridiculous. The leader of the Opposition said it would certainly make a top heavy vote. It would double the franchise votes and it would only increase the property votes very slightly. Why not double the votes just as they stand and give every woman a right to vote on her husband's property?

HON. MR. COX—Make a provision that the farm must be worth \$650 before she can vote—that would be twice the amount of one property voter's qualification.

HON. MR. JOHNSTON—In their petitions the women asked to be put on the same basis as the male voter. In cases where the woman has property in her own right they ask that she be granted both votes and in all other cases that she be granted simply the franchise. Why should we go further and discriminate between the married woman without property and the single woman without property? It seems to me we are not prepared to give women a right in our province's property?

MR. D. C. MCDONALD—You said it. Measly is right!

HON. MR. JOHNSTON—So long as the husband is alive she gets a vote but the moment he kicks out the property is divided and she loses that vote! What an anomaly!

MR. D. C. MCDONALD—Mr. Higgs' suggestion that any qualified property holder's wife get this vote seems to be a little hasty. Mr. Cox's suggestion that the qualification be husband's property to the value of \$650 is worth consideration. I suggested \$1,000. If the act went through without any of these amendments not one woman in fifty would have the second vote. I think the Councilors should be very thankful to us for these suggestions, at any rate.

HON. MR. CROSBY—That is right. But the objection is raised that two women on a farm would be as much entitled to a double vote as a man and wife.

The House met after recess at 9.45 p. m. House in committee on the Election Act.

MR. D. C. MCDONALD—I have been advised that the amendment to the wife's qualifications for a property vote would cause a serious complication as it would change the status of the voters and would necessitate great expense of time and trouble. I am not thoroughly satisfied about this argument, however. I'm like the men from Missouri—these gentlemen have got to show me. How ever, I would move that the clause stand over.

MR. SPEAKER DUFFY—This Legislature as at present constituted was changed from two chambers to one and it was specified that no change should thereafter be made in the qualification of voters. (Laughter) That's a change I agree to by at least two-thirds of the members of the House.

MR. D. C. MCDONALD—I wish to press the motion that the clause remain standing. So far as the two-third vote is concerned I guess we could carry that.

MR. DEWAR—I do not see what change it would make in the constitution. I think the amendment should be pressed.

HON. MR. HUGHES—The Act of 1893 provides that the qualifications for voters for Councilors shall be \$325. It requires two-thirds of the vote of the Legis-

BANDITS MAKE A BIG HAUL

SPRINGFIELD, May 16—Four bandits in an automobile intercepted a machine carrying the payroll of the St. Louis-San Francisco railway co., this morning and got thirty thousand dollars current silver. Police Detective Ben Lamb was hit in the arm by a shot fired by the bandits.

ture to amend that statute and rather than have a discussion on the matter I withdraw my amendment to the amendment of Mr. McDonald.

MR. D. C. MCDONALD—Can we not let the clause stand. We will not finish the Election Act tonight anyway.

HON. MR. CROSBY—I am still in favor of taking a vote on the question because I believe it would carry. However it would be no harm to let it stand.

HON. MR. HUGHES—Let my amendment stand too. Clause 31 was allowed to stand over.

Clause 32 read as follows:—“Every person, male or female, except an Indian ordinarily resident in an Indian reservation, shall be entitled to vote at an election to be held for the election of an Assemblyman to represent in the Legislative Assembly of this province any Electoral District; if such person (a) is of the full age of twenty-one years on the day of the election, and is not by this Act or any law of the Province disqualified or prevented from voting.

(b) Is a British subject, and (c) Has resided in the Province of Prince Edward Island for at least twelve months, and in the electoral district wherein such person seeks to vote for at least two months immediately preceding the issue of the writ of election; or (d) Who is the holder of a freehold estate for his own use and benefit or who is in the bona fide use and occupation or actual possession for his own use and benefit, of and in any dwelling house, warehouse, shop or other building or any farm or piece of land within the Electoral District in which he claims to have a vote, of the value of at least one hundred dollars, provided that every person claiming to vote under either of the property qualifications in this subsection mentioned has owned or possessed or has been in the use or occupation of the property for the space of six months before the date of the writ for holding such election.

PREMIER BELL—Some persons have inquired about section (d)—what was the use of it? Generally speaking it would seem as if that clause were unnecessary except that a person might have a vote in Charlottetown and in some part of the country and he might want to poll his second vote. It is purely for the purpose of retaining the privilege of the additional vote. Whether it is desired to keep this or make it merely an illegitimate vote is a matter for your consideration. The section generally is of the nature upon which the women's vote is based. It says that every person, male or female, who is of the full age of twenty-one years and who is a British subject, shall be entitled to vote. This section is revolutionary in a great many ways. Heretofore a man had to perform statute labor or pay the equivalent in order to qualify for a vote. By this Act it is no longer necessary either to perform statute labor or pay taxes, either for man or woman. It might be said that the effect of this would be to make it difficult to collect taxes. But all that is necessary is that the government use a little more vigor in collecting them promptly and efficiently every year. Then of course if the government does that there will be no arrears. It seems a strange thing that we should make the vote dependent on the payment of taxes. The federal government in the exercise of the right to vote simply depends on the fact that a person is a British subject, resided a certain length of time in the district; and we are virtual following this advanced principle. We cannot very well make a distinction between the vote of the woman and the vote of the man. We cannot make the woman pay taxes at all; so the only way out of the difficulty would simply be to abolish the payment of taxes altogether as the foundation for the vote—that leaves the man and the woman on the same standing. Of course this is in one sense revolutionary and in another sense it is progressive, and along the lines first laid down by the federal government.

More Complications At Genoa Conference

U. S. Refusal to Attend Hague Conference Brings New Note from Allies. Allies Drop Russian Question.

(Special to The Guardian)
GENOA, May 16—America's refusal to approve the Hague plan makes it extremely probable that the proposed conference to appoint a Russian Commission will be called off and the French indicated today they will follow the lead of the United States and refuse to participate in the proposed conference and the Russians withdrew their acceptance and asked for twenty-four hours delay to consider a new reply. The Allies despatched a telegram to the Hague next morning, planned a new note to Washington, they refused to accept the American reply as final refusal of their invitation.

PARIS, May 15—The French Cabinet today decided to refuse to send delegates to the Hague to consider the Russian question, if the proposed conference is in any respect political. Only if the conference at the peace palace next month is limited strictly to economic subjects will the French attend.

GENOA, May 16—The Council of the League of Nations refused today to take up the Russian problem and referred it to the Genoa conference at the Norwegian governments request for an immediate inquiry by the League into the general situation in Russia and the effect of the famine on economic reconstruction in Europe.

The woman is given the vote for several reasons: She has the right to defend her property in the larger field on the more important issues and therefore she should have it on the minor and local issues. Then (2) there are many things about which the woman in the protection of her own interests will have her say in the future; for instance, in the ownership of property; the payment of salaries to teachers, etc. In the teaching profession the woman today receives less compensation for the same work as the man and no doubt this question will be up for consideration in the future. We have a perfect right to give the woman the franchise in order that she might protect her interests. Again, where the husband and wife separate and the children have to be given to one or the other—this point will be settled more evenly when the woman comes into the vote and for all time to come woman's property and woman's relationship to the home and her children will be matters that she will be asked to take into consideration as a woman and deal with, and the voice of the Legislature will be dependent on the manner in which she exercises and asserts her rights. This bill provides that the woman must be the owner of the property to the same extent as the man, and that is what she has asked. That must be an ownership of property to the value of \$325 in order to have a vote for Councilor. She must own this property in her own right—just as the man must own it to be entitled to the second vote.

The Clause carried. HON. MR. JOHNSTON pointed out that all the clauses referred to 'he', 'him' and 'his'. Where did the women's part come in? PREMIER BELL explained that an explanatory clause would be added to the bill, making 'he' mean also 'she'.

A MEMBER—A sort of a cure-all clause. HON. MR. JOHNSTON—Which says a woman is a man. (Laughter)

Section 59 provided that the nomination deposit for Councilor or Assemblyman be \$10. On motion of Mr. LePage this was changed to \$25.

HON. MR. LEA—I don't believe that \$100 would be too much. At 11 o'clock progress was reported and the House adjourned until 10 o'clock the following morning.

LAND SURVEYING—PHONE Richmond today and tomorrow. Jno. Alfred McDonald, Land Surveyor, Hermanville.

IMPROVE YOUR GARDEN by planting new Roses, Shrubs, Peonies, etc. Direct importation just received also a number of Boston ferns. Mrs. John Williams, Phone 429.

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FOR SALE—APPLE, CHERRY, Juneyberry and Horse Chestnut trees, Raspberry plants, Hop sets and Strawberry plants, Dewberry and Cranberry plants, Scarlet Rhubarb bulbs and early potatoes. I ship to any station or by post. Write for prices. J. R. Marks, New London, P.E.I. E. I.

The Weather, Temperature, Tide, Moon, Etc.

TORONTO, May 17—Light to moderate winds. Fine and a little warmer. High tide this afternoon at 2.22 and tomorrow morning at 4.06. Sun sets this evening at 7.23 and rises tomorrow morning at 4.24. Last quarter moon Thursday, May 18th, 2.17 p. m.

Help the Boys by Helping the "Y" Annual Financial Campaign

May 15th-20th