



FOR GOD, AND HOME, AND HUMANITY.

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This issue of the "White Ribbon" is the last for the year 1931. It has been a year of unrest, depression, and turmoil, world-wide in its scope. Urgent problems in regard to finance and unemployment have confronted our legislators, and there has been too great an outcry for panic legislation. In times like these women need to watch carefully and think clearly. Rights won after years of struggle are always threatened, and often lost. Now, if ever, we need the eternal vigilance which is the price of liberty.

It is the first time since the passing of our present licensing laws that an Electoral Poll has been held without its accompanying Licensing Poll. The Triennial Poll, so hardly worked for and so bravely won by our leaders in the past, has been endangered. And why? Because the Brewers did not want a poll. They threw out a challenge, which was taken up by one section of the Temperance party, and they gained at least another three years' lease of life. It is an axiom in military circles to find out what your enemy does not want, and give it to him. The women knew the Brewers did not want a poll, so they worked hard to get one for them. But because the Temperance forces were divided, liquor won. Economy was the excuse. Had the whole election been postponed, there would have been a substantial saving, but the extra expense of the Licensing Poll was very small compared to the whole amount. As we have sat in the gallery and listened to our legislators talk; as we have noted the trend of legislation passed, and of that brought forward, we have parodied the old expression, and cried, "Oh, economy! what crimes are wrought in thy name." Pessimists told us we had no hope of winning; that we

had no money to fight an election. Nobody can predict how the vote would have gone. Economic conditions have altered greatly, and voters are keen enough to sense the economic waste of the Liquor Trade. Over eight million pounds spent in strong drink! Can we wonder at unemployment when this amount is diverted from other trades, which spend from 20 per cent. to 50 per cent. more in wages for amount received than the Liquor Trade does? Can we wonder that people who spend such a large part of their earnings in drink have failed to save and have to seek charitable aid when work fails? Thus the unthrifty become a burden upon the thrifty. Then there is the burden of supporting the unfit. Alcohol is a racial poison, its victims are filling our hospitals, our mental hospitals, our gaols, our special schools, and becoming an intolerable burden upon the taxpayer. These facts are becoming more widely known, and at a time like the present the people had a right to say whether this waste is to continue. That right was denied them by a clever arrangement between two parties.

But the past is past. Let us forget its failures, and remember only its lessons. Be on the alert not to be caught napping again.

There are several things the Liquor Trade wants, and we must see to it that they do not get their wishes. They want a poll every nine years, and they have got the thin end of the wedge in now by getting one interval lengthened. They are eager to make the long interval permanent. So be watchful. Every Union keep a watchful eye upon its own M.P. Then they want to be able to remove licenses. At present a license can only be removed half a mile in a borough and one mile in a county. But many places have become deserted, such as old gold mining districts, and the

Trade wants to shift those licenses to where the centres of population are. Again, Watch!

The Liquor Trade, like a vampire, is sucking the life blood of our Dominion. Organise! Educate! Agitate! ever ceaselessly at work until we vote it out.

Passing to another phase of panic legislation, we see a deadly menace to the freedom of our women in the catchcry that married women have no right to positions in our schools and offices. This is a direct blow struck at the economic independence of women, won at a great cost by the great women of the past. Let us note several facts:—

(1) Our schools are to educate our children. Large sums of money are spent for this object, and the child has the right to the best teacher available. Our schools are not maintained at such a cost just to provide positions for unemployed women. We deeply sympathise with our young teachers and clerks who are out of work, but why, to benefit them, be unjust to our children and to our married teachers. The eternal laws of the universe are just, and we never gain in the long run by going contra to them.

(2) Every woman has a right to work, and to realise the best that is in her in a profession which she loves. We train teachers at a great expense; we force them to sign a bond to repay that cost if they leave without giving certain years of service. Yet if a teacher marries she is to be forced to give up her profession and her life work. To many teachers their profession is much more than a means of livelihood. It is a sacred calling. If they are compelled to give up when they marry, many women of the highest type will prefer to remain single. Their profession is too dear to be given up.

There is also another aspect. Why should a woman's affairs be made an