

New Legislation for Women

Below is a summary of the activities of the various state legislatures during the past year concerning woman suffrage and other subjects relating to women, as recently made public by the Associated Press:

"Equal suffrage and other legislation affecting women figured prominently this year in the discussions of a large majority of the state legislatures. The sessions of most of them have now come to a close, and a summary of their activities collated by the Associated Press discloses that the question of woman suffrage came up for deliberation in twenty-two states, and that divorce laws, mothers' pensions, women police, minimum wage, eugenic marriage or other subjects relating to women were considered in twenty-eight states.

"The legislature of seven states adopted resolutions whereby a constitutional amendment giving women equal suffrage rights with men will be submitted to the people at the fall elections either this or next year. They are Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania in 1915; Iowa, South Dakota and West Virginia in 1916. Tennessee adopted a similar resolution, but it must also be passed by the next succeeding legislature before it can be submitted to the voters. So did Arkansas, but the resolution was ineffective because of a provision of the state constitution which forbids more than three constitutional amendments to be submitted at one election, and three had already been filed with the secretary of state.

"California adopted a resolution declaring that woman suffrage in that state had been an unqualified success. Alabama will consider the question at an adjourned session to begin July 7.

"To twelve states woman suffrage measures met defeat—Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, Vermont and Wisconsin. Three votes defeated the measure in Indiana. It was passed by the senate with only three votes registered against it, but a motion in the house to call the bill out of committee failed to carry, 46 to 49.

"Three votes also killed the measure in the Texas legislature, where it was introduced in the house. A two-thirds' majority, however, was required to pass it and the suffragist supporters claimed a great gain. The resolution did not reach the senate.

"Eight votes defeated the bill in the assembly of Wisconsin, and there was a bitter contest on the question in Montana, where, undaunted by the defeat of their cause at the general election last year, the suffrage adherents renewed the fight. In Delaware a proposed constitutional amendment was defeated decisively in both houses; in Florida in the lower house; in New Mexico and North Carolina it died in committee. In Michigan a proposed amendment to the constitution, giving women the right to vote for presidential electors and all officers of educational nature, was never reported out of the senate committee. The general assembly of Connecticut declined to send the measure to the next assembly for ratification.

"New Mexico, however, passed a law providing for the appointment of women on the governing boards of state institutions in the discretion of the governor. North Carolina enacted a bill, making women eligible to

become notaries in the state and giving them the right of petition in certain instances. Women may become notaries by a law passed also in Tennessee and serve in that state on school boards.

Pension for Mothers Given Consideration

"Pensions for mothers came up for consideration in eighteen states—Kansas, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Wyoming—legislation for this purpose was enacted for the first time. In two—Texas and West Virginia—mothers' pension measures were killed. In the rest the present laws were amended or amplified.

"The new Kansas statute fixes the maximum grant to needy mothers at \$25 a month, to be placed at the discretion of county commissions. The New Hampshire law limits payment to \$10 a month for a dependent mother having one child under sixteen years and \$5 for each additional child. The legislature appropriated \$16,000 for the first two years of the law's operation.

"The New York statute applies to widows with a child or children under sixteen who will be allowed the same amount as it would cost the state to support them. The Montana law applies to mothers with children under fourteen whose husbands are confined to a state institution or are physically incompetent; the Nevada law to widows only. In Oklahoma, both widows and mothers whose husbands are insane or prisoners are eligible to the benefits of the law, the compensation being \$10 a month for one child under fourteen and \$5 a month for each additional. The Wyoming law is similar. The law in Tennessee applies in counties of 50,000 population or more, and having juvenile courts. The act was not made mandatory. Sixteen is the age limit and \$10 and \$5 the compensation. Washington passed a bill making mothers' pension provisions somewhat less liberal.

"California, Colorado, Connecticut, North Carolina, Nevada and West Virginia acted on divorce laws. California amplified hers so that judges were granted power to call in the district attorney where fraud or collusion are suspected. Colorado amended hers so that a decree shall not be issued until six months after the divorce has been granted. Connecticut added incurable insanity to the list of grounds for divorce before the courts. Previously this cause had to be taken to the legislature. North Carolina passed a measure changing from ten to two years the period required to establish desertion, but the act met such a storm of protest that it was repealed the next day. Nevada returned to her law the six months' residence clause. West Virginia created in each county the office of "divorce commissioner," with power to investigate divorce suits, appear to trials, examine witnesses and defend the interests of the state to prevent fraud and collusion.

The senate of Indiana passed a eugenic marriage measure, but it was defeated in the house. Legislation to promote healthy marriages and check the social evil was enacted in Vermont. The law requires all physicians to report cases of social diseases to the state board of health, which is empowered to prescribe quarantine regulations.

Labor laws for women were enacted in Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts and Wyoming. Maine wrote into her statutes a fifty-four hours a week law for both women and boys under

sixteen working in mills, factories and laundries. It stipulates that such employees shall not work more than nine hours a day unless for the sole purpose of permitting a shorter schedule for one day in the week. Massachusetts legislated to prohibit the working of women and children overtime for the purpose of making up for the time lost on a legal holiday. Wyoming enacted for her working women an eight-hour day; and both maximum hour and minimum wage laws for women were passed by Kansas. A commission to investigate a proposed minimum wage law for women was created by Idaho. A bill providing for minimum wage for women in Michigan was killed in committee, although the commission appointed by Governor Ferris two years ago to investigate the subject, returned a strong report in favor of the enactment of such a law.

"New Mexico passed an act increasing the property rights of the wife, and Wyoming and Idaho in this particular placed wife and husband on an equal footing. New Jersey authorized the appointment of women policemen. Oregon forbade discrimination between male and female public school teachers in the payment of salaries. An attempt in California to enact a law to forbid women to shake dice for money or prizes was defeated. So was a bill providing for women jurors."

(During the past month the Alabama senate voted against the submission of an equal suffrage amendment to the state constitution.—Ed.)

THE CHEEKIEST OF TRUSTS

"The evidence in this case" said Judge Anderson, passing sentence upon the 116 men who had debauched the ballot-boxes of Vigo county, Ind., "showed that the saloons were the centres of nearly all the corruption in the election at Terre Haute. My notion is that the saloon will have to go."

Judge Anderson might have said that the saloon is going, and in many states and hundreds of counties has already gone, and for the

very reason so bluntly given. Prohibition is winning its most notable victories in regions where an antagonism to the saloon is even more pronounced than the sentiment in favor of total abstinence.

The brewers who own most of the saloons are chiefly to blame for the disasters that are overtaking them. They have not been content to sell beer. They have undertaken to govern parties, cities and states. Their power has been prodigious, and, naturally, it has often been abused. The brewing combine is the cheekiest of all our trusts, for it is the only one that has yet ventured to operate openly at the polls.—New York World.

A NOBLE WORK

Whether ex-Secretary of State Bryan belongs to the democratic party or the democratic party belongs to him, that noble man and real humanitarian is certainly helping in a noble work while addressing audiences made up of young and old, and pointing to the facts that the use of alcoholic liquors is not only physically injurious, but that it decreases man's efficiency, lowers his mentality and imparts constitutional weakness to his offspring. And at these gatherings he has affixed his name as witness to thousands of pledges given by men and boys never to use intoxicating liquors.—Auburn (Neb.) Granger.

BANKING ON DEPRESSION

There is no doubt whatever that the conditions which depressed business for a time are steadily losing their influence. Manufactures, commerce, financial activities are all looking up. As a republican politician nervously put it the other day, "it is now a race between prosperity and 1916"—meaning that he was afraid prosperity would be here in overwhelming force before the next presidential election.

The Post is not alone in thinking that prosperity will come under the wire a winner.—Boston Post.

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