

THE WOMEN SUFFRAGISTS AT BANCHORY.

The women suffragists had an amusing meeting at Banchory Auction Mart yesterday. The speakers were Miss Macaulay and Miss Gawthorpe, and when they arrived at the market Mr A. Duncan Smith, advocate, was addressing the farmers and others on behalf of Mr Gammell. The ladies had arranged to hold their meeting at noon, and shortly after 12 Miss Gawthorpe went through the crowd to Mr Smith, and told him that she was about to begin. Mr Smith proceeded with his address, however, and Miss Macaulay and he had a competition for the attention of the crowd. Mr Smith, however, gallantly gave way to the ladies, and the crowd went over to where Miss Macaulay was speaking. The principal speaker, however, was Miss Gawthorpe, who delivered a vigorous address, and she was subjected to continued interruptions by members of the audience. One elderly farmer shouted, "You ought to stay at home," to which another added, "Aye, that's the best place for them." Another old farmer took up the cudgels on behalf of the ladies, declaring that the women were more intelligent than the men. Miss Gawthorpe frequently turned upon her tormentors, and in her retorts invariably scored. When assailed with several simultaneous interruptions, she said—"I must remind you this is not a Liberal meeting—questions afterwards, and you will not be thrown out." (Laughter.) Miss Gawthorpe criticised Captain Murray's election address, and characterised the reference in it to adult suffrage as ambiguous. One Liberal, she said, had endeavoured to excuse Captain Murray for writing such a weak address by saying that he was a young man. Captain Murray asked them for their suffrage, and when a woman, declared by the law of the land not intelligent enough to vote, pointed out a weakness in the candidate's address, they were told that he was so young that he did not quite understand the question. (Laughter.)

At this stage two farmers were keenly discussing Miss Gawthorpe's oratorical powers. Said one of the agriculturists—"Would you like to bide wi' her for a week?" "Na," replied the other, "she wid pit me to the back o' the door in a week." Miss Gawthorpe silenced one old gentleman who was constantly interrupting by saying—"You should have been born a woman, you cannot stop talking." (Loud laughter, and cries of "That's a hard ane.") A man who appeared to be an agricultural labourer confined his interruptions to repeated cries of "Gladstone for ever." Miss Gawthorpe at last turned upon him, and said with a smile—"There it is: my father voted for Gladstone, and so must I." (Laughter.) Another man in the audience, who seemed to regard the suffragists very suspiciously, kept crying—"Who pays ye—the Tories?" (Laughter.)

At the close of Miss Gawthorpe's address a number of questions were put.

Mr James Hunter—You know that the Women's Suffrage Bill has passed its second reading in the House of Commons?

Miss Gawthorpe—Yes, and the bill has been shelved. As a practical politician, when do you think it will be taken off the shelf?

Mr Hunter—When they repent. (Laughter.)

Miss Gawthorpe—Quite right. (Renewed laughter.) When a mother has a refractory child, she sometimes talks to it about repentance, but she sometimes gives it a little smacking to make it repent. (Laughter.)

A Farmer—If a Conservative Government were in power, would you use the same tactics as you are using now?

Miss Gawthorpe—Yes: only they will get it far worse, because we shall get stronger as we go along. (Laughter and applause.)

Several other questions were put and answered, after which the suffragists gave way to Mr Gammell, who addressed the meeting.