

WOMEN SUFFRAGE DEMONSTRATION

MEETING IN UNION HALL.

The leaders of the militant section of the female suffrage movement, now engaged in a vigorous campaign against the Liberal candidate for South Aberdeen, held a demonstration last night in the Union Hall, which was crowded, many being unable to secure admission. Mrs Saunderson presided.

The following resolution was submitted:—
"That this meeting, desiring the immediate removal of sex disability, protests against the omission of a Woman's Suffrage Bill in the King's Speech, and demands that the private member's bill introduced on February 15 be made a Government measure, in order to ensure its passing into law this session."

Miss Helen Fraser, whose speech was remarkably temperate in tone, and whose quiet style is completely at variance with all one's preconceived notions of the aggressive female suffragist, contended that she and her colleagues had been mild in their methods in comparison with those adopted by the men in their fight for the franchise. The men had shown in an unmistakable fashion that they would not be put off with fair promises; the women were now animated by the same determination, and, be the consequences what they might, they would struggle on until political freedom had been attained. Miss Fraser had to contend against a few unmannerly interruptions, but, on the whole, she received a patient hearing, and the impression she created was evidently favourable. Her denunciation of the Liberals as cowardly, tyrannical, and hypocritical evoked applause, which was renewed as she referred in tones of seathing contempt to the humiliation involved in the expedient of employing mounted police to protect the British House of Commons against a handful of women.

Miss Annie Kenney, who was next called upon, referred in terms of gratification to the interest taken in the suffrage movement by the working women in Lancashire. All who knew anything of the industrial conditions that obtained there could not fail to realise the necessity of enfranchising women, so that they might possess the power of insisting upon reform. In conclusion, Miss Kenney earnestly appealed to the Scottish people for support in a great and good cause. She predicted that before another twelve months had passed there would be a 'women's revolution' unless their demand was conceded. Mr Haldane had himself stated to her in the House of Commons that it was necessary for her and her comrades to bring stronger pressure to bear on the Government. She (Miss Kenney) thanked him for the advice, and she was now acting upon it by calling upon the electors of South Aberdeen to vote against the Liberal candidate on Wednesday. (Applause.)

Mrs Billington-Greig, who was cordially applauded, after giving a historical retrospect, pointed to the practical futility of all the devoted efforts put forth during the past fifty years, and emphatically maintained that only now, in these days of fearlessly aggressive tactics, were they on the path to success. Persistent pressure on party politicians was essential, and this was being applied to effective purpose. The Liberal Government had acted toward them in the most fatuous fashion. By sending the female suffragists to jail the Government had played into their hands. Why, she and her comrades wished for nothing better than to be sent to prison and treated as criminals. They knew perfectly well that the result would be to inspire thousands of women hitherto apathetic with an interest in the agitation. As a matter of fact, this had been the case. They had gained thousands of adherents as a consequence of the persecution to which they had been subjected. The Government had shown almost incredible stupidity, for which she and her colleagues were, of course, duly grateful. (Laughter.) The Liberal party had deceived the suffragists again and again, but the latter would not be "sold" again. They had learned from experience, and they were not to be duped by promises and professions. The Liberal Government did not require the votes of the electors of South Aberdeen; had they not their mounted police to fall back upon? (Loud laughter.) No previous Government had been guilty of such folly and wickedness as had been displayed by this Government in sending out these mounted police against women instead of receiving a deputation courteously and dealing with the question in a statesmanlike fashion. Mrs Billington-Greig at the close of a most forcible speech, admirably delivered, called upon the men to vote against Mr Esslemont, because he was pledged to support a Government that denied the right of the suffrage to women.

The resolution was put to the meeting, and adopted almost unanimously, the only dissentients being, as Mrs Billington-Greig remarked, "two boys and a man."

While the demonstration was in progress an overflow meeting was being held around the Wallace Statue.