



Norway

Taler

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Sted

Budapest

Omstendigheter

Den Internationale Kvindestemmerets-Alliances 7de Kongres

- 1 (tale holdt som representant for Landskvindestemmeretsforeningen)

In Norway we go forward quietly, perhaps too slowly, but we are making progress constantly with this great aim: To make man and woman equal citizens
5 working honestly and faithfully for home and country. Whenever we find an obstacle in our way, an old barrier that has kept women handicapped, we struggle until we have removed it.

When Rev. Anna H. Shaw paid us the honour of a visit to Norway in June,
10 1911, our association sent in a petition to the church department to open the Church of Our Saviour for her. But to our great disappointment, we were not permitted to hear her in that church. The disappointment was so much deeper because women had spoken at mission-meetings many times in our churches, although not in those of the capital. This refusal caused Parliament to censure
15 the minister of the church, who was much criticised for his conduct. Women also sent in protests. A member of Parliament invited the House to propose to the Government the amendment of the rules, so that women speakers could be admitted to the church. As a result, in December of the same year, by order of the Council, the churches were opened to women speakers. In January, 1912,
20 Mrs. Bramwell Booth spoke in the Cathedral of Bergen of the work for the poor and starving - the first foreign woman to speak from a pulpit in Norway. When the Rev. Anna Shaw visits us next time, we shall have the great satisfaction of hearing her from the pulpit of a church.

25 A law providing for the admission of women to Government offices was proposed by the Government years ago, but was then postponed. A new Bill was proposed by the Government in 1911, providing for the eligibility of

women to State offices on the same terms as men, with the exception of the following offices: Members of His Majesty's Cabinet, the clerical offices of the State church, the offices in diplomatic service, military and civil-military offices. When the Bill was debated in Parliament, it was pointed out that women should not by law be excluded from any office. An amendment was proposed that women should be admitted as clergymen in the State church. This proposition was lost in the Lower House by forty-nine votes against thirty-nine, and in the Upper House by fifteen votes against fifteen, the President's vote deciding the tie, and he was opposed. The Government's Bill was passed without any amendments.

By this law the women of Norway can serve as judges, superior magistrates, sheriffs, district physicians, professors and teachers at the university, professors and chief physicians at the State hospitals and asylums; they can enter upon all State offices of public instruction, jurisprudence, medicine and surgery, etc. They may even become professors in the theological faculty - that is, teachers of clergymen, although they may not become clergymen. We feel quite sure that it will not be long before all the offices of the State are opened to women who possess the necessary qualifications. This law was dated February 9, 1912, and on the 29th of March a new professorship was established by our Parliament. The Chair was intended for Dr. Kristine Bonnevie, representative of the Government of Norway at the sixth Congress of the I.W.S.A. She is an authority on zoology and biology. When she gave her inaugural discourse, all the papers brought out her portrait and biography, and all the country rejoiced at the honour paid her, and her lecture-room was crowded.

Ellen Gleditsch last summer was nominated substitute for a university professor. She lectures on radium and radioactive substances, having studied in Paris under Madame Curie. We have also university women substitutes in botany and zoology. A good many university women have received a doctor's degree.

In September, 1912, the first woman physician was appointed assistant at the State obstetric hospital in Kristiania. Where women are most needed it is often most difficult to secure their appointment, for a great many unexpected obstacles are thrown in the way. This lady has won two of the university's gold medals for scientific dissertations on obstetrics; of these one was solemnly conferred upon her at the centenary jubilee of our university. She was the best

qualified of all the applicants, but the appointing authorities had many objections, based on prejudice and old custom. The official duties include
70 instruction of the medical students in gynecology, and the authorities especially objected on the ground that it was immodest for a woman to teach men students gynecology. They forgot that the subject of their study was woman, and that the students are both women and men. So Dr. Marie Kjolseth was appointed, and when once the matter was settled all objection ceased at once,
75 and everybody was contented. She is and has been the secretary of our association for many years.

It is a very long time since women teachers were allowed for boys and girls in higher and lower public schools, but they were kept in the lower and more
80 poorly paid positions. Now we have two university women appointed by the Government as teachers in the higher schools, with the same pay and the same work as men. In the municipal school women are now admitted as second masters on the same terms as men.

85 Our first woman barrister pleaded a case before the Supreme Court in July, 1912, and was invested with the advocateship. Her name is Elise Sem. She has been the secretary of a National Committee, consisting of four women and two men, which works against the white slave traffic, since its foundation nine years ago - a faithful and zealous worker to save women from falling into this hideous
90 abyss. For instance, it is due to this committee that there are women inspectors on board the ships of the new Norwegian-American line, to guide and help the travelling women, many of whom are very young and travelling alone to a foreign land. They therefore need the protection of a woman inspector.

95 For the first time a woman was elected vice-president or deputy-chairman of a municipal council in Kautokeino, far to the north of the Polar circle, in Finmarken, on the 15th of April, 1911. A woman was elected vice-commissioner of the Court of Reconciliation in Fredriksstad. A woman was appointed Holder of the Register in the Court of Justice in Kristiania,
100 subsequent to an Act of Parliament that admitted women to this position. Police women are at work in the capital, as well as in many of the other towns.

In order to secure legal provisions to prevent abuse in home industry, the Department of Commerce has appointed a committee, consisting of a man and
105 woman, the national factory inspectors, to prepare a Bill on the matter.

In many towns the women have taken up the task of censoring the performances of the cinematograph theatres, especialty to prevent improper
110 impressions upon children. They have succeeded in establishing an effective control over this form of amusement. In one town it is proposed that the town shall take charge of the cinematographs as its own business, and use them for the enlightenment of the people.

115 Under the law of the 21st of June, 1911, women may serve as guardians, trustees, and chief guardians 011 the same terms as men. In case of the death of the father, the mother shall succeed to the full guardianship of the children, etc.

The L.K.S.F. has proposed a Bill changing the arrangement of the
120 constituencies. The association has also proposed an amendment to the Constitution, giving women universal suffrage - that is, suffrage for women on the same terms as for men. These Bills are both to come before the Parliament after the new elections, which took place in the autumn of 1912; we therefore suppose that the Bills will be debated in Parliament this spring.

125 No woman stood for election to Parliament last autumn, the present arrangement of the constituencies making it almost impossible to get a woman elected. Seven women were nominated alternates - four of them by the Left or Liberal party, and three by the Socialists, - but none of them were elected.

130 The chief object for which our association worked during the campaign was that the voters should elect members of Parliament who would work and vote for political suffrage for women on the same terms as men; and that the political parties should take the reform into their platforms. In this we succeeded
135 completely. All our political parties endorsed universal political suffrage, for women.

We have, therefore, every reason to believe that our amendment for equal
140 suffrage will be passed by this Storthing (1913).

The members of Parliament who had spoken against the Bill that gave women admission to the State offices were not returned to Parliament.

We understand, by Bills proposed, that our Government is very willing to listen

to the demands of the women:

150 (1.) The Government in 1911 proposed an amendment to Sec. 12 of our Constitution. The wording of this paragraph, it is supposed, prevents women being admitted as members of the King's Cabinet Council. The proposed amendment will remove this obstacle.

155 (2.) A Bill is proposed concerning marriage, providing that the marriage, to be legal, must be signed before a civil magistrate.

(3.) The Social Committee of Parliament has proposed that men and women clerks in the public sick and invalid insurances shall be promoted upon the same terms.

160 (4.) Equal pay for equal work is established in some posts of the public service, especially the higher offices. Last year the same rule was proposed in Parliament for all clerks in public services, and the proposal was recommended by the Minister whose department was concerned. The matter was sent to the Government and will, no doubt, soon become a law.

165 (5.) A Bill is now proposed establishing compulsory health declaration before marriage, a minimum marriage-age fixed by law, and a certain space of time which must elapse after the banns of marriage are published before the wedding can take place.

170 (6.) It is a long time since the law of the 29th of June, 1888, gave women the right to keep their own property after marriage; to contract, and to dispose of their own earnings during marriage. If no special marriage contract is made, husband and wife have joint property. A Bill is now proposed with the
175 following provisions: The husband shall not be entitled to give away or sell real property without the consent of the wife. The husband shall not be entitled to stand surety or to endorse without the consent of the wife.

180 Everywhere we see the endeavour of our Government and Parliament to place woman on the same footing as man.

Last year Parliament made it obligatory that the profits from the State lottery should be divided equally between the men's and the women's Anti-

185 Tuberculosis Associations. The men's association had expected to get the whole
sum of money for itself alone, although the women's league had worked against
tuberculosis for more than eleven years, and the men's society not yet three
years.

190 The biennial of the L.K.S.F. that should have been held this year in April is
postponed, to be held during the great festivals and expositions in 1914, when
the celebration of the centenary of our Constitution will take place.

Another centenary jubilee was celebrated on the 23rd of January, 1913, in
195 commemoration of the birthday of Camilla Collett, our first woman writer. In
1855 she edited a great work, the first in our language dealing with the rights of
women; she was a richly gifted poet, and her novel in two volumes made a great
sensation; but very few understood her demands, at that time utterly new, and
the book was received with a storm of indignation. She was then a widow with
200 four little children, but people had no pity. So plainly was she told of the cold
and scornful attitude of the public towards her, that she felt it impossible to
remain at home. She lived, in consequence, for many years in Rome and Paris,
but she did not give up. Her books came one after another and cleared the way
for a new era with a new ideal for women. She lived to see her convictions
205 understood and her ideals established facts. And now her statue has been
erected by the women of Norway with great ceremony, in the presence of the
King, Queen, and Ministers; the Speaker and members of Parliament; the most
prominent men and women in literature and arts; and the workers for woman's
cause.

210 I believe this is the first statue in the world to be erected for a woman to honour
her work for the women's cause.

When we read her books, those excellent pictures of women's position in
215 society and family sixty years ago, and compare them with our position today,
we have great reason to be glad and thankful that we are permitted to see this
new day for the women of Norway. The future demands of us that we shall
prove equal to our task. We hope and believe that the women of our country
will fill the demands of the new times.

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Kilde

Trykk fra IWSA - International Women's Suffrage Alliance

Emner

1913, Foredrag, Innlegg, Kvinner, Kvinnesak, Likestilling, Stemmerett

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