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THE HON. EDWARD BLAKE, P.C., K.C., LL.D., an eminent Canadian Liberal statesman and lawyer, eldest son of the late Hon. William Hume Blake, chancellor of Upper Canada, now Ontario. He was born at the present village of Cairngorm, Ontario, Oct. 13, 1833, and was educated at Upper Canada College (Governor-general's prizeman) and at the University of Toronto. He was called to the Bar in 1856 and began practice in the city of Toronto. In 1864 he was created a queen's counsel by Viscount Monck; became a bencher of the Law Society of Upper Canada in 1871; and treasurer of the Law Society in 1879. For a time he was one of the examiners in, and a lecturer on, equity for the Law Society; and was appointed an honorary member of the law faculty of Toronto University in 1888. He declined appointment as chancellor of Upper Canada under Sir John Macdonald in 1869; as chief-justice of Canada under Mr. (afterward Sir Alex.) Mackenzie in 1875; and as chief-justice of Ontario under Sir Wilfred Laurier in 1897. His political career began in 1867, the epoch of Confederation, when he was elected both to the House of Commons and the local legislature. In 1869, he accepted the leadership of the Liberal party; and on the defeat of the Sandfield Macdonald government, in December, 1871 (an event largely due to his efforts), he was called on to form a new administration and succeeded in the task. He himself took the office of president of the council, without salary. On the abolition of dual representation, some time later, he resigned the premiership, with the view of devoting the whole of his attention to federal politics. He was one of the chief actors in the contest over the Pacific Railroad scandal, which resulted in the downfall of Sir John A. Macdonald. When Mr. Mackenzie became prime minister of the Dominion, Mr. Blake accepted a position in the cabinet without office. He was sworn of the privy council Nov. 7, 1873. Owing to ill health he resigned in February, 1874. In May, 1875, he accepted office as minister of justice, and while filling this post undertook an official mission to England. He was mainly instrumental in perfecting the constitution of the supreme court of Canada, and personally selected the first judges. After the defeat of the Mackenzie government, in 1878, he was chosen leader of the Liberal party in the House of Commons, and remained in that position until after the general election of 1887, when he retired and was succeeded by Mr. (afterward Sir Wilfred) Laurier. In June, 1892, he accepted the invitation of the leaders of the Irish parliamentary party to represent them in the British House of Commons. In 1894, he was elected a member of the executive committee of the Irish parliamentary party. In the same year he was included in the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland. In 1895, he was reelected to the British Parliament by acclamation for South Longford, and sits in the Commons as an Irish Nationalist member. In the same year, he went to New Zealand to act as arbitrator between the New Zealand government and the New Zealand Midland Railway Company, and made his award later in favor of the government. In 1896, he was one of the committee of fifteen of the House of Commons, appointed to investigate South African affairs and the causes of the Transvaal raid. He received the honorary degree of LL.D. from his Alma Mater, in 1889, but declined a K.C.M.G. for his public services in 1876. He was a

delegate to the third Commercial Congress, London, 1893. The Toronto "Globe" characterized him as "the most powerful Canadian speaker whose voice has been heard by this generation"; and Lord Rosebery declared him to be "the most brilliant orator and one of the most capable statesmen of Canada."

SUFFRAGE FOR WOMEN.

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE CANADIAN HOUSE
OF COMMONS, APRIL 17, 1885

LET me now look at one of the most important propositions, that to which I alluded a little while ago; look to the question of suffrage for women. Now, you found a marked difference in the language of the First Minister and that of the Secretary of State, with reference to that subject. The honorable Minister of Public Works was wisely silent; he said nothing about it. I do not know what he thought. Perhaps it was because he thought so much that he said so little; but at any rate he has kept a profound silence upon the subject of woman suffrage.

The honorable gentleman, however, upon some former occasions, was disposed, I remember, when a little badinage was passing across the House, rather to take credit for the woman-suffrage clause. I recollect he alluded to the ladies in the courteous and pleasant manner in which he speaks of the whole population, whether ladies or gentlemen, and spoke about the action of the right honorable gentleman with reference to it—so I presume that he favors it too.

But the First Minister declared himself strongly in favor of the woman suffrage; he declared the time was coming, and that soon, when it would be granted, and that he would be glad to see Canada take the first final step; and he referred to Mr. Gladstone, who, he said, was in favor of woman suffrage, and to Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote, who had declared themselves in favor of it. Now, I think

I have read all that Mr. Gladstone has ever said on that subject—though I have not been able to refer to all his speeches since the honorable gentleman spoke—and my recollection is that Mr. Gladstone had not delivered an opinion in favor of woman suffrage.

I am quite certain that in the late debate, when he had to meet Mr. Woodall's motion, he did not express an opinion in favor of it. He declared he would not express an opinion on the subject. He took the line of the Secretary of State. But, if I do not greatly err, in a former debate upon the question he expressed the view that if the franchise was to be given to the other sex he saw no ground upon which it could be limited to unmarried women; he expressed the view, if I remember rightly, that it must be conferred upon married women if conferred at all. Now, the honorable gentleman says that he will adopt Mr. Gladstone's attitude, and that he will not imperil this bill on the question of woman suffrage.

But Mr. Gladstone's attitude was wholly different. Mr. Gladstone had not brought in a bill with woman suffrage in it. Mr. Gladstone had brought in a bill that did not give the franchise to women. It was a government bill, and he was handling that government bill with a government in which the question was an open question, avowedly. Some members of the government were in favor of it and others opposed to it. But what Mr. Gladstone, who had not committed himself upon the question, said, was:

"I will not imperil this bill by allowing you to add the question of woman suffrage to it at all. I will express no opinion. It is an open question so far as we are concerned, but we have a duty to discharge, and that is to carry this bill through; and those of us who are in favor of, as well

as those who are opposed to woman suffrage, to take the ground that we are opposed to tacking it on to this bill."

But the honorable gentleman's view is different. He says:

"I have introduced a bill. I introduced it in 1883; I introduced it in 1884, and now in 1885; and I commend it to your attention as a government proposition. It is the government's proposition, but, forsooth, I will adopt Mr. Gladstone's views, and I will not imperil the bill."

The honorable gentleman had better have left it out, if he did not intend to carry it. But the honorable gentleman seems to be disposed to think that he will manage the matter. Having brought it in, in the former sessions, and having, presumably, taken the opinion of his friends upon it, he still proceeded, this session, with that clause in; and presumably he took some opinions again, and in the end he is to be forced to leave it out. It cannot be called an open question. Whoever heard of any ministerial measure being an open question. It is not an open question, but he has been forced to relax the tight bonds of party discipline and graciously to give his followers liberty to vote as they please on this question.

Well, the Secretary of State declared that he would not discuss the subject. He said that in different Provinces that question was not accepted in the same spirit, and that in Quebec public opinion was hostile. Now the question is no doubt a very important one. It is one of the most important that can be raised. I cannot conceive a more important political question than that which is raised by this clause of this bill, and I am free to say that I do not think the First Minister discharged his duty as a leader of the government by proposing such a clause in the bill if he did not mean to pass it, nor did he discharge his duty in the way of exposition of the views of the government in his speech. . . .

You talk of elevating the race—the race of women and of men. You say that it is for the good of the race that women should become political electors.

I grant your concession for argument's sake. But there is a law higher than your laws, that is the law under which we live and in which the appointed state of the great bulk of us is the marriage state; and that is not for the good of the race which tells us you are to elevate those who do not happen to be in the married state, and you are to disable them from the exercise of the elevating principle as soon as they assume that which is the ordinary condition of the race, both as regards men and women.

Will you be allowed, do you think, to say that the daughters may vote and the mothers shall not vote. Our laws are every day, and justly so, more fully recognizing the right of women to own property—the right of a woman to have her own property independent of her husband. These conditions of amelioration are being generally accepted, and they are becoming exceedingly wide—I do not know exactly how wide—in the different Provinces. They exist in Ontario, under the old codes, to a very large extent; they exist in Quebec, which for very many years has had more reasonable laws on this subject than formerly prevailed in others of the Provinces. We do not recognize the old doctrine that the husband may say to the wife that all she has is his.

This is no longer the doctrine. A woman's property may be her own. If a woman's property may be her own, why should we say that it is for the elevation of the woman that she should have a vote, and yet deny it to eight tenths of the women, the mothers and the wives, though they are property-owners, and give it to those who are spinsters or widows,

and to those only. How can the question stop even the right to vote? On what principle will you grant the right to elect and deny the right to be elected? On what logical and political principle will you do that? I can apprehend inconveniences, of course, but, as to them, surely the people are to be the judges. If the people choose to elect a woman, and a woman is eligible to vote, why should she not be eligible to take her seat in Parliament? On what ground can we say that people shall not have the right to choose a woman as their representative if women have the franchise?

I did not see but that all these things are to be opened by this bill, and that we may some day or other, under the government's proposition when fully developed, have a Speaker in a gown, it is true, but of a different kind and framed on different plans from that which you, Mr. Speaker, wear. These questions are all opened by this bill; it is certain they are not closed. They are opened by this bill; and even the proposition brought forward is brought forward without popular approbation? Have we been told by the honorable gentleman at any election that this was his policy? The honorable gentleman says that he has always favored it. But he kept it, like many others of his favorites, in his bosom. He did not tell anybody of his secret affection for the female franchise; he did not disclose his hidden love:

"Concealment, like a worm i' the bud, preyed on his damask cheek."

He alone knew how devoted he was to the sex. Why did he not let us know; why did he not let them know? Why did he woo them so much in secret that they did not know he was wooing them at all? How did it happen that this unrequited attachment of the First Minister did not become known?

I maintain that if the honorable gentleman nourished those views, and nourished them not merely as theoretical views and ideas which he would like to see put in force, but did not intend to take the responsibility of bringing forward, but as practical ideas, in which he was going to legislate, he was bound to have told the people at large, and to have said, "I am in favor of woman suffrage, and I am not merely in favor of it, but I propose, if you elect me and my supporters, to use my influence and position to accomplish that which I conceive to be a great reform."

We did not know anything about this until the honorable gentleman was in office. Has there been any agitation on this question; has there been any discussion of it among the people? Yes, I think I hear the honorable gentleman say, "A petition or two was presented." But the greatest marks of surprise upon the subject were exhibited by the few agitators for the women's suffrage themselves, who met and passed a resolution of thanks to the honorable gentleman for having spontaneously and without request done so much more for them than they expected. Now, I maintain that that is not the way in which a great idea of this kind should germinate and ripen until it becomes an act of Parliament. I maintain that there ought to be suggestions by responsible statesmen, agitation and discussion, and fair opportunity for the people at large to decide what they will have upon such a subject, before you propose to legislate at all. . . .

I, myself, have not infrequently stated my earnest desire that my fellow country-women should take a more active interest in public affairs; that they should acquaint themselves more thoroughly than they do with public questions, and I rejoice when I see them attending our political discussions and informing their minds on public ques-

tions. But while that is so, and while I believe there is a very satisfactory and progressive improvement in that department of this question, I ask the candid consideration of the House, and of the men and women of the country, to the question whether the women have as yet, as a class (if we are to call them so), as a sex, as a whole, taken up politics in the way we do.

I do not think the men pay sufficient attention to public affairs. I do not think that the electors give that attention which they ought to give to the current of public events. I do not think they do their full duty, or that they are fully alive to their responsibility as electors of this country. I think much has to be done in the way of informing them what that duty is, and enlisting from them a more active discharge of it. But, whatever the shortcomings of the men may be, it is clear, up to this time, that women have taken less steady and active interest in public affairs than those who are the electors. Now, do you wish to see them take that measure of interest that we do in politics? Unquestionably, yes, if you wish them to be voters. There is no more dangerous element in the voting community of the country than the mass which does not take a keen and active interest in public affairs, on one side or the other. I say the mass who do not inform themselves and keep their interest alive—and there are too many of them among the men of the country to-day—the mass who do not keep alive their interest in public affairs is a mass which is dangerous, and which impairs and sometimes imperils the stability of our institutions. Therefore, unquestionably, you do wish them to take an interest. Then, do you wish them to become delegates to your conventions; to become committee-women; to become canvassers? I say yes, if they are going to be voters. I say you cannot double

the voting population of the country without danger if you do not hope that the added population will take the same degree of interest and activity in the formation of public opinion, the organization of public opinion, as the rest; and therefore you must wish these things.

Therefore it is, sir, that the question before you is a momentous question. The question whether you are to make electors of the women is a question not to be dealt with in a speech of one and a half minutes, even by a gentleman of the authority of the First Minister. It should not be settled without full and ample thought and deliberation; without full consideration of the people at large; without full consideration by the women of the country themselves; without an appreciation of what their wishes are,—which are important to the consideration of this question, because I think it would be a mistake to force the franchise on a reluctant portion of the population,—if they be reluctant to accept the franchise, as to which, again, one has no opportunity of forming an opinion except from the absence of application for the purpose.

I say we have got to consider, then, the whole bearings of this proposition in the extent to which, in my opinion it will inevitably lead. I do not believe the wives and mothers of Canada will be content to see the daughters and widows voting, and will support the proposition that they should vote,—the view that it elevates the sex that they should vote, and yet should find themselves relegated to the lower sphere of those who are debarred from voting because they are wives. I do not believe in that view at all. I do not think that we should in one breath say it is good for women; it is good for spinsters; it is good for widows; it is good for the race; it is for the elevation of women that they shall vote, but it is bad for the married woman. I do not think so at all;

and therefore I think the question of their opinion and of their condition must be taken into account on this subject. I do not intend, as I have said, to discuss what the present place of woman is and what the future of woman is to be, but if you will allow me I will read you what I think is some very good philosophy, couched in glorious poetry, on that subject, and which, although I do not agree with all it says, I think tells as much on the problem which the honorable gentleman has submitted to us as has been told in any time past in so short a space:

"The woman's cause is man's: they rise or sink
 Together, dwarfed or Godlike, bond or free;
 For she that out of Lethe scales with man
 The shining steps of nature, shares with man
 His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,
 Stays all the fair young planets in her hands.
 If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
 How shall men grow? But work no more alone;
 Our place is much; as far as in us lies,
 We two will serve them both in aiding her,
 Will clear away the parasitic forms
 That seem to keep her up, but drag her down;
 Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
 Within her—let her make herself her own,
 To give or keep, to live and learn and be
 All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
 For woman is not undeveloped man,
 But diverse; could we make her as the men,
 Sweet love were slain; his dearest bond is this.
 Not like to like, but like in difference.
 Yet in the long years liker must they grow—
 The man be more of woman, she of man;
 He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
 She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
 Till at the last she set herself to man,
 Like perfect music unto noble words;
 And so these twain, upon the skirts of time,
 Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the to-be,
 Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
 Distinct in individualities,
 But like each other ev'n as those who love.
 Then comes the statelier Eden back to men;
 Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm;
 Then springs the growing race of humankind.
 May these things be!"

Yes; may these things be! But I believe that the philosophy which is indicated in those verses is a philosophy which requires deep study before you can decide that these things are to be by the honorable gentleman's proposal to confer the rights of voting upon spinsters and widows, and to leave out those to whom these verses are addressed—the married women.

Now, as I have said, the only safe process in this matter is discussion—gradual discussion, thorough discussion; and the result of that discussion may be—indeed probably will be, for we have to look far off—a diversity of opinion in the different Provinces. The Honorable Secretary of State to-day frankly admitted that on this branch of the Bill there are two opinions. There is the hostile opinion in the Province of Quebec; there is perhaps a favorable opinion in some of the other Provinces; I argue for leaving each Province to settle its own franchise. If you do not want woman franchise in the Province of Quebec, you are free not to have it; but leave the people to decide whether they shall have it or not. Woman franchise may be popular in the Province of Ontario; let the Province of Ontario pass a law to give women the franchise; that does not hurt Quebec, but give Ontario that which best suits her. And so with reference to the Provinces. No stronger argument for the adaptability and convenience of an independent franchise for each Province can be found than that provision of the bill, and the statement of the Secretary of State with reference to the woman franchise.