

The National Archives
Education Service

Britain 1906-1918

Gallery Three : Early 1900's
Women's suffrage



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Early 1900s Women's Suffrage

Overview

When the Liberal government came to power in 1906 there were many important issues facing the country. One of these issues was women's suffrage. Throughout the period 1906-18 dedicated groups of men and women campaigned for women to be able to vote in general elections in the same way as men.

THE BIG QUESTION IN THIS GALLERY IS:

IN THE EARLY 1900S WHO WAS FOR AND AGAINST WOMENS SUFFRAGE AND WHY?

Look at the Big Question for a worksheet that will show you how to use the case studies and how to organise your work.

Case Studies

The Big Question is too big to tackle in one go, so we have broken it up into smaller sections called case studies. Look at the case studies to study the historical sources.

See the following case studies in this gallery to study the sources:

- [The Case For](#)
- [The Case Against](#)
- [Other Issues](#)

Gallery Background

See Gallery Background for some information and sources which may be useful in your investigation.

Case Study – The Case For

The Case For : Overview

Today women vote on exactly the same terms as men. However, they did not gain completely equal voting

rights until 1928. It was a long hard struggle to achieve these rights.

In this case study you are going to study a number of sources from the time. These sources will help you to investigate the arguments which were put forward in favour of women's suffrage in the early 1900s.

Sources:

- [John Stuart Mill on women's suffrage, 1867](#)
- [The Times Newspaper on women's suffrage, 1906](#)
- [Labour MP Keir Hardie on women's suffrage](#)
- [Resolution passed in Australia, 1910](#)
- [Groups supporting women's suffrage, 1911](#)
- [Cartoon from a Suffragette newspaper, 1913](#)
- [Article from a Suffragette newspaper, 1913](#)

How to use the sources in this case study:

You can use these case study sources in two ways :

The Big Question

All of the sources in this case study have been chosen to help you decide why the Liberals brought in measures to help children. If you are tackling the Big Question Part 1 you should:

- Study each source carefully – use the questions to help you get the most from the source.
- Look at the list of possible reasons in Part 1 of the Big Question.
- Decide which reasons are supported or contradicted by the source.

Exam Practice

If you want to get some practice on examination type questions, just go to or download the Practice Questions.

Don't forget – if there are words or phrases in the sources which you cannot understand, try the glossary

Source 1

Extract from a speech made by the Liberal MP and political thinker John Stuart Mill on women's suffrage, 1867
(PRO 30/69/1834)

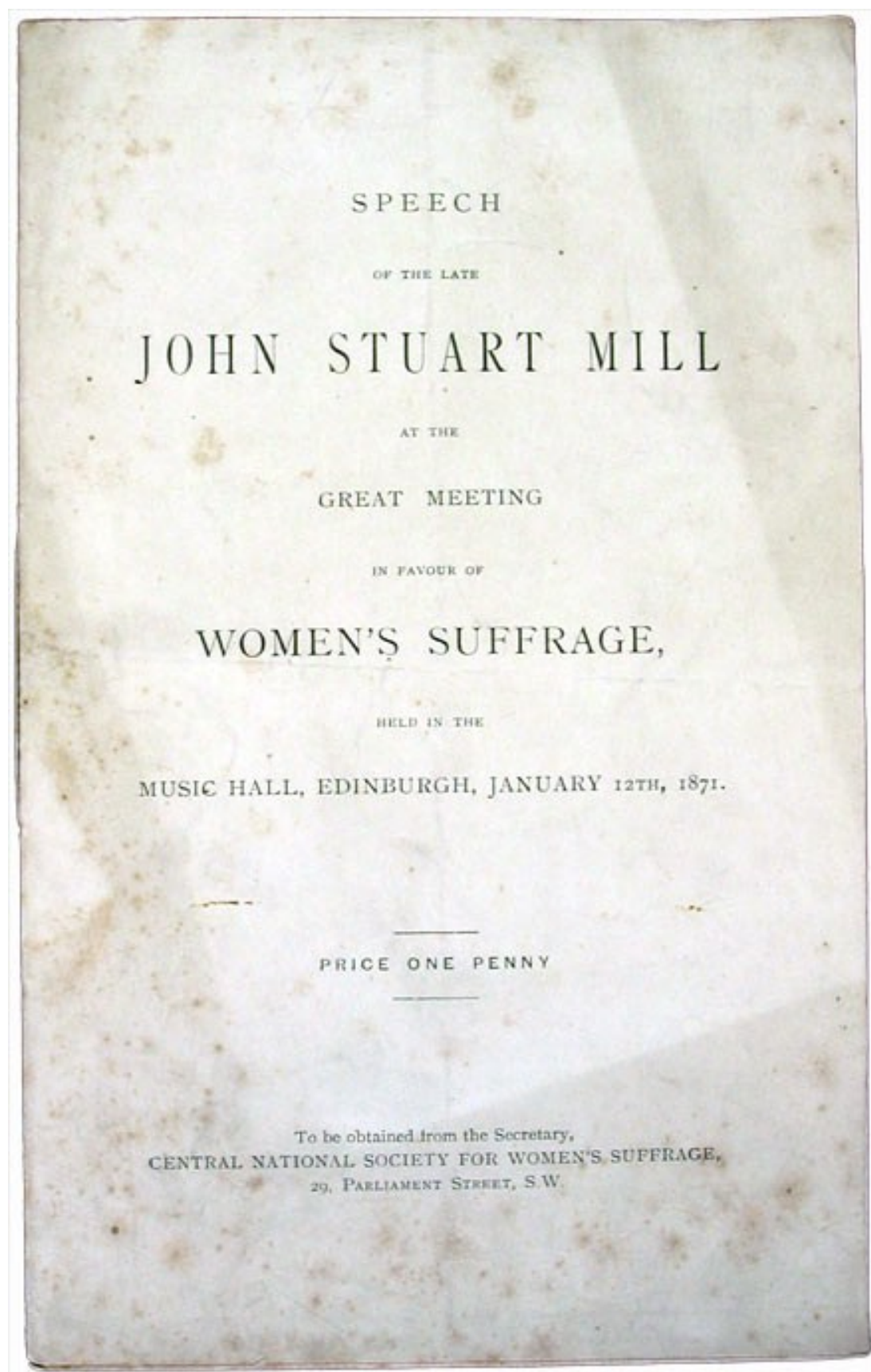
How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- What does this phrase mean: 'The laws treat them as they could not long be treated if they had the suffrage'?
- According to Mill, do police and magistrates treat women well?
- What would you say is Mill's main argument for women's suffrage?

Source 1A



Transcript

SPEECH
OF THE LATE
JOHN STUART MILL
AT THE
GREAT MEETING
IN FAVOUR OF
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,
HELD IN THE
MUSIC HALL, EDINBURGH, JANUARY 12TH, 1871.
PRICE ONE PENNY
To be obtained from the Secretary,
CENTRAL NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,
29, PARLIAMENT STREET, S.W.

Source 1B

All our recent constitutional reforms, and the whole creed of reformers, are grounded on the fact that the suffrage is needed for self-protection.

The treatment of women is certainly no exception to the rule. They have neither equal laws nor an equal administration of them. The laws treat them as they could not long be treated if they had the suffrage; and even if the laws were equal, the administration of the laws is not. Police magistrates and criminal judges cannot be exceptionally bad men; they are not chosen for their bad qualities; they must be thought, by those who appoint them, to represent fairly, or better than fairly, the moral feelings of average men. Yet, what do we see? For an atrocious assault by a man upon a woman, especially if she has the misfortune to be his wife, he is either let off with an admonition, or he is solemnly told that he has committed a grave offence, for which he must be severely punished, and then he gets as many weeks or months of imprisonment as a man who has taken five pounds' worth of property gets years.

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Source 2

Extracts from an article in The Times newspaper on women's suffrage, April 1906
(HO 45/10338/139199)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- Why does the Labour MP Keir Hardie believe female suffrage is right? 9 How convincing is Mr Wason?
- Why does Mr Redmond believe female suffrage is a good idea?
- What reservations does Mr Bottomley have?

ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil) moved :—
“That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that sex should cease to be a bar to the exercise of the Parliamentary franchise.” He traced the history of the question since 1832, and invited the decision of the House on the one question that sex should not be a barrier to the possession of the Parliamentary franchise.

Mr. E. WASON seconded the motion as one who had persistently and consistently advocated the rights of women in this matter.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.) supported the motion because he was against slavery in every shape or form. He held that any of God's creatures who were denied the right of exercising influence in the government of the country in which they lived were slaves. It was supremely ridiculous to hold that the sex which gave many Sovereigns to England was not qualified to vote for a member of Parliament. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.) supported the motion, and maintained that women would take an intelligent interest in politics if they were granted the franchise. He should resist any proposal to allow women to sit in that House.

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Source 3

Extract from a booklet written by Labour MP Keir Hardie in September 1906 calling for women's suffrage
(PRO 30/69/1834)

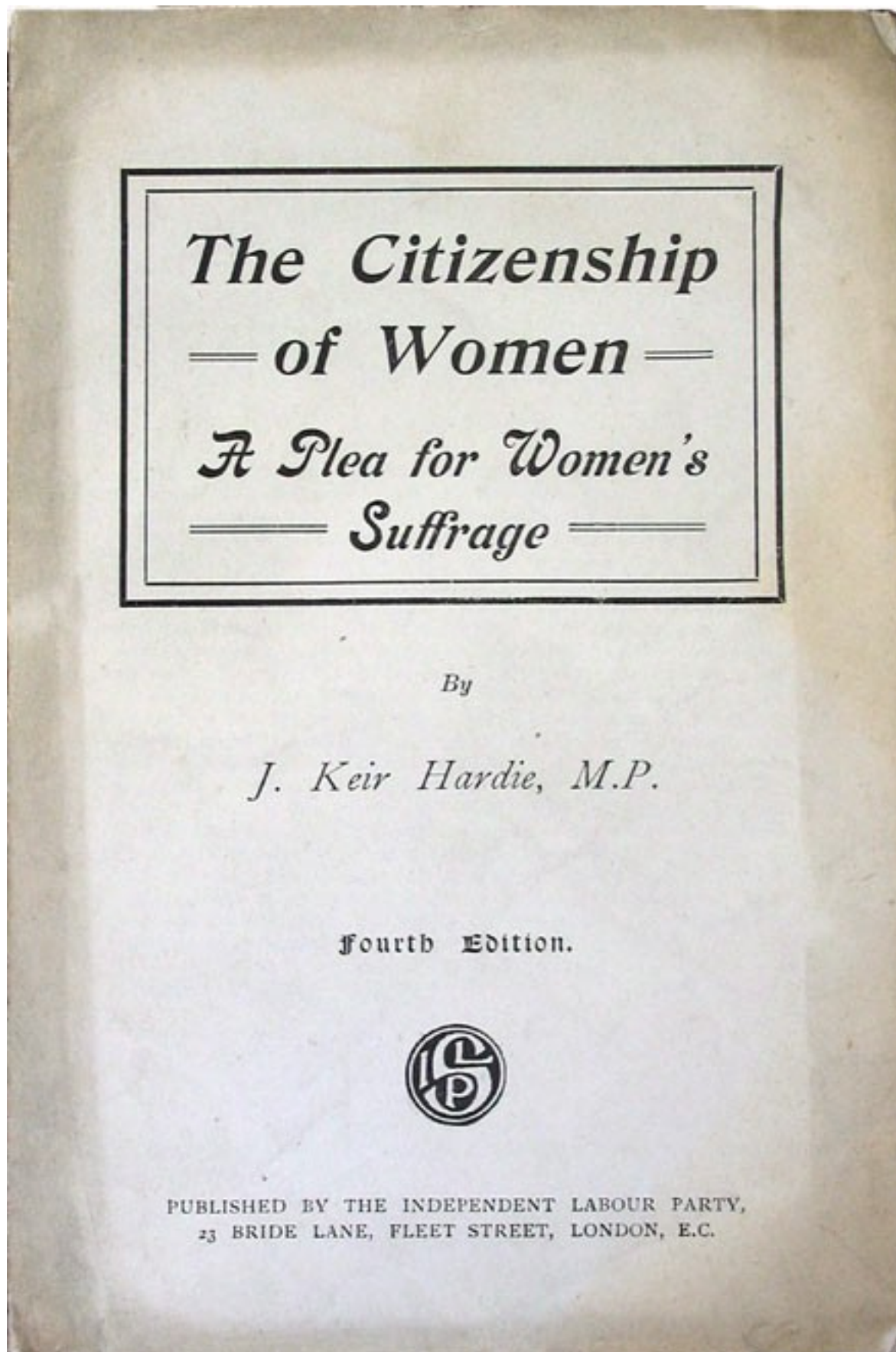
How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- According to Hardie, what advances were women making in the world of work?
- How does Hardie think men should react?
- What does this phrase mean: 'The enfranchisement of women is not a party question'?
- Hardie quoted former British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli at the end of this extract. What arguments did Disraeli put forward for supporting female suffrage?

Source 3A



The Citizenship
— *of Women* —
A Plea for Women's
— *Suffrage* —

By

J. Keir Hardie, M.P.

Fourth Edition.



PUBLISHED BY THE INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY,
23 BRIDE LANE, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

Transcript

The Citizenship
of Women

A Plea for Women's
Suffrage

By Keir Hardie, M.P.

Fourth Edition

PUBLISHED BY THE INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY,
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Source 3B

The "Half angel, half idiot," period is over in the woman's world. She is fighting her way into every sphere of human activity. Her labour is coming into competition with that of man in nearly every department of industry. The women's Trade Union movement is growing by leaps and bounds. In the learned professions she is forcing herself to the front by sheer determination and force of intellect in a way that will not be denied. Sooner or later men will be compelled to treat with her and recognise her as a co-worker, and they could not begin better than by admitting her right to be a co-voter.

The enfranchisement of women is not a party question. Its supporters and opponents are distributed over all parties. The

Disraeli, speaking on this question in the House of Commons, said :—

"I say that in a country governed by a woman—where you allow women

not only to own land, but to be a lady of the manor and hold legal courts—where a woman by law may be a churchwarden and overseer of the poor—I do not see, where she has so much to do with the State and Church, on what reasons, if you come to right, she has not a right to vote."

And with these words I conclude.

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Source 4

Resolution passed by the Australian Parliament in 1910

(PRO 30/69/1834)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- What is the point being made by the Australian Parliament?
- What have been the beneficial results?
- How have women reacted to being given the vote?
- Why do you think the resolution mentions that 'disaster was freely prophesied'?

“(i.) That this Senate is of opinion that the extension of the Suffrage to the women of Australia for States and Commonwealth Parliaments, on the same terms as men, has had the most beneficial results. It has led to the more orderly conduct of Elections, and at the last Federal Elections, the Women’s vote in the majority of the States showed a greater proportionate increase than that cast by men. It has given a greater prominence to legislation, particularly affecting women and children, although the women have not taken up such questions to the exclusion of others of wider significance. In matters of Defence and Imperial concern, they have proved themselves as far-seeing and discriminating as men. Because the reform has brought nothing but good, though disaster was freely prophesied, we respectfully urge that all Nations enjoying Representative Government would be well advised in granting votes to women.

“(ii.) That a copy of the foregoing Resolution be cabled to the British Prime Minister.”

Transcript

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Source 5

Extract from a pamphlet published by the NUWSS in April 1911 recording the range of organisations which support women's suffrage

(PRO 30/69/1834)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- What is the aim of this section of the pamphlet?
- Does the list achieve its aims?
- What information does it provide about who supported women's suffrage?
- What information does it provide about the reasons they supported women's suffrage?

Source 5A

Growth of the Movement outside the N.U.W.S.S.

Many other Societies have been formed, having Women's Suffrage as their sole object. Such are—

The National Women's Social and Political Union.

The Men's League for Women's Suffrage.

The Women's Freedom League.

The National Industrial and Professional Women's Suffrage Society.

The New Union.

The New Constitutional Society.

The Men's Political Union.

The Church League.

The Free Church League.

The League of Members of the Roman Catholic Communion
(in process of formation).

The League of the Society of Friends (in process of formation).

The Tax-Resistance League.

Besides such groups as the Artists' League, the Suffrage Atelier, the Actresses' Franchise League, the Society of Women Graduates, the Women Writers' Suffrage League, the Younger Suffragists, the Cambridge University Men's League, the London Graduates' Union for Women's Suffrage, the Gymnastic Teachers' Suffrage Society, etc., etc.

There is also the **Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association** and an **Irish Women's Franchise League**.

Within the Political Parties, there have been formed :—

The Forward Suffrage Union (within the Women's Liberal Federation).

The Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association.

The People's Suffrage Federation (which demands the suffrage for all adult men and women).

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Source 5B

X The following organizations have officially identified themselves with the demand for some measure of Women's Suffrage :—

- The London Liberal Federation.
- The Women's Liberal Federation.
- The Women's National Liberal Association.
- The Welsh Women's Liberal Federation.
- The Independent Labour Party.
- The Fabian Society.

Other Societies have repeatedly petitioned Parliament, or passed resolutions asking for a measure of Women's Suffrage.

Among them—

- The National British Women's Temperance Association (110,000 members).
- The Scottish Union of the above (42,000 members).
- The National Union of Women Workers. (The largest Women's Union ; numbers not exactly known).
- The International Council of Women.
- The Association of Headmistresses.
- The Association of University Women Teachers.
- The Incorporated Assistant Mistresses in Secondary Schools.
- The Society of Registered Nurses.
- The Nurses' International Congress.
- The Women's Co-operative Guild (the only organized body representing the married working-women of this country).

Resolutions in favour of the " Conciliation Bill " have been passed by

49 Trades and Labour Councils, and 36 Trades Unions and Federations.

Transcript

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Source 6

Cartoon from the Suffragette newspaper Votes For Women, June 1913, commenting on women's suffrage in other countries

(Reproduced by permission of the British Library)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- What is the main point being made by the cartoon?
- What does the clock mean?
- Is this an effective piece of propaganda for the women's movement?

"Votes for Women," June 13, 1913. *Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.*

VOTES FOR WOMEN

EDITED BY FREDERICK AND EMMELINE PETHICK LAWRENCE

VOL. VI. (New Series), No. 275. FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 1913. Price 1d. Weekly (Post Paid)

THE WOMAN VOTER

THE CLOCK THAT HAS NOT BEEN PUT BACK.

1849. Wyoming.

1893. Wyoming, New Zealand, Colorado.

1896. Wyoming, New Zealand, Colorado, S. Australia (1894), Utah, Idaho.

1902. Wyoming, New Zealand, Colorado, S. Australia, Utah, Idaho, W. Australia (1900), New South Wales.

1907. Wyoming, New Zealand, Colorado, S. Australia, Utah, Idaho, W. Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania (1900), Queensland (1900), Finland.

1908. Wyoming, New Zealand, Colorado, S. Australia, Utah, Idaho, N. S. Wales, W. Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, Finland, Victoria, Norway.

1911. Wyoming, New Zealand, Colorado, S. Australia, Utah, Idaho, W. Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania, Queensland, Finland, Victoria, Norway, Washington (1910), California.

1912-13. Tasmania, New Zealand, W. Australia, Colorado, N. S. Wales, S. Australia, Oregon, Utah, Kansas, Idaho, Arizona, Queensland, Finland, Victoria, Norway, Washington, California, Alaska.

SEE HOW SHE GROWS!

Transcript

THE WOMAN VOTER
The clock that has not been put back.
SEE HOW SHE GROWS!

1869.	1893	1896.	1902.	1907.	1908.	1911.	1912-13.
Wyoming.	Wyoming.	Wyoming.	Wyoming.	Wyoming.	Wyoming.	Wyoming.	Wyoming.
	New Zealand.	New Zealand.	New Zealand.	New Zealand.	New Zealand.	New Zealand.	New Zealand.
	Colorado.	Colorado.	Colorado.	Colorado.	Colorado.	Colorado.	Colorado.
		S. Australia (1894).	S. Australia (1894).	S. Australia (1894).	S. Australia (1894).	S. Australia (1894).	S. Australia (1894).
		Utah.	Utah.	Utah.	Utah.	Utah.	Utah.
		Idaho.	Idaho.	Idaho.	Idaho.	Idaho.	Idaho.
			W. Australia (1900).	W. Australia (1900).	W. Australia (1900).	W. Australia (1900).	W. Australia (1900).
			New South Wales.	New South Wales.	New South Wales.	New South Wales.	New South Wales.
				Tasmania (1904).	Tasmania (1904).	Tasmania (1904).	Tasmania (1904).
				Queensland (1905).	Queensland (1905).	Queensland (1905).	Queensland (1905).
				Finland.	Finland.	Finland.	Finland.
					Victoria.	Victoria.	Victoria.
					Norway.	Norway.	Norway.
						Washington (1910).	Washington (1910).
						California.	California.
							Kansas.
							Arizona.
							Alaska.

Source 7

Extracts from an article in the Suffragette newspaper Votes For Women June 1913

(Reproduced by permission of the British Library)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- What sacrifices have women made to get the vote?
- Why do women need the protection of the vote?
- What is wrong with much of the legislation (laws) passed recently? 26
- In what ways are women stigmatised?

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

The great demonstration in Hyde Park next Saturday of law-abiding Suffragists belonging to the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies will cause many a man and many a woman to ask, "What is it all about?"

why women think the acquisition of the Parliamentary vote so important that they are prepared to carry out on its behalf an agitation involving the sacrifice of time and money, and in some cases of liberty and health and even life itself, women give three answers. Firstly, they need the vote for the protection of themselves and other women under the law and the administration of the country. They point to the unequal treatment of women in the Insurance Act, to the exclusion of women from the better-paid posts in the Civil Service, to the sweating of women in Government employ, to the laws relating to divorce, the guardianship of children, inheritance, and many other matters as showing that a voteless section of the population does not obtain fair consideration at the hands of Parliament. In the second place, they claim that in all legislation affecting the interests of the country as a whole, and the men and women and children in it, the women's point of view is not given adequate weight. They say that the improvement of housing, the better protection of child life, the purification of food, and many other questions do not command the attention they deserve because the women who care most about these things have not the driving power of the vote to force them to the front. And they say that in consequence many thousands of little children die annually from preventable causes, and that the health and life of the country is gravely deteriorated. Lastly, they say that the Parliamentary vote is a symbol of citizenship, that the exclusion from the vote of the whole female sex is a stigma of inferiority which no glib talk about the "differing spheres of men and women" can obliterate.

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Case Study – The Case Against

The Case Against : Overview

The campaign to win equal votes for women in Britain was long and difficult. This was partly because the opposition to the measure was very strong. However, in order to understand the opposition we need to examine the reasons why some people were so strongly opposed.

In this case study you are going to study a number of sources from the time. These sources will help you to investigate the arguments which were put forward against women's suffrage in the early 1900s.

Sources:

- ['An Appeal Against Female Suffrage', 1889](#)
- [Views of anti-suffrage MP William Cremer, 1906](#)
- [Report of a debate on women's suffrage, 1906](#)
- [Article on Suffragist let out of prison, 1906](#)
- [Liberals report on Conciliation Bill, 1911](#)
- [National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage](#)
- [National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage](#)

How to use the sources in this case study:

You can use these case study sources in two ways :

The Big Question

All of the sources in this case study have been chosen to help you decide why the Liberals brought in measures to help children. If you are tackling the Big Question Part 1 you should:

- Study each source carefully – use the questions to help you get the most from the source.
- Look at the list of possible reasons in Part 1 of the Big Question.
- Decide which reasons are supported or contradicted by the source.

Exam Practice

If you want to get some practice on examination type questions, just go to or download the Practice Questions.

Don't forget – if there are words or phrases in the sources which you cannot understand, try the glossary

Source 1

An article called 'An Appeal Against Female Suffrage' published in The Nineteenth Century Magazine in June 1889

(PP5939e. Reproduced by permission of the British Library)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- Does this article suggest women are inferior to men?
- According to this article, in what ways are the roles of men and women different?
- What do you think the following phrases mean: 'disabilities of sex'; 'strong formations of custom and habit'?
- The writers of this article were wealthy women, the wives of leading political figures in England. Does this affect your view of what is said in the article?

*AN APPEAL
AGAINST FEMALE SUFFRAGE.*

WE, the undersigned, wish to appeal to the common sense and the educated thought of the men and women of England against the proposed extension of the Parliamentary suffrage to women.

1. While desiring the fullest possible development of the powers, energies, and education of women, we believe that their work for the State, and their responsibilities towards it, must always differ essentially from those of men, and that therefore their share in the working of the State machinery should be different from that assigned to men.

To men belong the struggle of debate and legislation in Parliament; the hard and exhausting labour implied in the administration of the national resources and powers; the conduct of England's relations towards the external world; the working of the army and navy;

In all these spheres women's direct participation is made impossible either by the disabilities of sex, or by strong formations of custom and habit resting ultimately upon physical difference, against which it is useless to contend.

In conclusion: nothing can be further from our minds than to seek to depreciate the position or the importance of women. It is because we are keenly alive to the enormous value of their special contribution to the community, that we oppose what seems to us likely to endanger that contribution. We are convinced that the pursuit of a mere outward equality with men is for women not only vain but leads to a total misconception of woman's true dignity and special mission.

Transcript

An Appeal Against Female Suffrage

We, the undersigned, wish to appeal to the common sense and educated thought of the men and women of England against the proposed extension of the Parliamentary suffrage to women.

1. While desiring the fullest possible development of the powers, energies, and education of women, we believe that their work for the State, and their responsibilities towards it, must always differ essentially from those of men, and that therefore their share in the working of the State machinery should be different from that assigned to men. To men belong the struggle of debate and legislation in Parliament; the hard and exhausting labour implied in the administration of the national resources and powers; the conduct of England's relations towards the external world; the working of the army and navy; In all these spheres women's direct participation is made impossible either by the disabilities of sex, or by strong formations of custom and habit resting ultimately on physical difference, against which it is useless to contend.

In conclusion: nothing can be further from our minds than to seek to depreciate the position or the importance of women. It is because we are keenly alive to the enormous value of their special contribution to the community, that we oppose what seems to us likely to endanger that contribution. We are convinced that the pursuit of a mere outward equality with men is for women not only vain but leads to a total misconception of woman's true dignity and special mission.

Source 2

Views of anti-suffrage MP William Cremer reported in The Times, April 1906
(HO 45/10338/139199)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- What problems and difficulties in child welfare are described in the source? 33
- What is causing the problems?
- Would you trust the account given in this source and why?
- How would Lloyd George react to this source?

Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston),
opposed the motion. He asserted that, if they once admitted any section of females to the right to the Parliamentary vote, it must ultimately lead to adult suffrage. (Hear, hear.) As, according to the last census, there were three-quarters of a million more female than male adults, and as, to that number, must be added perhaps a quarter of a million of men who were always unable to record their votes by reason of the nature of their occupations, adult suffrage meant handing the government of the country over to a majority of the electorate who would not be men but women. (Laughter.) He had too great a respect for women to drag them into the political arena and to ask them to undertake obligations and discharge duties that they did not understand, and, what was more, that they did not care for. If the women of the country were polled on this question, he believed that the majority would either not vote or would record their vote against it.

Transcript

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Source 3

Report from the Times newspaper of a debate on women's suffrage, April 1906
(HO 45/10338/139199)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- 35 What was Mr Evans saying when he was interrupted?
- 35 How did Mr Evans claim that the interruption proved his point?
- 35 What criticisms did Mr Evans make of the supporters of women's suffrage?

Mr. EVANS said if women had the vote they ought to have imposed upon them all the duties of citizens, and was developing this argument when he was interrupted by persistent voices from the Ladies' Gallery. Among the cries heard were "We will not have this talk any longer," "Divide, divide" ;

Mr. EVANS, continuing, asked whether there could be any argument in his favour stronger than what had just occurred. (Cheers.) Did hon. members desire that what had taken place in the gallery should be repeated on the floor of the House? Did they suppose that such exhibitions were approved of by the mass of the women in this country? (Cheers.) There had never been a vote of women in favour of the motion of his hon. friend, though it was true that the proposal had been supported at men's meetings at which some women were present; but was it to be supposed that when a mere handful of women assisted by some men adopted a resolution they voiced the feeling of the women of the country?

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Source 4

Part of an article in The Morning Leader newspaper, 29 October 1906

Reproduced by permission of the British Library

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- What has happened to Mrs Pethick Lawrence?
- What does this suggest about the campaigners for women's suffrage?
- Do you think the Morning Leader is sympathetic to women's suffrage?
- How would an opponent of women's suffrage have made use of a report like this?

SUFFRAGIST RELEASE FROM HOLLOWAY.

**MRS. PETHICK LAWRENCE
TOO ILL TO REMAIN.**

NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.

**RIGOR OF PRISON LIFE PROVES
TOO MUCH FOR HER.**

The rigor of prison life has proved too much for two of the women suffragists who were sent to Holloway for their share in the House of Commons disturbances of Tuesday. One of them, for reasons of health, was released on Saturday night, and another has had to be removed to the prison infirmary.

The released lady is Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, hon. treasurer of the Women's Social and Political Union. She is said to be seriously ill as the result of hardships she has endured, and on the doctor stating that it would be highly dangerous to allow her to remain in prison the union insisted upon her allowing herself to be released.

Transcript

Suffragist release from Holloway.
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Nervous Breakdown.

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Source 5

Extracts from a Liberal Party report presented to the Liberal government in November 1911 on the likely effects of a Conciliation Bill

(CAB 37/108/148)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- How many districts oppose the Conciliation Bill?
- What reasons do they give?
- Did any Liberals support women's suffrage?
- The Liberal government decided not to pass the Conciliation Bill in 1911. Are you surprised?

Source 5

SUMMARY of the Reports received.			
Federation.	Effect of present Registration Laws on Party.	Simple Residential Vote.	Conciliation Bill.
<i>Yorkshire Federation</i> ..	No report	<p>Constituencies— Favourable to Liberals, 38 Unfavourable to Liberals, 3 Favourable to Labour, 6 Effect doubtful, 1 Spen Valley and Colne Valley, of the 3 unfavourable would hand seat to Socialists. Of the 38 favourable, 11 Tory seats; of these 4 might be won and 4 now held would be more secure: York, Wakefield, Skipton, and Scarborough.</p>	<p>Districts— Favourable in 5. Slightly favourable in 5. Adverse, 22. No change, 17. Bill will not help us to win seats. Of 22 adverse, 16 held by Liberal or Labour. Objection to Bill:— Nothing to prevent man of property giving votes to several daughters, thus creating fresh votes under his control. If plural voting abolished will still leave the wives and daughters faggot votes.</p>
<i>Eastern Federation</i> ..	Abolition of plural voting strengthen Liberal Party. 10l. value test for lodgers. Against us succession. Liberals suffer more than Tories. 10l. occupation provides undesirable non-resident voters overwhelmingly Tory.	Would be warmly welcomed by Liberals. Important that increased polling facilities should be given.	It would be suicidal to pass Bill. Women 6 to 1 against us. Votes to women, whatever the qualification, would, for a number of years, be detrimental to Liberal Party.
<i>Western Federation</i> ..	Unanimous view that the plural voter is greatest adverse factor in present Registration Laws. Lodger vote is serious injury to Liberal Party. Twelve months' qualification is adverse to Liberal Party; a shorter qualification would increase our vote.	Will add the loafer and wastrel, but the percentage will not be large. General opinion that it will benefit Liberal Party. If extended to women, Liberal Party will suffer severely. There is a majority of women over 21. Should be six months' residence.	Would completely wipe out Liberal Representation.

Transcript

Federation.	Conciliation Bill.
Yorkshire Federation	Districts - Favourable in 5. Slightly favourable in 5. Adverse, 22. No change, 17. Bill will not help us to win seats. Of 22 adverse, 16 held by Liberal or Labour. Objection to Bill:-Nothing to prevent man of property giving votes to several daughters, thus creating fresh votes under his control.
Eastern Federation	It would be suicidal to pass Bill. Women 6 to 1 against us. Votes to women, whatever the qualification, would, for a number of years, be detrimental to the Liberal party.
Western Federation	Would completely wipe out Liberal Representation.

Source 5B

Devon and Cornwall Federation	<p>Ownership heavily handicaps Liberal Party; majority Tories.</p> <p>Plural Voting a bulwark of Toryism.</p> <p>10l. Qualification creates Tory voters. Farmers' sons added to Register.</p> <p>Household Occupation.—Period too long; also difficulty of succession to working men, who, by reason of employment, have to migrate.</p> <p>Lodgers.—The value shuts out enormous numbers of young men, while helping Tories who live in houses of sufficient value to give one or more lodgers value.</p> <p>Want of succession for lodgers operates against working men.</p> <p>Present law full of anomalies and inequalities.</p>	<p>Unanimous opinion in favour. It would sweep away 10l. occupation, household occupiers', and lodger qualification, and would enfranchise electors, and not bricks and mortar.</p> <p>Unanimous opinion in favour of simple residential qualification as likely to benefit Liberal Party. In some districts it might be against us, where soldiers are quartered, as Plymouth and Devonport. Soldiers usually vote Tory. But even there the great additions of civilians of the working classes may counter-balance the military vote.</p> <p>Unanimous opinion in favour of three or six months' period of qualification, ending on a quarter-day.</p>	<p>Probably 4ths of Liberal Party favourable, 4ths against. Under Bill a great many women on Municipal Register would not get Parliamentary Vote. House-joint qualifies for Municipal Vote. It would not as a household franchise qualify for Parliamentary Vote. Also a non-residential occupier 10l. value would not come under household qualification. It is largely felt that, if passed, the Bill will be disastrous to the Liberal Party in the greater number of Constituencies in Devon and Cornwall.</p> <p>In Devon it would be against Liberal Party in almost every Constituency.</p> <p>Present women voters largely Tory. In some places 10 to 1 against us. Even Agents who favour woman suffrage are against the Bill.</p>
London Federation	<p>Unanimous opinion in favour. Lodgers more easily obtained by Tories than Liberals. We should gain by the change.</p>	<p>Nobody wants it and dreads its advent.</p>

Transcript

Devon and Cornwall Federation	It is largely felt that, if passed, the Bill will be disastrous to the Liberal Party in the greater number of Constituencies in Devon and Cornwall. In Devon it would be against Liberal Party in almost every constituency. Present women voters largely Tory. In some places 10 to 1 against us. Even Agents who favour woman suffrage are against the Bill.
London Federation	Nobody wants it and dreads its advent.

Source 6

Part of a letter from the National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage written to Liberal politician David Lloyd George, June 1912

(T 172/968B)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- What is the attitude of this writer towards female suffrage?
- What does she see as the role of men and women?
- What reasons does she give for opposing women's suffrage?
- What is her attitudes towards supporters of women's suffrage?

Source 6A

1918

The National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage

CAXTON HOUSE, TOTHILL STREET
WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W.

Executive Committee
 Mrs. G. Lowthian Bell
 Mrs. Archibald Colquhoun
 Mrs. Frederic Harrison
 Mrs. Massie
 Miss Pott
 Mrs. Humphrey Ward
 Mrs. Henry Wilson
 Lord Haverham
 J. W. Hills, Esq., M.P.
 Michael Jones, Esq., K.C.
 A. MacCallum Scott, Esq., M.P.
 A. Macdonald, Esq.
 Arnold Ward, Esq., M.P.

Parliamentary Committee
 J. W. Hills, Esq., M.P.
 Hon. Neil Primrose, M.P.
 A. MacCallum Scott, Esq., M.P.
 Arnold Ward, Esq., M.P.
 J. Mason, Esq. (Hon. Treas.)

Presidents—
 The EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON
 Lord WEARDALE

Deputy Presidents—
 The COUNTESS OF JERSEY
 Lady ROBSON

Colonel LE ROY LEWIS, Chairman of Executive Committee

Hon. Treasurer—J. MASSIE, Esq., to whom all cheques are to be paid

Hon. Secretary—Mrs. Moberly Bell, to whom all communications should be addressed
 Interviews by appointment

Bankers—London County & Westminster, Caxton House, Tothill Street, Westminster

26 Marine Terrace
 Criccieth
 June 15. 12.

To the Rt. Hon. Lloyd George M. P.

Dear Sir

as a typical
 woman householder & rate and tax payer
 I beg you - a typical man - to take upon
 your stronger shoulders the burden of
 responsibility for the safety of the Empire,
 the Army - Navy, Trade, Shipping, Mining,
 Railways etc. I am too thankful to pay
 my taxes in return for your protection, if
 only you will leave me to look after
 my home and my child. It is true
 that I am in the unfortunate position
 of having to earn a livelihood as well

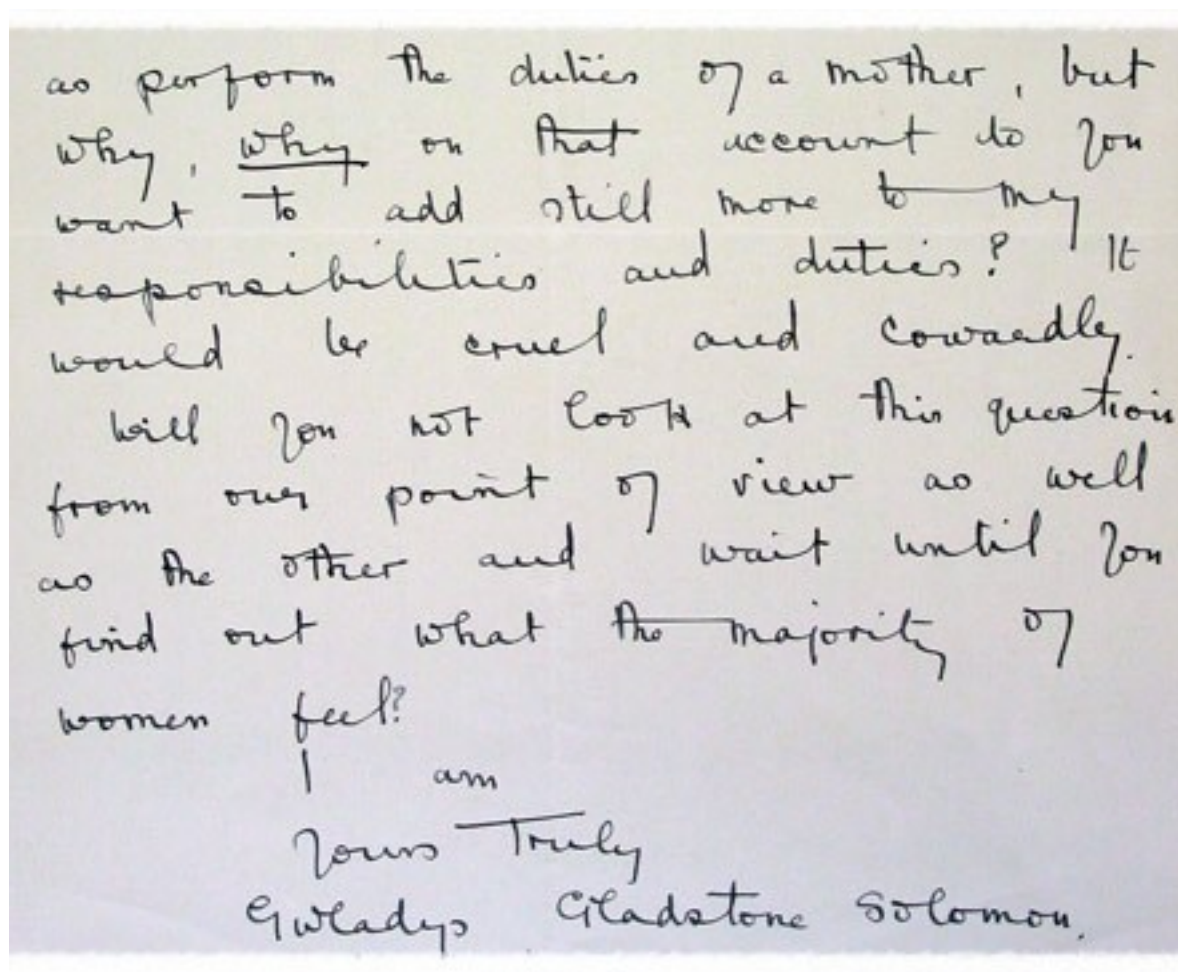
Transcript

To the Rt Hon Lloyd George MP

Dear Sir

..... As a typical women householder and rate and tax payer I beg you - a typical man - to take upon your stronger shoulders the burden of responsibility for the safety of the Empire, the Army, Navy, Trade, Shipping, Mining, Railways etc. I am too thankful to pay my taxes in return for your protection, if only you will leave me to look after my home and my child. It is true that I am in the unfortunate position of having to earn a livelihood as well...

Source 6B

A photograph of a handwritten letter on aged, slightly yellowed paper. The handwriting is in cursive, written in dark ink. The text is arranged in several lines, with some words underlined. The letter discusses the duties of a mother and the addition of more responsibilities. It ends with a signature and the name 'Gwladys Gladstone Solomon'.

as perform the duties of a mother, but
why, why on that account do you
want to add still more to my
responsibilities and duties? It
would be cruel and cowardly.
Will you not look at this question
from our point of view as well
as the other and wait until you
find out what the majority of
women feel?
I am
Yours Truly
Gwladys Gladstone Solomon.

Transcript

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Source 7

Part of a letter from the National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage written to Liberal politician David Lloyd George, October 1912

(T 172/968B)

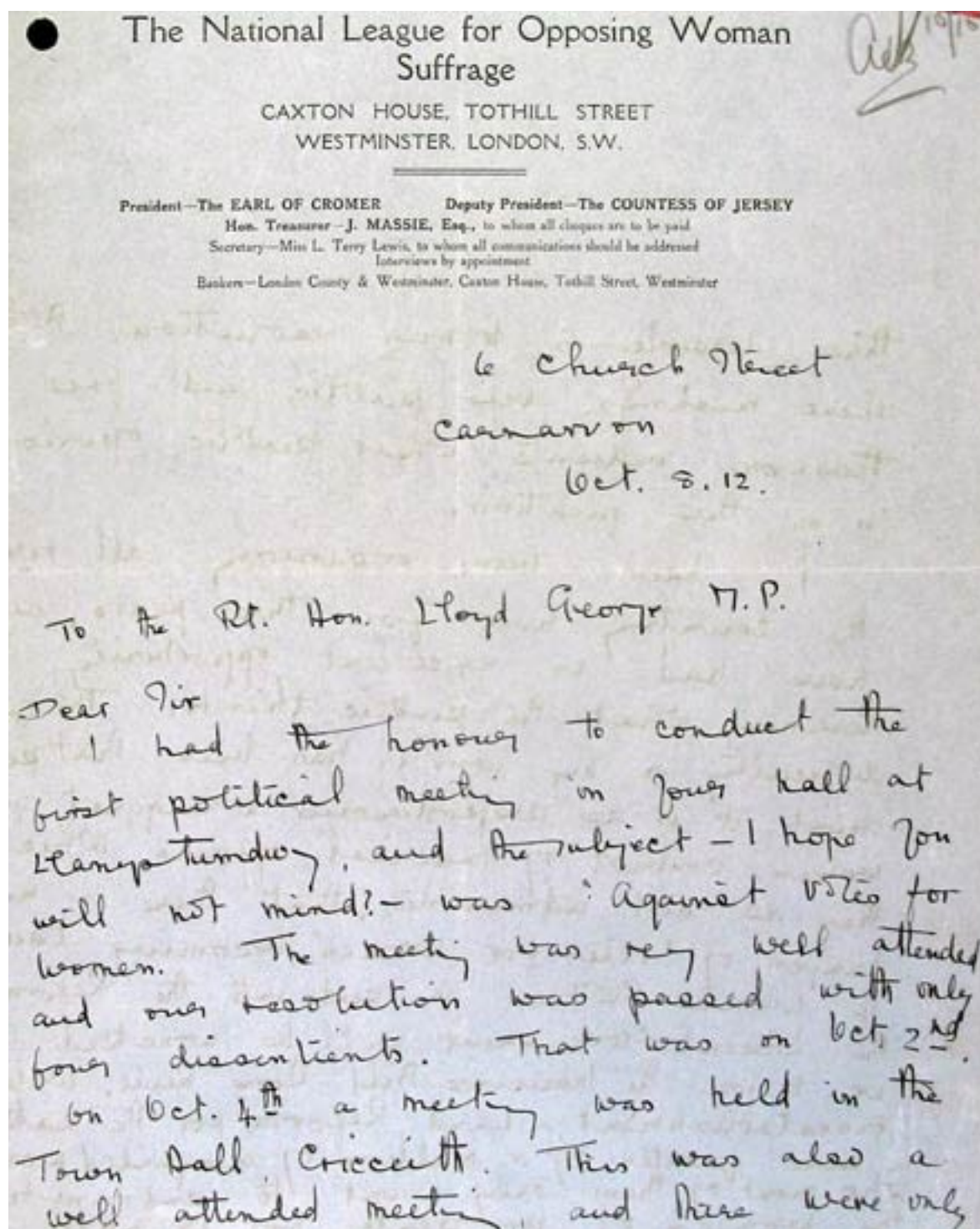
How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- Does the author of the letter represent public opinion generally?
- Do you think people in favour of women's suffrage would have come to her meetings? 48 What has been her greatest difficulty?
- What measures are more important to the letter writer than female suffrage?
- Are there any other reasons why she is opposed to female suffrage?

Source 7A



Transcript

To the Rt Hon Lloyd George MP

Dear Sir

I had the honour to conduct the first political meeting in your hall at Llanystumdwy, and the subject - I hope you will not mind? - was "Against Votes For Women". The meeting was very well attended and one resolution was passed with only four dissenters. That was on Oct. 2nd.

On Oct. 4th a meeting was held in the Town Hall, Criccieth. This was also a well attended meeting, and there were only...

Source 7B

three dissentients to our resolution. Both these meetings were public and free, and therefore indicate what public opinion is on this question.

I have been organizing all over the country now for two years, and have had an excellent opportunity of learning what the public think. The great difficulty in my work has been that people think it is so preposterous to suggest giving women control of Imperial affairs which they do not administer, that there is no danger of "votes for women" becoming law. If Woman Suffrage is put into the Reform Bill the Liberal Government will be wrecked. Are we to lose the Insurance Bill, Home Rule, Welsh Disestablishment, & Land Reform, for the sake of a mere quarter of a million of misguided women who, most of them only want to enfranchise the woman of property for the sake of the Conservative Party? Are the other $12\frac{3}{4}$ millions of women to be utterly ignored?

I am

Yours truly

Emmeline Pankhurst

Transcript

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I am

Yours Truly

Gwladys Gladstone Solomon

Case Study – Other Issues

Other Issues : Overview

Women could not vote in general elections in the early 1900s. However, they were still involved in politics and important issues. Many women campaigned on issues such as education, welfare for mothers and children. Many women were also involved in religious movements.

In this case study you are going to study a number of sources from the time. These sources will help you to investigate the issues which concerned women in the early 1900s and how far they were linked to the campaign for the vote.

Sources

- [Article on vice in London streets, 1913](#)
- [Article in 'Woman and Progress', 1906](#)
- [Meeting about conditions for unemployed women](#)
- [Letter from Florence Booth, Salvation Army](#)
- [Pamphlet on sanitation and health, 1912](#)
- [Cartoon: Voters First Women Nowhere!, 1913](#)

How to use the sources in this case study:

You can use these case study sources in two ways :

The Big Question

All of the sources in this case study have been chosen to help you decide why the Liberals brought in measures to help children. If you are tackling the Big Question Part 1 you should:

- Study each source carefully – use the questions to help you get the most from the source.
- Look at the list of possible reasons in Part 1 of the Big Question.
- Decide which reasons are supported or contradicted by the source.

Exam Practice

If you want to get some practice on examination type questions, just go to or download the Practice Questions.

Don't forget – if there are words or phrases in the sources which you cannot understand, try the glossary

Source 1

Extract from an article in The Times newspaper about vice in London streets, July 1913
(HO 45/10123/B13517)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- What are the MPs discussing in this debate?
- What do they think should be done?
- What attitudes are shown towards women?
- Do you get the impression that men or women are seen as responsible for prostitution? 54
Do you think women's suffrage campaigners would have been interested in this issue?

Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire) said that nothing but a sense of duty caused him to call attention to the disgraceful condition of many of the streets of London at night time. He asked hon. members to consider what it was possible for them to do in order to clear the country from what had become a national reproach. He had travelled in many countries, and he asserted that in no country could one see such sights as he saw in the metropolis. There was not a heathen country in which there were the open incentives to vice as were to be found in Piccadilly and neighbouring streets, for instance, at night.

He would naturally be asked how this difficulty could be grappled with. In answer he would point to Liverpool,

they formed a vigilance committee, worked upon public opinion, and at last elected a reforming watch committee to enforce the law :

In the course of ten years the outward aspect of Liverpool was changed. He could not say that the habits of great masses of people were changed by outward alterations, but it made a great difference, and it was a great benefit that young men were not assailed on every side by temptation.

In fairness, while referring to the facts, it was right to mention that respectable women, and especially young girls, were in constant danger of insult and annoyance from men in London streets.

Mr. SOUTTAR (Dumfriesshire) seconded the motion. He said it was especially on behalf of young men that he pleaded with the Home Secretary. He did not pretend that it was possible to prevent sin in London. All they asked was that the Home Office should make London just as good as other cities were.

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Source 2

Extract from an article in the journal *Women and Progress*, 2 November 1906

(Reproduced by permission of the British Library)

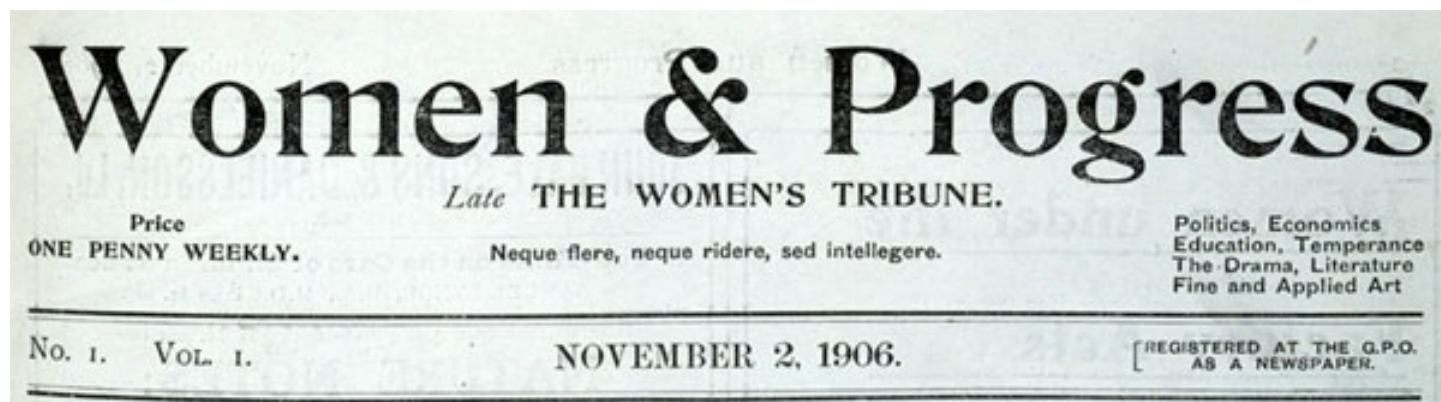
How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- What do the advertisements suggest are the kinds of books, talks and products which will interest women? 57
- What are the aims of the journal *Women and Progress*?
- What reforms and measures does the paper want to see the government take?
- Why do you think the journal lists Suffrage as more important than the other aims?

Source 2A



Transcript

Title page: Women & Progress

Source 2B

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Transcript

(advertisements)

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A Few Hints on the Care of Children at Sea.

Nature Notes: "The Magazine of the Selbourne Society, with which is Incorporated the Field Club."
.....

The Museum Gazette: And Journal of Field Study.

Bed-Time Fairy Tales.

"Verb. Sap." On going to West Africa, Northern and Southern Nigeria and the Coasts.

"Verb. Sap." On going to East Africa, British Central Africa, Uganda, and Zanzibar.

On the Care of Children's Teeth.

On the Care of the Teeth.

British Sanatoria Annual.

School Gymnastics on the Swedish System.

On Educational Reform, School Museums, and the Feeding of School Children.

Motherhood.

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.

A Year Book of Good Counsel: Homilies in little from Day to Day throughout the Year.

Source 2C

WOMEN AND PROGRESS.

Our objects are as before—to deal with economic and political topics as affecting women, to afford a medium for the expression of women's views, and to show by publication of these views, and by recording women's work in this and other countries, that women are fitted for the responsibilities which they claim. At the goal of our progress lie many reforms. The Suffrage for women claims the chief place; after that, reforms in housing, public health, education, temperance, sanitation, labour, prison life—indeed the list of necessary reforms is too long to quote in full, and will lengthen as time goes on. By progress towards this goal we do not mean a rush so rapid as to cause injury by the way, a reckless haste that would lose itself in supposed short cuts, or take the wrong road rather than give time for consideration, but a thoughtful, well-planned, and temperate advance.

Transcript

WOMEN AND PROGRESS.

..... Our objects are as before - to deal with economic and political topics as affecting women, to afford a medium for the expression of women's views, and to show by publication of these views, and by recording women's work in this and other countries, that women are fitted for the responsibilities which they claim. At the goal of our progress lie many reforms. The Suffrage for women claims the chief place; after that, reforms in housing, public health, education, temperance, sanitation, labour, prison life—indeed the list of necessary reforms is too long to quote in full, and will lengthen as time goes on. By progress towards this goal we do not mean a rush so rapid as to cause injury by the way, a reckless haste that would lose itself in supposed short cuts, or take the wrong road rather than give time for consideration, but a thoughtful, well-planned, and temperate advance

Source 3

Part of a pamphlet published by the Women's Labour League advertising a meeting in January 1909 to protest about conditions for unemployed women

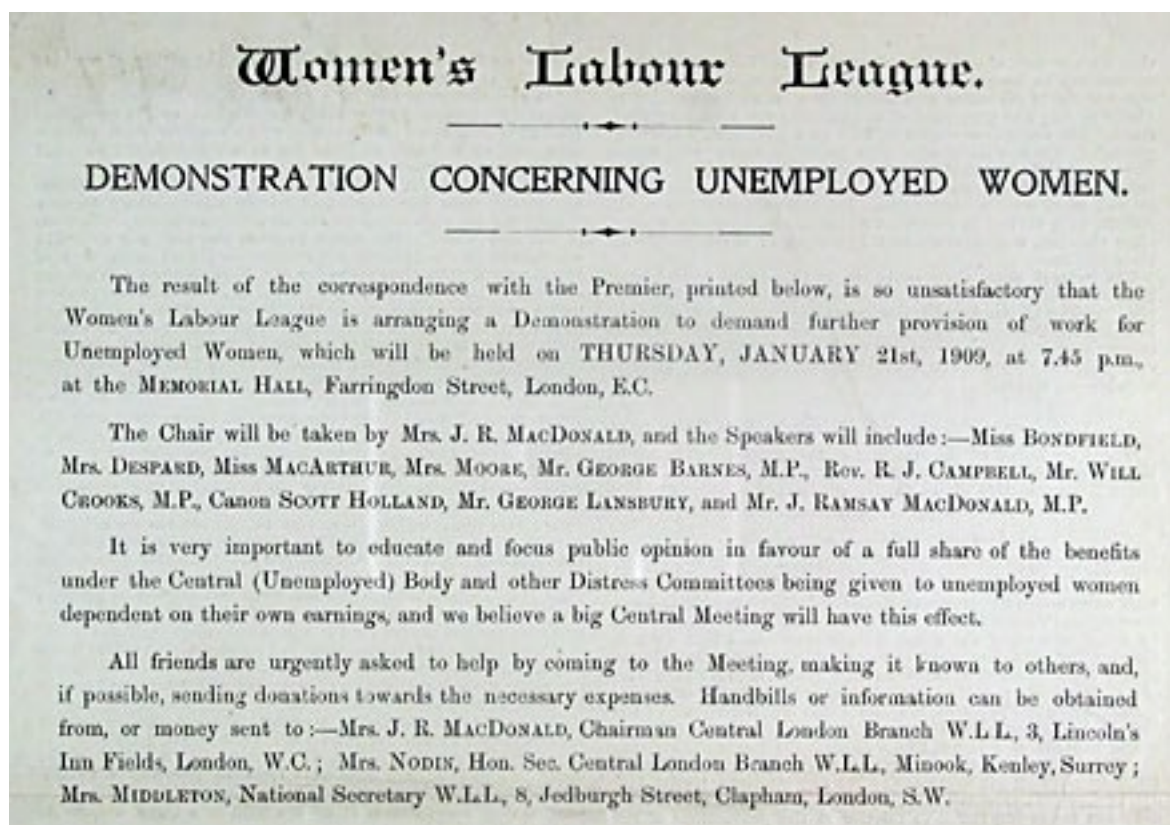
(PRO 30/69/1834)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- What is the League's attitude to the Prime Minister?
- What are the main concerns to be discussed at the meeting?
- What does the Women's League hope to achieve with this meeting? 62
- Is women's suffrage mentioned in this document?
- Do you think the audience would see it as an important issue?



Transcript

Women's Labour League

Demonstration Concerning Unemployed Women.

The result of the correspondence with the Premier, printed below, is so unsatisfactory that the Women's Labour League is arranging a Demonstration to demand further provision of work for Unemployed Women, which will be held on THURSDAY, JANUARY 21st, 1909, at 7.45 p.m., at the MEMORIAL HALL, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

The Chair will be taken by Mrs. J. R. MACDONALD, and the Speakers will include:—Miss BONDFIELD, Mrs. DESPARD, Miss MACARTHUR, Mrs. MOORE, Mr. GEORGE BARNES, M.P., Rev. R. J. CAMPBELL, Mr. WILL CROOKS, M.P., Canon SCOTT HOLLAND, Mr. GEORGE LANSBURY, and Mr. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD, M.P.

It is very important to educate and focus public opinion in favour of a full share of the benefits under the Central (Unemployed) Body and other Distress Committees being given to unemployed women dependent on their own earnings, and we believe a big Central Meeting will have this effect.

All friends are urgently asked to help by coming to the Meeting, making it known to others, and, if possible, sending donations towards the necessary expenses. Handbills or information can be obtained from, or money sent to:—Mrs. J. R. MACDONALD, Chairman Central London Branch W.L.L., 3, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.; Mrs. NODIN, Hon. Sec. Central London Branch W.L.L., Minook, Kenley, Surrey; Mrs. MIDDLETON, National Secretary W.L.L., 8, Jedburgh Street, Clapham, London, S.W.

Source 4

Letter from Florence Booth to the Church of England Women's Help Society, August 1910
(HO 45/10612/194463)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- What is the attitude of this letter towards girls?
- Do you associate this kind of campaigning with the Salvation Army?
- Is the vote mentioned in this letter?
- Do you think the writer or the person receiving the letter would see the vote as an important issue?

Dear Miss Russell:-

Mrs Booth desires me to apologise for the delay in replying to your letter of the 17th inst, owing to absence from town.

With reference to the matter upon which you write, Mrs Booth is entirely in favour of raising the age for the protection of young girls. It is well known that her husband, Mr Bramwell Booth, worked with Mr W.T Stead when the Criminal Law Amendment Act raised the age from thirteen to sixteen years, and at that time the utmost was done to get the age put at eighteen instead of sixteen, but they were not successful. Mrs Booth has however, every hope that in the near future it will at least be raised to eighteen.

Yours, faithfully,

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Yours, faithfully,

Source 5

Extract from a pamphlet on sanitation and health published by the Women's Labour League, May 1912
(PRO 30/69/1834)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- What are the main concerns expressed in this leaflet?
- Why does the leaflet believe women are responsible for tackling the issue of health and sanitation? 66
- What is the main aim of this document?
- How does it try to achieve its aim?
- Is there any connection between this issue and the struggle to get the vote for women?

THE CHALLENGE. The efficient collection and purification of refuse is of vital importance to the health of the Community ; yet in very few administrative areas has efficiency been reached. The women who work in the homes are the people to whom we must look to remedy defects in methods of collection, but it is hard work to get them to realise their duty.

THE BLINDNESS OF MRS. X. Consider a moment the sad case of Mrs. X. She will scrub her house, polish her brasses till they serve as mirrors, and work like a galley slave to keep her children neat. One sunny afternoon she was unconcernedly looking out of her parlour window, watching the dustman in his progress down the street. She and her neighbours had lined the highway with old pails, wooden boxes, etc., all without covers, and all filled to overflowing with the house refuse of the week. A putrid stench offended the nostrils, dirty scraps, bones, cabbage stalks, rags, and greasy matter were strewn along the path, and carried hither and thither by the wind. *These muck heaps had been in the sun for hours !*

"There's the dustman at last ; I can't abide walking down the street on dusty collecting days," and Mrs. X went out to fetch her empty but still evil smelling pail, and put it down just outside her backdoor near the larder window. She went to get tea and found flies, which had been disturbed from the muck heaps, on the butter, the milk, and stuck right into the jam. "Bother the pesky flies. I'll get fly-papers," said Mrs. X. She did not see death in the milk which she gave to her baby. The little one was dead within a week. Mrs. X was neither dirty nor brutal. *She was blind with the blindness of ignorance.*

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Source 6

Cartoon from the journal Votes For Women, 6 June 1913

(Reproduced by permission of the British Library)

How to use this source to help you answer the Big Question :

You need to study the source carefully before you decide whether it supports or contradicts any of the reasons in the Big Question.

Ask Yourself:

- Who are the customers in this shop?
- Which customers are getting special treatment and who is losing out?
- What do these events represent?
- The shopwalker, Sir John Simon, is a member of the Liberal government. What does the cartoon say about him?
- According to the cartoonist, what are the priorities of the Liberal government - votes for women, social reform or getting votes?

Source 6



Transcript

VOTERS FIRST - WOMEN NOWHERE!

SIR JOHN SIMON (Shopwalker): Forward, if you please, Mr. Asquith, with Social Reform for these gentlemen voters. The women can wait - they've no votes to pay for it.
 ("To the loss of an outpost at Newmarket and the repulse of an attack at Altrincham the Liberal party must reply by an advance all along the line." Sir John Simon at Oxford, May 31.)