

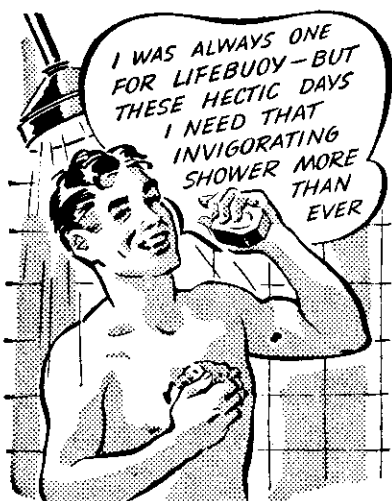
YES IT'S LOVELY,
BUT I DAREN'T
WASTE COUPONS
ON WOOLLIES
THAT WOULDN'T
WASH!

WISE WORDS, JUDY!
BUT IF YOU USE ONLY
LUX, I'LL STAY SOFT AND
FLUFFY FOR AGES.

Contains
no
harmful
soda.



LEVER BROTHERS (N.Z.) LIMITED - PETONE U.60.52Z.



I WAS ALWAYS ONE
FOR LIFEBOUY—BUT
THESE HECTIC DAYS
I NEED THAT
INVIGORATING
SHOWER MORE
THAN
EVER

The only soap specially made
to prevent "B.O."—whether
due to hard work, nervous-
ness or any other cause.



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Fifty Years Of Votes For Women

ALONG the dark red carpet of a corridor in the House of Representatives the other day, two men unrolled for the benefit of a *Listener* representative about 100 yards of a roll of paper, without making much difference to the size of the spool. It was a petition presented to Parliament in 1892, bearing the signatures of 25,519 women over 21 who were "of opinion that the franchise should be extended to women."

The petition had evidently not been unrolled since it was first assembled in sections after being examined by the Petitions Committee of the House of Representatives more than 50 years ago. By the time a curving snake of strong paper forms pasted top to tail had been extended about 100 yards along the carpet to a corner, the men began to realise that for the amusement of discovering the total length of the document, the labour of rolling it up again would be a heavy price. So about 7000 signatures were rolled back again to join another 18,000 names that will probably remain hidden until someone's curiosity to see the full list equals his diligence in rewinding it neatly.

On the grimy outside of the roll are written a few details—the number of names, the fact that the petition was presented to the House by Sir John Hall, and that it had been forwarded by K. W. Sheppard, Franchise Department, W.C.T.U. on July 5, 1892.

Women's franchise had been advocated in Parliament as early as 1877 (by Dr. Wallis). In 1888, Sir John Hall (then member for Selwyn, once having been Prime Minister, and having since become interested in liberalising the electoral laws), presented a great petition, and gave notice to move that the franchise be granted to women.

In 1889 he said: "We cannot afford to bid women stand aside from the work of the nation. We need all their spirit of duty, their patience, their knowledge in abating the sorrow, sin, and want that is around us." In 1891 the second reading of the Bill was passed by a majority of 25, but the Legislative Council threw it out by 17 votes to 15, to the dismay of its supporters.

In 1893, Sir John Hall again presented a petition, and on August 9 the second reading passed almost unanimously. The Legislative Council bowed to the inevitable, and even then a

What Have They Meant To New Zealand?

minority petitioned the Governor not to assent. The Bill became law on September 9, 1893.

The reasons given in the petition for the extension of the franchise to women include the following.

"That it has become an accepted axiom that Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the Governed."

"That the physical weakness of women naturally disposes them to exercise habitual caution, and to feel a deep interest in the constant preservation of peace, law, and order, and especially in the supremacy of right over might."

"That those who are mothers are particularly interested in legislation bearing upon the education and moral welfare of the young."

All that was half a century ago this year; so to find out whether New Zealand women still value the democratic privilege won for them in 1893, and whether they are satisfied with the use they have made of it, we asked a representative selection (including one man), for their comments, and in some cases

for their reminiscences of those exciting other days when women's suffrage seemed so important.

"It Was Too Easy"

"THE trouble with us in New Zealand was that we got the vote too darned easily," said Mrs. Knox Gilmer, a daughter of the Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon, and a well known organiser of women's activities. "In England they fought and fought for it. They had to; and when they got it they appreciated it. But here we just sat still and didn't do anything about it. It wasn't until 1917 that we also got the right to stand for Parliament. Then when we did have that right, our women candidates couldn't get in."

"Still, since we have had some women in the House, they've made themselves felt. They can be a link between the Government and the women's organisations, and we can use them as a means of approach; we have used them, of course. And I think we want more of them. But you have to be strong to do the work. It appeals to some women, and it's in my blood, but not in everyone's. Still, with so many more women assuming social responsibilities in this war, we may get more candidates from among them."

"Nothing Worth Celebrating"

"DO you think any young woman is in the least interested in whether it is fifty or a hundred years since women had the vote?" asked a woman who for many years has been prominent in women's movements in Wellington, in reply to *The Listener's* questions. "Women have no right to congratulate themselves that they have the vote, or that it has made an immense amount of difference. Celebrating the jubilee is just a sentimental idea. There should never have been any question about it at all. In a decent world, women would have had the vote with men. But of course until very recently the attitude just was that the vote went with property-owning and only a limited number of men had it. In a properly organised world—which we haven't got—you value every citizen, and a woman is not considered in any other way than as a citizen. Unfortunately, the vote in New Zealand never did give women real equality. The vote was looked upon as a political measure, and it had very little effect in giving women any real measure of equality. Women are so silly that they don't or won't realise that they must unite. If they did, especially in wartime, they could get anything that they wanted. Instead, they do a man's job at half his wages—and that in a country that is supposed to have led the

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"In England they fought and fought": Sylvia Pankhurst (right), and another militant suffragette in prison dress in 1906