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EDITORIAL

WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN NEW ZEALAND.

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SIR JOSEPH GEORGE WARD, the Premier of New Zealand, who is now in America, where he is holding up New Zealand as a proof of the efficacy of woman's suffrage in solving the Labor problem, should have taken the precaution to order the Department of Labor of his country to send none of its publications to the United States during his visit among us. Having neglected to take the precaution, the publications of the New Zealand Department of Labor are coming in,—and sadly refuting Sir Joseph's declamations.

Whatever else woman's suffrage may have accomplished for New Zealand, as far as the Labor Problem is concerned, the effect has been that of a plaster on a wooden leg.

Vol. X., Part 2 of the New Zealand Department of Labor, just brought in by the mail, looks, from the top of the first page to the bottom of the last, as if deliberately intended to prove, and that beyond cavil, that woman suffrage, on and by itself, is something that the capitalist class need not fear. It looks as if the volume is intended to allay capitalist apprehensions and demonstrate that there is "nothing in it" for Labor.

The volume in question contains the awards, recommendations and decisions rendered under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Not an award, not a recommendation, not a decision but demonstrates that the Labor Problem is as palpitating a subject in New Zealand, as it is in the United States. As one reads the awards, recommendations and decisions a procession passes before the mind's eye of capitalists and wage slaves; exploiters and exploited; cheating employers and cheated employes; men, women and children at work, just as here; and, just as here, judges siding with the employer in overreaching the employe (pp. 217 and 218).

Sir Joseph declares that "suffrage, as granted in New Zealand, was one of the

most far-sighted policies ever put into effect.” Perhaps it was that. If so, then it follows that the suffrage was extended to women as a rattle to keep the workingmen amused.

Woman should have the right to vote. There is no reason in sense why she should be deprived of the right. At the same time New Zealand’s experience is warning enough to remember that there is no more in the ballot than there is in the one who wields it—whether the wielder be woman or man.

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Uploaded by Donna Bills, October 2010

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