

Speaker's ruling) a clause giving the vote to women on broad general lines should be included from the start, and left to a free vote of the House.¹ He would begin campaigning for the clause immediately, and would himself introduce a private Member's Bill on the same lines to have two strings to the bow. He would stake his political reputation on the enactment of Votes for Women in the next session of Parliament, and would resign if it were defeated. He would give written guarantees to do all this which it would be "political dishonour" to repudiate. He stipulated, however, that militancy must be suspended; otherwise he would be unable "to swing the Liberal Party machine into line." This offer was, of course, of very great importance and worthy of most careful consideration. To my annoyance, Lansbury told H. D. Harben, who forestalled my own explanation by rushing off at once to Paris to tell Christabel. She immediately issued a statement to the Press repudiating all negotiations, declaring that militancy would continue till Votes for Women had received the Royal Assent. "No militant will trust in a single promise that the Government may make." I sent a message that I was coming to see her. She telegraphed to Norah Smyth: "Tell your friend not to come!" Nevertheless, I still intended to carry on negotiations. I had a conference with Keir Hardie, persuaded him that the day of limited Bills was over, and that the next move must be a vigorous campaign for a Reform Bill giving womanhood Suffrage, which the Labour Party must make a foremost plank. A

¹ The procedure by which women eventually were enfranchised under his Premiership.

pronouncement from his pen to this effect appeared in the *Labour Leader* forthwith. I took the women who had interviewed Asquith to urge the same view on the Labour Party Executive.

Coercion was still maintained. The police still occupied Lincoln's Inn House. The W.S.P.U. resorted to offices in Tothill Street, Westminster. On June 9th these also were seized; the Union took refuge with the Brackenburys in Campden Hill Square. Three days later the police occupied this haven, but vacated Lincoln's Inn House. Mrs. Pankhurst announced her intention to return there on July 8th, challenging the Government to rearrest and forcibly feed her. Her old slogan had been: "*They must do us justice, or do us violence!*" It was now: "*They must give us freedom, or give us death!*" She was rearrested and held for three days; then released on a licence of only four days, that her presence at a great meeting in the Holland Park Skating Rink, on July 16th, might be prevented. Determined to be there, she set out in an ambulance; the police commandeered it and drove her back to jail, whilst her friends at the meeting subscribed £16,350. That was their answer to McKenna's threat to prosecute W.S.P.U. subscribers! Two days later she was released from her tenth imprisonment.

On July 20th met the Buckingham Palace Conference called by the King to avert Irish Civil War. Women were arrested at the Palace gates with a letter from Mrs. Pankhurst demanding that since the Sovereign had called a conference of militant men, he should no longer plead inability to receive militant women.