

An effort is to be made to get the women's unions in the different parts of Queensland to take up the Suffrage Question. If women could once have it brought home to them that the question of the vote is an economic one; that their vote or no vote really means the price of their day's work, and the condition under which it is done, they would take more lively interest in the matter than they do at present. The vote also would be a bond of union among them and promote an *esprit de corps* which is now wanting. They would then have the feeling of responsibility which arises in those who have a trust placed in their hands and the knowledge that if that trust is not used honestly and efficiently the loss to themselves consequent on an ill-used trust, is justly deserved. The possession of a political vote raise women in their own eyes. They would question and discuss and procure information on subjects on which the use of their vote would give them a voice. They could join with effect in the agitation for a statute day of light hours; they could make their sentiments known on the subject of free education; of technical education; on sanitary matters; on laws touching immorality, and drunkenness, on overcrowding, on all which subjects women have a vital interest. Working women now take no interest in the matter of getting a vote, because they think their condition hopeless; they cannot see the way to improvement. Teach them that the vote would render them able to have a say as to the value of their work, and as to the share of that value that is to come to them, the workers, and they would soon rouse themselves from their apathy. It is because women do not yet understand the meaning of woman's suffrage, and that they do not comprehend what good it can do them, that they are heedless and indifferent. The Trades' Union is a grand step taken toward the Suffrage. Let women meet together: let them have some bond of union, some subject in which all are interested, let them begin to discuss among themselves what they want to make their lives less hard and how to get it and they will soon see that they must have a vote if they ever want to rise out of the poor hard worked class they have been hitherto. If they can have a voice in returning a member of Parliament the member will be quick to bring in measures that will secure them the Women's vote.

THE Shops and Factories' Commission have got well into their work. The lines of demarkation between employers and employées as represented on the Commission are unpleasantly marked. The women on the Commission confine themselves in great measures to women's work. The standing of girls during shop hours is a point about which they mean to make a great fight. That girls should be allowed to sit at intervals, while not actually engaged in serving, is acknowledged by persons employed in the trade to be quite compatible with good and faithful service to their employers. It was given in evidence that the payment of girls and women is invariably at least one third less than men. A saleswoman from one of the Queen street shops gave evidence, that after girls had served their time for learning their business; they were in many draper's shops only paid 2/6 a week for the next five or six months, and were frequently dismissed altogether and their places taken by learners to whom nothing is paid. The witness, though a trained saleswoman in the old country, was, for the first three years after her arrival in Brisbane only paid 15/- a week and advanced from that to 17/- per week, with a trifle commission amounting to about 5/- per month. The wages were paid irregularly and the girls were often weeks without money. The hours of work were 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. every night. No accommodation for meals, bad ventilation, no sitting allowed during work hours. The witness, a quiet modest-looking young woman, said she was frequently accosted in an insulting manner when returning home at night. One of the principal draper's wives, who is a member of the Commission insultingly asked her if that was in consequence of her own light behaviour.

At Hughenden, the Woman's Union comprises seventy members, which is the number of girls belonging to the place. The union has already greatly raised the rate of servants' wages.

At Blackall, the Woman's Union counts twenty-two members. The rates of wages are: laundresses, 30/-; general servants in hotels, 22/6; ditto, in private families, 17/6; nurse girls, 12/6. It is a proviso that all wages be paid weekly. Both these places are in the central district.