

Speech 2

Extract of a newspaper report on a speech to Otley Women's Liberal Association, dated 12th February 1909. Published in the Wharfedale & Airedale Observer.

As women interested in politics, they should focus their views on the question of women's suffrage. She did not wish them to take anything that she might say as anything more than her own opinion. She looked forward to the time - not far distant, she hoped, - when they would consider the question of women's suffrage as Liberals,, just as they were now considering it as women, for the principle underlying the granting of votes to women was essentially a Liberal one. There were two old Liberal watchwords which, when speaking at a Liberal meeting, she was obliged to leave out. The first was "The government of the people by the people for the people." How would she answer the question, if she was asked if she meant by "the people" only half the people? The other was, "Taxation and representation should go hand in hand." But she might be asked if that Liberal watchword applied only to male taxpayers, and not to female taxpayers. There was no logical answer to those questions.

Referring to the methods to the militant suffragettes, Miss Salt said that just as the temperaments of the large number of women present that evening were divergent, so were the opinions as to the methods by which the goal of women's

suffrage should be reached. Miss Christabel Pankhurst stood for the militant movement. "I do not know what you think of it," Miss Salt said, "but, personally, I don't like the militant methods. They go against the grain and they jar." (Applause.) But at the same time she would give the militant suffragettes their due. They had advertised the movement for women's suffrage and it would not have stood where it did today but for those women who, by unpleasant methods, had brought the question so much to the fore, and had made the man in the street think about it, instead of treating their demand with indifference. They should understand the position of those women who had worked, for forty years, and had grown impatient at seeing no result; and who felt that they must agitate for their rights in some more drastic way than by constitutional methods; but women would do more by showing they took a reasonable and responsible interest in politics, than by chaining themselves to railings, or ringing dinner bells. (Applause.) The strength of the women's movement lay in the fact that it impressed them all, and they should educate themselves to use the vote wisely when they should get it. She put Liberalism before women's suffrage. If the Unionists passed a measure for women's suffrage her Liberal cheek would blush with shame but her suffragette cheek would flush with pleasure.