

Joan Crowther Meets Political Correspondent Abel Vineberg

Britain's Political Parties Depend On Woman-power

By OLIVE DICKASON

Great Britain's political parties would collapse without their "back room boys" — who are none other than the women members.

Joan Crowther, who is an energetic member of the British Conservative party, said in an interview yesterday that as far as her country's political parties are concerned, "women do the organizing, raise the money and in general keep things going. They do nearly all the work involved . . . without them, nobody would do anything."

Despite this fact, however, very few women actually get into public life. Miss Crowther attributed this to the fact that family responsibilities come first; and secondly, resistance to women in public life.

The hard core of this resistance comes to lie with the professional classes, Miss Crowther observed. "Professional men almost never face such situations as unemployment, and so they are not dependent on their wives' earning power. Among industrial groups, however, the wife's earning capacity is often an important factor in family finances . . . and so it is always easier for a woman candidate to be accepted in an industrial riding."

Miss Crowther herself has run twice as a Conservative candidate, and has been defeated both times. "I found out the hard way what Mayor Charlotte Whitton says. . . a woman in public life has to be twice as good to be considered half as good as the men."

This discovery led Miss Crowther to come to Canada, where she will spend two years working her way across the country, to study conditions and attitudes here.

"Canada holds a key position in the Commonwealth as a sort of middle-man between the United States and Great Britain," Miss Crowther said. "My country, however, has been in the habit of looking to Europe and the United States for support in world affairs, and of ignoring its greatest source of strength, which is the Commonwealth. There has been a lot of hot air about improving relationships, but nothing has been done about it."

Because of this, Miss Crowther wants to see Canada at first hand to get a clearer picture of what that relationship should be. She plans to stay no longer than three months in any given city, and as she has to work to finance this project, she is taking a wide variety of jobs. Already in Montreal Miss Crowther has worked as cook-housekeeper for a Westmount family, a salesgirl for bathing suits in a large store, and is now on the administrative staff of the

Julia Drummond Residence. Back at home she is a home economics teacher.

"When I return, I hope to know a lot more than I do now on Commonwealth matters, and so be more valuable to my country. I intend to run again for parliament."

Miss Crowther feels that there was a serious need for British immigration to Canada . . . both from the viewpoint of the United Kingdom and of Canada. "You need the population to develop your resources, and we can't support our present population. Our people have industrial technical know-how which would be invaluable here."

One of the difficulties in the way of such a policy, however, is finances . . . currency exchange discounts are heavy, at least for British money coming into Canada. Besides that, the typical skilled British worker is used to a fairly good standard of living and a certain amount of security, and so has no compelling urge to start life anew under new and uncertain circumstances. Out of every 20 who consider emigrating, only one or two actually get around to it.

Miss Crowther noted that if Britain's oil dispute with Iran is not settled, then the skilled technicians of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company would be available for the Alberta fields.

Since arriving here, Miss Crowther has addressed the University Women's Club and meeting at Longueuil.