

INFLUENCE OF WOMEN BEATS MASK FACTION

Local Politicians Observe New Powerful Element in Civic Affairs

VICTORS IN DEBATE

Hassler, Heckled in His Own Bailiwick and Law Sharp, Talks Up to Board

The absorbing topic in the City Hall yesterday was the defeat of the mask ordinance by women's influence. The women killed it. That was what the experienced politicians said. They were predicting that more and more the voice of the new citizens will be heard at public deliberations on civic affairs.

"They come before the Board of Supervisors now with as much confidence as men, and talk as well as their fathers, husbands or brothers," said an old-timer.

"It was very different a dozen years ago. A convention or legislative body would have stared in astonishment at a woman rising to address it on civic subjects. Now a public meeting would be surprised if some woman did not take an active part in the discussion.

"The women formed the larger part of the audience which crowded the chamber of the Board of Supervisors to hear the Health Board's verbal battle with the opponents of the mask. Of these none were more assertive and tenacious than the women. There was a woman physician to heckle Dr. Hassler on the technicalities of diagnostics. There was a woman, who talked like a trained lawyer, to question the powers claimed by the Board of Health in enforcement of quarantine and the closing of public places. There were numerous women ready and competent to enter the debate, at any point where their side seemed to need help.

"They were not a body of women representing any one religious denomination or social set.

"They seemed to be representative of the class of women citizens who are coming regularly before the Board to voice their opinions on various questions—serious women in the prime of life, who have no timidity, but speak their minds and do it convincingly.

"Having evidently a firm belief in the psychological effect of applause in debates, the feminine majority stimulated their women champions by frequent and hearty outbursts, regardless of requests for suppression of such demonstrations in the municipal hall of legislation.

"That these women should have upset the plans of the Board of Health is regarded by the political veterans in the City Hall as most remarkable, for the politicians believe that Dr. Hassler had behind him the quiet but powerful pull of the administration.

"The Mayor was one of the first men in the City Hall to reappear masked after Dr. Hassler demanded remasking. He took public occasion to announce his confidence in the Board of Health. When it came to the final test in the Board of Supervisors on Thursday every administration Supervisor cast his vote for the mask."