



Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919

1919 CHAPTER 71

An Act to amend the Law with respect to disqualifications on account of sex.
[23rd December 1919]

BE IT ENACTED by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :

1 Removal of disqualification on grounds of sex.

A person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to or holding any civil or judicial office or post, or from entering or assuming or carrying on any civil profession or vocation, or for admission to any incorporated society (whether incorporated by Royal Charter or otherwise), and a person shall not be exempted by sex or marriage from the liability to serve as a juror :

Provided that—

- (a) notwithstanding anything in this section, His Majesty may by Order in Council authorise regulations to be made providing for and prescribing the mode of the admission of women to the civil service of His Majesty, and the conditions on which women admitted to that service may be appointed to or continue to hold posts therein, and giving power to reserve to men any branch of or posts in the civil service in any of His Majesty's possessions overseas, or in any foreign country ; and
- (b) any judge, chairman of quarter sessions, recorder or other person before whom a case is or may be heard may, in his discretion, on an application made by or on behalf of the parties (including in criminal cases the prosecution and the accused) or any of them, or at his own instance, make an order that the jury shall be composed of men only or of women only as the case may require, or may, on an application made by a woman to be exempted from service on a jury in respect of any case by reason of the nature of the evidence to be given or of the issues to be tried, grant such exemption.

Rules of court may be made—

- (a) prescribing the manner in which jurors are to be summoned and to be selected from the panel; and
- (b) exempting from attendance as jurors any women who are for medical reasons unfit to attend; and
- (c) as to the procedure to be adopted on any application under this section relating to service on juries.

Rules so made may require or authorise an application under this section, or any order thereon, to be made in interlocutory proceedings, and shall have full effect notwithstanding any existing rule of law or practice to the

As respects any criminal court in England, the expression " rules of court " means rules made by the Rule Committee established under the Indictments Act, 1915.

Any Order in Council made under this section shall be laid before each House of Parliament forthwith, and, if an Address is presented to His Majesty by either House of Parliament within the next subsequent twenty-one days on which that House has sat next after the Order is laid before it, praying that the Order or any part thereof may be annulled, His Majesty in Council may annul the Order, or that part thereof, and it shall thenceforth be void, but without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done thereunder.

2 Provision as to women who have qualified for degrees at universities not admitting women to degrees.

A woman shall be entitled to be admitted and enrolled as a solicitor after serving under articles for three years only if either she has taken such a university degree as would have so entitled her had she been a man, or if she has been admitted to and passed the final examination and kept, under the conditions required of women by the university, the period of residence necessary for a man to obtain a degree at any university which did not at the time the examination was passed admit women to degrees.

3 Power to universities to admit women to membership.

Nothing in the statutes or charter of any university shall be deemed to preclude the authorities of such university from making such provision as they shall think fit for the admission of women to membership thereof, or to any degree, right, or privilege therein or in connection therewith.

4 Short title and repeal.

- (1) This Act may be cited as the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919.
- (2) The enactments specified in the Schedule to this Act are hereby repealed to the extent specified in the third column of that schedule, and any other enactment, Order in Council, Royal Charter, or provision, so far as inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, shall cease to have effect, and any enactment relating to juries shall have effect so as to accord with the provisions of this Act.

SCHEDULE

Section 4.

ENACTMENTS REPEALED

| Session and Chapter. | Act. | Extent of Repeal. |
|----------------------|---|---|
| 33 & 34 Vict. | The Juries Act, 1870 | In section five the definition of jurors. |
| 34 & 35 Vict. c. 65. | The Juries Act (Ireland), 1871 | In section three the definition of " juror." |
| 56 & 57 Vict. c. 73. | The Local Government Act, 1894. | In section twenty-two the words " a woman or." |
| 57 & 58 Vict. c. 58. | The Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1894. | In section forty the words " a woman or." |
| 61 & 62 Vict. c. 37. | The Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898. | In section twenty-six the words " a woman or." |
| 7 Edw. 7. c. 33. | The Qualification of Women (County and Borough Councils) Act, 1907. | The proviso to subsection (1) of section one. |
| 7 Edw. 7. c. 48. | The Qualification of Women (County and Town Councils) (Scotland) Act, 1907. | From the word " Scotland " in section 1 (1) to the end of subsection. |
| 1 & 2 Geo. 5. c. 35. | The Local Authorities (Ireland) (Qualification of Women) Act, 1911. | The proviso to subsection (1) of section one. |
| 4 & 5 Geo. 5. c. 21. | The County and Borough Councils (Qualification) Act, 1914. | The proviso to subsection (1) of section one. |
| 4 & 5 Geo. 5. c. 39. | The County, Town and Parish Councils (Qualification) (Scotland) Act, 1914. | The proviso to subsection (1) of section one. |