

A few words to electors on a most serious subject / [by] the Scottish National Association for Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts.

Contributors

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A FEW WORDS TO ELECTORS ON A MOST SERIOUS SUBJECT.

Refuse to Vote for any Candidate who will not pledge himself to use every effort to promote the **Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1866 and 1869**, and to prevent any attempt on the part of the Government, or the Privy Council, to apply similar Laws to your Town.

Whatever corrupts the morals of the community, and is considered to be too indecent to be made Law, cannot be fit for Electors and Non-Electors to know and to denounce.

The Acts are now in force in 18 English and 3 Irish Towns, and a wide circle round those Towns, and great efforts are still being made by persons high in office to apply these, or similar Laws, **to the whole country!** They hope to do this by the aid of Mayors, Aldermen, Town Councillors, Boards of Guardians, and other local office-bearers in large towns. As you love your country,—as you value Religion, Morality, Justice, and Liberty from a hateful and un-English system of **Police Spies** in plain clothes,—Vote **only** for the Candidate who will pledge himself to the **Total Repeal** of these Acts.

Many of you are ignorant of the immoral and wicked nature of these Acts, because they were hurried or “smuggled” through both Houses of Parliament, in a manner unprecedented. The Act of 1869 was passed by both Houses between the dates of July 23d and August 7th, *without a single word of debate!* Why? Because supporters of the system of the Act knew that it would never receive the support or approval of the great mass of the English people. Mr Berkeley Hill, who is Secretary to a Society for Extending the Acts, warned a Parliamentary Committee, that “*it was very important that public attention should not be too much attracted*” to the Acts; because it was “*very important to get the whole country under control.*”

Petitions to Parliament, with more than a **Million** and

Quarter of Signatures of Men and Women, have testified their grief and disgust of the people regarding the Acts; yet they are not only unrepealed, but the Government lately attempted to extend their worst and most immoral principles to the whole country, and will, no doubt, try to do so again.

What are the **CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS**?

They are Laws passed for the alleged protection of Immoral Soldiers and Sailors from Disease resulting from immoral practices; but they are applied to **Women only**. Wherever they are in force, Women are at the mercy of **Police Spies in plain clothes**, and on the evidence of such men *any* poor defenceless woman may be compelled, **under the penalty of imprisonment** to undergo, whether well or ill, an indescribable outrage by Surgeon in the pay of the State. In the three years ending December 31st 1871, *One Hundred and Thirty-two Thousand Six Hundred and Ninety-three* of these outrages have been perpetrated, and in **One Hundred and Twenty Thousand Cases** without even the excuse of disease. No less than 127 poor women preferred *prison life and hard labour* to the atrocities of the Acts! These outrages are carried on daily at the present time.

The Laws are based on the Unrighteous and Immoral principle that *Prostitution is a Necessity*, and that it is the duty of the State to protect Immoral Men, by placing in jeopardy the character and personal honour of all *poor and helpless* Women.

In the House of Commons, on the 23d of July 1872, Mr. Mundella, M.P. for Sheffield, and a Member of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the working of the Acts, said: "*I protest against a law which visits upon Women the consequences of the delinquencies of Men. The course which Parliament has taken must be retraced; it is infamous and discreditable to a Christian Legislature, and cannot be supported.*"

Demand of all Candidates—the **Total and Unconditional Repeal of these Acts**, and their opposition to all similar legislation in future!! If they will not comply, refuse to Vote for them, or you will perpetuate and share in the infamy and discredit of these Laws.

Re-Issued by the Executive Committee of the Scottish National Association for Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts,
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Edinburgh, where Copies can be had.