

Transcription of letter from Janie Allan to Dr Devon, 26th June 1914

Dear Dr Devon,

I have heard that Miss Frances Gordon, as well as Mrs Arabelle Scott, is now in Perth Prison.

I am of course unaware as to the instructions of the prison commissioners in having these women taken to Perth. The supposition that has risen in the minds of many of their friends is that it may be with the intention of forcibly feeding them.

Should this prove to be true it is not difficult to prophesy what the result is likely to be. It is perhaps unnecessary to remind you of a conversation I had with you when Miss Moorhead was being fed in Edinburgh Prison, but in case it escapes your memory I shall recall it to you. You had been speaking of the necessity of stopping people from burning houses, I said that the result of forcibly feeding her would simply be to incite other women to more militant deeds, & you may recollect that 1 or 2 nights later Whitekirk was destroyed, which was the direct outcome of the treatment of Miss Moorhead. From my observation of the deep feeling of suffragists on this point, I should say that today they are even less inclined, than 7 months ago, to stand quietly by, while comrades & friends are forcibly fed. There are many women who, 6 months ago, were not prepared to do anything violently militant, but who today would not hesitate.

The Kings visit to Scotland will afford many opportunities to anyone desirous of making a memorable protest, though of course it would be a great pity if the Scottish tour were marked by regrettable incidents, at the same time to those who knew how high feeling runs against forcible feeding, such incidents would cause no surprise.

I have thought it right to remind you of these things, & I have also written to the Master of Polworth in the same strain, as I feel that those running in official circles do not fully realise the depths of indignation & bitterness, which repression is very naturally producing in even the most mild & gentle of women.

Believe me,
Yours truly,
Janie Allan

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