

NATIONAL-AMERICAN WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION

Member National Council of Women

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OFFICE OF HONORARY PRESIDENT.

ROCHESTER, N. Y.

May 21, 1901.

To the President, Officers and Members of the
National Conference of Political and Social Reform,
in session at Detroit, Mich., June 28-July 4, 1901.

My Dear Friends: --

As chairman of the committee appointed by the National-American Woman Suffrage Association to address letters to all of the large conventions held during this first year of the twentieth century, allow me to bring before you the great need for the recognition of the women of our nation in all of the rights, privileges and immunities of United States citizens.

The powerlessness of reformers in both governmental and social affairs is frequently commented upon by the press and public. Permit me to call your attention to the cause of this fact. Nearly every money-making enterprise, large or small, is conducted by men. The great business monopolies -- railroad, oil, coal, sugar, liquor, tobacco, etc., -- all have their agents and attorneys at Washington and at every State capital to secure laws in their favor and to prevent the passage of any which would be inimical to their interests. In addition to the capitalists the vast majority of their employes, being men, are voters, so that these corporations can put into one of the political scales the weight of both money and ballots. On the other hand, the churches, the charities, the reforms, though generally officered by men, count but a small minority of voters among their membership, however large that may be. It is, therefore, but a very simple problem in mathematics to show that if you put the great material interests into one scale with votes, and the great moral and reform interests into the other practically without votes, the latter must kick the beam. Their representatives in any legislative body have no choice -- they must comply with the demands of those who gave and can take away their positions.

It is generally admitted that we stand at a moral deadlock. While

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it is possible to secure some enactments in the interest of reform, such laws are virtually dead letters on the statute-books of every State in the Union. This is so not because many men do not try to have good laws enforced, but because there are not enough such men to make a balance of power sufficiently strong to re-elect officers who have faithfully discharged their duties. Since all classes of men are now voters, there is no possible way of obtaining this needed balance of power except by the enfranchisement of women, who already compose the majority of members in every reform association.

Until the greatest and most needed of all reforms -- the placing of the ballot in the hands of women -- is accomplished, all others must be hindered for lack of the help which can be given them only through granting to women full political and social equality.

Will you not have introduced into your meeting, discussed and adopted, a resolution in favor of woman suffrage, and also have your officers, on behalf of the Conference, sign a petition to Congress asking for the submission of a Sixteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution, prohibiting the disfranchisement of United States citizens on account of sex?

Enclosed is a form of petition. Please make two copies of it on your own official paper, if adopted, and return both to me when signed for presentation to Congress. Kindly send me also a copy of the suffrage resolution, should one be passed. In any case, I shall esteem it a favor to be informed of whatever action is taken upon these requests.

Hoping that your conference will throw the weight of its influence on the side of justice and equality for women, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

Susan B. Anthony.