



League of Women Voters of Minnesota Records

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THE ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN

and

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

1919 to 1944

11,080
The following quotations selected almost at random from my comparatively limited sources have been accumulated for my own satisfaction: how consistent had I been in my conception of the purpose of the League of Women Voters; how faithful in interpreting the purpose to the membership and the public; how aware of the dangers in unconscious changes in purpose; did I recognize that practices I myself fostered might lead to unconscious change of purpose?

By confining the quotations to my own words I have merely refreshed the memory of my own conception of the League's purpose (though occasionally evidence of members' changing views on the purpose crept in).

Having satisfied my curiosity I have lost the interest I once felt in helping with a history of the League of Women Voters. Yet I am impressed anew with the significance of Mrs. Catt's inspired project for preparing the newly enfranchised women "to pass through the door that the suffragists had opened", which becomes more significant in view of the unpredicted circumstances under which the new voters have functioned, circumstances unparalleled in American history. Inevitably Mrs. Catt's stipulation of five years to prepare the new voters seemed too short a time in view of the inability of the male electorate to cope with the new conditions.

One or another of you may sometime wish to make a complete record of so interesting an experiment. The necessary material can be found in state and national files and in the Congressional library.

M.M.W.

August 12, 1946

August 10, 1946

December 21, 1919.

(From Minneapolis Journal)

The League of Women Voters is the most political thing in the world It knows the value of political parties and thus wants to bring influence to bear on the parties. Educating every woman in the country to be an intelligent voter is not a visionary idea. Those people were visionary who came across the ocean to found a government on a new and untried theory. Now that it has been found that the experiment has not been wholly successful women have a wonderful opportunity to make this visionary idea practical. To make the people fit to govern themselves is the job ahead. It is planned to have a citizenship class in every precinct in the city.

1920. (Addressed to ten Minneapolis Papers)

When her attention was called to the criticism of the League of Women Voters by the Republican Loudon Committee for President at the Loudon lunch, Miss Marguerite Wells said, "Mr. Shultz is reported to have said that he opposed the League of Women Voters on the grounds that it savors of a third party, a party based on sex. The League of Women Voters is not a third party and has none of the features of a third party. It is an organization of women simply because the new voters happen to be women and for no other reason. It is a temporary organization designed to help the new voters at their entrance into political life. It will probably cease to exist as soon as the new voters become old voters."

June 26, 1920.

(Letter to editor of the Tribune)

The Tribune has recently commented editorially upon certain

criticisms of the League of Women Voters made by Mrs. Medill McCormick before the Minneapolis Republican Women's Club. The comments betray a certain misconception of the League of Women Voters which, in view of its consistently friendly attitude, I am confident its editor will be glad to have removed. Mrs. McCormick is reported to have attacked the League upon two scores.

"The League of Women Voters," she is quoted as saying, "is the most outstanding impediment to the proper organization of women along party lines." If a certain possible interpretation is put upon Mrs. McCormick's words, there will be many friends of the League of Women Voters to agree with her. If "a proper organization of women along party lines" involves converting them into party hacks, bound to follow the dictates of selfish groups of politicians temporarily in power, playing a political game regardless of the desires of the people, and doing all this in the name of party loyalty, then it is undoubtedly true that the League of Women Voters is a stumbling block; for while the slogan of the League is "get into the parties," and the fact is never overlooked in its political teaching that government in our country is by parties, it is also a part of the League's teaching that a political party, to endure, must be based upon certain definite principles and a determination to find a practical application of them, and that it is in devotion to these principles, and not in blind obedience to a group of selfish or misguided politicians, seeking temporary success for their party, that real party loyalty consists.

The political education of the League of Women Voters teaches women to think for themselves and to act upon the dictates of their own intelligence and conscience, not blindly upon orders from those who claim an occult knowledge of a certain black art which is knowingly called "the political game".

Hundreds and thousands of men today are in despair over

the meaninglessness, the cynical absence of ideals, the brazen manipulation in this same "political game". What the new voters have to contribute to the situation is precisely their fresh courage and unworn determination to find a way out of the political dilemma over which good men are shaking their heads in despair.

Finally, the League of Women Voters is an organization composed only of women for the simple reason that the new voters happen to be women. It might as well be called the League of New Voters and nothing is more to be desired than that it may eventually be simply the League of Voters, composed of both men and women. -- Marguerite M. Wells, President Minnesota League of Women Voters.

March 12, 1920.

(Excerpts from the Journal)

Miss Marguerite Wells denounced the charge that the League is a third party. She said that the League has no candidates, neither does it endorse any candidates. Therefore, it is not a party.
. . . It is of no use to be a ladies' auxiliary to a party. We must get into the committees that plan the primaries, that choose the candidates and that write the platforms. We are not yet used to the habit of using public means for private ends; we are likely to think of public ends first. As Democratic and Republican women you should work shoulder to shoulder getting programs of work first, then go out and work the best you can to make your party beat the other to it to do the things you want. One reason for being in a party is to get the things you want. We do not want to get into the parties for the fun of it. We want to go into the parties because we want to make the thinking patriotic people a part of them. She quoted Mrs. Catt as asking "Have we worked sixty years at a disadvantage

outside the political parties that now when we might be inside we keep out? The only way to get things in this country is to get them on the inside of a political party".

March 16, 1920.

Preceding her report Miss Marguerite Wells, second vice-president of the Minnesota League of Women Voters explained the presidential election and outlined platforms adopted by the National League of Women Voters together with work which the League proposed to do. "Voting is the patriotism of peace time," Miss Wells said, "and the work of the Minnesota League will be an organized effort to educate the four hundred and fifty thousand women eligible to go to the polls to use their ballots intelligently."

November 3, 1920.

(From a Minneapolis paper)

"Participating fully in a general election for the first time in the history of the Republic, American women wholly have vindicated those who have worked and fought to gain them admission to the political sphere." These are the deductions of Miss Marguerite M. Wells after she had worked as an election judge in the fourteenth district of the fourth ward Tuesday, following months of effort in winning suffrage for women and helping them put it into effect. "I believe", she said, "that the great amount of educational propaganda put out during the campaign to guide the newly enfranchised women has been strongly reflected among the men voters too. One of the fine things about the suffrage is that the gain of the women is no one's loss. The great need now is for women voters to make their moral

power felt while they are still a new force. If women fall into the same errors of method or purpose that parts of the male electorate and election machinery have fallen into, an opportunity will be gone. Some of the most remarkable facts of the whole suffrage struggle and victory has been that the League of Women Voters set itself to the job of educating American women in the use of the ballot at a time when the nineteenth amendment had not yet been passed by Congress. We believe that an organization as foresighted as that will continue to play a capable part in directing the women not in what to vote for but in how to understand and use the machinery of elections and politics."

1921. THE SECOND ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS.

. . . . Underlying the business of the convention there was a healthy spirit of inquiry to this effect: How is the League of Women Voters working? In a way we may be said to have taken the League to pieces there in Cleveland and so we felt better satisfied when at the end we put it together again much as it had been before.

A year ago the League was only a project. We were not even enfranchised. Within the year has come enfranchisement, the great nominating conventions, presidential election, numberless local elections, an almost continuous session of Congress, many sessions of state legislatures. These are the stuff upon which the League has tried its strength. What has been proved?

Not the least of its aims has been to make the new voter effective in parties and in politics. If only we might have had a year of preparation between enfranchisement and the presidential election! But this was not to be, and the new voter became the pawn of the politician just in the moment when stakes were highest and political life least sane. So it came about that hundreds of women whose own ideals are like ours

were misled into misunderstanding the purposes of the League. But thousands have understood and many, who had originally stood aloof, are now joining in. The second annual convention was not a convention of women outside of parties. It was a convention of women of all parties. It was not a convention of party women each one striving after an advantage for her own party, but a convention for women who realized that all saints are not in one party and all sinners in the other, and who believe that she serves her party best who comes into it independent in thought, free in conscience and judgment.

This means that one test we have successfully met.

So we concluded that our legislative program is essential but that our education should go hand in hand with legislation.

Certainly it is to our forefathers that we in America owe the setting up of that great experiment, government by the people, and with it the axiom that no people can be self-governing who are not educated. Men gave us those ideals but men have not been able to realize them. In America we have not educated our people, and we have not in any adequate sense a democracy. Is it not conceivable that women's contribution to political life will be that of realizing the ideals upon which our country is founded but which can never be realized until people, with that insight and patience characteristic of women, go painstakingly about to work them out through education?.

Thus we came out as we went in deciding that the corner stones of our organization now, after our year's experience, are the very corner stones on which we built our project -- making the new voter effective in politics; promoting good legislation; and education.

It was with renewed hope and faith that our convention closed. Obviously our officers and our national president were cheered and strengthened by the earnestness, enthusiasm and idealism of the delegates to the convention. But it was not the delegates there at Cleveland that

made the convention, it was the hundreds of women back home in every one of the 48 states who deserved to be there and who, we knew, were even then working at home on our common task.

If the note of our first convention at Chicago was that of faith in our purpose and ideals, the note of this one in Cleveland was that of faith in each other.

1921.

(From the Woman Citizen).

"You know how this new plan, this League of Women Voters, has been applauded all over the country as a piece of practical politics, but you know too, do you not, how it has been opposed. It has been opposed, and is being opposed by the professional politicians who are determined to keep their power and have some reason to believe that they may succeed, fighting desperately as they are doing to induct women into the parties in blind obedience to the powers that be and in complete surrender to the system that they find. To do this they raise the cry of party loyalty and party regularity, by which they mean machine loyalty and machine regularity and they are rallying about them deluded women, some of them real victims to the hypnotism of the rallying cry, others dazzled by illusory power and position. The machine politicians are determined that the new voters when they come into the parties shall subject themselves to authority and surrender of conscience and judgment. The League of Women Voters is determined that women shall go into the parties free in conscience and judgment and there you have a conflict it is useless to ignore."

1921. ANNIVERSARY DINNER OF ST. LOUIS LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS (Missouri)

Miss Wells defined the League of Women Voters as an organization to which women of all parties could come to gain ideals and inspiration.

"It is natural for people to differ on public questions and thereby drift into parties," she said, "but these parties must not have as their platforms merely series of maneuvers against other parties."

"The American woman came into public life last year in a fevered season, but already she has recovered enough to realize the part this new electorate may make in bringing about needed governmental changes. If the league has been in any degree unsuccessful, it has been because women have not understood its purpose."

1922.

(From the Minneapolis Tribune.)

. . . . "Do we believe that American has so pacific a purpose that the United States is in no danger at all of militarism, or

"Do we believe the philosophy that war shall always remain, that it is an important part of civilization?

"If we believe either of these things we are living in a fool's paradise," warned Miss Marguerite Wells yesterday at the post-convention luncheon of the League of Women Voters at the Radisson Hotel, where several hundred were assembled to hear reports on the Baltimore meeting.

"Men and women rallied to the clarion cry of a new world without war. The Washington conference was a step in the right direction. But those voices that sounded that call are silent now and voices that were silent then are heard now."

"There is not one in this room so young that she will see the actual abolishment of war, but there is no one in this room so old that she cannot determine to help with all the resources at her command to accomplish this greatest of all steps in human progress, the establishment of peace between nations. We must have the courage to speak as

loudly when we are in a minority as we would in the majority.

"The responsibility rests on this generation to find a way to do away with war."

1922. MINNESOTA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS ANNUAL CONVENTION. (Fourth)
(From the Minneapolis Sunday Tribune.)

"I believe you know the League of Women Voters represents an earnest and practical effort to increase intelligent participation in politics," Miss Wells said in her letter of invitation to the senatorial and gubernatorial candidates to address the mass meeting. "There is nothing that we have done to this end more successfully in gaining the interest of men and women in government and in increasing a thoughtful vote than these meetings at which candidates of all parties are given the opportunity to present their own point of view, their platform or their political creed to a serious and responsible audience.

"On the evening of October 5," the letter continues, "will be held the first evening session of our annual state convention at which will be present not only delegates from all parts of the state but a large general Minneapolis and St. Paul public. We are inviting all candidates for United States Senate and for governor to address us at this time. Your acceptance of the invitation will help us present to an interested audience in a vital way those important issues upon which men and women are soon to be called to express their opinions at the polls."

The call to the convention as sent out by Miss Wells reads:

"Hear the call for the fourth annual convention of the Minnesota League of Women Voters, to be held October 5, 6 and 7 at the St. Paul Hotel, St. Paul. This convention will be the rallying point to which members will come to renew their faith in the good that may be accomplished for state and nation by an organization such as ours, dedicated to good

citizenship, unceasingly at work, without selfish ends to serve and with no thought of personal reward. It is called early in the fall so that the high purposes to be there strengthened and the wisdom that will come from conference and counsel may be carried by the women out into their parties during the coming campaign and elections.

"At the sessions of this convention we shall lay plans for our own election-time campaign -- that the percentage of qualified voters actually casting their ballots at the polls this year shall be greater than has ever been recorded in our state. We shall decide what measures in behalf of human welfare we shall ask of this next legislature, advised by our committee who, in the interim between legislative sessions, have never ceased their consideration of this subject. We shall take under advisement types of legislation other than social, having in mind that upon women, as yet less preoccupied than men with special and group interests, lies a responsibility for that sort of legislation in the interest of better government that being everybody's business is too often nobody's business -- the direct primary, budget making, short ballot. We shall affirm our belief that the time has come, and that upon us the responsibility is placed, to help find a way by international cooperation to prevent wars, and we shall lay careful plans to this end.

"We shall take into account also that peace, like war, has its sinews. New plans will be presented for organization and finance. An election will be held for first vice president, secretary, treasurer, three directors and vice presidents for the First, Third, Fifth, Seventh and Ninth districts.

"For inspiration, for renewing faith and courage, for strengthening purposes, for mutual help in finding ways to accomplish the tasks we have undertaken, members of the league are called to this convention. Hear the call and heed it!"

March 1, 1923.

(From The Woman Voter)

WHY A LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS IN EVERY COMMUNITY

In every town in Minnesota, big or little, there are women who have long been devoted to the public welfare. These women have striven by every means at their command to improve social conditions. But they have been obliged to work indirectly. Without a vote, their influence upon government officials and administration for better laws and better law enforcement has been indirect and often slight.

The indirect methods of former days need no longer suffice eager and public-spirited women. A new method needing only to be better understood is at hand. Where are women to look for help in studying and using this new method of the franchise? Obviously to that organization that was created at the time of enfranchisement, founded upon the fact of the vote, whose sole purpose is to help the new voter to become effective for better government and whose entire equipment is designed to give her that help. Such an organization is the League of Women Voters.

1923.

(From the Minneapolis Journal.)

Miss Marguerite Wells, Minnesota chairman, answered the charge made by Mrs. Emily Newell Blair, vice chairman of the National Democratic committees that the league did not urge women strongly enough to get into the parties.

"If the league women do not work enough in the parties it is a defect that time will eradicate," she said. "The ideal way is for women to be both in the league and working in the parties. The organization will never accomplish its aims until all league women are party women and all party women league members."

1923.

(From the Minneapolis Journal.)

"Tomorrow should be set apart by every man and woman in the state of Minnesota as a day when no other duty and no pleasure should be allowed to interfere with the fulfillment of a patriotic obligation and the going to the polls to register a well considered decision."

That is the message broadcast to the women of Minnesota by Miss Marguerite M. Wells, president of the Minnesota League of Women Voters.

"On July 16 Minnesota will, for the second time since the war, choose a United States senator," Miss Wells said in her appeal by radio. "For the second time in their lives, Minnesota women will take part in such an election. The man whom their vote may help send to the senate will have many and great questions submitted to his consideration in the critical days before us."

"It will be strange if this congress is not called upon to decide questions involving the position that the United States shall assume among the nations of the world. It is the senate, not the

house of representatives, that decides questions of foreign policy.

"At a time when so many countries are looking to their law-making chambers in matters of life or death, disaster or salvation, ruin or reconstruction, it is perhaps rash to say that upon any certain one of these the gravest burden of responsibilities lies. Certainly upon that of great, rich, powerful America rests no slight responsibility for wise and beneficent legislation. We revere the founders of the government of our country. Scarcely a man, woman or child in America who cannot tell stores of the wise and courageous statesmen of those days to whom we owe the place we have taken in the world in the past. Upon the men in the United States senate in this time of reconstruction after the World War rests the responsibility for the part our country shall take in the future."

1924.

(Interview with Jamestown, North Dakota, Alert.)

"To make American democracy a continued success, in fact to save it from its powerful enemies, the citizens of both sexes must use their votes and use them intelligently.

"The League of Women Voters is unpartisan in policy. Women have an enormous potential influence that has not yet been fairly developed. The league has been organized to aid these new voters to operate as a force for good movement.

"The league is not a woman's party. Every woman is urged to enroll in the party of her choice."

ADDRESS GIVEN AT MEETING IN JAMESTOWN, NORTH DAKOTA.

"The two major political parties, "said the speaker, "show marked signs of decadence, and as the best results in government are to be had from competitive party management, one aim of the league work is

to preserve and purify the political parties, and to keep them watchful for the country's safety. The professional politician has already abandoned the first idea that the women's vote would be of no special importance, and that it would follow exactly the voting of the men. The present party system has lost much of its original influence, and purpose, and has retrograded into a fierce contest for the material things, the rewards of political success in the matter of power and pecuniary advantage; forgetting the principles of government and the traditions, rights and liberties upon which our government was founded, and which have called the parties into existence."

(From four annual speeches in League of Women Voters Conventions, 1920 to 1924).

. At the time of the enfranchisement of women, the American people were just being quite specifically told that only about fifty per cent of the enfranchised voters had been in the habit of going to the polls. While women were still working for the suffrage, they were sometimes told by friendly men, for whose opinion they had great respect, and whose political purposes they knew to be patriotic and public spirited, that the suffrage, if it could be obtained, would not give women what they wanted. The vote, these men sometimes said, was useless to them. With it they were not able to effect what they wished. They probably never guessed how shocking these words sounded in the ears of women who knew that the vote in a democratic country should be prized above every other privilege. Such confessions explained, however, to a certain extent at least the reasons for the fifty per cent absenteeism at the polls. At the time of the first presidential election after the enfranchisement of women, a certain cartoon appeared in the newspapers. It showed a restaurant and at the table a customer labelled "Mr. Voter". He had just been handed a menu by the waiter in the guise of "Uncle Sam".

"Uncle Sam" was obviously urging "Mr. Voter" to make a choice. At the back of the room a door stood ajar and through the crack could be seen the chef in his white apron and cap, labelled "Party Boss". And "Mr. Voter" replies to "Uncle Sam", "What is the use of my ordering? The chef out there will send me whatever he wants to, no matter what I order."

Now the professional politicians have run politics so ably, they have manned the machine so competently, and they have become so powerful, that other men, such men as used to warn women that the vote would not give them what they wished, such men as "Mr. Voter" in the cartoon, even when, sporadically stung to a certain spirit of reform, try to make themselves count in public life, find themselves impotent, and it is this baffled impotence that makes them exclaim, as they used sometimes to exclaim to the "suffragist", "Why struggle so hard for the vote? You can get nothing by the vote. We have tried. We can do nothing. Everything is cut and dried. Everything is arranged by the professional. Your vote won't count." Men, in other words, without concerted action, casually, individually, well-meaning, have not been able in all these years to break the power of the machine politicians and to open up the machine to the people. And women, better or worse than men as they may be thought, more determined, more conscientious, if one can believe then so to be, nevertheless have equally been unable, in those western states where they so long have voted, to bring about the new state of affairs for which earnest men and women alike are wishing. It is in recognition that long continued hopes and endeavors have not succeeded and that some new way must be found, that the League of Women Voters has sought to make of enfranchisement the occasion of a well-defined conscious effort to take the parties out of the control of the bosses and to get them into the control of the people. It is an attempt to organize into one big group the new voters of every party in the belief that they will find in union, in organization, a solidarity, a strength, an inspiration and a purpose that will make them more effective in the

various parties of their choice.

What threatens to destroy the parties today are not people outside of the parties but the people inside, people whose aims are power and office, not principle. The League of Women Voters was designed, not to keep women out of parties, but to send them in well equipped to work there effectively for the convictions and the ideals that they hold. It is designed not to destroy parties, but on the contrary, to save them in the only way they can be saved, by recruiting into them more people whose ends will be the ends of the public and of the country, not party or personal ends.

When there are more people in office for public ends who realize that these ends may be served even were they themselves reduced to the ranks and who think of a party not as an end but as an instrument, then the parties will no longer deserve the strictures of which they are now the object. It isn't arrogant to believe that, given their recent enfranchisement and their comparative freedom from bad political habits, women may be more rapidly recruited into the parties on these terms than men. Such at least, is the hope of the League of Women Voters.

This, too, must be a long struggle. It will not be today, nor tomorrow, nor the day after, that so great a change takes place in the parties. Meantime, what? And here again the League of Women Voters has an answer. The answer may be found in the suggestion of many writers of political science. It may be found in Bryce himself who wrote in his last book, "Parties need to be shaken up and ^{have} new life breathed into them by the independent thought of individuals or groups." Or groups! It is possible that the League of Women Voters may be one of the groups to bring upon the parties an influence for better things than they are disposed to do for themselves. Pending the time that the League of Women Voters has recruited into the party enough people who are there for principle not power or office to restore the party to its one-time prestige,

it is perfectly possible that it may remain much an all-partisan group formulating ideals and programs, and presenting them to the parties for acceptance.

1924.

WHEN MACHINE MEETS MACHINE

"Every country has to have someone to run it. If you won't have a monarchy, or an aristocracy, or an oligarchy for a government, and if you can't have a democracy, because the people won't act, who will run your country? Answer: the professional politicians. They will run it in their own interests for the jobs it will give them. They will run it by means of the machine.

There are machines and machines. The difference between the machine of the professional politician and the machine of the people is a difference of purpose. The first exists for jobs, the second would exist for good government. The first endeavors to keep the free and independent people out, the second endeavors to get the people in.

Both seek to get out the vote, the one to get out the bribed and pledged vote, the other to get out the free and conscientious vote. Both have to get out the vote by organization, by being on the job, by constant, unremitting toil, by remaining patient and persevering. There is no black magic about getting out the vote, there is no royal road to success in democracy. It is a house-to-house affair. It is a matter of canvassing and checking and following up.

If it is asked what are the rewards of the volunteers who seek to get out the free and conscientious vote, it can only be answered that the sense of having performed a public service is the only reward they can expect. It is self-interest that actuates the politicians machine and keeps it on the job year in and year out. Only love of country and

a determination to make a success of government by the people keeps the volunteer at work. Do you believe that self-interest is the stronger motive of the two and that before it altruism will falter and fail? You are eternally mistaken. Motives of self-interest are insistent in this world and they present themselves in throngs, it is true, but the higher the motive, the stronger it is, and those who have caught the call of patriotism and felt the urge of associating themselves with great human enterprises will never fail.

May 15, 1924.

Jamestown Alert

Miss Wells will speak at the annual convention and institute of the North Dakota League of Women Voters, which opened today, and will continue through Saturday.

She will urge women to join the political parties, "well equipped to work there effectively for the convictions and the ideals which they hold". She believes the League of Women Voters is "not designed to destroy parties, but to save them in the only way they can be saved -- by recruiting into them more people whose ends will be the ends of the public and the country, not party or personal ends."

Nov. 1, 1924.

(From the Woman Voter, The National League of Women Voters)

AFTER ELECTION -- WHAT?

When four years ago suffrage came to a generation of women ignorant of politics and entering an electorate that itself fell far short of an adequate intelligent interest, the League of Women Voters met the situation by undertaking what was nothing more or less than a permanent campaign to get out the vote and make that vote intelligent. As the 1924 presidential elections approached, the League redoubled

its efforts and set a definite goal of a twenty-five per cent increase in ballots. Other organizations caught the spirit. An unpartisan effort to get out the vote because the order of the day. "Vote, vote as you please, but vote," has been the popular cry.

As the drive has gathered speed, wearied and disillusioned workers have begun to doubt. "Cui bono?" -- "what's the use?" -- they have queried. The doubt has come from newspapers, from clergymen, from discouraged registration clerks, from perplexed men and women everywhere. It takes various forms:

"The electorate needs to be better equipped. You drive them to register today; the next year they will have forgotten. People won't vote without an issue; there are no issues. The candidates in our state are equally bad; people won't go to the polls to choose among them. Responsibility isn't fixed; my vote will mean nothing. The ballot is too long; busy people can't be informed about so many candidates. The political machine will defeat the will of the people no matter how they vote. What's the use of making people vote who aren't intelligent?"

So the objections run. To answer them is to answer the question of the title. It is to tell "what next". It is to say what the League of Women Voters should be "up and at", early in the morning of November 5. It is, in a word, to tell what the purpose and program of the League of Women Voters really is. A shorter ballot? Yes! Better election and nomination methods? Yes! Recruiting more people into the parties to swamp the professional politicians, formulating issues, setting standards, mobilizing public opinion, bringing home to the busy man and woman that affairs of government make an everyday difference to them, to their home and children, -- in other words, political education.

These are not matters for a frantic drive just before election. They are matters for sustained effort year in and year out. They are a matter of research and survey and study.

(From the Woman Citizen)

PUBLIC WELFARE IN GOVERNMENT

Four years ago, if women in general were indifferent about politics, in one direction their interest had already been aroused. Woman's responsibility for welfare in the family long since had led her to an interest in public welfare, and when public welfare went into government, woman's interest followed it there. Even before they were enfranchised, women had begun to take an active, if indirect and ineffective, interest in public welfare measure. So it is a coincidence probably, but a very interesting and significant one, that women's enfranchisement comes in an era when the relation of public welfare to government is a major political question. Somewhat as in the Rooseveltian era, the relation between business and government was a major political question. The theory upon which our American democracy is founded is equality of opportunity. At first the great foe of equality of opportunity was believed to be government, by men who had had their experience in Europe. Thus in this country the effort was to leave the individual free of government that he might enjoy the natural opportunities that were his. Time has passed. Conditions have changed. A huge and complicated economic, social and industrial system has developed in this country which threatens to deprive great numbers of people of their equal opportunities. If they are now to be safeguarded in these opportunities, there is only government to do it, and by the same token that it was a function of our democracy in the beginning to leave individuals alone in the enjoyment of the opportunities they possessed, it is a function of our democracy now to protect individuals from great forces that threaten to take away from them opportunities that by rights are theirs.

M.M.W.

1925.

(From the Springfield Weekly Republican.)

WHAT WOMEN ARE THINKING -- FOUR YEARS OF SUFFRAGE.

Four years ago while most women were ignorant about politics there were a few who knew all there was to know. These were the women who had borne the brunt of long struggle to win the vote. Disfranchised themselves, opposed by organized politicians everywhere, these women made of the ideal of suffrage for women, a practical political question. And won. In winning they learned the seamy side of American political life. They learned what would have made of women less wise and less balanced, embittered rebels. What has come out of the experience of these women for the League of Women Voters is not a little group of disgruntled critics, it is the department of efficiency in government under the wisest of leadership -- a leadership which has intelligently set itself to survey the field and to stake out a program. In my opinion the department of efficiency in government of the League of Women Voters is destined to play an important part in all future political reforms in our country.

Four years ago we believed that there were measures which women of all parties could join in supporting. Now we know it. We know it because of the planks in the party platforms, because of state and congressional legislation, initiated and supported, not by women of this or that party, but by women of all parties united in the league. We know it because the supreme political question of the day transcends all party lines. Parties cannot honestly differ on the subject of international cooperation to prevent war unless they break up present party lines and make new ones on that great question alone. The League has supported every constructive measure that promised to lead to international cooperation to prevent war, regardless of the party or group which initiated it.

M.M.W.

1925.

THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF SUFFRAGE.

(From The Woman Voter, published by the Minnesota League of Women Voters.)

Miss Wells' public statement in celebration of the day was as follows:

"There are people who profess themselves disappointed with the results of the extension of suffrage to women. They seem to have expected some sort of millennium -- as though women were better or wiser than men perhaps. I am not of that number. Quite the reverse -- for I did not realize before suffrage was won how different from men's was the contribution women might make to American political life, nor how great would be the need of their new and different contribution just as this juncture. In many directions this need is now so apparent that women's enfranchisement at this time may well be considered providential."

1925.

(From the Minneapolis Journal.)

There are people in this country who "view with alarm" the fact that the enfranchisement of women has increased the emphasis on public welfare in government and because the women have shown themselves to be possessed of the practical ability to unite in support of those measures in which they have a common interest as women and mothers, Miss Marguerite Wells, president of the Minnesota League of Women Voters, said:

"They do not like the things organized women are doing; they don't care for their lobbying, however respectable and educational and helpful it may be; they don't like their over-emphasis on woman and children; they don't like the measures these women have sponsored and think they are 'creating innumerable collateral evils, alarmingly increasing the official class and unduly and unwisely burdening the taxpayer.'

"Women voters with their new responsibilities and opportunities may well give heed to advice from a sincere source on the underlying principles of our American form of government and the fundamentals of economic theory as well as on the ethics of lobbying. But it is hoped they will not be misled by some admonitions which ignore the fact that the contribution women are best prepared to make to government, by nature and by training, is in the field of human welfare. The relation between public welfare and government is and ought to be a major political issue of the day; the very foundation of our democratic government is equality of opportunity and that with the development in this country of a highly complicated industrial and social system, this equality can be maintained only by government. It ignores the fact that the very reason for the existence of our federal government is that it shall procure to the people those blessings of happiness and welfare for which state and local governments had proved themselves inadequate. In an age when every selfish and commercial interest is organized and centralized for its own aggrandizement people who go about deploring the corresponding organization of altruistic agencies and corresponding centralization of government to cope with the ensuing conditions, lay themselves open to grave suspicions as to their motives."

Miss Wells declared that the lobbying of the newly enfranchised women had been, insofar as she knew, in the main not only respectable but discreet and courteous.

"Women have offered legislators information on subjects which as yet women know more about than men and they have been able to do so without forgetting that it is the people's representative, not the lobbyist, who, in the last resort, is to make the law."

1925.

(From the Minneapolis Journal.)

To the Editor of the Journal:

Mr. Child has been quarreling with the Woman Voter for stating that in the United States the people are sovereign and that it is for them to bestow their authority. Mr. Child denies this. He asserts that "politically speaking there is no people of the United States." We are not "a nation of people in the aggregate as some politically uninformed seem to treat our peoples," he explains. "The people in a body can bestow no sovereignty" (sic?).

In this contention Mr. Child contradicts most of the great men who have spoken for this country in the past and discusses as "politically uninformed" such authorities as the great Chief Justice Marshall, Abraham Lincoln and Daniel Webster. He also leaves unexplained the opening words of the Constitution, "We the people". Abraham Lincoln said, "This country with its institutions belongs to the people who inhabit it." Daniel Webster said, "I hold it (the United States) to be a popular government erected by the people. . . the people brought it into existence, established it. . . The people erected this government."

Marshall in the famous decision of *McCulloch vs. Maryland* said, "It has been said that the people had already surrendered all their powers to the state sovereignties and had nothing more to give. But surely the question whether they may reserve or modify the powers granted to government does not remain to be settled in this country. . . . The government (the United States) proceeds directly from the people, is ordained and established in the name of the people. . . The government of the union then. . . is emphatically and truly a government of the people. . . It is the government of all, its powers are delegated by all, it represents all and acts for all."

Mr. Child is fighting a ~~xxxxxx~~ cause that was already lost more than a century ago. - - - - M.M.W.

1925.

(From the Minneapolis Journal under the section entitled "What Other People Think".)

To the Editor of the Journal:

The Minneapolis Journal has been making certain charges about the proposed child labor amendment and, incidentally, about the Minnesota League of Women Voters, that call for categorical reply.

"The authors of the amendment are socialistic. . . It is a soviet measure pure and simple." Journal, December 2.

The Amendment in its present form is the outcome of months of consideration by Congress of 20 to 30 resolutions for such an amendment, introduced by as many members of House and Senate in the last two sessions of Congress, and including such well known conservatives as Senator Lodge of Massachusetts, Senator McCormick of Illinois, Senator Shortridge of California, Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Foster of Ohio. These various resolutions were considered for months by subcommittees of the judiciary committee of House and Senate, in consultation with representatives from the United States department of labor, the children's bureau, 16 national women's organizations such as General Federation of Women's Clubs, Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Consumers League, Y. W. C. A., Parent and Teachers Association, League of Women Voters; in consultation also with National Child Labor Committee, Dr. Worth M. Tippy, representing the Federal Council of Churches, Father John A. Ryan, professor of theology in the Catholic University of America, representing the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and Samuel L. Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor. Conferences were also held with Senator Walsh of Montana and Senator Pepper of Pennsylvania, two members of the Senate who are outstanding authorities on constitutional law. The opinion of many other legal authorities was sought, that of Professor Walter W. Cord of Yale, Dean Henry M. Bates of Michigan, Professor ~~WALTER~~ Funk of the University

of Chicago, Dean Pound of Harvard, among others. As a result of all this consideration and discussion, Senator Pepper drafted the amendment which was passed by Congress and is now before the states for ratification.

Such is the socialist origin of the proposed amendment.

"The soviet of Russia seeks to control the children of the state. That is what the amendment proposes, as The Journal reads it and that is why The Journal classes it as a soviet measure," Journal, December 16.

It should already be apparent that The Journal's opinion on the meaning of the amendment is not shared by such outstanding conservatives as Senator Lodge of Massachusetts and Senator Pepper of Pennsylvania, nor by such authorities on constitutional law as Pound of Harvard and Bates of Michigan. It was not shared either by President Coolidge who has been an unequivocal supporter of the amendment, by John W. Davis, a conservative and leading legal authority, not only candidate for president of the United States but president of the National Bar Association. In such a case the reader must choose between authorities, between The Journal's opinion unsubstantiated by a single accepted authority on constitutional law, and such opinions as those that have here been mentioned.

"It (The Journal) regrets that the League of Women Voters. . . is so determined to carry this amendment without investigation in the face of its recent rejection by the state of Massachusetts." Journal, December 16.

The League of Women Voters is not supporting the amendment without investigation. Representatives of the League of Women Voters have been intimately associated with every step in the process of determining the need for the amendment and in adopting the form of amendment best adapted to meeting that need. They know of their own knowledge that every word in the final form has been subjected to the most searching consideration. They believe that no section of the Constitution

itself, nor any of its 19 amendments was ever more carefully and intelligently considered.

No one who takes the trouble to investigate what happened in Massachusetts will find there a single reason for abating by a job or a title his support of the amendment. An association organized to promote the commercial advantage of its members and financially interested in the defeat of the amendment and in the use of cheap child labor carried on there a campaign of almost incredible misrepresentation. The public of Massachusetts was duped and fooled about the amendment as people always can be temporarily deceived by a campaign in which a great deal of money is spent to disseminate false and misleading propaganda.

"The Minnesota League of Women Voters quietly pledged practically all of the members (of the legislature) in advance . . . in favor without the knowledge of the people that this was going on and without any public discussion of the amendment and what is behind it. . . This is not the American way of doing business. The American way is for discussion on a question as vital as this and the League of Women Voters was wholly outside of its right in attempting to pledge the Legislature before the members themselves had the slightest knowledge of what the amendment really proposes." Journal, December 23.

The amendment passed the House of Congress in April and the Senate June 2. June 11 the republican national convention commended Congress for passing the amendment. June 28 the national democratic convention boasted that it could not have been done without democratic votes. July 4 the convention of the progressive party endorsed the amendment. Neither these planks in the national party platforms, nor the passage of the amendment itself, was unattended by newspaper publicity. The Journal itself commented upon the amendment editorially more than once in June and July. August 4 the Minnesota League of Women Voters asked candidates for the legislature in a questionnaire whether or not ^{they} ~~xxx~~ favored ratification.

So much for The Journal's charge that the League of Women Voters quietly pledged legislators in an un-American way without the knowledge of the people that this was going on and before the members themselves had the slightest knowledge of what the amendment proposed.

"It is for the people of Minnesota to arouse as they have never aroused and tell the Legislature this unholy thing cannot be done."
Journal, December 16.

This is strong language. It is the sort of language that is apt to be used when important questions are before the people for decision. It is not unlike the language that was used when the Constitution of the United States was before the people for ratification. It was one of The Journal's spiritual forefathers, a certain Mr. Treadwell, who said, at that time, that the Constitution "is founded in sin and reared up in iniquity, the foundations are laid in a most awful breach of public trust, and the top stone is the most iniquitous breach of public faith and I fear if it goes into operation we shall be quickly punished with the total extinction of our civil liberties."

But the Constitution did go into operation and Mr. Treadwell's spiritual heirs and descendants have lived to speak well of it. It does not take a very vivid imagination or a very wide acquaintance with history to prophecy that to some future Minneapolis Journal in another age the anxieties of The Journal of 1924 about the twentieth amendment to this Constitution will seem as quaint as Mr. Treadwell's fears and prophecies seem to us today.

December 31, 1924.

Marguerite M. Wells

P.S. This clipping and another of January, 1925, allude to the battle royal waged on the Child Labor Amendment between Mr. Child of the Minneapolis Journal on one side and the League of Women Voters on the other. The National League's campaign in behalf of the Amendment was outstanding in its effectiveness, though waged without benefit of the "Study Groups" of later years.

1925.

(From the Minnesota Woman Voter.)

WHEN FATHER PAYS THE BILLS.

Among the most popular of perennial jokes is one about father grumbling over the household bills. If this joke be founded on fact it is yet true that nine times out of ten father grumbles not because he is parsimonious, but because, in the case of household bills, he himself has not experienced the exquisite joy of making a bargain, handing out the price and receiving the purchase. He has merely signed a check. His imagination does not reach to appreciation of what has been purchased, much less to the fact that he himself has been a beneficiary.

It is even so with the tax power. He grumbles because he forgets what his taxes buy for him. His imagination also fails here. He needs to cultivate it for, as there is an increasing tendency for the community to buy more and the individual less, taxes are bound to increase. This does not mean that the citizen is getting less for his money. He may be getting more. But he is getting a larger part of it as a community, not an individual, transaction.

Mounting taxes may indeed mean waste and extravagance. . .
 . . But they may also mean increased comfort and safety, better educational opportunities, better business. Not how high is the tax, but what is he getting for his tax is the question each citizen must examine.

1925:

(From The Woman Voter, published by National League of Women Voters.)

ENDORSEMENTS

There has been a tendency of late to question the validity of endorsements of political measures by women's organizations. It is a good sign. In the days before 1920 when women's political support or opposition could be discounted, there was less reason to enquire how endorsements were come by. It is because of the influence they exert that they begin now to be sharply scrutinized. No longer can it be said that to the male politician all women's organizations -- and their endorsements -- look alike. Endorsements that count, in the future, must be arrived at by some process that involves the membership of the organization in their consideration, and the education of that membership for their support.

How to obtain the participation of members in making endorsements and in supporting them after they are made are problems each organization must solve for itself. In proportion as they are solved will the influence of the organization increase, while failure to solve them cannot for long pass undetected. Members who have not been included either in the process of consideration that precedes, or that of education which follows endorsement cannot be counted upon for support or even for approval. Many such repudiations will destroy the credit of any organization.

Such a test should be welcomed by organizations with a sound method of procedure like the League of Women Voters. It challenges the League to continue its efforts to secure each year wider and wider consideration of measures proposed for endorsement. It justifies it in refusing to endorse except when it is equipped to follow endorsement with active support. It vindicates the wisdom of League conventions which have become each year more reluctant to adopt eleventh hour resolutions, however worthy and eloquently framed, but have demanded of a

a proposal that it shall add to its other merits, the merit of having been duly considered.

To women whose experience in public work began in laxer days, this stricter accountability will bring a new respect for procedure and program. Time was when instances were not rare of women who used their organization as a kind of makeweight for their own individual opinion, and who permitted themselves a corresponding neglect of the official undertakings of their organization that did not happen to jump with their own ardent preferences.

"The womanhood of America," which had so many spokesmen in the past, is likely in the future to have its name less often taken in vain. Reciprocally, if members are no longer to presume to speak for an uncommitted organization, neither will the organization speak for an unconsulted membership. 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished.

M.M.W.

1926.

MONTANA CONVENTION OF LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS.

(From the Great Falls Leader.)

"The League Way" was the subject upon which Miss Marguerite Milton Wells of Minneapolis spoke at the afternoon session today at the Park Hotel.

"The League is an absolutely new thing in the world," said Miss Wells, in introducing her subject. "Suffrage has gradually been extended in every democratic class. The league was organized at the close of the war at a time of reaction when people were returning from altruism to their own self-centered interests.

Popular misconceptions of the league and its purpose were also given by Miss Wells, who said that men of the country first regarded it as a "woman's party", a feeling which has now been laid aside.

"The league, which is non-partisan, is identified by the public first with one and then with another political party. It is always the habit of one party to accuse the other of having the support of the organization," said Miss Wells.

Another misconception is confusing the league with other organizations, owing to certain committees of the league on social hygiene, child welfare, and other lines of social work. The league does not do social work but works for various measures sponsored by them in the legislature.

The speaker closed by saying "the greatest difficulty in organizing is that women consider they do not have time to do thorough work in behalf

political science to match the inventiveness in other fields that has brought about the need for expanded government.

City charters and the manager plan, state departments and an executive budget, federal aid, taxation, civil service, do these seem to you dry and technical subjects, or are they a challenge to find for our great expanded government, a great administration? This is still a new country. We are still a young people. In our veins runs the blood of pioneers. Especially do the new voters possess some of the courage and enthusiasm that comes with new responsibilities and new opportunities. Let us then stand up to our great task! Let us not be overwhelmed by its difficulties! Let us even, in the words of the psalmist, "Rejoice as a strong man to run a race."

1927. MISSOURI LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS AT KANSAS CITY.

Miss Wells said a survey which the Minnesota league had conducted showed that women do not vote as generally as do men.

"But it would be a miracle if they did," she said. "Women have had the ballot only seven years. It is something new to them. Every man is brought up from childhood to think of himself as a voter. I think it is encouraging that women vote as generally as they do."

Miss Wells also admits that women are not yet in on the inside in party matters but she believes that is largely because they are newcomers in politics.

Moreover, she pointed out, they are not at all fooled by the empty honors and honorary titles that the men politicians confer on them to placate them.

1927.

(From the Minnesota Woman Voter, published by the Minnesota League of Women Voters.)

Expressions of opposition to federal aid for infancy and maternity work continue all too frequently to be voiced. Are there good reasons for this opposition? Apparently not. At least none are given.

Reasonable and well-informed people, if they are consistent, are not going to give support to a Department of Agriculture, to federal aid for good roads, to a big navy, and then oppose federal aid for reducing the mortality rate of mothers and babies for any such reasons as those given above. No, such cannot be the reasons. What then can they be? Let me surmise.

I surmise that thoughtful and responsible people wish to avoid federal participation in government whenever it can be avoided with due consideration of the best interests of the people. I surmise, indeed, that they wish to avoid participation of government at all in the affairs of people except when it is for their undoubted best interests as a whole. I surmise that such thoughtful and responsible people desire federal aid for good roads because they are thoroughly familiar with the benefits to the people of good roads and appreciate that the benefit extends not merely to the people of the state in which the roads are made but to the country as a whole. I surmise that such people desire support of a federal Department of Agriculture with its expensive army of employees because they are thoroughly familiar with the services this department and its employees render and because they appreciate that these services benefit not only the people of a given state to which the aid is carried but indirectly, if not directly, all the citizens of the whole United States. I surmise that they approve the expenditure of unthinkable sums of money for navy construction because they are familiar with the use of a navy in case of war.

It must be then that the opposition of such people to a small appropriation of federal money for the reduction of the mortality rate

of mothers and babies through federal aid to the states arises from the fact that they are not familiar with the benefit that this federal aid brings to babies and mothers, the extent to which it is needed and the extent to which saving the lives and improving the health of babies and their mothers is a benefit not only to the state in which such families temporarily live but to the citizenry of the United States as a whole.

This is the most charitable explanation of the way writers and speakers lately have been taking flings at federal aid for infancy and maternity welfare. They think it is unnecessary and unimportant. They think so because they don't know. Those who do know ought to assume the responsibility of passing on their knowledge.

1927. ADDRESS IN THIRD INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Arranged by Minnesota League of Women Voters

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

(By Marguerite Milton Wells)

About five years ago the National League of Women Voters held a brilliant evening meeting in Memorial Continental Hall in Washington to which women from many nations came and at which the Secretary of State and the British Ambassador spoke. They talked about women and government, and Sir Auckland Geddes with true British candor told his audience that the contribution women could make to politics lacked value because of their ignorance of the principles of economics. Since that day and before, in fact ever since their enfranchisement, women have frequently found measures they were supporting opposed by economic interests-- from the manufacturer who fears that federal child labor legislation will interfere with his profits to the clerk of the court who sees in every reckless marriage prevented a two dollar fee lost to himself.

It was in response to such challenges as these that when members of the faculty of this Institute asked for suggestions about the courses your committee proposed a course that would show the relation

between economics, government and the public welfare.

In such theories as these we have real thinking on a subject of supreme importance. We have new ideas. We have distinguished men giving their minds to the problems of government. We have an attempt to devise new ways to meet new conditions. It is true the device shows a certain fear of government but so did Patrick Henry fear government who opposed the Constitution. So did Jefferson fear government who opposed broadening its scope. And so did Cobb of New York World fear government, the inveterate foe of Roosevelt, who always insisted that if you make government strong enough to regulate business you make it an object to business to take government into camp. It is true that these new theories show a distrust of Democracy but so did the founders of our Union fear democracy and by a system of checks and balances they prevented the people perhaps from doing much evil, certainly often from doing much good.

But after all it is Democracy that America is committed to and there is no royal road to Democracy. You cannot set up a Democracy by fiat. You have to work it out by educating people to govern themselves. You have to work it out by making government so simple that the people can handle it and not be obliged to leave it to professional politicians. You see that in spite of my respect for them I have my doubts about these new theories of the place of business in public affairs today.

If we can no longer trust our machinery of government there are many things we may do to improve it. We might make voting easier. We might adopt the short ballot, the election of the few and the appointment of the others, the fixing of responsibility so that the people may know whom to punish and whom to reward. We might do some reforming in our legislative procedure so that there would be more sense and less nonsense about it. We might do away with lame duck sessions of the

Congress. We might perhaps, if we thought best, have one long term for the president instead of two or more short ones. We might develop some of those methods which have already begun to be used of cooperation between local and national governments to give the advantage of local administration and of centralized standards. All these things we might do, tinkering and tampering, adjusting government to our needs. It would be very hard indeed to do. It would take a long time and patience and experimentation. Changes would have to be worked out.

. . . . it may be true that many of our problems of today are economic in character and it may be true that most of them are economic in character, but it is not true that they are purely economic in character. In the last resort all problems of government as well as all problems of life are problems of human welfare.

I wonder what the historian of the future will see when he looks back at this era of economic excesses. I wonder if he will see as a fact having any significance that in the very beginning of this era the electorate was doubled and that to the electorate whose business and habit of life had made it stress economic considerations was added an electorate whose experiences made it stress human welfare. I wonder if this historian of the future looking back will see these two parts of our electorate neutralizing each other until they become as broad as democracy itself. If he does see this beneficent outcome, I wonder if he will detect the beginning of it in just such undertakings as this one of ours this week. Only, you and I must remind ourselves that neutralizing two ways of thinking isn't just as simple as the neutralizing of chemical substances in a test tube in a laboratory. Ways of thinking have to be neutralized on the floors of legislative assemblies, in corridors and committee rooms, in public forums and in the public press, in small neighborhood gatherings and at the family dinner table.

(Article in the Woman's Journal)

Mrs. Dadourian doubts about campaigns to "Get-Out-The-Vote" and the letters commenting upon her article are thought-provoking. C.T.'s conclusion hits the nail on the head -- "the slower process of education is the only means of getting out the vote which is worthwhile". Yet she seems to contradict herself. She says that the votes that have to be gotten out are not worth getting. Then she mentions with apparent approval the getting out of an enormous vote by arousing in people the desire to vote. The desire to vote is aroused by knowing the issues at stake. Quite so. What we need is a new slogan. Mrs. Dadourian herself has supplied one -- Get-Out-The-Issues.

To be sure such a slogan has tremendous implications. It begins where it seems to me the political education of women has to begin. It begins with devising ways to make women see what they have not been brought up to see for themselves, the connection between the things they want and the vote. Yet you no sooner try to show this to women than you discover how many a slip there is betwixt the vote and the things that you hope your vote will bring about.

Get-Out-The-Issues is a big order. Follow it and you will do no less than reform the politics of the country. Certainly you will do what many men have been so afraid that women in their ignorance might do -- you will considerably upset the existing political organizations. . . .

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M.M.W

1928. NINTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF SOUTH DAKOTA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS.

Miss Wells explained that the League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization which does not support or work against any candidate and in which members are free to follow their own political tendencies. "The League of Women Voters", she stated, "was the first organiza-

tion to invite all candidates for any particular office to speak from its platform. The league also publishes printed literature on matters pertaining to the ballot. The league supports a program of governmental measures and it is with regard to these measures that we do our most characteristic work."

1928.

(From the Minneapolis Journal)

"To encourage women -- yes, and men, too -- to think about government, to help them realize their responsibility toward it and appreciate that government is a science they need to be intelligent about, is the big task the Minnesota League of Women Voters will undertake in 1929," Miss Marguerite Wells, president, declared Saturday. "The task is not a new one, but every year makes its importance newly felt. Industrial, economic and social conditions in the United States are in a state of revolutionary change. To adjust government to them is a problem demanding statesmanship of leaders and the good sense of all the people. The league recognized the part it has to play in the political education that will support the one and foster the other."

1929.

(From the Minnesota Woman Voter, published by Minnesota League of Women Voters.)

MAKING THE JOB FIT FOR YOUR DAUGHTER

Would you think it a great misfortune if your daughter were obliged to earn her own living by working in a store or a hotel or a factory? Or if your niece were obliged to, or a cousin, or a friend?

A sensible mother will not wish to save her daughter from work, but there is no natural mother who does not wish for her daughter a happy, healthy, normal life. If the daughter is young, her mother will wish

for her, time enough for fun and self-improvement. If she is older, the mother will still wish for her, time for self-improvement and recreation. Women want for their daughters enough rest time to keep well and time enough to themselves to keep attractive and neat. If a family is large, if there is much housework to do and not enough adults to do it, a mother will also expect of her daughter some help at home.

So mothers, before they say whether for them it would seem a misfortune for their daughters to go to work in a store, hotel or factory, must ask whether this work would make possible all these desirable things. The answer, of course, depends upon the number of hours required by the employer. Let us suppose it is nine and a half a day, fifty-four a week, and that work begins at eight o'clock and ends at six with a half-hour for lunch.

On such a schedule, a girl must get up at half past six to dress, to get breakfast, to get to work. Not a minute in the morning, therefore, for mending or cleaning or helping the family. Not a minute for anything. At twelve a half-hour for lunch. A rush to some place that is near, whether the food happens to be good or not, and a rush back to work. No time there for errands or for all the little accumulations of things to be looked after that come to everyone. At six, she leaves work. Home to supper. No chance there for errands -- for seeing a dentist, for going to a doctor, for a haircut, or for any errand of any kind. At seven, supper is over, and the girl is free -- free but tired. She was up at half past six and must be up tomorrow morning at half past six and tomorrow and everyday after she must be as rushed as she was today. So even if she is young and well, she ought to be in bed by half past ten. If she is not young nor strong nor well, she wants to go to bed earlier.

She has her evening then in which to do everything -- an evening from seven until ten. She may spend it, if the situation at home

demands it, helping with the housework and doing the things that she was not there to do during the day. If there is not this work to do for her family, she may spend her evening on her own clothes, washing or mending, or taking care of her own room, cleaning. Or if she is ambitious, she may read or study. But if she does any of these things, these necessary things, then for her there will never be any social life -- no movies, no parties, no keeping up with the trend of her age.

In any case, in such a day, a mother will look in vain for the opportunity for her daughter for exercise and out of door amusement. She will have to accept the fact that for her daughter these things can no longer be -- hikes, picnics, and the fun other young people are having outdoors. Only on Saturday afternoon would there be two or three hours free of daylight. Two or three hours of daylight a week are not enough for any young woman for the work and the play that every young woman ought to have.

So a mother with a daughter on a schedule like this thinks -- if only the hours were not quite so long, if only there were hours each day for the work my daughter must do outside her job and for the recreation every young woman should have!

The worst of it is that in Minnesota there are employers who are determined their help shall work not nine and a half hours a day but ten, ten and a half, eleven! Can you guess why? Don't guess. Go to the legislature and listen to those who come there to protest against a bill restricting the hours of labor for women to nine and a half hours a day or fifty-four a week. They want no such restriction because in every business there are rush seasons when in order to make the maximum profits to take advantage of the rush, they must either overwork their girls or make adjustments in their business. Efficient employers adjust. They find a way to take advantage of the busy season for their own profits without sacrificing their women workers.

Inefficient employers ought to be obliged to find a way, too, by a law regulating the hours.

For remember this about a nine and a half hour day: It means nine and a half hours on a wage-earning job. In addition to that, there are hours, sometimes many hours every day, that every woman needs to put in on her own job. Frequently one hears a man, yes, or a woman say, "Don't talk to me about a nine hour day. I work twelve hours." But you never heard anyone say this who worked twelve hours, all of them for someone else. The twelve hours a day and the fifteen hours a day that we hear so much about are the days that people put in not only on the work that brings them in money but on all the work that everybody has to do whether she works for wages or not.-- -- M.M.W.

1929.

(From the Minnesota Woman Voter, published by the Minnesota League of Women Voters.) .

Recently the National League published a pamphlet of appreciative newspaper editorials about the League of Women Voters. Among others equally complimentary these excerpts from the "Christian Science Monitor" are typical.

"* * * perhaps the most conspicuous for the extent of its organization and the practicability of its methods is the League of Women Voters. It conducts an intensive all-the-year-round campaign of investigation of political and governmental affairs for the education of its members and the general public. It seems simply to seek facts and to find out the best way in which to apply the ascertained information to the machinery of popular government."

Such words are good to hear. Better than to lay the flattering unction of them to the League's soul, however, will it be if they lead

to a searching of the League heart.

How must it go to work in order to succeed?

"It conducts an * * * * * all-the-year-round campaign."

It must work not only during legislative sessions and Congressional sessions and before elections but between sessions and elections, not only in winter but in summer. It must work all the year around in order to live up to its reputation.

What sort of all-the-year-round campaigns must these be that it conducts?

"For the education of its members and the general public."

It is not enough that the members shall know a little about the program for which they have assumed responsibility, but it is necessary that they know enough to be able to go out into the community and to educate the general public. State and local and national representatives would neither enact nor successfully administer the governmental measures favored by the League of Women Voters if their only support were League sentiment. They must be supported also by the general public.

How can the League educate its own members and the general public to the point of effective action in behalf of its adopted program?

"* * * perhaps the most conspicuous for the extent of its organization and the practicability of its methods is the League of Women Voters."

In order to live up to its reputation, the League must not only extend its membership constantly, never remitting its efforts to induct into the League women who are or who may become effective members, but it must also devise and develop methods of work that are so practicable that they may in the end bring success to the program for which it has assumed responsibility.

M.M.W.

1929.

(From "Some Effects of Woman Suffrage" by Marguerite M. Wells, printed in THE ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.)

The conspicuous contribution of enfranchised women has not been in the size of the vote they have cast. Why should it be! It takes more than eight years to break a tradition of exclusion from public affairs.

It may be that the infiltration will continue to be so gradual and the absorption so complete that the enfranchisement of women will result in no change at all in American political life. If this happens it will, in my opinion, be an opportunity lost. Every individual, every class, every group, even each sex, has its own contribution to make to life.

.women in general are rather cold to the allurements of politics as a game. The Chicago Post recently referred to the work of a certain woman's organization as "the nearest approximation to making politics a science, rather than a game, which is to be found in America today."

Getting out the vote by every conceivable device has marked women's part in elections, great and small, for eight years. Not satisfied with "ballyhoo" methods at election time, they have in many instances settled down to a permanent effort to awaken in the electorate a sense of responsibility.

1930.

(From The Minnesota Woman Voter.)

.It is still necessary in every League to emphasize what may be called the pattern of the League, to drill ourselves as officers and boards in League methods and procedure, to induct new

members with infinite care into League ways and League understanding. But with the tenth birthday, all at once, there came from many directions the urge to emphasize, also increase in membership.

Every day brings to the office news of some local League that has recently added to its membership. It is to assist these Leagues in presenting the League to new friends and to help the new members to understand the League that there has recently been printed a pamphlet -- "Some Achievements of the First Ten Years."

M.M.W.

1930.

(From the Minneapolis Journal.)

Representing the League of Women Voters, it is in the field of Government that I naturally look for the best things that can happen in 1931. Government is simply the arrangement by which people are able to live together in the world with justice to all, and the present arrangement needs a great deal of improving.

I might look for better international relations -- to the adherence of the United States to the World Court, for instance, -- as the best thing that can happen, because it is one of the ways already provided to make it easier for nations to exist together in the same world with justice to each. I might look to the success of plans now under way for social welfare, because it is a sign of wisdom that a nation shall not forget its responsibility for the protection of the young and handicapped. I might look to better governmental protection of the people from exploitation by economic interests. I might look to reforms in nomination and election procedure to make government more responsive to the will of the people. But in my opinion the best thing that can happen about Government in this country in 1931 is something

more fundamental than these specific measures. If in 1931 we can make more progress than has ever been made before toward intelligent participation of the people in their Government, we shall have the best thing that can happen. - - - - - Marguerite M. Wells,
Acting President, National League of Women Voters

1930.

(From the Minneapolis Journal)

Faribault: Miss Wells reviewed the history of the League in its 10 years of activity. "When the league was projected its purposes as announced, though vast, were concrete: showing women the way to the polls, decreasing the illiteracy the extent of which has been learned during the war, catching up with social legislation which heretofore, because women had not been in the electorate, had lagged. Almost at once, however, the goal of the league became less specific and its fulfillment became not so immediately possible. Within the first year it began to be the purpose of the league to make of the enfranchisement of women an occasion for vitalizing the political life of the American people.

"People who have an interest in government as a science are few and far between, nine-tenths of them at least men who teach or write it and would themselves be the first to admit that they can take no active part in politics. Thus it has come about that in the country which has undertaken the most conspicuous of all experiments in a government by the people, the people participate less and less intelligently than in most countries.

"The League of Women Voters has never had a magic cure for this condition; it offers no panacea and has formulated no easy remedy. It has proceeded as though the way to participate in politics was to participate and the way to learn about government was to study government. It has not only avowed its intention to bring about a wider in-

telligent participation of the people in government, but it has worked out methods and applied these methods. Now at the end of 10 years success does seem more certainly assured than ever before.

"The chances of failure have been many. It might have failed at the very start. Its purpose never could be adequately stated in by-laws or in charter, its methods and procedure could not be handed down nor handed out, but had to be developed. That there could have been so soon so widespread a unanimity of purpose and that there could have been developed so quickly a method for working out that purpose, that there could have been in so many places success in working it out, becomes, if you think about it, something to wonder over.

"There has to be much of determination and of purpose, much of intelligence, much of leadership, much of cooperation. There has to be self-discipline and self-restraint and self-sacrifice for such a feat. Women do not love discipline, either. No the discipline that is self-imposed. They do not love to stick to one task because they have chosen that -- they love to keep themselves free to snatch at the good that at the moment seems best to them. To steer by a distant and not very luminous star when brighter stars appear upon the horizon or when the sun dazzles them or the moon bewitches them is not so easy. . . ;

1931.WOMAN SUFFRAGE: SUCCESS OR FAILURE

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All this is why I say that what you decide about the results of woman suffrage depends upon where you look for these results. It depends upon what you think needed to happen to our political life in 1920. Pessimists about woman suffrage are likely to be equally pessimistic about that political life. They see us as fifty (?) odd million people by courtesy called an electorate indifferent and ignorant about government within whose midst functions a mechanized group of professional politicians out of which the life-blood has gradually oozed, a non-conductor between the people and the government, observing political formulas a hundred and fifty years old with no application to present-day conditions.

If the only hope for woman suffrage lies within this machine and women have really lost hope of functioning there, then I am afraid failure must be acknowledged. If the hope lay rather in a renaissance of political life, then there are hopeful signs. In either case, there had to be a political re-awakening of the people. What we need is not merely a few political reforms. It is a political reformation. It was probably folly to expect this to come through the old political machinery. But out of a popular political renaissance, on the other hand, reform may come to the machine.

Women who doubt whether working with the old political machinery is worth the price are a good sign. The failure would have been that the new voter also mistook the devitalized old game of politics for political life. If, having learned the futility of the one, she is seeking and finding ways to make more abundant the other, we should take courage.

It is a revival of that sort of political life and leadership that seems to be needed today. A new electorate ought to have been the occasion for it. Renaissances commonly dawn in the appearance of some

new group with the courage and enthusiasm and experimental spirit of youth. Add to these qualities to be expected of any new electorate the fact that this was an electorate of women and you have that "tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood" -- might be the saving of our democracy. In this hour it is just what we need - feminism added to the masculinism in political life that somehow has not proved enough. Look at it in this way: a man-made democracy, politically and industrially, has gone bankrupt. In its desperation it has taken in new partners, not to be "yes men" but to contribute something different out of their different experience. If now they do not make such a contribution, these new voters will have missed their opportunity. The enfranchisement of women will, to be sure, take its place in history as an incident in the progressive adoption of a democratic system but it will have done nothing towards ensuring to that system the success by which alone it can be justified.

1932.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON PRE-ELECTION ACTIVITIES AT CONVENTION

(From "League News", bulletin of the National League of Women Voters.)

EFFICIENCY IN POLITICS

"Is it true that the American people are not interested in political questions or is it only true that they are not interested in the political questions that politicians give them to vote on? I believe that the American people are interested in political questions, not only now, but even two years ago and four years ago. I believe the American people were interested in this question, for instance, 'How may we make the hundreds of adjustments between our national life as it has always been going on and the international world in which we find ourselves?' But no leader or no group has come forward with a program on that question, saying 'Vote this up or down,' and been willing to stand or fall on the vote. . . .

"If political leaders want to get out the vote, they should come before the people and say, 'This is our program, this is what we believe; if you believe it, vote us into office; if you do not believe it, then do not vote us into office.' That is not a millennium I am talking about; it is no changing nature. It is just as human to have ideas that you want to have put through as it is to want office and place. I do not think the evils of our political life are due so much to human nature in the American people as they are to our history -- to our history in which those who would naturally find their careers in public affairs have found them in private affairs. Staying outside of political life, they have despised it, and in despising it they have made it despicable. They fear government because they have corrupted it, and corrupting government makes government corrupt.

"What we really need, you see, is more reliance on government, more concern for it, greater responsibility about it, fermentation of political ideas, revival of the concern that we felt in the early days of

the country; a renaissance in political life. There are signs, I believe, of that renaissance.

We have seen signs of it in our groups, hundreds and hundreds of them all over the United States."

1933.

(From the Minneapolis Journal)

(The Legislative luncheon of the American Association of University Women at Benton Hall, Y. W. C. A.)

"The net effect of suffrage on women's organizations have been that they are less rather than more prone to 'take action' on political questions," Miss Wells said in her talk on the place of the legislative program in women's organizations. "Their members have become politically sophisticated to the point of knowing the difference between effective and ineffective political action," she said.

"In principle, the 'lobby' is a bad thing. In practice it seems to have its uses. Certainly the front door lobby, the educational lobby, the lobby in the public interest, of the women's organization, as distinguished from the multitude of special interests lobbies in the halls of all our capitals, has its use.

"The lobbies, like the 'pressure groups' which they represent, are imperfect and experimental attempts to make this democratic system of our function. It is to be hoped that they will in time disappear giving place to a more ideal system of representative government. George Washington said in his farewell address 'All combinations and associations under whatever plausible character with the real design to direct, control, counteract or awe the regular deliberations and actions of the constituted authorities are a fatal tendency.' But then, neither George Washington nor anyone else of this time, had a conception of what were to be the difficulties in developing a democratic government under the present industrial and social conditions."

1934.

(Excerpts from speech)

No one who knows the program as well as we in this room can fail to note that it gives evidence of striking agreement within the League of Women Voters about its purposes. Obviously it is a program in the public interest, not in a variety of special interests; not in local or class or economic interests. Special interests have always been well represented politically in this country.What has been lacking from the time of the passing away of the generation of founding fathers to our own day has been an interest in government for the sake of the whole, the country itself. This need the League of Women Voters seems to me to have been organized to meet. The League may indeed be said to constitute a pressure group for the most neglected special interests in these United States today, the very special interest of the public, the American people, the nation as a whole!

One thing is certain. The test of the League of Women Voters is not in the adoption of a program here, but in its operation everywhere. To learn of the League's condition of health, we must go to the states. If you cannot go often enough or stay long enough to observe everything, let me tell you where to find a pulse from which you can diagnose. Sit in on that meeting, board or other, when the proposed state program of work for the coming year is first considered. If discussion begins with consideration of the program of the current year, what has been accomplished and what left undone, what must be continued, and what may be discontinued, if new items are considered not merely on the merits of the subject, but on their timeliness, and especially on the preparedness of the League to undertake them; that League is healthy. If, on the contrary, discussion begins with suggestions from department chairmen in rotation, who select from the national program much as they would choose a meal on a menu, and if there is a disposition to insist that no department be slighted, the League is, if not unhealthy, at least immature."

1934.

(From the Newark News.)

.....

"Under the circumstances," Miss Wells admitted, "the temptation is to make a great drive for membership among women of all classes, particularly the college-educated and the society groups, whose influence would be helpful in achieving the league's aims. The president has a very practical view about the results of such a campaign.

"If we were to make a large increase in our numbers, we would have to resort to ballyhoo to do it. Then we should have to use more ballyhoo to keep the new members. That is not the way to get reforms."

.....

1934.

(From council meeting of National League of Women Voters in Washington)

....."I have noted your constant concern for an increasing membership.

"I have heard many suggestions you have found good, but no single one you seem to accept as going to the core of the problem.

"I offer such an one. You will best attract members by satisfying those you have. This you have not succeeded in doing.

"You have said members are to be satisfied by program. I agree. But only if program nourishes, not if it causes indigestion.

"You have said members demand variety. I agree. But not necessarily variety of subjects. A variety of subjects is what women's organizations have been offering these fifty years past. It is 'the easy road to Avernus down which programs have too often traveled to a lengthiness that ended in meaninglessness.

"A variety of subjects may not be the only variety to satisfy. Satisfaction may perhaps better be found in a variety of presentation, of treatment, in the use of many devices and of much ingenuity -- with

the occasional variety of accomplishment some undertaking carried to a successful conclusion!""

1934.

(New York, NEA)

. "The first things that must be done is to change the public mind and to make all the people feel responsibility for these who are put into positions of authority.

"Nothing works except alert public opinion. League members are constantly taking the roles of good citizens who watch to see that an efficient job is done in government, local or national. It is surprising what guilty consciences many politicians have. Ten determined women who care only about getting a thing right can produce a revolution at nearly any city hall in the land.

"The reason our women care about getting things right is that they have been aroused to a sense of responsibility. That is what we must do to others -- make them feel that something important to them is at stake, and that they may share what is to happen if they'll take the trouble."

1935.

(Bess Wilson of the Minneapolis Journal)

. "When such a thing is suggested to parents they are apt to say, 'Well, I'm afraid we have no pull. We have no political connections. We know a few people in politics but they all have more job-hunters than they can take care of now. We have done nothing of importance for any politicians, why should they take care of us?'

"That is only part of the picture -- this thwarting of young people who have a desire to go into government jobs with the premise that

it is hopeless. The other side of it is that because of this 'spoils' system and the resulting turnover, government is constantly being over-turned that new and inexperienced workers may take over work for which they are totally unfitted.

"Because both prosperity and disaster have come to us on a nationwide scale, they have to be dealt with by government and on an ever-widening basis. The people of the United States have come to trust more and more of their fate to government.

"Now we have come to the place where we must demand that government do its job well, that government positions cease to be political plums and come to be satisfactory positions; that the experienced trained worker shall not be pushed aside to make way for the untrained, the unfitted; that patronage must give way to quality."

This is the argument Miss Wells and other members of the League in both nation and individual states are using to urge other women to study conditions as they now are, to inform themselves so that they may demand that the "merit system be made to work better and better, that more and more government positions come under the system, and that selection of workers may depend upon training and ability rather than political values.

1935:

(From "Smith College Quarterly".)

GETTING INTO POLITICS.

When American women entered the electorate about fifteen years ago, they met with a rather grim welcome. "Here's the vote," their male fellow citizens seemed to say to them, "and much good may it do you! As for us, we can't seem to make much out of it." Political morale in this country was at a low ebb. Indeed it has long been pretty generally accepted that there is something wrong about American political life. Grumbling about politics, of course, is the pastime of every democracy. It is their growing pains.

A significant form of participation in political life has been represented by the League of Women Voters. Its purpose has been to add active and informed participants in public affairs to the electorate, inside or outside the parties, as fast as possible, in the public interest. It has consisted of women with an innate sense of responsibility, whose concern for community, state, and nation felt itself balked by machine politics and professional politicians. It has secured results by united effort and by unrelenting education. The principle behind the movement is that people learn by doing, and that the proper study of political science is politics. The League has acted on the theory that if a good many women can be assisted to some effective political action, they will have prepared themselves for continuous participation in politics.

. . . . College courses in government are of as little use in good citizenship as Greek and Latin, if they are studied as dead languages. Sometimes people talk as though voting and persuading others to vote was the remedy for all political ills -- Getting-Out-the-Vote. But there has not been so much talk of that kind lately. The vote has been getting itself out, which is another way of saying that people have had something

that they wanted to vote about. After all, not many people will vote because they ought to, but only because they want to. Making people want to vote, then, should be the task leaders set themselves. When parties and candidates present issues upon which public sentiment is sharply divided, there will be a big vote. When leaders are careful not to mention subjects which might conceivably alienate even a few voters, then voting falls off. It is not really the rank and file in this country that is politically apathetic. The rank and file is quick enough to take sides when "sides" are formulated and presented to them. It is a question of leadership. By leadership is not meant those who seek office or hold it. A leader may be more than that, or less. Whoever takes responsibility about public affairs, whether in the city, the rural community, the state, or the nation is a leader.

Occasionally it is asked how far women have advanced in public office since enfranchisement, or sometimes a well-intentioned feminist asks, "What can be done to put more women into public office?" It would be more to the point to ask what women should do to prepare themselves for public office, but if I were asked such a question, I should be tempted to answer, "Forget it." I should then repeat all that I have just written about accepting responsibilities as they present themselves.

But when all is said the important thing to be remembered by those who are by way of "commencing" politics is that it is not necessary to be an officeholder at all, elected, appointed, or under civil service, in order to be a useful member of the body politic. For that, it is only necessary to widen gradually the circle within which one is already accustomed to carry responsibilities until it begins to include those public affairs that are the business of us all, but which, appearing to be nobody's business, have too often been neglected in this country.

1936. TWELFTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS.

(From the Enquirer, Cincinnati)

"Political patronage as practiced in our country substitutes bribery for party responsibility," Miss Marguerite Wells told 600 delegates yesterday afternoon at the opening business sessions of the twelfth annual convention at the Hotel Netherland Plaza.

"Only effective, non-partisan effort can free the parties from the patronage incubus of which they are the victims as well as the authors," she continued. "The league will disappoint the hopes of many a party man and woman caught in the patronage toils if it fails during the trying times ahead."

"I do not fear for the league the defects I have recounted, nor do I deplore confession of them. There is only one danger before which I tremble. I tremble lest we fail to realize the peculiar need of our country for disinterested political service and the peculiar fitness of the league to render such service, and thus to play its part in bringing about a veritable political renaissance in the United States."

1936.

(From draft of **article for** News Letter of Intercollegiate Association of Women Students.)

PATRIOTISM AND POLITICS.

If there were as many people willing to live for their country as, in case of need, there are willing to die for it, politics would not be in its usual parlous state. If as much time were spent doing something constructive about government as is spent in criticizing those who are doing something, there would not be so much to criticize.

. . . .An organization in which women learn to take first steps in assuming responsibility about government is the League of Women Voters. First a League selects a certain limited number of things to do about government -- just as many as it can hope to be effective about. Then it informs itself. Finally it acts. Sometimes it is successful. Sometimes only partially successful. Even when it is least successful it has learned to do political things. It has learned by doing. Its members have started on the road to becoming responsible citizens. Once started, they can find the way gradually to greater and greater effectiveness.

1936.

(From the New York Herald Tribune.)

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The poll rests on a sentiment that is real and deep-rooted; how real and how deep-rooted, the League of Woman Voters has discovered during its two-year campaign to mobilize public opinion. The petitions being circulated by the league, which call upon the parties to abolish patronage, are not only readily signed but signed with enthusiasm. "I would like to shout it from the housetops," exclaimed a public official as he affixed his signature. "I wish you would give me twenty-five cards

to have signed," said a woman who had read in a magazine an article on merit versus spoils.

It is good to discover how many nameless and obscure citizens understand quite well the difference between good and bad in politics, but it is good also to learn how many men and women in high places stand ready with a helping hand. Senator George W. Norris was right when he said in the Senate not long ago that "the patronage system is not only a detriment to the country but a handicap to the public officials who use it." "I can name man after man of my acquaintance," the Senator stated, "who went down to defeat as a candidate for reelection to the House of Representatives and some men who went down to defeat as candidates for reelection to the Senate, for the major reason, and sometimes the sole reason, that they had too much patronage to handle and they had to disappoint too many men and too many women who wanted jobs."

Governors, mayors, party committee chairmen and legislators have borne witness to Senator Norris's claims by their warm approbation of the campaign the League of Women Voters is conducting. Such men know that the patronage evil is not only a handicap to themselves but a detriment to party responsibility, and thus a threat to the faith in government so necessary to a democracy. That threat the people of the United States are aroused to combat, perhaps in greater numbers and with less regard to mere party advantage than at any previous time in our history.

1936.

(From the Cincinnati Post.)

.there must always be much business to transact by a delegate group that meets only once in two years. Especially is it true of an organization that only a few years ago undertook to do an entirely new thing in an entirely new way. The new thing is to engage in definite political acts for the ulterior purpose of learning how to be effective

politically. Learning that, by people without selfish motives, appeared at the time of the League's inception to be the crying need of our country.

Learning it by doing it, by laboratory methods, through a series of what might be called "controlled experiments" had never been tried before. Naturally with so ambitious and novel a program, League conventions are hard-working affairs.

1936.

(To the Good Government Department of the Minneapolis Journal.)

The many replies to your request to say what is needed to assure good government in Minneapolis gives us all much food for thought. There is one preliminary step that seems to me to be essential but that has not yet been mentioned. Yet it is one that I believe to be possible, for I do believe that if any considerable number of us citizens were to make up our minds to conduct ourselves as conscientiously and sensibly in our public affairs as we do in our private affairs, it would make a real difference to Minneapolis.

It is true, of course, that the bigger the enterprise and the more diverse its interests, the harder it is to manage. So it is true that not every Minneapolis man and woman who succeeds in showing his better side in small affairs can do so in larger affairs. But hundreds could, and even a few hundred, if we were to set ourselves to work for a better Minneapolis in the old-fashioned American way of "begin at the bottom and work up", might make of it a good old-fashioned American success.

1936. NATIONAL LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CONVENTION IN CINCINNATI.

. The League never was an organization for learning about government. It has always been an organization for doing something about government. It is true that sixteen years ago newly enfranchised women had much to learn before they could do much -- effectively.

The past decade under Belle Sherwin's leadership has been in my opinion outstanding as a movement for political education directed to practical ends. The launching of the idea by Carrie Chapman Catt was an inspiration. The swift organization of the new women voters by Maud Wood Park was an achievement.

Such is the League's heritage. The time has come to capitalize on it. The time has come to put into practice what has been learned. The time has come to let "knowing more" wait upon "doing more."

I do not fear for the League the defects I have recounted, nor do I deplore confession of them. There is only one danger before which I tremble. I tremble lest we fail to realize the peculiar need of our country for disinterested, political service, and the peculiar fitness of the League to render such service, and thus to play its part in bringing about a veritable political renaissance in the United States.

1936.

(For Miss Agnes Taaffe of the Minneapolis Star)

Miss Wells was asked whether, if elected, she would follow out her previous policies about the League. Miss Wells replied that these policies would not change. She said she had believed for the past few years that the time had come when women needed to lay the emphasis on learning how to do political things rather than in learning about them.

"League members have accumulated a really astounding fund of political lore," said Miss Wells. "The important thing to my mind is that they translate it into political action. There never was any lack in this country of study about government. Our no-man's-land has been between the field of knowledge and the field of action. Not enough intelligent public-spirited citizens have occupied this no-man's land. This to my mind is the field of the League of Women Voters. I shall continue to urge upon League members that just as the proper study of mankind is man, the proper study of politics is politics."

1938.

(From "A Portrait of The League of Women Voters at the Age of Eighteen" by Marguerite M. Wells.)

. Once accept the idea that in our country it is more important to teach one single citizen to take a first step in political activity then to teach a hundred citizens a great deal about government and the worst is over. Accept the further idea that it is more important to help a hundred citizens take a first political step than to penetrate far into political activity oneself, and the battle is won.

. . it is not merely interest in government, it is doing things about government that the League will then have inculcated. Not to confine such experiences to the few, but to extend them to the many is a test of leadership. If well met, the rewards are sure to be great.

The League's test lies immediately before it. The choices it is now making will be irrevocable choices. They will be made either consciously or unconsciously. It is important that they should be made consciously. The hardest choice would be to remain unique, to persist in the ambitious purpose of helping democracy succeed by increasing intelligent citizen participation in government, to base the choice of program upon its suitability to widespread member participation and to restrict it to the resources of the League and leave enough time for promotion of League growth. An easier choice is to continue to develop the already considerable body of students of practical government capable of expressing themselves intelligently upon current political problems.

The easiest choice of all is the unconscious choice, imitating methods and objectives of others, following prevailing trends. To do so may end in a League of Women Voters as a sort of eclectic pressure group on various subjects but restricted to governmental aspects. If such a choice is to be made, it is best that it should be made consciously, not unconsciously. It would be unworthy of the League not to decide its destination and chart its course. If it finds itself off course, it

must re-orient itself. It must travel with compass or drift.

* * * * *

I have chosen upon the occasion of the 1938 National Convention to present portraits of the League taken from outside and within because they suggest choices to be made. They may help the League make its choice with eyes wide open and focused not only upon itself but upon the place it has been assigned in the political life of the country.

1938.

(From letters to an early former National Board member.)

I approve of doing away with "Study items" in the program because I see the possibility of its meeting in some small measure the crying need of transferring attention from the word to what Stuart Chase calls the "referent". It seems to me that only by taking that step, making that rectification in our trend, can women become politically functioning citizens.

I have come to suspect that the National Program of Work in too many cases fosters mistakes in the way state Leagues regard their plans of work. I should like to see attempts made to make it, if not positively helpful, at least not confusing. . . ; .

Can we trust a National Board to seek so carefully real evidence of League preparedness for making active a given federal measure? And can we trust it to prepare the Leagues after support has been entered upon? I'll give you my tentative opinion upon these two questions when we talk. It will depend largely upon what alternative can be devised.

As of course you know, my paramount concern since the League began has been that it should be prepared both to understand and to be effective about everything it does. That concern on my part has increased with the time. I am not satisfied with the need of success we have had in achieving that end. I am not satisfied, I am convinced that the controls that we set up in the beginning are not enough. I am fear-

ful that the letter may be substituted for the spirit. I see danger in too much reliance upon forms. But I feel cautious about giving up forms that are more helpful than harmful.

. I want you to join with me in looking at some problems with a fresh eye. Before I state them I will premise what I'm sure you and I agree upon, that we work on governmental matters in order (1) to teach ourselves, our members and others to consider them intelligently, to look not only at them but to see all round them (2) to learn how to be effective upon them.

I do not know whether we are headed for success for failure in reaching this objective. There is a good deal of evidence looking toward failure. I am not ready to commit myself upon the most likely outcome. I want merely to engage your interest in some of the evidence.

In order to succeed in making the League a kind of demonstration of the kind of citizenship conspicuously lacking in the U.S.A., citizenship directed to the good of the whole, be it town or nation, taking into consideration all elements of each situation, we have got to knit ourselves into a single whole and gear everything to that end. On the other hand, there is the constant current that threatens to carry us into being a sort of federation of special interests, an aggregation of special interests, a collection of pressure groups.

This was likely to be true because our political life is made up of pressure groups, which is precisely why there was need for an organization to establish another sort of citizen interest. But I am bound to admit that the League from the first fostered that tendency instead of discouraging it. You and I no doubt are guilty there. The extent to which we used and developed the program departments is what has done it. It is the one major mistake to my mind that we ever made. The pity of it is that those first by-laws adopted before anyone had experience or we had consciously seen what our mission was destined to be were quite flawless on this point. They provided that departments or

chairmen should be appointed by the Board to do the things that conventions had decided to do. It was we, later, who gave them their static form, set up all the rigmarole of making program through departments. Now we have got to undo that, or we cannot escape being a bunch of pressure groups!

The difference between a pressure group interest and the interest of a good citizen I need not point out to you. But I will illustrate. A Consumer group will think of the Consumer as a class and pursue "consumer interest" in isolation, separate from production and labor, regardless of governmental structure or principles, etc., etc. The intelligent citizen will treat the governmental aspect of consumer in its relation to other economic factors, in relation to taxation, in relation to personnel, in relation to spheres of government, local or federal, in relation to structures of government and their adequacy to tasks put upon them, etc., etc.

I could illustrate by the difference between Peace groups and the citizen approach to foreign policy, if there were any citizen approach in our country outside the League of Women Voters. I could illustrate it by Labor groups, education groups, Child Welfare groups and so on. . . .

Instead I will point out some of the phenomena of this "pressure group" tendency within the League. It shows in the tendency to enter into permanent organized relationship with pressure groups on given subjects -- cooperation -- thus making a farce of our own methods by substituting others.

. Just so long as programs are made by departments, will our programs be an aggregation of special interests and so large that they absorb all the energies of the leaders and prevent training women to be good citizens - in other words defeat the purpose for which some of us believe the League exists. Reverse the process, let the plan of work for the year be made by the League as a whole by means of its conventions and boards, then let the department chairmen do their job of

helping to carry out the plan and you have removed the greatest obstacle to League success.

Upon a reasonable solution of the problems I have touched upon in this letter depends, in my opinion, the success or failure of the League of Women Voters as an organization with a definite purpose.

For years, ever since the league got firmly established, I have had a certain nightmare about it. Not will it live, but will it deserve to live. Every organization that was ever started, has lived. Most of them (don't tell) would be better dead. But organizations don't die, or if they do die they are not buried. All organizations start with a definite purpose. Few organizations accomplish their purpose. Worse, few organizations tick to that purpose. Consider the programs of some you know. Can you tell them apart? Can you discover from them their *raison d'etre*? No, why? Because they travel without compass. I do not complain that they veer with the wind, that they avoid shoals and travel channels. I only charge that in doing so they lose their direction. They become the sport of the breezes that blow, scud from one channel to another regardless of the course they have set. This is a figure of speech to say that the League of Women Voters having accepted the objective of changing the political habits of citizens, will not accomplish its purpose by pandering to those habits.

Why do I write you all this? Because I hope I am to have the chance to talk with you before long and I want you to know what present themselves to me as problems to be solved so that we may make the best of the opportunity. Naturally the problems and hence their solution are not exactly those of 15 years ago at which time, it seems to me, the purpose of the League had begun to formulate itself and certain principles had been established.

The very first thing we had to tackle 15 years ago (even 18 years ago when we knew less what we were driving at) was to set up an entirely new concept in women's minds about what being effective in government meant.

We had to break ourselves of an inveterate habit exemplified in listening to a speech and jumping up at the end to "take a stand" on the subject presented by the speaker. . . .

At this time I want to make another comparison between "then" and "now". Then each project we understood was an artificially isolated fragment completely surrounded by and intertwined with the unknown. By the time we had done anything effective on that one project, no small part of that unknown, was known. Don't let us fool ourselves, most of what we learned as we proceeded has come not from separate shafts we sunk down, called "study" but adhered to the root at which we were tugging and came up with it. Most of what we learned about personnel and patronage came from no "study item" on the merit system, though I believe we had one once, but from experience with child welfare administration perhaps, or some state aid measure and so on. What we learned about state vs. federal government never came from the "study" on a program. It came from work on Child Labor Amendment; maternity and infancy legislation, and the like. And so I might go on.

Eighteen years of experience has carried us away in spite of ourselves from non academic standards. In College there can be courses that are prerequisite to other courses and students may be denied Course IIA until they have taken the prerequisite Course IB. Not so in what at college we call "the world". In the world Course I and Course II usually have to be taken at the same time. Well the League has functioned 18 years now in the world. It has gathered knowledge from experience. It has learned things that the written word never authorized it to know. Also it has had to do things, in the pursuit of an authorized object, that were never "underwritten".

My point is that willy-nilly the League as an organization has grown up and that by force of circumstances, without choice, it is obliged to "put away childish things" as no longer applicable -- and to search out tests and controls that are applicable.

1938. CONVENTION OF NEW YORK LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

(From the New York Times)

Miss Marguerite Wells of Minneapolis, president of the National League of Women Voters, stepped to the rostrum of the State convention in its closing sessions here this morning and within half an hour had virtually reshaped the immediate objectives of the group. Enthusiastic applause greeted her indirect appeal for a vitalized role for the league in the current precarious world situation.

"It was only on a black Monday three or four weeks ago that I for one say, "Miss Wells said, "that if the torch of democracy is to be kept burning in this world, it must be done by the United States of America. What I want to talk about with you this morning is whether the league is on the right way to doing all that it can do to help maintain democracy. I know that many think it is not and I also am very discontented."

1939. THIRD BIENNIAL COUNCIL, INDIANA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS.

(At Lafayette, Ind.)

"The essential ingredient of a democracy," Miss Wells told the council following a luncheon in the ballroom of Purdue University's Union Building yesterday, "is citizens who care about their government and do something about it.

"The League of Women Voters is not really an organization of women at all. What it is doing is helpful to men and women and citizens of the United States in teaching them that democracy does not run itself, that it has to be worked for before it works and that it must be passed on from generation to generation."

Miss Wells urged the council members to learn more about government so they could do more about government. "If you are going to be good citizens, you must teach others to participate sensibly in government." We have learned that to compromise and yet go ahead is the fine art of politics. It isn't principles and technique that are three-fourths of it. It's dealing and doing with other people, because government is just a way of people's getting together."

1939.

(From the New York Times.)

To the Editor of the New York Times:

I wish to reply to a letter from Miss Edith Abbott that appeared recently in THE TIMES and in which she asserts that the women of the country are strongly in favor of strengthening the Neutrality Act, and claims to speak for a large majority of the members of the League of Women Voters in protest against the league's position to the contrary. These are sweeping statements tht it seems to me Miss Abbott is not in a position to make.

To speak only of what I know best, Miss Abbott assuredly is mistaken in assuming that the recent action of the League of Women Voters

IN BEHALF OF REPEAL OF Section 1 of the Neutrality Act was taken by a small number of national officers. It is to clear up that point that I reply publicly to Miss Abbott's letter.

The League of Women Voters, like most organizations and like most democracies, including our own, operates on a representative basis. The action referred to was taken by the general council of the league in biennial session. The council is composed of delegates from State leagues, and the representation this year was even more complete than usual because of interest in the questions that were to come before them. Proposals for the action of which Miss Abbott complains came not from the national officers but from members and officers of State and local leagues. These proposals were made to the national headquarters and from them were sent to all State leagues two months in advance of the meeting. Action on the Neutrality Act at the council was fully discussed and then voted with but one dissenting voice.

As presiding officer, who, as such, was not called upon to arrive at a decision, I permit myself to say a few words on the impression made upon me by the discussion at the council session. Practically every delegate spoke on the question. It was plain that all spoke with a deep sense of responsibility, with appreciation of the vital issues involved, and then finally made their choice courageously. No one who spoke was listened to with more sympathy and respect than the sole dissenter. The choice made may be mistaken -- though I think not -- for no one can be sure of being completely right in the confusion of the world today. But courage of conviction, carefully arrived at, and tolerance of contrary convictions may in the end be more important factors in the solution of today's problems than the decisions themselves."

Marguerite M. Wells
President, National League of
Women Voters

May 10, 1939.

1940.

(From the Member's Magazine, published by National League of Women Voters.)

VOTING IS NOT EASY

Issues to be voted upon in November are partly social, partly international, partly economic, and most of them a mixture. League members have definite opinions about some of the issues through work on them or on others similar to them. This may be called case work -- learning about general principles through study of definite cases. With the social welfare and international field, especially, League members have in this way become very familiar.

Even in the economic field they have gained specialized knowledge about tariffs, for instance; protecting the consumer, ensuring the unemployed. The economic system itself, however, within which labor, the farmer, and the business man operate to produce the nation's living, remains unexplored territory. Yet that system and decisions about how much or how little it is best that government shall control is a major political question which voters are having to decide in almost every election nowadays, either consciously or unconsciously.

Are League members unprepared to make their decisions consciously because economic enterprise as a system has never been a program item? It would be a confession of failure of League methods were this true. The way the League works is supposed to strengthen a member's ability to tackle unfamiliar questions on her own. No one has fully profited by League experience who does not approach questions with an open mind, take time for consideration of all sides, know how to evaluate pros and cons. Add to this what League members have learned about essentials of democratic functions of government; add to it great stores of specialized knowledge gained in work on a few economic subjects; add up all this and we must conclude the League member is better prepared than most to come to conclusions about what is the desirable relationship between government and

private economic enterprise. If she finds it difficult, she may console herself with the thought that no one in the world today finds it easy.

M.M.W.

1940.

(From the Members' Magazine, published by National League of Women Voters.)

DID WE MEAN IT?

The political campaign is over. One of the two presidential candidates is elected. (As the Magazine goes to press, it is not known which.) Skeptics to the contrary, it has been a period of education, as election campaigns in a democracy always are.

The election is over, but its issues remain. Nor have the people lost responsibility for them. Preparedness, unemployment, powers of the executive, fiscal policies, free enterprise, government spending, war and our relationship to it -- these subjects demand everybody's best thinking after, as well as before election.

The American people like to be complimented on the ease with which they forgive and forget what has been said in an election campaign, to be excused because "they do not mean half they say," like the old grad at a football game who doesn't mean to smash his wife's hat when his team scores. In an election campaign, however, when crucial issues are at stake, might it not be better to say only the half that it meant and after the election remember that half? Let us forgive, by all means, but forget? No, for that is as important the day after election as the day before.

M.M.W.

1940.

(From the Minneapolis Times -Tribune -- Florence Taaffe's Column).

"HAPPY NEW YEAR? IF WE MAKE IT SO"

. . . says Miss Marguerite M. Wells in a holiday message especially for this column.

Her message to all of us: "It is not without confidence that I make a wish for a happy 1941, though the conditions of the world seem against that. It is said that it is never lack of opportunity that brings failure; it is missing the opportunities we have. Circumstances can be overcome. I believe people everywhere have called a halt on drifting from bad to worse. Even in our country danger had come so near that we are aroused to combat it. There are signs of an increase in wisdom in many directions. Let us apply ourselves to a better understanding of events and we shall master them. A happy New Year? Yes, if we make it so."

1940.

(From the Washington Post.)

. Last year the league worked for repeal of the arms embargo that permitted the United States to extend aid to the allies.

Miss Wells today branded as words of "defeatism" reports that many citizens think we are going into war and express no opinion whether we should or should not." She added:

"That the will of the minority should submit to the will of the majority is one thing. It is democracy. That the people should have no will is another. It has been, whenever it has happened, the beginning of dictatorship."

1941:

(From the Member's Magazine, published by National League of Women Voters.)

THIS NETTLE DANGER

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 A year ago the National Convention measured the dangers and decided that victims of lawless aggressors should be aided by the United States. Two years ago the General Council had measured the dangers and made the same choice. Three years ago a previous national convention had considered a similar question and found a similar answer. During nineteen years Leagues everywhere have been engaged with the principles upon which our foreign policy today is based.

Twenty-one years ago the League of Women Voters was founded on the ideas that a democracy's success was dependent upon the intelligence and devotion of its voting citizens. No one foresaw then the crucial tests a short time was to bring. Now the League's reward for its efforts is to find itself prepared to meet unexpected situations.

The "lease-lend" bill authorizes unusual methods to translate the unparalleled potential productive capacities of the United States into a reality that will strengthen the resistance of victims of lawless aggression.

What remains may prove more difficult, for our capacity is as yet potential only. To make it an actuality will entail daily sacrifice, great and small. Industry, both management and labor, must sacrifice their own legitimate interests. The rest of us must not only share in the sacrifice; we must try to understand the problems involved. A few of the problems the League of Women Voters already knows something about. Others it may, if it chooses, apply itself to understand. Always it must keep in mind that by acting in concert upon a few measures, it is learning how to be intelligent about many. Such is the League's contribution of which the electorate is in so much need today.

M.M.W.

1941.

(From the Member's Magazine, published by National League of Women Voters.)

IN RETROSPECT

The League of Women Voters, now on record in Congress as favoring outright repeal of the Neutrality Act, deserves to draw a breath of relief.

It is bitter to recall the fatal steps by which a well-intentioned people contributed to the disaster that has overtaken the world. It is better to turn from regrets over the past to resolution about the future. For the League of Women Voters there is some comfort to be derived from another roll call. '35: The League took no action on the temporary neutrality act. '36: The League attempted to get amendments to discriminate between aggressors and victim in the extended act. '37: The League tried for provisions in the permanent act for a discretionary arms embargo. '38: The League told candidates for Congress it favored flexible provisions in a neutrality act. '39: The League worked hard for repeal of the arms embargo. It came in modified form and word flashed to Leagues everywhere: Our ill-considered Neutrality Act has now been altered. Today the League seeks to finish the job with outright repeal.

M.M.W.

1941.

(From the Member's Magazine, published by National League of Women Voters.)

Dear Fellow Members:

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Do you find people who do not yet realize how swiftly and imperceptibly the United States has been robbed of its comparative isolation by inventions that destroy the natural bulwarks we once enjoyed? Have you met people who never understood the dependence of our country upon the British fleet? Have you acquaintances who do not realize that

when this program of defense called the Lease-Lend Act passed Congress it became the nation's foreign policy by will of the people, even as war would be; who do not realize that people need sometimes to abate conflicts of opinion on foreign affairs lest they result in danger to the nation? Do you meet with people who forget that when dangers exist they must be faced with courage; that it is not by dodging dangers that we overcome them? Do you hear it said that Americans could still live happily were the rest of the world to be dominated by totalitarians?

Are there people who tell you that the program of production for use here and abroad was meant only as an easy step into war, not as a plan that if it succeeded was better than war? Do you find skepticism that so novel, so stupendous, so dangerous a plan can succeed: doubt that anything but war itself can arouse the spirit of national unity and the will to sacrifice without which such a plan must fail?

If you have met with all these obstacles, as I have, I hope you are as grateful as I am that so many of us are united to help overcome them. I do believe that thus you and I may help take up that lag in understanding that elsewhere has brought the world to the brink of destruction. M.M.W.

1941.

(Excerpt from "Leadership in a Democracy" by M.M.W.)

My concern is lest through some fault of mine or of yours or of a local League president, League members may fail to realize their own opportunity and their obligation through the League of Women Voters to serve defense now and democracy all the time. A conversation recently repeated to me impressed me, as it may you, with our responsibility just now toward every League member. A gentleman was speaking of the League campaign for the Battle of Production in relation to his own painful sense of the world's predicament and his own frustration in relation to

it: "If I were doing what the League of Women Voters is doing," he said, "I should be glad to be alive today. But I have been wishing I were dead."

.The campaign is the concrete, the emergency, the instant demand upon us. Beyond it lies a duty no less compelling which for long the League has made peculiarly its own, to give active and intelligent attention to the government and thus to discover what ails democratic government and what might cure it. I for one make no claim that the League of Women Voters has found either the disease or the cure. Yet such discoveries in the end can be made best by those who have acquainted themselves with the operation of government and have practiced the art of citizenship. Among these the League of Women Voters is so conspicuous that I tremble lest members be diverted to lesser tasks when so great a one awaits their doing.

1941.

(Galveston League of Women Voters.)

On the 21st anniversary of woman suffrage in the United States, Miss Marguerite M. Wells, president of the National League of Women Voters, declared last Tuesday that the outstanding achievement of women since they were enfranchised was "the extent to which women have become a part of the electorate, citizens among citizens with no 'woman's angle'."

In explanation, Miss Wells said the only advantage she ever had coveted for women since August 26, 1920, when the secretary of state proclaimed the 19th amendment a part of the federal constitution was "the opportunity to become the kind of citizens a democracy needs -- the kind that for some time past democracy in all countries has conspicuously lacked."

"The lacks in democracies themselves have brought them where they are today," she said. "Hitler need not flatter himself that he is responsible. It may even turn out that in future history the name, Hitler, will be associated chiefly with the date marking the rebirth of democracy, for it is true that Hitler has been the occasion of a new love of freedom and a new courage about defending it."

"I am glad women are to be a part of that renaissance. I am glad members of the League of Women Voters have, since their enfranchisement, been getting ready to take part. I believe there is no 'woman's angle' about that part and no man's angle, but only the people's angle."

1942.

(From "Leadership in a Democracy" by M.M.W.)

A growing discontent and unhappiness about the caliber of public officials begins to show itself among the people. The time is ripe to point out that only the wisest and best are fit to represent the American people today. No such high standard has prevailed in the past. Men and women of caliber have habitually sought their sphere of usefulness outside "politics". The people have not habitually expected or demanded the best.

In this hour of crisis, the latent desire of the people for representatives capable of facing today's problems can be made conscious. An idea in the minds of men has always been the most potent of all weapons. Now, as the season of nominations and elections approaches, is the time for unsheathing that weapon.

Let us keep the idea simple but let us with faith in its potency "devise ways and means" to present it to the minds of the people: Representatives must be of the best America affords. The best are none too good. The second best will not do. No man and no woman is too good to be called upon for such service. No man and no woman who is not of sterling worth can be expected to succeed. Constant reiteration of that refrain would stick in men's minds these days.

1942.

(From "Leadership in a Democracy" by M.M.W.)

.The people themselves, people who have habitually remained outside political and party organization, must break through into the political fastnesses and find candidates for Congress of a different caliber. It can be done. It is not so difficult as might be thought. The ears of politicians are very sensitive to the voice of the people in election years. They wish to present candidates that the people will

elect. Let the people proclaim in no uncertain terms what they want and the parties will vie with one another to present them for election.

To arouse citizens to work for a better Congress, for enactment of an adequate tax program, for measures to prevent inflation, to arouse them to a realization of their responsibility as voters, The League of Women Voters, 60,000 strong, has joined in a nation-wide program (in one part of which, the Service to the Public, every member everywhere is given an opportunity to participate). The more I see of the frustration of individuals with no such outlet to their desire to strengthen our democracy, the more I see of organizations with only a paper membership, the deeper my sense of gratitude for the twenty-two years of experience the League of Women Voters has had in understanding political life and in fostering government in the public, not special, interests. We have never yet exerted as a national body the full strength that only unity for a common purpose at a definite time can give. We have now agreed that this is the time to put forth our full strength to reach the public in many and varied directions, and to awaken the sovereign people to a sense of their responsibility.

. Yet the prospect of a long and destructive war bound to leave behind it a sick and bankrupt world does not permit us to feel satisfied even with progress and good will. Nothing we can do is too much. No speed we can make is speed enough.

1942.

(From "Member's Magazine" published by National League of Women Voters.)

A NEW ORDER

. it may be said that though the freedom-loving American citizen is an alert critic, an avid spectator of what is done by government, his own time and his own work and his own thinking are directed elsewhere. If among the 75 million voters there were one

millions; merely one million, whose ruling passion was for the best possible local government, the best government of the state, the best national government, the renaissance of democratic government would have begun.

.With all our mobilizing of manpower to win ourselves another chance for democracy, let us mobilize enough manpower to make good on that chance. Then we also shall have a new order -- a new democratic order. The League of Women Voters can help. M.M.W.

1942.

(From "Member's Magazine" published by National League of Women Voters.)

FORWARD MARCH!

.it was in goals set by the League all those 22 years ago that texts were found for seizing today's opportunity. One text appeared in the first recorded minute of that historic first meeting. Let it be recorded here for every member's guidance: "The Chair in a brief address explained that the League of Women Voters means the banding of the women of the country together in an unselfish effort to improve the electorate." Such an effort, recognized as important then, today has become imperative. M.M.W.

1942.

(From "Member's Magazine" published by National League of Women Voters.)

MEMBER MOBILIZATION

For the first time in League history a concentrated attempt is in progress to mobilize the entire membership for action. Not all the time of everybody, but some time from everybody is sought. Work for what? To arouse the electorate to a sense of its responsibility for government at a time when citizen responsibility means democratic government, and democratic government is the device by which a free people live together in freedom. M.M.W.

1942.

(From letters to an early former national board member.)

. Now I'll write more generally about the LWV than before -- for your comment. I want to know what your ideas are on my ideas.

The League cannot stand still: it will drift or be directed. If it drifts it will be in the direction of ingrowth; more study; more expert work on the subject of government; more paper work.

(1) In most state Leagues flair for political achievement, legislation, etc., has dwindled. The prestige, far beyond its numerical strength, it enjoys because of legislative achievement is due to long-time directions nationally. It would be lost before we were aware of the danger were direction to be shared by the state Leagues in the way you suggest. The approach has become too academic.

I have assumed the League cannot stand still. I have indicated its drift. Now like Pearson and Allen, I prophesy: Unless halted and reversed the League will become the ivory tower some of our impatient friends long ago feared. The popular idea that it was taking out of active political life the very women so much needed there would be justified. My ideal for the LWV has always been that it would produce women with the savoir faire to become a force in politics. I think I would rather see the entire League membership dumped into the electorate at this crucial moment, than that the League should drift further in its present direction. But who can know what is best for the incalculable future?

It remains to speak of an alternative direction. It might be an attempt to return to its original dual purpose: (a) improvement of the electorate; (b) effective legislation. I believe the LWV as it now exists would not accept the premise. It means a use of the League as now prepared as purveyors of a little information and much inspiration to a still passive electorate. The bent of the LWV now,

its avid desire for more and more self-education (a pathetic American fetish) militates against return to that objective.

If conditions ten years ago had been what they are now, I think perhaps my efforts in that direction might have borne fruit. Or if now I were at my then age!

You no doubt recognize some of my attempts in that direction: to break down departmentalization; to rid the program of sterile "study" items; to develop strong state leadership boards, to reduce the number and focus the content of National League publications; to get wide distribution inside and outside the LWV of a news letter calculated to extend education; to get through to the members from the national center one free monthly publication to interpret, and unite the League: the merit campaign, the Battle of Production campaign for the same purpose. The changes in words. The expansion campaign.

Always the effort not to upset the apple cart in the doing. Well, I haven't upset the apple cart, but I haven't succeeded. Now what does the most courageous Leaguer I know say? Shall we upset the apple cart? We need not with the proposals to be made in Chicago. But there is risk.

Should we better upset it? Turn from the dual purpose as impracticable and choose a simple purpose, either education of the electorate, or "needed" legislation in the public interest, or a citizen group of experts in government? Either of the two latter we are well prepared to make a great success. The former, the LWV has turned far away from.

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1942. REMARKS AT OPENING SESSION OF 1942 NATIONAL CONVENTION

CHAIRMAN WELLS:

I welcome you tonight to the most momentous convention in the League's history, save only one -- that convention twenty-two years ago in this city in a hotel only a few blocks from ours, in which we are meeting tonight, when the League of Women Voters was organized. That was at the end of seventy-five years of support of one "item": an amendment to the Constitution, giving women the vote.

As we met together at that time, twenty-two years ago, twenty million women were standing at the door of the electorate of the democracy of the United States. But, that door was still locked; the key to the door was in one more ratification of the Amendment. Then those women in that hotel in Chicago, just before the women of the United States passed over that portal, organized the League of Women Voters, and I am going to read you minutes from that historic meeting.

One was the explanation by the Chair of the purpose of the League of Women Voters. The Chair said: "The League of Women Voters means the banding together in an unselfish effort to improve the electorate."

That is what the League of Women Voters meant to those who organized it on that evening.

Those were the ideas of the League of Women Voters as it set itself up. The world in which the League of Women Voters was inaugurated was not the same world that we live in, today. Then, it was at least daylight; we could at least see our way around. There were some things we thought we understood: we understood that we had just won a war to make the world safe for democracy. We thought we knew what war was. We thought we understood democracy, and one thing the League of Women Voters thought it saw plainly was that the electorate of this country somehow was failing to make democracy all that it should be.

Today, it is dark and confused. We do not know how we are to win the war. We do not really know how democracy can be saved. We hardly know what democracy is. Just one thing we still think we know is that men cannot live free men unless somehow they maintain a democracy, and a democracy cannot be maintained unless somehow the citizens take enough responsibility to maintain it.

And so, in the darkness and the confusion of this day, we come again around the circle and see once more that the first duty of the League of Women Voters is to awaken the electorate to a sense of responsibility. That is a solemn undertaking.

This convention must be a solemn convention. It will be, perhaps, a confused convention, because all the world is confused. But, it is good to be together, some of us for twenty-two years, and others -- all of us in the spirit that actuated the League of Women Voters for twenty-two years, and to set ourselves to that solemn task, solemn but so gratifying, to think that we have survived and persevered and are prepared to set ourselves to the old purpose in all the new ways we can invent. And so we must face it that, from the moment this gavel goes down tonight until the moment it goes down for the last time three days from now, everything that we do and everything that we say will tend to prove or disprove that we are equal to our task.

1942. REMARKS AT THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

.but, a convention has to do more than these chores; it has to make great decisions about the great things or the lesser things you want to be spending your time as a League about. In all our

experience, as I told you the other night, we have never had so important a convention as this. But, you may have noticed and I think you will go on noticing that there are very few votes asked on those great questions.

I thought, yesterday, that the presentation of the League's Wartime Service to the Public was almost the most important question you had to consider, but it was nothing but a discussion, there were not votes asked for, and the only indication there was of how you feel about it were questions you asked from the floor or assertions you made. Therefore, the big things that are before us we have not spent time over and have not voted on.

There were some very confusing questions raised, yesterday, because of this. We have left for today the discussion of: what kind of thing do we want to do actively? What subjects do we want to support legislation on for the next two years, in the way we supported legislation in our great traditions of the past. How can we tackle such tremendous and, in some cases, such new cases over which the whole country is in confusion? How shall we prepare ourselves to do it? Will the National League provide us with anything to help us support such measures, if we should decide to enter upon their support?

How do you think the National League will supply you with material? How has it always supplied you in the past? It will supply you with what material? With its knowledge of the Leagues everywhere, it will supply you with what it thinks important for you to have and what you need. I wonder if you wish anything else than that.

But, some of you are thinking: "Well, maybe they won't send us kits." May be they won't! If they don't it will be because time is racing too fast. We have got to cram, we have got to learn just enough to go on, and learn the rest as we do go on.

Well, do you think you ought to give the National Board some specific instruction as to these things? If you do, you must watch for time on the convention floor to give them that instruction.

.Now, I want to talk to you about something else: I, myself, am on the slate for election to President of this organization, and never once since I have had to consider that question, or even since I have decided, never once have I felt right about it. I want to tell you why.

I am not sure that the League of Women Voters and I wish to go in the same direction, and I don't know how to find out. I have tried and tried and tried to think: how can we put this to a test? How can I learn whether I am the kind of President they will wish to preside over their doings? Because, you know, a president does have policies and does enunciate them and does attempt to carry her organization with her. Well, in what matters do I think that we might not be ready to go the same way? It seemed to me, at the end of yesterday, that I must tell you. I think that the League of Women Voters has the greatest opportunity of any organization that was ever held together through twenty-two years, because it has an opportunity to do something that no other organization is in any way ready to do.

That does not mean that I think we are ready. It does not mean that I think we are even approaching perfection. It does not mean that I think we are superwomen. It does not mean anything smug. But, it does mean that we have at least had one objective through twenty-two years, although we have forgotten it frequently and often we have gone astray. That objective is to keep alive in the electorate of this country a sense of lively responsibility for its government. And nobody else, so far as I know, with any such power exists in this country, today. Well, therefore, I believe that should be our first objective; at least it should be our first until we have learned to do that thing, and it takes a little time to do it.

There is a great deal of talk about consent, and I know there is a great deal of honest worry about how consent of the League as a whole may be given to every broadside and every issue of Trends. And I want to say just one word about consent, I do not want to say much because we could talk about it all day. But, when I heard, as I have heard in these terribly confused and dangerous times within the League, when I have heard about the fear of losing members, if we do so-and-so and so-and-so, if we change our direction too much, if we emphasize in the present what we have not emphasized in the past, if we act on program without kits and study groups, when I have seen evidence of such worry over your hard won membership; I have pondered long upon what consent really means.

I have come to this conclusion -- now you see I am telling you the truth about myself and that is all -- I have concluded that in a time like this, no organization can do what it has an opportunity to do if it fears too much the loss of membership. Indeed I have sometimes asked myself whether becoming and remaining members was not in the last resort the one act of consent any organization with a vital purpose ought to ask. Otherwise, the membership and not its purpose becomes an organization's reason for being. If that were true, I have asked myself, would it not be better that today there should exist no organization, no institution of the LWV but only a new movement of the same women, women who by joining it today should give consent to today's essential services?

Now, this morning, these beliefs of mine troubled me very much. I did not know whether the convention members knew them; as I told you before, I did not know how you were going to make sure of them. Also, I wished in confessing them to make no idle gesture, and I sent, therefore, a note down to the Chairman of Elections, instructing her not to open the polls at the time indicated on your program. I wished first to talk with you as I have been talking with you, so that when you vote you may vote

knowing what you are doing.

Well, even that might be an empty gesture and, therefore, I pondered as I have pondered so many times before: "Well, if they don't want to go on with a president who has these ideas, what can they do about it?" And so I thought up something that you could do, and don't hesitate to consider it because you are not used to it. Do try to do something in a way different from anything you have ever done before, in a way that has never been done before. It will have to be a rush job, and do get used to rush jobs!

So I propose that, at the end of this meeting, the officers retire and that you hold a caucus (and I want to make it very easy for you), have before you all the names that our Nominating Committee has reported as having been suggested for any office. Supply yourself with a chairman who knows how to act and act fast. Decide whether you would rather have a president who holds other views than mine, and then caucus and vote, and then you will have a chance to prevail by writing in. You see, we are trying to make short work of the kind of processess that a party makes such a "to do" over, which is entirely unnecessary.

Then let me assure you that I shall not think -- if I am not elected -- that you don't like me. I shall think that you have relieved me from trying to lead an organization that does not want to go where I mean to go, if I can. And I shall feel very grateful, because you know there is a scarcity value, and if you have been in the League of Women Voters twenty-two years, there is that value set upon one's remaining years, and during the next two momentous years I want to do what I think ought to be done. I want to do that and I would rather do it outside the League than not do it inside the League.

1943.SESSION OF MEMBERS FROM SIX MIDWESTERN STATES AT INDIANAPOLIS.
NATIONAL LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS.

. The meeting is really based on a "stop isolationism" plan, Miss Wells explained, as that is one of the chief interests of the league at present. She defined isolationists as "shortsighted people."

"The kind of world we have after the war depends on whether the party leaders, congressmen and their constituents are farsighted or shortsighted," she said. "Shortsighted policies now are a mark of isolationism. Their advocates may be innocent isolationists, but they are not less dangerous. People may be carriers of a disease without themselves having the disease. They are none the less dangerous."

She warned that isolationism will be hard to discover. "It will lurk in the tug of war of party organization; it will be hidden in congressional debate and votes on such matters as trade and immigration, and assistance in restoring prosperity after the war," she said. "It has cropped up recently in the controversy over an air policy for the United States." Miss Wells said America's part in efforts to make a safer world to live in will not be decided by the state department nor the administration. "It will be decided by the congress, and the public will help congress to decide." She said.

"International cooperation only means," she continued, the kind of cooperation that nine-tenths of Americans at least practice as being the best policy, in family life, in business, in the congress. It means providing for enough good feeling to make human relations easy and to prevent the kind of quarreling that interferes with one's own well being. People who seek good feeling in their personal relationships. After all, perhaps we have only to fit them to glasses to strengthen their eyesight."

1943.MEETING OF NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

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Miss Wells commenting on the Board's discussion of the day before thought that she had not been helpful in the trouble the board felt in their efforts to prepare themselves to go to Leagues and clarify the subject of new methods. Perhaps the board members were making things over-complicated and emphasized our own fears. Miss Wells felt that in thinking of the League we must begin by thinking of the country and a believe in a practical government deriving its powers from the governed, that in order to have democracy there must be a government which suits for the time being and works pretty well, that there are no democratic governments that have worked even fairly well recently and that our own is a conspicuous example of one which does not work as well as it must in order to succeed.

The LWV has something to contribute in helping it to work better and in dispelling the fallacies that may people entertain about democratic government and the things that are not understood. The League has made itself a small something to keep alive the essential ideas about government, ideas which could spread more and more; that the League had the special advantage of not serving any special interests or parties which was certainly not true of the basis for decisions in Congress where little at this moment was being decided on its merits. She expressed her fear of long standing that the League might become an organization apart from political activity instead of a part of it and felt that the League was not worthy as an organization unless it accomplished its two purposes -- that it would be better to jeopardize the League as an organization rather than keep it alive and not accomplish its purposes; that we must "get into the thick of it" even with the possibility of losing members and that quite possibly we will answer this purpose and be stronger and a more useful factor in the political life of this country if we do lose some members. In the end we will not lose, but gain.

Miss Wells expressed a fear of organizations which in themselves had the germ of death if they live too long and become dead but not buried; that it is better for the League to die unless it can be born again. Therefore, there is no need of fear of change in direction and hence in methods. Miss Wells thought that the change of department structure was not complicated and accepted as a structure of all organization the board to board to board relation. She recognized the inadequacies of boards in possibly not being strong enough, responsible enough or having enough wisdom, but felt that you could not by-pass a board and that it did not make people more responsible to juggle them around into different positions. Miss Wells asked how board members could equip themselves to go out to the Leagues and answer their questions concerning the new direction.

Miss Wells spoke not only of the lack of a certain kind of responsibility in the electorate but of human nature always shrinking from action -- shrinking from handing out broadsides and starting a controversial discussion. She spoke of the League's desire to study and the members' unwillingness to "Put their feet into the stream," citing the parallel of McClellan in the Civil War who took infinite care in plans and preparation but never thought his men were ready to go into battle, and spoke of the danger of lingering in the field of inaction out of fear of going into action; that this was behind the inadequacy of our electorate and perhaps as true in the League as elsewhere. Miss Wells also spoke of the dangers of lingering too long in the realm of ideas which satisfy the individual but prevent accomplishment and in answer to the question how much the League should study, she pointed out that the country was filled with organizations and institutions which deal exclusively with ideas, to whom the members could go and which are needed, but that the League itself was not of this type.

1943. (From "Leadership in a Democracy").

. Fifty thousand men and women, whether or not League members,

recruited in all the states where Leagues exist and trained systematically on how to reach their share of the three million, could ensure that this time the United States will not fail its own country and the anxious world it failed before.

One way of accomplishing the purpose is not the way others are following: it is in addition to the speeches, the books, the search into diplomacy and international law, the study of techniques of government structures; it is the hard way of reaching the minds of individuals to whom foreign policy is an unopened book and imbuing those minds with a few simple facts, facts so simple that those who know them well often fail to mention them. In choosing the hard way of preaching the gospel of international cooperation with a few simple truths about foreign policy and our own history, don't forget the warning of the parable about the Word: those who merely hear it and receive it with joy on the spot, they, when tribulation comes and the evil one snatches it away, stumble -- because the roots of it are not in himself. The way we are to try is to impart a few ideas upon which each man and woman can build his own conviction about postwar planning, not to thrust ours upon him. It is the safe and sure way, -- but it is not an easy way. I earnestly hope that you will meet and conquer all the difficulties you will certainly encounter.

1943.

(From the Christian Science Monitor.)

Washington:

"As a nonpartisan organization functioning in the public interest, not in the interest of special groups including parties, its approach remains unique," Marguerite M. Wells, its president, said today.

"Every step taken toward international cooperation means for our nation, as for every nation, an increase in the amount and importance of national government," Miss Wells said. "The more government a country

has to have, the better that government needs to be -- that means, the better people have to be in order to conduct government. That is why we talk so much these days about a better Congress, better Administration, better candidates, better parties. But we shall never have such an improvement in political procedures and in the conduct of government until the people demand it. Until the American people get rid of the lingering idea that they or their sons or their daughters are too good for a political career or too important elsewhere, we shall never have the better government that more government makes necessary. The American people inherit an obsession that government itself is some sort of tyranny. Government only becomes a tyrant when the people abdicate their position as sovereign."

1943. MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN WASHINGTON IN NOVEMBER

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"While the Senate struggles," Miss Wells said today, "to stiffen its members to meet the postwar crisis, the League of Women Voters has undertaken to help stiffen the people. Sixty thousand men and women under league leadership have set out to reach millions of citizens individually, person to person, not to propagandize but to help them lay aside doubts and fear and fortify them for the time when the fateful choice will be made."

Explaining the league's methods, Miss Wells said, "the league's new means of reaching the people is not a substitute for, but an addition to, all the familiar devices of other organizations. It carries its message to those who do not seek it in speeches and pamphlets and broadcasts -- to the preoccupied, the indifferent, those who do not realize the choice is theirs to make. Because the idea is so new, though so simple, and demands so much of so many, it demands much also of the board, who must make plans to carry it out."

Suppose, as one instance, the conversationalist finds someone who says he had thought he was in favor of cooperating with the rest of the world but he does not trust Russia.

Recalling quickly the league tenet -- don't argue, just drop a seed for thought -- the league member who knows her stuff would pick up this cue to ask the doubter: First, whether he would really feel more secure to have us go it alone, knowing that if Russia also found herself going it alone, she would almost certainly decide that for her own safety she must make herself as strong as possible.

Second, whether it might not be better to assure Russia by our own actions that we accept the need for international cooperation and mean to get along with the world on that basis if we can, hoping that she will be convinced that her interests also lie in that direction.

"It sounds simple -- if you're interested in foreign policy -- to adopt this method of reaching the people who may not go to meetings or read papers or listen to addresses on the radio," said Miss Wells. "But we find there is many a woman who would make a speech to a great meeting with less timidity than to talk to someone she doesn't know. That is, until she has done it. Then it becomes an adventure, and it brings a great sense of achievement and a great sense of freedom from frustration."

1943.

(From "Citizens All", published by National League of Women Voters).

Our party system is supposed to help people make simple choices. But parties, though they have done an excellent job in organizing the voters, have failed to formulate governmental issues simply and unequivocally and to nominate candidates pledged to those policies. They have instead kept an ear to the ground trying to guess what issues and candidates would appeal most to a varied electorate. They have followed, not led, public opinion.

One organization, the League of Women Voters, is already experimenting in presenting the people with simple choices on affairs of government. It is an idea already faintly adumbrated in various other quarters and later other organizations may rise up to carry it out. For, it is unthinkable that at the moment when the danger to democracy has been averted only by the skin of our teeth, there shall not be a renaissance of zeal to establish in fact the ideal of democratic government here and everywhere.

1943.

(From "Citizens All")

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Only gradually have the American people begun to worry about the kind of government a great nation needs. Realization of the need for a government by and for the people as distinguished from by and for groups of special interests has suddenly become acute. So has realization of the inadequacy of time-honored attempts to arouse people to their responsibility for government. There are more individuals than the sum total of members of special groups. Millions of potentially responsible citizens cannot be reached wholesale. Preaching and teaching citizenship in mass is not enough.

So a new idea is born: let us attend less to "the electorate," more to the individual. Immediately that idea begets another: millions of individual Americans do not need preaching and teaching. Each needs only to realize that his own opinion really counts and inevitably spreads from person to person. Each needs only to know that beneath every complicated political issue there lies a simple policy upon which by virtue of his own everyday experience he is competent to pass.

For two years the League of Women Voters has put into practice the idea of person to person conversations on issues of the day and of

presenting simple choices to which the citizen may respond with an intelligent yes or no. In doing this, League members have discovered for themselves that the citizen is oftener frustrated and bewildered than indifferent and irresponsible. That released from a sense of obligation to know all the answers to measures and plans, he readily assumes responsibility to make simple choices.

1944.

(From "Citizens All".)

UNDERSTANDING GOVERNMENT

Whatever system of government a democracy possessed, the better it is understood, the better it will work.

Three features of our national government are outstanding. One, government by representation, we share with other democracies. Two are unique, the dual system and separation of powers.

Imagine the plight of a guest on a quiz program if asked which of the three is most democratic! Shall he reply: separation of powers, a device to protect the people against a united and therefore strong government? No, because it is no better adapted to our democracy than, for example, the parliamentary system is to the English democracy. Indeed we are told that the separation of powers was provided in the Constitution due to the influence of a French writer, Montesquieu, who erroneously believed it to be the English system and thus conducive to the freedom of the people.

Shall the reply be: the dual system is most democratic, under which each citizen has two governments, state and national? No, that provision was included in the Constitution as a trade to win support for a national government from the states jealous of their vested interests. Of itself the dual system is neither democratic nor undemocratic. It is true, however, that as the country grows larger, a judicious division of governmental functions between state and national helps the citizen to

participate politically, a sine qua non of democracy.

Obviously, the third, the representative feature of our democracy, is least often praised as being democratic. Indeed about representative government cluster most of the fallacies betrayed in the words "democratic" and "undemocratic". The respective role of the citizens and of their representatives is blurred in the minds of many Americans. Delegating responsibility and authority seems to some a surrender of natural rights. Leadership becomes suspect as "undemocratic".

Perhaps nowhere do words get in the way of understanding more frequently than in this very matter of government by representation. Government officials themselves are fond of emphasizing the fact that they are the servants of the people. But if servants are supposed to do only what they are told to do, the use of the word is misleading. It is good to remember that a government official is the servant of the people in that the people retain the power to "hire and fire", but it is important to remember also that the people elect their representatives precisely because things have to be done that the people can't do themselves.

1944.

(From "Citizens All" published by the National League of Women Voters)

PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATIONS ARE THESE

.The individual joins an organization in order to pursue its purpose. The guarantee to members must be that the purpose is pursued, that it shall not be changed without majority assent and that they exercise a choice of leadership for that purpose.

For Americans with their flair for organization, there is always the danger that pre-occupation with machinery and procedure may become a habit; accomplishing a purpose, alas, less often does. Yet purpose is the sine qua non of voluntary organization. . . . Leaders should be chosen for their ability to interpret and promote it. The structure of the

organization should facilitate constant and direct interpretation and promotion of that purpose. A short-time organization for an immediate purpose may not suffer from transgression of these principles. An organization of longstanding, however, especially in the changing world of the twentieth century, may find that the words of a purpose themselves have changed in meaning. It may find that the original methods for implementing a purpose no longer apply.

It is then that the organization must hold fast to general principles of group action. It is then that by-laws, purpose, structure must be re-examined. It is then that an organization must put itself to the pain and trouble of refitting itself to the time and situation, remembering that new wine must be put into fresh wine skins "else the new wine will burst the skins and itself will be lost."

March 7, 1944.

Dear State League President:

For your consideration I am submitting to you as provided in Article XV of the By-Laws, proposed revisions of those by-laws, both those that have originated with the National Board and from other sources. You will find when you consider them that they all relate to the status of the members and of the local Leagues to which members belong. They are designed to unite the members in a common purpose to which they assent and to provide the means by which they may participate more fully, more directly and more frequently in making and carrying out policies and methods. The By-Laws as revised give the Board's answer to the question: How can the LWV fit itself to help the country meet the challenge of these times? The Convention must give the final answer and

the wisdom of its decisions will depend upon the kind of consideration the proposals are given in every local League.

If League members everywhere are like those of us now serving on the National Board they will find some difficulty in opening their minds even to the possibility that any new structure could be better than the one to which they are accustomed. That tendency to cling to the familiar is so much a part of human nature that I sometimes think it must be nature's safeguard against undue rashness. The National Board, after two years of consideration, is unanimous in recommending adoption of these revised By-Laws.

No one will question the fact that today world conditions have changed, whether we like it or not. Most of us realize that the U. S. is the world's proving ground of democracy -- that many countries look to ours to demonstrate whether a democracy can or cannot maintain the kind of government free men need. We all want to help. We know that the gap between the electorate and their government should be bridged. It may be that some new citizens' organization, product of these times, would better fit the needs of the times than one of longstanding and settled habits. I for one would be content to leave it to others, if I were not convinced that the LWV possesses certain assets others have not acquired: the eye of the League has always been upon government. Whether the kind of attention it has given to government fits it or unfits it to rise to the challenge of today is for the LWV itself to decide.

Marguerite M. Wells,

President