

Mrs. EDWARD PORRITT
PRESS SECRETARY
82 TREMONT ST.,
HARTFORD.

Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association

HEADQUARTERS: 55-57 PRATT STREET, HARTFORD
TELEPHONE CHARTER 8217

SUFFRAGE NEWS AND NOTES.

By Annie G. Porritt.

The passage of the suffrage amendment by the House of Representatives last week puts Connecticut into the list of the campaign states--the states in which active campaigns are going on for the adoption of suffrage amendments at the polls. The long process that is provided in the State Constitution before an amendment can be adopted defers the actual voting for several years. Maine, where the Legislature only passed the suffrage amendment this year takes the vote on it as early as next September. In Connecticut it must be 1919 or 1920 before the towns will vote on the question, for the amendment has to pass through another legislature and receive a two-thirds vote in both Houses. As in many other states the voters will have to decide at the same time on a prohibition and a suffrage amendment, but the women who are most deeply concerned in the one amendment, and quite as much concerned in the other as the men, will not be allowed a say in regard to either.

The details of the voting were of great interest to all Suffragists. In the first place the large majority in favor of the amendment was most encouraging. It augurs well for the prospects of the measure at the next session, when it will need a two-thirds majority to carry it through. It was also most satisfactory to the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association that the amendment received a majority in every county except two--Hartford and Litchfield Counties--and that in these two the unfavorable majority was not large. Suffragists feel that if so much progress has been made in the last two years, it will not be difficult to complete the conversion of the majority not only of the members of the Legislature, but also of the voters of the state before 1919.





Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association

HEADQUARTERS: 55-57 PRATT STREET, HARTFORD
TELEPHONE CHARTER 6217

Suffragists have always been deeply interested in the higher education of women. Lack of educational facilities was one of the causes that started the movement for votes for women. The Suffragists of Connecticut are therefore taking a deep interest in the affairs of the new Connecticut College for Women and are feeling deeply grieved over the troubles that are besetting that institution. The institution belongs to the public of Connecticut and not to the Board of Trustees which has the control of it. This is a fact that the Board of Trustees seems to overlook. The Board seems to forget its trusteeship and to be acting as though the affairs of the college were its own private business to be conducted as suits the whim of the members of the board.

It would be impossible on any other theory to explain the high-handed action of the board in dismissing Dr Sykes without a word of explanation to the public of the causes of his dismissal. Quite serious charges have been made by Dr Sykes against the methods and management of the Board. Not one of these charges has been fairly met. Not one of them has been publicly refuted. But Dr Sykes is dismissed, and all that the public is told is that Dr Sykes as shown too much business incapacity. It looks as if too much business incapacity means in the eyes of the Board too much incapacity to shut his eyes to certain jobs and certain actions in favor of the private interests of some of the members of the Board, and too much insistence on the real welfare of the institution over which he was called upon to preside. Probably this is not the real explanation of Dr Syke's dismissal, but the Board by not answering the charges brought against and by dismissing Dr Sykes after a secret investigation by a committee representing itself alone and not representing either Dr Sykes or the public, lays itself open to a very general suspicion that the explanation is true.

Resolutions are being passed by suffragists in league and county meetings protesting against this contempt of the women of the state for whose benefit

MRS. EDWARD PORRITT
PRESS SECRETARY
68 TREMONT ST.,
HARTFORD



Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association

HEADQUARTERS: 55-57 PRATT STREET, HARTFORD
TELEPHONE CHARTER 5217

the college was supposed to have been founded. The Board of Directors of the Hartford Equal Franchise League at its monthly meeting last Wednesday went on record in two resolutions. The first resolution was as follows:--"The Board of Directors of the Hartford Equal Franchise League, feeling that the people of Connecticut are entitled to full information in a matter of such public importance as the management of the new Connecticut College for Women, protest against the action of the Board of Trustees of the College in removing Dr Sykes without making public any sufficient or definite charges against him.

The second resolution was addressed to Dr Sykes, and reads: "The Board of Directors of the Hartford Equal Franchise League wishes to express its gratitude to Dr Sykes for his efforts on behalf of the higher education of women in the State and regrets that he has been prevented from continuing his work by a reactionary element which was apparently serving its own ~~ends~~ interests and not those of the State.

The amount of nonsense that is being written about Miss Jeannette Rankin and her supposed sobb is getting on the nerves of Suffragists. In the first place we have it on good authority--the authority of several persons who were present in the House when the vote was taken about which so much fuss is made and who were much nearer to Miss Rankin than the newspaper correspondent who first got the story into print--that it was not Miss Rankin who did the sobbing. These spectators say that Miss Rankin, although extremely moved by the importance of the occasion, did no weeping at all. On the other hand, we have pretty general evidence that Representative Kitchin wept openly and that his emotion and agitation were plainly visible to everybody both on the floor and in the galleries.

Here is another vignette of emotion in the House of Representatives which has not attracted much attention. It is taken from a newspaper account of the debate on conscription. Speaker Clark had taken the floor to oppose the measure, and he was telling of his son's enlistment as a volunteer.

MRS. EDWARD PORRITT
PRESS SECRETARY
65 TREMONT ST.,
HARTFORD



Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association

HEADQUARTERS: 55-57 PRATT STREET, HARTFORD
TELEPHONE CHARTER 8217

"Should he fall", continued the Speaker, "I want the privilege of carving on his tombstone these words: 'This man, a Missouri volunteer, died fighting for his country'". Speaker Clark's voice", continued the report, "broke as he uttered the word tombstone. He fumbled for his handkerchief. He finished the sentence as a sob shook his burley frame and then he turned from the lecturn and left the House weeping."

"As his shoulders shook with the emotion of the moment, every member of the House rose to his feet. Many, unashamed, shed tears, and there was a sudden grasping for hip pockets. Handkerchiefs were in evidence all over the chamber. Even members who before the end of the week will record their votes against the principle for which Champ Clark was contending, yielded to the sincerity and earnestness of his pleading and gave him the tribute of wet lids and quivering lips."

Here is a similar story to that about Miss Rankin, probably with an equal amount of exaggeration. One would think it a more extraordinary story than the other. To have all the members of Congress weeping in chorus seems to me a more dramatic happening than to have one lone member sobbing. It should be noted also that Speaker Clark, the leader of the Democratic party, was opposing the President's policy and urging the House to oppose a measure that the President considered essential for the success of the country in the great war that it has entered. Yet the story of Miss Rankin's supposed sobs has gone all over the civilized world, and people who read it in England or Australia will not be aware that it is quite the ordinary thing for Congressmen to weep and sob, and that Miss Rankin was only supposedly doing what every other member of the Chamber is reported to have done, without anybody uttering any protest. Evidently a tear bomb must descend on Congress now and then, and members whether male or female ought not to be blamed if the bomb produces its due effect.

It is apparently assumed in the comments on Miss Rankin's conduct that

MRS. EDWARD PORRITT
PRESS SECRETARY
63 TREMONT ST.,
HARTFORD



Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association

HEADQUARTERS: 55-57 PRATT STREET, HARTFORD
TELEPHONE CHARTER 6217

Miss Rankin represents the women of the country. This is not the fact. The women did not elect her. As a matter of fact she was necessarily elected by the votes of men more than by the votes of women because there are more than twice as many men as women in the state from which she comes. The women of the nation ^{at large} had no share either in her nomination or in her election. No suffragists went west to help in her election campaign. She made her own fight and her election was a domestic concern of the people of Montana.

If the Suffrage Associations had had any say in the matter they would have chosen some woman of national repute to represent them. It might have been Mrs. Catt. It might have been Jane Addams. It might have been Florence Kelley or Dr. Katharine Bement Davis. It certainly would not have been Jeannette Rankin. Suffragists welcomed her election to Congress because it marked the opening of a new era; but if the choice of the woman had been in their hands instead of in the hands of the men and women--chiefly men--of Montana there is little doubt that a more capable, more experienced and more statesmanlike woman would have been chosen.

This is not saying that the suffragists disapprove of Miss Rankin. Their approval or disapproval has nothing to do with the case. It is only stating what every one knows to be the facts. It is only an attempt to put the matter in the right light and ^{to show} ~~showing~~ with how little reason it is assumed that Miss Rankin is assumed to represent the suffragists of the United States.

That the idea should ever go abroad is due to the old theory--not yet banished from the minds of men, though practically contradicted every day--that women are all alike, and that sweeping generalisations can be made from the conduct of a single woman--generalisations that would be laughed at were they made in the case of men.