

# CASE AGAINST SUFFRAGE

Presented by Mrs. James W. Wadsworth, Jr., Leader of Women's Organization Which Wants No Votes

**A** QUERULOUS, unreasoning insistence, an insistence that continues in and out of season, an insistence as irritating as the crying of a spoiled child, an insistence that is kept up until the desired object is attained—that, I am sorry to say, is a form of strategy to which a portion of my sex does not hesitate to descend. For countless generations—I suppose ever since the world began—women have

been using this in their private lives. Women suffragists are now using it in public life. Do the men want nagging injected into politics? This Fall the voters of two States, Maine and New York, must answer 'Yes' or 'No.'

This sentiment was expressed by Mrs. James W. Wadsworth, Jr., wife of the Senior United States Senator from New York and a daughter of the late John Hay, in giving her first interview as President of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, an office in which she recently succeeded Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge, apropos of the impending voting on the suffrage question in Maine this week and in New York two months hence.

"The right to petition the Government," she continued, "is one of the fundamental, one of the most sacred rights in a land of liberty. It is a right guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States. The suffragists, however, interpret this right to petition as the right to nag."

"Their petition to force, by an amendment to the Federal Constitution, woman suffrage upon States that have already overwhelmingly declared at the polls that they don't want it is already in Congress. The President has given them hearings, (disgraced by impertinent interruptions and hecklings.) But still there they are buzzing about the White House like a swarm of gadflies, trying to fret and goad a man already harassed by the staggering problems of a great nation in the midst of a world crisis.

"To be sure, a certain element among the suffragists is making belated and rather lukewarm efforts to disown responsibility for the picketing of the White House. But let us compare these denials of responsibility with the policy consistently followed in the past by all

suffragists, both those of the picket wing and those of the wing that are now gently denying to the others the light of their countenance. Put to this test, it will be found that they are now being made only in the hope that they will stem the rising tide of public wrath.

"The attempt of the pickets to nag and to keep on nagging the President until he gives them what they want is only a spectacular excrescence, so to speak, of the approved policy of all the suffragists—all that they have got dur-

individual voter with his secret ballot.' And during the same year, in an article in *The Woman Voter*, Mrs. Blatch de Forest expanded this policy a little further: 'It is easier to deal with 200 men than with 2,000,000. It is easier to bring influence to bear on a legislator, especially during the sensitive Fall months before election, than on a voter who does not face defeat and can afford to risk our displeasure.'

"That same year Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, President of the National

put into it, and he will not wonder that 'the great men on the hill' were 'afrighted.'

"But do we want the tactics of the female of the species to mold our policies of government, the spirit of our institutions, or the enforcement of our laws? I, for one, am very positive that we do not.

"Let me ask you to glance for a moment at the spirit of fairness that animates the 'female of the species' when she gets on the suffrage trail. In

1912 woman suffrage was defeated in Ohio by a majority of 87,455. Only two years later the voters were again bothered by and the State put to the expense of another suffrage campaign. The voters this time gave a more emphatic answer, rolling the adverse majority up to 182,905. Seeing that the voters were unalterably opposed to having this form of government, the suffragists decided that it would be given to them anyhow. So the female lobby began its missionary labors with the Legislature; and within three years the policy of nagging had made enough converts among the legislators to force Presidential suffrage for women upon the State of Ohio by legislative enactment. But the referendum prevails in Ohio, and the question is to be submitted to the voters at the election this November.

"The same policy of administering woman suffrage, willy-nilly, to the voters was followed in Nebraska. The question was apparently decided at the polls in 1914 by an adverse majority of

Woman Suffrage Association, which is now trying to disown the pickets, said in a speech at Cooper Union: 'I ask you, Has anything ever been achieved without pestering? The Barons pestered King John for Magna Charta, the Revolutionists pestered King George for independence. We will continue to pester.' Also from the same eminent suffrage source we have this anent Congress: 'The female of the species has afflicted the great men on the hill.'

"Mrs. Catt could not have chosen a more apt phrase. 'The female of the species' is a phrase that is used when one wants to speak of the unlovely side of womanhood, the side that is hard, bitter, implacable, crafty. Let any one read Kipling's poem, let him get the meaning that the originator of the phrase

10,000. But the suffragists began their female-of-the-species campaign in the Legislature; and after three years of it the legislators bought peace by passing a partial woman suffrage bill. Here also the referendum has been invoked. 'That' to quote an editorial in an Omaha paper, 'is what the referendum is for. It is to annul legislative action in defiance of the popular will.' But the suffragists are now branding 'as traitors and pro-Germans and bad, wicked, diseased citizens those who asked for the referendum,' to quote further from the same editorial.

"So, neither Ohio nor Nebraska has woman suffrage any more than New York or Maine has it; in all four States it has still to be passed upon by the voter. Yet the map issued by the suffragists to



Mrs. James W. Wadsworth, Jr.,  
Wife of U. S. Senator from New York.  
Photo by Harris & Ewing.

influence the voters of New York in the coming election shows both Ohio and Nebraska as suffrage States. This may be all right; but to me it looks very much like the tactics of the female of the species.

"I hate to dignify as 'militancy' those childish squabbles about the White House gates, or as 'militants' those weak-kneed 'wild women' who quickly grasped at a parlor rather than face the 'martyrdom' of a thirty-day stay in the workhouse; but still, even though the execution was pallid, the spirit was one of militancy. It is this that has roused the country to anger. And it is because

of this anger that that element of the suffragists represented by the National Woman Suffrage Association is endeavoring to disown the militants.

"When Mrs. Pankhurst came to this country the suffragists received her as a conquering heroine. Attention and honors were showered upon her. Not a single prominent suffragist, then or at any other time, raised her voice in criticism of the wanton tactics of the 'wild women of England.' This attitude toward Mrs. Pankhurst shows beyond mistake what the real, sincere attitude of the suffragist leaders is toward militancy. Is it any wonder that their belated denials of responsibility are lukewarm? For them to issue any denial at all must mean that they believe that the public has a very short memory.

"When the suffragists try to masquerade as patriots doing self-denying work for their country they must again be acting on the assumption that the public has a very, very, very short memory. At the beginning of the European war in 1914 the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, then under the Presidency of Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge, suggested a truce on the subject of woman suffrage in order that all women might unite in working for the Red Cross and other relief organizations. The suggestion was ignored by our opponents, and the suffrage campaign was carried on with more intensity than ever. With Belgium, Serbia, and the other stricken countries of Europe crying helplessly for food and for clothing and the other things that women's hands could make, the suffragists devoted their money and their time exclusively to 'the cause.'

"At the annual convention of the State Woman Suffrage Association, held in New York City on Dec. 1, 1915, Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt was reported as saying: 'Have a printed card to give to people who ask you to do any other work, saying that on account of the deferred

franchisement of women you must refuse. Let the card say further: "We are obliged to give ourselves and our money to the suffrage work. Won't you help us so that we can the sooner help you?" Let us take this little button (pointing to the one she was wearing) and make its slogan our own: "Suffrage first."

"An officer of the National Child Labor Committee admitted having had letters from individual suffragists declining to contribute to the work of the association until suffrage was won. At a hearing on the Suffrage bill before the House Committee on Judiciary, only a few months ago, Miss Lucy Burns said: 'It is astonishing that we should be asked to do Red Cross work. \* \* \* Suffrage comes first, and we must devote all our efforts toward freeing the women of the United States.'

"Not only have they devoted their time to 'the cause,' not only have they spent thousands upon thousands of dollars for its advancement, and this at a time when so much of the world is hungry and bleeding and in need of help, when in all probability there will be many dependents of the men who have gone to the front for us who will need financial help. More than this, they have relentlessly forced a Congress already overburdened with a tremendous mass of momentous and novel legislation to listen to their endless cry of 'votes for women.' They have forced busy Legislatures to listen to the same cry. They are forcing their pet issue upon an electorate that should have no other issues presented to it for decision than those growing out of the fearful life-and-death struggle of the world for democracy.

"And now, as to the genuineness of the patriotism of the suffragist leaders and the sincerity of their military ardor: Don't forget all the suffragists who, in the face of this fearful world cataclysm, argued that if women had the vote there would be no war. Don't forget that when

our ships were being sunk, our citizens massacred at sea, our rights ignored, and our national dignity spurned, not one woman prominent among the suffragists declared herself for preparedness and against peace without honor. Don't forget that Jane Addams, Fola La Follette, Crystal Eastman, and other prominent suffragists are still outspoken pacifists. Don't forget that Mrs. Catt, in a speech in Columbus, Ohio, on May 18, 1917, long after we were at war, said: 'The United States has no right to talk about making the world safe for democracy.' 'We had better blot the mote from our own eye before we go forth and want to blot it from the Prussian eye.'

"Don't forget that Mrs. Norman de R. Whitehouse, President of the Woman Suffrage Party of New York State; Marie Jenney Howe, Alice Carpenter, and other prominent suffragists, over their signatures, made an appeal for contributions to a fund to be given as 'a New Year's present' to the Masses; the revolutionary, socialistic magazine that was recently forbidden to use the mails because of its fight against conscription. And don't forget Jeannette Rankin, the Representative from Montana, who, in that solemn hour when the vote was being taken as to whether we would avenge the U-boat butcheries of our men, women, and children, whether we would take our stand with the Allies in the death struggle of democracy against militarism, stood up in the House of Representatives and quavered, 'I want to stand by my country, but I cannot vote for war, and broke down and wept.

"Government is a man's job. And I have no doubt that at the coming elections Maine and New York will continue with that imposing galaxy of States—Michigan, South Dakota, Ohio, North Dakota, Nebraska, Missouri, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Iowa, and West Virginia—which in the last four years have voted an emphatic 'no' to the cry of 'Votes for Women.'"



Workers in the Maine Campaign for Woman Suffrage.

Front row, left to right: Miss Eudora W. Ramsay of South Carolina, National Organizer; Mrs. Deborah Knox Livingston of Maine, Chairman of the State Committee; Mrs. Albert McLahan of Virginia, National Organizer.  
Second row: Miss Alice B. Curtis of New York, Secretary to Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt; Miss Lola C. Trax of Maryland, National Organizer; Miss Gertrude Watkins of Arkansas, National Organizer.  
Third row: Mrs. Eulalie E. Collins of Maine, bookkeeper at State Suffrage Headquarters; Miss Florence L. Nye of Maine, Executive Secretary to Mrs. Livingston; Mrs. Jeannette Sterling Grove of Tennessee, National Organizer.

ing the past few years has been got by nagging legislators.

"Do you know that since the close of 1912 the voters of thirteen States, including such big States as New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Missouri, have declared at the polls that they do not want woman suffrage; and that the voters of only two States, Nevada and Montana in 1914, have said that they want it? All the other gains, of which the suffragists have been so brazenly boasting, have been won in the State Legislatures by female lobbies.

"It is impossible to round up the voters and nag them into action, but a legislator can be cornered. At the Suffrage Convention of 1916 in Atlantic City Mrs. Ida Husted Harper said: 'We have had enough of appealing to the