

"PRESSURE" FOR SUFFRAGE

Three Interlocking Systems of Political Machinery Used by Women in Converting the Members of Congress

IT has been related how an elaborate card index, containing detailed information about each member of Congress, was employed in converting Senators and Representatives to the votes-for-women idea. The political pilots of the movement now assert that they have converted a sufficient number of statesmen to assure a suffrage victory. And it develops, incidentally, that the card index was only one of three media of pressure brought to bear on members of Congress. The three distinct pressure machines within the main suffrage organization have been the following:

First, the card index direct pressure system, presided over by Miss Maul Younger and her corps of lobbyists, supplied with all information needed in connection with their personal visits to members of Congress.

Second, the pressure-from-above Political Committee, of which Mrs. Abby Scott Baker is Chairman, intrusted with winning over by personal interviews the little groups of men having most influence with the Senators or Representatives in process of conversion.

Third, the pressure-from-below Organization and Legislative Committee, headed by Miss Doris Stevens, reaching out from Washington to the State organizations and through them to the people in the members' home States.

The three pressures have been brought into simultaneous play. The method was to start the pressure from below first and to apply the pressure from above last as the finishing touch. To Mrs. Baker, who is a Washington social leader, is given the palm by the National Woman's Party as its best diplomatist. She is thus described in a piece of literature obtained at the party headquarters:

"Mrs. Baker is sent on more difficult missions for the National Woman's Party than any other member of the party. When some particularly difficult manoeuvring is required to secure certain political support Mrs. Baker is chosen to secure it; when a source of financial help grows crochety Mrs. Baker is called upon to start the stream of generosity.

"She has the prime requisites of a diplomatist, an alluring personality, one that piques curiosity and that, while it inspires confidence, suggests mystery. She has also the other not essential but very useful quality in diplomatists—great personal beauty and distinction of appearance. Mrs. Baker, because of her friendship with the important men of her day and her constant interviews with them, knows probably beyond any one else the undercurrents of influence in the suffrage movement—the situation behind the scenes."

But for the three pressures suffrage would still be a long way from victory. That is admitted at the women's headquarters in Washington, where confident



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Miss Alice Paul, Militant Chairman of the National Woman's Party.

predictions are now forthcoming that the bill will be passed soon. Claiming two new votes, those of Senator Harris of Georgia and Senator Keyes of New Hampshire, the militant suffragists say they are assured of a margin of two above the votes needed in the Senate, and they have no doubt of the House.

A Senator, who had been a leader in the fight against the suffrage amendment, said just before the adjournment of the last Congress:

"Three-fourths of the Senators who have come out in favor of the amendment are against it in their hearts. They have been politically sandbagged."

This was an extreme statement from a heated partisan, but it is probably no exaggeration to say that no fewer than

one-third of the Senators were swung over when, if they had followed their own individual opinions, they would have remained in the column of the antis. Never before had they been brought into contact with such a political machine as was shoving them along. The impact of the three pressures gave them a push from behind and from each side.

More surprised than ever would they have been if they could have seen the woman who directed the lever that set the three pressures at work—Miss Alice Paul, Chairman of the National Woman's Party. She is a Quaker. At first sight she looks that part more than the militant suffragist who, for picketing the President, received a sentence of seven months' imprisonment. Her manners

are quiet, her voice low. She is apt to keep her hands crossed on her lap. It is only on close scrutiny that one perceives her underlying firmness and ability to fight to a finish.

It is related that, when Miss Paul was first arrested and was on one of her starvation strikes, her mother wrote from their home in Morristown, N. J., where the suffrage leader was born in 1885:

"Why has thee been arrested, Alice?"

The answer must have been sufficient, for the daughter continued on her way, to greater extremes.

Miss Paul is a graduate of Swarthmore College and, after a course in the New York School of Philanthropy, went to England to study labor problems in the Universities of London and Birmingham. Her followers at the Washington headquarters say it was while working among the women in the slums of London that she decided to return to America and devote herself to suffrage. Before she founded the National Woman's Party in 1913, she was associated with the older suffrage association. But from the first, her admirers recall, she was for downright fighting, contending that women must first free themselves by fighting for and asserting their rights before they could really be entitled to the ballot.

That was not a Quaker attitude, and another method she adopted was in just as sharp contrast. As is now made clear in the revelations of the three pressures, she resolved to take politics as she found it. She had made a study of representative government behind the scenes, and she took the tools of the boss politician in bringing political pressure to bear. It is now conceded by the best of the men politicians that she played their game with extraordinary success. She gave those members of Congress who had their ears to the ground their own medicine, fortified to a new degree and in such a way that they hardly knew what was happening to them.

For all the strain and excitement of the campaign, Miss Paul has retained her Quaker-like reticence. Her publicity agents have been unable to overcome her distaste of interviews, but after several visits the interview presented below was brought about a few days ago. The interviewer had already got hold of the three-pressure system, and Miss Paul was asked if she would illustrate with a real live Senator how the three-armed machine worked.

"There is the case of Senator Keyes of New Hampshire, who is the latest to come over," she answered. "We call Miss Younger's card index organization our thermometer. She gathers the information and finds out how the men stand; also she deals directly through the lobby with the members here in Washington. She reported that there was no hope of getting Senator Keyes



Miss Maud Younger, Lobby and Card Index Chairman.

by direct action. Then the Political Committee was notified. Mrs. Baker saw every one in power that could bring any influence to bear. We had from Miss Younger the information as to whom to see. Mrs. Baker had personal interviews with Mr. Hays, Chairman of the Republican National Committee, and with men prominent politically in Senator Keyes's home State.

"At about the same time the Legislative Committee under Miss Stevens got to work. Miss Stevens went to New Hampshire to get the organization there to speak out to Senator Keyes, to get all the forces in the State there for suffrage to make themselves heard in favor of it. If the State forces for suffrage are not made articulate, nothing is accomplished. We have a strong State organization in New Hampshire, and they made themselves heard, and while the two committees under Mrs. Baker and Miss Stevens were pressing their work Senator Keyes gave out a declaration yesterday that he would vote for the amendment. I do not mean to claim that what we did led him to make the change.

"The same course has been pursued with regard to others whom we have won over from the 531 members of Congress. Of course, if we can persuade a man by direct argument through Miss Younger's committee, there is no need of going any further, but we don't give up because we find the man can't be persuaded. We turn to his people at home, or his party, and to men of influence to whose advice he is known to give heed. We think a member is more likely to be converted by seeing what his party wants than by arguments."

"Will you name some of the men of influence who have talked to members of Congress in your behalf?" was asked.

"Colonel Roosevelt was one of our best helpers," was the answer. "He would invite some one whom we needed to change and who was a member of his party to lunch, or to Oyster Bay, or call him up and talk to him over the telephone. There are at least five Republican Senators whom we think Colonel Roosevelt was either wholly or partly influential in changing over. Ex-Chief Justice Hughes has also helped us; in response to a visit from a member of the Political Committee, he wrote out a statement supporting suffrage which was of much assistance to us. Colonel William Boyce Thompson of New York, who has large business connections, has also seen many for us."

"Have you considered the political morality of bringing pressure on a member of Congress to vote against his real convictions?"

"We think it is the duty of a Congressman to represent the people in his vote instead of his own personal opinion, and through our organization we seek first to create and organize that public opinion and then to bring it to bear on the member. This the Congressmen themselves recognize. Senator Mc-

Cumber was opposed to suffrage, and, I understand, still is, but when, following our efforts in his home State, the Legislature passed a resolution in favor of it, he took that as a mandate, and we won his vote. Senator Culbertson is



Mrs. Abby Scott Baker, Political Chairman.

another instance; we got two-thirds of the members of the Legislature in his State to sign a petition in favor of the amendment, and that resulted in the addition of the Texas Senator to our list. We have a strong organization in South Carolina, and when Senator Pollock was elected we turned on him a body of opinion, and Senator Pollock is now for suffrage. Senator Sutherland of West Virginia was for suffrage, but hesitated to cast his vote for it in the Senate because he thought the people of his State were opposed to it; lots of money had been spent to fight suffrage in West Virginia, and we had to show through our State organization in West Virginia that the sentiment was really in favor of the amendment."

"But if the amendment goes through, you will impose suffrage on some States where recent votes have shown they are opposed to it."

ment the woman suffragists began to work on Congress for an amendment, but side by side the work in the States was continued. Finally, nine States were won for suffrage. Then it was made clear that there was no use in going ahead any longer in this way, but instead to make of the nine States a sort of lever to force through a constitutional amendment. For that purpose this organization was formed in 1913, and since then its efforts have been wholly concentrated on that purpose.

"In connection with the other branches of the campaign the militant demonstrations have been of much help. That was particularly noticeable in the case of the President, whose support we needed most of all. Whenever we picketed the White House we noticed the President became more active in our cause, and whenever we let up there was a relaxation. We were on hand when he arrived in Boston on his return from Europe, and we learned afterward that one of the first things the President did on reaching



Miss Doris Stevens, Organization Chairman.

"That is no doubt true," said Miss Paul; "but this is something women in every State want, and we are proceeding according to the machinery of the Government by constitutional amendment; we are not attempting to overturn the Government, as men have done in extending the ballot among them. We are fighting a battle without a vote in the decision; if the women had the vote in determining suffrage there would be no doubt about the issue at the polls in any State. But they have not, and under the plan to get through a constitutional amendment three-fourths of the States control the other fourth."

To concentrate on a constitutional amendment was Miss Paul's conception.

"The suffrage fight began in 1840," she said, "with an effort in the States one by one. When the negroes were enfranchised by a constitutional amend-

Washington was to send for Senator Jones of the Senate Suffrage Committee and ask him not to fail to call up the amendment again before adjournment. If that had been possible the amendment would now be a law, for we had pledged the additional vote of Senator Gay of Louisiana, and that vote would have carried the measure through."