

Copy of a letter from Mrs. Jacobs to the Press defin-
ing the difference between the National American Woman
Suffrage Association and the Woman's Party.

There are two distinct and separate national organizations of suffragists in America; one is the National American Woman Suffrage Association, with affiliated branches in every State in the Union, and locals in every congressional district; the other is the Woman's Party, a newer group of comparatively few women, so-called militants. The policies and methods of work of the two associations are entirely different, although both are, of course, working for the same end, namely, the enfranchisement of women.

The National Association has more than two million members; its officers are Dr. Anna Shaw and Mrs. Carrie C. Catt. This Association believes in working for the ballot by both the State and Federal routes; it is absolutely and consistently non-partisan, and it is the organization with which Alabama suffragists have been affiliated since their beginning.

The Woman's Party (whose workers are now in our midst and who are expecting to organize a branch in Alabama) is headed by Miss Alice Paul. The Party advocates only the Federal way of getting the ballot; is partisan in practice; is responsible for the banner being displayed in the House of Representatives during President Wilson's address; for picketing the White House; it believes in "holding the party in power responsible for the passage of the Federal Amendment by Congress." This anti-party policy has resulted in several things; it has swerved to antagonize the Democrats (the party in power), from President Wilson down to the individual democratic Congressmen; in its practical application it has meant that when the Woman's Party toured the Western States where women vote, they not only campaigned vigorously against Mr. Wilson's re-election, but against the re-election of any Democrats to Congress. Now, the suffragists know that in the Senate and House there are many Democrats who have not only been lifelong believers in suffrage, but who have worked and voted for the Federal Amendment. To the Woman's Party, however, the individual Congressman's record and vote on suffrage makes not a whit of difference, their only reason for marking him for defeat being that he is a Democrat, belongs to the party in power, hence must not return to Washington. Of course, the reading public is aware of how little effect the campaign against President Wilson's re-election had in influencing the Western women's votes, for it was their votes which kept him in the White House!

If a branch of the Woman's Party is organized in Alabama, naturally such branch will be expected to advocate the definite policies of the Executive Committee of which Miss Paul is Chairman, and to work actively against the re-election to Congress of any Alabama Democrat; or it may be that local women will not be asked to defeat the Democrats until after they receive their enfranchisement at the hands of the Democrats! There being practically no other but the Democratic Party in the State, it is not difficult to foresee political hari-kari awaiting any such group of suffrage logicians in Alabama.

But aside from the point of whether or not Alabama women approve or disapprove of the policies of the Woman's Party, another consideration must outweigh, it would seem, and that is the waste of energy and effort in maintaining two suffrage organizations, both working for the Federal Amendment.

The suffragists are pledged to the principle of conservation as well as the practice of elimination of waste. So much has appeared in the press concerning these two things, especially in reference to the food situation, that there would seem to be no further necessity to call to the attention of the patriotic women of Alabama their duty in these matters. But what does not at the moment appear to be equally clear is the conservation of their energies and resources and the elimination of wasted effort in securing the ballot.

For six years the Alabama Equal Suffrage Association has been actively at work endeavoring to obtain the vote, by means of a Federal Amendment through Congress, or by changing the State Constitution, through act of the Legislature. The growth of our organization itself as well as the growth of suffrage sentiment in the State, is a matter of common knowledge and is the direct result of the self-sacrifice, intelligence and devotion of the Alabama suffragists. One reason we have made such headway in the State is because we have presented an unbroken front; there has been united effort, whether in going before the Legislature or in presenting our cause to our Congressmen. There certainly would seem to exist no need, in these busy times, for overlapping or duplication of effort, in short, no need for two groups in Alabama making the same demands on Congress.

There is no "royal road" to suffrage; like other reforms, it must be a gradual evolution; like other possessions worth having, the ballot, when given the women of the South, will represent struggle and consequent growth. Few there are, even in this "conservative" part of the country, who are unwilling to acknowledge that suffrage is not only coming, but that it is almost here. It may come by the Federal route, it very likely will, but not until there are enough Congressmen (Democrats, Republicans, Socialists and Prohibitionists) voting to submit the question to the various State Legislatures, and then not until the Legislatures of thirty-six States have acted favorably. As everybody knows, Congress can not alone enfranchise women; so it behooves the suffragists of this State to continue what they have so well begun, namely, their efforts to stir the manhood of Alabama to a realization of the injustice being done, in continuing to keep us in the doubtful company of incompetents, the negroes, children, lunatics and criminals. When we succeed in this, we will be ready for ratification by the State Legislature of the Federal Amendment.

PATTIE RUFFNER JACOBS.