

AN ANSWER AND A CHALLENGE

To the Editor:

It is difficult for me to believe that women in their sane minds could have put forth such a jumble of misstatements as are contained in a recent issue of your paper under the authorization of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. Very sheltered and ignorant ladies, wholly uninformed of the great movements, good and bad, in the world, might be excused for a great confusion of mind. But when a newspaper which can make no such excuse, however much opposed to woman suffrage it may be, prints such matter, one is at a loss to know what to make of it. If the material is not legally libelous, it borders so closely on the edge of it, as to make it unethical for any newspaper to give it space.

To begin with let me say that nothing would give suffragists more satisfaction than an investigation into the sources of their support and the items of their expenditures. Our books are audited semi-annually by certified accountants and always have been open for examination. Our financial record for fifty years is as clear as the fresh driven snow. Not a dollar has come from any source which we would not be willing to announce from the house tops.

Misstatement Number one: I speak for the National American Woman Suffrage Association. This body has nothing whatever to do with the Woman's Party, its finances nor its tactics. I have never said at any time or place that the National Board spends a million dollars a year. I have said and I repeat that the national State and Local boards spend about a million dollars a year and I add that every one of these hundreds of boards would be glad to make an accounting of their receipts and expenditures to whomever it may interest.

Misstatement Number two: The President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association has no sympathy or patience whatsoever with the I. W. W. and the women who say she is at "the head of a movement to organize a woman's I. W. W." make a charge absolutely without foundation and must misrepresent her with full knowledge and wilful intent.

Misstatement Number three: Rosika Schwimmer did not come to this country with or without peace resolutions by appointment of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance. She came by her own volition and at her own expense. She was not an officer of the Alliance when she came, and was not president of the Hungarian Suffrage Association. I think she was never president of that body.

Misstatement Number four: It has never been charged by anyone but anti-suffragists that Frau Schwimmer was an "agent of the German Government at the time of her activities on behalf of the adoption of woman suffrage" in this country.

Misstatement Number five: Frau Schwimmer had nothing whatever to do with the organization of the German American Suffrage Committee. That Committee was organized in 1915 and lasted for a few weeks. It was organized for the purpose of putting suffrage propaganda before German voters who soon would have the opportunity to vote on a suffrage amendment. Its officers were highly educated, distinguished, loyal and patriotic German-Americans. I have never heard that any member of that Committee was disloyal by word or deed. All von Dernburg had to do with it was to make a speech at a public meeting and this many months before any one suspected his objective in this country. There were also French, Scandinavian, Russian and numerous other similar committees organized for similar purposes.

Misstatement Number six: No one has ever said that knowledge of his family, his church and his lodge, kept on card index, is used to influence a legislator's attitude on the Federal

Amendment. The record of men is kept naturally -- a system followed by every sensible organization looking to legislation.

Misstatement Number seven: By lifting out of its context a half sentence and thrusting it in with other inferences, a meaning quite contrary to the real one is given in two or three whereas's. That treatment is not the work of foolish minds. It is the diabolical trickery of paid employees who are making anti-suffragists appear in a role they little suspect. However anxious they may be to refrain from voting there are some respectable women among them who would not lend their names if they had the slightest comprehension of the insidious, scrambled, deliberately misleading matter to which their names are signed.

Misstatement Number eight: The resolution asking investigation into connection between the National and International Suffrage Associations and Socialists of Europe, etc., attempts to put the idea of a real connection in the public mind. Any person with a modicum of public information knows that the International Socialists years ago commanded their women not to join or take part in the "bourgeois" suffrage movement and in consequence the suffrage movement in this and all other countries has few members who are also members of the Socialist Party. There are some Socialist women who do their suffrage work inside their own party.

The suffrage associations are now and always have been constructive, loyal, high-minded propagandists aiming to remove political disability from women -- nothing more, nothing less.

"Those whom the Gods destroy they first make mad" and when women who pose as persons endowed with ordinary wit put forth such a mass of misrepresentations and venomous personalities as a substitute for reasons why women should not vote, it is clear that the end is near.

The Senate has been kept pretty well engrossed in investigations but by all means let us have another. Already those investigations have exhibited a letter from Hugh Fox in a letter to Fred Miller Brewing Company, in which he says "We are in a position to establish channels of communication with the leaders of the anti-suffrage movement for our friends in any state"! When the Boston and Maine political ventures were investigated by the N. H. Public Service Commission another trail to the antis was revealed and still another stood bared the other day, when through the investigation of the Packers' Trust it was brought out that this trust had been advised by its confidential agent to make a secret contribution to Mrs. Wadsworth's anti-suffragist fund, and that Senator Wadsworth was referred to for "advice" by Mr. McManus, one of the Swift lawyers.

These investigations are tearing open anti-suffrage secrets and connections. What then? With loud acclaim they attempt to distract attention from themselves by shouting "Let us investigate the suffragists". Let him who will investigate. Suffragists have nothing to conceal. Can the antis say--and prove--as much?

Very truly yours,

Carrie Chapman Catt.