

R E P O R T O F T H E P R E S I D E N T

Woman's Franchise League
of Indiana

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When I took office a year ago I had entrusted to me Partial Suffrage for our women and two likely chances for full suffrage. I am afraid I seem a poor custodian. ~~Now~~, what has become of these things? Two gone, and the third no farther forward than it was. Some good has come out of all the wreck, however.

You all know that for some months, we considered ourselves, and, what is more impressive, were considered by the general public and the politicians, as voters. We have all shared in that sudden change in our relative importance.

Over night we became of interest to both political parties. I believe we all thoroughly enjoyed our sudden popularity and were amused at the way we were courted. That taste of power, has been fatal. Many women hitherto not interested in suffrage now demand to know why they may not vote. ~~We have~~ ^{The withdrawal of the voting privilege} enormously increased the number of women interested in suffrage. To the general public, political or otherwise, we can never again be the negligible quantity we were before. The fact remains that for a while we were voters. and all the effect of that is not lost.

Mistakes have been made this year; that was inevitable with new officers. Difficulties have been encountered- some of which had been anticipated and some which were a surprise. Miss Bosart and I have labored alike, under the disadvantages of working miles apart, instead of in the same office. This has ~~enormously~~ complicated things for us both.

Seriously

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

During the year the President has presided over -
10 Board meetings, which includes two Conferences: one large conference of workers in Indianapolis in August, with Mrs. Catt in attendance, and one small Conference, 2 days with the District Chairmen in January, also -
12 Executive Committee meetings.

She has made 24 trips to Indianapolis on League business - 14 besides Board meetings, (all but one of more than one day's duration.)

She has been in 10 of the 13 districts, paying 43 League visits.

She has tried to reply to all letters as promptly as possible.

She has taken over the work of two committees whose chairmen resigned, Educational and Speakers' Bureau, and has tried to assist in the work of other committees.

Through the President's office two new departments have been instituted, the War Service and Publicity Departments.

She has carried on, as best she could, the work which came to her as Representative of the Franchise League in the Woman's Section of the State Council of Defense.

In December she represented the League in Washington.

These things you know. What you do not know is the great human relationship which has sprung up, the scores of letters each month, which have brought vividly before me the women of all parts of the State - their needs and possibilities. I close my year's work with a memory of united and unified human interest ,

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the written expression of which I might take with me, but it constitutes a valuable part of the records of the office, human documents alive with spirit and splendid energy. Sometimes of the note of discouragement is sounded, but never permanently. Perhaps you would be interested to know to what extent this correspondence with the Leagues and individuals has grown.

No. of letters received from Board Members . .	324
No. of letters sent out to Board Members . . .	265b
No. of letters received from leagues, . . .	317
No. of letters sent out to leagues	305
No. of letters received from the National, . .	175
No. of letters sent out to the National . . .	125
No. of miscellaneous letters received	900
NO. of miscellaneous letters sent out	950
Total no. received,	1716
" " sent out,	1645
No. of form letters sent out for which	
stencils had to be made	34
No. of stencils for bulletins, fliers, programs,	
etc.,	48
No. of form communications sent out,	16506.

I was so startled by the figures when they were offered for my inspection the other day, that I am passing them on to you. The work has grown beyond anyone's original idea of it. The events of the year partially explain this. As you remember we started to organize for the proper use of the ballot, at the same time to increase membership and educate, preparatory

we must be prepared for temporary defeats. ~~However~~, we must be ^{prepare} even in the near future to encounter a set-back and remember it is only a temporary set-back. However we were scarcely started in this organization plan and ^{were} urging women to register when suit was filed attacking the constitutionality of the Convention Bill. Through all the early stages of our attack, we were pushing a special Registration week with auto tours and Woman Citizen Sunday and every form of advertising which would bring the women out to register. Just as they made their splendid response - telegrams reporting progress from all over the state ^{we had word} our Partial Suffrage Act was attacked! - We went into the breach with a conference of workers in Indianapolis, in August, and Mrs. Catt's presence to spur us on. Of the two months that followed much that is interesting might be told - pressure brought to bear on public opinion - lawyers enlisted to defend us - frequent alarms, false and otherwise, that sent our hopes up and as suddenly down - fly-by-night conferences - hurried meetings in lawyers' offices - the rumor of victory - then the actual treatment of victors accorded us - the 11th hour suspense as we approached the time of voting and no verdict from the Supreme Court as to whether the women could vote or not - never was drama staged more completely. Then - defeat! Worse than that - rout, complete and utter demoralization. The complete measure of it can best be instanced by one league which wrote wanting its money back! This league felt it had been organized under false pretenses, and now ^{that} it could not vote - wanted its dues returned!

But there was work to be done - Congressional work - Indiana must redeem her record of 1915 when 5 ^{representatives} Republican voted for, and 8 against the Susan B. Anthony Amendment - so letters had to go out again - petitions worked up - and delegates rounded up for ^{the} Wash-

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ington Convention and Congressional hearing.

All this time we were trying to meet a demand from some parts of the state for programs. One of the first things requested of me when I went into office was that material for programs should be sent out. This material had to be of two kinds - for leagues who could refer to libraries, and for our many small leagues in the country or small towns where there are no libraries. So a general program - suggestions, etc. - was sent out and since then two sets of programs have gone out from Peru each month, which contained everything necessary in the program and its accompanying clips, ~~except for occasional references to the Suffrage Blue Book, to con-~~ ^{except for occasional reference to the Suffrage Blue Book} duct each ~~program~~ ^{meeting}. It was never ~~our~~ intention to insist on regular league meetings - particularly after the necessity for war work had developed so strongly, but in case meetings were held, to furnish easily obtainable material for these meetings. I have sometimes felt as if all of my year that was not spent in Politicians' offices, was spent in writing endless reams to the leagues - and I know you have all felt snowed under with communications from the President's office. Often it has seemed all a waste of time and energy and postage - and perhaps discouraging to the recipients - so much yellow literature. But gradually something impressed itself upon ~~us~~ - each form letter we sent out had some replies - even though these letters asked for no reply. After a while, we began to notice that each bunch of replies brought us letters from leagues we had previously had no word from - ^{in fact had} ~~thought~~ were dead. Something in the letter would interest them or send them back with a question, and so we got in touch with that league. Our great problem is how best to keep in touch with all the leagues and in the discussion to follow, we want to know ~~these things:~~ This: -

What is the best medium of interesting the league presidents - of getting replies from them and maintaining the necessary relationship between the central office and the leagues? You all of you realize the importance of knitting our organization more closely together. I can see its necessity more clearly, perhaps, than any of you, for I receive instructions from the National which must be passed on to you, readjusted for our state needs. I want to say right here that this last year has been a wonderful lesson to me in the value of a disciplined, well ^{officered} ~~officered~~ army, under a responsible chief. I have done the best I could to carry out orders from the National and I say "orders" advisedly, because if anything has been made clear this last year, this certainly has - that we are part of a great national plan and can accomplish more working towards that plan - under a general like Mrs. Catt - than \equiv if we worked separately. I have been glad to take orders from her. I only wish I could make the state leagues see clearly that no league can work by itself - irrespective of the state plan and independent of the state organization - and get anywhere. Suffrage is a national problem - what each state does affects vitally every other state. So, what each league does or does not do affects vitally the other leagues in the state and the ^{consequent} state campaign. So I say again - we must ^{each} ~~we~~ feel a part of a whole - closely related - and interdependent. How to create this feeling is one of the problems of the presidents office and it is your business this morning to help solve them for the next President. I hope you feel as I do, that in spite of our defeats, this has been a profitable year. It has been a year for me - rich in friendships - new and old. There has been a great joy in working in close association with keen minds - quick enthusiasms - instant responsiveness. It would have been impossible to carry the growing work of the year but for the

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help I have had from every one of you. Mrs. Barnhill should make this report squally with me, because she, as 1st Vice-President, living in the same town with our headquarters, has had much of the President's work to do. To those of you who know her, I need not say how faithfully and willingly she has done her share of the work. There is not time to mention the endless list of individuals who have dropped their own work and come at the President's call - to help in every way. No President could possibly have had more perfect cooperation from an Executive Committee than has been mine this year. So many unexpected emergencies have arisen that much more than usual detail and decision have come before the Executive Committee.

~~That we none of us realized the way our work would grow this year, I can best illustrate by this little incident~~