

M. M. CRANE
EDWARD CRANE
M. M. CRANE, JR.
HUGH L. UMPHRES

CABLE ADDRESS (CRANE)
W. U. CODE

Crane, Crane & Umphres
Attorneys at Law
1102-1103 - 1104 and 1105
Western Indemnity Building
Dallas, Texas

January 8th, 1918

Mrs. E. B. Reppert,
Dallas, Texas.

Dear Mrs. Reppert:

The letters of Mrs. Cunningham and Mrs. Catt demonstrate that I did not make myself understood. I assume that the fault was mine, that my words were not well chosen, and, therefore, misunderstood.

I had no thought of comparing the ex-Governor with Mrs. Cunningham. In my mind there is no comparison of any sort that could possibly be made. They are in all things antipodes. I have Mrs. Cunningham in my mind on too lofty a plane to entertain any such thought. My reference to ex-Governor Ferguson was for the purpose of showing that Gov. Hobby would be obliged to insist on carrying out the platform pledges, or else he would be classed in that particular with ex-Governor Ferguson. I have no fears of his being so classed, because I am sure that in absolute good faith he is going to try to carry out every promise made.

I can see Mrs. Cunningham's point of view very clearly. She assumes that because the plank in the state platform on the subject in question is a recommendation, and not a demand, the party is at liberty to do as it wishes about it. In this she is mistaken. There is but one plank in the platform that has the word "demand" in it, as I read it, and that is the plank for prohibition. The emphasis on that was because of the fact that the previous instructions in respect to that question had been ignored by Ferguson's legislature. All the others are recommendations, or expressed in the form of "we favor". Until the advent of the Populist Party the latter form of expressions were almost entirely used by all parties. "We favor" or "we recommend", or a polite equivalent therefor was usually employed. The Populists grew a little more aggressive, and put theirs in the form of demands. In taking over some of the Populist planks in our platform, we also took over in part this habit of theirs.

The present platform "recommends" appropriations for the University, and for all our educational institutions. It "favors" legislation for other subjects. That was all that was deemed necessary to secure the attention of the legislature, because the legislature is supposed to reflect the popular will. The popular will of the Democrats is supposed to be embraced in the platform of the party, and as our government is a representative one there is nothing else for the legislature to do except to obey this popular will thus authoritatively expressed,

Mrs. Cunningham recognizes the binding force of the decisions of the women's organization. To a certain extent she is correct, but she is in error, I am sure, in thinking that the decision of the women's meeting held before the platform was adopted at Waco, is conclusive on her.

On the contrary that decision was overridden by the unanimous adoption of the party platform. Those women who acted with her were only a part of the Convention. The decision of a part must yield to the decision of the whole, and when the entire Convention overrode the decision of the women's meeting, as a matter of course it was nullified, and the will of the Convention was substituted therefor. Mrs. Cunningham, I am sure, with her strong mentality will see the reasonableness of this proposition. If I am not correct in this, then the women could be absolved from all party obligations, no matter how solemnly expressed, by simply holding a meeting prior to the meeting of the Convention in which they happen to be in the minority, and reaching a conclusion adverse to that of the majority. I am sure that Mrs. Cunningham upon reflection, will not contend for that proposition.

As for Mrs. Catt's suggestion that the saloons will be lined up against us, I think she is mistaken, because, as you know, we have no saloons in Texas now, and notwithstanding the decision of the Court of Criminal Appeals the Attorney General's Department has been able by injunctive process to prevent any saloon operating in Texas. The matter is not likely to reach the Supreme Court before a women's suffrage election will be held, and by that time we hope to have a constitutional prohibition amendment that will prevent forever the sale and manufacture of liquor within the limits of the State.

Now, I hope that Mrs. Cunningham and Mrs. Catt will understand me. I have no objections to national woman's suffrage. On the contrary I favor it. I am not obsessed with the idea of state's rights to the extent that the nation cannot determine that there should be no discrimination in the matter of suffrage because of sex. However, I am deeply impressed with the idea that until there shall be some funerals around Washington, we will never get the national amendment adopted. In the meantime, the Texas Democracy insists that the women of Texas shall be given universal suffrage whether this amendment can be gotten through the United States Senate or not, and the Democrats, not the women of the State alone, though many of them favor it, demand this right for the women of Texas without waiting for any other State in the American Union. The democracy of Texas has made that demand, and I feel that it will be very impolitic for any of the women who believe in suffrage to oppose the democracy which seeks to confer this right upon the women of our own state.

Texas Democrats will not be able to conceive why a national organization for woman's suffrage should seek to prevent a constitutional amendment giving the women of any state the right to vote, as was done in California, Colorado and in other states. It is to prevent this conflict between the national suffragists and the people who believe in suffrage to be exercised by states as well, that I am writing this letter. Why should the people who believe in women's suffrage be divided at the last moment? Why not co-operate together to get suffrage for one state, for two states, and for the entire Union? Most of the people who believe in woman's suffrage will support the national amendment, and that it will be adopted by the Texas legislature whenever presented is perfectly certain; but our fear is that the day when it will be passed by the United States Senate is so far distant that some of our good women who are now living may not be living then, unless, as I suggested, Providence shall intervene, and some new blood come into the Senate as a result of this intervention.

I beg you to assure Mrs. Cunningham of my highest esteem, and that if there is any word in this or in my former letter that would indicate otherwise, it was not intended to have that effect. I trust that the women will all get together, and even if defeated in Texas, the defeat will not hurt nearly so much as a division on the subject or the opposition of the national suffragists to the wishes of the Democrats of the state who desire this amendment submitted. In other words, the Democrats of the state have taken the subject out of the hands of its women, and put it in the hands of the men to vote on now. I think the suffragists all over the state ought to encourage the legislature of Texas to vote for this amendment rather than to vote against it, or else the men may conclude that the time for woman's suffrage has not yet arrived.

Yours very truly,

W. W. Cunningham