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Men's Equal Suffrage League of Maine (folder) I Greenwood Papers, Box 540, Folder 56

Isabel Greenwood

Maine Woman Suffrage Association

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Repository Citation

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NUMBER 20.

MEN'S EQUAL SUFFRAGE

League of Maine Open Headquarters in the Forest City—Doings of the League.

The Men's Equal Suffrage League of Maine opened headquarters for the campaign Saturday on the first floor of the Boyd block, corner of Middle and Exchange streets. The League was organized three years ago and has extended its organization throughout the state on district and county lines. It now has approximately six hundred members.

Plans for the campaign were formulated at a meeting held in Augusta in the House of Representatives in March. This meeting was attended by members from all sections of the state that filled the hall of the House of Representatives, and was addressed by Governor Carl E. Milliken; ex-U. S. Senator Chas. F. Johnson of Waterville; Hon. Robert T. Whitehouse of Portland; ex-Attorney General William R. Pattangall of Augusta; and Hon. Obadiah Gardner of Rockland.

At this meeting \$400 was raised for the preliminary expenses of the campaign and pledges of support were made from all sections. The following list of officers was elected to have charge of the campaign, with a representative from each congressional district and each county to look after the local organizations in the several towns and cities of the state.

President—Robert T. Whitehouse, Portland.

Vice Presidents—Congressional District Chairmen, Alexander T. Laughlin, Portland; C. S. Stetson, Greene; Wm. R. Pattangall, Waterville; Ira G. Hersey, Houlton.

Secretary—Ralph O. Brewster.

Treasurer—George H. Allan.

Executive Committee.

Hiram Ricker, Androscoggin.
Leonard A. Pierce, Aroostook.
E. C. Reynolds, Cumberland.
E. E. Richards, Franklin.
Hon. John A. Peters, Hancock.
Willis E. Swift, Kennebec.
Cyrus W. Tupper, Lincoln.
Robert J. Alley, Penobscot.
Alton C. Wheeler, Oxford.
Frank B. Guernsey, Piscataquis.
Aaron B. Cole, York.
Hubert Baxter, Sagadahoc.
Hodgdon C. Buzzell, Waldo.
John R. Trimble, Washington.

It was decided to open headquarters in Portland because the city was perhaps visited by more people from various sections of the state during the summer than any other place. Very attractive and convenient headquarters have been secured in the Boyd block and an assistant secretary and stenographer will have charge of these headquarters which will be open from 8.30 to 5 p. m. every day. From these headquarters literature will be sent to all sections of the state and the local organizations will be perfected.

Very gratifying responses have been received from all sections and the early reports from the field indicate that the leaders of thought in Maine are fully alive to the growth of the Equal Suffrage movement throughout the world. This is unquestionably the last opportunity which Maine will have to maintain its ancient position of leadership among the states of the East by leading these states into the column of Full Equal Suffrage. 8,000,000 American women will vote for the next President and this fact seems to have impressed the men of Maine with the desirability of making their women the equals of their sisters in the civilized world.

The growth of the Suffrage movement abroad as a direct result of the invaluable contribution of women to the war seems also to have dissipated the last doubt in many minds as to the right of women to vote. England and Russia expect shortly to give women Full Suffrage and the latest list of reforms of the Progressive party in Germany includes Woman Suffrage. Prominent leaders throughout the state of Maine seem to feel almost without exception that it is high time that Maine and the United States vindicated before the world its claim to leadership in Democracy.

The Men's Equal Suffrage League is prepared to furnish speakers and literature for meetings in any section of the state to present to the voters the simple truths as to the history and development of the ballot of woman to the point where these two are now meeting for the uplifting and betterment of mankind and the vindication of Democracy against Autocracy.

Men's Equal Suffrage League of Maine

"Equality is Equity"

PRESIDENT

ROBERT T. WHITEHOUSE, Portland

VICE PRESIDENTS

MORRILL N. DREW, Portland, First District

C. S. STETSON, Greene, Second District

WILLIAM R. PATTANGALL, Waterville, Third District

IRA G. HERSEY, Houlton, Fourth District

TREASURER

GEORGE H. ALLAN, Portland

SECRETARY

RALPH O. BREWSTER

120 Exchange Street,

Portland, Maine

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

HIRAM RICKER, Poland,	Androscoggin	ALTON C. WHEELER, South Paris,	Oxford
CARL E. MILLIKEN, Island Falls,	Aroostook	HALBERT N. GARDNER, Patten,	Penobscot
E. C. REYNOLDS, South Portland,	Cumberland	MILLARD METCALF, Greenville,	Piscataquis
E. E. RICHARDS, Farmington,	Franklin	EDWARD C. PLUMMER, Bath,	Sagadahoc
HON. JOHN A. PETERS, Ellsworth,	Hancock	E. N. MERRILL, Skowhegan,	Somerset
LEWIS A. BURLEIGH, Augusta,	Kennebec	FRANK I. PENDLETON, Searsport,	Waldo
HON. OBADIAH GARDNER, Rockland,	Knox	JOHN R. TRIMBLE, Calais,	Washington
K. M. DUNBAR, Damariscotta,	Lincoln	AARON B. COLE, Kittery,	York

Woman suffrage has passed the experimental stage. Women now have some direct rights of political representation in nearly all civilized countries—among which are England, France, Germany, Russia, and even parts of India, South Africa, and China. The entire lack of any direct political rights is peculiar to Maine, a few of the Southern States, and the benighted countries of Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria, Servia, and Turkey. This is not enviable companionship for any state. Besides the limited suffrage enjoyed by women in nearly all countries there is full equal suffrage for men and women in the European countries of Bohemia, Finland, and Norway; in the great Southern Federations of Australia and New Zealand; and in Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, Washington, California, Arizona, Kansas, and Oregon in the United States, besides presidential and municipal suffrage in Illinois. In the United States the privilege of electing the next President will be shared by twenty million men with at least four million women. Next year the question of woman suffrage will unquestionably be sent by the legislatures to the people in Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey besides several of the Western States. At this date woman suffrage cannot possibly be called a radical or untried experiment since it has been thoroughly tested in several of our sister states for over twenty years with its success convincingly demonstrated by the complete conversion of their neighbors. The experience of every state has conclusively shown:

- (a) That women will go to the polls in large numbers.
- (b) That the entrance of women has not upset the administration of the state in any department.
- (c) That in certain social phases of legislation they have a distinctly uplifting influence.

It is admitted on every side, as it is seen how state after state has converted its neighbor, that full woman suffrage is inevitable. The only problem for the men of Maine is whether Maine shall be a leader or a laggard? Maine has the opportunity at this time to lead the Eastern States into the ranks of equal suffrage as it has led so many other ameliorating and just reforms. With the uniquely powerful organization of the Grange and its sixty thousand members to give its unqualified support in the country districts and the free intercourse of the larger centers of population with the West to herald the successful working of equal suffrage there; with the impulse from Massachusetts and New York gathering strength each month and the recent strong indorsement of the suffrage movement by the National Federation of Women's Clubs at Chicago representing over one million American women, and the National Educational Association representing thousands of school teachers, the time seems ripe to make the women of Maine the political equals of their sisters in so many other states.

The women of Maine have made a far stronger and more dignified appeal for the ballot than was ever made by the men at any period of the extension to them of the ballot. Thus in 1800—twenty-five years after the American Revolution—when only one man in six could vote in this country, there is found in history no trace of any agitation or organization for ballot extension. Yet in the next thirty years came full manhood suffrage—apparently through the simple appeal of its justice and reasonableness to the consciences of the privileged voters.

Woman was once the mere dependent of man; time brought to her the quasi independence of the Roman world but she was still regarded as not competent to testify in court; Maine in 1844 was one of the earliest states to grant to her full rights of property; her right to an equal education with man has only been recognized within our own generation and again our state has blazed the way. Is the time not arrived for abolishing the last restriction of a barbarous age on the full equality of woman? Is the time not ripe to complete her emancipation begun so many thousands of years ago?

ORGANIZATION AND OBJECTS.

The Men's Equal Suffrage League of Maine was formally organized on May 25th, 1914, with the list of officers shown at the head of this letter. The objects of the League are to organize the sentiment for woman suffrage among the men of Maine and to diffuse information concerning the history and progress of woman suffrage.

MEMBERSHIP.

Any male citizen of Maine over twenty-one years of age is eligible to membership in this League and the bond of union and the only pledge of membership is our common indorsement of full woman suffrage on equal terms with men. Every citizen is earnestly urged to procure one of the little yellow membership cards of the distributors in each community and enroll in the ranks of Equal Suffrage.

FINANCES.

There are to be no dues nor membership fees of any sort and each individual pledges himself only to what assistance in financial or educational lines he feels personally practicable. The chief expenses of the League will be incurred in printing circulars and sending them to the several sections of the state for distribution. Small contributions by those especially interested in this reform will be greatly appreciated.

It is also suggested that any organization supporting this movement, such as the Grange, or any group of individuals in the several communities desiring to advance the cause shall give a benefit entertainment with a small admission fee. The entertainment may be of a general nature or it might consist of one of the numerous entertaining little suffrage plays that may now be easily obtained. The object of the entertainment could be advertised and the movement would thus with one stone capture the two birds of funds and publicity. A few dollars received in this way from the different communities could be used most effectively to extend the campaign. The Secretary of the League will be glad to correspond with any one on this subject and act as a clearing house of plans successfully tried elsewhere.

Will you not then help the cause definitely in one or more of these ways?

- 1. By all means sign and return one of the Yellow Membership Cards.*
- 2. Add a small subscription, if you feel so disposed.*
- 3. Interest some society or group in a benefit entertainment.*
- 4. Stand openly and definitely for the movement whenever occasion offers and interest your friends in the justice and wisdom of this advance.*

Correspondence may be addressed to

RALPH O. BREWSTER, Secretary,

120 Exchange Street, Portland, Maine.