

## **Congressional Committee Activities, NAWSA Convention, Washington, D.C., November 29-December 5, 1913**

An excellent report was presented at this time by Miss Alice Paul, chairman of the Congressional Committee. From the founding of the National Association in 1869 prominent representatives had appeared before committees of every Congress and during many winters Miss Susan B. Anthony had remained in Washington until she obtained a report from these committees, but after she ceased to do this, although the hearings were still granted, nobody made it an especial business to see that the committees made reports and so none was made and action by Congress seemed very remote. In 1910 when the movement entered a new era, the association appointed a special Congressional Committee to look after this matter. By the time of the convention of 1911 the two great victories in Washington and California had been gained and the prospect of a Federal Amendment began to grow brighter. A large committee was appointed consisting chiefly of the wives of Senators and Representatives with Mrs. William Kent (Calif.) chairman. No busier women could have been selected and beyond making excellent arrangements for the hearings, the committee was not active. In 1912, when Kansas, Oregon and Arizona enfranchised women, the whole country awoke to the fact that the turning point had been reached and universal woman suffrage through an amendment to the Federal Constitution was inevitable.

At this time Miss Paul and Miss Burns returned from England, where they had been studying and doing social welfare work and had been caught in the maelstrom of the "militant" suffrage movement, then at its height. Both had taken part in demonstrations before the House of Commons and been sent to prison and they came back to the United States filled with zeal to inaugurate a campaign of "militancy" here. The idea was coldly received by the suffrage leaders and they modified it to the extent of asking the National Association to cooperate in organizing a great suffrage parade to take place in Washington the day before the inauguration of Woodrow Wilson. Dr. Shaw had seen and taken part in such parades in London and was favorably inclined to the project. She put Miss Paul at the head of the Congressional Committee with power to choose the other members to organize the parade, with the proviso that they must themselves raise all the money for it but they could have the authority of the National Association letterheads. Headquarters were opened in a basement on F Street near the New Willard Hotel in Washington. They displayed astonishing executive ability, gathered about them a small army of women and during the next twelve months raised \$27,378, the larger part of it in Washington and most of the remainder in Philadelphia. The parade was long, beautiful and impressive, women from many States participating. The report of the Congressional Committee presented to the convention by Miss Paul slightly condensed, read as follows:

Work for Federal Amendment:

Headquarters were opened in Washington, Jan. 2, 1913.

Hearings were arranged before the Woman Suffrage Committee of the Senate; before the Rules Committee of the House, when members of the National Council of Women Voters were the speakers; before the Rules Committee during the present convention.

Processions: March 3, when from 8,000 to 10,000 women participated; April 7, when women from congressional districts went to Congress with petitions and resolutions; July 31, when an automobile procession met the "Pilgrims" at the end of their "hike" and escorted them through the streets of Washington to the Senate. This procession was headed by an automobile in which rode several of the Suffrage Committee of the Senate.

Pilgrimages coming from all parts of the country and extending over the month of July were organized, about twelve. These all ended in Washington on July 31, when approximately 200,000 signatures to petitions were presented to the Senate.

Deputations: Three deputations to the President were organized immediately preceding the calling of the special session of Congress in order to ask him to give the administration support to the suffrage amendment during the special session. One of these was from the National Association, one from the College Suffrage

League and one from the National Council of Women Voters. On November 17 a fourth deputation, composed of seventy-three women from New Jersey, was sent to the President to urge him to take up the amendment during the regular session of Congress.

Local arrangements were made for the conventions of the National Council of Women Voters and the convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

A campaign under a salaried organizer was conducted through the resort regions of New Jersey, Long Island and Rhode Island during July, August and September; and one through New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland during July. A month's campaign was carried on in North Carolina. On September 1 permanent headquarters were opened in Wilmington in charge of a salaried organizer and since that time a vigorous campaign has been carried on in Delaware in the attempt to influence the attitude of the Senators and Representatives from that State.

A salaried press chairman has been employed throughout the year, who has furnished daily press copy to the local papers, to the Washington correspondents of the various papers throughout the country and to all of the telegraphic bureaus in Washington. Approximately 120,000 pieces of literature have been printed and distributed. A weekly paper under the editorship of Mrs. Rheta Childe Dorr was established on November 15. This now has a paid circulation of about 1,200 and is self-supporting from its advertisements.

A Men's League was organized, General Anson Mills, U. S. A., being the temporary and Dr. Harvey W. Wiley the permanent chairman. A large number of Congressmen are members.

Eight theater meetings, exclusive of those during this convention, have been held in Washington. Smaller meetings both indoor and out have been held almost daily and frequently as many as five or ten a day. A tableau was presented on the Treasury steps at the time of the suffrage procession of March 3 under the direction of Miss Hazel Mackaye. A suffrage play was given, also two banquets, a reception and a luncheon, and a benefit and a luncheon were given for the purpose of raising funds.

A delegation in two special cars went to New York for the procession of May 3. An even larger delegation went to Baltimore for the procession of May 31. The play given in Washington was reproduced in Baltimore for the benefit of one of the suffrage societies there. A week's campaign was conducted in the four southern counties of Maryland prior to the primary election, at the request of one of the State's societies.

The Congressional Union was formed during the latter part of April and now numbers over a thousand members.

Congressional Work.

Senate and House Joint Resolution Number One for Federal Amendment introduced in Congress April 7, 1913.

Woman Suffrage Committee of Senate voted on May 14 to report the resolution favorably and did so unanimously, one not voting. On July 31 twenty-two Senators spoke in favor of the resolution and three against it. On September 18 Senator Andrieus Jones (N. M.) spoke in favor and asked for immediate action. On the same day Senator Henry F. Ashurst (Ariz.) announced on the floor of the Senate that he would press the measure to a vote at the earliest possible moment.

Three resolutions were introduced in the House for the creation of a Woman Suffrage Committee and referred to the Rules Committee and are still before it.

The amendment resolution is awaiting third reading in the Senate and is before the judiciary Committee of the House.

The action of the Senate was due to the fact that under the new administration a committee had been appointed which was favorable to woman suffrage instead of one opposed as heretofore, with a chairman, Senator Charles S. Thomas of Colorado, who had helped the women of his own State to secure the suffrage

twenty years before. The resolutions in the Lower House were introduced by old and tried friends and the association's new Congressional Committee had arranged hearings, brought pressure to bear on members and not permitted them to forget or ignore the question. Miss Agnes E. Ryan, business manager of the Woman's Journal said in her account: "The convention received the report with enthusiastic applause, giving three cheers and rising to its feet to show its appreciation."

This report was signed by Miss Paul as "chairman of the Congressional Committee and president of the Congressional Union" and she said at the beginning that it was impossible to separate the work of the two. At its conclusion Mrs. Catt moved that the part of the report as from the Congressional Committee be accepted, which was done by the convention. She then asked what was the relation between the two and why, if this was a regular committee of the National American Association, no appropriation had been made for its work during the coming year and why there was no statement in the treasurer's report of its' expenditures during the past year. It developed that the committee had raised and expended its own funds, which had not passed through the national treasury, and that the Congressional Union was a society formed the preceding April to assist the work of the committee. It was moved by Mrs. Catt and carried that the convention request the Official Board to continue the Congressional Committee and to cooperate with it in such a way as to remove further causes of embarrassment to the association. The motion was amended that the board should appropriate what money could be spared for the work of this committee.\*

The movement for woman suffrage was now so plainly centering in Congress, which had been the goal for over forty years, that there was a widespread feeling that the national headquarters should be established in Washington. Mrs. Oliver H. P. Belmont, a delegate from New York, through whose generosity it had been possible to take them to that city in 1909, offered a motion that they now be removed to Washington, She had given notice of this action the preceding day and the opponents were prepared. A motion to lay it on the table was quickly made and all discussion cut off. The opposition of the national officers was so apparent that many delegates hesitated to express their convictions for the affirmative but nevertheless the vote stood 134 ayes, and 169 noes.

\* When the board met after the convention it was disclosed that the Congressional Union, instead of being merely a local society to "assist the committee in its efforts with Congress, as Miss Paul had said, was a national organization to work for the Federal Amendment. That is, it was to duplicate the work which the National Association had been formed to do in 1869 and had brought to its present advanced stage. The association's letterheads had been used for this purpose and persons from all parts of the country had sent their names and money, many supposing they were assisting the National Association. Miss Paul had been obtaining names for membership in the Union during all the sessions of the convention. The board decided that there must be complete separation of the work of the committee and the Union; that the same person could not be at the head of both and that the plans of the Union must be regularly submitted to the Board. Miss Paul refused to accept these conditions and she was at once relieved from the chairmanship of the Congressional Committee and the other members resigned. The Union was continued as a separate organization. Another committee was appointed by the National American Association consisting of Mrs Ruth Hann, McCormick, chairman; Mrs. Antoinette Funk, Mrs. Sherman Booth, all of Illinois, Mrs, Desha Breckinridge (Ky.), Mrs Helen H. Gardener (D. C.), Mrs. H. Edward Dreier (N. Y.), Mrs. James Tucker (Calif.). Headquarters were opened in the Munsey Building, Washington, with the Illinois women in charge.