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Date: 1915
Description: Maine anti suffrage report

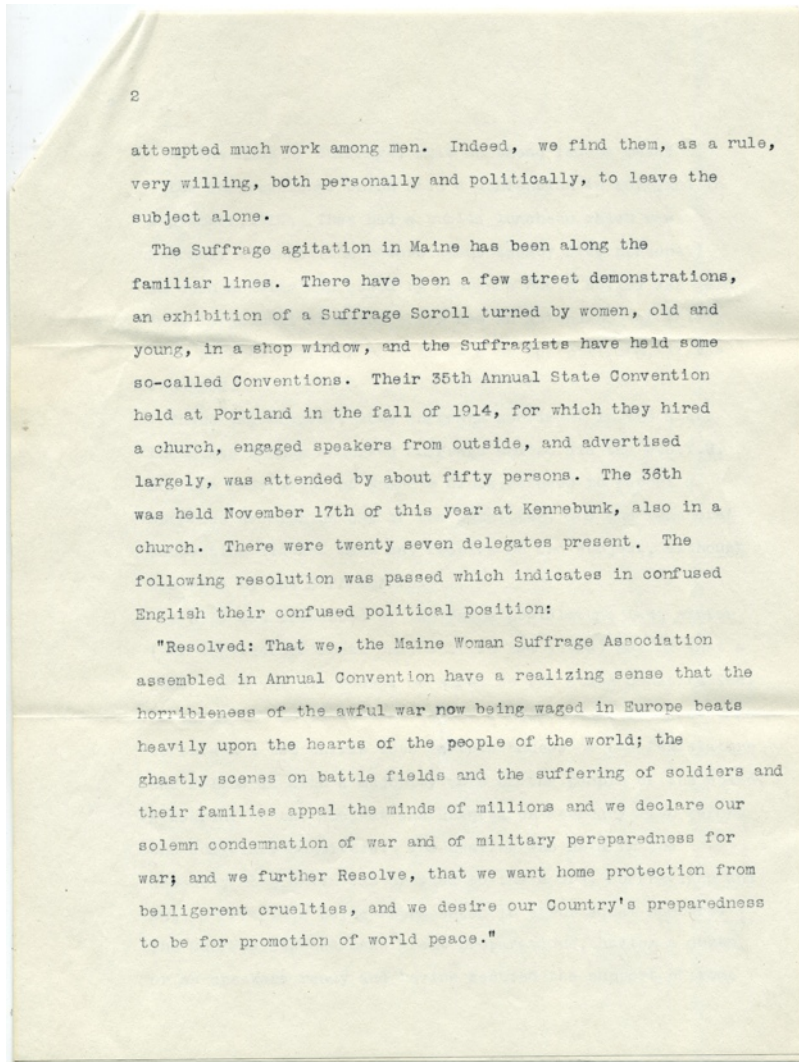
REPORT OF MAINE ASSOCIATION OPPOSED TO SUFFRAGE
FOR WOMEN. DEC. 1915.

Previous to the winter of 1913 there had been very little organized opposition to the Suffrage agitation in our State. The organization from which this report comes was formed in the fall of 1913 under the name of the Maine Association opposed to Suffrage for Women. Since that time the activities of the Association have been numerous and much has been accomplished in spite of difficulties in reaching the people of a widely scattered agricultural community, such as are comprised in the population of Maine.

The headquarters of the Association are in Portland and there is one branch, with officers, in Gardiner.

We have enrolled many names of which we keep a card and also a classified catalogue. Monthly meetings open to the public have been held in Portland during the winter months. At these meetings our own members have spoken frequently and we have had an occasional speaker from outside the State. Other public meetings have been held in Portland and in various parts of the State.

We have distributed a large amount of literature, the greater part of which was compiled and printed by the Association, and we ran, for nearly a year, a weekly column in two Portland papers. We have not, up to date,



2

attempted much work among men. Indeed, we find them, as a rule, very willing, both personally and politically, to leave the subject alone.

The Suffrage agitation in Maine has been along the familiar lines. There have been a few street demonstrations, an exhibition of a Suffrage Scroll turned by women, old and young, in a shop window, and the Suffragists have held some so-called Conventions. Their 35th Annual State Convention held at Portland in the fall of 1914, for which they hired a church, engaged speakers from outside, and advertised largely, was attended by about fifty persons. The 36th was held November 17th of this year at Kennebunk, also in a church. There were twenty seven delegates present. The following resolution was passed which indicates in confused English their confused political position:

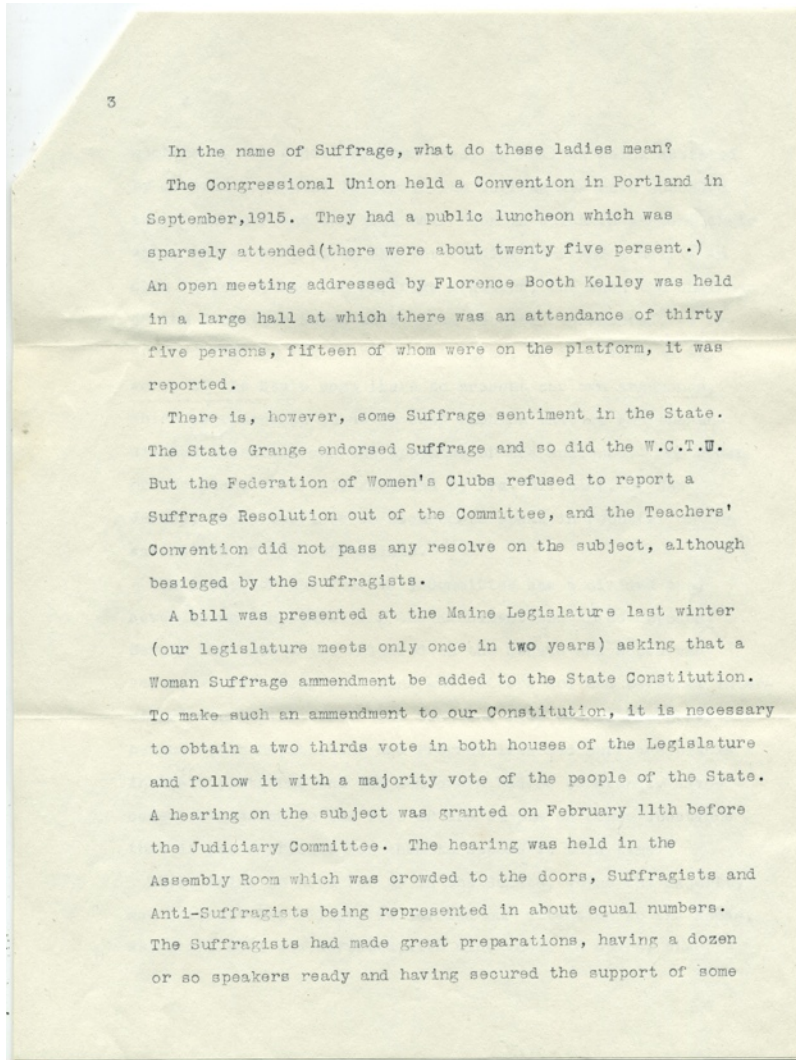
"Resolved: That we, the Maine Woman Suffrage Association assembled in Annual Convention have a realizing sense that the horribleness of the awful war now being waged in Europe beats heavily upon the hearts of the people of the world; the ghastly scenes on battle fields and the suffering of soldiers and their families appal the minds of millions and we declare our solemn condemnation of war and of military preparedness for war; and we further Resolve, that we want home protection from belligerent cruelties, and we desire our Country's preparedness to be for promotion of world peace."

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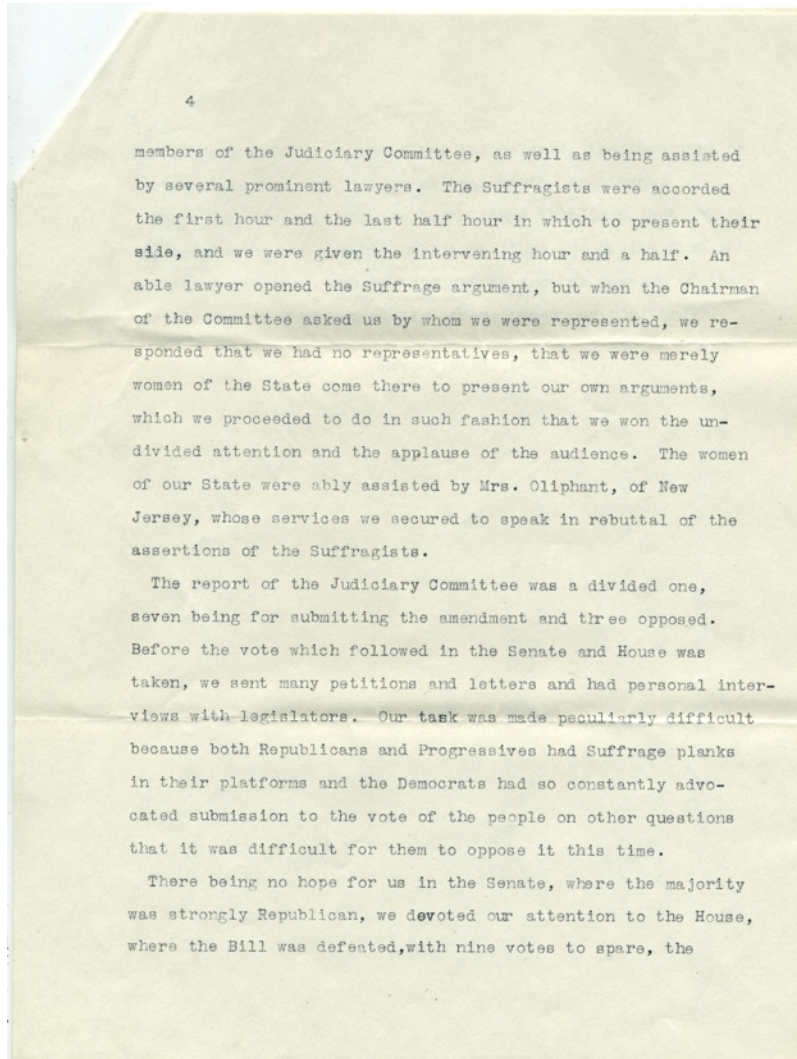
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In the name of Suffrage, what do these ladies mean?

The Congressional Union held a Convention in Portland in September, 1915. They had a public luncheon which was sparsely attended (there were about twenty five present.) An open meeting addressed by Florence Booth Kelly was held in a large hall at which there was an attendance of thirty five persons, fifteen of whom were on the platform, it was reported.

There is, however, some Suffrage sentiment in the State. The State Grange endorsed Suffrage and so did the W.C.T.U. But the Federation of Women's Clubs refused to report a Suffrage Resolution out of the Committee, and the Teachers' Convention did not pass any resolve on the subject, although besieged by the Suffragists.

A bill was presented at the Maine Legislature last winter (our legislature meets only once in two years) asking that a Woman Suffrage ammendment be added to the State Constitution. To make such an ammendment to our Constitution, it is necessary to obtain a two thirds vote in both houses of the Legislature and follow it with a majority vote of the people of the State. A hearing on the subject was granted on February 11th before the Judiciary Committee. The hearing was held in the Assembly Room which was crowded to the doors, Suffragists and Anti-Suffragists being represented in about equal numbers. The Suffragists had made great preparations, having a dozen or so speakers ready and having secured the support of some

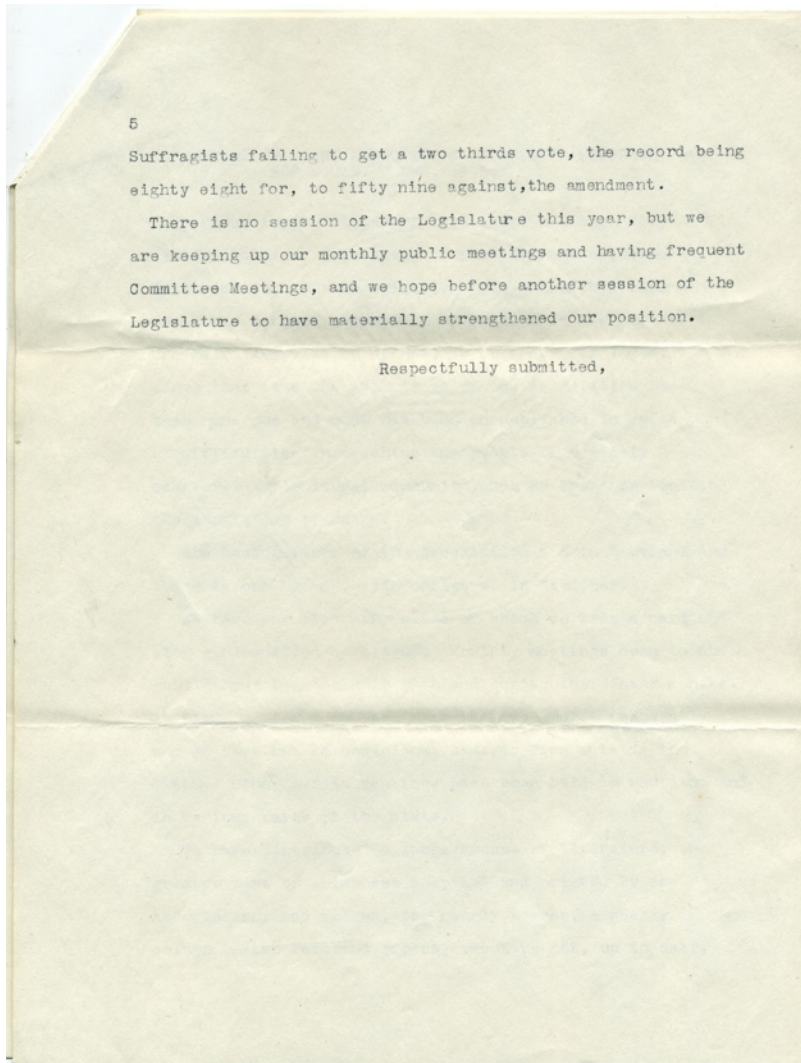


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members of the Judiciary Committee, as well as being assisted by several prominent lawyers. The Suffragists were accorded the first hour and the last half hour in which to present their side, and we were given the intervening hour and a half. An able lawyer opened the Suffrage argument, but when the Chairman of the Committee asked us by whom we were represented, we responded that we had no representatives, that we were merely women of the State come there to present our own arguments, which we proceeded to do in such fashion that we won the undivided attention and the applause of the audience. The women of our State were ably assisted by Mrs. Oliphant, of New Jersey, whose services we secured to speak in rebuttal of the assertions of the Suffragists.

The report of the Judiciary Committee was a divided one, seven being for submitting the amendment and three opposed. Before the vote which followed in the Senate and House was taken, we sent many petitions and letters and had personal interviews with legislators. Our task was made peculiarly difficult because both Republicans and Progressives had Suffrage planks in their platforms and the Democrats had so constantly advocated submission to the vote of the people on other questions that it was difficult for them to oppose it this time.

There being no hope for us in the Senate, where the majority was strongly Republican, we devoted our attention to the House, where the Bill was defeated, with nine votes to spare, the



5

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There is no session of the Legislature this year, but we are keeping up our monthly public meetings and having frequent Committee Meetings, and we hope before another session of the Legislature to have materially strengthened our position.

Respectfully submitted,

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