

TIME

Nov. 26, 1923

WOMEN

Callers

The National Woman's Party held a conference in Washington to launch its drive for a Constitutional Amendment to make women absolutely equal with men in the eyes of the law. Having received the assurance of Senator Curtis of Kansas, Republican whip, that he would present their amendment in the next Congress, a delegation of 200 women went to call on the President.

Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, President of the Party, led the delegation, and introduced as spokesman Miss Maud Younger, Chairman of the Party's Congressional Committee. Miss Younger asked the President to support the Party's amendment, delicately hinting that he might mention the matter in his message to Congress. President Coolidge replied with a metaphorical bow and a veiled injunction that the Woman's Party had best do its own speaking to Congress.

Said Miss Younger:

"In asking your support, Mr. President, we are not without precedent. We recall, when it was a discrimination on account of race, how Abraham Lincoln took the lead in this fight. We recall more recently, when the question was of discrimination on account of sex, how Woodrow Wilson went personally to the Senate to urge the passage of the suffrage amendment."

Said Mr. Coolidge:

"Your presence here is a very impressive demonstration of your desire. I doubt if any of my countrymen would hesitate to assert that if the womanhood of the nation want something they will be bound to secure it.

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“I am personally certain that if you will present to Congress as you have done to me your reasons why you want this constitutional amendment you will find them very responsive to your request.

“It is a novel impression to me. I have been engaged in legislation somewhat on the other side in Massachusetts, by attempting to protect women from possible impositions, as was suggested by one of the ladies, of prohibiting their employment in certain vocations that were supposed to be beyond their physical endurance, but if the womanhood of this nation wants that change and you demonstrate your ability, your capacity and your strength, even as you have before, to secure favorable action; if you want some change made now, I haven't the slightest doubt that Congress will respond favorably.”

The conference closed next day with a mass meeting in the crypt of the Capitol, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the equal rights movement. Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont in addressing the group declared:

“The women of the United States have recently been given the right to vote, but this is only a small part of the equality which still remains to be attained. The Constitution left women in the position in which the old English common law had always placed them—non-existent as human beings, enslaved as the chattels of men. This condition, with little improvement, exists today in the various states.”