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Equal Righters

"If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion."

Over 161 years ago, when the laws of this then infant country were being drawn up, Abigail Adams, who was to become the wife of one President and the mother of another, wrote those words to her husband. Eleven years later when the Constitution was finally adopted, Mrs. Adams saw that the Founding Fathers had denied her wish that "the ladies should be remembered."

Last week, members of the National Woman's Party for the first time felt some hope that Mrs. Adams' 161-year-old plea would be heeded by Congress.



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Mrs. Pell Heads the Woman's Party

From the Party's Eastern regional conference being held in Atlantic City, word went out to members in every state that through President Roosevelt they might hope to realize their one objective—the complete equality of women with men under the law.

Although not yet at the point of fomenting the rebellion which Mrs. Adams predicted, delegates at last week's conference expressed increased indignation over the failure of Congress to enact the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. Re-introduced every year since 1923, it now lies before the House and Senate Judiciary Committees.

Woman's Party

Members of the Party, which has but one plank in its platform—Equal Rights—felt that they had ample reason to deplore the present dormant state of the amendment. Although the Party assisted in winning legislation which gave women equal nationality rights with men, over 1,000 laws which discriminate against women still remain in force throughout the country. Rather than fight these laws in each of the separate states, the organization is determined to force passage of the amendment, which reads: "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction."

If passed, this would in one stroke wipe out such laws as these which are in effect in some states:

¶ The wife's earnings and personal possessions belong to the husband.

¶ A married woman, even though living apart from her husband, may not go into business without his consent.

¶ Women are barred from tasks requiring the lifting of more than 25 pounds.

The fight to rid the country of such discriminating laws and conditions has been carried on by the National Woman's Party since its permanent organization in 1921. From 1913 to 1920, a temporary party by that name, led the crusade for woman suffrage. Members were sent to picket the White House, were jailed, but eventually won their demands.

Under the chairmanship of Mrs. Stephen Pell, New York social registerite, the Party today directs its campaign from a beautiful Georgian clubhouse situated a block from the national Capitol. Not until every woman in the United States has equal property, inheritance, guardianship and domicile rights, will the clubhouse close its doors.