

Labor

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To Save 3 Senators Big Business Would Kill Suffrage Law

Why the L. & N. "Persuaded" Members of Tennessee House to Shift Front

INTERESTS FEAR WOMEN VOTERS

Shall millions of women be disfranchised for an indefinite period in order that three reactionary New England Senators may be re-elected to the American House of Lords?

That's the real issue in the dramatic fight in the Tennessee legislature over the ratification of the amendment to the Federal Constitution granting women the right to vote.

Of course, many of the members of the Tennessee legislature are honorable men, conscientiously opposed to women voting, but they constitute only a part of the opposition.

The men who are making the “last ditch” fight against suffrage represent the most sinister influence in the political life of Tennessee – the Louisville & Nashville Railroad.

Why does the Louisville & Nashville wish to defeat the suffrage amendment?

See Defeat In Enlarged Franchise

Here is the story:

Senators Brandegee of Connecticut, Dillingham of Vermont and Moses of New Hampshire are up for re-election this year. All three were bitterly opposed to the suffrage amendment, and Brandegee was so offensive that the suffrage leaders say he insulted them on the floor of the Senate.

The women of Connecticut, Vermont and New Hampshire know the story and they are awaiting an opportunity to scratch the names of Messrs. Brandegee, Dillingham and Moses.

But the three senators are among the most precious members of the Lodge-Penrose-Smooth senatorial combine. Their defeat would weaken and perhaps destroy the machine.

Therefore the word was given out months ago – and the fact noted in the columns of Labor – that the suffrage amendment must not be ratified until after the November election.

Explains Harding’s Nugatory Position

That was why Senator Harding announced at one time that he did not think he would be justified in asking the governor of Vermont to convene the legislature in special session to act on the amendment.

That was why the governor of Vermont refused to convene the legislature after Harding changed his mind and publicly pleaded with him to take such action.

The suffrage leaders believed they could defeat the senatorial combine by shifting the battle round to the Southern State where the Democrats rule. They argued that the Democrats would be anxious to assist in defeating three reactionary Republican Senators.

But they forgot that “Big Business” is as strong among the Democrats of the South as among the Republicans of the North. “Big Business” wanted Senators Brandegee, Dillingham, and Moses re-elected, not because they were Republicans but because they were friendly to “Big Business.”

Had Safe Majority in Tennessee

The women concentrated on Tennessee. At the request of Governor Cox and other party leaders the governor called the legislature in extra session. Senator Harding joined in the appeal to the legislators to ratify the amendment. A poll showed a safe majority for ratification.

Then the L. & N. got busy. The L. & N. has played a corrupt part in Tennessee politics for many years. It owns men in both parties. When the United States Senate sought to investigate it some years ago, Brandegee had opposed the proposition.

Effect of L. & N. "Persuasion"

The effect of its opposition was soon apparent. Men who had promised to vote for ratification switched, and became vehement in their opposition. Rumors of the use of money became so strong that a grand jury was convened.

When the vote came suffrage won by a margin of four votes, but the speaker of the House made a motion to reconsider and before that could be disposed of a sufficient number of the anti-suffrage members fled from the state over into Alabama to deprive the House of a quorum.

To further complicate matters a local judge was induced to issue an injunction restraining the governor from certifying the passage of the amendment.

The L. & N. hopes to keep the matter in the courts until after the election.

In that event, "Big Business" believes Senators Moses, Brandegee and Dillingham will be returned to represent the people of their states in the Senate of the United States.