

WOMAN PRESIDES OVER N. J. HOUSE

Mrs. Van Ness Takes Speaker's Chair at Night Session

DAYLIGHT BILL PASSED

Trenton, Feb. 23.—Mrs. Jennie C. Van Ness, the Essex assemblywoman, presided over deliberations of the Assembly last night, when Speaker Hobart vacated the chair and spent a half hour more on the Assembly floor. It was the first time any legislator, other than Speaker Hobart and Majority Leader Rowland, presided over the body this year.

When Speaker Hobart announced that Mrs. Van Ness would preside the members applauded the woman legislator as she walked from her seat and mounted the steps of the speaker's platform. Clutching a handkerchief in her left hand, Mrs. Van Ness seized the speaker's gavel and rapped for order. Routine business proceeded as usual until Mrs. Van Ness declared the session at an end for this week.

Mrs. Margaret B. Laird, the other Essex woman legislator, was also active in the session. She was one of fifteen protesters against the action of the House committee on public health which has thus far failed to report a bill for the purpose of having a separate licensing board and to permit such practitioners to prescribe medicines and perform surgery. The protest signed by Mrs. Laird, under the name of the House, will require the reporting of the committee bill at Monday night's session.

Mrs. Laird's bill to prohibit employment of females in factories after 10 p. m. and before 6 a. m. will be given a public hearing March 2, at 2 p. m. before the House labor and industries committee.

Another measure sponsored by Mrs. Laird for the appointment of a commission to repeal discriminatory statutes and permit appointment of women to all elective and appointive positions was reported from committee. Daylight saving legislation passed the House yesterday by 33 to 16. It will advance the clock one hour from the last Sunday in April to the last Sunday in September. Representatives from the agricultural counties voted the opposition. Senate action will be the next step in the bill's progress.

Bills aimed at regulation of cold storage plants passed the House. One measure prohibits keeping foodstuffs in cold storage more than a year and another would prohibit misbranding of foods.

Pensioning of state employees under a system whereby the state and its workers would contribute proportionate dues, was authorized by the House. Similar legislation was adopted a year ago, but failed of executive approval.

Senate President Alford and Speaker Hobart announced the personnel of the special committee which with Governor Edwards will frame a state policy to raise the \$25 million needed to complete the state highway system. The senators are Hakaman, of Ocean; Sturgees, of Gloucester; Backer, of Warren; Glover, of Bergen; Pierson, of Union.

Despite vigorous opposition of high school pupils, the House education committee reported the bill to prohibit fraternities and secret societies in the public schools.

Expiration of the time limit for introduction of new legislation witnessed presentation of 127 House bills and twenty-five in the Senate.

Mrs. Laird offered a bill for the last position of the 81 poll tax upon women voters.

Assemblyman Olson, of Essex, introduced a bill creating a department of Americanization in the state Department of Education.

Women Police Named in Bethlehem
Bethlehem, Pa., Feb. 23.—In order to better cope with health conditions in this city, four new women police officers were appointed. They are Miss Margaret Lynch and Miss Hilda Glitch, special sanitary police officers at a salary of \$1 a year.

MAIMED SOLDIER PROBLEM IS FIRST WITH MISS ALICE

Congresswoman Robertson, Visiting Here, Says Neglect of Them Is Outrage—Against Blue Sunday, but for Prohibition

Congresswoman Robertson—the white-haired woman who, as postmistress, was known to every man, woman and child, white, brown, black and red, within ten miles of Muskogee, Okla.—brought to Philadelphia a serious today that abounds in homely truth, touched by gentle humor.

For eight years before she was elected to represent her district in Congress, Miss Alice served advice and mail through the postoffice window to all comers—and got away with it, as her election proves.

She believes in everything American, she says, and a lot of things that ought to be universal. She believes in reason—she is an Oklahoma—the original "horse sense," she said. She gave a character photograph of herself when she declared for prohibition and added: "The only honor I ever had was sent to me while I was postmistress in Oklahoma by a devoted member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, so that I might have a handkerchief, and I never drank myself, but several postal inspectors visited my office later and took it and drank it."

Former Soldiers' Problem
She launched into a discussion of a number of things—the heaviest first. "I guess it's the soldier—the former soldiers. Their problem weighs heaviest on my mind today."

"Yes," she said after a reflective pause, "the most vital thing right now is the question of the incapacitated soldier. It is a shame the way they have been neglected. More and more every day the enormous number of men who were gassed and disabled, and wounded and maimed demand that something be done. They are not getting simple justice."

She stopped a minute and then said: "Let's take a minute and then talk about Blue Monday, for instance. I am a Christian first, an American second and a Republican after that—but when it comes to this Blue Sunday law, I would like everybody to be a free country, founded on the principle that people can live according to the dictates of their own conscience."

Prohibition Will Stay
Asked if she believed prohibition would stay, she said: "I do not believe the constitution of the United States that did not stay put? I do not believe the use of force is as much to be censured as the soldier. A Chinaman once came to me in Oklahoma, pretty well under the influence of liquor. I was about to lecture him on the subject when it became suddenly ill from eating too much ham and cabbage—my favorite dish—so I decided finally not to continue to the Indians."

"Dress," Congresswoman Robertson said, "is one of the critical questions of the day. Many young men are not getting married because they are frightened away by the expensive tastes."

Muscooke Postmarks Hit Many Modernisms

Here are a few postmarks brought to Philadelphia by Oklahoma's beloved, white-haired "Miss Alice" Robertson, for eight years postmistress of Muskogee and now a member of Congress from her district:

"A man may say he thinks a girl who smokes is a good fellow. I don't know, but his heart he thinks a lot out of her."

"They said we wouldn't get prohibition without woman suffrage, but we got it. I do not believe in woman working as a separate women's organization. Let them work with the men."

"My idea of party allegiance is, He serves his party best who serves his country first."

"The thing that lies heaviest on my heart now is the problem of the incapacitated man."

"A woman can accomplish what she sets out to do if she just keeps quiet and does not get mammed."



ALICE ROBERTSON

Women Card-Index Legislators' Votes

Continued from Page One

continued at one member of the Legislature who last session deliberately ignored the women's committee who visited Harrisburg. Some time ago he came to me and with an injured air inquired, 'Why is it that you avoid me? I might be able to help you with some of the things you are after here.'

"We have not been working very much in the open. We prefer to accomplish things and avoid display. It is success that counts," and then Mrs. Miller very casually exploded this legislative bombshell:

"We have the House and Senate already passed an every bill in which we are interested. You can fancy what this has meant in the way of work."

"How do you go about it?" I inquired with genuine curiosity.

"In the first place we have active centers in forty-four counties. We work in affiliation with the State Federation of Women's Clubs, the W. C. T. U., the Parent-Teachers' Association, the Woman's Republican Committee, the Woman's Democratic Committee, and the League of Women Voters. These organizations have what is known as a legislative council. I am here at the General Assembly representing the League of Women Voters. The other organizations have their representatives here from time to time; some a good part of the time."

Could Muster Forces in Crisis.
"All these organizations would have their representatives here in a crisis. The polling of a legislature is accomplished through these organizations. As many as fifty letters have been sent to one member before he would declare himself upon a certain measure. Our line of endeavor is clearly marked out."

"We take from all the programs of parties and factions the things that we regard as meritorious and upon which the legislative council can unite, and then we work to secure their enactment as laws."

"What are some of the things that you are particularly interested in?" I inquired.

"The Woman's Pension Fund increase, and Dr. Pincus's educational program, but particularly the salary lists for teachers. Also all bills affecting child labor, and the betterment of working conditions for women and children."

"Perhaps one of the most important features of our work is that of keeping a record of the work of every member of the House and Senate and just how he votes on bills in which our legislative council is interested. A detailed legislative record of each senator and member will be an invaluable aid to us in the future."

Mrs. Miller did not commit herself upon this subject any further, but the intimation was very strong that a card index of the attitude and vote of every member of the House and Senate is in course of preparation. It will be unique in the political annals of Pennsylvania. It has been done before in desultory fashion, but not as a permanent and lasting record.

And in the hands of women, too, think that?

"A member of the Legislature who for partisan reasons will cast his vote against a bill designed to better conditions for women, children, and the wards of the state, is not a desirable representative," she said.

And then the chairman of the League of Women Voters flung another hand grenade right into the center of an interesting problem.

"Our legislative council is opposed to extravagance in public office. The state is spending too much money uselessly. We believe in economy and are opposed to the multiplication of commissions and

bureaus that are created for political purposes.

"There are several departments in which we have reason to believe large sums of the taxpayers' money are being squandered without any adequate return."

"We are not after any particular faction or group of men. We are not after any jobs, but we do want to see this waste of money halted."

"There should be a complete reconstruction of the state government and not have it composed of a mass of departments many of which are overlapping. Intensive economy should be the object."

"You can get the drift of what we are aiming at when I tell you that on a recent visit to one of the departments in search for a report the latest I could get was that of 1917. Think of that in a great progressive state like Pennsylvania!" and honest indignation against such a show of incapacity or inefficiency was plainly visible in Mrs. Miller's tone. Then with a smile she continued:

"Looked Upon As a Nuisance"

"I know that the heads of some of the departments in Harrisburg look on me as a nuisance, because I appear at the most unexpected times to ask questions about some of the most unheard-of things in connection with their work. But it has to be done if we are to get the information, and somebody must do it. That is what I am here for."

Here is another interesting bit of information for the gentlemen who make the laws under the gilded roofs and between the mural beauties of House and Senate chambers:

All of the information that Mrs. Miller and her coworkers gather is sent to the state to something like

150,000 women, members of the various organizations I have mentioned above, in the shape of bulletins. And what is still more vital, in certain cases in confidential reports.

As an opinion worth passing in the hat it can be said that there are a large number of gentlemen in the General Assembly who, up to the present time, don't know what they are up against so far as this woman's legislative council is concerned. I didn't till my talk with Mrs. Miller.

Some of them have been afflicted with political sleeping sickness for a long long-time. They'll be jolted into sudden consciousness some bright day when they least expect it. Then maybe it will be too late.

"What are your chances of success, as you figure it out, from what you have accomplished already?" was my final question. For the first time the Lady of the Legislature dropped into the vernacular of the man voter:

"There are one or two measures that we will be able to get across, because we know just where we stand. On the others we are not certain because our poll is not completed." Then as a bit of information Mrs. Miller added:

"One of our greatest and most successful efforts thus far is in the education of women as to their political rights, duties and opportunities. The work is absolutely non-partisan; rather I should say that it is all partisan. It is a school for women voters and our pupils are all eager to learn."

An unbiased opinion suggests that in the above Mrs. Miller has dropped a few pertinent ideas that might with advantage be stored away in the anterior portion of the skull of a number of legislators now performing at the state capital.

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