

Miss Anthony—I now, gentlemen of the committee, introduce to you Mrs. Abigail Scott Duniway, from the extreme Northwest; and before she speaks, I wish to say that she has been the one canvasser in the great State of Oregon and Washington Territory, and that it is to Mrs. Duniway that the women of Washington Territory are more indebted than to all other influences for their enfranchisement.

Mrs. Duniway—Gentlemen of the committee: Do you think it possible that an agitation like this can go on and on forever without a victory? Do you not see that the golden moment has come for this committee to achieve immortality upon the grandest idea that has ever stirred the heart-beats of American citizens, and will you not in the magnanimity of noble purposes rise to meet the situation and accede to our demand, which in your hearts you must know is just?

There never was a grander theory of government than that of the United States. Never were grander principles enunciated upon any platform, never so grand before and never can be grander again, than the declaration that "all men" including of course all women, since women are amenable to the laws, "are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; * * * that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Gentlemen, are we allowed the opportunity of consent? These women who are here from Maine to Oregon, from the Straits of Fuca to the reefs of Florida, who, in their representative capacity, have come up here so often, augmented in their numbers year by year, looking with eyes of hope and hearts of faith, but oftentimes with hopes deferred, upon the final solution of this great problem, which it is so much in your hands to hasten its solution—these women are in earnest. My State is far away beyond the confines of the Rocky Mountains, away over beside the slinging Pacific sea, but the spirit of liberty is among us there, and the public heart has been stirred. The hearts of our men have been moved to listen to our demands, and in Washington Territory, as one speaker has informed you, women to-day are endowed with full and free enfranchisement, and the rejoicing throughout that Territory is universal.

In Oregon men have also listened to our demand, and the Legislature has in two successive sessions agreed upon a proposition to amend our State constitution, a proposition which will be submitted for ratification to our voters at the June election. It is simply a proposition declaring that the right of suffrage shall not hereafter be prohibited in the State of Oregon on account of sex. Your action in the Senate of the United States will greatly determine the action of the voters of Oregon on our, or rather on their, election day, for we stand before the public in the anomaly of petitioners upon a great question in which we in its final decision are allowed no voice, and we can only stand with expectant hearts and almost bated breath awaiting the action of men who are to make this decision.

We have great hope for our victory, because the men of the broad West are chivalrous and free. They have gone across the mighty continent with free steps; they have raised the standard of a new Pacific empire; they have imbibed the spirit of liberty with their very breath, and they have listened to us far in advance of many of the men of the older States who have not had their opportunity among the "grand free" wilds of nature for expansion.

So all of our leaders are with us to-day. You may go to either member of the Senate of the United States from Oregon, and while I cannot speak so positively for the senior member, as he came over here some years ago before the public were so well educated as now, I can and do proudly vouch for the late Senator-elect Dolph, who now has a seat upon the floor of the Senate, who is, heart and soul and hand and purse, in sympathy with this great movement for the enfranchisement of the women of Oregon. I would also be unjust to our worthy Representative in the lower House, Hon. M. C. George, did I not proudly speak his name in this great connection. Men of this class are with us, and without regard to party affiliations we know that they are upon our side. Our governor, our associate United States judge for the district of the Pacific Northwest, all of these men, are leading in the grand free way that characterizes the men of the West in assisting in this work. But we have—alas, that I should be compelled to say it—a great many men who pay no heed whatever to this question. Men will be entitled to a voice in this decision who are not, like members of Congress, the picked men of the nation or the State, but men, many of whom cannot read, who will have an opportunity to decide this question as far as their ballots can go. These are they to whom the enlightened, educated motherhood of the State of Oregon must look largely for the decision.

This brings me to the point of our coming to Congress. Some of you say to us, "Why not leave this matter for settlement in the different States?" When we leave it for settlement in the different States we leave it just as I have told you, because of the constitutional provisions of our organic law we cannot do otherwise; but if the question were to be settled by the Legislature of Oregon alone it would be settled now; and I, as a representative of that State only, would have no need of coming here; it would be settled just as it has been settled in Washington Territory; but when we come here to Congress it is the great nation asking you to take such legislative action in submitting an amendment to the Constitution of the United States as shall recognize the equality of these women who are here; these women who have come here from all parts of the country, whose constituents are looking on while we are here before you. As we reflect that our feeblest words uttered before this committee will go to the confines of this nation, across the great Atlantic and around the globe, we realize that more and more prominently our cause is growing into public favor, and the time is just upon us when some decision must be made.

Gentlemen of the committee, will you not recognize the importance of the movement? Who among you will be our standard-bearer? Who among you will achieve immortality by standing up in these halls in which we are forbidden to speak, and in the magnanimity of your own free wills and noble hearts champion the woman's cause and make us before the law, as we of right ought now to be, free and independent?