National Women's Trade Union League of America

ENDORSED BY THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND THE TRADES AND LABOR CONGRESS OF CANADA

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MRS. RAYMOND ROBINS, EDITOR
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Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
132 East Nineteenth Street,
New York, N. Y.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Replying to your inquiry of the seventh, I am sending you under separate cover the early history of trade unionism and some other pamphlets that may be of assistance to you.

If we can serve in any other way, please let us hear from you.

Very truly yours,

Gail A. Wilson

Secretary, Membership Committee

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CHICAGO, ILL., September 27, 1909.

To the Officers and Delegates of the Second Biennial Conference of the National Women's Trade Union League.

FELLOW WORKERS AND FRIENDS:

With great gladness of heart I bid you welcome. It is good indeed that we who are engaged in a great struggle have come together from the east and from the west to consider how best we may equip ourselves for the conflict. Let us counsel one with another and take fresh heart of courage, "for as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." And, as the industrial struggle is not only the supreme struggle of our age, but is also the universal struggle, and therefore we know that the workers of no one country can win out alone, we welcome with special rejoicing the fraternal delegates from England and Germany, Miss Mary Macarthur, Secretary of the British Women's Trade Union League, and Miss Margarete Schweichler of der Verband Kaufmannischer Weiblicher Angestellten of Hamburg, who come to us as ambassadors from our sisters across the seas.

For the work accomplished, I refer you to the Secretary's report. In so doing I ask you to consider that simultaneously with the election of your officers two years ago, began that great financial depression from which we are just recovering today, and which caused thousands and thousands of our brothers and sisters to be thrown out of employment, thus straining to the utmost the resources of even the strongest unions. That, under such conditions and amidst such terrible suffering, the League has grown from a small group of isolated members to a unified group of enthusiastic fellow workers shows this growth to have been in response to the demands of the working women of our country.

ORGANIZATION.

That we are living in an age of organization every one will admit. Everybody is organizing, bankers, lawyers, merchants, physicians, ministers and social workers are forming along craft and professional lines. But organization goes deeper than this. It is a fundamental law of nature; everywhere, if we will but look, we see union. "The miner tells us that when he goes down into the earth and finds a hard rock or stringer, he works till he comes to another stringer, and finally to a vein, and he knows that if he finds the union of the veins he has found a mine. Astronomers declare that every orb in the sky is bound into a cluster, and they declare that if there were one scab star in the sky we should have a wreck of the world. The sun is the central body and the eight planets are joined together into one constellation to do one thing, and they obey that law always. Look at the wild cattle on the plains. Do you find one? No. Great herds, managed and led by the strongest oxen. I looked through a glass-bottomed boat at Santa Catalina Island and saw the fish passing over the shoals. They were not alone, but in schools—thousands of them together. Look at the bird in the sky when he goes from Lake Winnipeg to Louisiana to spend the winter. Will he go alone? Never. Organized and by the hundreds they will come, not only following a leader, but forming an acute angle to lessen the resistance of the air." Can we, my friends, look anywhere in nature and not find unity of action within groups where common purposes are to be accomplished? Are we women to be an exception to that great law? And if we desire to be such an exception, how can we escape the penalty attached to disobedience of a general law of nature? "Nay," but you say, "we do believe in organization." True, but do we live it? It is no light task that we are undertaking, the organization of six million working women, one-half of whom represent our younger sisters. Let me suggest to you here one thought which I would

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