

W. S. Soco -
Lancashire & Ch. Textile Workers -

AL/2766

LANCASHIRE & CHESHIRE WOMEN TEXTILE & OTHER WORKERS' REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE.

5, JOHN DALTON STREET,

DEAR MADAM,

MANCHESTER, *November 30th, 1909.*

The Lancashire and Cheshire Women Textile and other Workers' Representation Committee has decided to contest the Rossendale constituency in the interests of Women's Suffrage. This Society consists of representatives of different professions and trades, Women Trade Unionists in the districts, and of the Lancashire and Cheshire Women's Suffrage Society and the Manchester and Salford Women's Trade Council.

This body of workers in the last General Election contested the borough of Wigan for Women's Suffrage, and their candidate, Mr. Thorley Smith, polled 2,205 votes.

Mr. Arthur K. Bulley, of Liverpool, has consented to stand as the Women's Suffrage Candidate. The Committee are very fortunate to have secured the help of a candidate of such ability and convincing earnestness.

It has been suggested that we should do well to drop the Women's Suffrage Question in this General Election, and devote our attention to the over-shadowing topic of the House of Lords. Such a suggestion will hardly appeal to women who are suffering severely and continuously from the unrepresentative and despotic tyranny of the House of Commons legislating for us by the "mere accident of birth."

The freedom of millions of women seems to us a much more important matter than any temporary dislocation between the two wholly unrepresentative Houses of our legislators, who are able to appeal to the "august tribunal of the people" without an attempt to consider the the existence of a majority of the nation.

We have decided to appeal specially to the Rossendale electors because, although we are non-party and are not against the Liberal Government as Liberals, we think the right and reasonable course, in view of the Prime Minister's statement of the divided state of the Cabinet on our subject, is to strengthen the hands of our friends in the present Government by opposing the return of our enemies. This Committee had experience of Mr. Harcourt's strongly hostile attitude to Women's Suffrage when in 1906 we took a petition to him signed by 8,000 of the men and women of Rossendale, urging the immediate necessity for the enfranchisement of women. An enemy in so influential a position as Mr. Harcourt's is, we think, the gravest danger to the cause of Women's Suffrage. As to our general policy of endeavouring to get a representative to fight our battle in the House of Commons, we know from experience that Parliament is the place in the world where we most want help, and where it is hardest to get it. We think that in contesting the issue of an election, we are attacking the political world in the only way in which it is possible for people without votes to make themselves felt.

In this case the Lancashire Women are appealing to the men amongst whom they live and work to help them with their votes, because these men know from their own experience, in a way that politicians cannot, the difficulties and disabilities suffered by the unenfranchised workers. The fact that Rossendale is a great centre of women's work in the cotton mills and other trades, gives our appeal there a peculiar force.

For the election fund we depend entirely on voluntary contributions, and we earnestly beg all those interested in Women's Suffrage to help us by sending a contribution to the fund now, and by work during the election. Cheques should be made payable to Miss Reddish, Treasurer (crossed "Williams Deacon's Bank"), and sent to this office, 5, John Dalton Street, Manchester.

We are,
Yours faithfully,

EVA GORE BOOTH }
ESTHER ROPER } *Hon. Secs.*