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N. Union

AL/623

NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES.

Hon. Secretary:

MISS EDITH DIMOCK.

President:

MRS. HENRY FAWCETT, LL.D.

Secretary,

MISS MARION PHILLIPS, B.A., D.Sc.,

25, VICTORIA STREET, WESTMINSTER,

LONDON, S.W.

OFFICE HOURS 9 TILL 6.

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Treasurer:

MISS BERTHA MASON.

30th September 1909

Dear Madam,

At the Special Meeting of the Executive Committee held this morning a resolution was passed that the following urgency resolution to be proposed by the Executive at the Cardiff Council Meeting, be sent immediately to each affiliated society, together with the enclosed letter which it is proposed to send in pursuance of that resolution :-

to this effect ["That the N.U. of W.S.S. strongly condemns the use of violence in political propoganda and authorises the Executive Committee to sign a letter to be sent to the press. And further that this Council urges all the Societies to circulate the letter in their local press signed in addition by the officers of their Societies."

It is hoped that your Society will be able to consider the matter before the Council Meeting on Wednesday next.

Yours faithfully,

MARION PHILLIPS

AL/623 cont.

Sir,

The recent developments in the acknowledged policy of the Women's Social and Political Union have made it necessary for us to reiterate our deep and abiding disapproval of the tactics of violence and disorder which appear to us as wicked as they are foolish.

On Nov. 9th 1908, the honorary officers of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies sent a circular letter to the members of the House of Commons and the press, placing on record our strong objection to similar disturbances and breaches of the peace, and affirming our steadfast adherence to lawful and constitutional methods of agitation. The policy and the conduct of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies are based upon a great principle. It is not one to be swayed by gusts of passion in either direction - the direction of disorder or that of reaction. We hold firmly to our principle that methods of violence and unreason are wrong and injurious. We foresaw long ago that such reprisals as the militant suffragists and the Government had embarked upon would only lead further and further into disaster and result in actions that would shock the public conscience as it has lately been shocked.

We see with infinite regret that the Women's Social and Political Union have abandoned the belief that the cause can be won by moral force, they have resorted to physical force and have turned their splendid enthusiasm and self-devotion in a direction which can only lead them to disaster.

We repeat that there is a fundamental difference in principle between the methods of the two societies and this being so, it should be utterly unnecessary for us periodically to register our disapproval of this or that militant action. We disapprove of violence, and therefore we disapprove of individual acts of violence.

Lastly, we protest against that action of those of our friends who say that they will stand aside until such time as the militants cease from troubling. Have they so little regard for the vindication of moral force that they are content to leave the battle in the hands of those who resort to physical force?

We appeal to all those who desire that the suffrage should be won by fair means to join us in our lawful and reasonable propaganda, and thereby prove to the Government, what we know to be the case, that the disorderly is merely a small and unrepresentative section of a vast body of men and women desiring this great reform.

Yours truly,