

(Speech of Joseph M. Carey  
on Woman's Suffrage)

On the 25th day of July 1868 Congress enacted the law for the organization of the Territory of Wyoming but with the qualification that it should take effect only <sup>soon after</sup> after the time when the executive and judicial officers, provided for in the Act, <sup>were</sup> ~~were~~ <sup>appointed and</sup> ~~and~~ sufficiently qualified.

Soon after the passage of the act, President Johnson proceeded to nominate a full corps of officers for the new territory.

The Senate of the United States did not act favorably on the appointments and the duty of appointing these <sup>best</sup> officers was finally left to the incoming administration <sup>of</sup> President Grant.

The executive and judicial officers arrived in Cheyenne, early in May 1869 and <sup>at once</sup> ~~soon~~ took up their work. During that month, the Territory of Wyoming was fully organized by the proclamation of John A. Campbell, the first Governor of Wyoming. The organic act gave him <sup>almost</sup> the power of an autocrat until the territory should have a legislature, <sup>of its own</sup> and even left with him the power to call a legislature at such time as in his discretion, he would see fit, <sup>with the saving clause however</sup> that the general laws of Dakota in force in any part of the new Territory should remain in force until repealed by the Legislature of Wyoming. Judicial districts were established and courts put into operation under the laws of the United States and the laws of the Territory of Dakota by <sup>the Governor's</sup> Campbell's proclamation during the month of May 1869. Not till the August following did he define the legislative district and call an election to select members of the Council and House of Representatives which were to consist respectively, of nine and thirteen members.

On a beautiful day, the 2nd of September 1869, the first election was held; - there was nothing to mar the beauty of the day. This legislature so elected, was called together to meet on Tuesday, the 12th of October 1869. Its session under the congressional act was limited to sixty days. This legislature was unanimously of one politics, - democratic. Neither Republicans, Independents, or any other party <sup>save the Democrats</sup> ~~was represented, there but the Democratic Party.~~

However many might have differed with the Legislature; considering the sparse population which at that time was less than 9,000 people, including Indians and soldiers stationed in the Territory, the Legislature did an important work and so legislated that

the wheels of the new government commenced to revolve smoothly; and from that date on to this we have probably been as well governed as any other political division of the United States, whether Territory or State.

Perhaps no act passed by the 1st Legislature ~~has~~ caused more criticism, both adverse and favorable, than that act, commonly known as the Women's Suffrage Act: the law giving women full political and civil rights in the Territory of Wyoming; - and I may now say with a good deal of force and enthusiasm, it has brought more glory to the people of Wyoming than any other legislative act. This law meant a new law in the history of the United States.

While the women had exercised the right of suffrage in the early days of New Jersey, <sup>the authority to do so</sup> ~~this law~~ passed out of existence, by non-user or <sup>legislative act</sup> ~~repeal~~. It may be safely said that the first territory <sup>or state</sup> to ever fully adopt this principal, was the Territory of Wyoming.

Susan B. Anthony with a great deal of force, as early as 1840, had commenced a great agitation for the cause. She had endured ridicule

and had even been sent to prison by reason of her enthusiasm. It became her life work, <sup>she was</sup> ~~and in it she staid~~ sincere, honest as the days are long; - a woman with whom no one could associate without admiring

her knowledge of the subject and the justice of her cause. She had <sup>influence</sup> ~~made numberless~~ <sup>many</sup> men and women interested in her work; but even up to the time the act was passed by the Wyoming Legislature, there was really no hope of any State adopting in generations to come, a law giving women perfect equality in the exercise of political rights.

<sup>when</sup> The law, some said, <sup>was passed placing women on equal with men in Wyoming</sup> was a joke; others said the Legislature would not have passed it, had it not been in order to bring the matter face to face with the Governor who was of opposite political feeling <sup>to the</sup> ~~of~~ the Legislature. He took the full time to sign the bill.

After the passage of the Act, there was much discussion of it in the newspapers of the country. It was an innovation, a reform, that in its coming anticipated the hopes of those few people who had been in its favor.

The Legislature that passed the bill, <sup>as was said</sup> expected Governor Campbell to decline to approve it, or at least that he would rather see it become a law without his approval. They were not prepared to see him endorse it.

Many went so far as to say that his approval of the bill would be sufficient cause for President Grant to remove him, while others voiced the opinion that the act would not stand the test of the courts, and that the organic act which provided "that male citizens should have the right to vote" by implication forbade the legislative body of the State to extend suffrage to any class except that specifically defined in the organic act.- None of these predictions proved true.

President Grant neither removed Governor Campbell, nor did he threaten to do so, and neither by word nor act did the President intimate that he was not in full accord with the act, made a law by the signature of Governor Campbell.

In their criticism of the act, some of the country's press ridiculed Governor Campbell and the Legislature, as well as the women of Wyoming in the exercise of their rights. Much history is connected with the inauguration of women's suffrage in Wyoming.

Among the men who were selected to serve in the 1st Legislature, representing the 3rd Council District, there was <sup>H. H.</sup> Bright, at that time residing at South Pass, in the then Carter County. He introduced and fathered the passage of the act to grant to the women of the Territory the right of suffrage and the right to hold office. He followed the measure, took responsibility for it and finally forced its passage. The story is often told that when he asked the late Esther Morris, then a resident of South Pass, and a woman of great natural ability, what legislature <sup>he</sup> he should undertake, she answered: "Introduce a bill that <sup>will</sup> ~~would~~ give to women the right to vote and to hold office in the Territory." That this action of Mrs. Morris led to the introduction and the passage of the bill, <sup>there</sup> ~~seems~~ <sup>to be no</sup> without doubt. Mr. Bright never denied the story and Mrs. Morris who was well known to most people of the State, often told of the incident. Mrs. Morris lived a

great many years after the passage of the bill and had many opportunities to exercise her rights under the law. Mr. Bright died only a few years ago at Washington, D. C.

This Act of December 10th 1869 remained on the statute books until the meeting of the 2nd Legislature in November 1871. The same political party who had been its sponsors in the 1st Legislature, left nothing undone to kill the act and try to secure its repeal in the 2nd session of the same year. (Insert) "A" covered on the date last named. In this

And in passing it might be well to state that women's suffrage had excited a great deal of interest in the United States, and at the 1st election in which women exercised their rights at the polls, a close watch was kept at a number of different polls inside the Territory. Newspaper correspondents of several great Eastern papers and representatives of magazines were on the ground on election day. There were no reports made by any of these men to the disadvantage of women's suffrage.

On the contrary, the influence of Wyoming's women made itself immediately felt, and not only have the political meetings, held in advance of elections, been conducted with a great deal more decorum and proved themselves the means of educating the people; but thanks to the care and good judgement exercised by the women of the State, the elections themselves have become more dignified and orderly since the inauguration of women's suffrage in Wyoming.

(Insert) "B" was wisely conducted.

I might mention many living women who have proved themselves bulwarks for the defense of women's suffrage in this State, but I will leave this to others. I will however add this much, that since the inauguration of suffrage for their sex there have been a good many women in Wyoming, honest, good and fearless, who by word and act have done everything in their power to impress the country beyond the borders of this State, that women's suffrage was in every way a success and in no way worked to the disadvantage of our State. That it opened for the woman doors to new and great opportunities, that it did not lower her in one respect, but on the contrary was the means of her elevation and betterment.

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In connection with the action of the Legislature, it should be remembered that women had voted at the elections held in '71, had helped to place all of the members of the Legislature into office, as well as all the county officers and the delegate to Congress. insert "A".

Thus, Some of the awful things predicted if women were to vote, never came true. They exercised their rights with great dignity and from that time on to this, Wyoming both as a Territory and a State, has had elections, that were dignified, quiet and wisely conducted.

While the repeal act was under discussion, the women of the territory made a noble fight to save the statute. From day to day <sup>they sought</sup> their representatives attended the legislative halls and made the best possible arguments for the retention of the law. That they were a great support in the fight to prevent the repeal of the act, cannot be gainsaid, and no woman was more conspicuous in this respect than the late *Amelia* B. Post of this city. Mrs. Post as well as Mrs. Morris, of whom mention has already been made, were continually on the alert during those days, in the defense of women's suffrage. insert "B"

The result in this Legislature really settled women's suffrage for all times in Wyoming, and the act was not assaulted again until the

Act for Admission of Wyoming as a State was under consideration in Congress. An attempt was made in that body to ridicule women's suffrage, but that ridicule did not cost the Admission of Wyoming as a State one vote.

A decision <sup>given</sup> laid down by the Supreme Court of the United States, previous to the passage of the Admission Act, while not directly bearing on the women's suffrage, <sup>question in Wyoming</sup> in Wyoming, left the matter entirely for the States themselves to decide; in other words it laid down the fact that there was nothing in the <sup>Constitution of the</sup> United States' Courts to say that women's suffrage should not be <sup>adopted by the individual States</sup> decided on by the States themselves. While there was some objection in Congress to the admission of States which adopted women's suffrage in their statutes, the opposition was weak, and the will of the people to admit women's suffrage <sup>acknowledged which</sup> remained determined and overcame all obstacles, both in the State Legislature and in Congress at the time of the Admission Act. <sup>Constitutional Convention</sup> <sup>process</sup> While the action of the 2 Legislatures <sup>in Assembly</sup> of Wyoming, referred to, was a leaven, it leavened the whole loaf, <sup>then</sup> for at that time Wyoming had only about 10,000 population, <sup>then</sup> and there were 40,000,000 people in the whole United States.

Other Territories and since then other States, have followed Wyoming's lead and adopted women's suffrage wholly or in part, until there are no less than twelve States and one Territory that have made women's suffrage a law. <sup>Soon I believe to be followed by other States,</sup>

Women's suffrage in this State perhaps has the tendency to make the women <sup>outside of</sup> outside of Wyoming and those States that followed Wyoming's lead, impatient, and we in the State can appreciate this fact. But <sup>it should be</sup> they should remember that all great reforms and movements have been the result of years of thought and agitation. During the days of the first Napoleon and at the close of his regime, as an actual factor of the politics of the world, there was scarcely a republic outside the then new Republic of the United States. The influence of the American Republic has been widespread, and with the exception of the colonies held in this hemisphere under the jurisdiction of European governments, all of the north and south American countries are under a system of

republican government, modeled after that of the United States.

Monarchism has but little influence in such countries as Canada and Australia, and to a great extent their's is a government of the people, linked to the British Empire more by mutual racial characteristics than by any deference to the monarchical system of the mother country.

Without going into details, we can make the same assertion of most of the European countries. France is under a very liberal republican government, Russia has won her freedom from absolutism, and nearly all other governments in Europe claiming the monarchical form of government, are only monarchies of the most limited character and the dawn of a new freedom is felt all over these nations; indeed, it is claimed to-day that the Great World War that now shocks civilization to its very <sup>foundations</sup> ~~foundations~~, has its <sup>inception</sup> ~~foundation~~ in the struggle

between Democracy on one side, and the claims of the Plutocrats and Autocrats of Europe, on the other, and the signs of the time point to a victory for Democracy and its principles. *Woman suffrage is*

*only carrying on the idea of the further extension of Democratic ideas*  
If our United States remains under the republican form of Government, -and it will, - <sup>not many years will elapse</sup> ~~it will not be long~~ before women will have full political and civil rights in every State of the Union. This is but right and no one will blame the women of those States that have not yet adopted women's suffrage, for exerting their best efforts to obtain this right. Let me say here however, that the methods employed by the militant suffragettes will not have the desired effect, and that parading outside the fences of the White House and insults to the President of the United States and the Government which he represents, will not help the cause, and that such methods <sup>are</sup> will undoubtedly ~~be~~ condemned by all <sup>thinking</sup> men and women of the United States, and that dignity and good taste will without doubt help women to victory where such strategies will fail.

The placing of the Tablet on this Building to-day to commemorate the inauguration of women's suffrage and their right to hold office is most appropriate, for in the second story of the building that stood on this ground, the first Council of the Wyoming Legislature met, and up in that corner of the building the bill for women's suffrage was introduced

by Mr. Bright and it was there, where it was passed. - No act of the people of Wyoming was more significant, no act was ever more influential, no act was better for the interest of men and women alike than this women's suffrage act which became a law on the 10th day of December 1869, and one of these days, the good women who are responsible for the erection of this Tablet, should see that a proper tablet be also placed on the building where the old Rawlins house stood on 16th Street, for it was there that the great fight was made to ~~safe~~ the forward step that was taken two years previous by the passage of the act in this building.