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THE MINNESOTA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

. . . an unpartisan organization to promote responsible and informed citizen participation in government, submits this record of the past twenty years of

*"learning by doing"*

1919 - 1939



Affiliated with the  
National League of Women Voters

914 Marquette Avenue

MINNEAPOLIS

MINNESOTA

#### FIRST YEAR, 1919-20 —

Prepared women for their first vote and laid a foundation for future work of the League of Women Voters by: a citizenship school in cooperation with the University of Minnesota at which 700 women registered; 53 schools of one to five days each and 72 lectures throughout the state; distributing 258,950 pieces of printed material of political education; holding eight conferences in eight congressional districts led by from five to eight speakers, the attendance for which was promoted by visits of officers to 66 towns.

Conducted the first get-out-the-vote campaign following the final enfranchisement of women, August 1920, including every device used in later campaigns with the addition of more instruction in the mechanics of voting and of election laws.

Held the first all-party candidates' meeting ever held in the state, and the first state and county fair booths offering non-partisan political information.

#### SECOND YEAR, 1920-21 —

Inaugurated the *Woman Voter*, a monthly bulletin of subjects of interest to members of the Minnesota League of Women Voters.

Led the public demand for calling the Washington Conference on Limitation of Armaments, the first League petition, numbering 3,500 names.

Supported the acceptance by the legislature of the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Act and the state's later cooperation with the federal government in organizing the work under the Act.

Supported the following successful legislative measures: Making women eligible for jury service; regulating the employment of children in street trades; increasing the maximum mothers' allowance; increasing the school year from six to eight months; and an amendment to make easier the enforcement of the compulsory school attendance law.

#### THIRD YEAR, 1921-22 —

Prepared and distributed the first state Digest of Election Laws which is still in use by public officials, teachers of civics in the public schools, and the general public.

Sent out questionnaires to determine women's reaction to jury service.

Inaugurated the League's plan of sending questionnaires to candidates for public office.

#### FOURTH YEAR, 1922-23 —

Supported the act by which the legislature appointed an interim committee on reorganization of the state departments. Without this committee, for which the League of Women Voters was primarily responsible, reorganization might not have occurred or have been long delayed.

Inaugurated a radio service of unpartisan political education that has never since been discontinued.

Held the first of four biennial Institutes of Government in cooperation with the University of Minnesota.

Supported the following measures passed by the Legislature:

- securing physical education in all the schools;
- providing for supplemental aid to poorer school districts and amendments representing an improvement in the method of distribution of this aid;
- limiting the work of women in industry to 54 hours a week;
- opposed an attempt to weaken the law providing jury service for women.

#### FIFTH YEAR, 1923-24 —

Gathered and carried to Washington a "mile" of signatures in behalf of the United States' adherence to the World Court — perhaps the most spectacular demonstration ever made in behalf of the World Court.

Held 34 one-day schools in 19 communities, with an attendance of 38,000, as one part of an extensive get-out-the-vote campaign.

#### SIXTH YEAR, 1924-25 —

Ended the get-out-the-vote campaign with the Passing-the-Torch tour from the Canadian to the Iowa border, 1,100 miles, with the final ceremony on the steps of the Capitol where it was met by the governor.

Carried on an intensive educational campaign in behalf of reorganization of state departments and in support of the bill which was passed by the legislature. Previous attempts at reorganization which had been supported by no such education of the public had failed.

Conducted an active but unsuccessful campaign to secure the ratification of the Child Labor Amendment.

#### SEVENTH YEAR, 1925-26 —

Prepared, published and distributed for use in study groups, 8,000 primers on "Current Questions in Government."

Organized first College League at St. Cloud.

Started a three year state-wide survey of jury service by women.

#### EIGHTH YEAR, 1926-27 —

Conducted a Survey of Voting Habits based upon a study of eight elections over a period of four years in twelve voting districts.

Supported the following measures passed by the Legislature:

providing a Teacher Tenure Law for cities of the first class;

providing for an appropriation to reimburse counties for one third of their expenditures under the Mothers' Allowance Law;

raising the marriageable age of girls from fifteen to sixteen, except with the approval of the Juvenile Court Judge.

#### NINTH YEAR, 1927-28 —

Organized listening-in groups for the radio Voters' Service of the National League of Women Voters as a part of an extensive get-out-the-vote campaign.

#### TENTH YEAR, 1928-29 —

Supported the act under which the legislature appropriated \$43,000 a year for infancy-maternity work, nearly compensating for withdrawal of federal aid.

Supported the "Stage Child" bill which was passed by the legislature, prohibiting the theatrical employment of children under ten years of age.

#### ELEVENTH YEAR, 1929-30 —

Secured signatures to a Memorial to the London Conference on Naval Reduction.

#### TWELFTH YEAR, 1930-31 —

Supported the bill providing for a five day waiting period between the application for a marriage license and its issuance. The measure met with bitter opposition, but was passed in the last hours of the legislative session.

Supported the measure providing for the reorganization of the State Teachers' Retirement Fund which was passed by the legislature.

#### THIRTEENTH YEAR, 1931-32 —

Supplied educational material on the caucus and convention system in Minnesota and other information for voters.

Went "over the top" in securing signatures to a petition to the World Disarmament Conference by securing 5,918 signatures in Minnesota — 293 more than the quota assigned by the National League.

Sent questionnaires on party caucuses to members of the League.

#### FOURTEENTH YEAR, 1932-33 —

Assisted Professor Robinson of Yale University in making a Survey of the Voters' Mind, in cooperation with other state leagues.

Supported an amendment to the Street Trades Law which was passed by the legislature.

Supported a bill, which passed, providing a 54 hour law for women.

Opposed attempts to weaken the Teacher Tenure Law, for cities of the first class, to repeal the Five Day Waiting Period Law, and opposed a bill making it possible to discharge married women from public employment.

Held the first series of Legislative Clinics throughout the state following the legislative session.

Minneapolis and St. Paul Leagues were selected as two of the fifty city Leagues in the United States to cooperate with the Chief of Labor Statistics in obtaining weekly reports of retail food prices.

Supported the ratification of the Child Labor Amendment, which was achieved in a special session, having failed in the regular session.

Supported the ratification of the Lame Duck Amendment which was passed in both houses of the legislature by a unanimous vote.

#### FIFTEENTH YEAR, 1933-34 —

Congratulated itself and rejoiced in the election of Miss Marguerite M. Wells, its former president, as National President of the League of Women Voters.

Conducted County Surveys in 35 counties, looking toward support of county reorganization in the future.

Conducted a survey of Public Emergency Relief throughout the state.

#### SIXTEENTH YEAR, 1934-35 —

Assisted the nine College Leagues in the organization of an All-College League Board.

Supported proposed changes in the Mothers' Aid Law, which were adopted by the legislature.

Supported four measures passed by the legislature providing for the revision of State Aid for Schools.

Opposed, successfully, repeal of the Five Day Waiting Period Law.

#### SEVENTEENTH YEAR, 1935-36 —

Participated in a nation-wide intensive campaign for civil service and trained personnel in government.

Supported a civil service bill in the special session of the Legislature, which did not pass.

Supported the clause of the unemployment compensation law requiring that employees be chosen on the basis of merit.

Conducted a survey of school districts.

Conducted a canned goods survey.

#### EIGHTEENTH YEAR, 1936-37 —

Invited all state-wide organizations endorsing the merit system in government to join with the League in organizing the Civil Service Council.

Worked intensively at the legislature for a civil service law based on merit, which did not pass.

Worked for adequate lay representation on County Welfare Boards, which was included in the law establishing these boards.

Supported an amendment to the Minimum Wage Law which made it cover girls as well as boys up to the age of 21.

#### NINETEENTH YEAR, 1937-38 —

Held the first of an annual series of Conferences on Governmental Problems in cooperation with the University of Minnesota at its Continuation Center.

Continued intensive state-wide education on civil service.

## TWENTIETH YEAR, 1938-39 —

Gave active support to the civil service bill which became a law on April 22, 1939.

Opposed successfully measures that would have barred practically all married women from public employment.

Opposed bills decreasing "lay" representation on County Welfare Boards, which failed to pass.

Opposed successfully repeal of the Five Day Waiting Period law.

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These listed achievements of the Minnesota League of Women Voters are illustrations of the organization's accomplishments during twenty years of continuous day-by-day activity in behalf of good government and political education. It does not include the preparation and distribution of publications for use in its educational work, the support of many federal measures, nor the accomplishments of local Leagues, such as support of city charter amendments, local civil service, and similar improvements in local government, nor a multitude of devices for interesting and informing voters at election time, nor constant observance of and reports on public boards and departments in state and local government.

Much effort is required to protect what has already been accomplished. Time and again it has been necessary for the League to oppose legislative measures the passage of which would have weakened or nullified laws for which the League has worked in the past. It also has constantly supported adequate appropriations for services worked for by the League.

This record has been achieved through the efforts of members of local Leagues scattered throughout the state in large and small communities.