

Document H: Negative reactions

British Anti-Suffrage League

In the summer of 1908 the famous author, Mary Humphry Ward, was approached by Lord Curzon and William Cremer and asked to become the first president of the Anti-Suffrage League. Ward agreed and on 8th July, 1908 the organisation published its manifesto. It included the following: "It is time that the women who are opposed to the concession of the parliamentary franchise to women should make themselves fully and widely heard. The matter is urgent. Unless those who hold that the success of the women's suffrage movement would bring disaster upon England are prepared to take immediate and effective action, judgement may go by default and our country drift towards a momentous revolution, both social and political, before it has realised the dangers involved."

The Anti-Suffrage League collected signatures against women having the vote and at a meeting on 26th March, 1909, Mary Humphry Ward announced that over 250,000 people had signed the petition. The following June she reported that the movement had 15,000 paying members and 110 branches and the number who had signed the petition had reached 320,000.

The leaders of the Anti-Suffrage League claimed that the vast majority of women in Britain were not interested in having the vote and that there was a danger that a small group of organised women would force the government to change the electoral system.

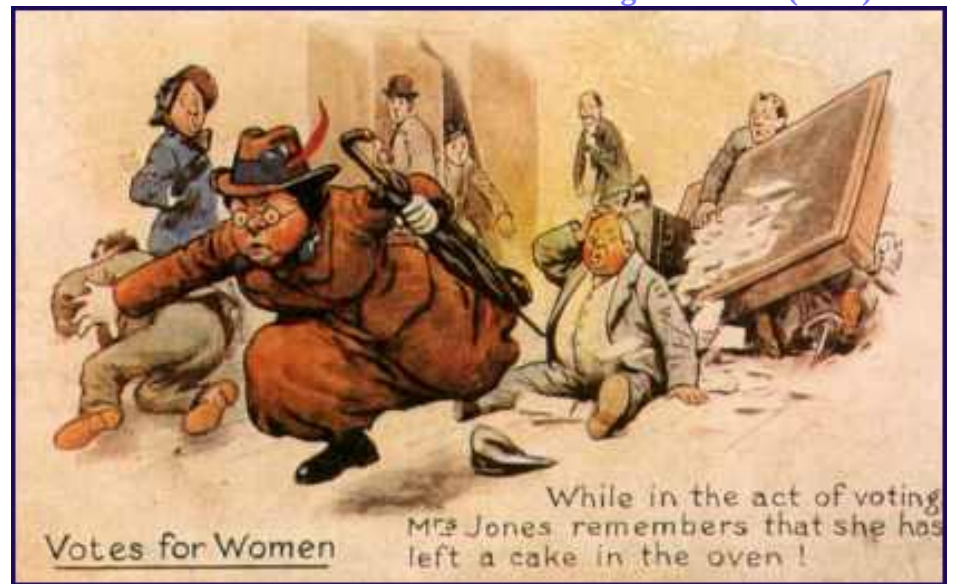
Source:

Accessed: Oct. 27, 2011

Spartacus Educational, John Simkin

(<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/Wanti.htm>)

Anti-Suffrage Postcard (1908)



Anti-Suffrage Poster by John Hassall (1912)

