

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF LADY MANAGERS.

Greeting.—A time has come in the history of woman's advancement in this country which is accompanied with a grave responsibility for each of us. The World's Fair is by Act of Congress an *industrial* exposition. Congress nobly recognized that woman has borne with man the trials of these four hundred years of progress, by creating a body of women to take a definite part in the management of this Exposition. Congress designated this body a *Board*; assigned to it a definite and special duty, thereby emphasizing the independent position the title *Board* always indicates, and appropriated the sum of \$36,000 for its use until July 1, 1892. The Commission has also accorded us a similar recognition in designating the number to constitute the Board. That this first national recognition of the principle of co-operation is in the industrial world, and not in the political arena, only makes our duty more imperative. It remains with us now to determine whether or not we will maintain this advanced position authorized and demanded of us by an Act of Congress. So long as this law is not repealed shall any power be permitted to destroy this individuality, or prevent the exercise of the right of the full Board to meet and arrange the methods and agencies necessary to perform the duties assigned it?

It is said that the Board is too large and unwieldy. It is grandly large, and in the first and only session it has held to date, demonstrated that it is not unwieldy (it may be too large in full session for outsiders to manage.) At this session rules were adopted to divide the entire membership in accordance with the twelve grand divisions of this industrial exhibit. This was done to secure systematic effort, and to bring our work in harmony with the autonomy of the whole exhibit as arranged by the Commission and the Exposition Directory.

Through such standing committees the best skilled women throughout the world would be more readily found who should be placed on the committees of awards. No work of the Commission or the Directory, or of the bureaus under the Director General should be duplicated in any way. We should utilize the established agencies, especially the installation bureau, where every application for space for exhibits will be made, and will designate if the exhibit be produced in part by female labor. This will save time and money. The Board planned that each one of these standing committees should be represented on the Executive Committee to preserve its own autonomy of method.

Besides these twelve fundamental committees the other agencies adopted were the officers, President, nine Vice-Presidents, and a Secretary, all elected by ballot, and the executive and financial committees to be appointed by the President. The finance committee has already done good work in Washington. The executive committee contains no members of the twelve fundamental standing committees, and has therefore no *honorable* standing. These twelve fundamental standing committees have not been appointed, and six months have elapsed.

The full Board should hold a meeting this year to go over every rule proposed by the Board of Control and adopted by the Commission at its April session, and change our rules and by-laws accordingly where necessary, to determine more specifically the uses to which the woman's building shall be put, and designate the special working committees accordingly; to define the work of the national workers, *i. e.* the members of the Board; to ascertain the various state policies at date toward women; to formulate and adopt plans of action for all, and to adopt and utilize the agencies established by the Commission and the Exposition Directory as far as possible, which will save time and money, and bring this third integral part of the management of the Fair in harmony with the general plan of the Exposition.

We have the right to meet as often as we wish, appropriation or no appropriation. Congress having created us and assigned us a duty, cannot consistently do less than pay for one such meeting a year. Women pay a large part of the taxes, and the next Congress contains members who owe their successful candidacy to efforts of women as well as men, and the prospects are that every Congress between now and the end of the Fair will contain influential members who appreciate woman's efforts in the economic world, and will grant us a week's session every year.

Let us meet in full session and send in the bill; conduct our own duties in harmony with the whole, and hold the place in this exposition granted us by the Act of Congress. Not to maintain this position is to be a traitor to the progress of women and the highest success of the Exposition, and to throw away the first special grant of Congress to women.

Attorney Walker, in behalf of the Board of Reference and Control, Bertha H. Palmer and Susan Gale Cooke, said in court, "*Remember that there is no assurance, no certainty, not even a probability that the Board of Lady Managers will ever convene again. That is the theory upon which the work is now being prosecuted*"

Twenty-six of our one hundred and fifteen members have lent themselves to this theory. We can only trust that before long they will be convinced of their mistake. Let us have a meeting of the full Board, and proceed faster for the lessons learned and because the relations of the three integral parts of the management of the exposition will be better understood.

Because it is possible for the form and not the substance of things desired to appear again, as in April, in my judgment each member of the Board of Lady Managers should immediately prepare herself to advance her own expenses, and be ready to come to Chicago on short notice.

With ill will toward none, and in answer to my sense of equity toward you all, I have sent you from time to time, what has come to my notice which I thought would not otherwise reach you, so that each may judge for herself the truth,

Yours fraternally,

FRANCES DICKINSON, M. D.

Member Board of Lady Managers.

August 1, 1891.