

Rebecca Latimer Felton

TO THE SENATE ¹

November 22, 1922

(In the Senate)

Mr. President, in my very remarkable campaign in Georgia, which, contrary to precedent, all came along after I was selected, one of the very amusing things that came to me by mail was a cartoon from San Antonio, Texas. The cartoon represented the United States Senate in session. The seats seemed to be fully occupied, and there appeared in the picture the figure of a woman who had evidently entered without sending in her card. The gentlemen in the Senate took the situation variously. Some seemed to be a little bit hysterical, but most of them occupied their time looking at the ceiling. Over the cartoon was written the wonderful words, "Will they ask the lady to take a chair?" [Laughter.] I want to return my thanks today for the beautiful, hospitable welcome that you have accorded to the lady when you gave her a chair.

I also want to return thanks to the noble men of Georgia. Georgia was very slow in her promises with reference to woman's suffrage. She has been rapid to perform, for Georgia is the first state in the federal Union composed of 48 states where one chivalric governor went to the front and said, "Send that old lady there and let her look at the Senate for even a day."

The senator-elect from Georgia, Mr. GEORGE,² said, "She shall have her day there," and I want to thank him in this presence. He is a worthy successor. I want to plead

for your gracious attention to him. He has been most chivalric. The sitting senator from Georgia [Mr. HARRIS]³ has been most obliging. Indeed, I feel that I am the happiest woman in the United States. I am at home in the Senate for a day. I appreciate this wonderful hospitality and the beautiful attention thus accorded to me.

I want to say further that I commend to your attention the ten million women voters who are watching this incident. It is a romantic incident, senators, but it is also a historical event. If Lady Astor,⁴ from the state of Virginia, can go to London and be accepted as a member of the British House of Commons, you can take this remnant of the old South that has never flickered in her patriotism to her country and be very well assured that she is not going to discredit her commission.

Let me say, Mr. President, that when the women of the country come in and sit with you, though there may be but very few in the next few years, I pledge you that you will get ability, you will get integrity of purpose, you will get exalted patriotism, and you will get unstinted usefulness.

Mr. President and senators, I thank you very much for this hearing. [Applause on the floor and in the galleries.]

¹ William J. Harris (1868-1932) served in the Senate, 1919-1932.

¹ U.S., Congress, Senate, *Congressional Record*, 67th Cong., 3d sess., p. 23.

⁴ Nancy Langhorne Astor (1879-1964) succeeded her husband, Viscount Waldorf Astor, in the House of Commons when he moved to the House of Lords. She was the first woman member of Parliament.

² Walter F. George (1878-1957) served in the Senate, 1922-1957.