

Letter from Jeannette Rankin to Anna Shaw, c. 1913

[Dear Dr. Shaw,]

I had been asked to come by suffrage workers [but after] I consented they found that the people did not want me on the program because they did not want a political speech. However, the governor was billed to speak so I said I would go anyway and if there was a chance alright and if not alright. When I arrived it was still said that I would not be allowed to speak, but there were several men very determined so when the speaking was over they called “Miss Rankin.” The men helped me on the platform but the chairman shook his head so I got down. Then they started to call again and as the chairman had left and the crowd started to leave, I got up and a man introduced me and the crowd came back. I talked a few minutes telling my best stories and the people thought it was a great joke that I finally got on, and they were all very good-natured. . . .

We had an interesting time in a little . . . village where we held an open air meeting. There were very few people in town [as] they were preparing for a big celebration the next day. The men sat around the saloons and insisted they would not come to hear the speaking, but a few women and children mixed with our crowd made a beginning and after that the men gradu-

ally came until we had a good audience. . . . We did not try to take up a collection but told them we had some Votes for Women buttons to sell. A woman in the audience who was the assistant postmaster came out in front and said, “Here, come buy these buttons,” and the men came up and we sold all the buttons we had. We felt that we had gained quite a victory.

The country districts are coming forward most wonderfully. We had a very interesting time at our State Central Committee at Lewistown. . . . Women from all parts of the state made their first suffrage and open-air speeches at the same time and the audiences enjoyed them very much. There was one anti in Lewistown. . . .

One woman . . . said that the antis reminded her of the old jingle about the purple cow:—“I never saw a purple cow. I hope I never see one, but I can tell you anyhow, I would rather see than be one.”

[*Jeannette Rankin*]

Source: *Montana Good Government State Central Committee Records, 1895–1919. Small Collection 567.* Montana Historical Society Research Center. Archives. Excerpted in *Not In Precious Metals Alone: A Manuscript History of Montana* (Helena, 1976): 235.