

## SOURCE 2

Extract from the Manifesto of the Women's Freedom League published in 1912

(PRO ref: T 172/968b)

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### HOW TO USE THIS SOURCE TO HELP YOU ANSWER THE BIG QUESTION :

Look carefully at this source and consider what it tells you about the relationship between the Suffragists and the Suffragettes and how this affected the campaign for the vote. You should consider:

### ASK YOURSELF:

- What kind of movement is the Women's Freedom League?
- What kind of protests has it carried out in the past?
- Does it believe that militant action works?
- What was its view on militancy in March 1912 and why?
- What does this source suggest about the relationship between the League and the WSPU?

Votes for Women.

Women's Freedom League

Weekly Paper: "THE VOTE."

President: Mrs. DESPARD.

Hon. Treasurer: Miss C. V. TITE.

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## MANIFESTO OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

March 4th, 1912.

We, the undersigned, members of the National Executive Committee of the Women's Freedom League, are requested by the Committee to state the reasons which have led them to refrain from militant action at this juncture.

### Mr. Asquith's Pledge.

The statement is frequently made that the "militant societies" regard Mr. Asquith's pledge as worthless, therefore it becomes necessary to remind the public that one militant society takes an entirely different view. The Women's Freedom League believes in and has frequently used methods of political agitation and protest which have led to the imprisonment of many of its members: It was the first suffrage society to make tax resistance a part of its official programme, it initiated the protest resulting in the removal of the "grille" of the House of Commons, the "Ballot Box" protest and "Census Resistance," besides many other less well-known protests. **We believe that it is largely owing to those protests that Mr. Asquith's pledges have been won, and are of the opinion that time should be allowed for them to be fulfilled.**

### Can Militancy help just now?

That may be true, but the question is not "Are we content with the situation?" but "Can militancy improve it?" We do not believe it can. It may be that unforeseen circumstances will arise when it would obviously be necessary to make a real and far-reaching protest, but at the present time those circumstances have not arisen. The situation is difficult, it is one of strained suspense which is almost intolerable, but it is impossible to say that anything can be gained while much may be lost by inopportune militancy. An important factor in all militant action is that it should appeal to that sense of fairmindedness which is in the long run found in the public. So long as to the ordinary person there appears to be a good chance of the question being successfully considered in Parliament, that ordinary person will not be convinced that militancy is expedient.