

SOURCE 3

A letter from the Home Counties Union of Women's Liberal Associations commenting on Suffragettes, 1912
(PRO ref: T 172/968b)

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:

- Who is writing the letter?
- Would the Liberal government pay careful attention to this letter?
- What attitude is shown towards the militants?
- Would a letter like this help the cause of women's suffrage?

SOURCE 3

Dear Sir,

As President of the Home Counties Union of Women's Liberal Associations numbering 220 Associations and over 25,000 active Liberal women workers, I write on their behalf to protest against the illegal actions of a relatively small number of women, the members of the Social and Political Union, during the past few days. We feel deeply that such action is not only a disgrace to the women concerned, but may prove to be the gravest hindrance to the cause of Woman's Suffrage, to which we are devoted both as women and Liberals. The action of the militants is not even consistent, for last year they strongly supported the Conciliation Bill and they are now opposing it.

We have again and again protested against the so-called militant tactics but never more so than now when victory is in sight, thanks to the pledges of the Government to give facilities to our question in Parliament. We would point out to the Liberal, Labour and Irish parties in the House, that in numbers the militant women are of no account compared to the women who have adopted constitutional methods.

The members of our Union have given ungrudging service in the Home Counties to the Liberal Party, and as Liberals we now appeal to all the members forming the Majority in the House to do justice to their women allies.

It is neither right nor just that the misguided action of the few should further delay justice to the many, and we who have worked for Liberalism both in the dark days and since brighter days have dawned look now to our friends for this act of justice to women.

I am,
Yours truly,

EVA MCLAREN.