

# Why did a campaign for women's suffrage

[History](#)



There were many reasons for a campaign developing for Women's Suffrage in the years after 1870 which can be identified as social, economical or political reasons. Firstly, I will deal with the economic reasons. A second economic reason for a campaign developing was that new inventions such as the typewriter opened up new job roles which women were good at for example as secretaries. These new jobs reinforced the image of women as being useful in society and therefore capable of managing the right to vote. One of the main triggers for a campaign was the Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution led to inventions and new machines creating increasing numbers of opportunities for women. This new work force was more readily employed as they would work for lower pay than men, encouraging factory owners to hire them. Giving women these jobs that men had previously occupied, gave them a new sense of independence and self reliance, leading to a confirmed belief that they should have the vote. The industrial revolution also saw men working hard for which many more men were given the vote as a reward, leading women to seek the same rights.

Next, I will deal with the political reasons. A third reason was that there were many reform acts for male voters being put in place which led to a campaign for women's suffrage starting in 1870. Some examples of these include The Great Reform Act in 1832 which gave middle class, property owning men the vote and The Second Reform Act in 1867 which gave skilled tradesmen and all male householders the vote. These acts would have been an additional incentive for women as increasing numbers of men were getting the vote, making England more of a Patriarchal Society.

Similarly, these new Acts showed that traditional values were being challenged and new ideas were being welcomed which would encourage women to try to get the vote. Moreover, some of these men that were now able to vote occupied jobs under women for example as farm labourers where they are employed by the farmer's wife so women would have questioned the reasoning of why men should get the vote but their female employers should not. As we shall see, participation in local activities soon fuelled the women's drive for the national vote.

A fourth reason was that in the years after 1870, women were given the right to vote in Local Elections in 1889 and for Council and Borough Councils in 1888. This accelerated the campaign for women's suffrage - which had already started by then - as women believed they should also be allowed to vote in Parliamentary elections. They thought that if they had the right to vote in local elections and County and Borough council elections then why should they not be allowed to vote in parliamentary elections as well.

A fifth reason for a campaign developing was that women in other countries had been given the vote. The attainment of the vote by women in other English speaking countries such as New Zealand in 1893, Southern Australia in 1894 and Western Australia in 1899 helped the campaign for Women's suffrage because the women believed that they should have equal rights to their counterparts in other countries in the British Empire. Finally I will deal with the social reasons for a Campaign for Women's Suffrage developing in the years after 1870.

A sixth factor in the drive for women's suffrage was education. Additional educational opportunities were opened up for women, especially for the upper and middle classes for example in 1870 the Government made school compulsory for girls as well as boys - who, in general, already attended school - under 10 years old. This made Women's aspirations rise and led to a group of women who were increasingly frustrated at the inequalities they faced.

Furthermore, the education that had been given to them meant that they were motivated and able to effect change. A final reason was that many prominent individuals thought that women should have the vote. Some examples of these people are Caroline Norton, a bestselling novelist and MPs such as Henry Hunt and John Stuart Mill. These individuals had the background to get themselves heard and knew the right people to tell.

Once they had a point of view they could make sure that the important people heard it and those people would probably listen because of these individuals' influence on society. There were a number of very significant incentives for a campaign for women's suffrage developing in the years after 1870 but of these I feel the most significant was the industrial revolution because it made women independent and reliable so I think that this would have made them want to have the vote and for people to start thinking that they should have the vote.