

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

*Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society),
8^B, Dryden Chambers, 119 Oxford Street, London W.1.*

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Price Sixpence.

Daughter of the ancient Eve,
We know the gifts ye gave and give;
Who knows the gifts which *you* shall give,
Daughter of the Newer Eve?

Francis Thompson

Christabel Pankhurst—The Girl who slew the Dragon

By Lord Pethick Lawrence

I have never accepted the saying that "genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains". For me, it is the faculty of apprehending truth intuitively. Olive Schreiner used to say that it is not a supernatural but a supernormal gift. Ordinary people, she explained, are quite capable of reasoning up to the conclusion which genius sees in a flash. But until it is expounded to them they do not grasp it.

Christabel Pankhurst had this gift in a high degree; and in my judgment she was among the foremost political geniuses of our age. What were these truths that she apprehended and applied? I will enumerate the most significant of them.

First, she saw unerringly that in this country under our existing party system the arbiter of legislative reform was the Government of the day. Private members of Parliament had no real power. They were, as she expressed it, like the back buttons on a man's tail coat. In this matter of the enfranchisement of women it was the Government alone who was responsible and it was the Government therefore upon whom all available pressure must be concentrated.

Secondly, she saw that, where a voteless class is claiming an advance in political status and is being refused, there comes a time in the agitation when further pleading is useless and even derisory. Then deeds must be substituted for words. From this sprang her decision to go to prison when charged with obstruction, and later the whole militant campaign.

Thirdly she saw that the greatest obstacle of all to the emancipation of women lay in their own apathy, and in what today would be called their inferiority complex. It was in overcoming this apathy that her genius for political leadership was most strikingly displayed. It was with a feeling of shame that she heard many a woman get up and commence her remarks by some such words as "Of course I am only a woman." She always sought to arouse among women a sense of glory in their sex and whatever call she made upon them for sacrifice was rarely made in vain.

It was one of the assets of the suffragettes that the press, especially at the beginning of the campaign, tried to misrepresent them as ungainly

disappointed viragoes. When therefore the crowds, gathered around their platforms, and discovered, on the contrary, that Christabel herself and many of her active coadjutors were bonny attractive young women, their emotional reaction was so violent as almost to convert them into supporters of votes for women on the spot.

Genius is no guarantee against fallibility and personally I do not think that Christabel was invariably right in her judgment. But this is a matter of opinion on which different people are entitled to hold different views. What is unquestionably true is that the great mass of criticism that was levelled against her was unjust and ill founded.

Naturally the political personages whom she attacked hit back and tried to discredit her by every means in their power. The vigour of their retaliation is a measure of the extent to which her shafts had reached their target. But many inside the movement criticised her for being autocratic and inflexible, and ruthless in her dealing with individuals who were giving selfless service to the cause. Against this charge, which is almost invariably levelled at leaders of any great campaign, I would point out that the main objective of victory must always take precedence in the mind of a leader over personal considerations.

Some people today still maintain that it was not the suffragettes with their militant tactics who won the vote but the quiet progress of persuasion aided by the spectacular services rendered by women to their country during the war of 1914-18. They seem to forget that when Christabel flung down her challenge the peaceful campaign for women's enfranchisement was at its lowest ebb. No one was thinking of it or talking about it. Ten years later it was on everyone's lips. Nor can it be doubted that but for the resurgence of women during those ten years few of them would have been prepared to offer these war services and that if they had done so the offer would have been in all probability contemptuously declined.

But the controversy is not really very important. Genius is its own defence and its own glory. Its fruits remain an everlasting memorial.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

We are indebted to the Women's Freedom League for allowing us to reproduce from *The Women's Bulletin* the fine tribute to Dame Christabel Pankhurst by Lord Pethick Lawrence.

* * *

Miss Evelyn Billing writes:

Only the W.S.P.U., and no other political party, had the courage and the cash to have weekly meetings at the Queen's Hall. The highlight was usually Christabel Pankhurst's speech. The famous "Spy" cartoon exactly depicts her and her dress, and her speaking posture. She interpreted for us the political scene and chicaneries with a perspicacity and lightning wit that even seasoned parliamentarians had to acknowledge. To us she gave vigorous leadership and a sound political education: to her opponents she gave scornful ridicule and a sound political trouncing.

It is to England's dishonour that the majority of voters today (including women and students) give the name "Pankhurst" a connotation of hysteria and rowdiness. But I have found an illustrated lecture turns teachers and teenagers into interested and indeed enthusiastic admirers. Cannot we all, the dwindling band of Suffragettes, give one such lecture in memory of an historic creative personality?

* * *

A pleasant and useful opportunity was provided on February 21st by the Women's Advisory Council of the United Nations Association for representatives of women's organisations to meet Miss Ruth Tomlinson, the United Kingdom delegate to the Twelfth Session of the Status of Women Commission, at the House of Commons. Miss Tomlinson invited questions and comments on each item of the agenda.

Regarding the Report of the Secretary General on Consent to Marriage and the Age of Marriage, Miss Tomlinson was impressed with its value and said that she herself was in favour of the establishment of a minimum age of marriage of sixteen years. Miss Challoner, on behalf of St. Joan's Alliance said she hoped Miss Tomlinson would be enabled to support this view at the Commission in Geneva.

During tea, with some of the women M.P.s, Dame Irene Ward and Mrs. Joyce Butler both congratulated Miss Tomlinson and the women's organisations on the non-political appointment of a delegate to the Status of Women Commission. They said how greatly the women M.P.s appreciated the co-operation of the women's organisations and how glad they were to forward their aims.

Lord Chorley has introduced a Bill in the House of Lords to give the mother of every legitimate infant joint guardianship with the father with equal authority, rights and responsibilities. We hope to deal more fully with the Bill in a future issue.

* * *

The whole fire service is incensed at the refusal of the Home Secretary to approve an increase in firewomen's wages. The general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union said: "These women work forty-eight hours a week, three shifts, Christmas Day and every day, all round the clock, on key jobs of great responsibility, maintaining the control, mobilisation and communications in the nerve centres of fire brigades. They do not earn overtime, they have no shift pay, their wages are from £7 to £8 a week . . . and they have had no increase since 1956."

* * *

We have heard from the Convent of the Cross, Boscombe, that the translation of Monsignor Trochu's book, "St. Bernadette Soubirous", reviewed in the last number of *The Catholic Citizen*, was largely undertaken by their late chaplain, Father Francis Weaver, S.J. It was afterwards adapted by Father James Joyce when Father Weaver became too ill to accomplish his task. One of the older nuns helped Father Weaver in some tricky translations.

The Convent of the Cross has subscribed to *The Catholic Citizen* for very many years and one of the community was an early member of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society. Our founder, Gabrielle Jeffery was a pupil at this convent.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "*The Catholic Citizen*," March 15th, 1933

When the full Parliamentary franchise was granted to women, many thought the need for further action unnecessary. The leaders of the movement never indulged in such easy optimism. They knew that the winning of the vote was but a step, a big step it is true, in fact a stride, towards our ultimate aim, but that the struggle against unfair discrimination towards women would have to be carried on with ceaseless vigilance.

The age-long tradition that in matters of legislation, women are a negligible quantity is hard to kill. Prudence dictates the wise assumption that it will never die, and that being so the necessity for the continuation and expansion of our Alliance is obvious.

Every fresh Bill presented to Parliament requires close scrutiny, no matter how unlikely to the inexperienced its subject matter may appear to affect women: It is astonishing where one who knows how to search can find some seemingly innocent clause tucked away that means an infringement or withdrawal of a hard-won right. — *Eleanor FitzGerald* in "*Work Before Us*."

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

AND

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society

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Forty-Sixth Annual Report*

For the year ending December 31st, 1957

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance has been directly concerned with the following events recorded for the year ending December 31st, 1957, and has worked for the promotion of the Society's aims, through the various activities recounted.

Two Bills of particular interest have been before Parliament during the year.

Women Peers

The Life Peerages Bill, enabling men and women to sit and vote in the House of Lords, passed its Second Reading in December. The Alliance welcomes the fact that this Bill makes provision for the creation of women peers while maintaining that women peers in their own right have a prior claim. Letters to that effect were sent to the appropriate authorities.

Maintenance Orders

The Maintenance Orders (Attachment of Income) Bill, introduced by Miss Joan Vickers, passed its Second Reading on March 1st, but was lost owing to the filibustering of certain members of the Standing Committee. Miss Vickers explained its terms at a luncheon given in the House of Commons to representatives of the supporting Societies, including St. Joan's Alliance.

A similar Bill sponsored by the Government—the *Maintenance Orders Bill*—was introduced in November by Mr. Butler, the Home Secretary. This Bill provides for the enforcement of certain Maintenance Orders through the attachment of wages, salaries or other earnings, or of pension. It passed its Second Reading on December 12th. Congratulations are due to the Married Women's Association which initiated the Bill with the support of many organisations, including St. Joan's Alliance.

Wolfenden Report

This report was at length published on September 4th. Part Three—Prostitution—gave small satisfaction to those who regard the present Solicitation Laws as unjust, and consider the establishment of a just law, applicable to both sexes, as of greater importance than the mere "clearing of the streets."

The Alliance was represented at the meeting, convened by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, to discuss the Report, and supported the ensuing statement,

*Subject to confirmation at the Annual Meeting.

which regretted particularly the proposal to eliminate the requirement to prove annoyance in the law regarding street offences, and the retention of the term "common prostitute."

Equal Pay

The third instalment of Equal Pay in the teaching profession and the non-industrial grades of the Civil Service was obtained in 1957. The Alliance, at its Annual Meeting, deplored the continual postponement of Equal Pay, and the exclusion of the women in the industrial grades of the Civil Service from even this measure of justice.

A step in the right direction is the decision of the Post Office to place women recruits for the telephone and telegraph grades on reaching the age of twenty-one, on the scale which will ultimately be equal to that in force for men, provided they are willing to be in attendance at any time during the twenty-four hours as the men are.

Female Circumcision

It was satisfactory to have the statement from the Secretary of State for the Colonies on August 1st that female circumcision in Kenya is forbidden by law. He said in the House of Commons "The practice is contrary to Sections 230 and 237 of the Penal Code but the Kenya Government's policy of eradicating it is most effectively pursued through the tribal authorities."

Status of Women Committee

On this committee, of which Dame Vera Laughton Mathews is Chairman, work has been done to promote legislation to give mothers and fathers equal guardianship of their children; on equal pay for women in the industrial grades of the civil service and in private industries; on the position regarding pay and promotion prospects for women employees in banks; on the question of the admission of women as members of Stock Exchanges and on the admission of women to the House of Lords.

Annual Meeting

The Forty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Alliance was held on March 16th at 27 Wilfred Street, S.W.1, Dr. Shattock presiding. The Annual Report was read by Miss Brandt and *The Catholic Citizen* Report by the Editor, Miss Christine Spender. Supporting speeches were made by Miss H. M. Green and Dr. Marita Shattock Harper. The Hon. Treasurer, Miss N. K. Carr, presented the Financial Report, and her appeal for funds resulted in £42 0s. 6d. Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, the International President, then gave some account of the inter-

national work done by the Alliance. She stressed the need for active work to improve the status of women in the underdeveloped countries and thanked Mrs. Grabinska and Miss Challoner for their work with the United Nations on the Slavery Convention in New York and Geneva respectively. Miss Retchford paid tribute to the work of the Alliance in initiating valuable action on the Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations at the United Nations. The Chairman spoke of the value of the Alliance in co-operating with other Societies, in helping those who might otherwise be forced into frustrated acceptance of their lot and in refuting the accusation that Catholics do not play their part in public life. Finally, she said work came to the Alliance through its unwillingness to turn down requests of feminist interest which came from diverse quarters—including a point brought to our attention by an enclosed nun.

Resolutions on Equal Political Rights, Maintenance Orders, Equal Pay, Prostitution, Domicil, Taxation, Nationality of Married Women, I.L.O. and Education were moved from the Chair and passed unanimously. Miss Chave Collisson, Secretary of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, spoke on Prostitution, calling for the strengthening of the law against procurement and third-party exploitation of the prostitute.

The Executive Committee was re-elected and at its first meeting re-elected its officers. (For text of the Resolutions and list of Officers see *The Catholic Citizen*, April 1957.)

On St. Joan's Feast, May 30th, which fell on Ascension Day, Mass was offered for the Alliance by the kindness of Fr. J. H. Ryan, C.S.Sp. Members attended Evening Mass at Westminster Cathedral and gathered afterwards at the shrine of St. Joan, where, in accordance with tradition, a wreath tied with the colours of the Alliance, had been laid.

The first event of the year was a party on January 31st, given by the International President for Madame Pesson Depret, who spoke of the Seminar on "The Role Women Play in the Soviet Union," which she had attended in Moscow as representative of the International Abolitionist Federation. A joint meeting with the Women's Freedom League was held in June, when Dr. Magda de Spur on a visit from U.S.A., spoke on "The Women of Hungary." A party was also given by Miss Barry and Miss Spender at Hampstead for overseas friends and students. After the Annual Mass for deceased members and friends in November, members met for dinner in Soho. On December 8th, by kind invitation of Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, members heard an account of her visit to Tanganyika, a visit which combined personal pleasure with valuable investigation into the position of women.

Co-operation with other Organisations

Members serve on the following Committees: British Commonwealth League, British Vigilance and National Committee for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons, the Catholic Committee for Overseas Students, the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child, the Open Door Council, the Status of Women Committee, the Women's Council co-operating with the Women of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, and the Women's Advisory Council of the United Nations Association.

Representatives attended the gathering at Westminster Abbey at the plaque of Dame Millicent and Henry Fawcett, on February 6th the anniversary of the first instalment of Votes for Women; and paid tribute to Mrs. Pankhurst on July 14th at her statue in Victoria Tower Gardens.

The Alliance took part in the Conference of the British Commonwealth League, the subject being "Problems of Migration within the Commonwealth," and attended many of the League's other functions. Representatives also attended various meetings of the Women's Council

co-operating with the Women of India, Pakistan and Ceylon; the Annual General Meetings of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene and of the Open Door Council; a reception for Miss Ester Graf, President of the International Alliance of Women and the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Women's Freedom League.

Under the auspices of the Women's Advisory Council of the United Nations Association, representatives of the Alliance met Dame Lucile Sayers before and after her attendance as U.K. delegate to the eleventh session of the Status of Women Commission, and Mrs. Walter Elliot on her return from her attendance as U.K. delegate to the eleventh General Assembly of the United Nations and again before she left for the twelfth Session which opened in September.

The Alliance was represented by Dr. Shattock at the enthronement of the Most Reverend William Godfrey, D.D., Ph.D., as Archbishop of Westminster. Miss Challoner represented the Alliance at the Mass for the welfare of Ghana on March 6th and at the party at the Catholic International Chaplaincy to celebrate that country's independence.

There has been correspondence on a variety of subjects, including women undergraduates and the Cambridge University chaplaincy; overseas students; the rôle of the laity in the Apostolate; women peers; the Wolfenden Report; the Maintenance Orders Bill; Roger Fulford's book "Votes for Women."

Visitors from Abroad

We were happy to welcome during the year from Australia, Mother Prioress of the Good Shepherd Convent, Adelaide, Mrs. Vaile and Mr. and Mrs. John Collins; from Belgium, Mademoiselle Pourvoyeur; from Ceylon, Mrs. de Silva; from Hungary, Sister Fabiola; from Ireland, Miss Horne and Mrs. Maxwell; from Trinidad, Father J. H. Ryan, C.S.Sp. and Mrs. McShine; from South Africa, Mrs. Byrne, Mrs. McGrath and Mrs. Power; from U.S.A., Mrs. Rebecca Reyher, Dr. Janet Robb and Dr. Magda de Spur.

We were sad to say goodbye to Mrs. Kinsella and congratulate her on having been elected President of the New South Wales Section of the Alliance.

Obituary

The Alliance records with sorrow the death of the following members: Miss Edith Delaney, the Hon. Mrs. Copland Griffiths, Lady Houston-Boswall, Miss Mardon, Mrs. McMahan, Lady Muir, Colonel R. O. Sheppard, D.S.O. and two very good friends who will be greatly missed: Mother Kevin of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Africa and Mrs. Elizabeth Abbott. R.I.P.

Mass was offered in March for Gabrielle Jeffery, Founder of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society and Leonora de Alberti, first Editor of *The Catholic Citizen*; and on the first Sunday in November, at St. Patrick's, Soho, for deceased members, associates and benefactors of the Alliance.

"The Catholic Citizen"

Subscriptions and Sales show a slight increase on last year but with heavy printing costs and increased postage, the paper does not yet pay its way and shows a deficit.

We are greatly indebted to the following who contributed special articles, to "Black Sasher", Mrs. Katherine Bompas, Mrs. Ormrod, Miss B. M. Pearson, Dr. Janet Robb.

We are also grateful to our members who have generously contributed to the paper, Miss P. M. Brandt, Miss P. C. Challoner, Miss M. C. Clarke, Miss Vera Douie, Miss Guessard, Mrs. Halpern, Miss McKinney and our numerous reviewers.

We were privileged to publish part of the address of His Excellency, Archbishop Carboni, which he gave to St. Joan's in Melbourne on its twenty-first birthday.

The Catholic Citizen has been able to give detailed information on the various Parliamentary Bills of interest to the Alliance and the work of the United Nations and the International Labour Office. Much appreciated items in the paper appear to be "The Month in Parliament" and "International Notes".

The paper goes all over the world and its circulation in Australia is particularly satisfactory.

We are very grateful to Miss Graham and Miss Hope Robson for help in sending out the paper every month and to Mrs. Coast and Mrs. Morison for so kindly addressing the wrappers.

Hon. Treasurer's Report

The Alliance has ended the year with a balance of £26 in the General Fund, but we were obliged to withdraw £250 from the Gabrielle Jeffery Memorial Fund to meet the heavy expenses entailed by rent and rates for the office.

The amount under item Subscriptions and Donations is considerably less than in the previous year, when a special appeal was made to St. Joan's International for the new office, and when we received two legacies which enabled us to meet our liabilities. Members' subscriptions, however, remain at about the usual level.

The Christmas Sale, together with a small Jumble Sale realised £130. We are grateful to all those who helped to make these Sales a success.

The Alliance is greatly indebted to our generous voluntary helpers in the office throughout the year, the Misses Brandt, Cave, Challoner, Davis and Jameson. Members will, we feel sure appreciate that without this efficient and regular voluntary help, the work of the Alliance could not be carried on as there are no funds available for a paid staff. To Miss I. E. Fleming we owe a debt of gratitude for so kindly auditing our accounts.

Merseyside Branch

Chairman, Mrs. McCann, 16 Princes Park Mansions, Liverpool 8.

At the Exhibition to illustrate the contribution of Catholics to the growth of Liverpool since 1207, as part of the Charter Celebrations held in September and October, copies of *The Catholic Citizen* and leaflets of St. Joan's Alliance were on view.

At a party given in September by the Chairman, members of the Branch heard the latest news of work at Headquarters from Miss F. Barry.

In December, Miss Herbison, a member of the Executive Committee, spoke on her visit to the Conference of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations and as a delegate appointed by Archbishop Godfrey to the Conference of the Lay Apostolate in Rome. Miss Herbison was congratulated on her election as National President of the Catholic Women's League. A Resolution on the Wolfenden Report was passed and sent to all local M.Ps.

Holy Mass was offered on the Feast of St. Joan and on November 2nd by the kindness of the Rev. J. J. Coyne for deceased members of the Alliance. A requiem Mass was said for members who died during the year: Mrs. Mary Teresa Weld Blundell, Mrs. Graham, Mr. Frank O'Callaghan and Mrs. Keating. R.I.P.

We take this opportunity of paying tribute to Mrs. Keating for her work as Hon. Secretary. We welcome Miss Brady, who kindly agreed to serve in her place.

The Branch is a constituent member of the Standing Conference of Women's Organisations, and is represented on the Board of Catholic Women.

ST. JOAN'S INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE

The Fourteenth Council Meeting took place in Paris at the Maison des Etudiantes on September 14th and 15th.

Resolutions on Slavery, Nationality of Married Women, Recovery Abroad of Maintenance, Political Rights, Equal Moral Standard, Equal Pay and Opportunities, Equal Retirement Age and Pensions Schemes, and Education were passed. (For text see *The Catholic Citizen* of October 1957).

Many distinguished Frenchwomen came to the meetings and took part in the discussions. They included Madame Lefauchex, delegate for France on the Status of Women Commission of the United Nations; Madame Francine Lefebvre, Deputy to the French Parliament; Madame Suzanne Meyer and Mademoiselle Agnes Lambert, both Mayors of sections of Paris; Madame Germaine Touquet, and Madame Suzanne Peters, both Municipal Councillors.

Soeur Marie André of the White Sisters was welcomed and made valuable suggestions on the question of the minimum age and the registration of marriages. An informal discussion on recent changes in the Liturgy took place and it was agreed that the Alliance should submit to the appropriate authority a request that the prayer in the Nuptial Mass said over the bride and bridegroom be so worded as to apply to both spouses.

The form of a new propaganda leaflet was discussed; reports from National Sections were received; the appointment of Mrs. Grabinska (U.S.A.) as a Vice-President was confirmed and Miss P. C. Challoner (U.K.) was elected a Vice-President.

Madame Lefauchex suggested, and the Alliance agreed, that the World Health Organisation be requested to convene a Conference on the subject of female circumcision to which the principal Officers of Health should be invited from all countries where this custom is practised.

Attention was drawn to Mrs. Grabinska's speech at the Conference of the International Council of Women at Montreal, on Regulated Prostitution.

A suggestion from the New South Wales Section that the subject Migration be taken as a project for 1958 was discussed. The matter was postponed until Australian representatives could be present. It was agreed to continue the campaign for the freedom of choice in marriage and of a minimum legal age of marriage for boys and girls of not less than sixteen years, in preparation for the twelfth Session of the Status of Women Commission; also to pursue the question of discrimination in employment in view of the programme of the International Labour Conference of 1958.

The French Radio-Television Service gave a brief report of the Council Meeting in its programme "La Femme".

United Nations

The Alliance has consultative status—on the Register—with the Economic and Social Council, its representatives being Mrs. Wanda Grabinska and Dr. Magda de Spur in New York and Madame Leroy-Boy in Geneva until her departure from Geneva, when Mademoiselle Archinard agreed to serve in her place.

The Alliance is on the International Labour Organisation's special list of Non-Governmental Organisations and on the Register of Organisations with which the Director General of UNESCO has "informal relations".

Slavery

The United Nations Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, signed by thirty-four countries and accepted by twenty-four non-Metropolitan territories, came into force on April 30th, after ratification by two countries, U.S.S.R. and U.K.

The Recommendation which was attached to the Supplementary Convention on Slavery, drawn up by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in 1956, that the Economic and Social Council "should initiate a study on the question of marriage, with a view to establishing free consent and a minimum age of marriage, preferably of not less than

fourteen years," was accepted by ECOSOC, and the Status of Women Commission was entrusted with this study. The Alliance had sent a request to ECOSOC that this should be done on the grounds that the Status of Women Commission was already engaged on a study of related questions.

Status of Women Commission

The *Nationality of Married Women Convention* was adopted by the General Assembly on January 29th; the result of eight years hard and persistent work of the Status of Women Commission. The Convention provides that women shall not automatically lose or acquire nationality because of marriage. The Convention retains inequality, it permits an alien wife to acquire her husband's nationality on easier terms than an alien husband, through specially privileged naturalisation procedures.

The Alliance submitted a statement (E/CN.6/NGO/44) to the eleventh Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, urging the abolition without delay of those customs which degrade women. At the Commission Mrs. Wanda Grabinska, on behalf of the Alliance, made a forceful plea for action, rebutting the argument that "time will do it".

The United Nations and the Government of Thailand sponsored an interesting Seminar in August on "Civic Responsibilities and Increased Participation of Asian Women in Public Life", at Bangkok. The ex-President of St. Joan's, New South Wales, Mrs. Jean Daly, was appointed as official Observer for the Australian Government.

Liaison Committee

As a constituent member of the Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations, the Alliance is represented on its Committees in London, New York, Geneva and Australia.

The Alliance was represented at the Conference of the International Council of Women at Montreal by Miss Madeleine Sheridan; and at the Conference of the Open-Door International at Paris by Madame Pesson-Depret. Miss Lilian Mitchell, a member of the Executive Committee of the New South Wales Section, attended the Plenary Session of UNESCO in New Delhi.

The Alliance was greatly honoured when His Excellency, Archbishop Carboni, Apostolic Delegate in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania expressed a wish to meet the Officers of the Alliance during his brief visit to England in May. The meeting took place at the International President's flat. His Excellency showed a sympathetic interest in the aims and work of the Alliance with which he was familiar from his knowledge of St. Joan's in Australia. He particularly commended the work of the Alliance for overseas students in England.

Congratulations were sent on the occasion of the twenty-first birthday of St. Joan's Alliance in Australia, celebrated in Melbourne in August. The guests of honour were His Excellency Archbishop Carboni the Apostolic Delegate, and Dame Enid Lyons, G.B.E. National President. Warm tributes were paid to the founder, Miss Margaret Flynn and to Miss Anna Brennan, President of the Victoria Section.

Congratulations were also sent to Mrs. H. McGrath, President of the Transvaal Section of St. Joan's International Alliance, who was awarded the medal *Bene Merenti* by the Holy Father, and to Frau Brauksiepe, again re-elected to the German Bundestag.

We are particularly grateful to Mrs. Grabinska for representing us at the eleventh Session of the Status of Women Commission in New York.

This brief record does not include the valuable work done by the National Sections, without whose immediate and generous response to any call for national action, the work of St. Joan's International Alliance could not succeed.

LETTER FROM BRUSSELS

Dear St. Joan's Alliance,

We thought you might be interested in a speech made this month at a luncheon given by the National Council of Women.

Opening a new women's club, Claire Préaux, professor of philology at Brussels University, spoke of woman's position in ancient Greece as a source of prejudice today. Greek cities did not distinguish between the warrior and the citizen. Women did not fight, therefore they were not citizens and did not partake in the state religion. Why then train them in logic?

A married daughter must not endanger the wealth of the family of her birth—therefore she was excluded from inheritance and economic independence. The wife was secluded in the home in a subordinate position, and girls' minds were conditioned for such a life. We feel the effects of that conditioning to this day. Plato held that difference in outlook between men and women was the result of education, Aristotle was convinced that it was rooted in nature, and so convinced the world.

The new Belgian law, now halfway through Parliament, allows a married woman a separate domicile, but states that the spouses must live together. In Latin countries the wife's domicile does not affect the law governing her life as it does in England. The question is one of professional and political independence. Our new law is probably the result of a recent incident in the Meuse Valley. A wife wanted to succeed her father as public notary in Anseremme whilst her husband sat on the Municipal Council in the neighbouring town of Dinant. They lived together on the road from Dinant to Anseremme. Our law at present requires the wife to take her husband's domicile, and a notary to be domiciled in the borough where his office is. I do not know how the problem was solved in this particular case, but the new law allows the spouses to have separate domiciles whilst living together. This is already the case in France, where a wife can have a separate domicile for professional reasons.

We will end by extending a hearty welcome to St. Joan's when they come to Brussels in September, and by hoping they do not suffer from too much turmoil.

F. Baetens

HON TREASURER'S NOTE

This is really an appeal to those unable to attend the Annual General Meeting on March 15th. Will you out of the generosity of your hearts join in the Special Appeal for the Rent Fund? Do, please send a contribution as soon as you read this so that we can add it to the amount received at the Meeting. I want £70—will you help me get it?

Noreen K. Carr

THE MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

On February 7th, Mr. Arthur Moyle moved the second reading of the Matrimonial Proceedings (Children) Bill, which seeks to extend the control of the Courts over children affected by broken marriages. Mr. Moyle said that since 1938 there had been an increase of 200 per cent. in the number of divorce petitions. The ratio of broken marriages was one in twelve and the number of children affected one in twenty. Under the Bill, there would be a duty on the Divorce Courts to consider arrangements for the children's welfare before a final decree was announced. The Bill did not provide any substitute for parental responsibility but it would rescue children from the worst effects of divorce. Mrs. Mann, in congratulating Mr. Moyle on introducing his Bill said that she feared the tendency would be for divorce to increase, because we read that the marriage rate in the 16-21 age group is increasing and such early marriages break up more frequently. She considered that the Dunmow Fitch should not go to the couple who can say: "We never had a quarrel in our lives" but to the couple who can say: "We constantly found incompatibilities but we have stuck it out together to the end of the road," this particularly where there are children. The Bill was unopposed and committed to Standing Committee.

During the second reading of the Recreational Charities Bill on February 11th, Mr. David Renton, Joint Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department explained that the provision of recreational facilities limited to women—such as Women's Institutes were deemed "charitable" if provided in the interests of social welfare, while those limited to men were not. He said: "Recreational institutes and clubs confined to men of full age have been treated in the past as not being charitable; and we do not think this should be altered now. On the other hand, women have seldom been in a position to provide these facilities for themselves, and we consider that the charitable status hitherto enjoyed by Women's Institutes and the like should be preserved."

The Life Peerages Bill was discussed on February 12th and 13th and its second reading carried by 305 to 251 votes.

On February 13th, in reply to Mr. Sorenson, Sir Edward Boyle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education said that the Minister of Education had received a deputation from the Roman Catholic Hierarchy asking that the grants for denominational building should be increased and should also be extended to cover the building of new schools which are ineligible for grant under the present law. This, said Sir Edward, would mean amending legislation and the

Minister was not in a position to make a statement. He further stated that the issues are "generally complex . . . after all we have here to take into account the views of many people—the local authorities, the teachers, the many religious denominations, and that large section of opinion not bound to any religious shade of view but which, none the less, is concerned with education."

On February 18th, Mr. E. L. Mallalieu asked if it was the policy of Her Majesty's Government that universal adult suffrage should be introduced in the Northern Region of Nigeria before self-government was introduced. Mr. Lennox Boyd, the Secretary of State for the Colonies said that the Government would stand by the undertaking given in 1953, regarding the granting of regional self-government. "This undertaking did not presuppose the adoption of any particular form of franchise but the North had adopted adult male suffrage for elections in the Region to the Federal House of Representatives."

On February 18th, Mr. A. Roberts asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies what action he proposed to take on the petition presented to the Governor of Hong Kong, by the Hong Kong Council of Women in December of last year, for the abolition of concubinage. Mr. Profumo: "This is a matter for the Governor of Hong Kong. He is carefully studying the petition and will reply to it as soon as possible."

Mr. Roberts: "Does the hon. Gentleman realise that the principle of concubinage is repugnant to the equality of the sexes, that it has been banned in Red China and Formosa, and further, that we ought to put our own house in order?"

Mr. Profumo: "I must repudiate entirely the second part of the hon. Gentleman's supplementary Question."

Mrs. Jeger asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many working wives paid surtax on the whole of their income and how much it would cost to abolish aggregation of income for surtax purposes. Mr. Simon, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said about eighty-five thousand and the cost would be nearly five million in a full year. Mrs. Jeger asked if the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not enjoy earning the undying devotion of eighty-five thousand women by removing this unfair incidence of income tax and going down in history as the Chancellor who removed the tax on marriage? Mr. Simon said, the odd thing was that people continued to get married in spite of every discouragement.

On February 26th, Mr. Parker asked the Postmaster-General why the General Post Office is replacing trained women sorters by untrained

men. Mr. Marples: "Sorting is regarded as men's work and women are employed on it only to cover temporary shortages of men. As suitable men become available, the women are released." We wonder why.

P. M. Brandt

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

New Zealand. Miss Mabel Howard is Minister of Social Security, Minister for the Welfare of Women and Children and Minister in Charge of the Child Welfare Department in the new Labour Cabinet. In 1947, Miss Howard was appointed Minister of Health, the first woman to reach Cabinet rank in New Zealand.

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Canada. Mrs. Ellen Fairclough, Canada's first Cabinet Minister, has been Acting Prime Minister while Dr. Diefenbaker, the Prime Minister was absent campaigning for the General Election. Mrs. Fairclough has been a member of Parliament for eight years.

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Ruanda-Urundi. *Temps Nouveaux d' Afrique* (November 17th and 24th, 1957) reports the deep concern of the *Conseil Supérieur* of Urundi at the re-actions of the young towards the excessive demands of parents for the "dot". Chief Barusasiyeko said that for over ten years, the Council had attempted to control the bride-price, but this had led to false declarations, while the demands of the parents had prevented young girls from marrying freely the men of their choice. He proposed that the tribunals should be authorised to receive declarations from the future spouses, both as to the bride-price and as to the matrimonial contract in cases where parents demanded more than the young men could pay. He said they must move towards the suppression of the bride-price and pointed out that already in Ruanda, there were examples of a modern approach to the question.

After a full discussion, the Council decided by twenty-eight votes to eighteen, "to suppress the dot and the accessories which accompany it for the reason that it is an obstacle to the progress of the family such as modern conditions of evolution demand."

BOOKS RECEIVED

This Place Called Lourdes. By Sister Maureen Flynn, O.P. (Burns Oates, 15s.)

Advanced German Unseens. By Keith Spalding, M.A., Ph.D. (Macmillan, 6s.)

A Study of the Gospels. By Rev. Thomas E. Bird, D.D., Ph.D. (Burns Oates and Macmillan, 8s. 6d.)

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