

# THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S NEWS

## JUS SUFFRAGII

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THE MONTHLY ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE ALLIANCE.

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### CONTENTS.

	Page.		Page.
Suffrage Victory in Brazil .....	69	Review .....	73
Disarmament .....	70	News in Brief .....	74
Liason Committee of Major International Associations .....	71	Reports from Auxiliaries .....	75
Women's Consultative Committee on Nationality .....	71	Women and the Banks .....	77
Notes and News .....	72	The Reaction of Chinese Women to the awakening of China .....	79
		Nouvelles de tous Pays .....	81

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### SUFFRAGE VICTORY IN BRAZIL.

The new election law just issued by the revolutionary government of Brazil provides votes for men and women on equal terms. Art. 2d says: "Are voters all Brazilian citizens, of either sex, over twenty one years of age, who have qualified in accordance with this law." The only difference is that art. 120 makes voting obligatory for all men under sixty, but not for those over that age or for women. The law also provides for eligibility of all citizens except those naturalised under four years before.

The Brazilian Federation for the Advancement of Women, which had conducted the organised movement for the last ten years is very pleased. Except for article 120, the conditions for woman suffrage are those presented to the government committee that drafted the law, by the Federation and agreed upon between the committee and the women. The terms are the same which were voted by the International Feminist Congress that met in Rio in July of last year and which the Federation has always insisted upon. They are also the same that were used in the bills presented to Congress and introduced into the election law of the state of Rio Grande do Norte, by the former senator and state president J. Lamartine, who granted women the vote in his state before any other in Latin America.

The election law also clearly states that the nationality of married women is not affected by marriage to foreigners, thus clearly defining their position as voters.

In her first interview to the press, Dr. Bertha Lutz,

president of the Brazilian Federation for the Advancement of Women pointed out that it took exactly forty three years of Republic, ten of intense campaigning with most modern methods (including radio and airplanes), the precedent of one state of the Brazilian Union and a successful revolution to bring votes for women about.

On behalf of the Alliance, we desire to offer our warmest congratulations to the women of Brazil, and especially to Dr. Bertha Lutz and the Federation for the Advancement of Women, on the attainment of woman suffrage, on what to all intents and purposes are equal terms with men. We may regret even the slightest inequality, but doubtless that will be swept away in due course, and in the meantime we rejoice that there is no bar to every adult woman citizen taking her share in the destinies of her countries if she will.

Brazil now holds the proud position of being the first of the great Republics of South America to give suffrage to its woman citizens as a whole. We must hope that this enlightened example will quickly be followed by her Spanish speaking neighbours, who have already had the example of Spain itself before them. We venture to express the hope that the Federation will not consider that it has reached its object in helping to obtain votes for women, but will continue its work until Brazil gives as shining an example to the rest of the world in every field of activity where men and women should be working side by side in perfect equality.

## DISARMAMENT.

As secretary of the Disarmament Committee of the Women's International Organisations I was very busy during my two months' stay in Geneva. My first activities were in connection with the presentation of petitions. These signatures amounted on February 6th when officially presented to the Disarmament Conference to 8,003,674, and on March 1st the total number of individual signatures received was 9,410,695.

We had been asked over and over again if it would be a good plan to have the circulation of petitions go on, as in many countries it has done a great deal of good by way of education. In some countries, however, the organisations failed to come up to the scratch, and only now they seem to be ready to try to make a good job of it. However, it does not seem worth while to circulate these same petitions again; some day some other petition may be needed and we shall then know that a much bigger effort *can* be made and better results may be obtained.

Now what is the next step of the Disarmament Committee? The 15 Women's Organisations who have had their representatives in Geneva these last months have accomplished further plans and formulated a working programme towards the realisation of disarmament.

A statement was drafted and formally accepted by the qualified representatives of the constituent organisations at a meeting of the Disarmament Committee held in Geneva on February 23rd. This Document was then approved by the higher executive of each international organisation and is now being forwarded to national sections for further consideration. Space does not permit of its being printed in full here, but a copy is shortly being sent to all the Societies affiliated to the Alliance, and a summary appears below.

May I ask each President of an Auxiliary of the Alliance to have this statement translated into her own language and have it circulated as widely as possible. May we suggest that they organize meetings in different towns and have this programme adopted also at annual meetings, then let the headquarters of this Disarmament Committee, 2 Rue Daniel Colladon, in Geneva, know your efforts and results. Do let the women of the world show again that there is a mighty force of public opinion which is working for the peace of the world.

The Disarmament Committee has further plans.

A Conference is to be organised with the object of laying our policy before the public, and speakers will be invited to speak on the different items of the policy in order to cover many topics which require amplification. Surely we must have a mixture of nationalities and of points of views.

The Disarmament Committee has won prestige in Geneva and the interest of the women of the world must be shown to the Disarmament Conference again and again.

ROSA MANUS.

#### The President of the Conference receives Representatives of the Disarmament Committee of the Women's International Organisations.

The Disarmament Committee of the Women's International Organisations once more let it be officially known that they and their organisations, representing a membership of 45,000,000, are standing firmly behind every effort of the Disarmament Conference to bring about a definite and effective reduction in armaments. On March 16th a group of women appeared officially before Mr. Henderson to present their Statement on Disarmament, as drafted and accepted by responsible representatives of the Women's International Organisations in Geneva.

Mr. Henderson received the women in the Disarmament Building adjoining the Secretariat. Receiving with him were three of the women delegates to the Disarmament Conference, Miss Mary E. Woolley, Dr. P. Luisi and Mrs. Margery Corbett Ashby, Miss Kydd and Mme. Szelagowska having already left Geneva.

Miss Mary Dingman, President of the Women's Disarmament Committee, informed Mr. Henderson that the special work of the Committee since Feb. 6th had been the preparation of the Statement on Disarmament which they now brought to his attention, and through him to the Conference as a whole. It had been no easy matter to reach a ground of common agreement between fifteen international organisations. That difficulty, faced continually by the Committee during the past weeks, had made them all the more able to appreciate the difficulties being faced by the Disarmament Conference itself.

Mr. Henderson expressed his extreme appreciation of the interest and labours of the Women's International Organisations in the cause of disarmament. He stressed the fact that efforts to educate public opinion in the various countries should be redoubled in the immediate future in order that governments may feel the support of their people as they go forward to translate their general proposals for disarmament into practical formulae.

The spirit of co-operation and confidence between the President of the Disarmament Conference and the Women's Disarmament Committee was never more apparent than at this official, yet friendly and informal, meeting between the two.

#### Summary of the Specific Proposals contained in the Disarmament Statement of the Women's International Organisations.

- I. National and international control of the traffic in arms.  
International and national supervision of the private and State manufacture of arms and ammunition.
- II. Abolition of military and naval aircraft.  
Effective international measures against the militarisation of civil aviation.  
Prohibition of appropriations for and preparation for and use of chemical and bacteriological warfare.
- III. Abolition of aggressive weapons. This would make a contribution to the solution of the problem of Disarmament on the basis of equal rights and security for all peoples in accordance with Art. VII. of the Covenant.
- IV. Armaments should be limited not only directly, but also indirectly by the amount spent on them.
- V. A permanent Disarmament Commission should be set up.

We stand for:

1. The acceptance by all States of the obligation to settle all international disputes, of whatever character, by peaceful means, and recognition that the nation which resorts to hostilities in defiance of its obligations has stamped itself as the aggressor.
2. The development of a system in harmony with the spirit of the Covenant to provide without resort to force for those economic and political changes which may become necessary in changing world conditions.
3. Effective collective action to prevent, or in the last resort to stop, a breach of world peace.

U.S.A.

Two of the States, Massachusetts and Virginia, have recently rejected Bills making women liable for Jury Service.

## LIAISON COMMITTEE OF MAJOR INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.

## RESOLUTION ON MORAL DISARMAMENT.

Deeply perturbed by the present general crisis and by the growing uneasiness of public opinion, the Liaison Committee for Major International Associations considers it its duty to issue an urgent appeal to the thinking public in general.

By virtue of the considerable number of their adherents in every country of the world and in view of the variety of their respective tendencies, the Major International Associations, grouped in their Liaison Committee, can legitimately be regarded as one of the most qualified expressions of universal opinion.

This position imposes a duty upon them: in so far as the means at their disposal permit, they must endeavour to maintain, amid the present confusion, the moral bonds between nations.

The constant weakening of these bonds would constitute the gravest danger not only to peace but to civilization itself. The whole world would soon fall into a state of chaos and international anarchy, the consequences of which would be impossible to predict.

This affirmation is derived, moreover, from the terms of the initial Declaration of the Liaison Committee, which served as its Charter and which has been confirmed in the course of the last six years by about fifteen important international congresses as well as by the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation and the VIIIth Assembly of the League of Nations, that is, in reality, by a sort of universal approval.

The Liaison Committee therefore appeals once again to universal opinion. It recalls that any sound system of education and any enlightened public opinion must, side by side with national values, reserve an important place for the conception of the indispensable solidarity of nations and, in conformity with its Resolution of November 10th last, it desires to emphasise the responsibility devolving in this respect on all—authors, educators, journalists and Statesmen—who, in virtue of the predominant influence of their talent or of their functions, guide and develop public opinion.

The Liaison Committee for the Major International Associations denounces, as an extremely grave danger, all forms of propaganda which, through the exaggeration of national feeling, tends to arouse a spirit of hostility between peoples by persuading each of them that their own interests supersede those of civilisation in common and that the difficulties of international life should ultimately be solved by resorting to force. In particular, energetic measures should be taken to suppress all movements, which, by invoking the lyricism of violence to incite youth to action, proclaim the beauty of sanguinary conflicts as an ideal.

As a preliminary step, the Liaison Committee calls the attention of all the Major International Associations to the present Declaration and invites them to give it the widest possible publicity in their own publications, in the Press and by bringing it to the notice of the public authorities in the different countries; it urges them to

organise public lectures, to make the fullest possible use of congresses, broadcasting, talking films and other appropriate means for calling the attention of all to the need for international co-operation, without which no effort towards disarmament can succeed and no lasting peace can be organised.

#### WOMEN'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON NATIONALITY.

Our readers will remember that in January 1931 the Council of the League of Nations decided to ask a group of women's international organisations to form themselves into a Committee to present a Report on Women's Nationality to the Assembly of 1931. That Report was prepared and presented, and the Assembly decided that it should be sent to the Governments with other documents in order that they might submit their observations with a view to discussion of the question at the Assembly of this year. The Women's Committee was also asked to submit any further observations so that it is continuing in being.

Recently a group of women in Geneva have been carrying on active propaganda in favour of getting the Council to adopt a Resolution, the terms of which are given as follows in "Equal Rights," the organ of the National Woman's Party of the U.S.A., which recently published an article on this question:

WHEREAS the Assembly has requested the Council to examine the possibility of increasing the collaboration of women in the work of the League of Nations in the field of peace and in other fields.

WHEREAS one of the essential bases for securing the collaboration of women is to give increased recognition to women in the work of the League, and

WHEREAS there already exists under the auspices of the League a Women's Consultative Committee charged with advising the League on the subject of the nationality of women in relation to the codification of international law;

*The Council Resolves,* As one step toward carrying out the above recommendation of the Assembly, to broaden the scope of the Women's Consultative Committee on Nationality so as to enable the committee to deal with all matters in the field of the codification of international law that bear upon the status of women;

*The Council also decides* to make this Women's Consultative Committee, as now constituted and organized, an official committee of the League of Nations, with all the attributes belonging to other official committees of the League.

It will be seen that the request is based on what is known as "The Spanish Resolution" adopted by the last Assembly with regard to increasing the collaboration of women in the work of the League of Nations, on which question the Alliance, together with the other women's international organisations has been asked to submit its views by July 1st. The Liaison Committee of nine of the Women's International Organisations has been working for some time on this subject with a view to endeavouring to produce a joint memorandum to be signed by all its member organisations, so that we must regret any action at this moment which would appear in any way to forestall or prejudice the question in the interval. But since without going into that aspect of the matter, we know that it is possible that the actual question of this Nationality Committee may come up in the immediate future, it has been thought desirable to send to each Member of the Council of the League the following letter from the Alliance:

### "DISARMAMENT"

A bi-monthly review of the League of Nations and of Governments, Parliamentary Debates and the Trend of Public Opinion and Action relating to the World Disarmament Conference, 1932.

Subscription rate: 9 Swiss francs for 18 issues.

Publisher:

DISARMAMENT INFORMATION COMMITTEE  
31, Quai du Mont Blanc, Geneva, SWITZERLAND.

Geneva, March 14th, 1932.

To Monsieur—  
Member of the Council of the League of Nations.  
Sir,

Knowing that the question has been brought to your attention, we venture to take the liberty of stating briefly the point of view of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship in regard to the question of extending the scope of the Women's Consultative Committee on Women's Nationality, and also of taking steps to give that Committee an official character.

Our Alliance, which is a union of 54 women's societies in 44 countries, is in principle opposed to such a demand. We consider that by Article 7 of the Covenant, women have an inalienable right to form part of all the organisms of the League of Nations, and therefore to become, equally with men, members of all its Committees whenever women with the necessary qualifications for the particular questions involved are available.

What, therefore, we would ask is that whenever a question of direct interest to women comes before the League of Nations, women experts, equally with men experts, should be appointed as members of the committee or other body charged with the consideration of such a question. We consider, on the other hand, that to form a new body to deal with women's questions in general, or to extend the scope of the Nationality Committee in this direction, would be a backward step from the principles of the Covenant, by putting women in a separate, and therefore an inferior, category.

We desire to bring this definite statement of our attitude to your kind attention, and we have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servants,

MARGERY I. CORBETT ASHBY, EMILIE GOULD,  
President. Secretary.

#### CONGRATULATIONS.

It is a matter of real satisfaction to learn that the distinguished member of the Alliance Board, Dr. Paulina Luisi, already a delegate of her Government to the Disarmament Conference, has been nominated as the chief delegate for Uruguay to the Air Committee of the Conference. Nor is that all, she was the only woman member, and a full Government delegate, of the Extraordinary Meeting of the League Assembly summoned to deal with the Sino-Japanese conflict. These are honours worthily awarded to a distinguished woman, and we congratulate Dr. Luisi and ourselves that one Government at least is able to make appointments on merit without distinction of sex.

#### NATIONALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN.

#### INTERNATIONAL PETITION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN.

Readers of JUS SUFFRAGII will be interested to know that an International Petition of Catholic men and women, affirming "That a woman, whether married or unmarried, should have the same right as a man to retain or change her nationality," is being circulated for presentation to the next Assembly of the League of Nations.

Signatures already obtained include those of such eminent ecclesiastics as the Archbishop of Birmingham, the Archbishop of Edinburgh, the Bishop of Orleans and 44 clergy of the City of Orleans and the Bishop of Pella; Don Luigi Sturzo of Italy, the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Joseph McMahon, the Rev. John M. Cooper, Professor of Anthropology at the Catholic University of America,

the Rev. William Dillon, Dean of St. Joseph's College, Brooklyn, Dr. Peter Guilday, Professor of Church History at the Catholic University, and Father Elliott Ross, C.S.P., of U.S.A., the Rev. B. Paddé, O.P., Provincial of Dominicans in France, the Rev. Father Bede Jarrett, O.P., Provincial of Dominicans in Great Britain, Father Vincent McNabb, O.P., Father Martindale, S.J., several Capuchins, Dominicans, Jesuits, Redemptorists, and many secular priests. Dom Gilbert Higgins, C.R.L., who collected the signatures of his Abbot and other members of his community, wrote: "Your Petition is one that should never have been required. May the Women's Petition succeed." Among the lay signatures are those of the Duchesse d'Uzès, the Countess of Iddesleigh, Mrs. Belloc Lowndes, Marie Gasquet, Professor and Mme. Paul Archambault, Mrs. Mary Norton, member of U.S.A. Congress and Mr. Wilfred Meynell.

We appeal to the Catholic readers of JUS SUFFRAGII of all nations to help to circulate the Petition, and send in their forms filled in by the end of May. Forms in English and German can be obtained from:

The International Women's Nationality  
Committee,  
55, Berners Street, Room 36.  
London, W.1.

French copies from:

Madame Aubey,  
35, rue Jeanne d'Arc,  
Orleans.

B.B.C.

#### NOTES AND NEWS.

**The Disarmament Conference.** It is extremely satisfactory that the Bureau of the Disarmament Conference decided to put on record the President's declaration that "The best way of associating women with the work would be to appoint women as members of delegations to Assemblies or International Conferences." This of course applies to the whole question of women's co-operation in the League of Nations, which will be discussed later on in connection with the Resolution proposed by the Spanish Delegation to the last Assembly and adopted by the Assembly, that this question should be studied by the Council. But at the moment it arose on a suggestion to form a special commission of women to advise the Disarmament Conference, which was rejected. In addition to the above general recommendation, it was decided that any recommendations made by women's organisations on the work of the Conference, should receive full consideration by the relevant committees. It does really look as if the Disarmament Conference does desire women's help and, marvellous to relate, sees clearly that that help can only be given effectively when it comes from women speaking with the same authority as men. It is a very welcome by-product of the work of the Conference.

**Native Women in South Africa.** Another very welcome piece of news is that by a Government Proclamation native women can now be freed from the control of their male relatives by the action of native Commissioners. Nothing could be more effective as a first step in the emancipation of these women, and it is to be hoped that the power given to the Commissioners will be widely used, for that is the weak point. Women know only too well that where customs affecting women are concerned, administrators become extremely conscious of the difficulties and dangers of

interfering with native customs. They are not so timid when the sacred economic interests of the white race are concerned. However it is much if in the hardest cases, a native woman will in future have the possibility of owning property, which up to now she has not had. The fruits of her labour have belonged without exception to her father, uncle, brother or even son. Many of these women do resent their position and if only they are made aware of their new rights, they may be depended upon to use them.

**Women in Local Government.** Women Mayors and Women Councillors are nowadays taken for granted, which is as it should be, but it is perhaps worth while noting that Dame Beatrix Lyall and Miss Agnes Dawson have just been elected as respectively Vice-Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the London Council Council. Another striking example of growing sex equality comes from the Royal Burgh of Renfrew in Scotland, where women hold three of the leading public offices, namely, the posts of registrar, public prosecutor and postmistress. Miss Catherine Harper, a woman lawyer, was chosen as public prosecutor by the unanimous vote of the town council.

**Malta.** The Report of the Malta Royal Commission, appointed to report on the constitutional position which has been causing a long controversy in that little Colony, states that it cannot in view of present conditions recommend that women should have the franchise. We do not know whether there is any organised suffrage movement in Malta, but it appears that the women presented a petition to the Commission asking for the suffrage. It is to be hoped that the Commission's statement will stimulate them to prepare a real campaign for the vote. Whatever conditions the Commission may have had in mind, it is certain that they affect women citizens no less than men.

**A Woman Railway Chief.** The recent visit to England of Anna Westergaard, to take part in the Annual Meeting of the

Open Door Council, aroused considerable interest in the Press. Miss Westergaard is the Assistant Manager of the Danish State Railways, a position which it is fairly safe to say is held by no other woman in the world. She began her service in the State Railways at the age of 17 and has worked there for 32 years, successfully winning the right to sit for the same examinations as the men.

Apart from her unique position, Miss Westergaard is one of the best-known workers for the woman's movement in Denmark, and is also, it appears from a popular vote taken by the press, one of the most popular of Danish women. She has done much to help to win for Danish women the right to equal pay and opportunities in the State Service, and she is a member of Dansk Kvindesamfund, the Danish Auxiliary of the Alliance, Vice-President of the Danish Open Door. She finds time also to sit on the Municipal Council of Gentofte, and has twice contested a seat in Parliament as a candidate of the Radical Party. Altogether she stands out as a remarkable woman for her ability, her charm, and her apparently unlimited energy and zest for work in so many different fields.

#### LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE.

On April 4th the Traffic in Women and Children Committee will meet in Geneva. The following points on its Agenda specially concern women's organisations. The question of the repatriation of foreign prostitutes, a question discussed last year, and on which the Alliance Board Member, Dr. Paulina Luisi, who is the Government representative of Uruguay, will present a Report. It will be remembered that a

proposal was made for the compulsory repatriation of these unfortunate women which roused unanimous protest from women's organisations. We know that in Dr. Luisi's Report we shall find the ideals of justice and equality in the standard of morals well upheld. Then the Secretariat will present a report on the employment of women police.

On April 9th follows the meeting of the Child Welfare Committee, on which the women's international organisations are represented by Mlle. Gourd. The Committee will deal with the questions of illegitimate children, children's courts, and other matters.

The International Labour Conference will meet on April 12th, with three main points on its Agenda as follows: Abolition of fee-charging Employment Agencies (first discussion); Invalidity, old-age and widows' and orphans' pensions (second discussion); Age for admission of children to non-industrial occupations (second discussion). All these questions, of course, affect women equally with men. It is greatly to be hoped that with regard to the last question, no suggestions will be adopted which would tend to encourage special provisions for girls. There must be many occupations where a handicap as to the age at which practical experience may begin would affect the participation of women all through their careers.

#### REVIEW.

**Woman and Society**, by Meyrick Booth. (George Allen & Unwin, 40, Museum Street, London. 8s. 6d.)

This book was first published in 1929, and is an attempt to show that the woman's movement, while it may have done a valuable work in breaking down many unnecessary barriers against women's fuller participation in social and economic life, has produced a confusion which urgently requires attention if the relations between the sexes are to lead to really fruitful co-operation.

The assumption is that there are fundamental and deeply rooted differences between men and women which will forever make it necessary for them to play different rôles in life. Several chapters are devoted to the study of these differences and to proving that they are indeed so fundamental that the common humanity which the sexes must be allowed to share is but a small part of their make-up. Women, it is true, share to a small extent in the possession of brains, but otherwise all the important qualities belong to men, balanced by something rather mysterious in the way of tenderness, intuition, etc.

The whole meaning of the book rests on the acceptance of this assumption. For an assumption it is since, in spite of all the scientific studies which Mr. Booth calls in evidence—and we always do wonder on what material such studies are based—he himself falls back on the "thousands of years" in which men and women have in fact been differentiated rather by the nature of their lives than by real organic differences. It is, after all, one of the claims of the woman's movement that we do not know what sex differences really are, just because of that long period when occupational and mental differences were enforced. If we find, as we do find, that when women get the chance to do some of the things which men have kept them from doing, they do them surprisingly well, are we not justified in supposing that it must be because they are more alike in their powers than had been supposed? And may we not claim that the experiment so recently begun should be continued, even at the cost of some growing pains for both of the sexes which make up society? Indeed, Mr. Booth, while deprecating the giving of a similar education to boys and girls, graciously says that if a

girl specially desires to follow some profession which he regards as masculine, she should not be forcibly debarred, but only as an exception should we train a few specially gifted girls and "the girls' schools must not be run in the interests of these exceptions." How the poor exceptions are to get their chance is not shown.

The author gibes at feminists for being illogical in saying first that sex differences are negligible, and then that they are so fundamental that they will take care of themselves and need not be artificially emphasised. What, in fact, feminists mean is that a great number of so-called sex differences are artificial, and that all that are real will emerge safely from the process of clearing away the jungle of false ideas which has grown up on this subject. Is this not more logical than his own contention which is that these differences are so fundamental and eternal that if we are not very careful we shall obliterate them and then be sorry!

Put briefly, and I hope not unfairly, the contention is that women by their efforts at freeing themselves are bringing nothing new into society, since they claim always the things and the ways of men, and that, owing to the vast differences between the sexes, the only logical arrangement is to divide the world up into a woman's section and a man's section. Women are to do the housework and the feeding, the nursing and the care of children, sewing, teaching (strictly controlled so that it shall not become a female monopoly), social work, some agriculture, art in all its forms if the poor creatures can ever hope to show any ability, etc. And medicine. This is instructive when we remember how, not so very long ago, women had to fight and endure insult of every kind in order to be allowed to perform what is now quite a "womanly" piece of work. Men are to be engineers, miners, sailors, bankers, accountants, and civil servants. And the reason is that nature has laid it down that not individual taste and capacity, but sex determines aptitude! And still, somehow, in this world where all the controlling positions are held by men, women are to bring in and make felt that purely feminine point of view!

Mr. Booth often has the word "evolution" on his lips. Surely it is a little dangerous to appeal to evolution when desiring to lay down a hard and fast plan for the future of the position of the sexes. The worst of evolution is that it will go on evolving, and if that long process can ever be watched at work, some of us think we can see it shaping women.

K. B.

## NEWS IN BRIEF.

**Greece.** It is reported that women failed to record their votes in any appreciable numbers when they had their first opportunity to do so in a municipal election in Piraeus. If this is so, it is still no argument against woman suffrage, since it appears that the whole poll was below the statutory minimum.

**India.** An attempt to get the Sarda Child Marriage Act repealed on the ground that it is practically a dead letter failed in the Council of State in Delhi. The Home Secretary stated that even if few cases were brought, it was a visible protest against social abuses.

Mrs. Srivastava has introduced a Bill into the Legislative Council of the United Provinces to provide for the inclusion of women in local bodies.

It is announced that the first policewoman in India has been appointed in Allahabad.

**Ireland.** After all there are two women in the new Free State Parliament, Mrs. Reynolds having been elected for Sligo-Leitrim in the Government interest. She is the widow of the candidate who was killed during his election campaign.

**Women Shipowners.** It appears that at least three countries can claim shipowning firms run by women, America, England and Germany. We know that women are now able to enter the marine service in many countries, so that it looks as if even the Sea, surely regarded as a very masculine domain, will some day be ruled by both sexes.

**Great Britain.** It is stated that as a result of the increased work caused by tariffs in the Customs and Excise Department the ban on the employment of women is to be lifted. Perhaps we shall hear no more of the unsuitability, and indeed impossibility, of women being expected to poke about in coal bunkers, etc. After all a woman can wash her face as well, if not better, than a man, and it is difficult to believe that a woman's courage and strength will not suffice for this work, which has certainly been performed by women in France, and probably elsewhere, for a long time.

Miss Walls is the first woman to be appointed since the end of the War to the control of a big Labour Exchange, Shoreditch, for both sexes.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have appointed a commission to consider the question of the Ministry of Women in the Church of England. There are four women members.

Mrs. Eugenie Strong, C.B.E., a well-known archaeologist and historian has been elected an honorary member of the Accademia di San Luca in Rome. She is the only woman member at present, though a few women have been elected in the past. The Academy was founded in the fourteenth century.

**Japan.** It is reported that for the first time in Japan, women police are to start work this month.

**Hawaii.** A public meeting in Honolulu adopted a Resolution asking for the appointment of women police.

**Spain.** Victoria Kent, a member of the Cortes, and Director of the Prison Administration, is establishing women's sections in all Spanish prisons, which are to be in charge of women warders, specially trained for this work on modern lines.

**U.S.A.** The National Academy of Science has for the first time awarded the Henry Draper Medal to a woman, Annie J. Cannon, for notable work in connection with astronomical physics.

**Mexico.** Mexican women are claiming the right to vote in the next elections. They believe that the constitution and laws do not prohibit women from voting, and they propose to ignore a decision taken by a special Congress of Governors of the States that women should not be allowed to vote.

**Canada.** In the recent municipal elections a larger number of women than ever before were elected to Municipal Councils, Boards of Education and other important offices. The National Council of Women is carrying on a campaign to interest women in what may be called both the theory and practice of municipal government.

## REPORTS FROM AUXILIARIES.

## CEYLON.

The Women's Political Union of Ceylon held its fourth Annual Meeting on February 27th, when a new President, Mrs. Aserappa, was elected in place of the retiring President, Mrs. Wijeyekoon, who has done so much good work for the Union. The Report presented to the meeting records the first occasion on which women have exercised their vote for the State Council and the election of the first woman Councillor. The membership is increasing and the programme for the future includes agitation for the grant of municipal and local government franchise, which curiously enough has not yet been granted to women, and many practical measures for social reform.

## THE NEW CZECHOSLOVAKIAN LAW WITH REGARD TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN QUESTIONS OF GUARDIANSHIP.

As a consequence of the evolution of our public life, which permits a wife to work in important public functions without the special permission of her husband, married women will no longer need their husbands' authority to act as guardians. The legal right of the mother will be widely extended: when the father dies the guardianship naturally falls to the mother, and even if the father has made a will against her guardianship the Court is not bound to accept that and may still nominate the mother as guardian; whatever the terms of the father's will, no other person has this right. If the father of a minor child dies, the Court has the right to give the widow complete parental authority, or to nominate her as guardian. In the first case she has complete control over the child's education and the management of its property, and in the second case she exercises the same rights, though under the direction of the Board of Control of the Court of Guardianship. It is left to the Court of Law to decide whether a husband shall be the trustee of his minor wife's fortune, and in cases where the marriage is dissolved before the wife reaches majority the husband ceases to be her trustee.

RUTH TONI KEINDL.

## EGYPT.

In the "Egyptienne" for February there is a very interesting article on the School for Professional and Domestic Training which has been built by the Union Féministe Egyptienne. In 1924 a workshop and dispensary were established, which led to the idea of establishing the present important centre. By means of Fancy Fairs and by the help of the public and of many sympathisers, the present imposing building has been built and will shortly be opened. Girls will be taught various manual trades, and also cooking, laundry work, and all sorts of domestic arts. There will also be classes in hygiene, child welfare, domestic economy, civics, so as to build up good citizens no less than capable workers. A three years' course is contemplated, and the last year will be devoted to specialised training in whatever branch of work the pupil has shown special aptitude, including typing and shorthand. It is hoped that in this way the school will turn out young women well-equipped to make careers for themselves in many different fields.

There will be a shop where the work done by the pupils will be sold and where the pupils may learn to serve refreshments, etc.

The new building will also include the offices of the Union and a fine conference hall for lectures, etc. As a means of augmenting the income necessary to carry

on this great work, it is proposed to organise classes where young girls of richer families may get specialised training.

The above brief account will show what a vast piece of work the Alliance Auxiliary in Egypt has undertaken, and we congratulate the Union and its President, Mme. Charaoui Pasha, on the courage, faith and generosity which have carried them to the accomplishment of this noble beginning, and wish them a great success in the future of their enterprise.

## DENMARK.

The housekeeping movement in Denmark has at last won official recognition, as the State has now appointed the Housekeeping Committee so long desired. This milestone is also a victory for the Dansk Kvinde-samfund, which was the first organisation to urge that women should have better education for their work as housewives and mothers. Specialised Housekeeping Associations have carried on this work during the past 10-15 years and now the Minister for Home Affairs, Herr Dahlgard, has invited women interested in the development of the home to work in his Ministry with a view to obtaining better commodities; in short a similar experiment is being done for Housekeeping as that which has been carried on in recent years for the benefit of agriculture.

This year, however, the work of the Committee will probably be mostly of a preparatory nature, that is to say enquiring into what is already being done in the different laboratories, and deciding whether any of these could be enlarged or whether there perhaps should be a State Housekeeping Laboratory. For the present the main idea is to centralise all the knowledge already collected on the subject of commodities, and then, bit by bit, to spread this knowledge among the people, and so effect improved conditions in economy and public health.

*Kvinden og Samfundet.*

## FRANCE.

At least there is plenty of activity in the suffrage world in France at the moment. In the Chamber of Deputies, M. Mandel, Chairman of the Universal Suffrage Committee, states that it has been decided to re-introduce, as an alternative bill, the text recently adopted by the Chamber and rejected by the Senate suppressing the second ballot and introducing woman suffrage and compulsory voting. Secondly, M. Proust has proposed an amendment to a Bill for giving sailors the right to vote by proxy, to the effect that such proxies may be the wife, mother, daughter or sister of the voter, provided that they have a common domicile. The women's societies are asking that the last qualification should be altered to read "provided that they reside in the same constituency."

In the Senate M. Louis Martin has proposed the consideration separately by the Senate of the second Article of the Bill referred to above as rejected, which deals solely with woman suffrage. He also secured at long last the fixing of a date by the Senate for the discussion of this question so long delayed by the Rapporteur of the Suffrage Committee of the Senate, M. Héry. This discussion, however, never took place, because M. Héry, though he had reluctantly agreed, found it impossible to attend the Senate on that day! His colleagues, in order to meet his convenience, voted to postpone the discussion till June 21st. So the extraordinary farce goes on.

In the meantime a bill has been deposited in the Senate to give women the right to have a special electoral register on which they will vote for the election of women assessors to sit on municipal councils with deliberative powers only. The Bill has been sent to Committee, but our readers will learn without surprise that French suffragists do not regard it as even a legitimate step in the direction of woman suffrage, but as a sop destined to keep them quiet. But, indeed, it appears more like the offer of a stone to the starving than even the smallest genuine crumb of bread.

Unfortunately, the Senate has had a further opportunity of demonstrating its anti-feminist tendencies when discussing the Bill to enable women to become solicitors and notaries. It is true that the Bill was not rejected, but was sent back to Committee, but in the course of discussion some very cheap and undignified arguments were used, many of them too futile for mention, but one of which, equally futile indeed, has been taken up by the press of other countries. The Senator in question appears to have brought forward that old bogey that women cannot keep a secret. And yet women in France are, and have been for many years, barristers and doctors. Is discretion not required in those professions? But the more serious arguments against the Bill appear to have afforded some grounds for a failure to pass it in its present form. They were three: that a woman could not perform the functions in question without the authority of her husband; that a notary has pecuniary responsibility which in the case of a married woman would be greatly limited by her status under French law; lastly, as a married woman has to have the domicile of her husband, what would happen if he decided to change his residence. Mme. Grinberg deals with these points in an article in "La Française," and notes that all these objections apply solely to the married woman and would not apply to single women desiring to adopt these careers. But obviously the law cannot and must not distinguish between women, married or unmarried, and while we may hope that a way may be found to make this particular bill meet the difficulties enumerated, what seems most clearly to arise from the debate is the urgent necessity of amending the code so as to remove all the disabilities from which married women suffer in France. At present under the law a woman may not have a banking account, get a passport or open any kind of business without the consent of her husband. If in practice these restrictions press lightly on most women, because custom is often better than the law, the discussion on this Bill shows how they may still be used as arguments, and valid arguments, against other reforms.

In a later debate a Bill for making women eligible for posts as registrars (greffiers) was rejected after much the same undignified debate. The French Senate is filling the cup of legitimate resentment to the brim.

#### THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN GERMANY AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL WORK.

The Presidential Elections in Germany on March 13th have caused a stir beyond our own country. Indeed it has been a day of the greatest significance, and few of us will forget the night when we listened for the last results until about 2 in the morning.

As is generally known, the first poll was not decisive, as an absolute majority is required and the votes given for Reichspräsident von Hindenburg fell short of it by about 200,000 votes. The second poll on April 10th, however, only requires a relative majority, and as the next favoured candidate, Herr Adolf Hitler, got over 7 million votes less than President von Hindenburg the final election of the latter is considered a certainty.

In countries with a proportional system an election that has as its object not a more or less anonymous list but a living, a conspicuous person, must create an exceptional excitement. The last presidential elections in 1925, when Generalfeldmarschall von Hindenburg was elected President, roused the German population greatly. This time it was even more so, as is proved by the participation of 85% to 89% of the population. The election of '25 was a decided "woman's election"; in many districts men and women had to use different ballot boxes, and everywhere the percentage of women's votes for von Hindenburg was the higher. This time we have not heard of any similar experiment, but we may conjecture that the circumstances have not altered. Many women took part in the election propaganda for Hindenburg, which was carried on not by parties but by wide circles of the population. The chief Committee in Berlin, for instance, consisted, among others, of Gertrud Bäumer, Helene Weber, Agnes von Zahn-Harnack and Dorothee von Velsen. Local committees in every town invited women to join—we noted with pleasure the work of our local branches.

Besides President von Hindenburg and Herr Hitler, put forward by his own Fascist Party, Herr Düsterberg, candidate of the Deutsch-Nationale Volkspartei (conservatives) and Herr Thälmann, candidate of the Communists, stood for election. The latter will have had a fair support from women and his Party made it a principle to let women help considerably in their propaganda work. Herr Düsterberg's Party, reserving its forces for the coming Prussian elections, put little vigour into the preparations, and we have not noticed one woman in public activity. Herr Hitler has, as is well known, a great number of women adherents, which is strange enough considering the fact that his programme deprives women not only of all public rights, but also of professional work, and assigns them a very modest place in private and family life. As the result of intense, well calculated propaganda, which, however, keeps those points in the background, the National-Socialist movement has gained tremendous support also from women, who hope that a complete change of system will lessen unemployment, lower taxes and improve our international position. According to party principles, no woman was allowed to speak in public, but we may be sure they worked strenuously in private for their convictions.

The presidential elections must be regarded as a link in the present inner development of Germany. The elections for the Prussian, Bavarian and some other diets, due on April 24th, will help to give a closer image of the political mind. The economic stress, the disappointment in questions of disarmament, and the generally disquieting atmosphere throughout the world answer for the tendency towards extremes, in the face of which it is not an easy task to steer democracy safely into port.

D. VON VELSEN.

#### GREAT BRITAIN.

The rapid growth of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship was forcibly demonstrated by the presence at the Council Meeting, held in London from March 9th to 11th, of the record number of 300 Delegates, representing 132 Societies from all over Great Britain. This recent growth of the National Union through the development of the Townswomen's Guild Movement, coupled with the increasing need for special watchfulness over women's freedom, led the Executive Committee to propose a resolution which was carried, providing that in future the work of the N.U.S.E.C.

should be divided between two separate organisations.

**The National Union of Guilds for Citizenship**, as the Union is now to be called, will concentrate entirely on the education of women as citizens, having as its object the first part of the old object of the N.U.S.E.C., viz. —

"To encourage the education of women to enable them as citizens to make their best contribution towards the common good."

A separate organisation, to be called, **The National Council for Equal Citizenship** was set up to carry out the second part of the old object, viz. —

"To obtain all such reforms as are necessary to secure a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women."

This Council will work for a feminist, political programme on the lines of the former N.U.S.E.C. Both aspects of the work until now carried out by the N.U.S.E.C. will, it is believed, benefit by these fundamental changes in organisation.

Mrs. Corbett Ashby was elected President of the National Union of Guilds for Citizenship, and Lady Cynthia Colville as Hon. President; while Miss Rathbone, M.P., is to be Hon. President of the National Council for Equal Citizenship, with Mrs. Hubback as President.

It was with the very greatest pride and pleasure that the Council welcomed its President, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, who had obtained a few days' leave from the Disarmament Conference especially for the Council Meeting. Mrs. Corbett Ashby had experienced at Geneva the value of and the great need for educated public opinion, and she inspired the Societies within the National Union to extend their work as widely as possible, while the National Council for Equal Citizenship should go forward in the vanguard of the women's movement.

As can be imagined, the main time of the Council was taken up with a discussion of the constitutional changes and the adoption of constitutions for the two new Societies. Urgency resolutions on Disarmament and War in the Far East were most ably moved by Miss K. D. Courtney, and passed unanimously. Other subjects discussed included Local Government, Housing, Women Police and Maternity and Child Welfare.

The Public Luncheon at the Criterion Restaurant was again a most successful feature of the Council Meeting. On this occasion the women Members of Parliament, so many of whom are new friends to the Women's Movement, were the guests of honour. Lady Cynthia Colville presided, Lady Astor and Miss Megan Lloyd-George each giving delightfully characteristic speeches; while the six new members present each responded briefly on being introduced to the company of nearly 400.

G. H.

#### INDIA.

It is late in the day to write about the Sixth All India Women's Conference on Educational and Social Reform, which actually took place in Madras at the beginning of January. But no account has reached us until now and we feel that this Conference is too important to pass by without notice. There were over 150 delegates from all the Provinces of India, women of many races and many religions, but the Resolutions adopted show how fully they were united on a great variety of important questions affecting women. It is very striking to see how quite apart from reforms in the direction of greater educational facilities for women, and the abolition of customs which bear hardly on them, the feeling of solidarity comes to the fore. For instance, the Conference advocated the gradual abolition of separate schools for different denominations or

communities or castes, and that caste distinction in application forms for admission into educational institutions should be discontinued. And again, the Conference condemned the practice of untouchability. It is impossible not to feel as one reads these Resolutions, all so sound in principle and so moderate in tone, that if the women of India had had in the past, or could now obtain, the power to deal with the problems of their country which they should possess, very many of those problems would find a wise and speedy solution.

#### IRELAND.

##### The Married Woman Teacher.

Further protests against the enforcement of resignation on the marriage of women teachers have been made by the Belfast branch of the Irish National School Teachers' Organisation and by the Belfast Women's Advisory Council. At a recent meeting in Dublin, Miss Christitch, B.A., Recording Secretary of the International Council of Women, pointed out that in Jugoslavia there was no marriage bar, either in the Civil Service or in the teaching profession. In an address on Married Women under the Law, given at a meeting of the Belfast Women Citizens Union on March 11th, Miss Dora Mellone pointed out that all the world seemed to be suffering from two dangerous fallacies. The first was that any difficulty, economic or otherwise could be solved by a policy of prohibition. Everywhere Governments were seeking to remedy economic depression by stoppage of imports, regardless of the obvious fact that if nobody bought anything, no one could sell anything. Import duties and prohibition of imports might be necessary, but were no permanent remedy for present conditions.

Another fallacy was involved in the tendency, one of the results of the long continued depression, to test any suggested action by its effect on the unemployment register. For example, if unemployment existed in the teaching profession, the immediate policy was to dismiss married women teachers. The teaching profession exists for the sake of the children, not as a means for employing the "superfluous young woman" and that woman who has the rare and precious gifts needed for successful teaching should be retained be she married or single.

#### OBITUARY.

At the moment of going to press, we have learnt with the deepest regret of the death of Mrs. Corbett, the mother of the President of the Alliance. We offer Mrs. Ashby our deepest sympathy, and we feel sure that this loss will be felt by all who had the privilege of knowing Mrs. Corbett.

#### WOMEN AND THE BANKS.

Before the War, the idea of women holding any position, however inferior, in the banking world of Great Britain was looked upon with distrust and disfavour. It is true that one private bank, whose methods differed in many respects from the usual banking system, had opened a special department for women and installed a woman manager. But this was regarded in banking circles as one more proof that these methods were unsound and when, some time after the War, the bank failed, the fact that it had been so unorthodox as to appoint a woman to a position of command was frequently quoted as a proof of its instability.

But during the War, a change had taken place in the attitude of the banks towards the employment of women. It is true that the honest opinion of most bank directors and managers on the question of taking women into their employ was "Needs must where the Devil drives!" They did not like the idea; they regarded it as one of the horrid necessities imposed upon them by the War. They felt it was a most dangerous step. Were women to be trusted not to talk about the affairs of the Bank in public? Would the customers take offence at the idea of women knowing anything of their private affairs? Could women stand the strain of the long hours of work, inevitable in a bank clerk's life? These were all serious questions which could only be solved by experiment.

It was therefore a pleasant surprise to the banking authorities to find that no catastrophe followed on the admission of women to banks. The women were conscientious, hard-working, accurate, ambitious. They attacked even the dull tasks with zest and made up for their lack of experience by their energy and application. The authorities felt that their dangerous experiment had turned out far better than they expected, but the situation still had its dangers. Owing to the shortage of men, women were beginning to do important work in the banks; it was no longer possible to confine their energies to those tasks usually performed by the Junior male clerks. It was necessary that they should become ledger-clerks, cashiers and even under-accountants. For the sake of the work they must be employed in these positions; but it would never do for the women themselves to imagine they were indispensable. So the simplest method of impressing upon women that they are only permitted to compete with men in the labour market on sufferance was at once put into force. Instructions were given that whatever position a woman occupied, her pay was never to rise above a certain sum. This amount differed in the various banks but agreed in the main point that it was always lower than the corresponding pay for a man.

It must be remembered that in those days, there was no form of organisation among the employes of banks whereby their point of view could be brought before the authorities and concerted action taken. The Bank Officers' Guild was not formed till the War was over and in its early days did not admit of the inclusion of women. This however was admitted to be a flagrant injustice and it is to the credit of the men of all grades of the banking world that they hastened to remedy it by the inclusion of women at the earliest opportunity. But by that time the mischief was done. For four years women had done the same work as men, had occupied superior positions to some of their male fellow employes, had been acknowledged as useful and important members of the bank staffs, but had accepted a lower scale of pay in all ranks and the idea had become so deeply rooted both in the minds of the women themselves and of their employers that no attempt was made to eradicate it.

After the War, the position changed again. When women had been first admitted to banks, many of the men with whom they worked had no more experience than themselves of banking methods. Men had been taken in from other offices to fill the places of those who were serving in the Forces and these men had accepted the promotion of women without much consideration of its effect on their own prospects. What they had to fear was the return of the experienced bank clerk and their own consequent dismissal as less competent to hold important positions. But it was a different matter for the men who returned to find women in positions of authority which they felt would have been theirs if they had not been obliged to leave their work in order to serve their country. The women agreed in the main with this point of view. They had for the most part considered themselves as only replacing the men

who had gone to the War and many women retired altogether from bank service on the return of the clerks whose places they had filled.

Economic factors, however, made it imperative that many women should continue to earn their own living after the war and those who had already gained four years experience in banking felt justly that they had found the work for which they were suited and must continue in it. The employment of women in banks was no longer considered merely a temporary expedient and girls fresh from school were anxious to take up this form of work. They entered the banks by the same methods as their male contemporaries. They were required to produce evidence of a certain standard of education and to pass entrance examinations. These requirements had in most cases not been exacted from the women taken in during the War, but now women and men were entering banks by exactly the same methods.

Once again, grave doubts arose in the minds of those in authority. If women were to enter the banks on exactly the same terms as men, how was it to be ensured that women should not in the end become such important factors that they might actually be controlling the economic power of the world? They had shown themselves surprisingly adaptable and intelligent. But it was not to be thought of for a single instant that they should ever be permitted to have a real voice in controlling the financial system of their country. To safeguard against this danger, two courses must be taken at once. It must be laid down firmly that the scale of pay for women should always be inferior to that for men; and it must be understood tacitly that women must not be given the same opportunities for promotion, to the higher branches of banking work as men. It was, of course, impossible to make an open declaration of the latter policy, but it was a simple matter to arrange that it should be carried out.

Why did the women accept this state of things? Chiefly because it was impossible for them to prevent it. Their numbers were so relatively small in comparison to those of the men, that their voice in the Bank Officers' Guild was but feeble. They had no other means of combination and they were still so new to the career that they felt a certain diffidence in making their claims felt. But as time went on a certain quality of resentment began to arise among them. The example of women in other countries showed that it was possible for women to hold important posts in banks, to receive the same pay as men, to take their share in solving the financial problems of their country by their ability and acumen. In the United States of America, women had a very definite position in the banking world. They were managers, and directors, they had a voice in controlling the policy of the corporations they served. In Poland, Madame Anna Paradowska-Szelagowska had been appointed manager of one of the most important banks in Warsaw. In Holland, Miss Clara Mijers was in complete charge of the women's department of a bank with a high reputation in International banking circles. All over the world, women were acknowledged to be valuable members of banking staffs and in many countries given every opportunity to advance in their career, but British women were kept back and hindered in every possible way, despite the fact that nobody attempted to deny their usefulness.

To take a case in point. A woman entered a prominent English bank in 1914, being then about 21 years of age. She worked hard and obtained promotion to one of its principal London branches. From there, she was sent, when it was considered that she had obtained sufficient experience, to take up work in a smaller London branch where more work was demanded of each individual clerk. The manager, quickly recognising her ability, gave her every opportunity

of mastering the more intricate portions of the work, and she soon attained a knowledge which, had she been a man, would have raised her to the position of accountant, with the prospect of a managership in due course. But she was given clearly to understand that this advancement could never come to a woman. One day, an inspector came to the bank and as he went through the various departments, he found that out of a staff of twelve men and four women (excluding the Manager) only the woman in question had any grasp of all the different aspects of the work and was able to take up work in any department at a moment's notice. The inspector complimented her on her thorough grasp of the different forms of work, but added: "What a pity you are not a man! I should have been so pleased to recommend you for promotion, but of course there is no chance of a woman being appointed accountant." When she asked why this would be impossible, he replied: "But then a woman might expect to become a manager and of course that would be impossible." It was the same state of things that stood in the way of her advancement: a woman may be the most valuable member of a bank staff, but she must not hope for any proper recognition of her services for fear that women should obtain a too important position in the economic world.

What is the remedy for this state of things? At present, as far as Great Britain is concerned, the only hope seems to lie in the work of the Bank Officers' Guild, which is making some attempt to see justice done and has appointed a woman organiser to champion the cause of women in banks. But the proportion of women to men in the Guild is still a small one and though the women on the Guild are waging a gallant fight, the odds against them are almost overwhelming. At present, banking may be a profession for women, but it is not a career. Yet there is no apparent reason why it should not be a career in which women should be peculiarly successful. Public opinion needs arousing on this matter. If shareholders and customers of banks would but lay aside their prejudices and declare themselves in favour of equal pay and equal opportunities of advancement for men and women in banking, the opposition of directors and Boards of Management would soon be swept away and it is possible that the world would benefit enormously financially.

This article may be considered perhaps too exclusively British to be interesting from the international point of view. But if women in other countries who have experience of the efforts of women to make their way in the banking profession would give their views a complete and important survey of the position of women in banking all over the world might be obtained.

EX-BANK CLERK.

### THE REACTION OF CHINESE WOMEN TO THE AWAKENING OF CHINA.

To reveal the gigantic drama which has lain hidden in that far, mysterious world of China for many thousands of years, would be a tale to tell immeasurably beyond the scope of this short article, but here is a thumb-nail sketch of the life of the Chinese woman to-day as she emerges from her hidden past. To get a sense of movement into the picture, we must look back at China as she was before 1911, when the revolution broke out.

Then, woman lived in a world separated from man as though in a water-tight compartment. Her place was essentially in the home; the family was her standard of value. The training of her whole personality was directed exclusively towards family life, the

education of her sons, or, if she had none, then those boys within the family circle whom she was expected to adopt—with due and proper ceremony—and bring up as her sons. No girl ever went to school; she was educated at home by her parents and taught penmanship, poetry, the classics, embroidery, music. Always, at all times, the inviolable sanctity of the home was ever impressed upon the sensitive, childish, girl-mind and a reverence for the parents was inculcated. When the young girl was about 16 years of age, a suitable husband was chosen for her, generally a youth from about 18 to 25 years of age, whose acquaintance she was only permitted to make at the time of the actual ceremony.

Into this quiet atmosphere of submissive women, bearing with sweet passivity and stoicism the iron yoke of tradition and convention, broke the smouldering discontent of the Chinese man-world, raging at the corrupt Manchurian monarchy, which had fastened like a parasite upon them for the last 380 years. The flame of racial feeling now burst forth, caught at the barriers of the woman's world, and now the new factor of woman entered the lists. Many stirring and romantic stories could be told of the stupendous feats of women during these tragic times. The famous Soong sisters who had received their education in America, are even spoken of as the Soong dynasty by Chinese. One sister became private secretary to Dr. Sun Yat Sen, the Founder of the Chinese Republic, and afterwards married him. Three years after he died in 1924, Madame Sun published a Manifesto to the Government disapproving of the revolutionary movement and making a call to order, which had a widespread influence and effect. Another sister married President Chiang Kai Shek, and a third, Dr. Kung, a descendant of Confucius: these were no prosaically arranged "marriages de convenance," but were the dynamic union of the eternal feminine seeking and finding her lawful mate. Another great woman who blazed a trail for Freedom was Tsiuchin; she was very active during the revolution, and tried to bomb the Governor of Manchou, afterwards suffering for her patriotism by execution. She recalls an echo from 2000 years back in Chinese history, when a girl called Molan enlisted as soldier to replace her fallen father and, like Jeanne d'Arc of France, strove to drive the invading hordes of Tartars from Chinese soil.

Even as the world itself, through infinite strife, is gradually welding together in one organic whole, so the emancipation of woman goes forward in China, bringing women into the arena of every expression of public life. Women are now serving in shops, in schools, they have the right of choice in marriage, and since 1930, they have equal rights with men to possess property. Dr. Soumei Tschang, who received her education in France, was chosen President of the Mixed Court at Shanghai, and is now practising as a lawyer with great success in that town. Indeed, since the flood-gates of Freedom are opened, it is hard to say to what heights Chinese women may not rise, since they react on a world of men who have for thousands of years been educated in so high a standard of liberality, that their system of public education was open to every boy, thus giving to the humblest peasant the full possibility to become the greatest Minister in the land. No social stigma or slur of poverty barred their way; success awaited the fittest wherever he might be found. Such an idealism is surely fair promise to the advancing impetus of Chinese women and to the hope that Woman, the Counterpart of Man, may bring to realisation the balance of the Great Pendulum which eternally swings between Nature's Poles. And, cannot we women of the West, endeavour to work out with our Chinese sisters this co-ordination and poise?

ROBIN LEEFE.



seignement professionnel et ménager qui a été construite par l'Union féministe égyptienne. En 1924 on avait institué un centre d'apprentissage et un dispensaire dont le succès donna l'idée de l'établissement actuel — bâti avec la coopération du public et de toutes sortes de contributions volontaires.

Les jeunes filles y apprendront l'hygiène, le soin des nourrissons, l'économie domestique, sans oublier une instruction civique qui leur enseignera leurs droits et devoirs de citoyennes. On prévoit une durée d'études de trois ans et la dernière année sera consacrée à une éducation purement vocationnelle suivant le désir des étudiantes.

Nous félicitons l'Union Egyptienne et sa présidente Madame Charaoui Pacha pour le courage, la foi, et la générosité dont elles ont fait preuve, pour mener à bien cette grande entreprise.

**Tchécoslovaquie.** En conséquence de l'évolution de notre vie publique qui permet à une femme mariée d'accepter des fonctions importantes sans la permission spéciale de son mari, une épouse aura désormais droit de tutelle sans avoir à en référer à son époux.

Le droit légal de la mère est étendu. La tutelle des enfants lui revient naturellement après la mort du père et même si celui-ci l'en écarte par testament, le Tribunal peut passer outre et la confirmer dans son droit. Si le père d'un enfant mineur disparaît, la Cour peut donner à la mère une autorité parentale complète ou la nommer tutrice. Dans le premier cas la mère contrôle entièrement l'éducation et les biens de l'enfant, dans le second elle exerce les mêmes droits, mais sous la direction d'un Comité de tutelle. C'est à la Cour de décider si un mari sera ou non le gérant des biens de son épouse mineure — mais dans les cas où le mariage est dissous avant la majorité de l'épouse, le mari cesse de gérer ses biens.

d'après RUTH TONI KEINDL.

#### ALLEMAGNE.

La traductrice regrette qu'il lui soit réservé si peu de place pour donner un compte rendu de la lettre de Frau von Velsen sur l'Élection présidentielle.

Les femmes nous dit-elle ont encore usé plus largement de leur droit de vote qu'en 1925. Un grand nombre se sont constituées actives propagandistes pour l'élection d'Hindenburg sans distinction de partis. Dans le comité central de Berlin nous relevons les noms de Gertrud Bäumer, Helen Weber, Agnes von Zahn Harnack, et Dorothee von Velsen. Dans chaque ville les femmes ont été invitées à faire partie des comités. Le Parti communiste a donné une part considérable aux femmes dans son travail de propagande. Les adhérents au Parti de Herr Hitler sont nombreuses ce qui est assez étrange, si l'on considère que son programme dénie aux femmes toute activité publique et professionnelle et les relègue à une place très modeste dans la vie de famille. Cependant comme les Socialistes nationaux proclament qu'ils pourront abolir le chômage, les impôts excessifs et améliorer la position internationale de l'Allemagne, leur mouvement a fait un énorme progrès parmi les femmes qui, dans le privé, ont beaucoup aidé à leur cause.

L'élection présidentielle, de même que les prochaines élections pour les diètes de Prusse et de Bavière nous permettront de juger la complexion politique de l'Allemagne.

La crise économique, les déceptions quant à la question du désarmement, l'inquiétude internationale sont responsables de cette poussée vers les partis extrêmes, au milieu desquels la démocratie aura bien de la peine à trouver un port de salut.

#### LA COMMISSION CONSULTATIVE DES FEMMES SUR LA QUESTION DE NATIONALITE.

Nos lectrices se rappellent qu'en Janvier 1931 le Conseil de la Société des Nations décida de demander à un groupe d'organisations internationales féminines de se former en une Commission qui préparerait un Rapport sur la Nationalité des femmes pour l'Assemblée de 1931. Ce rapport fut présenté et soumis à l'appréciation des divers gouvernements. La dite commission fut aussi priée de continuer ses observations de sorte qu'elle existe toujours.

Récemment un groupe de femmes à Genève a fait une active propagande dans le but de décider le Conseil à adopter une résolution dont les termes sont publiés dans "Equal Rights" (l'organe du National Woman's Party of U.S.A.) comme suit.

*Attendu que*—l'Assemblée a requis le Conseil d'examiner la possibilité d'accroître la collaboration des femmes dans le Travail de la Société des Nations et de la paix.

*Attendu que*—une fonction essentielle de cette collaboration est de donner une part importante aux femmes dans le travail de la Société.

*Attendu que*—il existe déjà, sous les auspices de la Société, une Commission consultative de femmes chargée de conseiller la Société sur le sujet de la Nationalité des femmes en relation avec la Codification du Droit International.

Le Conseil ordonne—comme mesure destinée à réaliser la recommandation sus dite de l'Assemblée — que la Commission Consultative verra ses attributions étendues de sorte qu'elle pourra examiner toutes les questions dans le domaine de la Codification du Droit international, qui ont trait à la situation des femmes.

Le Conseil décide aussi que cette Commission consultative de femmes, telle quelle constituée et organisée, deviendra une Commission officielle de la Société des Nations, avec tous les attributs appartenant aux autres commissions de la Société.

On voit que cette demande est basée sur la "Résolution Espagnole" adoptée par la dernière Assemblée sur la question d'accroître la collaboration des femmes dans le travail de la Société des Nations.

L'Alliance, avec d'autres organisations internationales doit soumettre son point de vue sur cette question pour le 1er juillet— Le Comité de liaison de neuf organisations internationales de femmes a mis depuis quelque temps cette question à l'étude et doit soumettre un memorandum d'ensemble; de sorte que, il nous semble que toute démarche qui semblerait devancer ce memorandum est pour le moins prématurée et comme telle regrettable. Aussi puisque le sujet de cette commission de nationalité peut se discuter tôt ou tard, avons nous estimé désirable d'envoyer à chaque membre du Conseil de la Société des Nations la lettre suivante:

Genève, le 14 mars 1932.

S. E. Monsieur,

Membre du Conseil de la Société des Nations,  
Monsieur le Ministre (Monsieur l'Ambassadeur),

Veuillez excuser la liberté que nous croyons devoir prendre, sachant que la question a été portée devant vous, de venir par les lignes qui suivent vous exposer brièvement le point de vue auquel se place l'Alliance Internationale pour le Suffrage et l'Action civique et politique des Femmes, relativement à l'extension des compétences de la Commission Consultative féminine sur la Nationalité de la Femme, ou encore relativement aux mesures qui pourraient lui conférer un caractère officiel.

Notre Alliance, qui fédère actuellement 54 Associations dans 44 pays différents, est par principe opposée à toute disposition de cet ordre. Nous considérons en effet que, de par l'art. 7 du Pacte, les femmes ont le droit imprescriptible de faire partie de tous les organismes de la Société des Nations, et par conséquent d'entrer comme les hommes dans toutes les Commissions pour l'activité desquelles il existe des femmes dont les compétences répondent aux qualifications nécessaires.

Ce que par conséquent nous demandons, c'est que, chaque fois que vient à l'ordre du jour de la S.d.N. une question qui intéresse directement les femmes; l'on fasse entrer dans les Commissions et organismes chargés de s'en occuper, et au même titre que des hommes spécialistes, des femmes spécialistes. En revanche, nous estimons que, soit constituer un organisme nouveau pour s'occuper des questions féminines en général, soit étendre de la sorte les compétences de la Commission de la Nationalité, serait situation d'exception, donc d'infériorité.

C'est ce point de vue très net que nous avons tenu à vous exposer, Monsieur le Ministre (ou l'Ambassadeur etc.), et en vous remerciant de la bienveillante attention que vous voudrez bien lui prêter, nous vous prions d'agréer l'expression de notre haute considération.

Pour l'Alliance Internationale pour le Suffrage et l'Action civique et politique des femmes:

MARGERY I. CORBETT ASHBY, EMILIE GOURD,  
La Présidente. La Secrétaire.

#### VICTOIRE SUFFRAGISTE AU BRÉSIL.

La nouvelle loi électorale qui vient d'être publiée par le gouvernement révolutionnaire du Brésil accorde le droit de suffrage à tous les citoyens brésiliens, sans distinction de sexe, quand ils ont atteint l'âge de 21 ans. La seule différence est que le vote est obligatoire pour les hommes au-dessous de 60 ans, mais facultatif pour les femmes.

La Fédération brésilienne pour l'avancement des Femmes qui depuis dix ans organisait une propagande de tous les instants se félicite du résultat. Les termes de la loi, sauf l'article 120, sont précisément ceux qui ont été rédigés par le Congrès Féministe réuni à Rio au mois de juillet l'année dernière et qui furent soumis au Gouvernement par la Fédération. Ce sont les termes mêmes qui furent introduits dans la loi Electorale de l'Etat de Rio Grande del Norte par le président Lamartine, le précurseur de la loi de suffrage dans les Etats de l'Amérique latine.

La loi électorale indique clairement que la nationalité d'une femme n'est pas influencée par son mariage avec un étranger précisant ainsi sa position en tant qu'électeur.

Dans sa première interview de presse Dr. Bertha Lutz, présidente de la Fédération brésilienne pour l'avancement des femmes remarqua qu'il a fallu 43 ans de République, 10 d'une campagne forcenée et de réclame intensive, le précédent d'un Etat du Brésil et finalement une révolution pour conquérir le suffrage féminin.

Au nom de l'Alliance, nous offrons nos plus vives félicitations à Dr. Bertha Lutz et aux femmes brésiliennes. Le Brésil est la première des grandes Républiques de l'Amérique du Sud qui accorde aux femmes le droit de suffrage, suivant en cela l'exemple de l'Espagne — aussi espérons nous que les autres républiques de langue espagnole ne tarderont pas à entrer dans la même voie.

Nous rappelons seulement à la Fédération des femmes brésiliennes que ce premier succès ne doit pas les conduire à imaginer que leur but est désormais

atteint; mais que bien au contraire il doit les inciter à poursuivre leur propagande pour que dans tous les champs de l'activité humaine, l'homme et la femme atteignent à la parfaite égalité.

#### DANEMARK.

##### Une femme directeur de Chemin de fer.

La visite récente de Miss Anna Westergaard à Londres pour la réunion du Conseil de l'"Open Door" a attiré l'attention de la Presse et du Grand Public. Miss Westergaard occupe en effet une position à peu près unique dans le monde, celle de Directeur Adjoint dans l'Administration des Chemins de fer de l'Etat du Danemark. Elle a commencé son service dans les Chemins de fer à 17 ans, y a travaillé 32 ans et a gagné pour elle et ses collègues le droit de se présenter aux mêmes examens que les hommes, d'obtenir les mêmes postes et les mêmes salaires, du moins dans les services d'Etat. Elle est membre de sociétés féministes danoises, en particulier de l'Auxiliaire affiliée à l'Alliance et du Conseil danois de la "Porte Ouverte." Elle trouve le temps de siéger au Conseil municipal de Gentofte et par deux fois s'est présentée à la députation comme membre du Parti radical. C'est une figure très populaire au Danemark.

La Science ménagère, si on peut appeler ainsi l'organisation scientifique de l'Economie domestique a fait un grand pas au Danemark. Car l'Etat vient de nommer la Commission d'Economie ménagère qu'on réclamait depuis longtemps.

Des Associations ménagères spécialisées, travaillaient depuis quinze ans, à un mouvement éducatif pour l'instruction des mères de famille. Aujourd'hui le Ministre de l'Intérieur, Herr Dahlgard a invité un certain nombre de femmes à collaborer avec lui en vue de multiplier les facilités pour la tenue commode d'une maison. En un mot on se propose de faire pour l'Economie domestique ce qui a déjà été accompli pour l'Agriculture.

On compte profiter des laboratoires déjà existants et si possible élargir leur champ, d'action. On espère même instituer un laboratoire d'Economie domestique d'Etat. Pour le moment on se contente de centraliser les faits et documents, relatifs à toutes les commodités, d'en vulgariser la connaissance de façon à améliorer les conditions de vie et la santé publique.

d'après KVINDEN OG SAMFUNDET.

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