

# THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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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

## World Refugee Year

By Nancy Stewart Parnell

Shocked by the plight of refugees in the Middle and Far East, which they had seen for themselves, a group of young Conservatives were moved to suggest in their organ, *Crossbow*, that there should be an immediate and universal effort to deal with this tragic problem. The idea was taken up with enthusiasm by the U.N. High Commissioner in London and by the United Nations Association, who arranged for a letter to appear in *The Times*, which met with a tremendous response, especially from the voluntary organisations which had worked so long and so devotedly in this field. Representations were made to H.M. Government and to appropriate and sympathetic bodies in other countries. Finally, Miss Pat Hornsby-Smith moved a resolution in the General Assembly of the United Nations calling for the promulgation of a "World Refugee Year" to be held from June 1959 to June 1960. This was carried by an overwhelming majority.

More than fifty countries have now pledged themselves to active participation in this effort to deal with what has rightly been called "The scandal of the age". In this country a United Kingdom Committee for World Refugee Year has been set up under the Chairmanship of Baroness Elliot of Harwood, D.B.E. with an all-party, all-denominational membership. The Committee has wisely set itself four limited objectives, namely, (1) assistance to European Refugees under the mandate of the U.N. High Commissioner, some 600,000 in number; (2) re-settlement of about 8,000 European Refugees still in China who lack the necessary money to emigrate to another country; (3) aid for Chinese Refugees in Hong Kong, where are congregated in appalling conditions, probably the biggest single group of these unhappy people in the world; (4) help for refugees in Palestine, mainly Arabs, who have lived for eleven years at destitution level. H.M. the Queen is patron of this national effort and the leaders of the three political parties, its Vice-patrons.

The Committee has been responsible for some

effective broadcasts, for a widely distributed poster, for an appeal to all civic authorities to initiate and co-ordinate activities in their localities and for the publication of a magazine called *Onslaught*, which sells at one shilling per copy, of which sixpence goes to the fund to be expended on the objects outlined above. Organisations and individuals are also invited to send donations to the Committee whose Headquarters are at 9 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1. Many people, however, are disappointed that it was not more successful in bringing about a closer co-ordination of effort among the chief organisations in this country which have made work on behalf of refugees their main or continuing concern. As things are, each body goes its own way, using its own methods, appealing for its own particular projects and even, on occasions, clashing with its fellow-participants in the timing of its activities, except when the civic authority or some wider organisation, like the United Nations Association, has been able to bring about a measure of local co-ordination. There is even some inevitable, but unfortunate, competition for funds between the U.K. Committee and the co-operating bodies.

Undoubtedly, the chief requirement is for money, both from Governmental and private sources. While some refugees, especially the more recent ones, need basic things like food, clothing and blankets, most are best helped by giving them the means of liberation from their encampments and by providing them with the necessary equipment for leading independent lives. Housing schemes are being carried out in Austria and Germany, for example, but could be speeded up if more money were available for materials and labour. Many of the younger refugees in particular need education, training and equipment, if they are to be able to earn their own living in a competitive world. Others are in great need of social and psychological help. Experience has shown that while many refugees, especially those going to another country, settle down very happily

and soon build a new life for themselves, others find the adjustment extremely difficult or impossible after years of enforced idleness, segregation and regimentation. These difficulties are accentuated when the only new homes available are in a country not of their own choosing and where, as is often the case in Germany, the refugees have understandable, but out-dated reasons for fearing and loathing the idea of settling in it. About one thousand of the European refugees still waiting to be settled are ex-victims of concentration camps. There is a tremendous need, therefore, for trained psychiatrists and social workers, if this process of resettlement is to achieve satisfactory results. There is also the problem of finding places in suitable institutions for the very old, the maimed and disabled and those suffering from diseases like tuberculosis, as so many of them do, due to the miserable conditions under which they have lived for so long. For all in this latter category, most governments, including our own, could be far more generous than they are at present in admitting small groups of them to their own institutions and hospitals.

The problem, since it involves some thirty million people with the widest possible variety of backgrounds and personalities, is a tremendous one. No sensible person will imagine that efforts, however generous, concentrated into one year can possibly solve it. World Refugee Year can only serve to publicise the facts, to stir the conscience of mankind and to ensure that relief comes to substantial numbers of refugees. It is hoped, however, that all this having been done, people will continue their interest and their efforts and not just leave the matter, as in the past, to a few hard-pressed, poorly supported voluntary organisations and to a U.N. High Commissioner for ever crying in the wilderness on behalf of his unhappy proteges.

His Holiness the Pope has given his blessing to this idea of World Refugee Year and has called upon Catholics everywhere "to collaborate generously and efficaciously in making a success" of it. The Hierarchy of England and Wales has appointed Sunday, December 27th as a day of national prayer for refugees and for the collection of money for them. There was also to be a weekend conference at Spode House, Hawkesyard Priory, Rugeley, Staffs, from November 6th to 8th in order to give Catholics an opportunity of discussing the whole problem.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

**Hinduism.** By Solange Lemaitre.  
**Is Theology a Science?** By M. D. Chenu, O.P.  
Faith and Fact Books. Burns Oates, 7s. 6d. each.

#### REVIEW

**Equal Pay for Equal Work.** Published by the Department of Labour of Canada.

This pamphlet carries on its cover the article from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights "Everyone, without discrimination, is entitled to equal pay for equal work."

In a foreword, Marion V. Royce, Director of the Women's Bureau, states that in the past decade, the Parliament of Canada and seven provincial legislatures have enacted equal pay laws.

The object of the pamphlet is to make known the laws and their means of enforcement and to stimulate interest in equal pay and encourage women to meet its challenge.

The principle was first recorded in 1882, when the Toronto Trades and Labour Council (later the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada) placed third on its programme, equal pay for equal work for both sexes. Since 1951, when the International Labour Organisation adopted the Convention on Equal Remuneration for Men and Women for Work of Equal Value, seven provinces, and in 1956 the Federal Parliament, enacted equal pay laws. Procedures for enforcing equal pay differ, but it is the woman herself who must register a complaint if she believes she is being paid less than a man for comparable work.

In Canada there are no legal barriers that prevent girls and women from participating in any type of vocational training, but "too often they fail to take advantage of existing opportunities."

The pamphlet remarks that the equal pay laws "mark important milestones in the recognition of women as workers who are making a worthwhile contribution to the economy of the nations. It remains for women to take advantage of their status under the law."

P. C. C.

#### I.L.O.

Mrs. Ana Figueroa has been appointed Assistant Director General of the International Labour Office as from February 15th, 1960.

Mrs. Figueroa was first associated with the United Nations in 1950 when she was Deputy Representative of Chile to the United Nations as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; she represented Chile at the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Commission and the Status of Women Commission, and was the first woman to sit on the Security Council. In 1954, she was appointed Chief of the Women's and Young Workers' Division, resigning in 1959 to become Special Representative in Latin America for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Mrs. Figueroa has been acting as President of the Chilean Federation of Women's Organisations.

## Notes and Comments

St. Joan's International Council will meet, by kind invitation of the German Section of the Alliance next year in Trier (Treves) at Whitsuntide. Trier is situated in lovely country on the Moselle, six miles from Luxemburg, is the oldest town in Germany and one of the most interesting. It existed thirteen hundred years before Rome. Members are assured of a warm welcome from our German colleagues.

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A statute, promulgated in Congregation at Oxford on October 20th, has at last given the women's colleges equal status with the men's. Heads of Women's Colleges are eligible for the Vice-Chancellorship of the University. Women may also act as Proctors—though they do not bear the name. Sir Maurice Bowra, Warden of Wadham and a former Vice-Chancellor, in moving this statute, described it as Oxford's "final act of franchise", though the new right is not absolute, for it depends on the will of the Chancellor.

Women will now be eligible to concern themselves with all the day-to-day business of the University—which will be, as Sir Maurice Bowra gracefully acknowledged "an enormous advantage to everybody." Oxford is still a length ahead of Cambridge in the women's franchise race.

The Vice-Chancellor and Proctors of Oxford University have appointed Miss Helen Gardner, professorial Fellow of St. Hilda's College as a delegate of the University Press. The delegates, hitherto all men, control the affairs of the Oxford University Press on behalf of the University. The appointment is for seven years.

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Mrs. J. E. Kelley, Governor of Askham Grange, the open prison for women in Yorkshire, succeeded Lady (Charity) Taylor as Governor of Holloway Prison on November 3rd. Lady Taylor has been appointed Assistant Commissioner and Inspector of Women's Prisons.

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The film *Fight for the Right*, giving the life work of Dr. Agnes McLaren and the founding of the Medical Mission Sisters by her follower, Dr. Anna Dengel was shown under the auspices of St. Joan's Alliance, at the Interval Club on October 21st, by the producer, Miss Joan Morris, founder of Damascene Pictures.

The film is the fruit of careful and wide research and the events in Dr. McLaren's life and in the history of medicine are illustrated with beautiful scenes and many fascinating reproductions from ancient manuscripts and documents.

The report of the thirteenth session of the Commission on the Status of Women came before the twenty-eighth session of the Economic and Social Council in June 1959.

The Resolution on minimum age of marriage, free consent of both spouses and compulsory registration of marriages which was passed unanimously, requests the Secretary-General to prepare for the fourteenth session of the Status of Women Commission, a draft convention and a draft recommendation on these three questions, together with provisions for regular reporting by Governments of Member States.

The Resolution recommending that the age of retirement and right to pension should be the same for men and women workers was amended. ECOSOC decided "to take no action for the time being". It "affirmed the principle that arrangements in regard to pensionable age and retirement age should not be such as to place women workers at any disadvantage as compared with men workers"—but recognises "that differences of opinion continue to exist as to whether an age of earlier optional retirement and an earlier pensionable age for women constitute any infringement of the above-mentioned principle."

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Speaking at the Forty-third Session of the International Labour Conference in June, 1959, the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the I.L.O., Mr. David Morse, the Director General said that:

"The I.L.O. was conceived in liberty in a tradition which holds sacred freedom of choice and of action for the individual. For my part I believe the attainment of the I.L.O.'s objectives would be meaningless were it to renounce this tradition. . .

"The forces hostile to individual liberty today are powerful. We have no sure guarantee beyond ourselves for its survival. Future generations may perhaps no longer recognise the meaning we still attach to the ideal of freedom to live as one wishes; yet the possibility that this ideal be the possession of but a passing phase of human history should not lessen the value we attach to it nor the passion with which we defend it."

\* \* \*

As we go to press, Dr. A. de Waal, President of *Katholiek Vrouwendispuut*, writes: "With sorrow and dismay, we learned of the death of Dame Vera Loughton Mathews. *The Katholiek Vrouwendispuut*, Holland offers their deep sympathy. Though we have only recently affiliated to the Alliance, we have known long before of the great importance of Dame Vera Loughton Mathews as a woman and as a leader. We all will pray for the peace of her soul."

## 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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## "The Very Spirit of St. Joan's Alliance"

### Further Tributes to Vera Laughton Mathews

#### Professor G. P. McEntee (Vice-President, U.S.A.)

It was with a deep sense of loss that I heard of the death of our dear President. Aside from those facts about her wonderful life which are, happily, the property of her country and the world, I cherish delightful personal recollections of her.

A generation has passed since I first met her, on the occasion of a visit which she and her husband made to the United States. She called one day when I was out and my sister described her: "You had a visitor today, a charming English lady, a handsome, big but oh, so womanly woman." I spent a delightful evening with the gracious couple at their hotel.

During the years we have kept in touch, sharing our news by letters sent across the Atlantic.

#### The Hon. Mabel Strickland (Vice-President, Malta)

Dame Vera Laughton gained the affection and admiration of all those whose privilege it was to know her intimately or to work with or for her. Hers was indeed a life of service to her country and to God. Dame Vera was a leader and an organizer and she believed in the role that women had to fill in this ever changing and challenging world. Not only did she believe in women's work but she led women.

I met Dame Vera when she visited Malta as Head of the Women's Royal Naval Service (which she had joined at its inception in 1917) and also as Chairman of the St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance, to which association Dame Vera gave the benefit of her great experience and enthusiasm. A happy recollection of her which I often recall was at Minden, immediately after the war, when she was the guest of Admiral Sir Harold Burroughs and I was a War Correspondent attached to B.A.O.R., in a game of chair polo up in the German skittle attic. She and the French Admiral beat the rest of us amid hilarious laughter.

In Naval circles, because of her determination to win for the Service she commanded what she considered necessary for their development and well-being, Dame Vera was affectionately referred to as "Tugboat Annie" and "Battleship Annie." She was never sunk and always in action when needs must.

Dame Vera was a great woman, a great leader and a great Catholic.

#### Transvaal Section

We offer our deepest sympathy to St. Joan's International on the loss of such an outstanding leader. We shall remember her in our prayers.

H. McGrath

#### From Australia

Miss Margaret Flynn writes that members in Melbourne attended Mass offered for Dame Vera in the church of St. Francis and special prayers for her were being said at the Carmelite Convent. "God was good to us," said Miss Flynn, "to give us her wise generalship."

Members of the New South Wales Section attended Mass for Dame Vera at St. Patrick's, Sydney. The president, Mrs. Kinsella, writes: "To so many of the Sydney members who met her and received her gracious hospitality, her death is a real personal loss." Mrs. Jean Daly, in her column in 'The Catholic Weekly' says: "Her prestige and outstanding experience were of incalculable value to the Alliance and her knowledge of the true basis of its aims and objects prevented any unwise deviation without stultifying the growth of the association."

Cables have also been received from South Australia and Western Australia.

#### Mrs. Tenison Woods, C.B.E.

One could not be long with Dame Vera without feeling the warm friendliness and love of human beings which governed her daily contacts and sensing the dedication which characterised her public and private life.

In my work with the United Nations, I had cause to know the great scope and quality of the work of St. Joan's International Alliance under her guidance to an even greater extent than I would have realised it as an Australian member; because in my post at United Nations headquarters, I became very aware of the effectiveness of the work of the Alliance in its international aspects, affecting human rights in general all over the world and the status of women in particular.

#### Rev. J. Joblin, S.J., I.L.O.

I am deeply sorry to hear of this loss, as I know the important part she played in your movement.

I had the opportunity to meet Dame Vera recently, and I could appreciate for myself the great personality she was.

#### Madame Leroy-Boy (Vice-President, Belgium)

Parmi les qualités multiples qui formaient cette forte personnalité de Dame Vera j'ai toujours été frappée par son aptitude exceptionnelle à résoudre les difficultés inopinées et à lever les objections particulières; elle examinait les unes et les autres, en fonction de principes irréfutables qu'elle exposait et développait avec une conviction contagieuse et avec cette sérénité que lui donnait la solidité de sa formation.

### GENERAL ELECTION

On behalf of St. Joan's Alliance, Mass was offered at Westminster Cathedral on Polling Day, to beg Divine Guidance for the electors. In accordance with our tradition, Mass has been offered on Polling Day, at every General Election, since women first obtained the vote in 1918.

For the first time this year, a Votive Mass of the Holy Ghost was offered at Westminster Cathedral on the occasion of the opening of Parliament. Catholic members of both Houses of Parliament attended the Mass which was offered by His Eminence, Cardinal Godfrey in the Crypt of the Cathedral on Tuesday, October 27th.

There were 89 women candidates—28 Conservatives, 34 Labour, 17 Liberal. Twenty-five were elected as against 28 in the last Parliament. Three have retired, Dame Florence Horsburgh, Lady Davidson and Mrs. Mann; three lost their seats, Miss Elaine Burton, Mrs. Jeger and Mrs. MaAlister. Three new women were elected.

The list is as follows (asterisks signifying new members):

#### Conservatives:

\*Anderson, Miss Harvie—E. Renfrewshire,  
Emmet, Mrs. Evelyn—East Grinstead  
Gammans, Lady—Hornsey  
Hill, Mrs. Eveline—Manchester, Wythenshawe  
Hornsby-Smith, Miss Patricia—Chislehurst  
McLaughlin, Mrs. Patricia—Belfast W.  
Pike, Miss Mervyn—Melton  
Pitt, Miss Edith—Birmingham, Edgbaston  
\*Thatcher, Mrs. Margaret—Finchley  
Tweedsmuir, Lady—Aberdeen S.  
Vickers, Miss Joan—Plymouth, Devonport  
Ward, Dame Irene—Tynemouth

#### Labour:

Bacon, Miss Alice—Leeds, S.E.  
Braddock, Mrs. E. M.—Liverpool, Exchange  
Butler, Mrs. Joyce—Wood Green  
Castle, Mrs. Barbara—Blackburn  
Corbet, Mrs. Freda—Peckham  
Cullen, Mrs. Alice—Glasgow, Gorbals  
\*Hart, Mrs. J. C. M.—Lanark  
Herbison, Miss Margaret—N. Lanarkshire  
Lee, Miss Jennie—Cannock  
Lloyd-George, Lady Megan—Carmarthen  
Slater, Mrs. Harriet—Stoke-on-Trent, N.  
Summerskill, Dr. Edith—Warrington  
White, Mrs. Eirene—East Flint

Government appointments include the following:

**Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health**—Miss Edith Pitt

**Assistant Postmaster General**—Miss Mervyn Pike

**Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Pensions**—The Rt. Hon. Patricia Hornsby-Smith who has become a Privy Councillor.

There are twenty-five Catholic M.P.s—three more than in the last Parliament. Six of these are new members. Mrs. Cullen is the only Catholic woman M.P., Mrs. McAlister having lost her seat.

#### Mrs. Wanda Grabinska (Vice-President, U.S.A.)

Dame Vera was like a beacon of wisdom and charity in our movement and although I had no opportunity to get acquainted with her personally I have admired her as a great Catholic, great woman and a great leader.

May God bless her soul and may He give you strength and courage to continue her great work.

#### Mademoiselle Delaval (France)

L'Alliance voit disparaître un grand soutien. Je me souviendrai de son amabilité et de l'ambiance de paix qu'elle savait créer autour d'elle. Que son souvenir vive toujours parmi les membres de l'Alliance pour leur transmettre cette fraternité de sentiments qui est si nécessaire.

#### Ma. Felipa Español Coli (Spain)

I regret very deeply indeed the tremendous loss that not only the Alliance but also all feminists have suffered in Dame Vera's death. With regard to women in Spain our position is so disadvantageous that I feel we have lost still more than many others.

#### Anna Lenah Elgström (Sweden)

I met Dame Vera only once, but she belonged to that kind of people whom you only needed to meet once—afterwards you always remembered them. Such a person Dame Vera was in a very, very great and fine way. I deplore with all St. Joan's Alliance what you lose when you lose her inspired leadership, her kindness, her great heart and fine intellect.

#### Miss Katharine Rook Davis

I loved Dame Vera from the first for her great sincerity and steadfastness of purpose, for her humility and what I can only call her human-ness. Others will speak of Dame Vera as the great leader, organiser and orator, but for me I shall always remember her as kindly, thoughtful of others and, above all, a steadfast Christian.

#### Mrs. Hulme

The high regard which was felt for Dame Vera by all sections of the community was strikingly evident at the solemn Requiem Mass held at Westminster Cathedral on October 2nd.

Her interests were so varied that it would be invidious to single out one in preference to another, but to all she brought to bear her great intellect, great courage and enthusiastic and sympathetic understanding.

#### The Fawcett Society

The members of the Executive Committee of the Fawcett Society record their deep regret at the death of Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, D.B.E., whose life-long association with the woman's movement they so greatly valued. Her distinguished career in the W.R.N.S. and her public work since the war, including her association with the Gas Industry were of direct service to all women, as was her leadership in the more specifically feminist field of St. Joan's International Alliance. The members record their appreciation of all Dame Vera's work and in particular her consistent support of and active endeavours for equal opportunity for women with men in all fields of employment.

#### The Suffragette Fellowship

"The reward of a thing well done is to have done it." These words of Emerson's sum up the personality and influence of Vera Laughton Mathews, particularly to her friends and colleagues of the Suffragette Movement. She had that unerring instinct of what is right, possessed by those who "walk with God"—and did what she knew to be right with unflinching courage, dignity and kindness. Suffragettes everywhere mourn the passing of a wise, kind and personal friend.

Enid Goulden Bach

## ERADICATION OF PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

The Second United Nations Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations, on this subject met in Geneva, June 22-26, 1959, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Brock Chisholm.

The Conference was opened by Mr. John Humphrey, Director of the Division of Human Rights, with authorised representatives of eighty-four non-governmental organisations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. A number of N.G.O.s not having consultative status were also present.

The terms of reference of the Conference were the techniques to be used for eliminating prejudice and discrimination and there were discussions in three working groups concerned respectively with Legal, Community and Educational Techniques and three plenary sessions. The most important points which emerged from the discussions were in the first group, the importance of law itself as a means of education; in the second group, the need for more research into the techniques for improving group relations; in the third group, the pre-eminent importance of the home in forming attitudes of youth and the need for care in the use of mass media. During the discussion in the first group the value of the special officer, known in Scandinavia as "ombudsman" was pointed out, this officer is elected but independent of the executive; complaints can be made to him and he has power to initiate action before the courts.

Twelve resolutions were passed (1) urging UNESCO to intensify its programme for the eradication of prejudice and discrimination; (2) calling for the continued co-operation of non-governmental organisations in combating prejudice and discrimination; (3) appealing to ECOSOC to re-examine the rules governing communications on human rights so that non-governmental organisations in consultative status may make oral statements or written submissions on violation of human rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; (4) urging N.G.O.s to continue their activities devoted to the greater understanding among young people of the importance of actively campaigning against all forms of discrimination; (5) recommending the establishment of national working groups on the diminution of prejudice and discrimination; (6) appealing for greater facilities for research into techniques for the eradication of prejudice and discrimination; (7) calling for the support of N.G.O.s to secure the ratification of the I.L.O. Convention and Recommendations concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation; (8) re-

questing the U.N. to intensify its efforts to ensure that Governments enact laws guaranteeing women equal rights; (9) recommending further action by the U.N. to combat prejudice and discrimination; (10) urging N.G.O.s to oppose discrimination in the matter of political rights; (11) requesting further co-operation between the U.N. and its specialised agencies and N.G.O.s in the matter of combating prejudice and discrimination; (12) recommending the consideration in any study of techniques of non-violent resistance.

St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance was represented by the International President, Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, the Hon. Secretary Miss Barry, and Mdle. Archinard, St. Joan's representative in Geneva, all of whom took part in the discussions in the working parties and in the plenary sessions.

The Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations was represented by Miss Bowie and Mrs. V. Williams, Hon. Secretary from the London group; Mme. A. Wibl -Gaillard from the Geneva group; and Professor D. Lewis from the New York group. Miss Bowie was also elected to the Steering Committee of the Conference.

Prior to the Conference, a special meeting of the Liaison Committee was held with invited guests from other women's organisations. Miss Bowie from the Chair, welcomed particularly, Mr. Charles Hogan, Chief of N.G.O. Section of the United Nations whose constant help, she said, to the women's organisations is greatly appreciated. In his reply, Mr. Hogan said that it was the N.G.O.s who must do the actual work of elimination of discrimination. It was in the playground and factories that discrimination grew and "Governments were not of much use there." Moreover they needed the N.G.O.s to "shove" them into action.

B. A. C.

## CHRISTMAS SALE

Saturday, November 21st at St. Patrick's Clubroom, Soho Square, 12.30—5.30 p.m.

Please come and bring your friends to the Christmas Sale. There will be luncheons and teas at reasonable prices. We want to be able to clear our debts before the end of the year. Do come and buy your Christmas presents and spend all your money, we can promise you it will be put to good use. If you have not already let the office know what you can do to help, please do so at once, it is not too late. We also still need goods for sale.

Noreen K. Carr  
Hon Treasurer.

## PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

During 1958 the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene drafted and circulated to societies a proposed Bill on Indecency with Children. Hitherto the law has not provided for the punishment of any person who, without committing an assault, behaves indecently towards a child. The Bill covered this, among other points, but had to be laid aside under the pressure of the Street Offences Campaign.

Now the Criminal Law Revision Committee, appointed by Mr. Butler on 2nd February, 1959, to consider matters suggested by the Home Secretary, has in its first Report (cmd. 835 August, 1959) submitted a Draft Bill on Indecency with Children. The main clause (Clause I(1)) would penalise "any person who commits an act of gross indecency with or towards a child under the age of fourteen, or who incites a child under that age to such an act with him or another."

The principle of the Bill is excellent; but certain points need examination. The term "gross indecency" was employed in 1885 to create the offence of indecent conduct between males and at present carries that connotation; but the Committee thinks it might lead to confusion if the new offence is described in different terms. It is not clear why this should be so.

There is clearly room for different views as to what should be the upper age limit. Sixteen is too high for a Bill intended to protect children incited to acts whose nature they do not understand. The Committee state: "The age of fourteen seems to us appropriate partly because a person below that age is a 'child' for the purposes of the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933 (c. 12) and a boy below that age is presumed not to have sexual capacity." They add that it could be argued that thirteen has much in its favour, since it is a felony punishable with life imprisonment to have unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under thirteen. But on balance, they conclude, fourteen seems better.

Clause I(2) provides that a wife or husband of the accused shall be competent to give evidence provided that (a) the wife or husband shall not be compellable either to give evidence, or in evidence to disclose any communication made to her or him during the marriage by the accused and (b) the failure of wife or husband to give evidence shall not be made the subject of any comment by the prosecution. Penalties, on conviction on indictment, maximum two years, on summary conviction, maximum six months; a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds, or both.

The Bill therefore covers clear cut issues. This is a law whose principles all concerned for children will heartily approve.

M. Chave Collisson

## INTERNATIONAL NOTES

**Egypt.** The Rector of Al Azhar University, the Venerable Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltout, speaking in Cairo in reply to a request from a women member of the National Union that he would ban divorce in Egypt on the approaching Mother's Day, stated that God considered divorce "detestable" and the Koran laid down the punishment for "detestable acts in God's eyes."

He urged the United Arab Republic and other Moslem Governments to amend the penal code, in accordance with the rules of the Koran, and make divorce without serious cause an offence punishable by imprisonment or fines and heavy lashes. Men may, under the existing civil law divorce their wives at will.

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**Ghana.** The women's branch of the Ghana Police Force, formed only seven years ago, has made a great impression throughout the country, particularly in the urban areas. The basic qualification for enlistment is the possession of a Middle School Leaving Certificate; the recruit must pass the Ghana Police Training Depot entrance examination and have a reasonable physique. She is not required to resign on marriage but she must undertake to serve anywhere in the country. Her uniform consists of a navy blue jacket and skirt with white open-necked blouse, a navy blue peaked cap and black shoes with white ankle socks. Her scheme of service is comparable with that of the men and she guides pedestrians at the new zebra crossings as well as carrying out her duties in the juvenile courts, remand homes and probation offices.—(*Ghana Today*).

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**India.** In the July number of the International Labour Review, Miss Parimal Das, Director of Women's Programmes, Ministry of Community Development in the Government of India, has written an interesting and detailed account of the work of her department. She points out how greatly the Community Development Programme, as a whole, has grown since the support of the women was enlisted.

As improvements in the standard of living have to start from the home and in the villages, the support of the women was essential, for such things as the improvement of health and sanitation, improved diet and care of the cattle, a vaccination drive or a campaign against flies.

Women social education organisers, extension workers, health visitors, midwives have now been trained and are attached to each "block" or territorial unit of development under India's second Five Year Plan. They are helping the woman in her family tasks and are also helping her to develop her role as a responsible citizen in the new Republic and Welfare State of India.

As an old peasant woman said: "Society is like a cart; it has two wheels and when one wheel is broken, the cart cannot go." The programme for women and children, which was conceived as an afterthought, is proving that the collaboration of women is essential to the success of the whole scheme of Community development.

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**New South Wales.** In New South Wales, more than 100,000 women workers are to receive a wage increase of sixteen shillings a week. This will bring the women's wages in more than seventy categories up to seventy-five per cent. of the corresponding male wage.

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**U.S.A.** Equal Pay Laws have been enacted in nineteen States. In Wyoming, an equal pay law came into force in March 1959 and in Ohio in April.

#### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "*The Catholic Citizen*" November 15, 1934

The Report of the Departmental Committee of the Home Office to re-view the law relating to the enforcement of fines imposed by Courts of Summary Jurisdiction states that some 200,000 maintenance orders for wives have been made during the last twenty years, but that there is no evidence to show how many are in operation at any given time. We venture to think that the figure would be surprisingly small and still more so as regards affiliation orders which, difficult to obtain in the first instance, are often scarcely worth more than the paper they are written on, so easy are the means of evasion. . . Hence it is not surprising to learn that there are fifty per cent more imprisonments for failure to comply with maintenance than with affiliation orders. When it is remembered that in both cases a term of imprisonment extinguishes the debt, that no arrears can accrue during imprisonment, it becomes obvious that the defrauded wife or mother has singularly little to gain financially by bringing the defaulter into court, often at great inconvenience to herself. . . In Scotland, with its separate legal system, the number of imprisonments in both categories of cases is insignificant and this is attributed in the main to two circumstances: first, that imprisonment for arrears does not extinguish the debt, and the man therefore has no inducement to prefer prison to payment out of sheer vindictiveness, a not uncommon occurrence in England, while further, his wages may be attached at the source up to the amount needed; secondly, that a man is only sent to prison when he wilfully neglects to pay and is granted further time if he can prove genuine inability.—V. M. Crawford in "*Fines v. Imprisonment*".

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