

WOMEN'S SERVICE  
FILE COPY

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

# Catholic Citizen

Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society),  
55, Berners Street, London, W.1.

Signed Articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

Vol. XXXII. No. 3.

MARCH, 1946.

Price Twopence.

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.

## National Insurance Bill

By BEATRICE M. PEARSON

The National Insurance Bill now before Parliament is a complex measure, requiring clarification on many points and with many of its provisions subject to regulations to be defined later.

### Classification.

Under the Bill, insured persons fall into three classes:

- (a) Employed persons, i.e., those under a contract of service.
- (b) Self-employed persons, i.e., those who are gainfully occupied but not under a contract of service.
- (c) Non-employed persons, i.e., those who are not gainfully occupied.

### Contributions.

Those in Class (a) will pay 3s. 7d. a week contribution (women) and 4s. 7d. a week (men), while the employer will pay 3s. and 3s. 6d. a week in each case.

The self-employed woman will pay 4s. 6d. a week and the man 5s. 6d., while the non-employed woman will pay 3s. 6d. and the man 4s. 6d.

The Exchequer, too, will make a contribution in each case.

### Benefits.

Employed persons can qualify for sickness and unemployment benefit (26s. weekly) as well as for retirement pension of 26s. weekly. Self-employed persons can only claim sickness benefit and retirement pension while non-employed persons qualify for retirement pension only.

There will, in addition, be maternity benefits falling under three headings: Maternity grant of £4, maternity allowance of 36s. a week for 13 weeks (payable to the gainfully occupied woman on condition that she abstains from work during that period) and attendance allowance of £1 a week for four weeks (not payable to the gainfully occupied woman).

Widows' benefits fall under three headings: Widow's Allowance, Widowed Mother's Allowance and Widow's Pension.

### Exemptions and Exceptions.

Some categories of people will be excepted from liability to pay contributions but may be credited with contributions while others, those whose total income is less than £75 a year, will be able to claim exemption from liability to pay but will forego all benefit rights.

The Minister will have power to exempt all married women from liability to pay contributions, in which case they will only receive benefits as dependants of insured contributors.

### Inequalities Under the Bill.

The Minister of National Insurance claims that the Bill "seeks to provide equal benefits in exchange for

equal payments," apparently overlooking the fact that single women will be required to pay a substantially lower contribution than men for the same rate of unemployment benefit, sickness benefit and retirement pension. The qualifying age for retirement pension for women, too, is five years lower than that for men.

Equalitarian Societies have always maintained that there should be equality of contributions and benefits for men and women and that the qualifying age for retirement pension should be the same in each case.

### The Married Woman.

A married woman may fall into any one of the insured categories: employed, self-employed or non-employed, but it must be emphasized that she is singled out to be dealt with by the Minister under regulations. He will have power to provide that a married woman who is a non-employed person (housewife) will be excepted from insurance unless, being already insured, she elects to remain insured in order to qualify for a retirement pension in her own right.

An employed, or self-employed, married woman may opt to contract out of insurance and so forfeit her right to sickness benefit. But even if the employed married woman chooses to remain a direct contributor she will receive only 20s. unemployment benefit and 16s. sickness benefit as against 26s. weekly to which a single woman would be entitled.

Feminists are urging that Clause 58 of the Bill, dealing with married women, be deleted and that these women should be included as direct contributors in their appropriate category, and not subject to the arbitrary powers of a Minister. They would then be entitled in their own right, to the benefits appropriate to their category.

### Widows' Benefits.

Because the Minister, in drafting the Bill, has not acceded to the demand to treat a married woman as an independent adult, insurable in her own right, but has made her, instead, dependent upon her husband's insurance, curious, special arrangements with regard to widows have been proposed.

A widow will qualify on her husband's insurance for a widow's allowance of 36s. a week for 13 weeks, plus an extra 7s. 6d. a week if she has been left with a child of school age. Thereafter she will receive a widowed mother's allowance of 33s. 6d. a week for herself and her child as long as she has a child of school age. If she is over 40 years of age when this allowance ceases and ten years have elapsed since the date of her marriage, she will qualify for a widow's pension of 26s. a week until she is entitled to a retirement pension.

Continued on page 3

## Notes and Comments

Mass will be offered this month at St. Patrick's, Soho, for our founder, Gabrielle Jeffery, and for the first editor of the *Catholic Citizen*, Leonora de Alberti, whose anniversaries occur on March 19th and 26th respectively. We feel sure our members will remember them with affection and gratitude in their prayers.—R.I.P.

The Alliance was represented by Mrs. Garrard at the impressive ceremony of the solemn reception of His Eminence Cardinal Griffin into Westminster Cathedral on March 10th.

We are grateful to Miss Pearson for her lucid explanation of the Insurance Bill. The Joint Standing Parliamentary Committee, of which Miss Pearson is Hon. Secretary, and which counts St. Joan's Alliance as one of its constituent societies, has made representations on the points covered by Miss Pearson's article to the Minister and Members of Standing Committee A. Arising out of the Conference of Women's Organisations held on February 23rd the Minister has been asked to receive a deputation.

**Nationality.** Women are getting more and more impatient at the delay in granting nationality rights to those British-born women who marry aliens. "Consultation with the Dominions" is always used as an excuse. At the deputation in November the Home Secretary "hoped that it might be possible to make some progress in the not distant future." Now on February 21st the Home Secretary said in Parliament that "it may be some time before that (i.e. consultation with the Dominions), can be arranged." We call upon the Government to place this matter on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of Dominion Premiers.

Women who have lost British nationality by reason only of marriage to aliens, are no longer required to register with the police.

During his speech in support of the declaration in favour of the participation on women in the Conferences of the United Nations, Mr. Noel Baker mentioned that "it was in our country forty years ago that the first struggle for the political rights of women took place." With due respect to Mr. Noel Baker, may we point out that Mary Wollestonecraft started women's demand for political liberty in England in 1792 and in 1868 Lydia Becker led a band of women ratepayers who applied to be placed on the Parliamentary register. In the famous case of Chorlton versus Lings judgment was given against these women on the express ground that although the word "man" in an Act of Parliament must be held to include women, "this did not apply to the privileges granted by the State."

It was recently reported in the *Evening Standard* that "London Transport's women conductors are to be replaced by men." It has been decided to replace 5,807 women on Central London buses and 1,539 on country services, also 2,924 on tramcars and trolley buses. The women will be replaced by demobilised men employed formerly by the Transport Board and by other ex-Service men looking for jobs.

This seems very shabby treatment when it was the women "clippies" who bore the heavy burdens of wartime bus conducting. It is quite natural that men formerly employed by the Transport Board should seek re-employment but in the words of Mr. Bert Papworth, an executive member of the Transport and General Workers' Union, "Why should women be sacked who have given three to five years' service through all the toil and tribulations of wartime?"

## UNITED NATIONS

A Commission on Human Rights has been set up by the Economic and Social Council. Its work will be to submit proposals to the Council on an international bill of rights; international declarations or conventions on civil liberties, the status of women, freedom of information and similar matters; the protection of minorities; the prevention of discrimination on grounds of race, sex, language or religion. The following nine members will hold office till March 31st, 1947: M. Paal Berg (Norway); Professor René Cassin (France); M. Fernand Dehousse (Belgium); Mr. Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre (Peru), Mr. K. C. Neogi (India); Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt (U.S.A.); Dr. John C. H. Wu (China). Nominations from the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia are to be added.

A Sub-Commission on the Status of Women has been set up to submit "proposals, recommendations and reports to the Commission on Human Rights regarding the status of women and may submit proposals to the Council, through the Commission on Human Rights, regarding its terms of reference." Initially the following have been appointed to serve till March, 1947: Mrs. Bodil Begtrup (Denmark); Miss Minerva Bernardino (Dominican Republic); Miss Angela Jurdak (Lebanon); Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur (India); Miss Gabriela Mistral (Chile); Mrs. Vienot (France); Miss Wu Yi-Fang (China); in addition the names of one national each from Poland and the U.S.S.R. are to be transmitted to the Secretary-General before the end of March by the member of the Council for the U.S.S.R., and three members are to be appointed by the Commission on Human Rights to serve as ex-officio members of this Sub-Commission.

During the 29th Plenary Meeting of the United Nations Assembly much time was taken in discussing the proposal submitted by the French delegation, at the instigation of Madame le Fauchoux, "that a much larger place should be accorded to women in the different delegations of the United Nations to its next Conference." Mrs. Roosevelt presented an open letter to the women of the world in support of this proposition. She appealed to all women delegates present at the Assembly to work at home for wider participation of women in the work of the United Nations. The two speakers following, Miss Bernardino (Dominican Republic) and Mrs. Dalen (Norway) supported the resolution, and Mrs. Verwey (Netherlands) emphasised the fact that in any country there might be some woman who would be a credit to the delegation in question and who would be extremely glad to have the opportunity of meeting men and women in an international sphere. It was on their behalf and on behalf of the women they represented that the recommendation was made. Mr. Paul Boncour (France) insisted that in bringing their statement on the participation of women before the Assembly, the French delegation were inspired not only by gallantry but by justice. Mr. Fraser (New Zealand) and Dr. Fusco (Uruguay) both supported the proposal and Mr. Noel Baker (United Kingdom) drew the attention of the Conference to two practical points; first, that there ought to be some women in responsible posts in the Secretariat itself; and secondly, that the information section of the Secretariat ought to keep in close contact with the great women's organisations throughout the world.

The President closed the debate by stating that though there was no formal proposal to submit to the vote, the manner in which the declaration was received by the Assembly led to the hope that it would be taken into very serious consideration.

We offer our deep sympathy to Dr. Delia Moclair on the death of her son, Patrick, aged fourteen and to Miss Vera Douie on the death of her sister. We ask members to pray for them.—R.I.P.

## Parliament Day by Day.

Parliament has been working very hard indeed, often until midnight or even later. There have been debates on Agriculture, Manpower, Education, Industrial Compensation, Investment Control and Foreign Affairs as well as the outstanding ones on the Trade Disputes Bill, the Food Situation and National Insurance. This last a two-day debate on 6th and 7th February, was so full of interest that it is hard to pick out highlights. Mrs. Ridealgh, in a maiden speech that was more emotional than logical, appealed for **Spinsters' Pensions** at 55, as did several other speakers, including Beverley Baxter, who seems to think life ends (perhaps mercifully) for all unmarried women at 60, since he says, "I believe that the last lap in an unmarried woman's life, from 55 to 60, is a cruel and hard thing."

The Minister of National Insurance himself, in his opening speech, touched in passing on the fact that the provision allowing 36s. a week to a mother for six weeks before and seven weeks after a birth, if and only if, she stays away from work, will enable this country to ratify "one of the I.L.O. conventions." (This point is worth watching.)

Mr. Lindgren spoke sensibly about improving conditions of work for women instead of tamely submitting to the convention that they wear out sooner than men.

Mrs. Mann and Mrs. Manning constituted themselves the champions of the **Housewives** in the great "Withdrawal of Dried Egg" battle. They harried Sir Ben Smith most energetically, Mrs. Mann heading a queue of eleven questioners on that subject on 6th February, and speaking very sternly of the Minister of Food's technique in the debate on 14th February. Other food and clothing questions were asked by Miss Bacon and Lady Noel Buxton.

Mrs. Ayrton Gould has been active in defence of Service men, their income tax and call-up hardships, and is taking up Miss Rathbone's cudgels for the starving children of Austria.

A number of questions have been asked about the **Women Married to American Service men**, and their plight if divorce proceedings are taken out against them. The Government appears unmoved by their difficulties and contends that there is already ample "machinery available."

When Mr. Austin asked the Solicitor-General on 6th February "if he would consider opening an office to which British women still in this country married to Americans and having divorce proceedings taken against them, can bring their cases for legal advice," the Solicitor-General replied, "I do not think it necessary, or indeed practicable. In this country the women concerned in such cases, as in others, can consult either their own legal advisers or one of the organizations which give free legal advice to those in poor circumstances."

When Wing Commander Hulbert asked for facilities for transport for wives who want to go to the U.S.A.

We are most grateful to **St. Joan's Alliance in Australia** for their wonderful kindness in sending St. Joan's in England very many Christmas parcels which have been distributed among members of the Committee and headquarters' helpers. When things seem to be getting more and more difficult over here it is heartening to have these glimpses of good cheer, but most of all it is the thought behind the gifts that we value. The last parcel contained a delicious-looking, ousize cake which is being kept for teas at the annual meeting. So all those who attend will have a taste!

to defend divorce petitions, the Minister of War Transport said, "The main difficulty in these cases is not transport but the question whether these wives can be admitted to the United States. I shall be ready to discuss with the United States authorities the question of providing transport in any case where the necessary visa for entry into the United States has been obtained." Meanwhile the divorce petitions, of course, go through unopposed.

On January 31st Mr. Cluse brought up the case of women divorced by American law but still married under British law. The Attorney-General replied, "Our law recognizes decrees of divorce made in accordance with the domicile of the parties. By English law the wife would take the domicile of her husband and our law would recognize a decree of divorce made in accordance with the law of that domicile. Moreover Section I of the Matrimonial Causes (War Marriages) Act 1944 enables women who since the outbreak of war have married men domiciled outside the United Kingdom, subject to certain qualifications, to take divorce proceedings against their husbands." In fact, all that is needed is a second (and expensive) wrong to put matters right.

The **Royal Commission on Equal Pay** (according to the Prime Minister on 29th January) "are considering their report. They cannot yet say when this will be ready."

The **Markham Hancock Report**, however, has at last borne fruit. On 7th February Mr. Isaacs said, "It has been decided to set up forthwith on a limited experimental basis a National Institute of Houseworkers as recommended in this report."

An interesting point was raised by Mr. Teeling on 26th February. He asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "In view of a recent judgment that **Wives' Savings** belong to their husbands, is it the intention of his department that widows shall be asked to pay death duties on their savings on the demise of their husbands, and if so, whether a special exception can be made in the case of National Savings Certificates and such personal property as jewels and household furniture purchased out of such savings?"

Mr. Dalton replied: "The case which I think the Hon. Member has in mind related only to savings out of housekeeping allowance made by a husband to his wife. No property belonging in law to a wife is assessed to death duties as part of her husband's estate." Mr. Teeling did not pursue the matter any further but Mr. Dalton's reply was in no sense an answer to his question since in so many cases "wife's savings" and "savings from the housekeeping allowance" are in fact the same thing, whether they remain in the form of cash or are turned into objects. Is there some unspecified stage at which these things become the wife's property in law?  
B. M. HALPERN.

## NATIONAL INSURANCE BILL (contd.)

A widow without a dependent child at the time of her husband's death will receive a widow's pension of 26s. a week at the end of the 13 weeks' widow's allowance providing she is over 50 years of age and ten years have elapsed since the date of her marriage. In cases where she does not fulfil these conditions she could claim a widow's pension during any period when she was incapable of self-support. The unmarried woman working in an unpaid capacity in the home of a relative is not covered in this Bill, as no one, it appears, will be liable for payment of contributions in respect of her employment.

## REVIEWS

**Coral on the Reef**, by Marguerite Fedden. (The Burleigh Press, 8s. 6d.).

Miss Fedden is well known for her journalistic work and here in her first novel she gives us a glimpse of South African life which is both informative and cheerful. We have colourful descriptions of the South African scene alongside the story of the self-reliant Coral who never seems at a loss to know what to do next whatever the fix she may be in. All ends happily with Coral safely back in London, albeit the wartime London, and married to the man of her choice. C. S.

**Women and Work**, by Gertrude Williams. (Nicholson and Watson, 5s.).

A most useful reference book of facts relating to the status of women. It shows how far off we still are from real equality, and "the rate for the job," and these facts are profusely and admirably illustrated by pictures and charts which reveal and impress in an almost startling degree the inequality in pay, benefits and general conditions. The chapters on women's employment show that an immense amount of work still lies before us to make the "rate for the job" an established fact admitted by all. There can be no adequate reason for paying women hosiery operatives less than half the men's wage, and in the important field of education it is surely out of date as well as unjust to pay women teachers less than men for equal work, equal hours, equal responsibility. "Women and Work" is worth careful study for it covers a very big field in a bold and practical way, and while stressing the widening opportunities for women in general, it wisely gives some emphasis to community welfare, and to the important part that only women can play as experts in health, housing and education.

URSULA P. BUCKMASTER.

We welcome **Context**, a form of "Catholic Digest" for England. It is likely to become more and more interesting as it expands and it is a courageous experiment. The Editor is John William Culmer, address 34B North End Road, London N.W.11.

## DISTINGUISHED PEOPLE

As part of the Status of Women Committee, St. Joan's Alliance helped to entertain women members of the United Nations delegations at Gunter's, when Mrs. Hartree presided and short speeches were made by Miss Bernardino, Madame Lefaücheux, Mrs. Dalen, Mrs. Verwey and Miss McPhee. They were also joint hosts at a party given by the International Alliance of Women, the Liaison Committee with Indian Women and the Anglo-Swedish Society to welcome Dr. Hannah Rydh, of Sweden, who had attended the All-India Women's Congress.

The Alliance was represented by Miss Barry at a dinner at Frascati's to honour Lord and Lady Pethick Lawrence, given jointly by the Suffragette Fellowship and the W.F.L. Dame Vera Laughton Mathews expressed the good wishes of the gathering for the success of Lord Pethick Lawrence's difficult mission to India and wished him God-speed. Miss Marion Lawson presided. Among the distinguished guests was Mrs. Mary Tenison-Woods, of Sydney, child welfare expert and a member of St. Joan's Alliance.

## CHARACTER FROM HANDWRITING

**HELPFUL**, interesting, true. Send 2/6 and stamped envelope with specimen of writing.—W.F., St. Joan's Alliance, 55 Berners Street, London, W.1.

## HOUSEWIVES REVOLT

Women will put up with a great deal without complaining. For many years they have queued and cooked and swept and cleaned their houses (the last two items with the most inadequate materials) as well as doing full-time or part-time jobs. They have cared for evacuees and billetees and coped with ration books and rising prices—or if prices have been controlled they have been faced with disappearing goods. Fair shares where rationed goods are concerned have just made things bearable, but when fish was at its scarcest the Minister of Food decided to remove dried eggs from the ration. Tired bodies and strained nerves would stand no more, the long-suffering housewives revolted at last. It was the straw that breaks the camel's back, for it was not as though there were no dried eggs—newspapers informed the housewife that in the U.S.A. and Canada there were plenty but owing to lack of dollars or lack of cartons they were not to come here. Some one had blundered.

Blunders lead to organisation on the part of the victims of the blunder. Protest meetings have been held, petitions and deputations have been showered on Ministers and M.P.s and the British Housewives' League has been formed. These women are using their democratic rights—some of them perhaps for the first time. They are learning political sense, perhaps they may even demand that a woman shall handle the nation's food situation.

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Councillor Mrs. V. M. Crawford in the "Catholic Citizen," March, 1921.

"I freely admit that the . . . title 'Endowment of Motherhood' has been a somewhat misleading one. What is really meant—though its advocates do not always seem to have seen this quite clearly—is endowment of childhood, i.e., some security for all children, and some means by which the children of the large family should have as good a chance as the children of the small. For this the endowment of children rather than the endowment of mothers is what is actually needed, and approached from this angle presents fewer points of attack. True, any payment based, not on the skill and labour of the husband, but on the number of mouths that the wife has to fill in the home, is a recognition—and to me a welcome one—of the domestic toil imposed on every working-class mother."—*More About the Endowment of Maternity.*

THE HOSPITAL OF  
ST. JOHN & ST. ELIZABETH

The Hospital was founded in 1856 by four Sisters of Mercy on their return with Florence Nightingale from the Crimean War. The Hospital contains 154 beds, including 34 beds for paying

patients. Private rooms are available from 8 guineas per week. One ward is used exclusively for Nuns, and Private Rooms are set aside for Priests from the Diocese of Westminster.

Trained Nurses sent to patients' own homes. Apply to the Superintendent in Charge of the Trained Nurses' Institute, 134 Circus Road, N.W. 8. Telephone: Primrose 2788.

**60 GROVE END ROAD, ST JOHN'S WOOD**

Cunningham 5126.

N.W. 8.

DHB