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THE INTERNATIONAL

WOMEN'S NEWS

JUS SUFFRAGII

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INTERNATIONAL PEACE CAMPAIGN.

As we go to press we learn that it has been decided by the Executive Committee that the International Congress planned to take place in Geneva, is to be held in Brussels from the 3rd to 6th September.

We beg members to note this change of place, and also to note that from now on the address of the Organising Secretary, Miss Rosa Manus, will be 48, Boulevard Botanique, Brussels.

A CALL TO WOMEN.

We are living in times darkened by the threat of a war which grows more menacing day by day.

The anxiety of simple folks grows greater and mothers everywhere feel a growing despair. They tremble at the thought that the children they have borne must undergo the horrors of another war, a war more ghastly than those of the past by the recent inventions of science and technique.

The clarion call to a world wide effort for peace, the "International Peace Campaign," sent out by Lord Cecil and other well known men inspired like him with a burning love of humanity, has roused the sincerest echoes in the hearts of women everywhere.

Women realize that it is not enough to long for peace, to pay lip service to peace, but that if we are to save peace we must toil for it without ceasing.

We are now calling on all women, manual workers and intellectuals, housewives, school teachers, mothers of families from the towns and countryside, of all countries, of all classes, of all political opinions, to support with all the force at their command the International Congress which will be held in Brussels from the 3rd-6th September.

The following have already signed the Appeal:

Mrs. M. I. CORBETT-ASHBY, Executive Committee of the International Peace Campaign.
Mme. MALATERRE-SELLIER, Executive Committee of the International Peace Campaign.
Miss ROSA MANUS, Secretary of the Congress of the International Peace Campaign.
Comité Mondial des Femmes contre la Guerre et le Fascisme.
International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship.
League of Mothers and Educators for Peace.
Peace and Disarmament Committee of the Women's International Organizations.
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.
World Union of Women for International Concord.

Four points which form the basis of the Congress are:

(1) Restoration of the sanctity of Treaty obligations.
(2) Reduction and limitation of armaments by International Agreement, and the suppression of profit from the manufacture of arms.
(3) Strengthening of the League of Nations for the prevention and stopping of war by the more effective organisation of Collective Security and Mutual Assistance.
(4) Establishment, within the framework of the League of Nations, of effective machinery for the remedying by peaceful means of international conditions that might lead to war.

What women can do:

(1) Secure the co-operation of the greatest possible number of Women's organisations so as to interest women widely in the work of the International Peace Campaign;
(2) Take an energetic share in the work of the National Committees for the International Peace Campaign;
(3) Organize in co-operation with other organisations peace meetings, demonstrations and processions on the days the Congress is being held, from which messages should be sent to the Congress showing the enormous popular support for the International Peace Campaign.
(4) Make the fullest possible use of press and radio to make known this appeal and all other informa-

tion connected with the International Peace Campaign.

(5) Organize collections and "flag days" to secure funds for the International Peace Campaign.

Suggestions for the international organisation of Peace:

Except on sporadic occasions, social collectivity, society, the conscience of mankind cannot function as they should for lack of organisation.

To establish an international juridical system, three forms of activity are essential:

(1) *Political activity*. This would be the task of Governments; the organ of this activity is the League of Nations.

(2) *Systematic scientific research* dealing with international relations and forces which dominate international society. In this field much work has been done, but there is a lack of co-ordination of the results obtained through central organisations.

(3) *Education and propaganda*. Here there is a lack of any real movement in favour of peace.

An Institute of Propaganda, on a wide basis, should have been instituted, making constant use of objective propaganda, psychologically organised in favour of peace (cinemas, education, travel, etc.). At the present moment it is essential to establish means for carrying on the work indicated in (2) and (3).

RASSEMBLEMENT UNIVERSEL POUR LA PAIX.

Au dernier moment nous venons d'apprendre que le Comité Exécutif a décidé qu'il est impossible à organiser le grand Congrès International à Genève, et que ce Congres aura lieu à Bruxelles du 3 au 6 septembre.

Veuillez noter ce changement, ainsi que l'adresse nouvelle, à partir de ce moment, de la Secrétaire, Mlle. Rosa Manus, soit 48, Boulevard Botanique, Bruxelles.

APPEL AUX FEMMES.

Nous vivons des jours assombris par la menace chaque jour plus grande de la guerre.

L'anxiété des peuples grandit et l'angoisse des mères se fait de plus en plus douloureuse. Elle tremblent à la pensée que les êtres nés de leur chair pourraient devoir subir les horreurs d'une nouvelle guerre, que les perfectionnements apportés par la science et la technique rendraient plus terrible encore que celles du passé.

Aussi, lorsque Lord Cecil et quelques personnalités animés d'un ardent esprit humanitaire lancèrent, à travers le monde, un Appel pour un "Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix," celui-ci éveilla-t-il des échos profonds dans le cœur d'innombrables femmes.

Celles-ci savent, en effet, qu'il ne suffit pas de chérir la paix, du lui rendre hommage en paroles, mais qu'il faut, pour la sauver, mener une lutte de tous les instants.

C'est pourquoi nous demandons à toutes les femmes, travailleuses manuelles et intellectuelles de la ville et de la campagne, ménagères, éducatrices, mères de famille, de tous les pays, sans distinction de milieux sociaux et d'opinions philosophiques et politiques, de collaborer par tous les moyens en leur pouvoir au succès du Congrès du R.U.P. qui se tiendra à Bruxelles au début de Septembre 1936.

Margery Corbett Ashby } membres du Comité
Germ. Malaterre-Sellier } Exécutif du R.U.P.
Rosa Manus, Secrétaire Internationale.
Mary A. Dingman, Comité pour la Paix et le Désarmement créé par les Org. féminines internationales.
Emilie Gourd, Alliance Internationale pour le Suffrage et l'Action civique et politique des Femmes.
G. Duchêne }
M. B. Cattaneo } Comité Mondial des Femmes.
Clara Ragaz, Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté.
M. Y. Prudhommeaux } Ligue des Mères et des
J. Ruyssen } Educatrices pour la Paix.
Marg. Nobs, Union Mondiale de la Femme pour la Concorde Internationale.

BUT DU CONGRES.

Les quatre points suivants sont à la base du Congrès:

1. L'inviolabilité des obligations résultant des traités.
2. La réduction et la limitation des armements par accord international et la suppression des profits résultant de la production des armes.
3. Le renforcement de la Société des Nations pour prévenir et arrêter les guerres par l'organisation la plus efficace de la sécurité collective et de l'assistance mutuelle.
4. L'établissement dans le cadre de la Société des Nations d'un mécanisme efficace pour remédier aux situations internationales susceptibles de provoquer la guerre.

Ce que les femmes peuvent faire.

1. Organiser nationalement la coopération du plus grand nombre possible d'associations féminines en vue d'intéresser les femmes au R. U. P.
2. Participef activement au travail des Comités Nationaux.
3. Organiser avec l'aide d'autres organisations des conférences, des démonstrations, des cortèges pacifistes, etc., au moment du Congrès, et envoyer des messages au Congrès en indiquant le nombre de personnes qui soutiennent le R. U. P
4. Utiliser aussi largement que possible la presse et la radio-diffusion pour faire connaitre le présent appel, ainsi que toutes informations relatives au R. U. P.
5. Organiser des collectes, des "journées nationales," etc., pour recueillir des fonds en faveur du R. U. P.

ADDRESS OF MISS KERSTIN HESSELGREN,

Delegate of the Swedish Government

at the

Assembly of the League of Nations, July 3rd, 1936.

Note.—For many years Miss Hesselgren has represented her Government at the Assembly of the League of Nations and the Annual Conference of the International Labour Organisation. She has won the respect of all by her ability, good judgment, capacity for hard work and her disinterested devotion to the cause of world peace and social justice.

Miss Hesselgren and Miss Forchhammer from Denmark were the only two women members of this adjourned Assembly and both felt their responsibilities keenly. Miss Hesselgren was the only woman who spoke, and she undoubtedly voiced the point of view of many all over the world.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As an expression of the feeling of women in many parts of the world, I want to say a few words.

The Covenant gives to women the right to take part in the work of the League and I wonder which vital question would not touch women as well as men. Certainly this does, which we now have discussed for days.

I have been listening with greatest interest to these fine and eloquent speeches, but I have found no ray of hope in them.

50 nations give in to one aggressor.

50 nations let a small power, one of its own members, fall to the ground.

However can we after this hope, that any small country can have any hope for the future?

A few years ago the League of Nations asked for the collaboration of women—we answered by pleading by millions all over the world for disarmament, what was the result! not disarmament but rearmament all over the world.

When last autumn 50 nations rose to help one of the small members of the League against deadly agression, we took hope. The League was after all a real protector. It had not shown itself so before, but now had come the time when it would show its strength—when we would learn that our homes and our children could be safe under its wings. And the result! Worse than nothing! The small nation which the League went out to help is wiped out and the belief in the League of Nations is shaken to its foundation.

In many countries the authorities are afraid of the low birthrate—how could it be otherwise, how could women wish to bear children into a world that is so hopeless, so insecure? I have heard numbers of women say this. You may well say that fight and war have always been there and that children have been born into it all the same—that is true—but war has never taken such horrible forms as now.

You may also say, as has been said here, that everything must be done not to let loose war on Europe, for this aim it is meet that one country should die for all the others—yes!—but are you sure that you are not letting it loose just by giving in to the agressor now.

Every small country must after this ask itself, when its time will come, and ask this with no hope in the strength of the League. You are all thinking of such a possibility. It has run like a red thread through every speech—everyone has seen the looming shadow of such an event. What are you going to do?

How are you going to prevent its coming?

Surely it must be by going to the very root of the evil. Try to find the very source of unrest, try to take every dispute in hand at once and effectively, not let month after month go with futile discussions.

Prevention is now the only way—and the education of nations as well as of individuals to the understanding of the latent power of good will.

You want the collaboration of women, you can get it whole heartedly if you work for peace by such means.

I cannot give advice.

I cannot tell you how.

I can only voice the intense anguish of the women all over the world and urge you to use every wit and every power to find a solution.

Peace and Disarmament Committee of the Women's International Organisations, 6 rue Adhémar Fabri 6, Geneva.

ALLIANCE OFFICE IN GENEVA.

As usual the Alliance, during the Assembly of the League of Nations, will open a temporary Office in Geneva as a central meeting place not only for all our members, but also for the numerous feminists who will be staying in the town at that time. As before, visitors can obtain addresses and information, see women's papers, meet their friends, and conduct their correspondence at the Office. In addition meetings and reunions will be organised, to which all our readers who will let us know of their presence in Geneva are cordially invited.

In view of the postponement of the League Assembly, now fixed for the 21st September, this office will be open every day, from the 10th September, 9—12 a.m. and 2—6 p.m. Unfortunately it is not possible at the time of going to press to give the address of the Office, but we shall publish it shortly in the women's papers and the Geneva Press and will send notices of it to our Societies. The fact that the Board of the Alliance is meeting in Geneva on the 17th, 18th and 20th September means that a great number of the leaders of our movement will be in the town, so that those who come to our Office will have every opportunity of meeting them.

FINLAND.

Parliamentary elections took place in this country on the first and second of July. All the different political parties had nominated women candidates, and as the number of women members elected had been reduced to fourteen in 1933, considerable anxiety was felt as to the result of the elections this year as far as women were concerned.

We have now to record a small victory—16 women have been elected. The largest party, the Social Democrats, have 8 women members out of 83. Miss Mina Sillanpáa (Social Democrat), who has been a member of our Parliament ever since woman's suffrage was introduced in 1906, failed in 1933, but has been re-elected. The party of smallholders (Maalaislütto) has 2 women members out of a total number of 53; the National Coalition party (Kokoomus) 2 out of 20; the Swedish National party (Svenska folkpartiet) one out of 21; our "Fascist" party, the patriotic national party, (Tsán maallinen kansallis lütto) one out of 14; and the Liberal party one out of 7.

The Swedish party's woman candidate, Miss Elsa Bonsdorff, was elected as number two out of nine elected members in her constituency, which has not happened before. She represents strong rural interests. Miss Mandi Hannula, who has been a delegate at several of the Alliance Congresses, stood for her small party after an absence of several years, and came out as number one, though the Liberals lost four seats at the recent elections.

Of course we feminists regret that more women candidates were not elected, but considering the so-called reaction against women's rights to equality at the present time, we were pleased that the representation of women in our public life has been strengthened.

Annie Furuhjelm.

LIAISON COMMITTEE OF WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS.

Comprising the Joint Standing and Liaison Committees.

Objects—To serve as a medium of intercommunication and co-operation between the member organisations: to develop the influence of women in international affairs.

At its Congress in 1925, held in Washington, U.S.A., the International Council of Women decided to invite other women's international organisations to form an international standing committee with the object of working unitedly for the appointment of suitable women on commissions and other bodies of the League of Nations where women's opinion should be represented. That invitation was accepted by most of the women's international organisations and a "Joint Standing Committee of Women's International Organisations" was formed, which has for ten years carried on the special work of watching over the representation and position of women in the League of Nations and the I.L.O.

It was, however, frequently found that its members desired to consult together on questions of a more general character, and to be able to co-operate when matters of international importance arose which made united international action desirable and effective.

A draft Resolution on Co-operation was framed by the I.C.W. for consideration of its Congress to be held in Vienna in May, 1930, and was widely circulated in advance. It aroused much interest and discussion among the leading Women's International Organisa-

tions and certain amendments were suggested and accepted. The Resolution as amended was adopted by the full Congress at Vienna, and led to the eventual formation of the Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations on February 12th, 1931, based upon the same lines of working as the Joint Standing Committee. The original member-organisations composing it had all been members of the Joint Standing Committee, *viz.*, the International Council of Women; the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship; the World's Young Women's Christian Association; the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; the International Federation of University Women; the World Union of Women for International Concord; the World's Women's Christian Temperance Union. At later periods there were added the St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance; the Equal Rights International; the International Federation of Women Magistrates, Barristers and other branches of the Legal Profession; the International Federation of Business and Professional Women.

The subject selected in February, 1931, by the Liaison Committee for work in common was the support of World Peace and Disarmament. In order to devote the united strength of women's organisations very specially to this great cause, the Liaison Committee founded in May, 1931, an *ad hoc* Sub-Committee on Disarmament that should work in Geneva side by side with the Disarmament Conference of the League of Nations. This Committee has been remarkably effective and is now an independent Committee under the name of "Peace and Disarmament Committee of the Women's International Organisations," with its Headquarters in Geneva.

During the five years of its existence the Liaison Committee has dealt with a number of leading questions affecting women throughout the world and has established itself as an important co-ordinating body of international opinion among women.

With a view to economising the number of meetings and the secretarial and clerical duties associated with the Joint Standing and the Liaison Committees of Women's International Organisations, it has been decided that the purposes of both shall be united under one Committee, which shall bear the name of the Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations.

The Hon. Secretaries will be Miss Zimmern, who will continue as General Hon. Secretary of the amalgamated body, and Mrs. Bigland, who will continue to act for the business connected with the appointment of women to Commissions and other bodies of the League.

SWEDEN.

Broadcasting in Sweden is managed by a Company in which the State has a 50% interest and which is administered by a Board of Directors and an Executive Committee. The Radio Board has a controlling "Commission of Opinion" appointed jointly by the State and the shareholders.

In June, 1933, Frederika - Bremer - Förbundet, Sweden's oldest organisation with a complete programme of the women's cause, applied to the Government with the request that women should be appointed amongst the competent persons just elected to arrange the broadcasting activity of the country, and that women should be included in the broadcasting management and among the higher officials of A/B Radiojänst. This application did not receive consideration. The Frederika-Bremer-Förbundet then took the initiative in founding the Svenska Kvinnoforeningars Radiokommittee in December, 1933. This Committee consisted of two representatives, with proxies, of 14 of the leading organisations in the country; Attorney Ruth Stjernstedt was appointed Chairman, Konsulent Ingeborg Walin and Mrs. Eleonor Lilliehöök Vice-Chairmen, and Mrs. Gerda Hedström and Editor Margareta von Konow Secretaries.

The Committee made an application to the Government similar to that referred to above and also got into direct communication with the A/B Radiojänst. A certain amount of co-operation was quickly established with the lecture section of the Company and the number of women lecturers has steadily increased. This has been still more the case since the broadcasting time was extended to include some hours in the forenoon, which was, in fact, one of the desiderata put forward in the enquête carried out by the members of the Committee soon after it was founded.

On several occasions the Committee's Board has been called into conference with the Radiojänst lecture department. When the Government and the authorities mentioned above made a certain reorganisation of the management and programme committee of Radiojänst, the latter was converted into a Radio Board with an increased number of members, to which three women were appointed out of a total of 15 members.

Svenska Kvinnoforeningars Radiokommittee is still working towards the goal of getting women appointed members of the Company's Board and included among the higher officials. In this connection it may be mentioned that a similar Committee has been founded in Norway, partly on the Swedish model, and that through its efforts, the Norwegian Government has appointed a woman member of the Radio Board.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN.

We have just received the printed Programme of the Council Meetings to be held at the Preparandija, Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, from September 28th to October 9th. We hope that the change of date of the Assembly of the League of Nations to September 21st will not have caused serious difficulty to the organisers, and impelled them to alter their dates—a very difficult thing to do at short notice.

We can only glance briefly at the Resolutions to come before the meetings. Proposals are being made for the setting up of two new Committees, one on Social Information and one on Domestic and Political Economy, with the double object of securing a just appreciation of the housewife's profession, and of helping the housewife to obtain fuller knowledge of national economy and a better training.

Other Resolutions concern the Eradication of Slavery, the Strengthening of the League of Nations, the Distribution of Raw Materials, the Nationality of the Married Woman and Equal Rights for both Sexes, various questions concerning Education, Women in Broadcasting, and the question of the Cinema; Equal Moral Standard questions; Nutrition; various matters concerning Equal Rights for women in the economic sphere, etc., etc.

This brief catalogue must suffice to show what a wide and interesting field for discussion will lie before the Congress.

This Congress has before it a very important decision, namely, the election of a new International President. We reported some time ago that Lady Aberdeen is resigning the presidentship that she has held so long and we see that three candidates, all of them known to the whole women's movement, will be proposed: Baronne Pol Boël, President of the Belgian Council of Women, the Princess Cantacuzene, President of the Roumanian Council, and Miss Kerstin Hesselgren, President of the Swedish Council. We can only say that the choice will surely be a hard one for the delegates, but that on whichever of these women the lot may fall, the new President will surely worthily uphold the traditions of the International Council of Women.

FRANCE.

It appears, unfortunately, highly improbable that by the time this appears any appreciable progress will have been made with a Woman Suffrage Bill in the French Parliament, though we understand that the Minister of the Interior has submitted a bill which would give equal suffrage and eligibility. It is stated that in the same bill will be provisions for "calling up" women in cases of national emergency, in fact a form of conscription parallel to the military service of men. Whether this will prove to be true or not, there would not seem to be any possible objection on feminist grounds to making women equally liable with men for the defence of the country, it being remembered that "things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another" and that actual fighting is but a part of the conduct of national defence. Whether on pacifist grounds women may object to the possible terms of a possible bill, is another question.

In the meantime, Mme. Louise Weiss is obtaining great publicity by her militant methods, though so far they are not of a very serious kind: Serenading a recalcitrant Senator with a Jazz Band playing nursery rhymes suited to his mentality; a chained cordon of women across the street, and a poster parade on the course at Longchamps just before the Grand Prix but timed to avoid possible injury to the runners. Publicity is a great weapon, though no doubt in France as in England, some people will feel that these things bring the movement into ridicule. What harm that may or may not do is a question of the mentality of the French public, but it has often been proved that women's lesser fear of ridicule is a potent force against the male sex so much more sensitive in that respect. Reformers have perhaps never been able to take great thought for preserving their dignity of outward aspect.

INDIA.

The organised women of Madras made representations to the Government in regard to the registration of literate women as voters, pointing out that the necessity for appearing in person before the registration officers would prevent many women from registering. They also suggested that there should be women registration officers such as Headmistresses of Government Schools, Women Medical Officers, etc., and that in view of the fact that the latest date for registration had been fixed while many people would still be away on holiday, the time should be extended; and lastly that in many districts vernacular newspapers might not be available to the small number of women literates and that verbal proclamation should be made. The Government met these demands in part, by permitting that application for registration by purdah women or others who dislike to appear in person, may be made by a third party, and also making a slight extension of the date.

Naturally these small concessions cannot really meet the women's wishes. The literacy qualification for women was opposed on the grounds of its inequality and injustice, and the appearance in person however modified by permission for a third party to undertake it, must still present great difficulties.

Stri Dharma, from which we take this information is making a very strong appeal to women to take this trouble in view of the great importance to them of being able to exercise the franchise. But those of us who with far greater facilities and experience find our registration as voters made easy for us by the arrival of a printed form which has simply to be filled up and put into the nearest letter box without even a stamp, must feel indignant that the women of India have been given a restricted franchise, hedged about with such difficulties The franchise is to be restricted forsooth because the women are illiterate and unaccustomed to take part in public life; so they are to be asked to give evidence of an activity, "advanced" spirit and awareness which if asked from the supposedly more "advanced" women of other countries would certainly drastically limit the participation of women as voters. If any substantial proportion of potential women voters get on to the registers in spite of all this, it will indeed be a tribute to their sense of duty and their concern with their national destiny.

CEYLON.

A short time ago we published the Questionnaire issued by the Women's Political Union of Ceylon at the time of the General Election. We have now received their Annual Report for 1935 which shows much interesting work accomplished but ends on a rather depressing note as regards the support given to the Union. An effort was made to hold a series of lectures on the position of women in different countries, the consuls being approached for this purpose, with the surprising result that only those of Japan and Italy complied.

The Union has been working steadily to ensure that women under remand should not be placed in gaol with convicted women; for maternity benefits and for Factory Legislation. Its efforts for the establishment of Children's Courts are, it is hoped, shortly to be crowned with success, and it is to be hoped that this organisation which has such a valuable programme will be able to extend its membership of active workers.

ROUMANIA.

Industrial and Labour Information stated that the Women's Club set up in connection with the Employees' Union has sent out an appeal to women workers urging them to join their professional or trade union. The chief aims of the trade unions for which women should organise are given as: Equal pay for equal work; equal right to promotion; paid maternity leave; respect for women; equality between men and women as to civil and political rights; and other matters of a more political nature. It would seem that the working women of Roumania are to be organised on sound feminist lines.

BARBAROUS MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

Readers will remember that twice we have quoted letters of the Archdeacon of Kavirondo on African marriage customs. Recently he wrote again to the *Manchester Guardian* on this subject, and we publish extracts from his latest letter:—

"Last year you kindly allowed me to draw attention to some barbarous features of African marriage customs. I gave instances of violently protesting girls being dragged forcibly along the public roads in the Reserves, to 'marriage' with men who claim them, in spite of their resistance, because they have paid to the girls' relations a certain number of cattle or goats, the 'bride price.' Mr. J. Kenyatta wrote that tribal custom did not sanction girls being forced in this way.

"The 'East African Standard' reports the trial of a Tanganyika girl named Kekwe, 18 years old. In true African fashion her people accepted the bride price from a man towards whom she had expressed her aversion. She ran away to the man she preferred, was followed, and, in the presence of her relatives, stabbed the man who wished to take her away. Unfortunately, the stab proved fatal. She was convicted of manslaughter, and sentenced to eighteen month's imprisonment.

"The fact that eighteen year old Kekwe was resisting in spite of the sanction of her family and tribe does not seem to me to invalidate her right to defend her physical person and her spiritual personality. What girl under

such circumstances could keep so coolheaded as to take heed that the knife went in thus far and no farther? I see Kekwe as a victim of a custom which is barbarous, a custom which has broken the lives of countless thousands of African girls. (The girl I mentioned in my last letter has since died.) Had Kekwe no right to withhold her body from the detested man, whose only claim was that he had paid a certain number of goats that he might possess that body? In previous letters I wrote that 'in certain circumstances native marriage customs seem to involve a kind of slavery for reluctant women.' It took me long years in Africa before I would yield to a conclusion so condemnatory of African social life. I tried to defend it, but the anguish of decent girls, oft repeated, broke down my defence. . .

"The degradation felt by African girls when dragged off is unspeakable . . . I would that I could make your readers see and hear it. What were Kekwe's feelings when she thrust the fatal knife?"

The Catholic Citizen.

WOMEN'S WORK.

The "Mouvement Féministe" has for some time been dealing with the question of the practical recognition of the money value of domestic work done by wives. In a recent article the proposal is made that women should work for a law based on the following lines: The two spouses each make a contribution to the household expenses, that of the husband coming from his earnings or other income; that of the wife may also come from these sources, but is essentially based on her household work. The half share (50%) contributed by the husband is to be considered both as payment of a salary for the housewife and a contribution to household expenses. In addition the housewife is to receive legally and not as a gift from her husband a sum corresponding to from 10% to 20% of the total household budget. The percentage system has the advantage of recognising the actual situation of each household, and would make the woman's contribution effective as the payment made by the husband would not be in the form of a salary, but of a contribution towards household expenses as an equivalent of the work performed by the wife. The additional legal payment to the woman would complete payment due to the housewife for her work.

The article adds that in present circumstances where the wife is sometimes the breadwinner owing to the husband's unemployment and where he helps in the house, the position might possibly be reversed.

The idea is interesting and the question one which it is important that the feminist movement should face, whether in most cases the above solution is favoured or not. There is no doubt that the immense economic importance of the housewife's work is everywhere unrecognised in practice whatever oratorical bouquets may be thrown to her. One of the difficulties which sometimes makes a feminist shy away from this question is that there are undoubtedly cases, and many cases though possibly the actual proportion of them might work out as infinitesimal, where a wife does in fact make but a very small contribution towards the work of the household. A large establishment may take a good deal of organising, but it is the medium establishment where maids are employed which really does not provide anything approaching a full or even half-time job for an able-bodied woman. In justice it must, however, be remembered that social custom and probably the wish of the husband has created this position. Productive work has been taken out of the hands of the housewife, leaving for the middle-class woman, at any rate and for the most part for the working woman too, in cities, only the non-productive but still necessary work of cleaning and cooking. Where this is not performed by the wife, but by labour paid in most cases by the husband, what does the wife contribute? Of course there may be children, but that is really rather another question and partly at any rate must come into that intangible contribution made by both parties towards the happiness of the family and the general success of the marriage. In that sphere also there is little doubt that the wife carries the heavier responsibility in most cases, but it cannot be reckoned in terms of money.

The law is a clumsy machine for dealing with questions where the delicate nature of domestic and personal relations count for so much, but without invoking the law is there any chance of changing the point of view of the community? We doubt it together with the writer of the article from which we quote and that is why we repeat that here is a question which women ought to face.

Under the heading of this article there may suitably come another aspect of women's work, namely their place in industry and trade. L'Indépendance Belge recently published an article on women's work in the U.S.A. based on a study made by the National Industrial Conference Board, with especial reference to the statement so often made that women are replacing men in industry and contributing in this way to the growth of male unemployment. Personally we should not mind if this were the case, since if wages are equal for men and women, it does not seem to matter in the least whether a man or a woman earns it. But the conclusions arrived at are nevertheless interesting, since they show that if women were taken out of industry in present conditions, there would be an immense shortage of labour and in fact that 95% of women gainfully employed are *necessary* for production. This is certainly a confirmation of the statement that women now form a large and important element in the economic life of the world and shows that it is full time that, apart from the elementary question of justice, irresponsible people should cease to talk about women "taking the bread out of men's mouths," and to claim that if the women would only consent to a possibly temporary period of starvation, they would all eventually be able to marry and be dependant on a male worker! It appears that in the U.S.A. at any rate without the woman wage-earner there would not be enough "bread" using the term in the sense of necessary goods of all kinds, to go round!

A HUSBAND'S RIGHTS.

Possibly there will always be some stupid women and a few bullying men, but most people must have been a little shocked to learn this week that a man could compose and a modern young woman could sign so recently as the year 1934 a document, to which a 6d. stamp was attached, and which read:—

"I, Diane Mary Beard, undertake by marrying S. E. Cummings never to nag or annoy or be suspicious of the said S. E. Cummings, and always to obey him. I also agree not to accept alimony or monetary consideration or property in the event of a separation or divorce."

After this declaration of a "husband's rights" no wonder that the marriage came to grief!

Yet it was only 45 years ago—in 1891, that Mrs. Jackson, of Clitheroe, Lancashire, having refused to live with her husband was seized by him and two other men as she came out of church, dragged violently away from her sister and taken to a house in Blackburn. There she was detained and not allowed to see her relatives, her solicitor, her doctor, or anybody else but the husband and his goalers. Mrs. Jackson's friends brought an action against the husband, and the first two judges before whom the case came, Justices Cave and Jeune, both declared that it was legal for a husband to imprison his wife; and the *Law Journal* observed that "it is the law of this country that a husband has the right of all his wife's time, and to direct her course of life, and if she refuses to submit to his orders, he can legally confine her to the house, from which she cannot be released by Habeas Corpus." Mrs. Jackson's friends at once appealed on her behalf, and the Appeal was heard before the Lord Chancellor (Halsbury), the Master of the Rolls (Esher), and Mr. Justice Fry. Their Lordships finally gave judgment for Mrs. Jackson. Lord Halsbury said: "No English subject, be he husband or otherwise, has the right to imprison any other English subject;" and Lord Esher declared: "According to the law of England a man has no more right over the personal liberty of his wife than over any other woman." Mr. Justice Fry concurred, and the *Law Times* admitted that "the Court of Appeal has performed a very valuable public service," and that "the judgment may be regarded as the charter of the personal liberty of married women."

W.F.L. Bulletin.

BABIES.

In our last issue we were glad to publish an article on some special aspects of the work of the National Baby Week Council of Great Britain, as we feel that the same problems must be met with everywhere. We have now received from the Council the "slogans" for which school children, girls and boys, have been awarded prizes, and we quote one or two which seem to us the neatest in case they may suggest to readers interested in child welfare that a similar competition in their own countries might show some ingenious suggestions from the young citizen on behalf of the still younger. We think the boys' best effort was: "Bronzed Babies—Britain's finest Memorial." The girls were more definitely practical and at the same time poetical. Here are two couplets and a quatrain: "Wrong food, Fretful mood," "Dirty dummy, Tiresome tummy," "Healthy houses, Open Spaces, Fine strong limbs, Rosy faces."

WOMEN IN THE CONSULAR AND DIPLOMATIC SERVICES.

After an inexcusable delay of nearly two years the Government has at last yielded to the demands of the women's societies and has published both the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Admission of Women to the Diplomatic and Consular Services* and its own considered verdict upon the matter.

Both are disappointing. As most of our readers will be aware the Government, having studied the Report has come to the conclusion "that the time has not yet arrived when women could be employed in the Consular Service or in the Diplomatic Service with advantage to the State or with profit to women."

With regard to the decision about the Consular Service (admittedly the more difficult issue of the two) the Government can, unfortunately, shelter comfortably behind the Report, since the only dissentients to this policy were the two women members of the Committee—Miss M. Ritson, and Miss Martindale, O.B.E. Even they, gallantly though they obviously strove and much indebted as we are to them, were a little too inclined to accept the *status quo* in our Civil Service. Instead of protesting against those restrictions which prevent women gaining the special kind of mercantile knowledge and experience essential in most consulates, they suggest "the adoption of the method of seconding a limited number of women officers from the Home Civil Service" to the Consular Service as a test of the fitness of women for this service. The Government in its statement on the Report brushes aside even this compromise, and entirely ignores the women members' further suggestion that "women should be considered together with men for appointment as unsalaried consuls in those places which are not of sufficient importance to justify a career consul." The Government's conclusions savour more of rationalisation than reasoning, e.g., "In the very large majority of Consular posts, officers have to deal with a number of matters which it would be difficult for the average woman to handle . . ."

In its verdict on the employment of women in the Diplomatic service the Government has shown its timidity, its lack of any real regard for the interests of women and the superficiality of its judgments even more clearly than in the case of the Consular Service, for here the practical difficulties are very much less and the reform could be immediately and easily introduced. Also, the Committee were fairly evenly divided on this issue, the two women favouring the immediate permanent opening of the Service, the Chairman, Sir Claud Schuster, and Sir James Rae advocating a period of experiment in the matter and the other four members on very inadequate grounds opposing the admission of women altogether even for a trial period. It was this last point of view that was adopted by the Government despite its own confession that the success or otherwise of women could only be proved by experiment.

"His Majesty's Government do not consider that any injustice is being done to women by their continued exclusion from the Diplomatic Service . . . it is . . doubtful whether the admission of women would contribute any special advantage to the State." In regard to the first statement there are many brilliant young University women who would, if they were men, find in these services the natural outlet for their gifts and energies. It is surely a significant thing that the principals of all the women's colleges should have sent a joint letter of protest to the *Times* upon this very point. As to the doubt as to whether the admission of women would be of "any special advantage to the State," in the words of the *Manchester Guardian*: "Must women, then, plead that their employment would be of 'special advantage' before they are entitled to the barest measure of equality with men?" Incidentally it is obvious that to limit the choice of candidates to one sex must rule out some who are specially suitable in gifts and personality.

For many years now we in St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance have worked for women's right of entry to the Consular and Diplomatic Services, and our chairman, Mrs. Laughton Mathews gave evidence to the Committee on our behalf. We must continue that struggle even more vigorously not only that a few brilliant women may enter some extremely important spheres of human activity, but far more that our principles may steadily permeate the whole of life.

NANCY STEWART PARNELL.
The Catholic Citizen.

*Cmd. 51-66 (1936).

COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD.

The third Congress of this international association held in Washington in June, was more than a success, it was to use an appropriate American expression "a landslide." The rural women of the United States were so anxious to show their friendship and solidarity with their fellow women from other lands, that they poured into Washington to the number of over 7,000, providing a problem in accommodation, both lodgings and halls for meetings. The Press was staggered and had to mobilise rapidly to give proper news of this monster Congress of women. Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt received the delegates at a Garden Party at the White House.

The international delegates were taken on a tour and passed across the Peace Bridge into Canada, where the bridge was closed to traffic during a little ceremony when the President, Mrs. Alfred Watt, was presented

with a replica of the tablet which will be affixed to the Bridge to commemorate this visit of the Countrywomen of the World. Then followed a tour in Canada, and again at Guelph Agricultural College, there was an avalanche of women, no less than 6,000 being provied by the college with a picnic lunch. The tour ended with a party given by the Governor General of Canda and his wife.

Here is surely an international woman's movement which counts.

SPINSTERS' PENSIONS.

We return to this subject in order to say that since the short note which appeared in the June issue, we have received an effective hand-bill published by the Open Door Council of Great Britain, setting out almost the same views as were expressed in that note, which was however written well before the bill reached us.

We would like to add that if any supporter of the proposal who may read this desires to state her views, we shall be glad to publish them.

NEWS IN BRIEF.

Belgium. Isabelle Blume, Socialist, was returned to the Chamber in the recent elections, the only woman Member in the last Parliament, Lucie Dejardin, failing to secure re-election. We do not know whether any other woman was elected, but it seems unlikely that the other parties had women candidates. As our readers know, the curious situation obtains in Belgium that women are eligible for Parliament without having the right to vote, except in the case of a few women "War victims."

Denmark. The I.C.W. Bulletin reports two appointments which have given great satisfaction to women in Denmark. Mrs. Ella Saabye has been appointed Head of Department at the State Experimental Institute, the first woman engineer to be so employed. Dr. Ellen Pedersen, the only woman among eight candidates, has been appointed Head of the Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Ry.

Great Britain. The London Stock Exchange has refused a woman's application for membership. A woman, Miss Midgley, a well-established stock and share broker in Bradford, has been trying for six years to gain admission to the Bradford Exchange without success. She is now seeking Government intervention to secure the admission of women to Stock Exchanges.

The Bishop of London is to preach this year at the annual memorial service to Mrs. Pankhurst, which ends with a pilgrimage to her statue in the Embankment Gardens.

Russia. A woman has been appointed Consular Agent of the U.S.S.R. in Norway.

The wives of Engineers and Technicians who are housewives and not themselves gainfully employed, are organised according to their husbands' occupations and they recently held a Conference in Moscow, where reports were given on the cultural and social activities of the different groups. They create factory gardens, set up crèches, children's restaurants and sanatoria, organise all sorts of courses for women, etc. This seems an interesting and valuable initiative, not only because of the valuable work done but because it shows the oneness—or the duality according to the way you look at it—of the household in connection with the work by which they live. The actual production is carried on by the wage-earner, but the wage-earner can only produce because of the whole social background on which his life depends no less than on the wages he earns.

Switzerland. Mlle. Gourd has been appointed as one of the three women members of a Committee appointed by the Geneva Government to study the reform of the Law on Conseils de Pred' hommes, one of the few bodies for which women have the right to vote.

BUREAU DE GENEVE DE L'ALLIANCE.

Comme d'habitude, l'Alliance ouvrira à Genève pendant l'Assemblée de la Société des Nations, un Bureau temporaire qui constituera le centre de ralliement, non seulement de tous nos membres, mais encore de nombreuses féministes de passage dans la ville de la S.d.N. Comme d'habitude on trouvera à ce Bureau des renseignements, des adresses, des journaux féministes, l'on pourra y donner des rendez-vous, y faire sa correspondance, etc., etc., et de plus il sera organisé à ce moment là des rencontres et des réunions familières, auxquelles toutes celles de nos lectrices qui feront connaître leur présence à Genève sont déjà cordialement invitées.

Vu le retard de l'ouverture de l'Assemblée, fixée au 21 septembre, ce Bureau sera ouvert dès le 10 septembre, tous les jours de 9 h. à midi et de 14 à 18 heures. Il ne nous est malheureusement pas possible au moment où nous mettons sous presse de donner déjà son adresse, mais nous la ferons connaître sous peu par les journaux féminins, la presse genevoise, et des avis envoyés à nos Sociétés. Le fait que le Board de l'Alliance se réunit à Genève les 17, 18 et 20 septembre amenera dans cette ville bon nombre des chefs de notre mouvement, que celles qui viendront à notre Bureau auront aussi toute chance de pouvoir rencontrer.

EGYPTE.

Suivant l'immense effort accompli par notre pays afin de prendre rang sur le plan international du travail, nous enregistrons avec joie son admission au B.I.T.

Nous espérons que l'entrée de l'Egypte dans cette organisation — la plus humaine de la S.D.N., aura les plus heureux effets.

Le Ministère de l'Instruction Publique vient de décider d'envoyer à Genève, Mlle. Naïma El Ayoubi, — notre première avocate — actuellement inspectrice de l'Instruction publique et du Bureau du Travail.

Cette mission a pour but de permettre à notre compatriote de se spécialiser dans les études sociales, en suivant pendant un an les cours de l'"Ecole des Sciences Sociales" de Genève.

Ses études terminées, Mlle. Naïma el Ayoubi sera, dans nos écoles secondaires, l'initiatrice aux études sociales, première condition de tout véritable service social et philanthropique.

CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES FEMMES.

Le C.I.F. dont nous venons de recevoir le programme va tenir ses séances du 28 Septembre au 9 Octobre à Dubrovnik en Yougo-Slavie. Un coup d'œil général sur les Résolutions nous montre qu'on se propose de former deux Commissions nouvelles, l'une sur l'Information Sociale et l'autre sur l'Economie Politique et Domestique. D'autres résolutions portent sur l'Esclavage, la Société des Nations, la distribution des matières premières, la nationalité de la femme mariée et les droits égaux pour les deux sexes, le Cinéma l'Hygiene morale, etc.

Ce Congrès devra élire sa nouvelle Présidente Internationale. On sait en effet que Lady Aberdeen abandonne la présidence qu'elle assume depuis tant d'années. Trois candidates, toutes bien connues sont proposées: La Baronne Pol Boël, présidente du Conseil Belge, la princesse Cantacuzène, Présidente du Conseil Roumain et Miss Hesselgren, présidente du Conseil suédois.

LES FEMMES ANGLAISES DANS LES SERVICES CONSULAIRES ET DIPLOMATIQUES.

Après un délai de presque deux ans, le Gouvernement a consenti à publier son rapport sur le verdict de non-admission des femmes aux emplois consulaires et diplomatiques. Les deux seuls membres de la Commission opposés à ce verdict étaient Miss Ritson et Miss Martindale, O.B.E. La raison donnée est: dans la plupart des postes consulaires, les fonctionnaires ont à examiner nombre de cas qui ne sont pas du tout du ressort d'une femme. Dans le cas de la diplomatie où les difficultés matèrielles sont inexistantes, la mauvaise volonté de la commission est la même. Sir Claud Schuster et Sir James Rae étaient partisans d'une pèriode d'essai, mais les quatre autres membres masculins de la commission s'y opposant, leur point de vue dût prévaloir.

Le Gouvernment de sa Majesté "ne considère pas qu'une injustice soit faite aux femmes par leur exclusion des services diplomatiques." Il y a pourtant de brillantes jeunes universitaires qui, si elles étaient hommes trouveraient dans ces services l'emploi de leurs remarquables facultés. C'est du moins l'avis de toutes les directrices des Universités de femmes en Angleterre.

Mais le rapport ajoute: "que l'admission des femmes n'est pas d'un avantage spécial pour l'Etat" L'emploi d'une femme est-il donc être subordonné au principe que son travail doit être "un avantage special"?

L'injustice s'affirme et demeure.

NOUVELLES BRÈVES.

France. On nous dit que le Ministre de l'Intérieur a proposé un projet de loi donnant aux femmes le suffrage et l'éligibilité. L'égalité leur conférerait aussi le devoir d'obéir à une mobilisation en cas de crise ou de danger national.

En attendant Madame Louise Weiss continue sa tactique militante et toujours avec le même esprit. Par exemple on joue des sérénades enfantives sous les fenêtres d'un sénateur impénitent; on forme un cordon de femmes au travers de la rue; on fait une parade d'affiches à Longchamp etc. Il est douteux que ces manifestations nuisent au mouvement, comme d'aucuns le prétendent. Au contraire, le ridicule en France est senti peut-être plus encore par les hommes que par les femmes; aussi ne tarderont-ils pas à comprendre qu'une telle propagande, nécessaire tant que le Sénat conservera son attitude, ne peut que nuire à la dignité masculine.

Findlande.

Les élections législatives ont eu lieu en Finlande le 1er et 2 juillet dernier. Tous les partis politiques avaient présenté des femmes candidates, mais comme le nombre de femmes élues en 1933 avait été réduit à quatorze, l'anxiété des féministes était grande quant au résultat des élections de cette anée pour les candidates féminines. Mais heureusement on peut faire part d'une victoire modérée—16 femmes ont été élues membres du parlement.

La candidate du parti national suédois, Miss Elsa Bonsdorff, a été élue la seconde sur une liste de 9 membres élus dans sa circonscription, ce qui n'était encore jamais arrivé. Elle représente des intérêts ruraux importants. Miss Mandi Hannula, qui a été plusieurs fois déléguée aux Congrès de l'Alliance, se présenta pour son parti, après une absence du plusieurs anées, et fut élu la première de la liste, bien que le parti liberal ait perdu quatre sièges aux récentes elections.

Notre regret, comme féministes, est de ne pas avoir vu plus de femmes candidates élues, mais considérant la soi-disante réaction qui règne en ce moment contre l'égalité des droits des femmes c'est satisfaisant de voir que la représentation des femmes dans la vie publique de Finlande a été renforcée.

Ceylan. L'Union politique des femmes de Ceylan a fait circuler un questionnaire, au moment des élections. Elle a demandé aux consuls de tous les pays de faire des conférences sur la situation des femmes dans leurs pays respectifs. Seuls, les consuls d'Italie et du Japon ont accepté. L'Union a préparé des desiderata sur la Législation du Travail, de la Maternité, de l'Enfance, etc.

Roumanie. Une Revue du Travail nous apprend que le Club de Femmes qui s'est constitué parallèlement au Syndicat des Employés a envoyé une circulaire à toutes les travailleuses les adjurant de faire partie de leur syndicat, ouvrier ou professionnel. Les buts principaux de ces organisations syndicales féminines sont; Salaire égal pour travail égal, droit égal à l'avancement; congé maternel payé, égalité en matière de droits civils et politiques. Il semble que les travailleuses de Roumanie soient bien organisées.

Belgique. Isabelle Blume, socialiste, a été élue députée, la seule femme aux récentes élections. Lucie Dejardin n'a pas été réélue. La situation en Belgique est toujours étrange: Une femme est éligibile, mais elle ne peut être électeur.

Suisse. Melle. Gourd est l'une des trois femmes membres d'un comité nommé par la municipalité de Genève pour étudier la réforme du Conseil des Prud'hommes, l'un des rares Groupes où la femme a le droit de vote.

Danemark. Deux nominations ont apporté beaucoup de satisfaction à la population féminine du Danemark. Mrs. Ella Saabye est Chef de Service dans l'Institut expérimental d'Etat et Dr. Ellen Petersen a été nommée Directeur du Sanatorium de Ry.

Grande-Bretagne. La Bourse de Londres a refusé l'inscription d'une femme parmi ses membres. Miss Midgley depuis longtemps établie comme agent de change à Bradford se voit refuser l'inscription à la Bourse de Bradford depuis six ans et est en train d'en appeler au Gouvernement.

L'évêque de Londres va prêcher cette année le service commémoratif pour Mrs. Pankhurst qui se terminera par une procession jusqu'à sa statue dans les jardins de la Tamise.

U.R.S.S. Une femme vient d'être nommée agent consulaire en Norvège.

Les femmes d'ingénieurs et de techniciens qui n'occupent pas d'emplois rétribués sont organisées suivant les fonctions de leurs maris. Elles ont récemment organisé à Moscou, une conférence où fut relatée l'activité de leurs divers groupes, culturels et sociaux. Elles ont créé des jardins d'usine, des crèches, des restaurants pour enfants, des sanatoria, des cours féminins etc.

Inde. Une organisation féministe de Madras a représenté au Gouvernement que les difficultés accumulées pour l'inscriptiont des électrices risquent de neutraliser leur droit de vote. Celui-ci leur est acquis si elles savent lire et écrire, restriction qui n'existe pas pour les hommes; mais la loi dit qu'elles doivent se présenter, en personne, pour recevoir leur inscription. Après l'objection des femmes de Madras, il a été concédé que les femmes en purdah pourraient être inscrites par une tierce personne, telle qu'une directrice d'Ecole ou une femme médecin et que la date d'inscription serait quelque peu ajournée. Le journal Stri Dharma s'efforce d'attirer l'attention des femmes sur leurs nouveaux droits et sur la nécessité de prendre la peine de se faire inscrire. On se demande pourquoi des électrices aussi novices ne pourraient être aussi bien

servies que nous, leurs soeurs d'Occident, qui, tout simplement recevons la formule d'inscription par la poste.

Coutumes barbares de mariage indigène.

Nos lectrices se rappellent les intéressants extraits de lettres de l'Archiprêtre de Kavirondo sur les coutumes nuptiales africaines.

Le "Manchester Guardian" en publie d'autres qui nous émeuvent profondément: "L'année dernière j'ai attiré votre attention sur la cruauté des coutumes nuptiales de certaines tribus africaines—où de très jeunes filles sont trainées de force le long des routes des "Réserves" par des hommes qui ont payé à leur famille le prix du mariage c'est à dire un certain nombre de têtes de bétail, de chèvres, etc. En réalité la loi de la tribu ne sanctionne pas cette cruauté.

"Au Tanganyka, une jeune fille de 18 ans nommée Kekwe, vient d'être condamnée à 18 mois de prison, parce qu'elle s'est défendue au couteau contre l'homme qui voulait l'emmener, à qui elle avait été vendue en mariage par sa famille, et qu'elle détestait. La blessure avait entrainé la mort de l'homme, d'où condamnation.

"Le fait que le mariage avait été sanctionné par la famille n'empêche pas, à mon sens, que Kekwe ait eu le droit de se refuser à un homme pour qui elle avait de l'aversion. Si elle a tué, c'est par mégarde, et elle aurait du bénéficier de circonstances atténuantes."

Argentine.

Parmi les autres informations lues a la dernière assemblée du Conseil National des Femmes figure celle de l'association "Patronage des Lépreux" affiliée au Conseil depuis l'année passée; sa présidente Mme. Hersilia Casares de Blaquier a fait connaître l'œuvre très humanitaire que la Patronage réalise non seulement pour combattre la lépre mais aussi pour la guérir.

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