

# THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society).  
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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

## What do Women care about Automation?

By I. Archinard

So many important scientific and technical advances are continually being made in this world of ours, and so many excited articles describe them, that we are getting indifferent to their possible impact on our lives. Sputnik I was a great sensation—for political motives. We know that atoms are getting unwholesome and even without bombing may wreck generations to come—and we do not react much. For ten years cybernetics and its offspring automation have been spreading quietly: do we realise what a change, for better or for worse, they are about to bring into our lives in the event of our escaping the atom? We know, of course, about the Standard Motor strikes. We have read that the 1956 strikes in the U.S.A. metal industry were caused by the refusal by the Trade Unions to accept more than a two years' bargaining: in a period so pregnant with social changes, one year more might have meant a very heavy loss of benefits from the spread of automation. But, as the *Osservatore Romano* said two years ago, Catholics should not only follow happenings, they should *be in advance*, ready to integrate any progress into a scheme which preserves social justice and the pre-eminence of spiritual values.

*Cybernetics* (from a Greek verb which means "to govern") is the branch of technology which at present seems to open the greatest possibilities for man to achieve a complete control of the material world; and, owing to their immersion in matter, of the social and psychological worlds as well.

The machines which were at the origin of the Industrial Revolution were man-operated and did the work of man's *hand*. Cybernetic machines in their present version (much evolved from Pascal's arithmetic machine) will do the work of man's *mind*, of a brain and memory almost infallible. In close co-operation with biologists, some physicists and engineers have re-designed models of the functioning of the brain and nervous centres, replacing nervous cells by radio valves

and other electronics material, thus obtaining mechanical organs capable not only of performing most difficult and long calculations in a very short time, but also of taking orders, reacting to events, taking logical decisions in a pre-required sense, and giving the answers in their own particular language. They can be self-correcting, in a certain degree self-repairing and certain enthusiastic experts have even predicted that they may be made to reproduce themselves in improved forms! At present they are already the best of servants, executing orders but not capable of creating their own "programmes". They are extremely costly (some organisations only hire them) and still require a great amount of arduous preparation of the problems set to them. But already some of them seem to be able to "read" documents in ordinary print. Inventors have contended their machines were not only able to calculate, but could also create logically constructed works of art such as abstract paintings or classical symphonies (an idea not generally confirmed by real artists).

The practical uses of cybernetics are already manifold in public or private offices. Everyone has heard about machines which in one second tell a bank which cheques it may pay, or which calculate taxation or telephone bills for millions of individuals. Does one think of the *power* such instruments confer to the privileged few who may use them? In a time when psychological techniques have been developed in utter disregard of human rights (e.g. in the Chinese "brain washing" but also in American methods of propaganda such as invisible [under-timed] superimposing of slogans on ordinary films) and when it has been suggested that State health authorities keep a record of every citizen's mental state, one may have a creepy imagination of what would happen if a crew of unscrupulous experts controlled the psychological trends of a whole population thanks to a well-equipped board of dials. . . .

But there is an even greater danger to consider and to ward off. The "scientific" atheism of the 19th century was caused by man's exultation at finding out secrets of nature—but nature was there before him and independently. Now man is contemplating the possibility of creating beings "better made" than he is himself, at least in certain of their operations, and it has actually been written that the cybernetician's ultimate intention is to *substitute himself* for God. Gross as the error blatantly is, the credulity of a certain public is even grosser!

As to *automation*, among the dozens of definitions suggested for it we may here choose "the submitting of mechanical (industrial) processes to cybernetic control." The changes involved are enormous, implying reductions of as much as ninety per cent. in manpower and manufacturing costs: which immediately shows the economic and social problems involved in that undeniable technical advance.

To the individual, automation brings a greater abundance of goods at a better price, and the prospect of an ever greater reduction of working hours. Monotonous drudgery will be replaced by more intelligent and cleaner work. But if the Trade Unions are positive minded towards it, recognising that progress must be integrated, not rejected, they are keeping a close watch over the risks of unemployment as well as of confiscation of the social benefits. Then, owing to the transformation of the factory buildings and the tendency to create them anew in smaller cities, there will be—there already has been—for thousands of workers the obligation to migrate with their families, which implies expenses, lodging problems, the necessity of finding schools, etc. To fight unemployment, some Union leaders suggested a lowering of retirement age, pointing out that aged workers were anyhow the least adaptable to new methods. Of course the action is cruel to men and women who may have had a long life of fidelity to the concern in which they worked, and the concern itself may be weakened by losing some of its most solid and trustworthy elements. Another suggestion has been to keep young people at school until the age of twenty-one. The idea seems justified in view of the greatly increased technical competence required in modern methods. But readers with any experience in teaching will think of the impatience of so many boys and girls to leave their classroom and enter "real" life. As it is, the suggestion, made in U.S.A., could not be even partially implemented, as the country suffers from a great want of teachers and schools, and the building of a hundred thousand classrooms would be necessary in ten years' time.

Shorter working hours will, of course, imply longer leisure, and it may be hoped both that people will be left to use it freely (without the State taking too great care of it) and that they

will use it intelligently. It has been observed that owing to lack of space in the home, to lack of time and to fatigue (the shorter working hours of modern times often being offset by tedious hours in train or bus), active hobbies are increasingly replaced by "passive" leisure, the most passive of all being gazing at television. What the implications may mean on mental and physical development the future will show. They may be greatly influenced by an adequate supplying of cultural and educational opportunities, which might well be financed by the benefits brought about by the new methods. It is a direction in which alert and generous women may find it most fruitful to engage their efforts.

Change of work and change of locality will of course influence the life of families. But we must not forget that automation may once free the housewife of some of her most tiring tasks.

Before that happy day we must foresee a period of adaptation when women at home will still have a heavy task in comparison with those who will benefit from automation. Machines in the kitchen are not yet a solution: there ought to be "a machine to clean the other machines"!

A most interesting experience is available to women in the new townships around the automated factories created in rural districts: in the general planning, in the budgeting of schools, hospitals and other public services, women in the full possession of their rights will show the contribution they are able to bring when they are present at the very start of things.

But the most inspiring of pioneer work is perhaps that in the new *parishes*. It is reported that in the U.S.A. the Church has suddenly been faced with entirely fresh problems, communities being formed in places without any priest or church; lay men and women were entrusted with greater tasks than hitherto in organising, catechising, etc. There again, Catholics with know-how and will to may provide the most valuable and durable contribution to public welfare.

What will be the future of automation? Up to now it has been a luxury of large concerns and great countries, tending to make them yet larger or greater. Small concerns survive and may even develop as satellites of the major ones. Underdeveloped countries may become even poorer if a sort of international justice does not prompt the richer ones to share their benefits with them. What will the present American recession do to cybernetic trends? Will real push-button factories be made a working and paying reality or will there only be some interesting pilot attempts? Will there be social upheavals or a harmonious spreading of less careworn living? There again the future will show. That future lies for a great part in the hands of those who know that the necessities of life shall be added unto those who seek "first the kingdom of God and His justice".

## Notes and Comments

At long last, a breach has been made in the final stronghold of political prejudice. Four women are included among the fourteen life peers created under the recent Life Peerages Act—Baroness Ravensdale; Stella, Marchioness of Reading; Dame Katherine Elliot, D.B.E.; and Miss Barbara Wootton. It is a pity that Lady Ravensdale has had her seat, place and voice in the House of Lords conferred upon her by the Life Peerages Act as she is a peeress in her own right.

We send our best wishes to these women pioneers for the success of their work in the Upper House; we hope they will be received by their colleagues with more courtesy than was shown to the first woman to take her seat in the House of Commons.

We are glad to see that Lord Reading has tabled a motion suggesting the correction of the anomaly by which the new life peeresses will sit in the House of Lords, from which twenty-three hereditary peeresses are still debarred. He asks for legislation to "confer upon such women peers as under existing conditions are not qualified to take their seats in this House, the same rights, duties and privileges as are now enjoyed by hereditary peers having seat, place and voice in this House." We trust that this clear measure of justice will soon become law since it depends not at all on any other changes that may be made in the constitution of a Second Chamber.

\* \* \*

The Maintenance Orders Act, 1958, received the Royal Assent on July 7th, 1958. This is, in substance, the same measure as the Maintenance Orders (Attachment of Income) Bill, which was introduced by Miss Joan Vickers, M.P. on March 1st, 1957, at the request of the Married Women's Association, with the support of many women's organisations, including St. Joan's Alliance.

It is satisfactory to know that the Amendment urged by the women's organisations, that the term of imprisonment imposed on the persistent defaulter should not wipe out his debt, was accepted.

\* \* \*

The Domicile Bill passed its Third Reading in the House of Lords on July 24th.

In the debate, the Lord Chancellor made it abundantly clear that the new rules presented by the rule determining a person's domicile would apply to all married women as they apply to any other person of full age or capacity, and that, to ensure that there should be no room for misunderstanding, he would prepare an amendment stating that the new rules replace the rules of the Common Law.

Lord Silkin and Lord Pethick Lawrence both thanked the Lord Chancellor, Lord Pethick Lawrence adding "some of us are aware that in

times gone by, although matters of this kind were perfectly clear as we understood them, the very question of the position of women has been negated by the authorities of the day. . . . Having been several times bitten, we were shy in this particular case."

\* \* \*

The Alliance has suffered a great loss in the death of Mrs. Kathleen McCann, chairman of the Merseyside Branch, who died in Liverpool on July 25th. She was one of the earliest members of the Liverpool and District Branch of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society when it was founded in Liverpool in 1912 and she had been a most faithful member ever since. She was chairman of the Branch for many years before her death and kept the flag flying through innumerable difficulties. During the last war Miss Bowden, the Hon. Secretary, who had worked so closely with her for many years, was killed by enemy action. Mrs. McCann, herself, lost her home.

Mrs. McCann kept in close touch with headquarters and made it her business to keep the local M.P.s informed on points of the programme of the Alliance. Her home was always at the disposal of the Branch for meetings at which she never failed to arrange for an interesting speaker.

She was always most hospitable and generous and there was never an occasion, festive or otherwise, which did not bring an appropriate telegram or message from Mrs. McCann.

On behalf of headquarters, Mass has been offered for the repose of her soul.

We send our deep sympathy to her two daughters and her son as well as to the members of the Merseyside Branch of the Alliance, in their loss. R.I.P.

### Merseyside Branch

Hon. Secretary: Miss M. C. Brady,  
10 Fairfield Street, Liverpool 7

On Monday, September 15th, at 5.45 p.m., at St. Philip Neri's Church, Catharine Street, Liverpool, Mass will be offered for Mrs. McCann, on behalf of the Branch. A meeting of members will be held afterwards at Atlantic House to elect a new chairman.

### Hon. Treasurer's Note

If any member has still not sent her subscription for 1958 (£1 which includes *The Catholic Citizen*), may I ask for it as soon as possible. We have a large rent bill to pay in September.

Please remember our Christmas Sale on Saturday, November 22nd, and start to collect goods for the stalls. But do not send them to the office until further particulars are given.

N. K. Carr

## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

AND

Editorial Office of "The Catholic Citizen"

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society

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## A Flame which lit the World

July 14th, 1958, the centenary of the birth of the great suffrage leader, Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, was celebrated with a vitality, imagination and devotion which showed that the suffragette spirit is still very much alive, not only among the "old hands" but in their successors in Women's Organisations. Warm congratulations and thanks are due to the Suffragette Fellowship, whose Chairman, Enid Goulden Bach, a daughter of Mrs. Pankhurst's youngest sister, had, with a small band of associates, conceived the idea and worked for many months to achieve the success of the various celebrations. The publicity was excellent, both in the Press and on radio.

Of all the tributes paid to this great woman during the day, there rings especially in our ears the words of Miss Winifred Mayo, President of the Suffragette Fellowship, now in her 89th year: "She had the quality of a flame, a torch which lit up and transformed lives and history."

The celebrations began with a historic reception at the House of Commons—the place from which suffragettes had once been violently thrown out and which now welcomed them as honoured guests, the hostesses being four women M.P.s, Lady Davidson, Mrs. Jean Mann, Dr. Edith Summerskill and Dame Irene Ward. The three hundred guests, in addition to the old suffragettes proudly wearing their prison medals, included representatives of forty women's organisations (St. Joan's Alliance among them) and many famous men and women, including Lord Attlee, Mr. and Mrs. Clement Davies, Mrs. J. Grimond, Mrs. Henry Brooke, twenty-one women M.P.s including the only woman Minister, Miss Pat Hornsby-Smith, and a Canadian woman M.P., the Directors of the three Women's Services, the Principals of several Women's Colleges, Lord Denning, Lord Chorley, Mr. Ernest Thesiger, who once carried a suffrage banner, Miss Yvonne Arnaud, Miss Wendy Hiller, Miss Harriet Cohen, Mrs. Helen Bentwich, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Miss Marghanita Laski.

In short speeches the four hostess M.P.s all paid tribute to Mrs. Pankhurst, Lady Davidson referred to her father, W. H. Dickinson (later Lord Dickinson) who had introduced a Private Member's Bill on Woman Suffrage. Dr. Summerskill compared her own training as a doctor 25 years ago, when women students were still comparatively rare, to her daughter's training in a hospital where 30 per cent. of the students were women, and she foretold even greater progress for women doctors—"a career particularly suited to women."

Mrs. Mann referred to the need for more women M.P.s, and emphasised that there should be equality in work and debate and that women M.P.s should not be overburdened with women's meetings and women's questions. Dame Irene Ward declared: "The fight was worthwhile".

Nancy, Lady Astor, was then called for and, vital and dynamic as ever, she declared that she could never be grateful enough to the pioneers and the women who had backed her up in her early days in the House.

The next ceremony was the laying of flowers and wreaths at Mrs. Pankhurst's statue close to the Houses of Parliament, when the throng included Lady Astor and the four hostess M.P.s from the reception. The first flowers were laid by three small girls, "Citizens of the Future", one of them, Belinda Emmeline Bach, being Mrs. Pankhurst's great-niece. There followed representatives of women's organisations and other friends until the statue was completely surrounded with flowers.

The last of the anniversary celebrations was a meeting at the Caxton Hall, when the followers of Mrs. Pankhurst filled the hall to overflowing and made it a real family affair.

The meeting began with the sending of a telegram to the Queen, the chairman, Enid Bach, reminding the audience that a Queen was also on the throne one hundred years ago at the time of Mrs. Pankhurst's birth.

The first speaker, our old friend Lord Pethick-

Lawrence, was given a great reception. He referred to Mrs. Pankhurst as "a very great woman, who made a profound and lasting impression on this country. Whether you are among her friends and admirers or not, the fact is undeniable." The statue of Mrs. Pankhurst, said Lord Pethick-Lawrence, was more than a statue of a famous woman, though it was a speaking likeness; it represented womanhood. The statue was, he said, "an elegant, feminine, slender figure, almost pleading, yet with a suspicion of those other qualities which men find in women to their astonishment, a passionate thirst for life, unbelievable courage, fierce and even ruthless determination—and all these qualities Mrs. Pankhurst possessed in a superlative degree."

In addition, she had fulfilled the most transcendent of women's functions—she was a mother. Referring to "the lioness and her cubs", he said that two of her daughters were famous—"Christabel, who I have no hesitation in saying had a political genius equal to that of the greatest politicians of our age—and Sylvia, a great artist."

Then followed speeches from women of various countries in the Commonwealth, all of whom stressed that Woman Suffrage had come easily in their country as a result of the British Militant Movement. Begum Ikramullah, wife of the High Commissioner for Pakistan, gave a magnificent address. She said that the most significant fact of this century was the new rôle of women in society, and spoke of the tremendous impact of Mrs. Pankhurst's life on the destiny of women the world over.

Mrs. Casinader of Ceylon, the first woman to enter Colombo University, said the women had been very timid at first and stories of Mrs. Pankhurst had encouraged them. Their own men had helped them also. She remembered how her father had escorted her mother to a meeting "and stood guard outside in case she came scuttling back".

Mrs. Davey, President of Cape Town National Council of Women, said that a public meeting was being held in Cape Town at the same time, presided over by an ex-W.S.P.U. member (then Joyce Nettlefold) who was the Deputy-Mayor. She mentioned that non-European women still have no vote.

Another speaker from South Africa, Mrs. Marais, one of the founders of the Black Sash Movement, said that as a child she had realised the importance of political freedom because women had been prepared to suffer indignities and hardship to obtain it.

Moving tributes to Mrs. Pankhurst and short personal reminiscences were given by Una Duval, Grace Roe, Winifred Mayo, Dorothy Bowker, Eileen Casey, Lilian Lenton, Charlotte Marsh, Mary Phillips, Theresa Garnett and Daisy Solomon.

Two very interesting announcements were made during the evening. Lord Pethick-Lawrence said that a Committee was being formed to promote a National Memorial to Christabel Pankhurst, and Grace Roe revealed that Christabel had left the manuscript of a book on the life of her mother which is the history of the W.S.P.U. and that arrangements were being made for its publication.

Vera Laughton Mathews

### VISCOUNTESS RHONDDA

We record with sorrow the death of Lady Rhondda on July 20th, news of which came too late for insertion in our July issue.

Lady Rhondda has had many tributes for her public work, for her tremendous business capacity (at one time she was a director of nearly forty companies). St. Joan's Alliance wishes to honour her for her work for the woman's movement.

She was a member of the W.S.P.U., suffered a term of imprisonment for her activities during the Votes for Women campaign and went on hunger strike. After the vote for women over thirty was won in 1918, she continued to work actively for equal franchise. She was chairman of the Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee (comprising thirty societies) in which St. Joan's took a very active part. This campaign culminated in the great Queen's Hall Meeting of 1928, and the passing of the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Bill.

After the passing of the Sex Disqualification Removal Act 1919, as a peeress in her own right, Lady Rhondda, in 1920, petitioned the King to issue her a writ of summons to attend the House of Lords. The Committee of Privileges of the House at first reported favourably, but, on the motion of the Lord Chancellor, the report was referred back and finally in 1922, to the great disappointment of the women's organisations, her claim was defeated by a majority of twenty to four votes.

On the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of *The Catholic Citizen* in 1940, Lady Rhondda honoured us by speaking at the Jubilee Lunch when she praised the work of *The Catholic Citizen* most generously.

In 1920, Lady Rhondda founded *Time and Tide*—the independent weekly, and for the last thirty years, her life and her not inconsiderable fortune was devoted chiefly to work for this paper. The memorial for which she most wished was for *Time and Tide* to continue and we are glad for her sake that means have been found for this to be done.

St. Joan's Alliance was represented at the Memorial Service at Holy Trinity, Brompton Road, by the Hon. Secretary.

May she rest in peace.

## THE MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

During July, of course, Parliament was much taken up with the crisis in the Middle East and the consequent exercises in Summitmanship. Much time was also spent on normal financial business, but a number of topics of special interest to us were also raised.

The Children's Bill (Lords) was considered in Committee and given a Third Reading on July 25th. A number of amendments were discussed, notably those referring to the safeguards laid down in cases where British or British-born children are to be adopted by persons domiciled in other countries. As Miss Vickers commented, these provisions are of particular importance in the case of Catholics and of coloured children, who are in some respects the most likely to be adopted by foreign nationals. Members were deeply concerned to ensure the continued well-being of all children so adopted and wished to tighten up the sanctions. Miss Hornsby-Smith, however, spoke convincingly in favour of allowing the supervising Courts rather more discretion, and the Bill was given its Third Reading without the relevant amendments.

On July 3rd the Lords' Amendments to the Maintenance Bill were considered, and agreed, notably the reduction of the maximum term of imprisonment for non-payment to six weeks, and the important point that such imprisonment would not wipe out the arrears.

On two occasions the Minister of Health, in answer to questions asked by Mrs. Jeger, refused to extend facilities for Birth Control in the National Health Service. He said: "The present facilities are for advice and treatment where pregnancy would be detrimental to health. Help is also given in some areas to voluntary associations by making premises available. I do not consider that there is a sufficient case in present circumstances for seeking to widen these facilities."

In the course of a debate on July 30th on the deterioration in the value of House Property used for purposes of prostitution, Mr. Walter Edwards made what any ordinary person would consider to be a very reasonable remark. He said: "The Government set up the Wolfenden Committee. I think it was a very responsible Committee which did its work very well. The Report of that Committee has been before this House and the Government for, I think, about twelve months. It appears that the Government will not give time for the consideration by the House of the Report of that Committee. I feel that if the Government, whether Conservative or Labour, set up a committee to give them advice, whatever the subject may be, they ought to provide the House with the opportunity for discussion of the Committee's recommendations." Governments, however, whether Conservative or Labour or anything

else, have always had a habit of regarding Royal Commissions as convenient pigeonholes for questions they do not wish to discuss in the House.

Following a recent case in Wolverhampton, when a dance hall which operated a colour bar had its licence renewed, after some hesitation, by the local magistrates, Mr. John Baird, Member for the constituency where this occurred moved a Motion, on July 8th: "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make it illegal to refuse admission to lodging houses, restaurants, dance halls and similar establishments on the grounds of colour, race or religion." He further pointed out, in passing, that the State of New York already has such legislation. The Question was agreed and the Bill will be prepared. Supporters include Mr. J. Dugdale, Mr. Sydney Silverman, Mr. Brockway, Mr. Stonehouse, Mr. Anthony Greenwood, Mr. Creech Jones and Mrs. Castle.

The Prime Minister stated, on July 31st that, for the first time this year, the State Opening of Parliament will be televised by both B.B.C. and I.T.V. Members were reassured that despite this, the Government had no intention of allowing proceedings in Parliament to be televised.

Parliament rose on August 1st and adjourned until October 23rd.

B. M. Halpern

## INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

**Belgium.** The *Bulletin* of the National Council of Women of Belgium reports an interview given to *Soir* by the Minister of Justice, Monsieur Lilar, concerning the law of April 30th, on the respective Rights and Duties of Spouses. The law of April 30th, he said, put an end to the principles which, since 1804, with some changes introduced in 1932, have formed the basis of the juridical status of the married woman, that is to say the marital power and juridical incapacity. . . . The new law embodies a concept that has already been adopted by a large proportion of Belgian families. The husband does not impose his views in an authoritative fashion, but important decisions are taken by agreement between the spouses. The Minister said that though the principle of the juridical capacity of the wife had been admitted, it would not find its complete application until the matrimonial regime had been reformed in the sense of the equality of the two spouses.

In 1832, changes in the law allowed the wife to claim a part of her husband's salary, and power was given to the courts to take all necessary measures when one or other spouse was gravely neglectful of his or her duty. The new law gives the wife the right to take up a profession, or to engage in commerce or industry . . . it gives her the right to appeal against the domicile fixed by

her husband; and the loss of the marital power takes from the husband certain powers of control as, for example, that over his wife's personal correspondence.

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**New South Wales.** Mrs. Jean Daly, writing in the *Sydney Catholic Weekly*, states: "It has been announced officially that at the session of the New South Wales Parliament commencing next month, legislation will be introduced to plan for the implementation of the policy of the Labour Party to make women's pay equal to the male rates. . . ."

"It is first proposed to legislate to amend the Arbitration Act so as to increase the women's pay from sixty-five per cent. of the male rate to seventy-five per cent., and then to have annual increases of five per cent. over a five-year period. This would mean that by 1965 women workers under State awards and in Government and semi-Governmental instrumentalities would be paid the same amount of money as the men.

"A comparison of the proposed method of introduction of this principle of equal pay here and the methods employed in other countries is interesting, because the N.S.W. proposal includes the participation of industrial workers in the scheme from the commencement as well as clerical and professional women.

"A change in the attitude of mind in favour of the principle of the rate for the job here in Australia will eventually become general and could be speeded up by inquiry into the best method for implementation throughout the Commonwealth rather than perhaps be retarded by piecemeal legislation on State levels."

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**Sweden.** Mrs. Agda Rössell has been appointed permanent representative of her Government at the United Nations, New York—the first woman to be given such an appointment. Mrs. Rössell has been delegate for her country on the Status of Women Commission and was chairman of the Commission for the tenth and eleventh sessions.

## Discrimination in the field of Employment and Occupation

The International Labour Conference adopted on June 20th a Convention by which countries ratifying the Convention will undertake to "declare and pursue a national policy designed to promote, by methods appropriate to national conditions and practice, equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation, with a view to eliminating any discrimination in respect thereof."

The Czechoslovak Government member and the Workers' members proposed the deletion of Article 6, by which Equal Remuneration would have been omitted from the Convention, on the grounds that it was already the subject of the Equal Remuneration Convention 1951, the implication being that States which had not ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention could nevertheless ratify the Convention concerning discrimination in respect of employment.

The deletion of Article 6 was adopted and thus unequal remuneration for men and women workers is listed among discriminations to be eliminated by the Convention.

The Alliance regrets the retention of the word "sex" in Article 5. It is opposed to the view that special measures of protection or assistance, based solely on the ground of sex, shall not be deemed to be discrimination.

## STATUS OF WOMEN COMMISSION

It is welcome news that the Resolution of the Status of Women Commission, inviting the World Health Organisation to undertake a study of the persistence of customs, which subject girls to ritual operations, and of the measures taken or planned for putting a stop to such practices, has been adopted by the Economic and Social Council, practically unchanged.

We are also glad, but not unreservedly, that ECOSOC has passed a Resolution on the age of marriage, free consent, and registration of marriages, requesting the Secretary-General to prepare for the Fourteenth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, a report based on information received from Governments and from non-governmental organisations. This Resolution, which follows the Resolution of the Status of Women Commission, weakens that of the Commission in two important particulars. These are, first, that the instrument proposed is a Recommendation and not a Convention—that is, an instrument which binds nobody; and second, that it makes no mention of a specific minimum age of marriage. The Status of Women Commission had a juster appreciation of the importance of these questions; it asked for a Convention and for the establishment of a minimum age of marriage, preferably of not less than sixteen years. It appears that the question must be reopened or fought once again.

As regards "Age of Retirement and Right to Pension", it is surprising that ECOSOC has not endorsed the Recommendation of the Status of Women Commission that there should be implementation of the principle that the normal retirement age and pensionable age should be the same for men and women, but has referred the matter back to the Commission for further study.

### B.C.L. CONFERENCE

The British Commonwealth League held its 26th Annual Conference this year again at Hanover Lodge, Bedford College, under the presidency of Mrs. Alice Hemming.

The Conference opened with a very pleasant sherry party in the grounds of Hanover Lodge, when many distinguished visitors were entertained and first contacts made.

The subject of the Conference was "Women's Rôle in the Social Services—Problems and Progress in the Commonwealth." Delegates had the privilege of hearing experts from this country and a number of experienced workers from other countries. Miss Halpin, C.B.E., Chief Administrator, Regions, of the W.V.S., gave an admirable introductory talk on the history of women in social service; and on the second day Miss Cram, Principal Organiser of Children's Care under the London County Council, remembered some of the pioneers in this unique work of co-operation between officers of the L.C.C. and voluntary workers. Miss Stewart, Director, Tropical Community Development Committee, Y.W.C.A., spoke particularly of the problems of East Africa, while representatives from Pakistan, India and Ceylon, the West Indies and West Africa gave eloquent testimony to the work of their social services and paid tribute to the help and example given by Britain in this field. A wonderfully eloquent speaker was Miss Clubwalla Jadhav, member of the Madras Legislative Council, and she and others referred with gratitude to their training in the Girl Guide Movement. The women from Nigeria and Ghana stressed the importance of the market women in the economy of their countries and spoke of crèches and nursery schools provided, at their insistence, in close proximity to the markets where they work. They also stressed the strength of family ties which left no unwanted child or aged parent to official care.

Mrs. Mountford, representing several Associations of Australian women, and her delegation, told of the development of the social services and of the attention that is now being paid to the needs of the aboriginals.

Miss Chave Collisson, of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, pleaded for the support of the British Commonwealth League throughout the Commonwealth in the battle for equal treatment of men and women in legislation on prostitution, and against the unjust segregation of a class of citizens as outside the ordinary protection of the law.

Members who attended the final session had the privilege of hearing two distinguished Canadian women, Mrs. Margaret Aitken, M.P., and Miss Byrne Hope Sanders.

St. Joan's Alliance was represented by Miss Barry and Miss Challoner. **P.C.C.**

### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "The Catholic Citizen," September, 1933

A recent number of *The Universe* reports that an Englishwoman lately returned from Vera Cruz, Mexico, gave an account of religious conditions there, which is of much interest. Vera Cruz, at the heart of religious persecution had, or has, only one church open, and that schismatic, but there were forty secret chapels in the houses of the faithful. One priest only serves the city since by law there may be one priest only to 100,000 people. This Englishwoman was taken by the manager of the hotel where she was staying, to one of these secret chapels, where, with other women, she received Holy Communion from the hands of the mistress of the house, being first asked whether she would like to give herself Holy Communion. The priest goes about incognito and says Mass whenever possible; the children receive instruction, and so the Faith is kept alive as in penal days in England.—

*Notes and Comments*

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