

WOMEN'S SERVICES
FILE COPY

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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

Vol. XXXVII. No. 3.

15th MARCH, 1951

Price Fourpence.

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.

Golden Grain

By H. Grace Ashton

Women in business in competition with men! A vexed problem this, ever since it was decided that great economy could be effected by employing women in—be it understood—the *lesser* positions, for (blessings on the women) they could be persuaded to work for smaller pay than men! Lesser positions! Smaller pay! But women did not know their own value then, nor, indeed, do many of them know it now!

Having risen to the position of director of three companies, and export manageress in one, I wonder if my experience would be of interest to other women trying to mount the higher steps of the business ladder, against firm male discouragement.

I believe that one of the reasons for women's acceptance of inferiority is a sub-conscious fear of losing their jobs should they show too much "daring." If this attitude is due to having others dependant upon their earnings, it is a natural enough one, but it will not enable them to go very far. A fatal attitude, as I realised quite early, when I was faced with the necessity of maintaining my two small daughters, an elderly mother, and an entirely bedridden husband. The outlook was grim, but fear could but increase its grimness.

I would have to work—but that would be nothing new, for, apart from the first five happy years of my married life, care-free years of plenty with the peace of mind that financial security brings (a fool's paradise, in my case, as I afterwards found), I had worked since I was thirteen. Surely I could start again, and I was better equipped than at thirteen, when my mother and father separated. (Mother had become a Catholic and I had followed her example.) The secret of that separation belongs to the dead—suffice it to say that as we were entirely destitute because my mother, poor unemancipated woman, had lost everything, we were obliged to accept any work that came our way. The year was 1896, and my mother, a middle-aged woman and I a child of thirteen—made paper sugar bags for the noble pay of 1s. 2d. per thousand. Hard, stiff paper, difficult to fold, and to make 15s. weekly meant working from early morning until past midnight. Often we were hungry and cold, but I was young and hopeful and my mother, buoyed up by her religion, for which she believed suffering was to be endured bravely. After a couple of years, somehow she managed to send me to a Convent School in Belgium where, free of charge, by helping with the babies, I learned French and German. But I was restless. Had I not already proved that I could earn enough to keep myself. I wanted to do better this time, and to earn enough to keep my mother too. When I was just fifteen, I put up my hair, took to long frocks (that easy way in those days of bridging the gulf between childhood and womanhood), and firmly asserting that I was nineteen, I sought and obtained a post as governess in Austria.

Then, when I was twenty-three I married, and my husband and I went to live in Egypt. Oh, those five,

short, happy years—ghost-like memories now! Then, when saving two people from drowning, my husband received a spinal blow that led to complete paralysis.

After hearing his death sentence from the doctor, I wandered about the London streets, trying to make myself understand just what it would mean—and what I must do.

I have never been clear as to how it came about, but I suddenly found that I was approaching St. Ethelreda's Church. Rather mechanically I entered, and I do not think I prayed much, for suddenly I began to cry—and cry—and cry, as if I must pour away all my tears—for all time. As I left the Church I turned towards the Statue of Our Lady. "Take my cause in hand and obtain for it good success," I whispered. She has not failed me.

No more tears—work. Yes . . . grind out the golden grain day by day. My first post was that of "single-handed-general-office-worker" or maid-of-all-work, and I was paid 25s. weekly, but it did, while I managed to learn Spanish as I journeyed to and from the office. It was the beginning of the 1914 war, so German was useless except in the Censor's Department, and I did not want temporary posts, but with Spanish and French I could hope to get on. I began to climb. £2 weekly . . . £3 . . . £4 . . . and then suddenly my mother died. No one now to look after my husband and children while I was out. Again the outlook became grim—a very dark night. The usual advice was given to me—"Put your husband into some Home. Send your little girls away to a Convent School. Think of yourself a little. You must have some relaxation or you will get ill." But my own commonsense answered "No! Keep your home together and your husband and your children there with you, and above all, if you want that most blessed thing—indpendence, pay for your children's education so that you do not lose control. It will be far happier so." It was, and I did not get ill. To rise before six each morning and to work through the day—grinding out the grain—on and on until midnight—does not make one ill, if one is determined not to get ill. This is a matter of one's mental outlook. Do believe it—for it is true.

I knew, of course, that I should now have to earn more money—and work, even as a man. No more correspondent's jobs for me. When I heard that someone was required in a large city firm to establish an export department, I applied for the job. With so many men away in the Forces (it was 1915), I felt that perhaps there might be a chance for me. I knew nothing about export business, except from stereotyped phrases in my commercial grammars, but at my interview I appeared to satisfy the managing director of the company, and he gave me my chance. It was up to me to make good, and somehow I managed it.

Then, after three years, the men began to come home. It was, of course, natural that they should seek to get

back their pre-war posts, and for many of them life was hard. But I had usurped no man's post for the one I held I had created. I was certainly not going to let it be snatched from me, so I fought several rounds, and each time I won. The managing director had come to look upon me rather as his protégé, and so long as I fought fairly I knew he would see that I got justice.

Finally, I began to be accepted as "something unusual, a woman export manageress; but so long as that kind of thing did not spread, I might be tolerated—anyway I could be put on trial." My trial has long since ended, and for over thirty-three years I have been "tolerated." Years of hard fighting to keep my end up, for time and again men tried to get my position and to make me accept the compromise of being their assistant. I rode, rough-shod, over all this, and went on establishing solid and lasting business connections all over the world, and taught myself exactly what export business really is. Buying, selling, shipping and arranging finance. Hard work, but full of interest—even romance, for what is more thrilling than bringing off some big deal that no one thought could bring off? When my efforts brought good results to my company, I never hesitated to request fair reward. If I pleaded my cause well enough, I won.

Then, one day, after having already been made a director of two subsidiary companies, I was nominated a place on "The Seats of the Mighty," the board of my mother company. Something of an achievement, I knew, and the other nine male directors have certainly accepted me courteously, and as an equal.

Now, at the age of sixty-seven, I look back over the long struggle, and hope that I have always tried to keep to the accepted rules of battle. Once I would worry over some of my actions, but I learnt to realise that no one can do more than act as it seems right at the time—and that indulgence in retrospect can be a mistake.

Of course, I know well that I have been very fortunate in working for a company that is first-class in every way, governed by excellent and conscientious managing directors. Had this been otherwise, I would not have been daunted, for I would have sought other fields. It is a great mistake to be afraid of changing one's post if it proves unsuitable, insecure or unpleasant. But I was spared this problem, for my battles were not with the management, but with men who aspired to become managers. I made every allowance for them, but I had to stand firm, for if I had given way one inch it would have meant an undignified retreat to the background. All this lies in the past. For years now such battles have ceased.

I would not like it to be thought that I had neglected my home; and by that I mean my husband and children. My daughters helped me wonderfully in their spare time from their studies, and devoted themselves to their poor father. It was up to me, when he died, and they were entering their early teens, to help them towards congenial careers. I left the decision to them, and the elder became an authoress and the younger, an actress. Both made very happy marriages.

With the aftermath of the Second World War, heavy taxation—and long drawn-out negotiations for war damage all one's life, I had to realise that one could work all one's life, and then lose much in a single hour. But we can all rebuild, and until I have done so, I cannot retire—nor do I want to. It really is too late for that. I am just going on—and on. I hope to conclude many another "thrilling" big deal, before, for me, the Golden Grain runs out.

My sisters in business, listen to me. You can all succeed, if you will. Have complete confidence in yourselves, and make yourselves acquire whatever knowledge is necessary for your work. Refuse to become enslaved by that most stupid and rather dangerous "inferiority

complex," and above all, never let it be said of you that you are a "man-hater." That won't do, for no true woman every really hates men. We can feel

My sister in business, listen to me. You can all angry with them, but it is more our own fault that so many of us are still deprived of equal pay. We must refuse to put up with it, and agitate in all fair ways until we win. We are mostly taken at our own valuation, and if we fight for a just cause with clean weapons we shall ultimately win. And what a lot we have won already through those great Suffragette Heroines who suffered ridicule, imprisonment and sometimes torture, to break our bonds. Let us complete their work under the guidance of Our Lady, the greatest of all women. She will teach us how to keep unspoil our true feminism, and for this our husbands and our sons will love and respect us.

[H. Grace Ashton, the author of the above article, is the mother of Lady Hills (Mary Grace Ashton), who wrote the article, "A Retrospect" in the last issue of THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN.]

Notes and Comments

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

* * *

The following resolution has been sent to the Government and various M.P.s:—

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance protests against the Matrimonial Causes Bill introduced by Mrs. Eirene White, which would tend to undermine still further the stability of the family and marriage, and calls upon the Government to refuse facilities for its passage into law.

On March 9th, the Bill passed its second reading by 131 votes to 60 against the advice of the Government, who proposed a Royal Commission to study the whole field of the marriage laws.

* * *

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1950, was passed by Standing Committee B on March 6th, and now awaits the Report stage.

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The office will be closed from March 27th to April 3rd.

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Triptych, shown to the press in February, is a technicolour experiment in the blending of colour, music and painting. Italian masterpieces form the bases of the panels of the triptych: Crivelli's "Annunciation," Botticelli's "Nativity" and Mantegna's "Calvary." These are interpreted in appropriate music sung by Beniamino Gigli, the great Italian tenor. This short film should have tremendous appeal to all Christians. M.F.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

AND

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ex-officio DAME VERA LAUGHTON MATHEWS, D.B.E., President, St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance

MISS P. C. CHALLONER, M.A., Chairman.

MISS F. A. BARRY, Hon. Secretary.

MISS PAULINE M. BRANDT.

MISS NOREEN K. CARR, Hon. Treasurer.

MISS GABRIELLE DAYE.

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MISS CHRISTINE SPENDER, Hon. Editor, "Catholic Citizen."

40th Annual Report*

for the year ending December 31st, 1950.

The year 1950 will be memorable for Catholics the world over as being Holy Year, marked by the promulgation of the Dogma of the Assumption and the canonisation of many saints. For Catholics in England, also as being the Centenary Year of the Restoration of the Hierarchy.

St. Joan's Alliance, Great Britain, celebrated the Holy Year by joining in the official pilgrimage of St. Joan's International Alliance to Rome, which included an audience with the Holy Father at Castel Gandolfo. The Alliance was represented at the Centenary celebrations at Westminster Cathedral and at the Solemn Pontifical Mass at Wembley Stadium.

The General Election

This took place on February 23rd. Of 125 women candidates, 21 were elected—14 Labour, 6 Unionist, 1 Liberal. Regrettably, our member, Lady Pakenham (Lab., Oxford City), was not returned. Mrs. Cullen, the first Catholic woman to take her seat at Westminster, was re-elected.

The Alliance's Questionnaire, together with the Manifesto of the Status of Women Committee, was sent to all members asking them to question their candidates by letters, interviews, or at meetings.

The Status of Women Committee asked the three political Parties to receive a deputation to explain the points in its Manifesto. Only the Conservative Party agreed to do this, and a deputation, introduced by the Chairman, Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, was received by the Rt. Hon. M. S. McCorquodale on behalf of the Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill. Representatives of the various constituent Societies amplified the points in the Manifesto, the Hon. Secretary of St. Joan's Alliance speaking on the Equal Moral Standard.

The Rt. Hon. Edith Summerskill was appointed Minister of National Insurance in the new Government, and Miss Heribson was appointed Joint Parliamentary Secretary of State for Scotland. On April 5th, another deputation from the Status of Women Committee was received by the Labour Women M.P.s in the House of Commons, under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Barbara Castle, and the same points were raised as before, Miss Barry again dealing with the injustice of the Laws regarding Solicitation and Prostitution. Mrs. Castle expressed her interest, particularly on the points raised by the Hon. Secretary of the Alliance and promised "to do what she could."

The new House of Commons, restored on the traditional lines, was ready for the autumn session. In this session, the important democratic right of private members to introduce Bills and Motions was restored. Advantage of this was taken by Mrs. Castle to introduce the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1950.

* Subject to confirmation at Annual Meeting

Public Morality.

The Alliance has worked for many years with the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene to amend those clauses in the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885, which excluded from protection against the procurer "common prostitutes and women of known immoral character." A definite first step forward can be recorded. In fulfilment of her pledge to the deputation from the Status of Women Committee in April, Mrs. Barbara Castle introduced the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1950, prepared by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, on December 13th, without opposition.

The Alliance took a major part in the campaign for the Bill launched by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene. Members up and down the country, by letters, interviews, or lobbying, made clear to their M.P.s the strong support there was for the Bill. Mrs. Castle expressed her thanks to the Alliance for the successful work it had done.

Another Bill has been drafted by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene to amend the present unjust Solicitation Laws. The Bill has the support of the Alliance and very many other organisations, but no opportunity has so far presented itself for its introduction into Parliament.

Early in the year, the Hon. Secretary attended a Home Office Working Party to discuss with Mr. Allen (now Sir Oswald Allen) the Convention on the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. The Alliance agreed with the action taken by the United Kingdom delegate at the United Nations Assembly in opposing Article 1 of the Convention. This Article weakened the main purpose of the Convention which was to take action against exploitation, rather than against the prostitute.

Agreed suggestions for a United Nations Questionnaire on Traffic in Persons to be sent to Governments were submitted jointly by the Working Party.

The importance of legislation to put our own house in order in this country was pressed upon Sir Oswald Allen.

Equal Pay.

The Alliance has lost no opportunity of pressing for Equal Pay, independently and in co-operation with the Equal Pay Campaign Committee. It was one of the chief points in the General Election Programme of the Alliance and on that of the Status of Women Committee, of which the Alliance is a constituent member. The statements of the three political parties on their policy on this matter were published in the *Catholic Citizen* prior to the election.

The Alliance wrote to the Minister of Labour asking for the support of the United Kingdom delegate to the

International Labour Conference 1950, for a Convention for Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value. The Alliance also took part in a deputation from the Equal Pay Campaign Committee to the Ministry of Labour and submitted a Memorandum putting forward points for which they asked for the support of the United Kingdom delegate at Geneva.

St. Joan's Alliance, in common with other women's organisations, made vigorous protests against the speech of the Minister of Labour at Geneva, which implied that women receive more from the social services than men, and that equal pay is only one aspect of remuneration, which cannot be treated on a narrow basis.

A fine protest against these specious arguments was made by Miss Irene Ward, M.P., in the debate on the King's Speech when she regretted there was no mention of the implementation of equal pay. Miss Ward lets no opportunity pass of raising the matter of equal pay at Question time; other M.P.s., notably Mrs. Barbara Castle, Miss Elaine Burton, and Mr. J. Cooper, have also pressed for this measure of justice.

The Alliance associated itself with the National Union of Women Teachers in its protests against the new Burnham Scales for Teachers' Salaries, which increase the differentiation between the salaries of men and women.

The Film "To be a Woman," an excellent film on Equal Pay, was completed during the year at a cost of only just over £4,150. This low figure was owing to the generosity of Miss Jill Craigie, the script writer, director and producer. Some members of the Alliance contributed towards the cost, but so far only to the amount of £22 8s. 6d. The full sum has been guaranteed by the National Union of Women Teachers which must not be left to bear so much of the burden.

The Alliance sent a telegram to the Trades Union Leaders Conference in May asking for the implementation of the principle of Equal Pay. When the increase in pay for the fighting forces was announced in September the Executive Committee sent the following Resolution to the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer:—

"St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, while recognising the gravity of the present situation, is resolved to continue to press for the implementation of the principle of equal pay, maintaining that changing circumstances cannot affect the fundamental principle of justice and that it is unjust to require women workers to continue to bear the burden of lower rates of pay in addition to the sacrifices asked of men and women alike."

Towards the close of the year the Equal Pay Campaign Committee sent a Memorandum to the Government asking that the United Kingdom delegate to the International Labour Conference in 1951 should press for a Convention, supplemented by a Recommendation and stating its object to specific points of the text for consideration at the Conference.

Human Rights.

A Resolution was sent to the Minister of State asking for the support of the United Kingdom delegates to the United Nations for the amendment of Article 4 of the First Draft International Covenant of Human Rights by the deletion of the words "involving risk, where such is not required by his state of physical or mental health." The article then to read:—

"No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. In particular, no one shall be subjected against his will to medical or scientific experimentation;" also to press for the inclusion of Articles in the Covenant on (1) marriage, declaring that no marriage shall be contracted without the free consent of both intending spouses; (2) on

economic, social and cultural rights; and (3) in the measures for implementation, for the right of individuals and groups to Petition the United Nations in respect of violations of human rights. (See *Catholic Citizen*, November, 1950.)

Annual General Meeting.

The 39th Annual Meeting was held on the birthday of the Alliance, March 25th, at St. Patrick's Clubroom, Soho, the chairman, Dr. Shattock, presiding. Canon Reardon praised the pertinacity of the Alliance and welcomed the increase in the number of women candidates for Parliament. Miss Challoner presented the Annual Report, which was adopted after speeches in support from Miss McClellan and Miss Monica Munro. The report on the *Catholic Citizen* was presented by Miss Spender and Miss Sorby moved its adoption. Mrs. Keating presented the report from the Merseyside Branch and Miss Barry read the Financial Statement in the unavoidable absence of Miss Organ. Alderman Mrs. Hoare, L.C.C. moved the adoption of the Financial Statement.

Miss Noreen Carr made an appeal for funds as a birthday present to the Alliance, and £107 was collected in promises and cash.

Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, International President, then spoke of the new Sections of the Alliance in the Transvaal and West Australia; of the Council Meeting in London, and of the results of St. Joan's Petition to the Trusteeship Council on forced marriage and on child marriage.

The Chairman, after thanking the speakers, asked members to give help in the important work that lay before the Alliance, both nationally and internationally, particularly on Equal Pay.

Resolutions on Human Rights; Equal Political Rights; Equal Pay; the Equal Moral Standard; the removal of inequalities in Taxation; National Insurance; Domicile and Education; and on the Status of Women in territories under British jurisdiction, were then put to the vote and carried and sent to the appropriate authorities. The resolutions will be found in the April 1950 issue of the *Catholic Citizen*.

Miss Cooper, Miss Fahie and Miss Organ having retired from the executive committee, three new members were elected: Miss Vera Douie, known throughout the woman's movement as author and librarian; Miss W. Mann, who has wide commercial experience; and Miss Monica Munro, S.R.N., S.C.M., a distinguished member of the nursing profession, from the West Indies.

The Executive Committee elected Miss Challoner Chairman, and Miss Noreen Carr, Hon. Treasurer. The Hon. Secretary and Editor of the *Catholic Citizen* were re-elected.

We take this opportunity of thanking Dr. Shattock for her work as Chairman and for the always willing help and advice given during the year, despite her heavy professional commitments.

Mass was offered at St. Patrick's, Soho, in March, for Gabrielle Jeffery and Leonora de Alberti, and on November 5th for deceased members, associates and benefactors of the Alliance. Following tradition, Mass was offered on the occasion of the General Election, on February 23rd, at Westminster Cathedral, by request of the Alliance, to beg Divine Guidance on the electors. On St. Joan's Day, May 30th, Mass was offered for the Alliance through the kindness of Rev. W. G. Wood, and a wreath, tied with the colours of the Alliance was laid on St. Joan's Shrine at Westminster Cathedral.

His Eminence Cardinal Griffin was good enough to place before the Bishops at their meeting in November the request of St. Joan's Alliance that the Holy See be petitioned for the extension of the Feast of St. Joan of Arc to England. Their Lordships decided to take no action at the present time.

Events of the Year.

An important event in the domestic history of the Alliance was the change of office from the sixth to the third floor of 55, Berners Street, a change involving, alas, a smaller room and a larger rent! This task, a herculean one, as anyone who has visited the office will testify was chiefly accomplished by the over 60s. On April 26th a small group met at Room 14, 55 Berners Street, for the blessing of the new office by the Rev. W. G. Wood, of St. Patrick's, Soho. A handsome gift to the new office was a beautiful solid oak desk, and a chair, from Miss Graham.

On June 5th there was a dinner and theatre party for Miss Organ to mark the Alliance's appreciation of her ten years devoted work as Hon. Treasurer.

On July 29th a party was given at the Hon. Secretary's home in Hampstead to welcome the many Australian members who were visiting this country. Greetings were given from Melbourne, Sydney and West Australia by Mrs. O'Brien, Mrs. Norma Bourke and Miss Hoard. The guest speaker was Miss Chave Collisson of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, herself an Australian, who spoke on Josephine Butler and the need for continuing the campaign for the Equal Moral Standard.

On October 30th the delegates reported on the Rome Pilgrimage and the Triennial Conference at a well-attended meeting held, by the generosity of the Reverend Mother, at the Holy Child Convent, Cavendish Square.

On December 8th a meeting was held at the Service Women's Club to celebrate the beginning of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, on that day forty years ago. Miss Challoner presided. A large and appreciative audience heard Miss Gadsby, the "fairy godmother" of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, and three other pioneer members—Miss Annie Christitch, Miss Constance Connolly, and Miss Eleanor FitzGerald, illustrate the "background to St. Joan's" from their own experiences. They were preceded by Dame Vera Laughton Mathews speaking of the Suffrage Movement in her young days.

The office has been kept busy with the scrutiny of documents and literature from the United Nations and many other organisations, not to speak of newspapers and magazines. Everything has to be looked into, and followed up, where necessary, by representations to the appropriate authorities.

Information from the Alliance was sought on many occasions, not only on the actual work of the Alliance, but on many aspects of the woman's movement.

Co-operation with other Societies.

The Alliance was represented at the National Catholic Education Rally in the Albert Hall by Dame Vera Laughton Mathews. It has co-operated with the Catholic Committee for Overseas Students in offering hospitality to Catholic women students, and Miss Challoner serves on this Committee.

The Alliance is affiliated to the International Alliance of Women. It is a constituent Society of the Status of Women Committee, the Equal Pay Campaign Committee and of the British Commonwealth League.

Replies to the Questionnaire from The United Nations Status of Women Commission regarding the position of women in this country with respect to Property Rights and Family law were agreed upon and sent to Lake Success in the name of the Status of Women Committee. Further co-operation with the Status of Women Committee is referred to under the headings "Public Morality" and "Equal Pay."

Many functions of the British Commonwealth League were attended by members of the Alliance, including a party to welcome Mrs. Innes on her return from her tour in Australia. The Alliance moved a Resolution at the B.C.L. Conference, begging the Governments of the

Commonwealth to support an I.L.O. Convention on Equal Pay, but abstained from that part of the Conference dealing with World Government, this being outside the scope of our work.

Most of these functions took place at the Minerva Club where the Alliance, together with so many other women's organisations enjoyed the hospitality of Miss Reeves, President of the Women's Freedom League.

The Alliance is represented on the Women's Council co-operating with the Women of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, and has attended many gatherings arranged by this body to greet distinguished women, notably Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, Minister of Health, India, and Mrs. Hanna Sen on her return from serving on the Status of Women Commission.

The Alliance is also represented on the British National Committee for Suppression of Traffic in Women and on the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child.

Many members attended the annual gathering of the Suffragette Fellowship and laid flowers on Mrs. Pankhurst's statue on her birthday, July 14th, and afterwards attended the meeting at St. Ermin's.

Members also attended the Annual Meeting of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene and of the Open Door Council.

The Alliance was happy to join in the celebration of the opening of the new premises of the London and National Society for Women's Service, the first Woman Suffrage Society in England; the Alliance was also represented at the house warming of the Federation of Soroptimists Clubs of Great Britain and Ireland.

Visitors.

The Holy Year brought many visitors—no fewer than twenty-two Australian members from every State of the Commonwealth visited the office. It was a great joy to welcome them and to be able to return some small amount of the kindness received from Australia during the war. Visitors were also welcomed from Belgium, Ceylon, East Africa, France, Germany, Ireland, and Switzerland.

Obituary.

The Alliance was grieved at the death of Archbishop McDonald of Edinburgh and of Father Northcote, both early members of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society. We also mourn the death of devoted members—Miss Havers, Miss May Moclair, Mrs. Hope-Robson, and Mrs. Whately.—R.I.P.

Miss Moclair had been recommended for a Papal decoration for her great social work, but unhappily arrangements were not completed before her death.

Press.

As in past years, the *Catholic Herald* has given us publicity on many occasions, for which we thank the editor. Reports of the activities of the Alliance have also appeared in the *Universe* and *Catholic Times*.

The *Woman Teacher* reproduced from the *Catholic Citizen*, Dr. Klompé's article "Capacity of the Married Woman in the Dutch Civil Code." Many news cuttings relating to the Alliance have been received from the Australian press, thanks to the vigilance and enterprise of St. Joan's members in Australia.

The chairman wrote letters on Equal Pay to the *Catholic Herald* and the *Tablet*; to the *Catholic Herald* regarding St. Joan's feast in England; and to the *New Statesman* protesting against a flippant and insulting article on the Holy Year. This last was not published. We are also indebted to her for writing articles on the aims of the Alliance for "The Uptonian," and for the "The Pack" (South Rhodesia).

The Alliance is also indebted to Miss Vera Douie for kindly answering the Questionnaire on the legal position of women in this country in reply to a request from German women who were studying the new Constitution of Germany.

The Catholic Citizen.

There has been a welcome increase in subscriptions and sales and also advertisements which have covered the cost of printing and postage. Members must realise that the secretarial work and the editorial work is entirely voluntary. The Alliance is extremely fortunate in being able to call upon so many writers with expert knowledge. This year we note especially Miss Christopher St. John's tribute to "Our Good Friend—G.B.S."

It was a privilege to be allowed to publish the resumé of the lecture on "The Position of African Women," given by Soeur Marie-André du Sacré Coeur to *l'Alliance Jeanne d'Arc* in Paris. This authoritative survey commanded the attention of many specialists.

During the Holy Year, Mrs. Magda de Spur acted as Rome correspondent of the *Catholic Citizen*. We are indebted to her for several notes and the article on St. Maria Goretti; also the Report of the Rome Conference of St. Joan's International.

Mrs. Halpern and Miss Douie kindly undertook the monthly Parliamentary Report, and our reviewing staff kept up their usual standard.

The work of the United Nations has been recorded—at times in considerable detail—in many issues.

Mrs. Garrard and Mrs. Morison have continued the tedious task of regularly addressing the wrappers.

In some miraculous way the *Catholic Citizen* appears each month. To all who contribute in any way to its production, not least to Miss P. C. Challoner, we offer heartfelt thanks.

Hon. Treasurer's Report.

The Alliance much regretted that Miss J. M. Organ felt compelled to resign the treasurership after ten years devoted service. Miss Noreen Carr kindly undertook this office.

It is satisfactory to report that the Alliance has paid its way without having to draw on the Gabrielle Jeffery Memorial Fund. The Subscription list shows an increase of £45. The office and Christmas Sales brought us in over £120, thanks to all who helped so generously by gifts or service.

Much expense is spared to the Alliance by the magnificent help of voluntary workers.

The Alliance is again deeply indebted to Miss Jameson for her expert help in the office twice weekly as well as for taking complete charge during the Rome Conference. We also thank Miss Carr and Miss Cave who have regularly given valuable help, and offer grateful thanks to Miss Bodenham and Miss Graham for help on various occasions. Miss Gadsby once more kindly undertook the auditing of the accounts and Miss Sheila Hynes kept the press book with her usual care.

Merseyside Branch. Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Keating, 34, Danehurst Road, Wallasey, Cheshire.

A successful Garden Party was held in July at Huyton, by kind permission of Mrs. Brady, the Hon. Treasurer. Mrs. Jackson, a former member of the Branch, now a member of the Executive Committee in London, spoke on the aims and work of the Alliance, and several new members joined. She was requested to ask the Executive Committee for a short pamphlet on the history and work of the Alliance.

Members in the various Merseyside constituencies wrote to their M.P.s asking for their support for the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1950, and, generally, had received favourable replies.

Representatives of the Branch continue to serve on the Women's Organisations Committee.

St. Joan's International Alliance

The Holy Year Pilgrimage took place in October. Delegates went in procession carrying St. Joan's banner, to pay their Jubilee visits to the four Basilicas. At Castel Gandolfo, delegates had the privilege of an audience with the Holy Father.

The triennial Conference took place in Rome on October 2nd and 3rd, and was reported in the November, 1950, issue of the *Catholic Citizen*.

The new Section of South Australia was welcomed. The president, Dame Vera Laughton Mathews and the other officers were re-elected and Miss Margaret Flynn, founder of the Alliance in Australia, was elected a vice-president.

Trusteeship Council.

As a result of the Petition from St. Joan's International Alliance (T/PET/4/2), conditions regarding forced marriages were made the subject of a special investigation by the Visiting Mission of the Trusteeship Council to the Cameroons under British Administration. Petitions of protest were presented from the 80-year-old Fon of Bikom himself and others, including one signed by twelve of the Fon's 110 wives. The Fon stated that the women were free to go if they wished, and with this knowledge 30-40 actually left. One Petition said that the only complaint of the wives was that they had no children.

The matter received much publicity, and from letters in the African Press it was clear that the opinion of many of the more progressive Africans was against polygamy. The Visiting Mission, while yielding somewhat to local sentiment, stated that it seemed "necessary to encourage the custom (plural marriage) to disappear progressively and as rapidly as possible."

The Visiting Mission recommended the administering authority:—

1. To proclaim and effectively protect the right of women and girls to refuse to take part in any forced union, and their right to release themselves from any such unions in which they have been compelled to take part.
2. To allow the wives of polygamists to withdraw from their marriages when it appears that they no longer wish to accept their position as additional wives.

Early in the year, representations were made to the Trusteeship Council urging that the Draft Trusteeship Agreement for the Territory of Somaliland under Italian administration should include the prohibition of all forms of State Regulation of Prostitution.

The Draft Trusteeship Agreement, as adopted by the Trusteeship Council, provides that the Administering Authority shall apply existing International Conventions concerning prostitution.

It is satisfactory to note that the Agreement also prohibits "all forms of slavery, slave-trade, and child marriage."

Slavery.

The first meeting of the United Nations *ad hoc* Committee on Slavery took place in February. The Alliance had requested the Committee in its "Survey of the Field of Slavery and other institutions or customs resembling Slavery" to investigate and attack certain forms of the enslavement of women and girls, such as forced marriages and child marriages; the bartering of women and children; the hiring out of women to pay debts; the lending out of wives and the inheritance of widows. It was gratifying to note, that these points were substantially included in the questionnaire sent out by the Committee.

A Memorandum was sent to the Committee by the Alliance giving instances of these evils. Much valuable first-hand evidence was collected by *l'Alliance Jeanne d'Arc*, notably from Soeur Marie André du Sacré Coeur of the White Sisters, who had recently returned

from seventeen months' research in French West Africa and the French Cameroons.

From the Rome Conference, a resolution was sent to the *ad hoc* Committee submitting for its consideration, proposals for attacking these problems. (See resolution, *Catholic Citizen*, November, 1950.)

Draft International Covenant of Human Rights.

At the Rome Conference, National Sections were asked to write immediately to their Governmental representatives at the General Assembly in session at Lake Success to beg for the inclusion of certain points in the Draft Covenant of Human Rights. They were also asked to approach their Governments, regarding the amendment of Article 4. Details are given on page —. The Alliance was glad to note that the Assembly, in a directive, expressed the desirability of including economic, social and cultural rights in the Draft Covenant, and of making provision for individuals and organisations to Petition the United Nations on the violation of Human Rights.

Status of Women Commission.

This met at Lake Success in May and discussed the question of Conventions on Equal Political Rights and on the Nationality of Married Women. It sent out a Questionnaire on the Property Rights of Married Women and on Family Law.

The Alliance sent its congratulations to Mrs. Tenison Woods, vice-president of the New South Wales Section of the Alliance, on her appointment in July as chief of the United Nations' Section on the Status of Women.

International Labour Conference.

A Memorandum on equal pay was sent to the Conference in Geneva dealing with special points in Report V (2) of the I.L.O. The Alliance pressed for a Convention on Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, so that, on ratification, it should be obligatory on States Members to implement the principle of equal pay. The decision as to a Convention or a Recommendation was postponed and placed on the Agenda of the 1951 Conference.

International Conferences.

St. Joan's International Alliance was represented at the following international conferences: United Nations N.G.O., in Geneva, by Madame Darbre (Switzerland) and Miss Hallman (Canada); the Apostolatus Maris, in Rome, by Miss O'Brien and Miss O'Connor; the Open Door International, in Sigtuna, by Mrs. Anna Lenah Elgström (Sweden); the International Federation of University Women, in Zurich, by Dr. Marga Klompé (Holland); the Semaine de Missiologie, in Louvain, by Miss P. C. Challoner (Great Britain); and the International Abolitionist Federation, in Rome, by Miss Margaret Flynn and Mrs. Lalor (Australia).

Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations.

The Alliance continues to work as a constituent society of this Committee which operates from London, Geneva, New York, Paris, and from Australia. The Alliance obtained the support of other important constituent organisations of the Liaison Committee when the *ad hoc* Committee on Slavery was approached, asking that certain customs involving the Slavery of Women be included in this investigation; also for certain amendments to the Draft Covenant of Human Rights.

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INTERNATIONAL NOTES

Australia. On January 23rd and 24th the first "get together" of the Sections of St. Joan's Alliance in Australia was held at the Royal Empire Society, Sydney. Representatives of Sections in Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland, and many observers attended and messages of good will were received from Headquarters in London, Mrs. Tenison Woods, O.B.E., and Miss Westhoven, President of the W.A. Section. Dame Enid Lyons, Australian President, was unable to attend through illness. Mrs. Garry, Vice-President of the N.S.W. Section, was chairman at the two Sessions, and Mrs. Daly of N.S.W., opening the discussion, said she had been requested by St. Joan's International, when in London, to bring back two practical suggestions, the publication of an Australian Magazine—which had been achieved—and a gathering of the Sections, which had led to this meeting. The question of the establishment of a Federal Section was then discussed and it was agreed that a Federal Representative be appointed from each State to be the channel through which approach could be made to a Federal Secretary in matters calling for united action on a national or international level. Delegates were requested to recommend that their Executives endorse the resolutions passed at the Rome Conference relating to the Draft 1st Covenant of Human Rights and the International Labour Office on equal remuneration for work of equal value, and press the Federal Government to instruct the Australian Representatives at U.N. to support them. Reports were presented by all Sections with special reference to work of Equal Pay and on Divorce Legislation and plans of action and study for the forthcoming year formulated.

At an evening reception, members recently returned from Europe spoke and Miss Eunice Gardiner provided musical interludes. A.F.

* * *

Egypt. Congratulations to our friend and colleague Madame Nabaraoui, leader of l' Union Feministe Egyptienne, on the vigorous action taken by Egyptian suffragettes in demanding votes for women.

The Union Feministe Egyptienne and the Bent el Nil (Daughters of the Nile) Union held a joint meeting attended by over 1,000 women on February 19th. They demanded votes for women, the abolition of polygamy, liberty for women to work, and equal pay.

After the meeting they marched to Parliament but were refused admission. The following day, they carried a Petition to the Prime Minister's office at the Abdin Palace, demanding women's rights.

Germany. A meeting of the Deutscher Zweig of St. Joan's International Alliance was held at Dusseldorf on January 13th, Frau Brauksiepe, M.d.B. presiding; Dr. Schlüter-Hermkes, Vice-President of St. Joan's International Alliance, attending.

It was proposed to strengthen contacts between women M.P.s and women electors, by the formation of a Parliamentary Committee to which other women's organisations should be invited.

A Report was given of the Rome Conference of St. Joan's International and of the work of St. Joan's with the United Nations. The importance of acting on a suggestion made at Rome that each National Section should have its own news sheet was emphasized. In future articles will, in this way, be sent to members of the German Section on the proposed laws in the Bund Parliament and in the local Parliaments of the Länder, and other relevant matters.

Discussions took place on questions regarding the regulation of prostitution and protective legislation for women. Both these questions called for further investigation.

Dame Vera Laughton Mathews addressed the Deutscher Zweig during her visit to Germany this month.

* * *

Switzerland. In the recent referendum, the men of the Canton of Vaud refused the right of women to vote in local elections by a majority of 12,708.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

*Leonora de Alberti in the CATHOLIC CITIZEN,
March 15th, 1926.*

Magna Carta still remains the mainspring of English liberties. The Great Charter not only put a limit to the power of the monarch, it protected the liberty of the subject, it embodied the principle that taxation without representation is a tyranny. Its main clause declares: "To none will we deny, to none will we sell, to none will we delay, the right of justice." Yet in spite of this proud boast, for how long was justice denied to all Englishwomen, and for how much longer, may we ask, is it still to be denied to large sections of Englishwomen? Nearly eight years have passed since the passing of the Representation of the People Act. Women accepted for a time the fantastic franchise it conferred on them. Suffragists accepted that franchise law, because it did establish the principle of woman suffrage, and it was made clear that no other way was open to them.

But they accepted under protest; they in their turn made it clear that it was understood to be a temporary measure; and in accepting the limited franchise the societies pledged themselves to continue their work till equality was established.—*The Justice of Equal Franchise.*

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

NON-PARTY

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Organ—"The Catholic Citizen," 4d. monthly.

OBJECT

To band together Catholics of both sexes, in order to secure the political, social and economic equality between men and women, and to further the work and usefulness of Catholic women as citizens.

MEMBERSHIP

All Catholic women are eligible as Members, who approve the object and methods, and will pay a minimum annual subscription of 10s. which includes the *Catholic Citizen*. Men are invited to join as Associates, on the same conditions, with the exception that they may not elect or be elected to the Executive.

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