

# 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.*

## Woman Suffrage Celebrations

On February 6th, the anniversary of the first grant of votes for women, Dame Vera Loughton Mathews, D.B.E., appeared on the B.B.C. Television Programme "Twice Twenty," to speak on reminiscences of the Suffrage Movement. By the courtesy of the B.B.C. we are glad to publish her talk, in which, in spite of the very short time available, she managed to convey some telling points most effectively. She said: "Well, I was a Suffragette—only for the last couple of years of the movement; I was not old enough for more. In fact, I was taken to one of the great meetings in the Albert Hall by my aunts when I was a girl in my teens. I didn't do any of the brave things that some women did. But I knew them, and believe me they were not at all hooligans or sensationalists, but ordinary women, of all sections of life, who did not find it easy to break with convention and tradition, but were devoted to an ideal.

"You know, it wanted quite a lot of courage even to join the Movement. You can't imagine the sort of hysteria which the very mild demand that women should vote produced among men. I think the bravest thing I ever did was to sell the paper, *The Suffragette*, in the streets. I felt it would have been almost easier to go to prison. But there's one thing—if at the age of twenty you have stood in the gutter with a trembling heart, calling out 'Suffragette—One penny,' amid sneers and jeers and while passers-by spat on you—Yes, literally spat on you—well, you can stand up to a good deal in later years. Afterwards I became sub-editor on *The Suffragette* after the previous staff had been put in prison. The paper was being raided by the police, chased about and printed in secret—all very exciting.

"You may not know that when the militant agitation started, the suffrage movement had already been going on for half a century. Many of the suffragettes had been working for years and had lost heart—Mrs. Pankhurst herself had been in the movement since a girl. Such a movement as the militant doesn't just start spontaneously—it grows from a deep sense of grievance which has not been dealt with. And you

see women, not having votes, had no constitutional weapon; they had no means at all of bringing direct pressure on the Government.

"Militancy started in 1905, just fifty years ago and the position at that time was that although a large number of individual M.P.s had expressed themselves in favour, women were no nearer getting votes. So the suffragettes decided to oppose *any* Government in power until a Government measure was promised.

"They went to Cabinet Ministers' meetings to ask questions—and later frankly to interrupt. You see, the question put was not 'Are you in favour of women suffrage'—the Minister would no doubt have smiled courteously and said 'Certainly'—but 'Will the Liberal Government if elected give women the vote?' He couldn't say Yes without committing his Government. He couldn't say No, for that would have displeased the Liberal ladies on the platform. So he didn't answer. When the women persisted they were dragged from their places by the stewards and brutally flung outside. Sometimes they started to address the crowd outside and were arrested for obstruction.

"Another regular form of militancy was deputations to Parliament—sounds peaceful enough—but they were broken up by the police in Whitehall or Parliament Square and hundreds of women were arrested—volunteering for a deputation meant volunteering for prison, and prison came to mean all the horrors of hungerstrike and forcible feeding.

"For six years the suffragettes themselves were the only people who suffered violence. Their own violence and law breaking came only at the end. Whether it was right or wrong, I think today on this anniversary of the granting of votes to women we should only be grateful to them, for having given years of their lives to this cause and suffered so much for it.

"Well, it's all very old history—in some ways sad and in some ways glorious. And I do believe that nothing worth while is achieved without sacrifice.



"On the last General Election day, two young girls passed me in Oxford Street and just as they passed I heard one say to the other, 'Have you voted yet?' 'Oh, yes' was the reply 'I voted this morning before going to work.'

"I stood and looked after them—bareheaded, fluffy bobbed hair, confidently swinging along—taking it all for granted, bless them."

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At Westminster Abbey at noon on the same day, a wreath was placed beneath the memorial plaques to Dame Millicent Fawcett and her husband in St. George's Chapel. The Dean read prayers of thanksgiving for the life and work of this leader of the great Constitutional Movement for Woman Suffrage. Miss M. J. Buchanan, who travelled specially from Scotland for the occasion then gave the following moving tribute:

"It is difficult to find words to express what Dame Millicent Fawcett's long lifetime of work and her vital personality meant to the Suffrage Movement. To her it was the Common Cause of Humanity, which was to work for the benefit of man, woman and child: 'If women are slaves How can man be free.' She stressed responsibilities more than rights. As the old philosopher said 'the only Right worth fighting for is the right to do your duty.' The strange fact, so often forgotten, was that the majority of Members of Parliament were pledged for thirty-two years to vote for Woman's Suffrage. We always had strong support from the men, but because of party measures and party manoeuvres there was the deadlock. But she never doubted the clouds would break and her faith kept her serene all the way. The beauty and devotion of her radiant selflessness she, in some mysterious way, managed to pass on to the rank and file of her followers. We rejoice that she lived to see February 6th, 1918. We give thanks for our beloved Leader."

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In the evening members and friends of the Suffragette Fellowship assembled at Caxton Hall for their annual commemoration meeting. Miss Marian Reeves was in the Chair, and the speakers were: Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Miss Gertrude Leverkus, F.R.I.B.A., and Miss Charlotte Marsh.

The Alliance was represented at both gatherings.

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Dame Vera Laughton Mathews' broadcast brought tributes from many who took part in the Votes for Women Campaign. The most welcome one was from Lord Pethick Lawrence who said: "I have just witnessed the T.V. Your performance could not have been bettered. Substance, words, manner quite perfect. I do congratulate you."

### INTERNATIONAL NOTES

**Austria.** Frau Hess, chief of the Women's Criminal Police Corps in Vienna has been appointed Chief of the Department of Criminal Police.

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**Belgium.** We record with regret the death of Baroness Pol Boël on January 18th. Baroness Boël succeeded Lady Aberdeen as president of the International Council of Women in 1936 which office she filled till 1947. She was president of honour of the I.C.W. till her death. She took the greatest interest in the Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations and representatives of St. Joan's Alliance attended the meeting held in her hospitable home in Brussels in 1946 when the Committee was re-organised after the war.

St. Joan's Alliance offers sympathy to the National Council of Women of Belgium and to the International Council of Women.

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**Cameroons under French Administration.** Madame Dicka Nsamgue has been appointed first African Woman Assessor at the Court of Justice of Douala. This post, which is actually that of interpreter, is of great importance to African women of the bush, who have difficulty in explaining their cases before the local tribunals.

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**Greece.** We send our congratulations to Mrs. Lina Tsaldaris on her appointment as the first Greek woman Cabinet Minister.

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**Italy.** On December 19th, a new law introduced by the Christian Democrat Maria Pia Dal Canton, came into force. This law will do much to mitigate the humiliations suffered by illegitimate persons. Hitherto, those personal documents which have to be produced on countless occasions for employment, examinations, etc. have borne the letters N.M. (*Nihil Nomen*); now the names of both parents will be omitted and there will be nothing to stigmatise the unfortunates who suffer, in any case, for the sins of others.

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**Kenya.** The Coutts Report on voting for the African representatives on the Legislative Council has been accepted by the Kenya Government with some amendments. The principle of direct secret election is accepted with a limited franchise based on property, education, public service etc. Women are not excluded on grounds of sex, though for the present, it will be very difficult for them to qualify on the same terms as men. Two special qualifications have therefore been proposed for women (1) the equivalent of Elder in a tribe (2) a badge of membership of a women's club.

### Notes and Comments

On March 2nd the 80th birthday of the Holy Father which is also the seventeenth anniversary of His election to the Chair of St. Peter, a telegram—"Homage and prayers" was sent to His Holiness.

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At the Solemn High Mass offered for the Holy Father in the evening at Westminster Cathedral the Alliance was represented by Miss Challoner and Miss Graham. St. Joan's International Alliance was represented by Mrs. Kinsella of New South Wales.

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According to tradition Mass will be offered in March for Gabrielle Jeffery, founder of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, and Leonora de Alberti, first editor of *The Catholic Citizen*. Miss Jeffery's anniversary falls on March 19th and Miss de Alberti's on March 26th. We feel sure our members will remember them with affection and gratitude in their prayers. R.I.P.

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We offer our congratulations to the Rev. John La Farge, S.J., on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood.

We are glad to know that a member of the Alliance, Miss Annie Christitch, attended the Inter-Racial Mass and Communion, with breakfast afterwards, on December 8th, 1955, in New York, arranged by the Catholic Layman's Union of the Catholic Inter-Racial Council, in his honour.

Father La Farge was closely associated with the foundation of the *Inter-Racial Review*—with which *The Catholic Citizen* has been exchanged for many years. A message of congratulation from the *Inter-Racial Review* to *The Catholic Citizen* on its Silver Jubilee expressed the sentiment that "the staff and associates of the *Inter-Racial Review* feel a distinct kinship with those persons associated with *The Catholic Citizen*. We believe that we, in some measure, understand their problems and that they understand ours." In 1956 we can still appreciate and reciprocate these sentiments. Long may Father La Farge continue the work of Inter-Racial understanding to which he has devoted so much of his life.

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During the printing dispute some papers have been printed abroad. An issue of one paper comes from a monastic printing press in Switzerland where some of the type-setting was done by nuns! Switzerland may refuse the vote to women but, at least, unlike British Trade Unions, it does not bar them from setting type.

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The Women's Advisory Council of the United Nations Association gave an opportunity, on

February 22nd, for representatives of Women's organisations to hear Dame Lucile Sayers speak on the Tenth General Assembly of the United Nations, which she had attended as delegate from the United Kingdom. This was before her departure for the Status of Women Commission to which she is again the United Kingdom delegate.

Questions on points on the agenda included the access of women to education, equal pay, political rights of women. Under the item "Economic Opportunities for Women," Miss Barry brought up the question of discrimination between men and women in the age of retirement.

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In view of the Government's decision to implement equal pay in the Civil Service by seven stages starting from January 1955, followed by corresponding decisions of the Burnham Committee and other bodies, the Equal Pay Campaign Committee and Advisory Council consider that the time has arrived to disband. The Committee and Council believe that the further necessary work to implement full equal pay is best undertaken by the individual organizations in their own spheres.

The Equal Pay Campaign Committee and Advisory Council, consisting of some fifty national organizations under the chairmanship of Mrs. Cazalet-Keir, was formed in 1944, for the purpose of achieving equal pay in the public services.

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We are pleased to announce that our member, Councillor Miss Sylvia Terry is to be the new Mayor of Ilford. She has been a member of the Ilford Council since she was elected in 1947.

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We offer our sincere sympathy to Monsignor Worlock on the death of his father, Captain Harford Thornhill Worlock. Captain and Mrs. Worlock (who died a short time ago) were both members of The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society in its early days. We ask our members to pray for them. R.I.P.

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We remind members of the 45th Annual Meeting of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance on Saturday, April 14th, at 2.30 p.m., Mrs. Shattock, M.D., D.P.M., presiding. This year it will be held at 63, Bayswater Road (near Lancaster Gate Station). Among the speakers will be Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, D.B.E., Dame Leslie Whately, D.B.E., Miss Noreen Carr, Miss Cory, Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell, and Mrs. Williams.

Tea (2s. 6d.) will be available after the meeting. Subscriptions to the Alliance £1, which includes "The Catholic Citizen," are now due.



## 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

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## Slavery Convention

*Substance of Speech given by Mme Wanda Grabinska on behalf of St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance before the Committee of the United Nations set up to draft a Supplementary Convention on Slavery, New York—January 17th, 1956*

On behalf of St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance I thank you for giving us this opportunity of expanding the comments sent in by the Alliance on the Draft Supplementary Convention on Slavery.

Although we have limited our opinions to the subjects, which are the nearest to our interests and action in the field we do sponsor the proposed Convention and its spirit as a whole.

We are deeply concerned that the proposed Convention be worded in such a way, as to exclude the possibility of misinterpretation. It was, because of our concern as to the clarity of the text, that we asked for the deletion in the first two lines of the words "practicable," . . . "where appropriate," . . . "progressively." Were these words omitted the preamble would give an impression of a determination to get rid of evils which are acknowledged, which would of itself be the best guarantee of success. We would urge that there is need, not so much for caution as for courage in dealing with these customs which are analogous to slavery. There are more influences on the side of evasive action or inaction than there are on the side of action of any kind. The words "all necessary measures" . . . "as soon as possible," should be sufficient to prevent any rash or precipitate action.

We are particularly interested in the insertion of the provision preventing child marriages and child betrothal, which we believe is at the root of the evil that enslaves women in many countries—for once betrothed and the bride-price paid, it is practically impossible for a girl to refuse a marriage.

If a girl child can, by tribal custom, be sold at birth to a man of mature age, if she can be taken back from her husband who has paid the bride-price and given to another who is willing to pay more, if she can be lent out to her hus-

band's guests or pawned to pay his debts, or sent out to raise children to her father, then surely her condition corresponds to the definition of Slavery adopted by the Convention of 1926, i.e. "one over whom any or all of the rights of ownership are exercised."

The children who are bought (to all intents and purposes) at a tender age and taken into a man's household are not only in the position of slaves, but are also practically slaves of the older wives, whose task it is to train the children and younger women. It does not require much imagination to fill out the picture.

We trust therefore that the Committee will take into consideration our request to add the words "promised or" before the words "given in marriage" in Article 1(c) (i) creating thus a legal barrier against such practices.

St. Joan's Alliance, which for twenty-five years has been engaged with these questions, has collected a considerable body of evidence on customs analogous to slavery, and in August 1950 sent a Memorandum with documented information to the *ad hoc* Committee on Slavery.

As regards child welfare, the Alliance welcomes the proposal inserted in paragraph (d) of Art. 1, in so far as it would hasten the suppression of the abuse of child adoption, which still persists in some countries. *Bona fide* adoption is doubtless to be commended. At the same time the Alliance views with some misgiving the exception in the last sentence lest this should weaken the force of the previous prohibition. This exception might condone adoptions, which, on a short-term view, seem to the child's advantage in being fed and clothed, but are against its interest on a long-term view, as these adoptions might lead to the exploitation of the labour of the child, and possibly to something worse, its prostitution.

Should the proviso be retained the Alliance would plead for adequate *legal* safeguards, such as exist in Hong-Kong, for example. There, largely as the result of a campaign carried on in 1937-38 for the protection of the Mui Tsai, a system was established by which every person who has in his custody any girl must register within three months under stringent regulations for inspection and control.

The Alliance urges the fixing of a universal minimum age of consent in marriage. The words "where appropriate" as used in Art. 5, would surely open the door to evasive action and temporising discussion in country after country. The Alliance believes that no marriage contract should be made for boys or girls under the age of fourteen and that the free and full consent of both spouses should be indispensable for the validity of a marriage.

Recently an all-Nigerian Committee (Report of the Committee on Bride-Price—Eastern Regional Government, Enugu 1955) has recommended that child marriage be abolished by legislation. It has also recommended that the age of marriage should be sixteen (an age the Alliance had scarcely dared to suggest)—with the proviso that the parents' permission be obtained if either party is under the age of twenty-one—such permission not to be unreasonably withheld.

The Eastern Regional Government of Nigeria accepts the responsibility for social customs which affect the well-being of its peoples—and will introduce legislation on those which seem to the Committee most urgent—amongst these is child marriage. It accepts that it is its duty to act as an instrument of enlightenment in these important social problems.

St. Joan's Alliance has asked for legislation against forced marriage and child betrothal, and has been told that these things will die out with education. Must children still suffer before they have the *legal* right to protection?

We ask that these customs be called by their true name—slavery, and abolished by law. Child marriage has been legally abolished in the French and Belgian Overseas Territories, and in Southern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa. Law is itself an educating factor, and knowledge of the fact that a girl is legally free will soon influence public opinion.

The Alliance agrees with the establishment of a civil register of marriages but with the proviso that only *monogamous* marriages be registered. It strongly advocates the recognition of duly authorized ministers of religion as marriage officers and that they be required to register the marriages solemnized by them.

It believes that to register polygamous marriages would create an impression in the minds of the people that the Government is not serious in its support of monogamy.

One further point; we would ask the Committee to recommend the setting up of a Committee of experts to supervise the application of the Slavery Convention.

Realizing how precious is your time we have limited ourselves here to the presentation of the bare bones of our comments and suggestions. We are glad to add that the International Bureau for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons, which is well known to you, and which I also have the honour to represent, endorses all these comments.

May I end by saying that we firmly hope that this Committee—at this Session—will succeed in advancing this Convention. We are living in an Atomic Age. The power of Material Energy, however, has alas! far outstripped the power of the Moral and Spiritual forces of humanity. Human suffering and human needs are still endless. We believe that the proposed Convention will create the means to relieve mankind of a social evil—in striking contrast with the spirit of the Twentieth Century. Let us hope that this Century will at long last eradicate the stigma of tolerated slavery in every form—everywhere.

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We print below the text of the Articles to which Madame Grabinska refers in her speech as they were adopted by the Drafting Committee.

#### Article 1. Preamble

Each of the Contracting Parties to the present Convention shall take all practicable and necessary legislative and other measures to bring about progressively and as soon as possible the complete abolition or abandonment of the following institutions and practices, where they still exist and whether or not they are covered by the definition of slavery contained in Article 1 of the Slavery Convention of September 25th, 1926.

#### Article 1 (c)

Any institution or practice whereby a woman, without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or in kind to her parents, guardian, family or to any other person or group.

#### Article 1 (d)

Any institution or practice whereby a child or young person under the age of 18 years is delivered by either or both his natural parents or his guardians to another person, whether for reward or not, for the purpose of exploiting the child or young person, or his or her labour.

#### Article 2 (formerly Article 5)

With a view to bringing to an end the institutions and practices mentioned in Article 1(c) of this Convention, the Contracting Parties undertake to prescribe, where appropriate, suitable minimum ages of marriage, to encourage the use of facilities whereby the consent of both parties to a marriage may be freely expressed in the presence of a competent civil or religious authority, and to encourage the registration of marriages.

(Continued on page 23)



### THE MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

In February the Commons discussed the Housing and Subsidies Bill at length (Committee, Report and Third Reading) and the New National Insurance Bill (February 3rd). On February 16th the question of the Abolition of Capital Punishment was given a free vote. The Home Secretary moved:—"That this House is of the opinion that, while the death penalty should be retained, the law relating to the crime of murder should be amended." During the debate Mr. Herbert Morrison said: "We all believe in sex equality. We believe in equality of rights and obligations as between men and women, but executions of women are becoming distasteful, whether people believe in sex equality or not." The motion was defeated and an amendment reading: "That this House believes that the death penalty for murder no longer accords with the needs or the true interests of a civilised society and calls on Her Majesty's Government to introduce forthwith legislation for its abolition or for its suspension for an experimental period," was passed by 292 to 246 votes. None of the women members spoke in the debate. Thirteen of them voted against Capital punishment and seven for its retention.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement on the Economic Situation was debated on February 20th and the Pensions (Increase) Bill had its second reading on February 23rd.

Dame Irene Ward continued her vigorous campaign for the small fixed income groups. She put in Supplementaries whenever pensions were the subject of questions and asked a number of questions herself, notably on February 9th: "Whether, having introduced the Pensions (Increase) Bill he will proceed to formulate proposals for assisting those living on small fixed incomes who do not benefit under this Bill." When Mr. H. Brooke, in reply, asked Dame Irene for some concrete suggestions, she pursued: "Whilst thanking my right hon. Friend for the small step forward in the case of people covered by the Pensions (Increase) Bill, may I ask whether he would bear in mind that the Prime Minister is committed up to the hilt to help these people as a result of his speech in Bradford? Is my right hon. Friend aware that I think nothing at all of his Answer, which I consider to be a breach of trust?" Mr. Brooke pursued pacifically and with some justice: "The problem of helping those who are not pensioners and who have been freed by this Government from liability to Income Tax is a very difficult one indeed. I am sure that the best thing that we can do for them is to stabilise the £." Dame Irene again pursued the question, this time on behalf of non-contributory pensioners, with the Minister of Pensions and National Insurance on February 13th. She also spoke at length in the debate on

the National Insurance Bill (February 3rd) on the subject of elderly women and permitted earnings in addition to pensions. She said: "I hope that the hon. Gentlemen opposite will forgive me if I say one or two critical things about the apparent attitude of the trade unions towards the matter of married women who work. I always understood that part of the reason why the trade unions were critical of any increase in the earnings rule was that they thought that women reaching the age of 60 might, if there was an increase in the permitted earnings, retire from full-time employment and seek part-time employment. If that is the view. . . I suggest that the women's wage scales should be looked at."

Publication of the report of the Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce has been held up by the printing trade dispute. On February 16th, in answer to a question by Mr. Woodburn, the Attorney General said that: "The report will not be published before March 16th."

On January 30th, Mr. Collins asked the Foreign Secretary: "If he will approach the United States Government with a view to making reciprocal arrangements to facilitate legal action against United States citizens who have deserted their dependants in this country, and of British citizens, now in Britain who have similarly deserted their families in the United States." Lord John Hope replied: "No Sir. According to the information available to me the problem of securing maintenance payments in cases of desertion does not call for special arrangements. In any case the difficulties of arranging and administering them would be immense." Mr. Collins pursued: "Is the hon. Gentleman aware that there are extremely distressing cases of women with young children who have been deserted and left penniless, with no practical enforceable legal remedy? Surely this state of affairs is completely undesirable to both Governments? Will the hon. Gentleman not look into it? If he has not had evidence of such cases sent to him, I shall be very pleased to send him evidence, and I hope that he will then look into it." Lord John Hope replied: "I would be grateful for any evidence that the hon. Gentleman cares to send. So far very few cases of desertion have been brought to our notice."

On February 13th Mr. Benn asked the Under Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations: "Why a group of Bamangwato women were recently flogged in Bechuanaland; what offences they were charged with; by whom they were tried; under what authority such punishments are authorised; by whom and where and under whose supervision the sentences were carried out; and if he will make a statement." Commander Allan Noble replied: "In December 1955, at Gweta, two women who were involved in a drunken brawl assaulted a tribal policeman and subsequently insulted the

Subordinate Native Authority in his kgotla. The Subordinate Native Authority ordered the two women to receive two strokes each. The sentence was imposed under Section 13 of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Native Courts Proclamation and was administered in kgotla according to native law and custom. The Native Authority had already prohibited corporal punishment of women and he has been asked to remind all his subordinates again that corporal punishment should not be administered to women."

On February 22nd Mr. Sorenson asked the Colonial Secretary: "Approximately how many cases of Mui-tsai bondage of children now exist in Hong Kong; and what action has been taken to secure the progressive abolition of this institution." Mr. Hare replied: "No cases have come to light for a number of years. Mui-tsai is illegal and social welfare inspectors vigilantly enforce the law."

B. M. Halpern

### UNE CAMPAGNE POUR L'AUGMENTATION DU "SALAIRE UNIQUE"

Mme Lefauchaux a rédigé avec quelques dirigeantes d'associations une lettre dont nous donnons le texte ci-dessous et qui a recueilli l'adhésion des groupements dont les noms suivent.

La lettre a été rédigée en vue d'être remise aux ministres compétents et envoyée à tous ceux qui se sont déclarés favorables au principe de l'augmentation du "salaire unique", sans peut-être se rendre un compte exact des conséquences de tous ordres d'une semblable mesure.

D'autres arguments pourraient être mis en avant; les rédactrices de la lettre ont pensé qu'un texte bref a plus de chances de retenir l'attention.

"Le Conseil National des Femmes françaises, au nom des Organisations dont les noms suivent, tient à manifester son inquiétude devant un mouvement d'opinion qui risque de remettre en question les progrès accomplis depuis la guerre dans la voie d'une égalité de droits pour tous les citoyens d'un même pays.

"L'aide à la famille est prévue dans les systèmes de Sécurité Sociale de tous les pays civilisés. Cette aide est de stricte justice. La France est parmi les nations qui la mettent en pratique le plus largement.

"Plus discutables sont certains projets actuels qui envisagent de modifier l'allocation de "salaire unique" dans de telles proportions qu'elle devienne pour les femmes une véritable prime de renoncement au travail. La formation professionnelle des femmes s'en trouverait atteinte. La reprise d'activité pour les femmes seules, chefs de famille, sans qualification, deviendrait quasi impossible.

"Nous craignons que ce mouvement d'opinion ne soit inspiré trop souvent par le souci de réserver

aux seuls travailleurs masculins les emplois de toutes catégories.

"Un des arguments mis en avant dans cette campagne est particulièrement choquant: c'est celui qui prétend établir une supériorité morale de la femme qui reste au foyer sur celle qui travaille. Ce discrédit a priori est indéfendable. Nous estimons que c'est à la femme elle-même à choisir en toute liberté, sans aucune pression d'aucune sorte, la voie dans laquelle elle veut s'engager. Une prime élevée, comme celle qu'on réclame pour la "mère au foyer", ne peut que nuire aux femmes qui travaillent. En effet, la meilleure chance de celles-ci pour améliorer leur condition est d'obtenir la mise en pratique de cette égalité de droits affirmée dans le Préambule de notre Constitution. Or, il est impossible de réclamer à la fois égalité et privilège.

"Nous n'insisterons pas sur les incidences économiques de la mesure proposée, alors que l'ensemble de nos charges sociales, plus élevées que dans la plupart des autres pays concurrents, met déjà en difficulté trop d'industries françaises. A la charge supplémentaire imposée à notre budget s'ajouterait en outre une diminution certaine de la productivité."

Le texte a été approuvé par les associations féminines suivantes:

Alliance Ste-Jeanne-d'Arc;—Ass. des Anciennes Elèves de l'Ecole Normale de Sèvres;—Ass. des Femmes de l'Union Française;—Ass. des Françaises Diplômées de l'Université;—Ass. Française des Femmes des Carrières Juridiques;—Ass. Française des Femmes Médecins;—Groupement Amical des Femmes Avocats de France;—Groupement Féminin des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises;—Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes;—Union Féminine des Carrières Libérales et Commerciales;—Union Française des Electriciennes;—Union des Soroptimists-Clubs de France.—Bulletin Conseil National des Femmes Françaises.

### SLAVERY CONVENTION (Continued from page 21)

The Alliance warmly welcomes the new International Draft Convention "On the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery," which was unanimously adopted by the special Ten-Member Committee of the United Nations on February 6th, for submission to the Economic and Social Council in April, in New York.

The Alliance is particularly gratified that the words **promised or** have been inserted in Article 1(c)—an essential safeguard. Also that the exception which tended to weaken the original Article on child adoption has been omitted. This ran "Except that this Article shall not be construed so as to prohibit or hinder **bona fide** adoptions intended to promote the welfare of children or young persons."

We regret that in Article 5, now Article 2, the words **where appropriate** are still retained and that no universal minimum age of consent in marriage has been laid down; neither is it clear that only monogamous marriages will be registered "by a competent civil or religious authority."

We are grateful to Madame Grabinska for so ably representing St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance on this occasion.



### Merseyside Branch

The meeting on January 26th was a great success and Miss Keeley was excellent. She reported on the Pax Romana Conference at Nottingham at which the difficulties facing undergraduates on entering the professional world were discussed.

At the same meeting Sister Monica of the White Sisters, recently returned home after twenty years in Uganda, gave a most interesting talk concerning the education of women in that country.

The Chairman, Mrs. McCann, spoke of the celebrations to be held in Rouen in June. She reported that Miss C. Brady had been elected a member of the Housing Sub-Committee of the Women's Organizations Committee Standing Conference, and that Mrs. de Rouffignac was to be the speaker at the Women's Organizations Committee's meeting in April, on the work of a Hospital Management Committee.

\* \* \*

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