

WOMEN'S · SERVICE  
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# Catholic Citizen

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

Vol. XVIII, No. 10.

NOVEMBER, 1932.

Price Twopence.

Daughter of the ancient Eve,  
We know the gifts ye gave and give;  
Who knows the gifts which you shall give,  
Daughter of the Newer Eve?

—Francis Thompson.

## The XIIIth Assembly of the League of Nations from the Feminist Point of View.

BY HELEN A. ARCHDALE.

The XIIIth Assembly takes place during a world revolution. International affairs, like so many national affairs, are in a state of revolution. Many familiar features are present: deep unrest; fear, not only of one nation for another but of the unknown, a fear engendering always more fear; the fall of accustomed leadership; instability of its successors. Many nations have passed through this revolutionary pain, some bloodily, some bloodlessly.

It is noted by historians that nations in troublous times call upon the women for help. Whatever the position of women may be in times of peace and in times of national contentment, there is no doubt that in times of national discontentment, the call to the women is always heard.

Historians tell us of outstanding women, rising to power during revolutions; they tell us of battalions of women standing in anonymous strength beside the men.

Now, after twelve years of growth this spirit of revolution is international, is in the heart of the League of Nations. In its 12th Assembly puzzled, uncertain, attacked from many sides, the League called upon the women for help.

The Spanish resolution in the 12th Assembly called for the collaboration of women in the work of the League. The Council instructed the Secretariat to ask the women themselves how they would suggest that this collaboration could be achieved.

In what will be a historic document in the long life of the women's movement, in Document A 10,1932, comes the voice of women, replying to the call of the Nations now so painfully in revolution. With one voice the women replied:

equal status is a pre-requisite of effective collaboration.

No longer will women be servers only; they will be servers and directors too. In A 10,1932 they unanimously reject continuing only in unofficial collaboration, they demand the equality and the dignity of official collaboration.

This clear answer from women, summarised in A 10,1932, was presented to the XIIIth Assembly. It is of more than passing interest to recall here the lucky attributes discovered in the number 13 by British militants in their fight for British citizenship.

The Assembly sent it to the 6th Commission and Miss Hesselgren, Delegate for Sweden, was appointed Rapporteur for this subject, the collaboration of women in the work of the League of Nations. Miss Hesselgren presented a report based on the Spanish Resolution of 1931, the answers of the women, and on various resolutions which had been sent in.

On this report there followed a discussion in which Sweden, Great Britain, Spain, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and others, stressed the demand for equal and for official collaboration; for the recognition that equal status is a pre-

requisite of effective collaboration. A demand was made, and most notably and clearly by Lord Cecil, Delegate of Great Britain, that no advantages, no special privileges, should be suggested, but only equal chance, equal opportunity. It was agreed, in response to some objections, that the League should not and could not dictate to its Member States, but that it should and could draw their attention to the unanimous opinion of women that equal status is a pre-requisite of effective collaboration.

Concurrently with the above, in the 1st Commission, a similarly decided attitude was revealed on the point of the ratification of the Hague Nationality Convention with its four Articles (8-11) which discriminate between men and women.

During the making of this Convention, in 1929, and ever since, women have protested against its sex discrimination. Here, in the 1st Commission, the effect of their work was seen in the prolonged debates, in the desperate efforts of anti-feminists and, most notably, in the acceptance of the principle of the equality of the sexes in so many of the speeches. While not always agreeing with the women's intense objection to Articles 8 to 11 speakers were careful to make clear that

"the Articles laid down no principle" and

"the Hague Convention in no way prejudiced the principle of the equality of the sexes." Notably, Austria, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Irish Free State, India, made the same point as was made by other delegates in the 6th Commission, that complete equality is demanded by women, that it is a just demand, that it must inevitably be ceded.

Prolonging the struggle day after day, it was not until a Sub-Committee had tried to harmonise various resolutions, and had then sent the result of their efforts to a Drafting Committee that a resolution was arrived at. This contained a request to States to ratify the Hague Convention, and the objection to such ratification continued to manifest itself in the 1st Commission where the resolution received 23 votes, four voting against and 2 abstaining. Again objection was carried to the Assembly where the Resolution received 30 votes, with 9 abstentions.

While the acceptance of the four discriminatory Articles can only be seen as a defeat for feminism, the number of abstentions, the tone of the long debates and the acceptance of the principle of equality can only be seen as a big

step towards the final victory. There can be no doubt as to the genuineness of this wonderful wave of equal status which has shown itself in the XIIIth Assembly of the League of Nations. Let the nations take full advantage of it and turn their laws in the direction of equality so that the wave is not hindered by national laws but instead gathers force and flows uninterruptedly on to triumph.

#### RESOLUTION ON NATIONALITY OF WOMEN

As Passed 12/10/32.

"The Assembly,

"Having considered with the greatest interest the report of the Secretary-General containing the observations submitted by Governments on the subject of the nationality of women in accordance with the resolution of the twelfth Assembly, together with the observations of the Committee of Representatives of Women's International Organisations and the petitions of the 'Catholic Women and Catholic Men';

"Considering that the Codification Conference did not intend to embody in the provisions of the 'Convention on certain questions relating to the conflict of nationality laws' any principle in contradiction with the independence of the nationality of married women, but rather to put an end to certain difficulties which arise from existing divergencies between the law governing the matter in different countries (Articles 8, 9 and 11), and that Article 10 even contains a formal application of the principle of independence; and that the Hague Codification Conference, by its recommendation No. VI, requested States 'to examine whether it would not be possible:

"(1) To introduce into their law the principle of the equality of the sexes in matters of nationality, taking particularly into consideration the interests of the children,

"(2) And especially to decide that, in principle, the nationality of the wife shall henceforth not be affected without her consent either by the mere fact of marriage or by any change in the nationality of her husband';

"Noting that, in their observances, a large number of Governments express the opinion that Articles 8 to 11 of the Hague Convention represent the degree of progress which can at

(Continued on p. 85).

### Notes and Comments.

Mrs. Archdale's article, and the appended resolution passed by the 13th Assembly of the League of Nations, shows exactly how the principle of equal nationality fared in the Assembly. Feminist societies in this and other countries will not be satisfied with the glimmer of hope for the future contained in one clause of the resolution. The agitation goes on, and will grow till women have obtained justice.

We are grateful to Señora Vergara, delegate from Chile, for her brave and dignified plea for the revision in the Hague Convention of Articles 8-11, which deal with women's nationality. She was supported by the Colombian delegate.

So much for international progress; here in our own country women demand that the Government—true to their principles expressed last year at the Assembly of the League—shall pass a Bill giving to women the same rights of nationality as a man enjoys.

We are glad to record that our Hon. Secretary, Miss F. A. Barry, was at Geneva during the whole of the Assembly, and was able to attend the Conferences and Committees dealing with questions of particular interest to women.

The Irish Delegation at Geneva is to be congratulated for their lead in the protest against that portion of the Report of the Health Committee of the League of Nations which deals with the prevention of conception in certain cases of disease. They were chiefly instrumental in having this portion referred back for consideration to the next Session of the Council, and in causing the distribution of the Report as it stood to be suspended.

Communications asking for the suppression or amendment of the offending paragraph were received by the Secretariat from the International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues and from other organisations, these being chiefly Medical Associations in various countries.

We offer our cordial congratulations to our associate, Mr. A. N. D. Kerr, who was elected as Independent Candidate at the first Borough Election of Barnes.

The Annual Mass for deceased members, associates and benefactors of the Alliance was offered at St. Patrick's, Soho Square, on Sunday, November 6th.

#### RESOLUTION ON NATIONALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN—(Continued).

present be obtained by way of general international agreement in regard to the question of the nationality of women;

"Considering that any amendment outside the normal procedure for revision would prove impracticable and, therefore, that it is not possible even to eliminate from the text the words that seem to have created a misconception as to a discrimination of sexes in regard to nationality; "Being satisfied, therefore, that the coming into force of Articles 8 to 11 would in no way prejudice further concerted international action, when such action becomes practicable;

"Recognising that their coming into force would not, in the meantime, place any restriction upon the freedom of action of any State that may desire to give further effect in its nationality laws to the principle of the equality of the sexes;

"Considering, finally, the question of the nationality of women to be in process of evolution and connected with the change of women's position in social, economic and political life;

"Expresses the hope that the States which have already signed the Hague Nationality Convention will introduce such legislation as may be necessary to give effect thereto, and will deposit their ratifications at an early date;

"Draws the attention of the States that have not yet passed the necessary legislative measures to give effect to the Convention to the possibility of enacting their internal legislative measures in a form more appropriate to meet the wishes of the women's organisations;

"Instructs the Secretary-General from time to time to ask the Governments to give him information as to the effect which they have found it possible to give to the Recommendation No. VI of the Codification Conference;

"Requests the Council, on the basis of the information so obtained, to follow the development of public opinion on this important question, in order to determine when such development has reached a point at which further concerted international action would be justified."

We remind our readers of our stall at the Green, White and Gold Fair, at Caxton Hall, November 17th and 18th, open from 3 to 9-30. On November 16th there will be a private sale at our office, 55 Berners Street, W., from 1-30 to 6. Tea will be provided.

## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,

AND

*Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":*

55 BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.1. Tel. Museum 4181

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

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## A Victorian Champion of Sex Equality.\*

The Stansfeld trustees have done good service in entrusting to Mr. and Mrs. Hammond the writing of this record of the career of the late Sir James Stansfeld, whose noble life is an honour to his country. Had he been a General noted for martial victories he would have been famous in history, but Stansfeld's victory was a moral one, his combat was waged against the powers of darkness, and such victories go for the most part unheeded.

Posterity is apt to forget the pioneers who have passed on, and many a woman fighting to raise the status of women, has been ignorant of the work accomplished by James Stansfeld in an earlier generation. The main object of this study is to relate—and how well it is related—the part played by Stansfeld in the agitation against the Contagious Diseases Acts. He had held Cabinet office in the days of Palmerston and Gladstone, and deliberately renounced his career to fight on the side of Josephine Butler.

At first immersed in his political work the agitation against the Contagious Diseases Acts passed him by, and it was the pressure brought on him by his constituents in Halifax, which opened his eyes to the real meaning and to the horror of the measures taken in ports and garrison towns in a vain attempt to protect immoral men from the result of their own folly.

Josephine Butler and her adherents had educated a body of the voters of Halifax, and Stansfeld's answer to the question put by his

constituents in January 1870: "Will you oppose any attempts to extend the Contagious Diseases Acts and vote for their repeal?"—was justly considered unsound. After explaining to his audience the powers given by this Act to the police and medical inspectors for the prevention of contagious diseases which "spring out of the sexual vices of men," he continued: "You must know that, if you keep in a condition of celibacy, as we do, the thousands of soldiers in our army and the sailors in our fleet, we must expect—and unfortunately we know too well that we must expect—the consequences of that condition which we ourselves have enforced. It so becomes necessary to provide in these garrison towns, for the sake of these men, themselves the victims of disease, and for the sake of the poor creatures who minister to their desires, the means of inspection to which I have referred . . ."

At that time even a man of noble ideals such as Stansfeld had not realised that the Government by their action stimulated the demands of their soldiers and sailors, and provided the supply of "Government women" as they were sometimes called.

Well might the great Pontiff Pius IX designate this iniquitous system as "a traffic in human flesh, patented by the Government." And is it not charitable to suppose that those who uphold the system as the lesser of two evils have little knowledge of the measures necessary to enforce it.

A few years later, in 1874, we find Stansfeld a staunch opponent of the Acts, and a Vice-President of the National Association for Repeal.

\* James Stansfeld, *A Victorian Champion of Sex Equality*. By J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond. Longmans, Green & Co. 15s. net.

In his first speech to the House he declared: "I have made my choice—I have cast in my lot with those men and women—for ever revered be their names—who hitherto have led a hope which too long has seemed forlorn and never will I desist, and never will they desist from this sacred agitation until these degrading laws are blotted out from the Statute Book for ever . . ." For another twelve years the agitation for repeal was continued, and it was not till 1886 the repealers won their victory and the Acts were abolished.

Stansfeld was a friend to women; when at the Local Government Board, he appointed in 1872 the first woman Poor Law Inspector, Mrs. Nassau Senior, an appointment by no means welcome to his colleagues; he was a suffragist; he rendered great assistance in opening the medical profession to women; he was a lover of liberty, but his name should be remembered for his work in co-operation with Josephine Butler in purging England from the abominations of licensed prostitution.

The question is now better understood, and its connection with the White Slave Traffic recognised by the League of Nations. Out of the forty-seven countries which adopted the licensed house system, twenty-eight have now abolished it, and fourteen have set up Commissions of Enquiry.

"Thus," the authors tell us, "whereas England was being urged by sober thinkers fifty years ago to follow the example of the Continent, nation after nation to-day, taught by experience, is turning back to the example of England. Of the honour due to England for giving the world that example no small share belongs to a man whose noble patience England has forgotten."

L. DE ALBERTI.

### DINNER TO ME. FREMONT.

On Tuesday, November 1st, All Saints' Day, the Alliance had the honour of entertaining Madame Frémont, the Canadian Delegate to the League of Nations Assembly, at Pinoli's Restaurant. Mrs. Laughton Mathews, who was in the chair, read friendly messages from Dom Gilbert Higgins, the Very Rev. W. H. Kent, O.S.C., and also from Mrs. Corbett Ashby, who had hoped to be present. Mrs. Laughton Mathews referred to the position at Geneva as regards the Nationality of Married Women and urged the importance of continuing to press the Government to pass into law at the earliest possible moment a Bill giving women equal

nationality rights with men. Mrs. Laughton Mathews introduced Madame Frémont as the only woman to be full delegate to the League this year, and added it was a great pleasure that this honour had fallen to a Catholic and a friend of the Alliance. Madame Frémont had been appointed to the 5th and 6th Commissions at Geneva, those dealing with humanitarian and political questions, but unfortunately not to the 1st Commission, on which Madame Vergara, of Chile, had made such a fine stand for equality on the question of nationality of married women. Madame Frémont, who had been asked to give her impressions of the League, gave a sketch of its organisation, and expressed her confidence in it as a valuable constructive effort, a symbol of international good-will. In Canada in her own province of Quebec, women had not yet the vote, though they had the Federal vote for the Federal Legislature. Meanwhile, the women's organisations were doing much in the way of civic education, and Madame Frémont's own organisation had begun by reforming the status of charwomen employed in Government departments; this social work had conciliated a good many sympathies in less progressive circles.

A vote of thanks was moved by Miss Barclay Carter, and seconded by Miss Madden, who voiced the good wishes of St. Joan's Alliance for the speedy enfranchisement of the women of Quebec.

B. C.

## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

NON-PARTY.

Office—55, Berners St., Oxford St., London, W.1.

Patron: Saint Joan of Arc. Colours: Blue, White & Gold

Organ—"The Catholic Citizen," 2d. 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 1s. 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.

## Thirteenth Assembly of the League of Nations.

We are glad to learn that the Memorandum issued last year by the International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues has now been cancelled. It has been replaced by the following:

### FIRST COMMITTEE NATIONALITY OF WOMEN.

#### Communication from the International Union of Catholic Women's Associations.

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT.

On instructions from the Chairman of the First Committee the Secretariat has the honour to communicate to the Committee the following memorandum which has been presented to the Chairman by the International Union of Catholic Women's Associations, and which cancels and replaces the memorandum from the same organisation which was distributed to the Assembly last year.

(Translation)

#### MEMORANDUM ON THE NATIONALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN.

On August 10th, 1931, the International Union of Catholic Women's Associations had the honour to present to His Excellency the Secretary-General of the League of Nations a memorandum on the nationality of married women.\*

This memorandum has clearly given rise to misinterpretation, since in certain quarters it has been understood as affirming that unity of the family necessarily involves identity of nationality.

In these circumstances, and in view of the fact that the question is on the agenda of the present session of the Assembly of the League of Nations, the "Bureau" of the Union feels it desirable to define its views in the present memorandum, which cancels and replaces that of 1931.

The "Bureau" of the Union, recognising:

(1) That the *unity of the family* is a complex conception, all the elements of which are not of the same importance;

(2) That contemporary legislation appears to tend

- (a) to give a woman who marries a foreigner the right to decide her own nationality;

\* Document A41, 1931V.

(b) to give general application to this solution by means of international conventions;

And feeling further:

(1) That a marriage, voluntarily entered into by the parties, creates in the form of a family a social group to which the children to be born of the union also belong;

(2) That although *identity of nationality* is in principle an undisputed factor in the unity of the family, it must nevertheless be recognised that in some circumstances differences of nationality are not calculated to affect such unity;

(3) That *arbitrary changes of nationality* during marriage, made without previous agreement between husband and wife, are frequently a menace to the social group constituted by the family, and more especially to the children;

Without entering into legal details, makes the following recommendations:

1. Any legislative provision governing the nationality of husbands and wives should respect the essential interests, in regard to unity, of the social group constituted by the family and enforce *subordination* of the *personal* interests of the husband and wife to the interests of the family which they have founded.

2. That the family should be given a permanent and stable status regulating the relations between its members.

3. That a change in the nationality either of the husband or of the wife should not be allowed without the other party to the marriage having a right to oppose such change exercisable under the control of the Courts.

4. That, in accordance with the recommendation made on August 22nd last at Oslo by the Institute of International Law, in cases where husband and wife have different nationalities, either should be able to acquire as easily and as rapidly as possible the nationality of the other party to the marriage.

5. That, pending the entry into force of such international measures, there should be established an *international system for the settlement of conflicts* capable of threatening the interests of the wife and children.

In the name of the International Union of Catholic Women's Associations:

(Sgd.) F. STEENBERGHE-ENGERINGH,  
President.

(Sgd.) Vtesse. de VELARD, Vice-  
President.

(Sgd.) M. ROMME, Secretary.

### THE POSITION OF MARRIED WOMEN.

A Conference on the Position of Married Women was held at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on October 21st under the auspices of the Women's Freedom League. Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, speaking from the chair, urged the importance of the married woman being recognised as a human being, with rights and responsibilities.

Resolutions were passed:

(1) Demanding the abolition of all forms of Coverture.

(2) Affirming the right of all women, whether married or single, to undertake paid employment.

(3) Urging that the incomes of husband and wife be not aggregated for purposes of assessment of Income Tax.

(4) Expressing the firm opinion of the Conference that marriage should not prevent a woman from obtaining or retaining any medical post.

(5) Condemning the denial of ordinary (covenanted) benefit to thousands of married women permissible by Order under the Anomalies Act and demanding the immediate cancellation of that Order.

(6) Deploring the action of the Government in reducing the benefits payable to women under the National Health Insurance Act which penalises married women as such.

A further resolution dealing with Family Allowance was lost by a large majority; and a resolution on Testamentary Provision was dropped, although the Conference was in general agreement that the surviving spouse should have a right to some of the property.

The resolution dealing with Nationality was proposed by St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance and seconded by the Six Point Group. "This Conference expresses its dissatisfaction that at this year's Assembly of the League of Nations the British Government voted in favour of ratification of the Hague Nationality Convention. It welcomes, however, the recommendation urging Governments 'to enact their internal legislative measures in a form more appropriate to meet the wishes of the women's organisations' and calls upon the Government to introduce and pass into law the Nationality of Married Women Bill.

"It further appeals to the Government to urge the Dominions to come into line with the above quoted recommendations."

In proposing the resolution Mrs. Laughton Mathews referred to Madame Vergara's splendid fight at the Assembly of the League of Nations against the ratification of the Hague Convention. The advantages of the Convention are as nothing compared with its fundamental misunderstanding of the highest ideals of marriage. Family unity is not to be attained by coercion.

What we demand from the British Government is a Nationality Bill giving a woman the independent right to her nationality, and not Captain Cazalet's British Born Alien Women (Civil Rights) Bill, which is merely a palliative. Let the Government introduce and pass into law the Nationality of Married Women Bill and do justice without waiting to see how many countries are ready to do the same.

C. S.

### LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Hon. Sec.: Mrs. A. Stewart Mason, B.A.,

Brinsworth, Grosvenor Road, Birkenhead.

The first meeting of the Winter Session was held on Monday, September 26th, in the Blue Coat Chambers, Liverpool. It took the form of a social, at which Miss N. S. Parnell, B.A., was presented with a silver tea service in recognition of her valuable services to the branch during the nine years she was Hon. Secretary. Miss Parnell in returning thanks gave a brief sketch of the early days of the Alliance, and said that though she belonged to many societies she was most proud of her membership of St. Joan's, as she considered it the finest society of women in the world.

The Misses Hudson and Miss Johnston entertained the meeting with music and recitations.

On Monday, October 10th, we had the pleasure of a visit from Dr. Isabel Heath, a former chairman of the Liverpool Branch, who gave us a most interesting lecture on Maternal Mortality.

A vote of thanks was proposed to Dr. Heath by Mrs. Graham and seconded by Mrs. Murray.

### TREASURER'S NOTE.

The Jumble Sale on October 22nd brought us in £7 6s. 4d., and we are most grateful to all who sent us goods and also to those who helped to sell, and especially Mrs. Hand and Mrs. Garrard who worked extremely hard for it.

May I now remind members of our stall at the Green, White and Gold Fair at the Caxton Hall on November 17th and 18th. Gifts in money or kind are urgently needed, and also helpers to sell at the stall. Will anyone who can help kindly notify the office?

On November 16th there will be a private Sale at the office from 1-30 to 6 p.m. for members who prefer to have first choice of the articles for sale. Tea will be provided.

P. M. BRANDT.

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We rejoice to hear of the appointment of the Begum Shah Nawaz to the 3rd Indian Round Table Conference opening in London on November 15th. We regret that only one woman should come from India.

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Council for the Representation of Women in the League of Nations.

**ANNUAL MEETING, Friday, 2nd December, 1932**  
at Women's Service House Annexe, 35 Marsham Street, S.W.1.

Business Meeting at 2.30. At 4.30 Mrs. CORBETT ASHBY (British Substitute Delegate to the Disarmament Conference of the League of Nations) will speak on "DISARMAMENT OR RE-ARMAMENT". Visitors will be warmly welcomed both to the Business Meeting and to hear Mrs. Corbett Ashby's address

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