

THE
CATHOLIC CITIZEN

VOLUME XVI, 1930.



ST. JOANS' SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,
55 BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W. 1.

CATHOLIC CITIZEN



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WOMEN'S SERVICE
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NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

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. XVI, No. 1. 15th JANUARY, 1930. 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.

Women and the New Public Assistance Committees.

By COUNCILLOR MRS. V. M. CRAWFORD.

The transference of the functions of Boards of Guardians to County Councils and County Boroughs, under the Local Government Act of 1929, is to take place on March 31 next, and all over the country Councils are busy making the necessary administrative arrangements for this far-reaching reform. Thus the days of the Women Guardians of the Poor are strictly numbered, and in a few weeks time some two thousand five hundred of us, with a host of male colleagues, will find ourselves, through no fault of our own, bereft of our job. It is little wonder that many of us regard the new Act with scant favour.

Yet looking at the matter in its wider aspects there is much that is good and progressive in Mr. Neville Chamberlain's Act. Setting aside for the moment the whole subject of De-rating, as beyond the scope of this article, it must be remembered that in the past there has been a lamentable amount of over-lapping as regards the giving of relief between rival local authorities. This will be largely avoided in future. And though the new Act can scarcely be said to "abolish the workhouse," it certainly goes some way in the direction of abolishing "pauperism" as a social disease to be segregated in a water-tight compartment of our administrative system. The hated stigma of pauperism has lain specially heavily on workhouse infirmaries which to-day in many ways do the work of general hospitals, with the

result that while voluntary hospitals have been overcrowded, the rate-supported infirmary wards often stand half-empty. No one applies for poor law medical relief save as a last resort, yet every one to-day admits the need for early and preventive treatment of disease. In future the insulting distinction between "pauper" and other patients will be wiped away and classification of patients according to disease will be immensely facilitated.

So too the distinction between "pauper" schools, excellent as many of them have been, and ordinary schools will be a thing of the past, and all children will pass their school years under the care of a single education authority whether their school be day or residential, and whatever the financial position of their parents may be.

Other advantages there are of an economic nature through a better equalisation of rates, while it may be anticipated that there will be a greater uniformity of treatment as regards Out Relief—henceforward to be called "public assistance"—through the substitution of wide country areas for the present small poor law areas.

The bald fact however remains that the new scheme offers a very limited field for women's activity. Every one, from Mr. Neville Chamberlain downwards, pays compliments to the work of women guardians in the past, and expresses pious hopes that the best of them will continue to serve in

the future. But whereas in the past Boards of Guardians have presented a comparatively easy field for women to conquer, as competition was never keen, and even in Victorian days the special suitability of women for the work was widely recognised, it is a very different matter to-day in the often hotly contested elections on political lines for County Councils and County Boroughs. As a matter of fact among all the County Councils of England and Wales there are only some 130 women councillors to be found, while no less than 17 of these Councils possess no women members at all. This is partly accounted for by the inevitable expense incurred in travelling by many County Councillors, re-payment of which is not legal. And although co-optation for Public Assistance committees and sub-committees is clearly contemplated in the Act, and it is laid down that *some* of the co-opted members *shall* be women, the question of co-opting or not is left to each Council to decide for itself. County Borough Councils, it is true, usually contain more women members than County Councils, but it is reported that a number of these, Manchester, Salford, Sheffield, Bradford—to name only the most important—have already decided to co-opt nobody, and to shoulder their new administrative burdens unaided. This means in effect, as Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., has pointed out, (*The Nation*, November 24, 1928), that "it will be perfectly possible for a County Borough authority taking over the new functions to include not a single ex-Guardian, and not a single woman." She adds that "it would be possible for a County authority to meet the requirements of the Act by including two men and two women on each of its Guardians committees." This is the situation, taken at its worst, that women have to face to-day.

It has been the duty of all County authorities, during the past year, to draw up schemes under the new Act which have been submitted by now to the Minister of Health for his sanction. Apart therefore from the vital question of co-optation, it is obvious that in matters of detail there may be a good deal of variety as between one country and another. It seems simpler there-

fore to describe in some detail the approved scheme of the London County Council, which can be taken of all others and is, in itself, one of the first importance.

Certain portions of the very heavy work that the L.C.C. has to take over from the Metropolitan Boards of Guardians and from the Metropolitan Asylums Board can be absorbed by its existing committees, i.e., the Poor Law schools by the Education Committee, the "pauper" asylums by the Mental Hospitals Committee, and the Poor Law infirmaries and the treatment of the sick poor generally to the Public Health Committee. As however this implies a wide extension of the duties of the existing Health Committee, it has been decided to re-constitute and enlarge it and confer on it the new name of Central Public Health Committee. The Council being empowered to co-opt on to it outside members up to one third of its number, and as at the moment it possesses a most competent woman Chairman in the person of Dr. Barrie Lambert, we may safely assume that the claims of women will not be overlooked.

For the strictly relief work of the Guardians it has been found necessary to form an entirely new Committee of the L.C.C. to be known as the Public Assistance Committee. It will consist of 48 members, of whom 32 are to be members of the Council, and 16, some of whom will be women, co-opted from outside. For the purposes of relief London will be divided into ten large areas, each containing three or four boroughs. Each area will be entrusted to a "Local Committee," to consist of from 32 to 50 persons, partly members of the Public Assistance Committee and partly co-opted men and women. Each Local Committee will have to distribute itself between a number of sub-committees consisting of 8 or 10 members, to whom the actual detailed work of assistance will be entrusted and on to which again women will be co-opted. It is just here that the co-operation of former Guardians will be so valuable and the L.C.C. has made special regulations with a view to securing their assistance. To the sub-committees will fall the duty of investigating the circumstances

(Continued on p. 5.)

Notes and Comments.

We offer our good wishes for 1930 to our readers; we hope the year holds many victories for the feminist, or equalitarian, cause.

* * * *

In answer to a question by Sir N. Grafton Doyle, the Home Secretary stated that it is proposed immediately to increase the number of women police, in the Metropolitan area, from 50 to 100. "The scope of the functions of a policewoman as an attested constable," said Mr. Clynes, "is in law the same as those of a man, but in practice the policewoman will conform to a special scheme of duties, which will be subject to variation in detail in the light of experience." A hundred policewomen are better than fifty, but still far too few.

* * * *

At the invitation of the Chief Commissioner, the Women's Auxiliary Service is sending two trained policewomen to Alexandria. Their work will be specially concerned with the suppression of the traffic in women. The authorities hope that girls passing through Egypt on their way to the East, to be used in the traffic, may be rescued from the hands of the traders who have procured them.

We congratulate the W.A.S. on being chosen for this work.

* * * *

The Legal Sub-Committee of the Child Welfare Committee, League of Nations, had under consideration at their recent meeting in Paris the question of the enforcement abroad of maintenance orders, and the situation of illegitimate children. The Committee drew up a series of principles, as regards maintenance orders, which it considered might form a basis of a Convention between countries, whose internal laws are similar.

The question of illegitimate children was considered mainly from the point of view of such measures as might prevent the separation of these children from their mothers. The Committee suggests that the Secretariat might collect all statistical data calculated to elucidate the problem of the illegitimate child.

St. Joan's S.P.A. Lantern Lecture.

On Monday, February 3, at 6 p.m., at St. Patrick's Schools, Chapel Street, Oxford Street, (nearly opposite Bourne and Hollingsworth), Lantern Lecture by Miss M. A. Pressley-Smith, on "Women Pioneers in Labrador." Chair: The Rt. Hon. Lord Morris, K.C.M.G. Admission free.

Readers are asked to note that the meeting will take place at the *Schools* and not at the Club Room.

* * * *

We are glad to see that the Head Mistress of Notre Dame, Liverpool, Sister Clare, has received the M.B.E. We offer her our congratulations.

We also congratulate Miss Maude Royden on being appointed Companion of Honour.

* * * *

The Open Door International has now a quarterly paper of its own, "The Open Door." The second number, now obtainable, has many interesting items dealing with women's work in this and other lands. It also contains a Supplement—"Women and the Right to Work in Mines" by Elizabeth Abbott, chairmen of the British Open Door Council, and "The Use of Lead Paint by Women" by Winifred Le Sueur; both articles are of great importance, especially at this moment.

The Secretary of the O.D.C. will be glad to exchange copies of the paper with editors of other feminist papers.

Annual Meeting.

For Members of St. Joan's S.P.A. only.

The Annual Meeting will be held on March 15th. Resolutions for the Agenda, and Nominations for Committee, duly proposed and seconded, must reach the Secretary not later than *February 3*.

No nominations can be accepted unless the consent of the nominees has been previously obtained.

Will members please take this as the official notice.

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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International Feminism in 1929.

The summer of 1929 saw three international gatherings of women. In May the International Council of Women held meetings in London, when women of many lands came together to discuss a variety of questions. The I.C.W., like our own National Council of Women, is not precisely a feminist society, but includes in its programme more general subjects. The I.C.W. Conference culminated in a pageant of the progress of women, in which the suffrage section was under the care of St. Joan's S.P.A.

In June two international feminist Congresses were held in Berlin. The International Alliance for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship celebrated the twenty-fifth Jubilee of their first congress in that city, and the Open Door Council was established on an international basis, following on a few days' conference immediately preceding the Congress.

The Reports of the Jubilee Congress of the I.A.S.E.C. is now published, and many be obtained from the Headquarters, 190 Vauxhall Bridge Road, price 4s.

Forty-five countries sent delegates, and the report shows the amount of work accomplished. Woman Suffrage still remains the chief aim of the Alliance since in many of the affiliated countries the franchise is still to be won; but there are many questions in which voters and voteless may co-operate.

A glance at the resolutions shows the wide field covered by the Congress. As in former meetings the Congress re-affirmed belief in a same high moral standard both for men and women. Other subjects discussed included the nationality of married women; economic rights; the unmarried mother and her child; women police; peace and the League of Nations; like conditions of work for men and women, etc. We urge our readers to get the report and to study it. On the important question of protective legislation for women in industry, opinions differed widely, and this proves the need of the third International feminist society the Open Door Council.

The O.D.C. has also issued a report of their Conference in Berlin, which may be obtained from their Headquarters, 31ddesleigh House, Caxton Street, London, S.W.1: (price 1s. 6d. post free). The Conference, supported by 21 countries, agreed to the formation of the new international organisation, to be known as The Open Door International for the economic emancipation of the Woman Worker, having for its Object:

To secure that a woman shall be free to work and be protected as a worker on the same terms as a man, and that legislation and regulations dealing with conditions and hours, payment, entry and training shall be based upon the nature

of the work and not upon the sex of the worker: and to secure for a woman, irrespective of marriage or childbirth, the right at all times to decide whether she shall engage in paid work, and to ensure that no legislation or regulations shall deprive her of this right.

This question of a woman's right to work is one of the most important at the present time, and St. Joan's S.P.A. welcomes the work of the O.D.C. nationally and internationally.

L. de Alberti.

and it is worth noting that Dr. Marion Phillips, M.P., in the *Labour Woman*, strongly urges on her readers the duty of offering themselves for co-option on to Public Health and Public Assistance Committees, in spite of their recognised objections to such a method of selection.

As for those Councils, whether County or County Borough, that reject co-option and thereby shut their doors on women's co-operation, our women's Societies will surely see to it that it is made into a test question at the elections of 1931.

International Notes.

We offer our cordial congratulations to the Women's Franchise Union of Ceylon on the adoption by the Legislative Council of the new Constitution, which extends the franchise to the whole population. Men and women will vote of equal terms at the age of 21.

* * * *

We are glad to learn that the Belgian Government has appointed a woman—Mlle. Marcelle Renson—among its delegates to the Conference on the Codification of International Law, to be held at the Hague next March, when the nationality of married women will be discussed. We hope that the British Government will follow this enlightened lead.

* * * *

Le Mouvement Féministe, Geneva, gives an interesting account of the International Congress of Nurses held recently in Montreal, which was attended by over 8,000 delegates. Mlle. Chaptal (France) was appointed President of the International Council of Nurses. Mlle. Chaptal represents France as technical adviser on the Commission for Child Welfare, League of Nations.

* * * *

To sum up: the most urgent need at the moment is surely for women to come forward in sufficient numbers to fill all the place available to them through co-option. Even this, to some of us, is a somewhat repugnant line of action. Co-option is a very unsatisfactory substitute for free election, and in many democratic centres it is extremely unpopular. Yet at the present juncture it would assuredly be unwise of women to stand aside on these grounds,

The same paper reports a feminist victory in the Canton of Vaud, where the Council has rejected clause 62 of the Bill on primary Education, which provided that women teachers should be dismissed on marriage. We congratulate Swiss feminists on their victory.

Stri-Dharma, India, reports that the Child Marriage Prevention Act will become law on April 1st, 1930. The debate in the Assembly and Councils have shown that India is awake to the evil of child-marriage. The organised women of India have been working for a number of years to rouse public opinion on this subject, and we congratulate them on the success of their labours.

L. de A.

Review.

The Women of the Gospel. By Annie Christitch. Burns and Oates, 2s. 6d.

We are grateful to Miss Christitch for giving us this reminder of the women who came into direct contact with Our Lord. She recalls to us that not one of these women left Our Lord's presence without an act of faith. That women followed Him to Calvary, and wept for His sufferings, whilst His Apostles were in hiding, is a fact ever remembered; but Miss Christitch has collected together all the various incidents which demonstrate the part played by women in the life of Christ. It is unnecessary to speak of Our Lady, but we are reminded that it was a woman, St. Elizabeth, who made the first Act of Faith in the Incarnation. The Samaritan woman, Miss Christitch finds, was given the task of proclaiming that the Saviour had come not alone for the Jews, but for all nations. "Now of that city (Samaria) many of the Samaritans believed in Him, for the word of the woman giving testimony."

Each incident with regard to the women of the Gospel is thus treated reverently and with judgment.

Some years ago Miss Toker dealt with the same subject in her book "Ecce Mater," but it is not a subject easily exhausted.

To Mary Magdalen and the other women who came to the sepulchre that Easter Day, was given the mission to bear witness to the Resurrection, and the Apostles thought their testimony to be idle tales!

We should like to suggest to Miss Christitch that in any further edition she might enlarge on this question of the mission given to women to bear witness to the Resurrection. In view of the nonsense

that has been talked about women being incapable of giving evidence in law, this is of the highest importance.

We commend "The Women of the Gospel" to our readers.

L. de A.

St. Joan's Alliance Meeting on Birth Control.

A crowded meeting under the auspices of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance was held on December 9th, at St. Patrick's Club Room, Soho, when Father Martindale, S.J., gave an address on the teaching of the Catholic Church as regards contraception; and Mrs. Laughton Mathews explained why St. Joan's Alliance opposes Birth Prevention on feminist as well as Catholic grounds.

Miss Gordon, in the chair, said that it was thought desirable to convene an open meeting to enable members and friends to hear a clear exposition of Catholic teaching on the point.

Fr. Martindale, S.J., began his address by calling attention to the enormous increase in abortions since the propaganda for "Birth Control" had become widespread. The Catholic Church, he said, taught quite definitely that active interference to prevent conception is a grievous sin. It was never lawful to use a function and deliberately frustrate the purpose for which it was intended. At the same time the Church did not teach that married people must have as large a family as possible. Catholics realised as well as others the difficult problems involved, and that under modern conditions average persons were called upon to exercise heroic virtue. No one denied that the Catholic religion was difficult, a cross stands in the path of every Catholic. In discussing this and every question a Catholic must necessarily start with the existence of God, a future life and a purpose in the universe. The Church never had and never would consider well-being in this life as comparable with the life to come.

Mrs. Laughton Mathews said that Birth Prevention was directly contrary to feminist principles. Suffragists had always demanded

an equally high moral standard for men and women; propaganda on "Birth Control" is a definite lowering of the moral standard, since it is practically an admission that self control is impossible. Just as a new generation of young men was growing up, who had been taught by their mothers that self control in sex was as necessary for them as for their sisters, this evil propaganda was gaining ground. It lowered the moral standard of the whole nation. If unlimited license was to be allowed to married people, how could chastity be demanded of the unmarried. For the Government to allow this information to be given in welfare clinics supported by public funds was to give Government sanction to "Birth Control" propaganda. She would like to point out that the truly progressive non-Catholic feminist societies had not expressed an opinion one way or the other—this might be due to the presence on some of the committees of members of St. Joan's Alliance, and a desire not to split the feminist ranks.

At the close of the meeting Father Martindale answered a number of questions.

Annual Subscriptions.

Annual subscriptions to St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance and to the "Catholic Citizen" fall due this month. Members and subscribers can save much labour at the office, by sending subscriptions in good time. Subscription to the "Catholic Citizen," 2/6; minimum subscription to the Alliance, 1/. One shilling does not really cover even the postage of notices in the year, members are, therefore, asked to increase their subscription, if they possibly can.

We congratulate the women societies of Liverpool—including our Branch of St. Joan's S.P.A.—on their victory in the City Council, which, after many years of agitation, has decided that twenty qualified policewomen should be appointed as an integral part of the Police Force. The Watch Committee intends to disregard this, but the women societies will no doubt find means of dealing with the Watch Committee.

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TREASURER'S NOTE.

Another Jumble Sale will be held on Saturday, January 18, at St. Patrick's School Hall. Goods are urgently needed, and may be sent to the Hall on the morning of the Sale, or to me at 57 Carlton Hill, N.W. 8. Helpers at the Sale are also needed.

Members will readily understand the necessity for sending in their annual subscriptions promptly, as we rely on this money for carrying on our work in the New Year.

VERA LAUGHTON MATHEWS,
Hon. Treasurer.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

*Hon. Secretary: Miss N. S. Parnell, B.A.,
45 Falkner Street, Liverpool.*

As it occurred too late for inclusion in last month's report, mention must be made of the very interesting address on women police, with special reference to their position in Liverpool, given by Miss Mabel Fletcher, C.C., J.P.

At the December meeting we had the pleasure of hearing Miss Leadley Brown, probably Liverpool's leading woman barrister, on "The Nationality of Married Women."

Both these addresses provoked discussion and resulted in appropriate resolutions being passed and sent to the authorities concerned.

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS.—All communications respecting Advertisements to be addressed THE MANAGER, "Catholic Citizen," 55, Berners Street, London, W.1.

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

NON-PARTY.

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

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St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance

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on "Women Pioneers in Labrador,"

BY

Miss M. A. PRESSLEY-SMITH,

at **ST. PATRICK'S SCHOOLS, SOHO** (Entrance in Chapel Street, off Oxford Street),

on **Monday, February 3rd, 1930, at 6 p.m.**

Chairman:—

THE RT. HON. LORD MORRIS, P.C., K.C.M.G.

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VERA LAUGHTON MATHEWS, M.B.E.

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