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THE Catholic Citizen

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

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

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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 Pope and Women in Politics.

While French women were going to the polling stations and Italy was fixing the first general election in which women will vote, the Holy Father made an important broadcast (October 21st): "Your hour, Catholic women is here. Public life needs you. Your destiny is at stake."

The *Universe* made a long report of this speech from which we quote extracts.

"In personal dignity, as children of God, men and women are absolutely equal, as they are in relation to the last end of life—everlasting union with God in Heaven, said the Holy Father.

"It is to the undying glory of the Church that she has put these truths in their proper light and freed woman from a degrading and unnatural slavery . . .

"Your hour Catholic women and girls is here. Public life needs you. Your destiny is at stake . . .

"Many political movements are turning to woman to win her for their causes. Some totalitarian systems dangle marvellous promises before her eyes; equality of rights with men, care during pregnancy and childbirth, public kitchens and other communal services to free her from her household cares; public kindergartens and other institutions maintained and administered by the State or local governments which will relieve her of maternal obligations towards her young children. No one wants to deny there are advantages to be gained from one or other of these services if properly administered.

"Indeed, we have already, on another occasion, pointed out that for the same work and output a woman is entitled to the same wages as a man.

"But there still remains the crucial point of the question: Is woman's position thereby improved? . . .

"In the concessions one can easily see, not respect for the dignity or mission of woman, but an attempt to foster the economic and military power of the totalitarian state. On the other hand any system dominated by capitalism has had effects upon the well-being of woman . . .

"But shall we conclude . . . that you Catholic women and girls shall show yourselves averse to these movements and against political life? Certainly not. It would be useless to preach woman's return to the home while conditions prevail which constrain her to remain away from it . . . Will you perhaps leave (political life) to those who would destroy social and domestic life—of which the family is a primary factor—and uproot its foundations?

"The fate of the family, the fate of human relations are at stake. They are in your hands.

"Every woman—mark this well—has the obligation, the strict obligation in conscience to go into action, in the

manner and way suitable to the conditions of each, so as to check currents which threaten the home, so as to uphold those doctrines which support the home, and to achieve its restoration.

"To those motives there is added another—her dignity as a woman.

"She has to collaborate with man for the good of the State, in which she has an equal dignity. Each of the two sexes must take the part which belongs to it according to its special qualities, its spiritual and moral aptitudes.

"It is clear that while a man is by temperament more concerned with external aspects of public life, woman generally speaking has more discernment and perspicacity in matters relating to family life, the foundations of all social life.

"This does not, however, exclude the possibility of women taking part in all kinds of public activity. It is not so much a question of distinct assignments as of judgment and coming to practical conclusions.

"Let us take the case of civil rights. These are at present the same for both, but how more efficaciously they will be used if men and women come to complement one another . . .

"Who better than a woman can say how we can preserve the dignity of women, the integrity and honour of young girls, the education and protection of children? All these matters present problems for the Governments and legislators. If women concern themselves with these important problems, untold benefits will accrue for the family and society . . .

"Therefore the vote is a great and powerful weapon in the fulfilment of women's social and religious duty. She is bound to fulfil this duty.

"The functions of the State and of politics are to consolidate and to give to every family in every walk of life, economic, juridical and ethical conditions necessary for their existence and development in a peaceful community. Yet if the State does not make its legislation conform to this aim, the people will suffer.

"Therefore, woman cannot agree that politics should mean the prevalence of one class over another, or condone selfish designs of territorial or economic expansion which would result in the oppression of others, and were not in accordance with agreements whatever their motive . . .

"The path of woman to the polls is a path of peace . . .

"Courage, young Catholic women! Carry on your work without allowing difficulties to disturb, humiliate or discourage you. Remain under the banner of Christ the King, under the protection of the Queen of Mothers, Mary, and be the defenders of the home, the family and society.

"May God's help be with you."

Notes and Comments

A memorandum has been sent to the Committee appointed to re-examine the question of the admission of women to the senior branch of the Foreign Service, on behalf of many women's organisations, including St. Joan's Alliance. Evidence will be given on their behalf before the Committee on November 30th. The memorandum asks for equality of entry and conditions of service and no marriage bar. It is hoped the Committee will report in time to enable women to enter for the first entry examination for the reorganised foreign service.

The marriage bar for women employed by the London County Council has now been lifted. During the war the Council has employed married women as a temporary measure and the present arrangements for giving special leave to expectant mothers will be retained.

We congratulate Mrs. Kathleen Chambers, our co-religionist and fellow worker in the suffrage movement, on her election as Lord Mayor of Bradford which crowns her long career of public service for her city and for the blind of the nation.

It is with sorrow that we record the death of our member, Miss Ida M. Dickinson, in May of this year. R.I.P.

For many years of her life Miss Dickinson did valuable moral welfare work in India and for her services the British Government offered her the Kaiser-i-Hind medal. This she refused as she felt very strongly about British treatment of Indian political prisoners. Miss Dickinson was a member of our Committee and she many times put her specialised knowledge of Indian women and of moral and social questions at our disposal. She wrote articles for the *Catholic Citizen*—*The Woman's Movement in India* (1934), *Checking Commercialised Vice* (1935) *Traffic in Women* (1936), *Whither Islam?* (1937) and was one of our most valued contributors.

In 1938 Miss Dickinson entered the Congregation of St. Mary Magdalene ("Bethany") in France, an Order whose work she had followed for many years with great sympathy. The year 1938 saw her clothing at Montfermeil-Chateau, but later on ill-health combined with the war compelled her return to England where she lived in retirement in the Cotswolds. We ask the prayers of our readers for the repose of her soul.

We regret to record the death of Victor Duval an ardent worker for the militant suffrage campaign. He went to prison for the cause, as a young man, and suffered financial and personal loss. He helped to found the Men's League for Woman Suffrage and gave it his enthusiastic support. We offer our sympathy to Mrs. Una Duval his co-worker in the fight.

At the Memorial Service at the Savoy Chapel on November 8th our Alliance was represented by Miss Graham.

We regret to record the death of Lord Mamhead, who, as Sir Robert Newman, represented Exeter as a Conservative in the House of Commons from 1918 to 1929, and as Independent from 1929 to 1931. He was a keen supporter of Votes for Women and we had the honour of having him as a speaker at a public meeting organised by the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society. He was also in sympathy with abolitionist principles and was a Vice President of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene.

Stop-Press. With sorrow we record the death of our first chairman Miss Kathleen FitzGerald, R.I.P. We know our members will pray for her. We offer our deep sympathy to Miss Eleanor FitzGerald and her sister. An appreciation will appear in our next issue.

International Notes

We congratulate the women of France on their first exercise of the Parliamentary vote at the recent elections for the Assemblée Constituante which will for the next seven months work out a new constitution for France. Thirty-two women were elected to the Assemblée one of whom, Mme Germaine Ponsio Chapuis, a barrister, is a member of the Committee of l'Alliance Jeanne d'Arc. There are seventeen Communists; twelve of the party M.R.P. and three of other parties.

The day the Pope made the allocution reported elsewhere in this paper was the birthday of our founder, Gabrielle Jeffery—October 21st. Our Hon. Secretary says that this allocution did not appear by so much as one word in the Swiss Catholic paper *Courrier de Geneve*, though the report was sought for every day for a week. It is significant that Swiss women have not yet won the vote. French women voted on October 21st.

At the instigation of General McArthur the revised Constitution of Japan accords the vote to Japanese women, the age of enfranchisement being 20 for both men and women.

NATIONALITY.

In reply to a question by Captain Gammans as to how far he proposed to implement the pledge given by the coalition Government to grant British citizenship to members of the Polish Forces unwilling or unable to return to Poland, the Prime Minister said: "This is a matter on which we obviously have to consult with the other Governments of the Commonwealth, but I may say that it was a hope rather than a pledge. It is in the spirit of that, however, that we intend to act. We need to do out utmost for our friends who have been fighting with us so well during the war. I think it would be premature to make a declaration at the moment on the exact steps proposed to be taken."

In reply to questions put by Miss Rathbone as to the desirability of introducing a bill to right the injustice of refusing British nationality to British-born women married to aliens of allied or other nationalities while granting it to women married to enemy aliens Mr. Ede said: "The difficulty is that the status of British citizens has to be determined not only by this country but by the Dominions. There have been negotiations in the past which have indicated where there was controversy, and we might have difficulty in getting some of the Dominions into line on this matter."

In reply to other questions on the subject of the nationalisation of refugee aliens who had served this country in the British armed forces or in any other capacity Mr. Ede said: "I hope to make a statement on future policy at an early date . . . I have it very urgently before me."

OUR CHRISTMAS SALE.

Our Christmas Sale will be held from 12 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, December 8th, at St. Patrick's Clubroom, Soho Square. Lunches and teas will be provided at a small cost and we invite members and friends in the London district to come and do their Christmas shopping in comfort. Gifts for the sale would be much appreciated and should be sent priced to the office as soon as possible. There will be a second-hand stall and bargains in new and second-hand goods.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Cecil Houses (Incorporated) 17th Report.
Usury in Catholic Theology by Rev. Lewis Watts, S.J. (Catholic Social Guild, ls.).

Parliament Month by Month.

The new Parliament has begun its work without delay and is already starting to show distinguishing marks. One of these is—so far—a very praiseworthy despatch and decision in debate. The new members, however, have not yet learned to make the most of question time. The firing is for the most part both sporadic and repetitive. This is particularly noticeable in the case of the new women members. Long experience had made the women members of the last Parliament very skilled in asking the right questions at the right moment: the new team has yet to learn the art.

For one entertaining moment on the 11th a woman member seemed almost taken aback at being considered a separate entity from her husband, when Mrs. Paton tried to ask a question put down by Mr. Paton, also a member, but was stopped by the Speaker. Another entertaining—and significant—little scene took place the same day when a man, Mr. Skeffington asked the Minister of Education "whether she is aware that Derby's local education authority have notified women applicants, for a post of divisional education officer, that it is not their intention to appoint women to such posts; and whether their action meets with her approval or what action she proposes to take in the matter." Miss Wilkinson answered, of course, "I consider that appointments to such posts should be made on the merits of the candidates, and that the introduction of any sex-discrimination is most undesirable." She added that she was not competent to give a direction in this case, but would bring the matter to their notice.

The next day, however, in answer to a question by Mr. Linstead about the transfer of married women from temporary to permanent Civil Service posts, Mr. Dalton

repeated the old tale of "a married woman may not be appointed to an established post in the Civil Service" unless she is thought to have "special qualifications" or "special experience."

This Parliament, we are glad to see, has inherited their predecessors' dissatisfaction at the scurvy treatment given to the W.L.A. No fewer than six questions on this point were asked on 15th and all the Minister of Agriculture could find to offer them was the ludicrous sop of four free travel warrants a year instead of two. This point was raised again on the Supplementary Estimates on 16th and yet again when Mr. Williams made a lean and grudging statement on 22nd, granting some members of the W.L.A. an extra week's holiday in an effort to persuade them to stay on the land for a further two years. Members made it clear that this is not the last that will be heard of the matter.

Several more of the new women members have made their maiden speeches. Miss Bacon and Mrs. Mann both spoke in a very warm and human style and may well prove valuable fighters in the field of women's special human interests. Mrs. Braddock's maiden speech confirmed her as a tough and dogged Party woman—may her powder and shot be directed where it does most good!

For the most part, however, this month has been so full of hard, heavy and urgent work that it is difficult to pick out one debate more than another. Procedure, finance, demobilization, housing, education and the food situation in Europe, all are of equally pressing interest to men and women, and the new members, men and women alike, are undertaking a very tough consignment with admirable vigour and zest.

B. M. HALPERN.

Geneva Conference.

The International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship held a meeting of its International Committee, members of the Board, and Presidents of its national auxiliaries at the end of October. Geneva was chosen for the meeting place in the hope that it would help our Swiss colleagues in their long fight for the franchise. The fight in Switzerland is particularly difficult because not only a Parliamentary bill is required but also a referendum; every man in Switzerland must be asked if he approves of women voting.

In spite of all the great travel difficulties delegates from Australia, Egypt, England, France, Iceland, Sweden arrived and the Swiss delegates acted as hosts. From the British auxiliaries, Miss Barry, represented St. Joan's Alliance and Mrs. Bush, the Women's Freedom League. To the great sorrow of all, the President, Mrs. Corbett Ashby was unable to attend owing to the illness of her husband and to her and our great disappointment. Mademoiselle Gourde, the life and soul of the Geneva suffragists was only allowed by her doctor to pay us a flying visit during one of the sessions.

Dr. Hanna Rhydh of Sweden presided at the sessions until the arrival of Madame Malaterre Sellier who had been detained by the French elections at Rouen where she stood as a candidate.

Reports were received on the changes of the status of women in various countries and the reorganisation of the work of the Alliance was discussed. The possibility of accepting the invitation for the next congress to be held in Egypt in 1946 if circumstances permitted, was enthusiastically considered.

The Swiss Association for Woman Suffrage organised a public meeting at the Athenée in favour of votes for women in Switzerland, Madame Vischer-Alioth of Bale presiding. Among the speakers were Madame Brunshwig, Madame Malaterre-Sellier, Madame Lehman of France.

Miss Barry on behalf of St. Joan's Alliance expressed astonishment that in democratic Switzerland, women were still unenfranchised. She spoke of the work of the women in England during the war, of the programme of the women's organisations and she ended by quoting the Holy Father's statement on equal pay and the political rights of women. Greetings and best wishes for the speedy enfranchisement of Swiss women were also given at the meeting brought by each of the other delegates.

The delegates were enchanted by their stay in the beautiful, peaceful city of Geneva where everything possible was done by our Swiss hosts for our comfort. Thanks are specially due to Madame Vischer-Alioth, President of the Swiss Suffrage Society and to Mrs. Bompas, the Secretary of the International Alliance for their indefatigable work in making the Conference run smoothly. To Madame Berlei who eased the formalities of travel and residence abroad we also tender our thanks.

During the Conference, the delegates had the privilege of visiting the headquarters of the International Red Cross, an immense organisation of mercy, which is largely staffed by Swiss workers and to which the Swiss people have contributed in gifts and service in an effort to staunch the wounds of a war-torn world.

Miss Barry writes: "I was shown much hospitality by a group of Swiss Catholic colleagues. Madame Malaterre-Sellier and myself were invited to dinner by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Catholic Women's Society when some interesting discussions took place. Among those present was Dr. Hilde Verene Borsinger, editor of *Die Schweizerin*, the very well produced monthly organ of the Lucerne Catholic Women's Society. The May issue contains an article on St. Joan's Alliance. By kind invitation of Mademoiselle Borsinger, sister of Dr. Borsinger, I had the pleasure of visiting the "Oeuvre des

[Continued on page 40]

St. Joan's in three Countries

Australia.

We have received cuttings from Australian papers reporting a protest meeting held by St. Joan's Alliance in Australia against a certain play being shown in Melbourne. It is described as "a disgusting exploitation of sex and the most indecent thing that has ever been shown on the stage."

St. Joan's have also made representations to the Government suggesting the names of women likely to be of service to the new Colonial Committee of the I.L.O.

Dame Enid Lyons continues to champion the cause of Equal Pay in the House of Representatives and recently she has queried the different rates for men and women in Section 74 of the Re-establishment and Employment Bill and the foreshadowed amendments designed to make the rates uniform.

We offer our warm congratulations to Miss Marie Carroll on her marriage to Captain John Murtagh and we wish them many years of happiness. Members will remember the pleasure we had in having Miss Carroll with us in 1939 and how she came with us as an enthusiastic pilgrim in St. Joan's pilgrimage to Walsingham on the occasion of the 21st jubilee thanksgiving for Votes for Women.

At recent parties of the British Commonwealth League we have had the pleasure of meeting two distinguished women from Sydney, Mrs. Evatt, the first woman to be appointed to the Sydney Art Gallery; and Mrs. Jesse Street on her return from the San Francisco Conference.

Brazil.

We have had an encouraging letter from Miss Lisboa, founder and secretary of *Allianca Sta Joanna D'Arc*. She tells us "the whole nation is stirring"—that Brazilian women, now they have attained their rights, are beginning to realise "that if they take they must also give"—and that shortly they will realise the value of their freedom, not only for themselves individually, but in working together for a common end.

Miss Lisboa tells us that she has just met Father Pierre Charles, S.J. once more, who, as readers will remember is an enthusiastic supporter of our work.

France.

Miss Barry reporting on her visit to Paris writes: "I was delighted after six years to meet again the President and Secretary of *L'Alliance Ste Jeanne*—Madame Pesson-Depret and Mademoiselle Lenoël. Both on my way out to Geneva and on my return, hospitality was shown to me by these two good friends. Madame Pesson-Depret invited several members of *L'Alliance* and our International Treasurer, Mademoiselle Delaval to meet me at her flat and discussions on the recent elections made these encounters most interesting. They were very proud that Mme. Ponsio-Chapuis, one of their number was elected for Marseilles. An unsuccessful M.R.P. candidate, Mme. Goufay who was defeated by only seventeen votes in the Municipal elections, was present at one of these gatherings. I also had the pleasure of meeting another Deputy, Madame Lamblin who was full of vitality and sympathetic to our aims. Mademoiselle Lenoël told me that in her village she was nominated for the Municipal Council but this came to nothing because the law did not allow members of the same family to sit on the Council, so her brother-in-law was elected in preference.

"Madame Pesson-Depret, Mademoiselle Lenoël and myself, at the I.L.O. Conference, interviewed Mrs. Mary Norton, a Catholic member of the U.S.A. House of Representatives during twenty-one years. She very kindly invited us all to lunch where we had the pleasure of meeting Miss Lenroot, chief of the Children's Bureau of the Ministry of Labour, also our member Miss B.

Stafford, Chief Inspector of Factories who was adviser and substitute delegate for the Government of Ireland. (I will report on the work of the I.L.O. in the next issue).

In spite of all the sufferings and privations through which they have passed—not the least being their loss of liberty—one feels that the women of France are giving their utmost to the rebuilding of their country."

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From the *Catholic Citizen*, November 15th, 1920.

The Holy Father (Pope Benedict XV) has once again made it quite clear that he is anxious for women to take their share in public life. In answer to the President of the Spanish Catholic Society the *Accion Catolica*, who asked the Pope for guidance, Cardinal Gasparri writes that those who had concluded from a recent allocation that the Pope desired Christian women's organisations to be exclusively directed into religious channels were mistaken. The Holy Father considers that it behoves everyone who desires the welfare of the people to enter the political arena and to unfurl the flag of Christ in order that the light of His divine teaching and the flames of charity may extend not only amongst the few but throughout the world. The Pope, therefore, urges all women to have a clear understanding of social problems.—*Notes and Comments.*

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Geneva Conference—continued from page 39.

Amis de l'Enfance "just outside Geneva where babies from one day old until the age of six are wonderfully cared for. Miss Borsinger started this venture with one refugee baby from Belgium which she brought from the frontier in a suitcase after the last war, in 1918. This 'little grain of mustard seed,' as Miss Borsinger called it, has grown into a marvellous work for child welfare and a training school for nurses, famed throughout Switzerland.

"I was glad to resume contact with two members of St. Joan's Alliance, Miss de Romer of Poland who formerly worked in the Traffic in Women department of the League of Nations and Miss Keiser of Bale of whom we have happy recollections during her stay in England. Another kind friend was Mademoiselle Achinard, a scientist and one-time translator at the League—curiously enough she had translated our Memorandum on the status of native women circulated to the League.

"I was loaded with gifts at the station for my journey by my Catholic friends who saw me off with bananas, cheese and delicious swiss cakes."