

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. XII, No. 5.

15th MAY, 1926.

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.

Protective Legislation for Women.

BY COUNCILLOR MRS. V. M. CRAWFORD.

Differential labour legislation for women is a subject on which feminists in England have long been divided, and the problem to-day—thanks to the vigorous hostility shown by the Equal Rights Party to every form of sex differentiation in industrial as in political life—is being warmly debated in the United States. Dr. J. A. Ryan is a strong protagonist of labour laws, regulating and restricting women's industrial sphere, and speaking generally, his attitude is that of the National Catholic Welfare Council as a whole. The Rev. R. A. McGowan discusses the whole question very temperately in a recent pamphlet on "Women and Industry," issued by the N.C.W.C., but asserts quite definitely his conviction that though protective laws do indeed handicap some women, millions are helped by them. "The law," he states, "gives them their start towards personal emancipation and towards satisfactorily safeguarding their whole future health and happiness."

St. Joan's Alliance has more than once made its position clear in this matter. We stand definitely for equality in industrial legislation as between men and women, and this attitude was emphasised in the resolution against "protective" legislation passed at our Annual Meeting in March last. The problem, however, is by no means a simple one, and is not rendered any less complicated

by some of the arguments advanced by our opponents. Thus a re-statement of our reasons for our attitude may be helpful to some of our members, all the more as the whole subject may come up in some form at the International Suffrage Congress in Paris, and, if so, is likely to provoke lively discussion.

In the first place an "equality" attitude is not in any way incompatible with approval, for instance, of widows' pensions, which are granted, not for the widows, but for the express benefit of the children of the deceased father; neither does it mean opposition to any scheme of maternity benefit, which is merely one form of sick insurance to which men and women alike contribute. But it does mean that in all matters concerning wages, hours of labour, industrial conditions and factory legislation generally, the woman worker, in our opinion, should fight the battle side by side with the man, agitating for healthy conditions for both, rather than claiming special consideration for herself on the score of sex disabilities. If night work is deleterious to the health of women, so it is to the health of men, and it should only be tolerated where it is an unavoidable necessity and should always be accompanied by some counteracting advantages. If lead-poisoning be injurious to a woman's health, so it must be to a man's.

and both alike require safeguarding regulations. Admitting that where industrial conditions are shockingly bad it is desirable that women at least should be excluded from them, their exclusion at best is only an inadequate palliative. The aim of a national democratic policy should surely be good industrial conditions for all workers alike, and the granting of sectional advantages acts often as a hindrance to general progress. Moreover, when these apparent advantages are based on sex, they do tend to exclude women from the labour market, and, frankly, that is precisely why some people are so exceedingly keen on them.

But to many of us the question is not one of mere practical utility; it lies at the basis of our whole feminist faith. We do not believe in sex rivalry any more than we believe in sex domination. We believe that men and women are intended mutually to help and benefit one another, and that this law should prevail in the industrial no less than in the domestic sphere, whereas sex differentiation in laws is bound to react unfavourably on sex relations. Father McGowan, in his pamphlet, entirely ignores this point of view, and it is scarcely fair to use, as he does, the quotations given—with which we are all in agreement—from the *Rerum Novarum* concerning "poor and necessitous wage-earners," as an argument for differential sex legislation. It is a well-recognised fact that in Pope Leo's great Labour Encyclical there is very little direct reference to women's work in mill or factory. He was still able to envisage, forty years ago, a state of society in which women would only be employed in home work, a condition which no one contemplates to-day as either possible or desirable.

And lastly, should preferential legislation for any reason be necessary for women in any department of industry, surely the women workers themselves should be the first to be consulted about it. And that is precisely what our present restricted franchise renders impossible. For the injustice is not only that some five million individual women cannot vote, who would vote were they men, but that roughly speaking almost the whole industrial womanhood of the country is disfranchised, *i.e.*, every factory worker and mill hand under thirty and every unmarried worker of any age who continues to live at home or to occupy a furnished

room. Until this injustice is remedied—a class injustice as well as a sex injustice, for it is a comparatively easy matter for the unmarried well-to-do woman to get upon the register—and until the woman worker, from the age of twenty-one, is free to vote for or against those who now regulate her labour without her consent, until, in short, her rights and her desires have to be taken into account by parliamentary candidates, so long shall we continue to oppose any restrictions on women's industrial freedom, on however specious a plea they may be advanced.

Catholic Citizens' Parliament.

A very enjoyable evening was spent on the occasion of the Third Annual Dinner of the Catholic Citizens' Parliament on April 19, at the Corner House, Coventry Street, at which St. Joan's S.P.A. was well represented. The speakers included His Lordship the Bishop of Pella, Mr. P. Hand, Father P. de Ternant, Father W. Pritchard, Mr. J. Jonas, and Miss Eleanor FitzGerald, the latter replying to the toast of the affiliated societies. The Parliament, formed to promote the study of Catholic Doctrine and Social Principles, holds monthly debates at St. Anne's Settlement, Harleyford Road, Vauxhall, on present day burning questions, which should be of great interest to readers of this paper.

Quebec Legislature has passed a Bill giving municipal franchise to married women owning property; it applies to the cities of Montreal and Quebec only.

The British Commonwealth League has published a full report of the Conference held last July in London to consider "The Citizen Rights of Women within the British Empire." It makes an excellent book of reference for speakers, and all who are interested in the position of women, and the varied laws affecting the status of women in the different part of the Empire. It can be obtained from the Headquarters of the League, 17 Buckingham Street, London, W.C. 2, for the small sum of 1/6, post free.

The B.C.L. is convening a Conference on Emigration, in June.

Notes and Comments.

We offer our hearty congratulations to Miss Susan Lawrence on her election to Parliament. She was one of our M.P.'s. who were defeated at the last election, and women of all parties are glad to think she is back again. A Deputation organised by the N.U.S.E.C. laid before Miss Lawrence feminist views on restrictive legislation for women in industry. Miss Lawrence does not feel able to give support to the immediate demand that industrial legislation should be based upon the nature of the occupation and not upon sex. She, however, agrees with our views in other matters. Miss Barry represented St. Joan's S.P.A. on the deputation.

Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., earned praise all round when she moved the second reading of her Factories Bill. Miss Wilkinson described the Bill as an "Industrial Workers' Charter," and as a Bill to protect decent employers against unfair competition. It was felt that so important a measure could not be dealt with as a private member's bill, and the Home Secretary has undertaken to introduce a Factories Bill later on, which shall contain nineteen-twentieths of Miss Wilkinson's Bill. Mr. Briant put forward the view, held by feminist societies, including St. Joan's, that restrictions should be based on the type of the work and not on the sex of the worker. We gather that the Home Secretary does not hold that view; we hope he may be converted.

The Sub-Committee of the League of Nations Committee for the codification of International Law, which has been considering the laws of nationality, has concluded its examination and submitted a report. In dealing with the question of the nationality of married women, the Committee realise that recent laws in the United States, Belgium and Roumania, show a marked tendency to abandon the old principle that marriage with a foreigner *ipso facto* involves loss of nationality for the woman; yet in speaking of the provisional draft drawn up by the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, the report says that though the general principles embodied in the draft, are very desirable, it

cannot be affirmed that the moment for such measures has come. Needless to say, there was no woman on the Committee, though efforts were made to get a woman lawyer appointed to it.

Spanish feminists are making a determined attempt to obtain the reform of the civil code. As *Mundo Feminino* says, the inequalities of the law need not trouble happily married couples, but where this is not the case, the law presses so heavily upon the woman that Christianity, civilisation, progress and social dignity, clamour in chorus for the amendment of the code, placing men and women on a footing of equality.

Mr. E. P. McCarron, Secretary to the Local Government Department, giving evidence before the Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor, Irish Free State, said that there was no prospect at present of widows' pensions being established. He suggested that Boards of Health should consider a special policy as regards widows. Efforts should be made to show that widows were not paupers. The delay in widows' pensions is, of course, due to the expense of the measure.

We congratulate our member, Miss Fortey, on the splendid fight she is making on the Leicester Council for Women Police, and in defence of married women in paid employment. The latter question arose out of the dismissal by the Health Committee of a woman Health Visitor upon marriage. Miss Fortey said there was no precedent for this action of the Health Committee, which had other married women in their service. She asked for the decision to be rescinded. Miss Fortey asked at the same meeting for the appointment of Women Police; she thought the time was ripe, seeing the Home Secretary's approval of the appointment of Police Women. In this Miss Fortey had the support of Sir Jonathan North, former Mayor of Leicester. Although Miss Fortey was defeated on both resolutions, she has paved the way for future success by her excellent propaganda.

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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The Equal Franchise Campaign.

The meeting to demand Equal Franchise, convened by St. Joan's S.P.A. on April 29, at Caxton Hall, was a great success. It was the third big meeting of the kind held in London within the last few weeks. The first was under the auspices of the Women's Freedom League, and the second was convened by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. Mrs. V. M. Crawford, chairman of the meeting on the 29th, opened the proceedings by reminding the audience that the question of Equal Political Rights had always been the first object of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, and while we had changed our name, we had not changed our aims and ideals.

The meeting, which was supported by thirty organisations, carried unanimously the following resolution: "This meeting, supported by thirty organisations, calls upon the Government to introduce and pass without delay a Bill giving votes to women at the age of 21, and on the same grounds as to men."

The resolution was moved by His Lordship the Bishop of Pella, who said: "I have always felt very strongly upon this matter, especially upon the injustice inflicted on the working women of this country in not getting

the vote. I have lived and worked for 40 years among working people, and the longer I live the more amazed I am at the courage, generosity and perseverance of the working mother. The more I see of it the more I am amazed. Her life is generally one endless round of toil, most of it monotonous, often done in spite of the handicap of bad health, and small means. I am still more amazed and humbled when I see the amount of unregistered charity among the poor. The woman herself burdened with household duties, or a young woman with her day's work before her, sitting up the whole night with some sick person and taking it all as a matter of course. I wonder how many people more happily placed are prepared to face a day's work with very little sleep, to help someone who is suffering. So I have always felt that we should do our best to help on this class to get the right to vote.

"What the men have in the way of voting, either as regards Local Government or Parliamentary Government, I consider the women should have as a measure of justice. There is a song—'We are getting it by degrees'—and there is something in that, and I think you are very wise in taking the instalments as they come and working on for more. I remember on one occasion when Parnell was

asked would he take a certain measure of self-government for Ireland, he answered: 'Yes, take the half loaf, eat the half loaf, and it will give you strength to get the whole loaf.'

"I think the arguments put forward against the women—that they would not use it: that they would vote merely as their husbands voted—I think these arguments are now obsolete, and do not carry very much weight. People talk on the experience of New Zealand where, broadly speaking, married women voted with their husbands, but probably if you took any great industrial cities in the country where there are trades in which the interests of men and women are bound to be mutual, then it is probably true that the women would vote with the men, not because they have not thought for themselves, but because the issue is one of life or death, or of their very substance, that they are on the same side. But when you come to the South and the Metropolis, with its varied population occupied in a whole multitude of different professions or trades, it is by no means the same case at all, and I should think that it is by no means safe to generalise. There I think you will find that married women do not vote with their husbands; whether a good thing or a bad thing, it showed women were thinking for themselves."

Miss Ellen Wilkinson, in seconding the resolution, said that under the present Franchise Law some 2,000,000 industrial women workers were debarred from the suffrage. Meanwhile Parliament interfered more and more with conditions of labour, she thought that was all to the good, but it should not be done over the heads of the women affected by the laws.

Dame Millicent Fawcett, who was received with great enthusiasm, said that she was very pleased to take part in the demand for Equal Franchise, because, for one thing, she was to a great extent responsible for the fact that the unequal Franchise Bill was accepted. She was sure that women had done right in accepting the half loaf, it was certainly the only measure which could have been passed into law at that time. There was an insane idea abroad that women "would vote as one man against the men." That was quite absurd. She did not consider it a sin for women to agree with

their husbands, she thought they very often would vote in the same way as their husbands, and it showed a very nice spirit of harmony. Dame Millicent paid an eloquent tribute to youth, with all its fine ideals. The old need the young, and the young need the old. She thought it was calamitous to shut youth out of the politics of the country.

Sir Robert Newman, an old friend of suffrage, in supporting the resolution, prophesied that Equal Franchise would come before the end of this Parliament. It was a ridiculous anomaly to make women equal with men when it came to breaking laws; to allow that they were old enough to choose a life partner at 21, but not old enough to choose a candidate to represent them in Parliament.

Miss Barclay Carter, one of our "under thirties," in supporting the resolution, gave us a brilliant defence of the younger generation, who are, she said, full of a natural and healthy curiosity, she believed that to enfranchise young girls would give them a new zest, and be all to the good of the nation. Indifference to the Government of the country, was a far more real danger than any danger of communism.

Mrs. Liveing, and Miss Monica O'Connor (another of our "under thirties"), made able speeches in moving and seconding the votes of thanks; and Miss Eleanor FitzGerald, in appealing for funds to carry on the campaign, urged the audience, one and all, to join the great procession on July 3, which would walk from the Embankment to Hyde Park, to give a visible sign of the public support for Equal Franchise.

The meeting, as has been said, was a great success, but it must not end there. We ask all our readers in the first place to write to their member of Parliament asking support for the Equal Franchise demand; and in the second, to remember July 3 and to rally round our banner of St. Joan, which will once again be carried through the streets of London in a Suffrage Procession.

L. DE A.

We offer our cordial thanks to Miss Connolly, of the Bureau of Ways and Means, for her kindness in multigraphing notices of the meeting.

Letters read at an Equal Franchise Meeting, April 29th, 1926.

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM. I wish the meeting on the 29th every success. The burden of proof should be laid upon those who refuse an Equal Franchise between men and women, not upon those who demand it. The very giving of a franchise at all to women is an admission *in principle* of their right to an equal franchise. That principle must be carried out to its logical and just conclusion.

DOM GILBERT HIGGINS, C.R.L. It is with great sorrow I find myself unable to be present this evening at your important meeting, owing to unexpected work which compels me to remain at home. I have done what I could to advertise the event, speaking twice last Sunday on the right of the voiceless voters. Success to your efforts in the cause of justice and liberty.

LORD MORRIS. If I possibly can arrange I will be at your meeting. Should I not be there you have my permission to say that I am in entire sympathy with the principle for which you are contending.

VISCOUNTESS ASTOR. I am very sorry that I cannot be at your Equal Franchise demonstration, but I should like to express once more my firm conviction that Equal Franchise for men and women at 21 is the only possible line of progress. In my opinion, the proposal for making 25 the voting age for men and women shows a deplorable lack of political judgment, and a fundamental distrust of democracy. I think it will be found that opinion among women of all political parties is overwhelmingly in favour of equal franchise at 21.

FATHER PHILIP FLETCHER. I was drawn to your Society because you were the women who *DID—You do not merely talk*. Also, you work out of doors, in the open, reaching those whom it is *difficult to reach*. We Ransomers also *DID*, not merely talked, and we work out of doors and reach those who are difficult to reach. Accept my best wishes and a little offering.

FATHER FILMER. (Wire.) Very sorry prevented coming, best wishes.

FATHER CONRAD, O.S.F.C., *Guardian Peckham*. Unfortunately I have a meeting here, otherwise I would be at Caxton Hall. Father Augustine will, if he can, be present. Your efforts and cause have my most hearty support. And I wish you every success in procuring this simple measure of justice to women.

VISCOUNTESS RHONDDA. I wish I could have spoken at your meeting, to which I wish the greatest possible success, but unfortunately I shall be abroad just then.

MRS. WINTRINGHAM. Every citizen, man or woman has a right to a voice in the election of those who make the laws; this is the only safeguard to prevent laws being made which are injurious or unjust to individuals. History shows that without a voice in legislation there

is no direct representation and the interests of that voiceless section are not sufficiently guarded. A measure of Equal Franchise is not only one of expediency, but one of common justice overdue.

Letters were also read from the following Catholic M.P.'s. in support of Equal Franchise: Sir Nicholas Grattan Doyle, Arthur Hope, J. Sullivan, M. Connolly, Hugh Murnin, Major P. M. Malone.

SOCIETIES WHICH SUPPORTED OUR MEETING ON EQUAL FRANCHISE.

The Catholic Citizens Parliament, The Catholic League of South London, The Guild of Our Lady of Ransom, The Knights of St. Columba, The University of London Catholic Society, The Actresses' Franchise League, The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, The Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries, The British Commonwealth League, The Federation of Women Civil Servants, The International Woman Suffrage Alliance, The League of the Church Militant, The International Council of Women, The National Council of Women, The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, The National Union of Women Teachers, The Six Point Group, The Women's Co-operative Guild, The Women's Election Committee, The Women's Freedom League, The Women's International League, London Society for Women's Service, The Women's Auxiliary Service, Women's Guild of Empire, Australian Federation of Women's Societies, The Montreal Women's Club Franchise Committee, Women's Reform Club of Johannesburg, Women's Indian Association, Bermuda Woman Suffrage Society, International Council of Women.

Resolution supported by 30 Organisations.

Meeting in Support of Lord Buckmaster's Resolution on Birth Control.

The meeting convened by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship on April 26, to consider Lord Buckmaster's resolution on Birth Control, was advertised as a Conference, but as all the official speakers, including the Chairman, were advocates of the dissemination of Birth Control Information at Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, we think the word Conference was a misnomer. Such opposition as there was, came from members of the audience. Dr. Moclair, for St. Joan's S.P.A., spoke against the resolution from the medical and moral point of view. Miss Fedden was also a delegate from St. Joan's. Miss Helen Fraser spoke against the resolution, saying, justly, that it was absurd to pretend knowledge was being withheld from the poor, and reminding the audience that what was now being advocated, would throw the responsibility of limiting families upon the wife. Mrs. John Clay, of the Mothers' Union, also spoke against the resolution, which was carried by a large majority; but it was understood that delegates voted as individuals, and that the vote did not commit the societies.

Lord Buckmaster's resolution was carried by thirteen votes in the House of Lords.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

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

A very enjoyable Social was held on April 19. Nearly all the items were contributed by members of the Branch, and the refreshments were generously provided by the Committee. The Chairman read a letter from His Grace the Archbishop, in which he stated that although he was not free to give official support to political organisations, he had always had a kindly feeling towards the Society of St. Joan, and expressed his general sympathy with our Alliance. Afterwards Miss Parnell explained to the members about the Peacemakers Pilgrimage, and appealed to them to support the Liverpool Demonstration on May 29.

An afternoon of Recollection has been arranged for members at the Convent of the Cenacle on Saturday, June 5.

We much regret the resignation of our Chairman, Miss Sevenoaks, and take this opportunity of thanking her for all her valuable work on behalf of the Branch. Mrs. Murphy has been elected Chairman in her place.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS.

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Fortey, Miss	...	2	6 0
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TREASURER'S REPORT.

Our Equal Franchise Meeting on April 29 was pronounced on all sides to have been a noteworthy success. The expenses, however, amounted to between £15-£17, and the collection of £6 10s. only sufficed to pay the rent of the hall, which was £6 6s. Although it was a crowded meeting, many of our London members were prevented from coming, and to these I appeal that they should send us towards the deficit the sum that they would have spent in the collection and their journey to the meet-

ing. Other events for which a considerable sum is needed, are the I.W.S.A. Congress in Paris this month, and the Franchise Procession and Demonstration on July 3.

G. JEFFERY.

The Peacemaker's Pilgrimage.

CAMPAIGN FOR PEACE

Start to be made shortly.

The romantic idea of a Pilgrimage of women to London from all parts of the country has aroused the greatest enthusiasm on all sides, as was hoped and believed would be the case by the promoters. As the time draws near for those in distant places to start on their long journey this enthusiasm is steadily increasing. The pilgrims from Land's End and from Dundee will be starting very soon now. In Scotland the gathering of the clans will take place in Edinburgh on May 9, and the contingents from Dundee, Glasgow, Perth and Stirling, are making their arrangements accordingly. In the West, Miss Maude Royden is addressing big meetings in Cardiff and Bristol on the days on which the Pilgrimage is passing through these towns, which are May 25 and 26 respectively. All the arrangements for the entry of the Pilgrims into London on June 18 and 19, are in the hands of the London Federation of the League of Nations Union. The various suburbs of London which will have to cope with the task of housing the vast numbers of pilgrims on the last stage of their journey, *i.e.*, June 18, will probably be: Ealing, East Dulwich, Walthamstow, Wimbledon, and the Hampstead Garden Suburb. All those living in these districts should see to it that a hearty welcome is prepared for the pilgrims, and that a large contingent is added to their numbers on their final march to the Big Demonstration in Hyde Park on Saturday, June 19. The Liverpool Branch of St. Joan's S.P.A. is helping in the Pilgrimage; and the Alliance will send a contingent to Hyde Park. Will members willing to join in please communicate with Miss Barry, at 55 Berners Street.

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

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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.

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PHILIP FLETCHER,
JOSEPH M. BAMPTON, S.J.

Secretary: F. W. Chambers,
20 Holmes Road, Twickenham.

"The Ethics and Psychology of Neo-Malthusian BIRTH CONTROL," by Rev. Vincent McNabb, O.P., S.T.M.—For copy, send stamped addressed envelope to the Secretary, St. Joan's S.P.A., 55 Berners Street, London, W.1.

FRENCH ALPS.—Furnished Châlet, to let, June to October or part. View Mt. Blanc. Five bedrooms, seven beds. Bath.—E.C.F., 31 Meadhurst Rd., Leicester.

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