

WOMEN'S SERVICE
FILE COPY

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. XXXIII. No. 9.

15th OCTOBER, 1947.

Price Fourpence.

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's Call to Catholic Women

The Holy Father, speaking to the International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues on September 11th, called upon Catholic women to exercise, in the face of unprecedented dangers, intrepid faith and moral strength. "Now," He said, "you have come out and descended into the market place to take your place in the struggle." The Pope spoke of "the perverse doctrines affecting marriage and the family, affecting conjugal fidelity and divorce, affecting even life and death which are insensibly eating their way into men's minds, and attacking at their roots the Christian life of the family."

He pointed out the dangers of secularism, and of materialism, of the subjection of woman and of the increasing attacks against her dignity and rights both as a person and as a Christian. "Never before in the world's history have events demanded of women so much initiative and boldness, such a sense of responsibility, of fidelity, of moral force, of the spirit of sacrifice, of endurance of every sort of suffering, in a word, of heroism. . . . The reports, the letters wherein women reveal to us what was and still is their fate in these cruel times—the fate of their families—are so impressive that they make the reader ask whether he is not going through a nightmare, and how such things could have happened in our era and in the world in which we live." Saying that "it is not enough to be good, sympathetic and generous; it is necessary also to be wise and strong," His Holiness condemned the "blind sentimentality which can defend euthanasia—to withdraw the human being from purifying suffering, not by a charitable and praiseworthy relief, but by a death such as one gives to an animal without reason and without immortality. Is not compassion whereby one pretends to justify or legalise divorce for unhappy spouses an illusion. . . . ?"

"We have prayed that all Christians, all honest souls, in particular all those occupying public offices, shall turn their attention to the devastation wrought in these years of a second world war and post-war period which have been so unprecedentedly

tragic for women. As witnesses of a crisis of this gravity all living forces must unite."

The Pope gave four particular counsels. The first need was for a strong and supernatural faith, ardent, alert and intrepid in defence of Catholic doctrine. "Assuredly the battle will be hard . . . but you have on your side those healthy spirits of good sense who are after all, the majority. You have above all God. Therefore take to heart this thought of St. Paul; 'Your faith has made of you heroes in combat.' . . . Do not be duped by the hollow wish of overcoming your adversary by running after him and modelling yourself on him. . . . Precisely because you are waging war upon the forces of anti-Christ, which are 'totalitarian' the first condition is to oppose them with the law of God, willingly, joyously, wholly embraced and observed in your life. . . . You who wish to live an apostolic life—and it is most praiseworthy—each one of you, according to your particular circumstances, cannot know so little of the world that you are unaware, in your battle against present-day unbelief and immorality, of the radical insufficiency of all natural resources, and all the means that are purely human; what is absolutely essential is intimate union with Christ; and this intimate union equally supposes both prayer and sacrifice."

The Pope then warned his hearers against the false spirituality which under the guise of defending the Church against losing itself in the sphere of the temporal, urged her withdrawal from the temporal sphere altogether, "as if dogma had nothing to do with the fields of human life, as if the mysteries of the faith, with their supernatural riches, should abstain from maintaining and fortifying the life of individuals and, as a logical consequence, harmonising public life with the law of God, impregnating it with the spirit of Christ. Such vivisection is quite simply anti-Catholic. On the contrary, be present wherever vital interests are at stake . . . unhappily one has too often to deplore the absence of Catholic organisations.

Responsibility weighs heavily on whoever, man or woman, enjoys political rights to vote, above all where religious interests are at stake; abstention in this case is in itself—let them know it full well—a grave and fatal sin of omission. On the other hand, to make use, and good use of that right, is to work effectively for the true weal of the people. It means to act as loyal defenders of the law of God and of the Church."

Thirdly, The Pope stressed the necessity for upholding the social teaching of the Church which has always in view the good of the people as a whole, the real common good. . . . A more equitable distribution of riches had always been one of the principle objectives of Catholic social doctrine. "We can say the same about the claim to equal pay for equal work and production for women, a claim which the Church has made her own for a long time." Finally His Holiness spoke of the role of women in political life which "in general is to work to make woman more conscious of her sacred rights, of her duties, of her influence either on public opinion in daily intercourse, or on public bodies and legislation, for the good use of her prerogative as a citizen." In concluding, the Holy Father said, "we do not lose sight of the fact that the management of a home where everybody feels at ease and happy, and the education of children, are in reality a contribution of the first order to the common welfare, an appreciable service redounding to the benefit of the entire nation. Those among you who are more free, more fitted and better prepared, will take on the heavy burdens of public work and will be the representatives of the rest and their delegates. Have faith in these, understand their difficulties, their worries, the sacrifices entailed by their devotion. Support them, help them."

* * *

In His address to the men's section of Italian Catholic Action on September 7th, His Holiness Pope Pius XII gave two counsels:

"Be generous of heart. Whenever you meet, in the cause of Christ and of the Church, sincere good-will, activity, intelligence, wisdom, whether in your own ranks or outside Catholic Action, even if they be new but solid forms of the apostolate, rejoice at them, do not hinder them, but keep on friendly terms with them and help them as often as your help is possible and desirable or expected.

"Keep always vivid in your heart and mind the ideal whose greatness is echoed in the dynamic rhythm of your anthem—an ideal of conquest, not merely of defence. . . . It is often said that he who limits himself always to remain on the defensive is slowly losing."

Eva Hartree

The woman's movement has suffered a great loss in the death of Mrs. Hartree on September 9th. She was, of course, an ardent worker in the Votes for Women Campaign, and was throughout her life an uncompromising feminist, serving the movement with courage, persistence and integrity. She was intimately associated with Cambridge; she was a student at Girton, later she served on the Borough Council for twenty years, and she became the first woman Mayor of that city. The list of her activities is immense, amongst them being her great work for refugees during the war. She rejoiced when, at long last, the University of Cambridge was prepared to grant full degrees to women.

Mrs. Hartree was an officer of the N.C.W. and on the Board of the O.D.I., and a former chairman of the Status of Women Committee. This brought the Alliance into close touch with her, but it was in her work for the independent nationality rights of married women that the closest contact was made, and kept to the end. Throughout the later stages of the fight, which Mrs. Hartree had taken up on the death of Chrystal Macmillan, as chairman of the Nationality of Married Women Committee, it was the privilege of the Alliance to lend its hon. secretary and its office for the campaign. It is sad Mrs. Hartree did not live to see the Nationality Bill through Parliament, but she died assured of the success of the cause to which she gave so much of her time and expert knowledge. May she rest in peace.

An Australian Pioneer

We offer our deep sympathy to Miss Anna T. Brennan, past president of the Victoria Section of St. Joan's Alliance, on the death of her sister, Ellen, who was the second oldest of a family of thirteen, of which Anna herself is the youngest. Ellen Brennan was born eighty years ago of pioneer parents; she did a considerable amount of free lance journalism, wielding a very vigorous pen, and also took an active part in encouraging women to study politics in the early days of Australian Federation. Ellen was a great personality and the very stuff of which Australia is made.—R.I.P.

Duckett

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Notes and Comments

The Annual Mass for deceased members, associates and benefactors of St. Joan's Alliance will be offered at St. Patrick's, Soho, on Sunday, November 2nd, at 10.30. We ask as many members as possible to attend.

* * *

We offer our warmest congratulations to our good friend Archbishop Hughes of the White Fathers on his appointment as the first Papal Internuncio in Egypt. As a member of the Advisory Council on Native Education in Uganda he did much for the education of African girls. Members will recall the very delightful talk he gave to the Alliance which was published in the *Catholic Citizen* of January 1946. Monsignor Hughes on that occasion pointed out that it was just as important to educate the African men and boys into valuing women's proper place in Society as it was to educate women themselves, and in speaking of the "Longest Advent," he urged members to achieve the completion of the Christian ideal, for which devotion to Our Lady had paved the way, of "full equality, liberty and emancipation."

We quote from *The Universe*: "Because the Egyptians are very conscious of their newly-achieved independent status, the Holy See had an unusually delicate task to choose the right man. Now Archbishop Hughes is an Englishman. In the new circumstances, would an Englishman be acceptable? The problem was settled by the Egyptian newspapers. All of them urged the Vatican to appoint Mgr. Hughes—an unorthodox proceeding but very welcome. The Moslems are satisfied and the Arabs and the Jews; the Latin Catholics and those of Eastern Rites—everyone."

* * *

The new Control of Engagement Order which came into force on October 1st applies to men of 18-50 and women of 18-40 years of age. It allows young men of under 20 to be directed away from home, not young women. Women who have children under 15 living with them are exempt, as are also persons in the "managerial, professional, administrative or executive" categories.

The provisions of the Factory Act of 1937 have once again, as in the crisis of the war, been relaxed and from September 22nd women are to be allowed, by a decision of the Ministry of Labour, to do night work. So are boys of 16, and the limitation as to hours is the same for both.

It seems a pity that regulations as to hours, age groups, etc., still appear to be based largely on the sex of the worker instead of on the nature of the work. If adult workers could be classed together (with due consideration for women's greater responsibility towards young children) surely the nation would be better served.

The Trades Union Congress at its meeting at Southport on September 5th, passed the following resolution unanimously:—

"That this Congress congratulates the General Council on their activities on the questions of Equal Pay for equal work and equal opportunities for women—matters of national importance which call for co-ordinated pressure on a national basis in support of the approaches of individual unions.

"Congress, however, views with grave concern the continued discrimination of some employers against women by the barring of married women from permanent employment, thus maintaining a practice which frequently results in the employment of younger women—who might in other circumstances be attracted to the vital production industries of the country—in filling the place of women who are forced to retire on marriage, and is detrimental to the welfare of the nation.

"Congress therefore requests the General Council to continue to use its full resources to engage without delay in vigorous co-ordinated activity to secure the implementation of Congress policy of Equal Pay for Equal Work and Equal Opportunities for women."

* * *

The National Conference of Labour Women at Southport on October 2nd, carried a resolution urging the immediate adoption of equal pay for men and women employees under direct Government control.

* * *

A vigorous campaign organised by the Equal Pay Demonstration Committee left all the candidates in the West Islington by-election in no doubt as to the determination of women's organisations to press for the implementation of the principle of equal pay, a principle which has been adopted by all the Parties.

* * *

This year sees the centenary of the birth of Alice Meynell, the great poet who lent the grace of her pen and the weight of her reputation to the cause of Woman Suffrage. "Is it not a wonder," she wrote, in the first number of the *Catholic Suffragist*, "that all Christian, and therefore all Catholic, women are not in the forefront of such a movement." We are happy to announce that on Wednesday, December 10th, at 7 p.m., Miss Christopher St. John, will lecture for the Alliance, on Alice Meynell. The lecture will take place at The Holy Child Convent, Cavendish Square.

* * *

We offer our deep sympathy to Mrs. Eileen Mills on the death of her young daughter, Audrey, on September 14th, after much suffering.—R.I.P. Audrey was a grand-daughter of Mrs. A. J. Hughes, one of the original members of the Liverpool Branch of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society.

* * *

We send our best wishes to our member, Miss Sylvia Terry, who is standing as a candidate (U.) for the Ilford Borough Council.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen"

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society

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The Conference at Brussels

The Fifth International Conference of St. Joan's Alliance took place in Brussels during the first week of September and a truly successful Conference it was, leaving all delegates with a feeling of hope for the future. It was the first time international representatives of the Alliance had met since before the war, the last Conference having been held in Geneva in 1937, and from every country came a report of a stirring among Catholic women, a movement towards the ideals for which St. Joan's Alliance has striven for so long.

Naturally with the present world conditions added to difficulties of distance, there were many who wished to be there who found it impossible. It was particularly sad that no Australian delegates could be present as members of both the Victoria and New South Wales Sections had been in England so recently and would certainly have come to Brussels if their return to Australia had not been essential. A message from the Australian Federal President, Dame Enid Lyons, which appears in another column, gave great pleasure to the Conference. Both Sections sent resolutions and suggestions and though absent took an active part in the programme.

The Brazilian Section was also unfortunately not represented in person but was certainly there in spirit. A message came from the President Miss Lisboa and letters full of life and determination testified to the close link with this far-away Section. These three sections appointed proxies.

Great Britain (not counting the International President and Hon. Secretary) was represented by its Chairman Miss P. C. Challoner, the Editor of the *Catholic Citizen*, Miss Christine Spender and by three members of the Committee, Miss Brandt, Miss Graham and Miss Leslie.

France, in addition to the founder of the Section and International Vice-President Mademoiselle Marie Lenoël, was led by the President of the Section, Madame Pesson Depret and the delegation included Madame Paul Archambault, Mademoiselle

Delaval, the International Hon. Treasurer and Madame Marthe Gouffé. The last named had just been adopted as a candidate for the municipal Council in Paris and her colleagues from other countries all hope to hear of her success in the forthcoming elections.

The presence was particularly appreciated of Dr. Schlüter-Hermkes of Germany, a member of many years standing who had overcome the greatest difficulties in order to join her St. Joan's colleagues again.

A new friend was Madame Freuler of Switzerland whose youth and enthusiasm and sound judgment were a great asset to the Conference. St. Joan's expects to hear more of her.

Belgium, the hostess country, had two first-rate representatives in Madame Leroy-Boy and Madame de Munter-Latinis. Madame Leroy had made all the preliminary arrangements for the Conference and very kindly gave a reception at her charming house for the St. Joan's delegates to meet the prominent Catholic women of Brussels. A short speech was given by the President to explain the aims and work of the Alliance and there was an atmosphere of keen interest marked by many questions. It would perhaps be indelicate to comment on the delicious refreshments provided: it is many a long year since the British delegation saw such *pâtisserie*.

Although women do not vote in Belgium, among distinguished Catholic women are numbered two Senators and a member of Parliament, and an *échevin* of the City of Brussels. The last named is also Registrar of Marriages and actually performs the civil ceremony in the dignified chamber of the beautiful old Town Hall, part of which dates from the 12th century.

The St. Joan's Conference was held at the Headquarters of the Lay Auxiliaries of the Missions, a recent and very interesting movement for training young women as lay workers in the mission fields. The delegates lived in their hostel

St. Joan's International

At the Fifth International Conference of St. Joan's Alliance held at Brussels, September 3rd-5th, the following resolutions were passed:—

I. **Human Rights.**—St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance expresses its satisfaction that the equality of the sexes is clearly and specifically written into the Charter of the United Nations. It calls upon all Governments to implement the Charter by removing all legal and administrative discriminations against women. St. Joan's Alliance welcomes the establishment of a Commission on Human Rights and urges that the International Bill of Rights to be drawn up, shall specifically lay down that human rights and fundamental freedoms shall apply to all, without distinction of race, sex, language, religion or tribal custom.

In particular it urges that the following points be included:—

1. No child or woman, whatever her race, shall be treated as a chattel to be sold by her father or alleged proprietor.
2. Every woman shall be permitted to choose her own partner in life despite any contract entered into in her name by any other person.
3. No marriage contract shall be made for any girl under fourteen nor for any woman over fourteen without her consent.
4. There shall be no lending out of wives under any pretext.
5. Widows shall not be inherited. They should be free to dispose of themselves and their children as they think fit, remain with the husband's family, go back to their own, be independent, or re-marry.

It calls upon the I.L.O. to apply this principle in all its draft provisions.

II. **Political Rights.**—St. Joan's Alliance expresses its satisfaction that equal franchise and eligibility for men and women have been granted in so many countries. It calls upon those Governments which have not already done so, to grant women the same political rights as men.

III. **Economic Rights.**—St. Joan's Alliance calls upon all Governments to establish equal pay for equal work for men and women throughout their Services with equal opportunities for training, employment and promotion. It demands that in all labour legislation, equal protection shall be given to men and women against exploitation, industrial accident or disease; that all insurance or pension schemes shall be based on a system of equal contributions and equal benefits for men and women.

IV. **Education.**—St. Joan's Alliance believes that it is essential for a peaceful democracy that education should be based on religion and spiritual values.

St. Joan's Alliance urges all Governments and also Administering Authorities in Trust Territories to ensure that in all schemes of education, equal opportunities shall be available for boys and girls, men and women, irrespective of religion or race.

V. **Marriage.**—St. Joan's Alliance believes that the Sacrament of Marriage entails an indissoluble monogamous union entered into with the full consent of both parties; with a full sense of responsibility and without the intention to restrict procreation by artificial means.

It demands that those laws which still impose a measure of civil incapacity upon the wife and married mother shall be rescinded.

(i) A married woman should have the same rights as other citizens:

(a) regarding nationality and domicile;

and had a nice Conference room entirely at their disposal. Moreover there was the great blessing of a Chapel on the premises and the delegates were able to meet at daily Mass and Holy Communion and ask a blessing on the proceedings of the day.

St. Joan's delegates were entertained to lunch by the Vice-Director of the Society when they had the privilege of meeting l' Abbé Boland, its Founder.

In opening the Conference the President after welcoming the delegates, referred to the irreparable loss the Alliance had suffered in the death in 1940 of the founder Gabrielle Jeffery whose wisdom and courage were continuously missed. Since the last meeting two Vice-Presidents both warriors in the movement had also died, Dr. Mary Hayden of Eire and Miss Dorman of South Africa. The delegates stood for a moment in recollection of these pioneers and joined in a short prayer.

The President also paid tribute to the great work of Miss Barry who through all the war years had continued to devote her life to the cause of the Alliance. It was largely due to her that the Alliance now stood on the springboard ready to leap forward in so many countries.

The Conference was a business one, limited to workers in the movement. All were enthusiastic and vital, with the result that the discussion never flagged and although sometimes heated (a good sign) it was never acrimonious. French and English flowed equally with an occasional short translation, as nearly everyone was familiar with both languages.

Delegates learnt of each others' national difficulties; of the particular organisation needed for a federation of Sections in a huge country like Australia, a situation which may well arise later in the U.S.A.; of the unusual system of referendum in Switzerland which so far has kept women outside the political enclosure; of the new conditions in France where women have so recently gained equality under the law. A new constitution was drawn up and the resolutions (which are printed in full elsewhere) were fully debated. They dealt with such time-worn (though not alas out of date) subjects as the Suffrage, equal pay, equal nationality rights, together with the newer aspect of the status and economic position of the married woman.

No one can have left this Conference without a feeling of profound thankfulness not only on account of the work accomplished and the prospect of the development of the Alliance in a number of new countries, but even more because of the spirit of the gathering, of the energy and vitality of the representatives. Herein indeed lies hope for the future.

VERA LAUGHTON MATHEWS.

- (b) to contract, to earn, and to exercise rights over her own earnings and property.
- (ii) A married woman should exercise equal rights with her husband over the children born of their marriage.
- (iii) There should be no legal bar to a woman undertaking work outside the home, though she should not be forced to do so by economic necessity.
- (iv) The economic status of the housewife should be raised. It should be legally recognised that both are partners, and each of them is entitled to a share of the family income.

VI. **Equal Moral Standard.**—St. Joan's Alliance reaffirms its belief in the same high moral standard for both sexes. It calls upon all Governments to abolish state regulation of prostitution and to make all third party exploitation of vice a legal offence. It calls upon the United Nations, to adopt the four Conventions (1904, 1910, 1921, 1933) against Traffic in Women, and take steps to adopt the fifth Convention as prepared by the League of Nations in 1937, and to secure signatures and ratifications of the States Members thereto.

St. Joan's Alliance demands that laws to safeguard public order shall apply equally to men and women; and that all measures taken to prevent the spread of venereal disease shall be free, voluntary and confidential.

Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, D.B.E. was re-elected as President, of St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance, Miss F. A. Barry as Hon. Secretary and Mademoiselle Delaval as Hon. Treasurer. The following were elected as Vice-Presidents: Mademoiselle Marie Lenoël (France), Exma Snra Maria H. Lisboa (Brazil), Dame Enid Lyons, G.B.E., M.H.R. (Australia), Professor G. McEntee, Ph.D. (U.S.A.), the Hon. Mabel Strickland (Malta), Madame Pesson-Depret (France) Dr. Maria Schlüter-Hermkes (Germany) and Madame Leroy-Boy (Belgium).

Dame Enid Lyons, President of St. Joan's Alliance in Australia wrote from the House of Representatives in Canberra the following message: "I should like, more than I can say, to have been able to attend and bring my greetings from Australia in person. This, however, is not possible and I should be grateful if you would give to the Conference our warm good wishes for the success of the meeting.

"The work of St. Joan's Alliance was never more important than to-day. The need for Christian women to take an active share in attempting a solution of the world's problems in the light of Christian teaching and tradition was never so urgent. The fact that St. Joan's is part of a world-wide fellowship of women of goodwill gives added strength and effectiveness to the work it has undertaken.

"All members in Australia unite in congratulations and good wishes on this great occasion."

The following message was received from Miss Lisboa, Vice-President, Brazil.

"Unfortunately women's progress in Brazil does not always keep faithful to family and religious traditions, that is why it is so important to establish St. Joan's in this country and for the same reason, in all South America.

"Personally to my last breath, I shall struggle to attain this aim and pray all who are meeting at this Conference to join in a collective prayer for this purpose."

Professor G. McEntee, Vice-President, U.S.A. wrote as follows:

"Heartiest congratulations on the reunion in Belgium. It is my prayerful wish that the meeting may be fruitful in measures for the improvement of the international status of women."

Good wishes were also received from the Hon. Mabel Strickland, Vice-President, Malta, Miss Margaret Flynn of the Victoria Section of the Alliance, and Mrs. Jean Daly of the New South Wales Section, Miss Teresa Durland (Cuba), Madame Grabinska (Poland) and from members in Canada, China, Eire, Holland, Hungary, Switzerland, Union of South Africa and Yugoslavia.

United Nations. At the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations held at Lake Success on September 12th and 13th, St. Joan's International Social & Political Alliance was represented by Mrs. Hedstrom Quirk and Dr. Marga Klompé.

INTERNATIONAL ABOLITIONIST CONGRESS

The Seventeenth Congress of the International Abolitionist Federation took place in Brussels from September 6th-9th. Resolutions were passed congratulating the Belgian House of Representatives on its recent unanimous vote in favour of the abolition of regulated prostitution; asking the United Nations to submit the draft Convention of 1937 concerning the Traffic in Women and Children to member States for signature; calling upon the Economic and Social Council to continue research into the causes of the demand for prostitutes; calling attention to the fact that good moral, economic and social conditions, together with a vigorous educational campaign are essential for the prevention of venereal disease, and reaffirming the Federation's belief in free voluntary and confidential treatment; calling upon all men of good will to recognise their responsibility for the evil of prostitution and to uphold the unity of the moral law; drawing attention to the bad effects of state regulation and special laws against prostitutes, as well as such measures as the distribution of prophylactic packets to the Forces.

October 24th at 7 at the Interval Club, Dame Vera Laughton Mathews and the British delegates will report on the Brussels Conference. Dinner 6.15 (2/6) if booked by October 22nd.

Parliament Month by Month

During the tail end of the session the Commons spent a busy period clearing up as much as they could before they adjourned on August 13th. They covered Housing, when Lady Megan Lloyd George spoke well and calmly in a debate that was sometimes far from calm, notably when Dr. Edith Summerskill exchanged rather heated words with Mr. Hudson. The House also discussed Colonial Affairs, the Army and Education, when Mrs. Manning herself an ex-teacher took a very prominent part in the debate. The Supplies and Services Bill was considered in Committee, resulting in a stiff Party fight on the subject of increased State Control and later, of course, the Prime Minister made his statement on the Crisis.

During this short period few points of particular interest to women were raised. Mrs. Corbet asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer on August 5th "whether he will extend the scope of the regulation under which the **marriage bar in the Civil Service** was abolished as from 15th October 1946, so as to include those women who married before that date and were obliged to resign but who continued their service without a break on a temporary basis, such reinstatement being subject to the return of the marriage gratuity." Mr. Dalton replied "No. The present rule was recommended by the National Whitley Council."

Mrs. Manning asked the Minister of Education on 7th August, "the number (of women) on the incremental part of the **Burnham scales** and the number of those who have reached their maximum." Mr. Tomlinson asked for time — "rather a long time" to reply.

Mr. Osborne asked the Minister of Labour, also on 7th August, for a statement on "the **number of women who have entered industry** in response to the Government's appeal; how much it cost to make the appeal; and if he is satisfied with the response." Mr. Isaacs gave figures; 7,533 women volunteered in June and July as well as over 5,000 employed direct. The cost of the campaign was about £4,500. He went on to say that as "many of the 69 local campaigns are not yet fully in their stride, I consider the results so far achieved are satisfactory." Mr. Assheton added "Will the right hon. Gentleman make quite clear that he is not asking **married women with young children** to go back into industry?" To which Mr. Isaacs replied "That was made most clear in the original broadcast and in answers to questions but I am very anxious to repeat it now."

Mr. Sorenson again raised the question of **Illegitimate Children of Occupying troops** on July 30th. He asked the Foreign Secretary "if he will initiate consultations between zonal authorities in Germany with a view to securing joint action on marital affairs and the care of illegitimate

children involving the troops of occupying powers." Mr. Bevin replied "No Sir. I think it would be resented by our allies if we interfered in the behaviour of their troops within their own zones of responsibility. The care of illegitimate children is a matter which has been left in each zone as the sole responsibility of the German authorities."

The vexed question of the **Russian Wives** was raised again on August 13th and Mr. Mayhew, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs made one very interesting point. He said "I was asked whether we could not use international machinery in some way in this matter. The answer is that no international machinery exists to which we could appeal . . . It is a fact that in Soviet law these wives are Soviet citizens and the relations between a sovereign country and its nationals cannot be brought before any existing international organisation. However we are considering working into the Bill of Rights which is to be considered by the Human Rights Commission, possibly some clause relating to the rights of individuals to leave their countries; but I do not think that will have any bearing on the present issue. Apart from that, I am afraid there is no help to be sought from international institutions." In the absence of a change—or perhaps one should say a first awakening—of heart on the part of the Soviet Government, it seems that nothing can be done in this matter. B. M. HALPERN.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

V.M.C. in the "Catholic Citizen," October 15th 1922.

The Ligue Catholique du Suffrage Féminin, founded in Belgium in 1912, has practically the same aims and ideals as our own and has had to struggle towards success through the same difficulties and discouragements. It reads like an account of our own beginnings when Mademoiselle Van den Plas relates that she and a few friends having decided to group together Catholic women with feminist ideals in view of a growing non-Catholic feminist movement, the difficulty was to find any Catholic women to group! . . . Happily a few valiant friends, both men and women, rallied to the cause, and if the twenty years have been a period of hard work and frequent misrepresentation, they have also shown slow but steady progress and a gradual conversion of public opinion in Belgium. . . . How much the whole movement owes to Mademoiselle Van den Plas herself is, of course, not emphasised in these pages, but she relates the facts concerning what in Belgium is regarded as her most remarkable achievement; her elaborate study of the Belgian Code and the drawing up of the amendments it needs to place married women in a position of legal equality with men, a work which won for her a Gold Medal at the Brussels Exhibition of 1910.—*Review of Souvenirs de Vingt Ans d'Efforts* by Louise Van den Plas.

We send our congratulations and best wishes to Dr. Marita Harper (née Shattock) on the birth of her son, Anthony Hamish, on September 10th,

International Notes

Argentina. The Bill granting women the same political rights as men was unanimously passed by the Chamber of Deputies on September 10th. *The Times* reports that the campaign for Woman Suffrage was largely inspired and sponsored by Senora Peron.

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Belgium. The Burgomaster deputed a woman *échevin* of the City of Brussels to receive the guests at the Reception at the Town Hall given to the delegates of the Congress of the International Abolitionist Federation. Mademoiselle Van den Heuvel, our co-religionist, is the first woman *échevin* of the city of Brussels. There are eight *échevins* who form an executive committee of the 41 Town Councillors, all elected for six years; the Committee meets three times a week. Mademoiselle Van den Heuvel has a staff of 500 and amongst her duties is that of registrar of marriages. By Belgian law a civil marriage must precede the religious ceremony. The civil marriage at which Mademoiselle Van den Heuvel officiates, takes place in the beautiful hall of the ancient Hotel de Ville with officials in mediaeval costume and with impressive rites. The British delegates were surprised by a familiar note in the *échevin's* official dress, and discovered that she had modelled her hat on that of a W.R.N.S. officer.

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The Belgian Open Door Council also gave a party when Madame Bakeroodt and Dr. Adèle Hauwel gave the English delegates to the Abolitionist Congress an opportunity of hearing of their work, and of partaking of a marvellous tea.

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France. We congratulate Madame Solange-Lamblin, a member of *l'Alliance Jeanne d'Arc*, on her appointment as Rapporteur of the Commission on Education. She is the first woman to be appointed Rapporteur of a Government Commission.

* * *

Malta. On September 10th, a nineteen-gun salute marked the Proclamation of the new Constitution. The electors, men and women will choose their representatives for Parliament, which will be opened, on November 10th, by the Duke of Gloucester, representing the King. We congratulate the Women of Malta on their enfranchisement and rejoice that Miss Helene Buhagier (D.A.P.) and Mrs. Pat Vella Gregory (Lab.) are candidates. Many had hoped that Miss Mabel Strickland would also have stood as she has given such fine service to Malta during the last twenty-five years and gave evidence before the Royal Commission on Maltese Affairs, in favour of Votes for Women in 1931. But in the *Times of Malta* she writes, explaining "I am convinced that it is as an independent editor that at this

election and at this period of the Island's Constitutional development I can best serve the people of Malta. . . . I most sincerely hope, however, that the electors of Malta and Gozo will elect other women to represent them in some constituencies."

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At the recent Congress of the **International Council of Women** held in Philadelphia, Miss Retchford represented St. Joan's International Alliance as a fraternal delegate.



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Please keep Saturday, December 6th free for our *Christmas Sale* and think of its needs. Contributions in cash or kind for the various stalls will be welcome any time at the office, also offers of help in selling on December 6th.