

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

*Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society),
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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 Black Sash Movement

By Black Sasher

The Black Sash movement in South Africa or the Women's Defence of the Constitution League as it was first called, had its first beginnings one Sunday morning in May 1955 when six women met according to pleasant local custom for morning tea in a Johannesburg home. The talk turned as it did at most gatherings at that time to the political and constitutional crisis that was facing South Africa. Parliament meeting in Cape Town that week was debating the now notorious Senate Act—the Act which enabled the Government to circumvent the provisions of the South African constitution in order to interfere with the voting rights of the coloured people in the Cape Province, the only province in which coloured people had political rights. According to the South Africa Act of 1910 which lays down the provisions of the South African constitution, legislation affecting either the equal language rights of English and Afrikaans—the two official languages—or the franchise rights of the non-Europeans in the Cape could only be passed by a two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament in joint session. These "entrenched" clauses are considered the corner-stones of the constitution as without agreement and compromise on these points, union between the four widely differing provinces of South Africa would not have been possible.

The Government could not command such a two-thirds majority and previous attempts to pass legislation affecting the coloured voters by a simple majority had been declared invalid by the Courts of the land. The Senate Act increased the number of senators from forty-eight to eighty-nine and so altered the method of electing senators that the Government was assured of the necessary majority.

In the view of many thousands of South Africans this Act was a constitutional trick devoid of political morality and a violation of the trust and understanding and the moral pledges that were the basis of Union. Feeling against this action of the Government ran high. There was talk and discussion but till then no action had

been taken. The six women at their tea party, thinking of their fathers and grandfathers whose pledged word had been dishonoured and of their children whose future lay in this beautiful but troubled land, made up their minds that the time for talking had passed and the time for doing had come. With no organisation of any kind but with the co-operation of the opposition press and with the help of the telephone, they decided to organise a protest march of women through the streets of Johannesburg. They hoped, with luck, to have between two hundred to five hundred women. On the Wednesday morning, two thousand women turned out to show their disapproval of the Senate Act.

Encouraged by this reaction, the six women, joined now by others, again with virtually no organisation, organised a petition to the Prime Minister asking him to withdraw the Senate Act. In ten days they collected 100,000 women's signatures from the far-flung and often sparsely populated towns and villages of South Africa. Once again they marched, this time from Pretoria to the Union Buildings, the administrative seat of the Government, to present their petition in person to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister declined to see the women but sent his deputy, who said his Government had no intention then, or ever, of withdrawing the Senate Act. Again they decided on dramatic action and for forty-eight hours, the coldest of the year, they camped out in the grounds of the Union Buildings to prove their sincerity and tenacity of purpose and to show the Government and the rest of South Africa that they were prepared to endure hardship and suffering for what they believed to be right.

When they returned to their homes they realised that something had been born during those hours in Pretoria—a spirit of self-sacrifice and determination that they felt their country sorely needed. So it was decided that the protest would go on and the Black Sash movement came into being.

In a few weeks the movement spread through-

out the four provinces in South Africa and was joined by women of all kinds—English speaking and Afrikaans speaking, women from the towns, from the villages, from the lonely farms, women of all political parties and of all religious beliefs. A resistance movement composed entirely of women was something new in the modern world and these women faced their task with courage, dignity and imagination and above all with a will to succeed.

A black sash of mourning for the death of trust in their country became the symbol of the movement and gave it the name by which it is now known all over the world. Four silent women with bowed heads wearing the black sash stand daily at the Union Buildings in Pretoria where the members of the Cabinet have their offices. Larger parties of Black Sash women meet Cabinet Ministers at airports and railway stations or on their way to official functions. They say they "haunt" the Ministers as the conscience of the nation.

In February 1956 when Parliament met in joint session to consider the Bill to remove the coloured people from the common voters roll, two hundred Black Sash cars with four women in each converged on Cape Town in convoy. For forty-eight hours a continuous vigil was kept outside Parliament. When, a week later, the Bill was passed by the artificially created two-thirds majority and the members of the Government came out of Parliament buildings late at night at the close of the session, they were confronted by three hundred women lining the streets and railings of the House. Since then, whenever Parliament has considered legislation which was in conflict with Black Sash principles of freedom and justice for all races, Black Sash women have similarly lined the railings. Other protests have included public meetings, protest marches and petitions.

As the movement has developed, the Black Sash has added political education and vigilance on public affairs to its other activities. Believing that political ignorance and indifference are dangers in a democracy, the leaders of the Black Sash have organised lectures, discussions and debates by experts, a monthly magazine is published and pamphlets and other propaganda material is distributed wherever possible. Every Black Sash member is encouraged to take an active interest in her own particular political party to know and understand its policy.

Believing too the truth of the dictum that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, the Black Sash expects its members to keep a close watch on every sphere of public affairs from Parliamentary down to local civic level. A Parliamentary sub-committee studies every Bill that comes before Parliament as soon as it is published and its report is available to all members.

Two Black Sash members sat in the public galleries throughout the whole of the last session of Parliament. Committees are formed in the towns to watch municipal affairs and in villages, the local authority. In many cases Black Sash vigilance of this sort has prevented injustice and hardship being done to helpless people. Black Sash interference can draw the attention of the whole country to issues which might otherwise be allowed to pass unnoticed.

The Black Sash is not a political party. It has no political policy. The things that it stands for are above and beyond party politics. It judges political action by the simple principle that what is morally wrong can never be politically right.

The basic problem facing South Africa is how to build a united nation with peoples of many different races and varying degrees of civilisation. The Black Sash is facing that problem on the straightforward basis of what is right and what is wrong. It is guided always by Christian principles and the ideas of Western Democracy. Its leaders are determined its work and its protests will go on until there is no more need for protest and until good government, freedom and justice have been secured for all the peoples of South Africa.

REVIEWS

Women's Freedom League. 1907-1957. By Stella Newsome. (Women's Freedom League, 1s. 6d.)

Miss Newsome has produced the perfect pamphlet. It is simply and sincerely written with no histrionics, but it is more than fascinating, it is quite thrilling. The history of the W.F.L. is the history of the struggle for equality, of persistence and single-mindedness in the face of difficulties and disappointments and temptations to digress, and of great personalities and ingenious thinkers. Tax resistance and refusal to take part in the census were two only of the League's activities, and it has preserved a democratic constitution and a limited militancy throughout its career. The first President, Mrs. Charlotte Despard, set the standard from which the Women's Freedom League has never departed and under its present President, Miss Marian Reeves, the League continues its traditional service to women by "eternal vigilance."

P.C.C.

The Dignity of Labor. By Albert Le Roy, S.J. (The Newman Press, Maryland. \$1.25.)

This little book gives a comprehensive survey of the part played by Catholics in the work of the International Labour Organisation. It includes a brief history of the Catholic Social Movement and the address given by the Holy Father in 1954 to members of the Governing Body and the Secretariat of the I.L.O. The booklet is attractively produced with several photographic illustrations.

P.M.B.

Notes and Comments

We grieve to record the death of Elizabeth Abbott on October 17th. We are grateful to Mrs. Bompas for her tribute in this issue. Among many causes for which Mrs. Abbott fought both nationally and internationally, apart from votes for women, were equal pay, "Open Door" and above all an equal moral standard. Her long and devoted service as an officer of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene linked her with the name of Josephine Butler, and in clarity of mind and force of spirit she might well be compared with that ardent reformer.

St. Joan's Alliance is particularly indebted to Mrs. Abbott for the many brilliant articles which she wrote for *The Catholic Citizen*. Just before her death, she had hoped to write for us an article on the Wolfenden Report whose recommendations on prostitution were such a bitter disappointment. At the funeral at Finchfield Parish Church, the Alliance was represented by the Hon. Secretary and a laurel wreath tied with our colours and inscribed "In loving memory of a noble and gallant fighter for justice" was sent from the Alliance.

We send our sympathy to her son, Commander Jasper Abbott. May she rest in peace.

* * *

St. Joan's Alliance welcomes the announcement in the Queen's Speech of legislation to create life peerages for men and women, enabling them to sit and vote in the House of Lords. Nevertheless, the Alliance maintains that peeresses in their own right should, in justice, also be admitted to the House of Lords.

* * *

While it is of course very gratifying to know that many women at Oxford have done so well in the final Honours' Schools it is not very satisfying to have their successes "explained." Lady Margaret Hall had the highest percentage of firsts and seconds (86 per cent.), St. Hilda's second (82 per cent.), Somerville third (79 per cent.), St. Anne's fifth (74 per cent.). The highest men's college was Queen's (75 per cent.). Percentages are misleading and comparisons are odious so we would merely point out in the interests of truth (which is after all the aim of all education) that until the number of entrants are more or less equal, and until the same high standard is expected of all the men as is expected of all the women who go to the University, it will be possible, on a percentage basis, to prove that women are more brilliant than men. We have never claimed this, all we ask for is equal opportunities. At present, the number of places open to women is about one sixth of those open to men.

An Exhibition, as part of Liverpool's Charter Celebrations, was held in October by the Catholics of Liverpool, under the patronage of His Grace Archbishop Heenan, to illustrate the contribution of Catholics to the growth of Liverpool during the last seven hundred and fifty years. There were vestments of the martyrs, chalices and monstrances on show with historic statues and portraits of notable Lancashire Catholics. A necklace worth £3,000 was given by the Holy Father. There was a small stall for literature and copies of *The Catholic Citizen* and a large number of St. Joan's Alliance leaflets were displayed under the care of Miss Brady, Hon. Secretary of the Merseyside Branch of the Alliance.

* * *

The Daily Mail suggests that the Chancellor of the Exchequer may promise equal pay for women in Great Britain within the next year or two. This would help to equalise costs throughout the proposed free trade area and might result in a better use of woman power. In France there is already equal pay in shops and factories.

* * *

Mrs. Constance Arreger, addressing the Education Section of the British Association in Dublin, said that one way to overcome the national shortage of trained scientists was to encourage and train girls in science. She said that it was unenthusiastic teaching of science and mathematics that gave girls their distaste for these subjects. Parents often preferred the idea of an Arts course at the University for their daughters leading to a "respectable" job rather than a science course leading to an unknown one. She also urged that more married women should be encouraged to return to teaching after raising their families and that short refresher courses might be arranged by the Universities. In view of the shortage of scientists in industry, Mrs. Arreger was sure that qualified women scientists would get jobs even if promotion might be more difficult owing to old prejudices, but on the whole, she was optimistic about the future as much had been achieved in the last fifty years.

CHRISTMAS SALE

The Christmas Sale is fast approaching—Saturday, November 23rd at St. Patrick's Clubroom, Soho Square. Do come and make this a really grand social function. We so rarely meet all our members and feel this is an opportunity for doing so. The Sale opens at 12 noon and closes at 5.30, so there is ample time for buying. Admission is free but please be generous while you are there, we need help to cover our heavy expenses.

N. K. Carr,
Hon. Treasurer

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

AND

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society

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St. Joan's in Australia

Summary of Reports presented at the Council Meeting of St. Joan's International Alliance Paris, September 1957

The year 1956-57 has been an eventful one for members of St. Joan's Alliance in Australia.

The five hundredth anniversary of the Rehabilitation of St. Joan of Arc was commemorated by the Alliance in Victoria, New South Wales, West Australia, South Australia and Queensland. Delegates from Victoria and New South Wales were present at the celebrations in Rouen; each Section had a special Mass offered in honour of St. Joan and retreats were held to mark the occasion. In Queensland a hymn to honour St. Joan, written and composed by Mrs. G. Russell (president of Queensland Section) was first sung at the Mass at St. Stephen's Cathedral, Brisbane, which was presided over by Archbishop Duhig. In Melbourne, the president, Miss Anna Brennan gave an address on the Trial and Rehabilitation of St. Joan.

Victoria celebrated the twenty-first anniversary of the establishment of the Alliance in Australia (by Miss Margaret Flynn in Melbourne on March 25th, 1936), at a Coming-of-Age party which was honoured by the presence of His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate. Archbishop Carboni addressed the meeting as did Dame Enid Lyons, G.B.E., National President; Miss Anna Brennan, President, Victoria, and Miss Margaret Flynn. Representatives of many women's organisations, Catholic and non-Catholic, were present.

The Victoria Section took part in the Catholic Life Exhibition and a Report from the Alliance was included in the Diocesan Reports compiled for presentation to the World Congress of the Lay Apostolate in Rome. At the "Torch Service" display conducted by women's organisations during the Olympic Games it was also represented. The Alliance was glad to welcome the Hon. Mabel Strickland during her brief visit to Melbourne.

Approaches have been made to the Government on behalf of the Alliance in Australia concerning Australia's representation on the Status of Women Commission; amendments to the Draft Supplementary Convention on Slavery; Social Workers for the Aborigines; Equal Pay; the proposed uniform Divorce Legislation.

In New South Wales a series of Talks on Immigration were given, and in this connection, the Second Public Speaking Competition for Girls' Secondary Schools was arranged by the Alliance under the title "Australians All." The office of the Alliance was lent to the Hungarian Relief Committee during the Christmas recess.

As a member of the Public Service Association Combined Committee for Equal Pay, a representative of the Alliance took part in a deputation to the Prime Minister with the request that a tripartite committee be set up to consider the best methods of implementing the principle of equal pay on a national level.

Mrs. Jean Daly, ex-president of the New South Wales Section represented the Federal Government at the United Nations Seminar on the Civic Responsibilities and Increased Participation of Asian Women in Public Life which was held in Bangkok last August. Miss Lilian Mitchell, a member of the executive committee, acted as observer at the Plenary Session of Unesco held in New Delhi.

In Queensland, St. Joan's Alliance has been made the official Catholic representative in the Courts. Daily contact with the police is kept and members attend the Court to take custody of cases suitable for Catholic Institutions. Three members have been appointed Justices of the Peace. Work is done in collaboration with the Good Shepherd Sisters and members work as lay "follow-up" contacts with the girls who leave the Sisters' care. A panel of members has been

visiting Catholic Secondary Schools and addressing the girls on their adjustment to adult life. These visits have proved most profitable and have met with an enthusiastic response.

Well attended monthly meetings have been held by all Sections on a variety of subjects, e.g. Welfare of Aborigines, Immigration, Maintenance and Divorce Laws, Juvenile Delinquency, Technical Assistance, etc. Co-operation with other women's organisations and with the United Nations Association is carried on in each State.

L'ALLIANCE JEANNE D'ARC

*Emission de la Radio-télévision française :
Emission matérielle "La Femme"*

Entrée en émission. Vous assistiez samedi à la réunion du 14^e Conseil de l'Alliance Jeanne d'Arc et vous nous parlez des travaux de cette rencontre internationale.

Réponse. Oui, en effet l'Alliance est internationale et ses travaux ont toujours un but humain, social. J'ajoute que cette association qui existe chez nous seulement depuis 1931, a été créée en 1911 en Angleterre, qu'elle est représentée dans plus de 30 pays et que ses travaux portent surtout, sur la situation de la femme dans les pays sous développés.

C'est ce qui explique qu'il ait été question samedi et dimanche, de démarches auprès de l'ONU et de la Commission de la Femme, pour obtenir qu'un âge minimum du mariage soit inscrit dans les lois de certaines contrées, et que le mariage ne soit pas conclu sans la présence des deux conjoints et sans leur plein et libre consentement. Une résolution a également été prise concernant l'esclavage.

Autre point, qui concerne tous les pays: l'âge de la retraite. Vous savez que souvent on demande qu'il soit avancé pour la femme, ce qui serait un handicap supplémentaire pour elle, surtout lorsqu'elle doit travailler, ou se remettre au travail assez tard dans sa vie. Aussi, le Comité de l'Alliance a-t-il été d'accord pour demander que l'on adopte notre formule: même âge, avec possibilité de prendre la retraite 5 ans plutôt; ceci valable pour hommes et femmes, et sans fixation d'âge car des conditions particulières peuvent intervenir dans tel ou tel pays. Il ne peut rien y avoir d'uniforme pour le monde entier.

Parmi les rapports présentés par les sections nationales, je vous parlerai de celui de la section française que préside Mme Marthe Gouffé, que l'on connaît bien dans les milieux de militantes des mouvements féminins. Elle avait mission de rappeler l'action des deux années écoulées depuis la dernière rencontre des responsables de l'Alliance.

Naturellement elle a souligné la Ratification par notre pays, de la Convention Internationale sur les droits politiques de la Femme. Convention qui avait été signée en 1953 par Mme Lefauchaux

au nom du Gouvernement. Il s'agit de l'égalité d'exercice pour les postes publics et les fonctions publiques: cette convention n'avait jamais été rapportée au Parlement Français.

En Mai dernier, la ratification a été acquise, ce qui est un succès à répercussions importantes sur le plan national et international.

Mme Gouffé a rappelé encore les travaux de l'Alliance Jeanne d'Arc, en liaison avec d'autres associations, contre la prostitution; pour la révision des régimes matrimoniaux ainsi que ses interventions auprès de la F.A.O. pour faire prévaloir les considérations concernant la libération matérielle de la femme. Puis elle a conclu en posant la question: nous avons acquis des droits, les conserverons-nous? Certainement pas si nous ne sommes pas vigilantes.

MOTHER KEVIN

Mother Kevin of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Africa died in her sleep on October 17th at Boston, Mass., U.S.A., at the age of eighty-one. She spent fifty-two years in Africa where she founded the African community of the Little Sisters of St. Francis in Uganda in 1923.

She herself entered the novitiate in Mill Hill in 1896, and seven years later was one of six nuns sent to the Mission of the Mill Hill Fathers in Uganda. She obtained special permission from the Holy Father to return to England to take a course of midwifery, and established a training school for African midwives. In 1952 the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Africa were erected into a new Congregation entirely Missionary in character of which she was appointed the first superior general.

Mother Kevin was awarded the M.B.E. for her work during the first world war and the C.B.E. after her retirement in 1955.

"Mama Kevina" as she was called was loved by many in Africa, pagans as well as Christians. Members of the Alliance had the privilege of meeting Mother Kevin in 1935 at the flat of her great friend Mrs. V. M. Crawford and hearing her speak of her work. When on her way to her new foundation in Boston in 1952, the chairman and hon. secretary of the Alliance had the happiness of a talk with her in London, when she discussed the problems of the higher education of African girls.

The film "More Than I Can" is a vivid testimony to the work she set on foot—all types of education, care of homeless children, of the aged and incurable and of lepers. She was showing the film the evening before she died to a Boston audience. She leaves behind twenty-eight foundations of the African Little Sisters of St. Francis in Uganda alone, seven in Kenya, two in the Union of South Africa and two in Northern Rhodesia. Archbishop Cushing of Boston flew with her body to her native Ireland. R.I.P.

ELIZABETH ABBOTT

By the death of Elizabeth Abbott women have lost one of their greatest champions. She had that passion for justice which we older people feel has so largely been lost. It is a sacred indignation which in her case burnt fiercely up to the end, and forbade her to rest. There are perhaps at any time few people who are capable of a sustained and strong emotion—not for individual cases, but on behalf of the whole tragic race of man. It is a thing which is apt to frighten people and perhaps also to make them uncomfortable since it disturbs the more pleasant, even and "reasonable" pursuit of a cause.

But how many people who worked with her felt a surge of relief when in some meeting she rose to oppose the compromise that was beginning to seem so inevitable. And what a speaker she was: impassioned but logical, witty too. And being a good Scot, how naturally she found in the Bible the penetrating phrase and the essence of wisdom. And she knew her subject, read and studied endless blue books, Hansards, and reports, apart from her very wide reading in many fields. It was this solid background to her own lively and stimulating mind that made her such a delightful companion. She loved poetry and music and all the good things of life and was such a generous friend.

It so happened that I followed her as Secretary of the International Suffrage Alliance whose paper, *Jus Suffragii*, she was still editing. From that time for all those many years I worked with her in many ways, notably perhaps in studying the Beveridge Report and subsequent National Insurance Act. We did not achieve equality for women but I think it is true that one tiny amendment was due to us, namely that the married women in paid employment should be held as an insurable person though with a right to contract out.

More recently I was connected with the work of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene in the cause so near her heart for which she never ceased to work. It is sad that the miserable Wolfenden Report came to frustrate the hope of some measure of reform in the laws affecting the prostitute. How we shall miss that "bonny fighter" in the uphill work which lies ahead in combating the extraordinarily out-of-date suggestions in the Report if they appear in future legislation.

I mourn a dear friend and great woman.

Katherine Bompas

We ask our readers to pray for the repose of the soul of our member Miss Edith Delaney who died recently. R.I.P.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

In his address to the World Congress of the Lay Apostolate, the Holy Father urged the Catholics of Africa and Asia to collaborate with neutral and non-Catholic movements and organisations if by doing so they serve the common good and the cause of God. In speaking of opportunities for women in the apostolate, His Holiness mentioned teaching in all types of schools, work for the abolition of child marriages and forced marriages, divorce and polygamy, the preparation of girls for marriage and the formation of groups for mutual help and to assist their non-Catholic neighbours.

United Nations. When Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II addressed a special plenary session of the General Assembly, she called to mind that the Assembly itself was born of the endeavours of countless men and women from different nations who over the centuries had pursued the aims of the preservation of peace between nations, equality of justice for all before the law, and the right of peoples of the world to live their lives in freedom and security. She said "the peoples of the world expect the United Nations to persevere in its efforts," and ended, "only when justice and respect for obligations are firmly established will the United Nations achieve the goal of a world at peace, law-abiding and prosperous . . . which is the heart's desire of every nation here represented."

Germany. In the new Bundestag the forty-eight women are distributed among the different parties as follows: Christian Democrats 22; Social Democrats 22; Free Democrats 3; German Party 1. We congratulate the two members of St. Joan's Alliance, Frau Brauksiepe and Frau Pitz-Savilsberg, members of the Christian Democratic Party, on their election, as well as our old friend Dr. Marie Elisabeth Lüders of Berlin, member of the Free Democratic Party.

Ghana. A correspondent in *The Times* recently writing on the women of Ghana said that the women of Ashanti had always played an important part in the life of the nation. The children belong to the woman's family and she is entitled to keep her own property. As in many other countries, the women seem to do more work than the men. In addition to their housework many engage in trade, some of the women traders having a turnover of £1,000 or more a month, out of which some pay for the education of their children in England. Ashanti is still largely polygamous, though as education spreads, monogamy becomes more fashionable and those married

in Church come under the English law. The women are taking a great interest in politics, all parties having women's sections. They are eligible to vote and stand for election and they contribute generously to party funds. On the other hand, in domestic life the wife is still under the power of her husband and while she cooks for him, she rarely eats with him, but keeps a respectful distance.

Switzerland. The Bulletin of *l'Union Civique des Femmes Catholiques Suisses* (Staka) states that the Government Report of February 22nd, 1957, made it clear that Swiss women, on the grounds of justice, equality and democracy had a right to the vote and recommended that the necessary alteration be made in the law. In accordance with Swiss law this would first involve a Referendum.

The Report is in three parts. Part 1 gives a history of the origin of men's political rights, the position of women in other countries and the present position in Switzerland. Part 2 gives the pros and cons for woman suffrage. Part 3 discusses whether partial or complete franchise is desirable and comes to the conclusion that full political rights should be given to women. Some of the arguments, especially the religious arguments against woman suffrage appear weak and contradictory and Staka urges its members to study the Report carefully and to make their views known to the various bodies concerned.

In the following month a Government Bill on Civil Defence was thrown out by a small majority. This rejection was held by some to be due to the fear of women being conscripted for civil defence following the Government's declaration on the franchise. Staka urges its members to take their full share in *voluntary* civil defence wherever this may be established.

Staka finally reports that there is a move in certain quarters to take the opportunity of the revision of the Federal Criminal Code to urge the permission for the practice of abortion and warns its members to be on the alert.

As we go to press we learn that, in Basle, by a ballot of the men electors, a law was passed on November 3rd giving the women the right to the municipal vote.

U.S.A. *The Catholic Digest* reports that at St. Vincent's Hospital, New York, managed by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent of Paul, a course of instruction in pre-natal care is given to both prospective fathers and mothers. The fathers are encouraged to ask questions and practise feeding and bathing an infant under the supervision of a nun. The course is said to be very successful.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

A resolution was adopted by the International Labour Conference on June 27th, 1957, requesting "the Governing Body shortly to constitute and convene a tripartite Committee on Women's Work to deal with specific problems of women workers."

The considerations which led the General Conference of the I.L.O. to propose this resolution, which will command the attention of women's organisations, include the following: "that the remunerated employment of women raises, at various levels, many specific problems"; "that the workers' organisations have for long drawn the attention of the I.L.O. to the need for the establishment of a special tripartite Committee on Women's Work"; "that the Meeting of Experts on Women's Employment which was held in Geneva in November 1956 drew the attention of the Governing Body to the desirability of setting up a tripartite Committee on Women's Work to meet every two years to deal with the problems concerning women workers."

The I.L.O. is undertaking a study on the conditions of employment of nurses, following requests from international professional organisations and a resolution of the I.L.O. Advisory Committee on "Salaried Employees" and professional workers. The Committee noted that shortage of hospital and nursing staff could be attributed in part to dissatisfaction with conditions of training and employment. The report of this study will serve as a working paper for an *ad hoc* meeting of experts which will be convened by the I.L.O. in 1958 and will formulate recommendations concerning conditions of employment in this field.

MIGRATION

In a message to the Third International Catholic Migration Congress held in Assisi in September, the High Commissioner for Refugees emphasised the importance of the "family" concept of migration. In the past, too much attention had been paid to the qualities of the individual and too little to the family unit. Consequently thousands of families have had to accept separation or forego their chance of migration. It may have been necessary in the past to accept only the most fit for resettlement but recent experience with Hungarian and other refugees has shown that families with members over the usual age limit or suffering from a physical handicap have been able to adapt themselves as well as or better, than others. The very fact of being together was a strength to the settlers and a powerful stimulant to integration in a new community.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "The Catholic Citizen," November 15th, 1932

Sir James Stansfeld, a staunch opponent of the Contagious Diseases Acts and a Vice-President of The National Association for Repeal in 1874, in his first speech to the House declared: "I have made my choice—I have cast in my lot with those men and women—forever revered be their names—who hitherto have led a hope which too long has seemed forlorn and never will I desist, and never will they desist from this sacred agitation until these degrading laws are blotted out from the Statute Book forever . . ." For another twelve years the agitation for repeal was continued, and it was not until 1886 the Repealers won their victory and the Acts were abolished.

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

BOOKS RECEIVED

The Letters of St. Paul. Translated by Ronald Knox. (Burns Oates, Universe Books, 2s. 6d.)

Seeds of Contemplation. By Thomas Merton. (Burns Oates, Universe Books, 2d. 6d.)

ST. JOAN'S ALLIANCE

Christmas Sale

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23rd,

12 - 5.30 p.m. at

ST. PATRICK'S CLUBROOM,
SOHO SQUARE W.1

(Entrance through porch of Church)

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