

# THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

*Organ of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, 55, Berners Street, London, W.1.*

VOL. VIII., No. 6.

June 15th, 1922.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

Daughter of the ancient Eve,  
We know the gifts ye gave and give;  
Who knows the gifts which *you* shall give,  
Daughter of the newer Eve?

—Francis Thompson.

## THE SWEATED INDUSTRIES OF THE PAST AND THEIR POSITION TO-DAY.

BY MARGRIETA BEER, M.A.

Since last September some millions of industrial workers have been anxiously awaiting the Report of Lord Cave's Committee, which was appointed to enquire into the working and effects of the Trade Boards Acts. The present position of these workers, as regards wages, had been secured after years of agitation, propaganda and strenuous work, and lately this position had seemed to be threatened and jeopardised by the attack levelled against the Trade Boards by certain employers' associations.

The terrible evil of sweated labour, which was poisoning our industrial life during the nineteenth century was at last lying heavily on the conscience of the public, and had given rise to various Government enquiries, investigations, and appointment of committees. Reform however was slow in coming. But condemnation of the exploitation by unscrupulous employers of the poorest and most helpless class of workers was gathering force, and at long last the Trade Boards Act of 1909 was passed. For the first time in their miserable existence the sweated workers saw some definite hope of relief held out to them. The Act was admittedly experimental, and was at first applied to four trades only, but powers were given in the Act to apply its provisions to any trade in which the rates of wages were exceptionally low, as compared with those in other employments. For these trades a Trade Board was set up consisting of representatives of employers and of workers, and some additional neutral and impartial

members. Their task was to fix general minimum rates of wages, which became the legal minimum rate in the trade, after a certain time had elapsed for objections to be brought forward by employers or workers, and to be duly considered by the Board. No employer might pay less than this minimum rate. If he did, he was punishable by law. The Boards, however, could grant exemptions for workers suffering from infirmity or physical injury. About half a million of workers were covered under the first Act.

In 1918, an amended Act, giving extended powers, was passed. The war had brought with it great industrial changes. General increases of wages had taken place with the rise in the cost of living, and it had been easy to obtain and maintain these increases while the supply of labour was restricted, and trade was booming. There was a fear, however, that with the end of the war, wages, especially those of the unskilled workers, might suddenly drop, without a corresponding drop in the cost of living. A Sub-Committee of the Reconstruction Committee, which sat in 1917, considered the subject, and recommended that women workers should be protected by Trade Board machinery, and the Whitley Committee strengthened the recommendation by urging that in addition to the establishment of Joint Industrial Councils Trade Boards should be extended to those trades which were comparatively unorganised.

These recommendations were followed by the Trade Boards Act of 1918, and new Trade



Boards were set up in quick succession. There were soon 63 Boards in existence, covering about three million workers, of whom about 70 per cent. are women. These Boards would in all probability have been accepted as quietly as the earlier ones, but for one unfortunate circumstance, which rendered their course a difficult one, almost from the outset. While trade was booming and wages moving upwards, they worked remarkably smoothly, but in 1920 the trade of the country suffered an unprecedented depression. Reductions of wages at intervals, followed the fall in the cost of living, but the machinery of the Act necessitates delay before these variations can become effective. An agitation against the Act was engineered, and given a publicity which its beneficial effects have never achieved. The attack assumed such proportions that the Government at length appointed a Committee to enquire into the working and effects of the Acts.

It is the Report of this Committee which is now before us. The workers had awaited its findings with anxiety, since the total repeal of the Acts had been advocated with fire and fury in one hostile quarter. Even drastic amendment of the Acts might render them practically ineffective. However, not only the workers, but all who have their welfare at heart, must be relieved on reading the Report. It is in fact a document of considerable importance. Firstly, it is a notable tribute to the work done by the Trade Boards in the past. "The effect of their operations," says the Committee, "was gradually to remove from the trades concerned the reproach of 'sweating,' and (so far as the evidence shows) without injury to those engaged in the industries or to the consumer." With regard to the later developments they say "we think it is established that the system has had beneficial effects. Notable tributes have been paid by employers to the achievements of Trade Boards in . . . (11 specified trades), and by workers' organisations to the working of the system as a whole. A number of employers' organisations stated that the conditions of the poorer and less skilled workers have been substantially improved. It appears to us, that speaking generally, Trade Boards have succeeded in abolishing the grosser forms of under payment, and regularising wages conditions in trades brought under the Acts."

Other good results noted by the Committee are the protection afforded the good employer

against unscrupulous competition, the stimulus to improvement in working methods, in machinery and organisation, which has brought about increased production, the encouragement given to the revival of apprenticeship, and to the sound industrial training of juveniles, and lastly the improvement in industrial relations. "If the Trade Boards were abolished," says the Report, "without the creation of some effective machinery to take their place, the earnings of the poorer workers would be likely to fall very rapidly, and 'sweating' would return. Further, there are still some trades in which the wages paid to workers appear to be exceptionally low and no efficient organisation for securing better wage conditions exists, and it is undesirable that the workers in these trades should be deprived of all hope of protection."

The Committee proceeds to recommend certain changes and modifications in the machinery of the Acts. Some of these have been urged repeatedly by the Trade Boards themselves. It has always been felt to be a serious drawback, that a variation in a rate can only become effective after several months' delay. The Committee urges a speeding-up, which would be a great improvement.

The most serious change proposed lies in the distinction suggested between unskilled and skilled rates, the latter to be fixed only with the consent of both sides. In fixing a minimum rate to apply to the least skilled workers in the trade, there has always been the danger that such a rate might cover only a few ancillary workers, such as messengers, sweepers, etc., and that therefore the ordinary worker in the trade might be uncovered. To protect the general body of workers in a trade, the Committee therefore recommends that the general minimum time-rate should be defined as the rate payable to the ordinary worker in the trade of the lowest grade of skill, and that the Board should have power to fix a special time-rate for ancillary workers lower than the general minimum.

Other minor changes recommended in the Report do not seem very formidable to those who have experience of the working of the Trade Boards, since many of them have been carried out hitherto in practice, though not explicitly provided for in the Acts. Altogether then there is cause for congratulation in the latest phase of Trade Board history.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

On May 10th women passed another milestone on their way to equality. On that day for the first time in the history of England a woman was called to the Bar. Dr. Ivy Williams, who is a lecturer on Law at Oxford does not intend to practise, but will continue her lectures. Dr. Williams as holder of the Certificate of Honour took precedence over the twenty-two men called at the same time.

\* \* \* \*

By the persistence of Mr. Hailwood and Mr. Grattan Doyle nuns have been put upon the same footing as priests and other ministers of religion, and are exempted from jury service. We do not agree with Mr. Shortt that from "the jury point of view and from the point of view of their value in the Courts, nuns were purely negligible," but there is no doubt that it would have entailed considerable hardship on the nuns themselves, and that they are entitled to exemption.

\* \* \* \*

We were glad to read in a recent number of the *Tablet* W. H. K.'s remarks in support of Mrs. Crawford's article, "A New Conscience," which appeared in our April number. W. H. K. also quotes Lecky's tribute to the Fathers of the Church for their endeavour to impress upon Christians "the equality of obligation imposed upon both sexes." The tribute should be better known among certain feminists, who are sometimes prejudiced against the early Fathers, it might re-adjust the balance a little.

\* \* \* \*

The third anniversary of the signing of peace will be celebrated this year by a monster League of Nations rally in Hyde Park on Saturday, June 24th. There is to be a big procession from the Embankment to Hyde Park organised by the Greater London Branches of the League of Nations Union and supported by numerous other societies. The Foreign Colonies of London have undertaken to supply delegations in national costume for all of the fifty one nations of the League.

The procession will arrive in Hyde Park at 5 o'clock, and among the speakers that will

occupy the twelve platforms during the simultaneous meetings will be the Archbishop of York, Lord Robert Cecil, Lady Astor, Mrs. Wintringham, Lord Eustace Percy, Sir Maurice de Bunsen, Major Ormsby Gore, Mr. Walter Elliott, the Bishop of Woolwich, the Rt. Hon. G. N. Barnes, Bishop Welldon, the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard, Sir Arthur Steel Maitland, Captain Colin Coote, Dr. Scott-Lidgett, Mrs. Corbett Ashby and Mrs. Oliver Strachey.

\* \* \* \*

A number of women's societies, including the C.W.S.S., attended a meeting at North St. Pancras, to meet Sir Willoughby Dickinson, to whom the usual questions were asked, that are put by the feminist societies to parliamentary candidates. Sir Willoughby Dickinson's replies to all the questions were most satisfactory, besides which he expressed his sympathy with Catholic schools, and while standing for equal divorce laws, is opposed to divorce.

\* \* \* \*

The Council for the Representation of Women in the League of Nations, of which Miss L. de Alberti has recently been appointed Hon. Secretary, has received information from Dr. Nitobe, Assistant General Secretary of the League of Nations, that Madame Curie, and Mlle. Kristine Bonnevie, Professor of Zoology at the University of Christiania, have been nominated to the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation. The committee will consist of twelve members.

\* \* \* \*

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill, with which we deal in another column, is put down for its Second Reading on June 14th.

\* \* \* \*

There will be a meeting of the C.W.S.S. at the Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, on Wednesday, June 28th, at 5-30 p.m., when Mrs. Trounson, Secretary of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance, will speak on her Tour in America.



## THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":

55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W., I. Tel. Museum 4181.

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

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### Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1922 C.W.S.S Meeting.

After many vicissitudes the Criminal Law Amendment Bill seems to be nearing port. We shall not believe that it is really safe till it is on the Statute Book, but now that it is a Government measure, it does not seem too sanguine to hope that it will be safely piloted into port. The Bill was introduced into the House by the Home Secretary in February, and the Government has promised to proceed with it immediately after Whitsun. In view of the importance of keeping the matter to the fore, the C.W.S.S. held a meeting on May 30, at which Miss Alison Neilans, of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, explained the main points of the Bill, and dealt with its chance of successfully passing into Law this Session. Miss Dorothy Lenn presided.

Miss Neilans gave a lucid explanation both of the present Bill and of the principle upon which English Law proceeds in dealing with immorality. The 1922 Bill, as many of our readers are aware, is a compromise, though it has the support of sixty-two national societies, including the C.W.S.S. We, as well as many other societies want more protection for young girls, and for boys, than this Bill gives, but it is sometimes wise to compromise. Bills have been brought forward year after year only to be defeated, and though this one does not raise the age of consent, it does contain a clause abolishing the defence "of reasonable cause to believe" that is, that the girl was under the age of consent, which is sixteen. As any scoundrel was entitled to put in this defence and go scot free, this clause is really more important than the one to raise the age of con-

sent. Miss Neilans explained that her society realising that there was still some opposition to the abolition of this defence, had tabled an amendment to protect young men under twenty-one, first offenders, and of previous good character, from anything in the nature of blackmail. It is suggested that in such case the youth could be bound over to be of good behaviour, and no conviction be recorded against him.

At the close of the meeting the following resolution was put from the chair and carried unanimously: "That this meeting of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society urges the Government to proceed with the Criminal Law Amendment Bill without delay in order that it may become law this Session."

The Bill is not yet safe. Any of our members who are willing to lobby at the House of Commons on this or other bills, are asked to communicate at once with Miss Barry.

L. DE ALBERTI.

### MRS. MORE NISBETT FOR PARLIAMENT.

As we go to Press we hear with great pleasure that our member, Mrs. More Nisbett, is standing for Parliament, for an Edinburgh constituency, at the General Election. She has been adopted as an independent candidate by the Edinburgh National Union for Equal Citizenship. Mrs. More Nisbett stands for all those things we most value, and as the success of her campaign depends largely on funds, we hope all our members and readers will contribute to the campaign fund.

### Impressions of America.

Many interesting reports and items of news get crowded out of our limited columns, which accounts for our being unable to make mention last month of the interesting and enjoyable lecture given by Miss Christitch, B.A., on her impressions of America. Miss Christitch spoke in glowing terms of American women, and especially of American nuns, whom she found very progressive and ahead of other Catholics, and very alive to the need of training girls to be good citizens. The lecturer spoke also of the keen interest taken by American Catholics in the attitude of Catholics here, and of their appreciation of the work done by the C.W.S.S. and its paper, "The Catholic Citizen." The afternoon will be remembered by all who were present as a most enjoyable one. The chair was taken by Miss V. S. Laughton, M.B.E.

### N.U.S.E.C. Summer School

The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship is holding a Summer School at St. Hilda's College, Oxford, from August 19th to September 2nd.

The Syllabus of Lectures shows that the School will be both interesting and useful, a special section being devoted to Women Magistrates. Full particulars may be had from the Secretary, N.U.S.E.C., Evelyn House, 62, Oxford Street, London, W.1.

### The Protection of Animals

A mass meeting was held at the Queen's Hall, on May 26th, to commemorate the centenary of Martin's Act, the first act passed in this country for the protection of animals. Among the speakers were Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, Mr. Edward Carpenter and Miss Cole. The C.W.S.S. was represented on the platform by Miss Barry and Miss Jeffery. On the following day there was a procession and mass meeting in Hyde Park to commemorate the centenary. At this meeting the Rev. Dom Gilbert Higgins, C.R.L., was among the speakers.

### Social Reform.

I had been reading in a daily paper of various reforms, of progressive laws to be proposed whereby people should be forced to give up the greater part of their possessions to help their poorer brethren, and then I picked up that wonderful book of the Very Rev. Fr. Peter Baptist, O.F.M., on the Spirit of the Third Order of S. Francis, and it set me thinking—for truly, the Friars, both the followers of our Seraphic Father St. Francis and those of his great contemporary, St. Dominic, were the socialists of the Middle Ages. They, like the reformers of to-day desired the rich to give of their abundance to the poor. They went further; they even preached revolution. But there was this difference; to-day, reformers, for the most part are anxious to make laws that will force other people to do their duty. The Friars first gave an example in their own lives and then urged others to follow them of their own free will, and the revolution they preached was the revolution that each individual should make in himself, by turning from a life of selfishness to one of entire unselfishness.

To-day women have the vote and many of them realizing their responsibility, do their utmost to use it to the best advantage, but they long for more power than a single vote can give. I want to remind them that a vote, like good advice, can be solidly strengthened by a life of example. There is so much uninstructed effort to meet the social problems of to-day, but present conditions are no worse than they were when St. Francis and St. Dominic by word and example preached reform.

"Such as the individual is, such will society be," was a truth that was acted on, and the large number of members of the Third Orders practically changed the conditions of the downtrodden poor.

If to-day Catholics in large numbers would join one of the Third Orders and keep the letter and the spirit of their rule, the result, even in non-Catholic England, would be marvellous.

A. H. BENNETT.



INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Canadian suffragists, so we learn from *Jus Suffragii* are carrying forward their propaganda with unabated energy. Fuller reports go to prove the wonderful enthusiasm that greeted Mrs. Trounson wherever she spoke both in Canada and Newfoundland. An important deputation of over 200 women, led by Mme. Gerin Lajoie, Lady Drummond and Mrs. Casgrian, urged on the Premier of Quebec Province, M. Tascheraeu, the granting of the provincial suffrage to women. The Premier, declaring himself "imbued with the Latin spirit," said he was opposed to Woman Suffrage, but anyhow announced that the Government would not officially oppose the Bill that is shortly to be introduced in the Provincial Legislature. We must be grateful for small mercies!

\* \* \* \*

German women have gained an important victory by the passing of a Bill through the Reichstag conferring on them the right to serve on juries; nurses and widows—and, we hope, enclosed nuns—are to be exempt. Unfortunately the cause of morality in Germany has simultaneously received a setback by the re-introduction of the State regulation of prostitution as a clause in a Bill dealing with Venereal Disease.

\* \* \* \*

It is lamentable that Woman Suffrage should once more have been rejected (March 23rd) by the S. African Parliament. The conversion of General Smuts to the justice of women's claims has so far been of little benefit to the cause, being accompanied by a repeated refusal to make the Bill a Government measure. S. African women must take courage from the fact that the rejection of the Bill was carried by only four votes—55 to 51.

\* \* \* \*

The *Christliche Frau* devotes a dozen pages to a really admirable article on "Marriage Reform or Reformed Marriage," by a professor of Bonn University, Dr. Rademacher, in which he deplors the wide prevalence of immorality in Germany to-day. The whole article is based on the equal and mutual responsibility of men and women in all matters of sex. "First and foremost," he writes, "we must do away with the double moral standard. The Gospels never recognise it. Pre-matrimonial purity is an obligation

binding both parties with equal severity. . . . It may well be that a woman may be generous enough to forgive what is past, but it should be treated as a matter for real forgiveness and not as a subject in which it may be taken for granted that women should shew themselves accommodating. The same should naturally be true in a man's relation to his wife's past."

\* \* \* \*

The same subject is treated with great earnestness by Mlle. L. van den Plas in *La Femme Belge* under the title "Catholics and Morality." She too condemns the existing double code of morality—to which unfortunately Catholics so frequently give a tacit consent—as the basis of all the moral evils of our day and she appeals especially to Catholic mothers to bring up their sons in a more truly Christian code.

\* \* \* \*

The voting for the Luxemburg Chamber took place on May 28th, and the *Luxemburger Frau* has been giving each week very clear and emphatic directions to the new women voters not only how to vote but who to vote for. Voting, it appears, is obligatory in Luxemburg as in Holland. There is a very full account (May 14th) of the recent congress of the Action Sociale de la Femme in Paris—an annual event at which C.W.S.S. is always represented—at which great stress was laid, it seems, on the absolute necessity for girls of the middle and professional classes going through some solid training by which they may earn a livelihood. The days of the mere amateur are admittedly over.

\* \* \* \*

We have already referred in these columns to the attempt being made by reactionary forces in Hungary to reduce women's political power. It would appear from an article in our intrepid suffragist contemporary of Christiania, *Nylaende*, that one proposal is to deprive women of the right to vote like men at 21, and only allow it at 24. The Norwegian women have telegraphed their indignant sympathy to the Hungarian women at this proposed insult.

\* \* \* \*

The *Travail Féminin* for June gives a very encouraging annual report of the progress of the Union des Travailleuses Catholiques de Genève of which it is the organ and which has

just celebrated the 25th anniversary of its foundation. The most recent development is the organisation of bed-rooms and restaurant for its members above the society's offices. We note that in the junior section members can wisely be enrolled as young as fourteen, immediately on leaving school.

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*La Française* publishes a very favourable review of a book by the well-known Catholic feminist, Mlle. Leontine Zanta "Psychologie du Féminisme," to which we hope to refer more fully later.

V.M.C.

Journées Sociales.

The meetings of the Action Sociale de la Femme held recently in Paris will be remembered by all who attended them as being in every way interesting and enjoyable. M. Souchon, who presided, opened the sessions with an uplifting and profound speech dealing with the part played by woman in contemporary society. The addresses on the subject of the present difficulties besetting the professional and middle classes were of exceptional interest, especially the address given by M. Goyau, the eminent writer.

The C.W.S.S. was represented by Miss J. Holmes, and Mdlle. Chalmel. Miss Holmes read a paper on the fight for equality, and told her audience what had been achieved in England and what remained to be done. The deputy from Luxemburg entered a protest against the Family Vote. Mme. Chotard pleaded for women Suffrage, and the deputy from Poland gave a wonderful account of the patriotic and social work done by her country-women during these last terrible years. The Action Sociale de la Femme is to be heartily congratulated on the great success of the whole Congress.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Hon. Sec., Miss A. J. Musson, Fair View West, Rainhill. We offer our congratulations to the Revd. T. J. Walshe, M.A., on his appointment to the parish of Aughton. We always remember with gratitude what a champion he was of our cause, in the days when it was an unpopular one.

We regret, that owing to pressure of work, Mrs. L. Hughes, has been obliged to resign

her office of Hon. Treasurer. Miss Stack has kindly consented to take her place and would be glad if those who have not already paid their subscriptions would send them to her at 66, Park Road South, Birkenhead.

SEPARATION AND MAINTENANCE ORDERS BILL.

We will deal next month with the Separation and Maintenance Orders Bill, which we are glad to see passed its second reading without a division. The C.W.S.S. is among the many Societies that support it.

WOMEN POLICE.

Another great Protest Meeting against the suppression of Women Police was held on Monday, May 29th. The meeting was convened by the Feminist League. The Chair was taken by Miss Abadam, and the speakers included the Bishop of Kensington and the Duchess of Hamilton. The resolution demanding the retention of Women Police was passed unanimously. The meeting had the support of many Societies, including the C.W.S.S.

Hon. Treasurer's Note.

We have received £3 4s. 6d. to date towards a typewriter for the office, but this is not nearly sufficient. We hope members will kindly remember this very necessary object, even if they can only spare a few pence towards it. In the meantime one has been lent to us, as it was found impossible to do longer without it, but this is only a temporary arrangement, and it is obvious that the office should possess a typewriter of its own.

G. JEFFERY.

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**LECTURES.**

Wed., 21st June, 8-15 p.m. Recital "Pompilia" (from 'The Ring and the Book'). Miss Margaret Omar.

Wed., 28th June, 8-15 p.m. Announced later.

Wed., 5th July, 8-15 p.m. "Old Lamps or New." Lady Amherst of Hackney. Chairman, Mrs. Dexter.

Wed., 12th July, 8-15 p.m. "Women in H.M. Forces." Professor Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, D.B.E., LL.D., D.Sc. Chairman, Miss Vera S. Laughton, M.B.E.

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will be held at

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 will report on her

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