

WOMEN'S SERVICE
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THE

Catholic Citizen

Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society),
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Signed Articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the 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.

Salute to Courage

By EVELYN BILLING.

Has it ever struck you that Marble Arch and the thoroughfares between the City and Hyde Park are doubly sacred to Catholic Suffragettes? Within our hearts are enshrined visions of the Way to the Tree of Tyburn, along which so many Catholic martyrs were dragged on hurdles from the Tower to sanctify Tyburn for ever by their death on the triangular gibbet. And we remember how the Suffragettes in tens of thousands used to march with banners and with songs towards Hyde Park or Albert Hall to claim political freedom for women.

It was thus not inappropriate that a hotel overlooking Hyde Park should be the place where St. Joan's Alliance combined with fifty-one other women's organisations to celebrate the entry of women into the House of Commons and to do honour to the first woman M.P. who took her seat there, the woman who for a quarter-century has represented the Sutton division of Plymouth. Lady Astor was the guest at a reception organised by the old guard—the seven surviving suffrage societies—which was held at Grosvenor House on 1st December 1944. She was presented with a leather-bound illuminated address.

Through these many years Lady Astor has been a great personality in the House of Commons. At first, the one lone woman there, she had to create a tradition: in sincere and sprightly fashion she rose to the occasion, and was—just herself! Let us be thankful that our pioneer Member was able to display that combined courage and wit which disconcerted the staid Commons and yet compelled their attention, just exactly as the same qualities shown by the Suffragettes had affected their opponents. In the Votes for Women campaign we learned what it was to be cold-shouldered by our "anti" friends, but I confess I was ashamed that I had so little realised how shabbily the men had at first cold-shouldered Lady Astor—her personal friends would not speak to her in the House!

Into a resentful House came Lady Astor, young, charming and graceful, as lightly poised as a columbine-flower in the wind—as Miss Rathbone happily put it. Was the resentment's deepest cause the quick realisation that Lady Astor, having wealth, beauty and social position, chose deliberately and joyously to battle for women's equality as a part of her battle for the cause of God? From the time of her first election campaign Lady Astor's ideal has been, as she told Alice Maynell, to keep self out of her work, and to put her hope in God only. Gloriously has our first Member lived up to this self-imposed ideal. Let us be glad that the first woman M.P. put spiritual

things first and believed in the high spiritual purposes of a free womanhood.

We of St. Joan's Alliance were proud and happy to have our ex-Chairman, Mrs. Laughton Mathews, now Director of the W.R.N.S., presiding on this historic occasion. It was fitting that a senior naval officer should honour a senior Parliamentary representative for a naval constituency. In her speech she said that thirty-seven women had sat in the House since Lady Astor first entered it. One of them had been a Cabinet Minister and four of them Parliamentary Secretaries. These thirty-seven share the honourable responsibility for much work done for equality between the sexes, maternity and child welfare, and education in this quarter of a century. Lady Astor herself has effectively championed equality of moral standard between men and women. Mrs. Laughton Mathews read a message from Mr. Pethick Lawrence in which he regretted his unavoidable absence from the reception and said that Lady Astor had "won a permanent and honoured place in the annals of British history."

Several of Lady Astor's parliamentary colleagues came to pay tribute to her. On the platform were Mrs. Winttingham, who was the second woman member, Miss Florence Horsburgh, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, and Miss Eleanor Rathbone. (An apology was read from Miss Margaret Bondfield.) All these three spoke of Lady Astor's great courage. Mrs. Winttingham dwelt also on her generosity, Miss Horsburgh on her complete sincerity, and Miss Rathbone on her essential femininity, the quality without which the House of Commons could not be a truly representative assembly. When women entered the House, there was spontaneously created that strong comradeship that binds together the women Members, whatever their party; for, again to the astonishment and consternation of many of the men, the women M.P.s have worked together as a team for measures affecting women's affairs.

Lady Astor, in her speech, expressed her gratitude to the great feminist leaders, Mrs. Fawcett, Mrs. Pankhurst and the others, to the British people who had supported her for all that she was a Virginian, to her husband, and above all to the women of Plymouth. She said she had thoroughly enjoyed the House of Commons, "one of the fairest assemblies in the world." She ended by announcing—to the regret of all of us—that she would not again stand for election.

The reception was not only a tribute to courageous endeavour but also a salute to women's achievement.

Notes and Comments

The King's speech promises "further provisions for the regulation of wages and conditions of employment." May we hope that they will include equal pay for men and women?

We have heard from a member of L'Alliance Sainte Jeanne d'Arc who has been in Paris throughout the occupation, and are much relieved to know that she and other members of the Alliance are well. As we expected, several of them have been working devotedly for their country and for the unfortunate among its citizens.

We learn from the *Daily Sketch* that since a date early in November women who are discharged from factories no longer in need of their services are catechized about their private affairs by the Ministry of Labour if they apply to it for re-employment. Do you own the furniture of your dwelling? How much have you saved from your pay in your last job? What service allowance do you receive from your husband? What do you spend on sending him parcels? What do you pay your parents every week? How many are there in your family? These queries are set out in a questionnaire presented to the applicants. "We have no authority to compel the women to answer," an official of the Ministry stated. No consideration, neither the vain greed of government departments for filing matter nor any other, can excuse the impertinence of this inquisition.

Having estimated that 5,000,000 women will need paid employment after the war, the vice-chairman of the T.U.C. has stated that he considers this prospect alarming only if there be no assurance that women will be employed on the same terms as men, receiving equal pay for equal work. He condemns the policy of employing women only on semi-skilled jobs, and advises the unions to allow suitable girls to train for skilled work.

A petition signed by 66,000 working housewives and others was presented to the House of Commons by Dr. Summerskill on 2nd November. It asks that after such necessary liabilities as tax, rent and household expenses have been discharged out of the joint income of a married couple, the residue may be divided equally between the husband and the wife.

Certain welcome, and belated, amendments to the statutes of the Royal Society have admitted women to the fellowship of this institution.

It is sad news that the Catholic chapel of St. Columba on Drimnin in Argyllshire, built by Sir Charles Gordon of Drimnin in 1830, is to be converted to secular purposes, his descendants having recently sold the estate. The workers on Drimnin have made a presentation to Miss C. M. Gordon, an ex-chairman of the Alliance, who for some years has managed the property. We have grateful memories of her mother, the late Mrs. Gordon of Drimnin, an old and loyal member of St. Joan's.

A small contribution "from Saint Joan's Alliance" was made to the cheque for 105 guineas presented by the women's organizations of Edinburgh to Lady Darling when they entertained her and Sir William Darling, until recently Lord Provost of the city. St. Joan's was represented by Miss Mardon and Mrs. Watters.

Miss O'Brien, who is a Catholic, has been appointed High Sheriff of Worcester city. She has been a member of Worcester City Council since 1930.

International Notes

Barbados. We are still without news of the results of the general election for the House of Assembly, which occurred on 27th November and in which women voted for the first time in this colony, as did that poorer class of the community whose income is between 96 dollars and 240 dollars a year. Of the 44 candidates who stood for the 24 seats in the House, two were women. "Some of the women," a correspondent wrote to the *Trinidad Guardian* on 11th November, "are so enthusiastic that they are taking part in political meetings and speaking on platforms of both male and female candidates. Some are not yet moved by the political stir. But hundreds of them have been registered."

Ethiopia. A women's conference was held in the Alliance Hall on 26th October on the subject of the hospital which is to be founded in Addis Ababa in memory of the late Princess Tsahai of Ethiopia. It was attended by representatives of many women's organizations, Miss Chailoner for St. Joan's among them.

Dr. Maude Royden, from the chair, spoke eloquently of our debt to Ethiopia, the country "thrown to the wolves" by the League of Nations in Mussolini's heyday, and of the young Princess Tsahai, who trained as a nurse in Great Ormond Street Hospital, winning there golden opinions, and whose heart's desire it was to establish in her own country a hospital and a school of nursing and medicine. Mrs. Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale described the princess as the symbol of the modern womanhood of North Africa, whom we can link up with great women of European race, Florence Nightingale and others. Mr. W. McAdam Eccles, the distinguished surgeon, said that the building and equipment of the hospital ought to be first rate and explained the consequent great need for funds. Mrs. Barbara Ayrton Gould emphasized that there is to be equality of medical training for men and women in the hospital in Addis Ababa. "That is one of the things . . . which we have not yet succeeded in getting in Britain. It is a most important thing, and I hope it will prove an example to this country." Mrs. Corbett Ashby reminded her hearers that we are fighting a war for "reverence for the human personality, regardless of race, religion and, if possible, of sex," and that this hospital will stand for racial equality and sex equality. Moreover, it will prove "whether the Ethiopians, one of the African races, can give something new to the world as they work their way upward." Since Ethiopia is a Christian country in a continent largely Muslim, it behoves us to help to show forth in it, by example, the Christian ideal of service in which "there is neither bond nor free."

A message was sent to Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, who is now in Ethiopia, "that this conference of women pledges themselves to do all in their power to forward the work in whose interests she has journeyed to Ethiopia."

France. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, working in France, has told the story of "a modern Joan of Arc," a French peasant girl, nineteen years old, who has become a heroine of the F.F.I. Having led a group of Canadian paratroopers through the German lines, thus saving 36 men for the cause, she returned, recrossing the enemy lines, to the commandant of the F.F.I., and accepted from him the mission of warning the British forces that the R.A.F. should spare an abbey and school in the Bon Sauvreur quarter of Caen in which five or six thousand French people were sheltering. Quite alone, "Joan" crossed 400 yards of ground patrolled by German sentries, then No Man's Land in which she was exposed to British fire. She got through and delivered her message.

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Parliament Day by Day

At our monthly discussion meeting at the Interval Club on 2nd November, Miss Margaret Bond, the Hon. Secretary of the Hansard Society and a member of the Alliance, gave a most interesting talk entitled "Parliament Day by Day." Mrs. Halpern took the chair.

The speaker began by emphasising how necessary it is, if parliamentary democracy is to function properly, for the people to take an interest in the work of Parliament. An alive electorate will give us a responsible vigorous Parliament and a government of strength and principles. But how are the people to find out what is happening in Parliament? The parliamentary summaries in the press and the news bulletins on the wireless are necessarily very curtailed during war-time. The case was not much better in peace-time.

Miss Bond then gave an account of the struggle which had taken place between the press and Parliament during the 17th and 18th centuries, and described how punishments were inflicted by Parliament on reporters and others who had tried to give publicity to the speeches of members. On one occasion the Lord Mayor of London had been locked up in the Tower for supporting the press in the matter. Gradually, however, the force of public opinion had obliged members of Parliament to allow publicity to be given to their proceedings, and in 1909, as a result of a select committee's proposals, eleven very skilled reporters were chosen to report Parliament and it was decided that

Parliament was to have its own official newspaper, commonly known as Hansard.

Hansard, said the speaker, is a verbatim account of the proceedings of Parliament. Hansard is informative, interesting and often amusing reading. In order fully to appreciate Hansard it is desirable to have some knowledge of parliamentary procedure. Miss Bond gave a short account of a parliamentary day, including the Speaker's procession, question-time, debates of various kinds and adjournments.

Turning to the Hansard Society, Miss Bond described how this had been started in June, 1943, by Cdr. Stephen King-Hall, M.P., as "The Friends of Hansard," which had the modest aim of making it known that Hansard was on sale to the public and of seeing that Hansard was available in British embassies and legations, service messes, public libraries and so on. It had soon become obvious that there was a widespread public demand for knowledge on all kinds of aspects of the work of Parliament. In August 1944, in order to meet this demand, the Hansard Society was formed out of "The Friends of Hansard," with an elected council and a legal constitution. The work in front of the society is unlimited; in effect it is the unofficial public relations organisation of Parliament.

A vote of thanks to the speaker was moved by Mrs. McNeerney, whose father was one of "the eleven very skilled reporters" mentioned by Miss Bond, and was seconded by Miss Mary Parnell.

Address to Lady Astor

The following address was presented to Lady Astor at her jubilee party:—

"This address is presented by women's organisations in commemoration of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of your entry into the House of Commons as the first woman to take her seat there.

"On this Silver Jubilee women's organisations in Great Britain salute you with admiration, gratitude and affection, and hail you as the symbol of an historic event.

"We recognise the dauntless courage with which you have led the fight for equality within the House of Commons. We value the fearlessness and pertinacity with which you have defended our cause and the sympathy with which you have met our claims.

"We offer you our congratulations and our best wishes for the future, well knowing that you will not weary in your work for equality between men and women. May God bless you."

It was very beautifully written and illuminated on vellum by our member Mrs. Gray Hastings (née Erica Butler Bowden), the decorations including a charming miniature of the Houses of Parliament, and was inscribed with the names of the fifty women's organizations (including St. Joan's) who presented it. The cover of worked leather was made by a disabled man.

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with the result that "in a maelstrom of bombs and shells" abbey and school were untouched.

United States. Of the 18 women who stood for election to the House of Representatives on November 7th, nine have been returned, as against the seven women members of the late House. Of these seven, six—all but one of them Republicans—have been re-elected. Since the three new Congresswomen are Democrats, women representatives are fairly well divided between the parties. It is estimated that 65 per cent. of the voters on November 7th were women, an unprecedentedly large proportion.

Pay for Teachers

The following letter has been received from the National Union of Women Teachers:—

"The National Union of Women Teachers learns with great indignation that the proposed new scales of salaries for teachers continue the present differentiation between men and women teachers of the same professional status. (It is noted, for example, that it is only after working for three years that a woman reaches the salary offered to a man at the outset of his career, and that a woman has to obtain the headship of a school containing more than 200 pupils before she receives as big a salary as the maximum paid to an assistant master.)

"The N.U.T. is also deeply concerned at the suggested introduction of a system of payments to head teachers based on the number of children over 15 years of age who are in the schools, thus inferring that the education of older children is of greater value and importance than that of the younger children.

"The N.U.T. deplors that the Burnham Committee has failed to formulate a scale of salaries for teachers comparable to the remuneration offered to the members of other professions, and maintains that, in order to attract to the teaching service sufficient men and women of good calibre, immediate steps should be taken to establish a truly national scale of salaries for teachers, adequate in amount and without differentiation based upon sex, the age of the children or the district in which the school is situated."

We congratulate the well-known newspaper correspondent Anne O'Hare McCormick on the award to her, for her services to the Church, of the *Lactare* medal. During her recent journey through Italy she had an audience with the Holy Father. From Italy she proceeded to France, and in both countries went to the fighting fronts and behind them. Afterwards she paid a flying visit to England. She is an observer concerned for the future of Europe.

In Parliament

Post-War Credits. Answering Mrs. Tate, who said that some men had already received, and were retaining, their wives' post-war credit certificates, and asked that these wives might be empowered to obtain possession of their own money, Sir John Anderson on October 31st pointed out that no payment will be made on such credits before the termination of hostilities. Although the credit certificate is sent to the husband, a wife who has income may apply to the Inspector of Taxes for a division of the credit either in accordance with an agreement between herself and her husband or in proportion to their respective incomes. If the wife thus claims a division she receives a separate certificate for her share of the credit. A leaflet explaining the wife's claim to such division is sent, about the time the certificates are issued, to married women in employment.

Children's Allowances. When Mrs. Cazalet Keir brought up in the House of Commons on November 3rd the question of paying children's allowances to the mother, Mr. Butler stated that the names of both parents would be inserted in the allowance order book, and that the post office clerk would be instructed to pay the allowance to either of them. He admitted, however, that the order would be sent to the father. Miss Rathbone, the expert on this subject, protested, and begged the government to reconsider the matter, pointing out that such orders were payable to the mother in Australia and New Zealand and under most French schemes, and that to pay the money to the father would go against the opinion of most British people and greatly shock the women of this country. The Family Endowment Society is urging that the alteration advocated by Miss Rathbone be incorporated in the legislation on this subject which may be introduced early in the new year.

Women Doctors. In answer to a question on October 19th by Captain Prescott, on the appointment and promotion of married women doctors in the Ministry of Health and in local government service, Mr. Willink stated that in government departments there is a general ban, removable in exceptional circumstances, on the establishment of married women, and that the question of its abolition in the Ministry of Health is a general one and within the province of the Treasury. In this Ministry there is no ban on the promotion of married women. There is no statutory bar to the employment by local authorities of married women as medical officers, which matter is entirely within the discretion of these authorities.

Equal Pay. The Under Secretary of State for the Dominions, answering on 18th October a question by Mrs. Cazalet Keir, could cite only Canada as a Dominion in which male and female civil servants are paid at equal rates, and added that women are ineligible for some posts in the Canadian civil service. In Australia, women employed for the period of the war on work normally done by men receive the same pay as the men they replace, but permanent women civil servants are paid less than men in this Dominion, as are all women civil servants in New Zealand and South Africa and, with certain exceptions, in Eire.

Liverpool and District Branch: Hon. Secretary, Miss Mary Hickey, 81, Park Road East, Birkenhead.

We were happy to welcome Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell amongst us again on December 18th, when she spoke to us on Women and Post-War Reconstruction. The meeting was held by kind permission of the chairman, Mrs. McCann, at Greenheys Road, Liverpool.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.

From the "Catholic Citizen," December 15th, 1919.

We offer our hearty congratulations to Lady Astor, M.P. Whether one is for or against the Coalition, whether one is Conservative, Labour, Liberal or non-party, all women will rejoice that the first woman M.P.—and a very able woman—takes her seat at Westminster. The Countess Markiewicz has not done so, and Lady Astor has the honour of being the first woman to sit in the House of Commons. There can be no doubt that she will hold her own.

We note with pleasure that in the debate on the India Bill, Lady Astor voted against the Government and for the amendment to confer the franchise on Indian women.—*Leonora de Alberti in Notes and Comments.*

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS RECEIVED

Cecil Houses. 16th Report, 1943-44. (193, Gower Street, N.W. 1.) When Mrs. Cecil Chesterton learnt that "while municipal bodies supplied ample sleeping accommodation at reasonable charges for men, it was left to private enterprise and philanthropic societies to cater for women," she began her enterprise of founding the Cecil Houses, in which "for one shilling a woman can get a good bed, hot bath and facilities for washing her clothes," and for another 3d. a cot for her baby. "Women applying for beds will not be called upon to answer any questions whatsoever": this is the note of liberal charity which marks the enterprise. Five Cecil Houses were founded between 1927 and 1934, but one was so damaged by blast during the recent flying-bomb season that it has had to be evacuated. Down to the end of last September, 1,093,123 nights of rest had been provided for women in the Cecil Houses.

I Knew Mrs. Pankhurst. By Thelma Cazalet, M.P. (Suffragette Fellowship, 6d.) Mrs. Cazalet Keir's vivid sketch of the militant leader is reproduced from the script of her broadcast.

The Machinery of Town and Country Planning. By Michael P. Fogarty. (Catholic Social Guild, Oxford, 6d.)

Mobility of Labour. By Margaret M. Attlee. (Catholic Social Guild, Oxford, 6d.)

International Reconstruction. By John Eppstein. (Catholic Social Guild, Oxford, 6d.)

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