

A D D R E S S

BY

MOST REV. JOSEPH P. FITZGERALD O.M.I.  
ARCHBISHOP OF BLOEMFONTEIN.

CEREMONY OF DEDICATION FOR DELEGATES ATTENDING THIRTY-THIRD CONFERENCE  
OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF SOUTH AFRICA IN THE CATHEDRAL  
OF THE SACRED HEART, BLOEMFONTEIN, APRIL 17TH, 1967.

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"Yes, YAHWEH is good, his love is everlasting, his faithfulness endures  
from age to age" (Psalm 100 - 5).

Ladies of the National Council of Women of South Africa you have come from all parts of Southern Africa to hold your 33rd Conference here in Bloemfontein. You represent here to-day thousands of women of South Africa. Yours is a heavy responsibility. For, you have come here, not merely to represent your local and regional councils, but also, and above all, to make your contribution in ideas and dynamic action, to the furthering of the ideals for which you stand, and to take back with you, what you will undoubtedly receive at this Conference, new ideas, new inspiration, new courage, renewed initiative and vitality for the tasks that lie ahead of you.

Your aims are high and responsible ones, namely the welfare of mankind, the family, and the individual. For this end you pool your many talents, qualifications and various resources spiritual and otherwise. You are here to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; to educate and encourage women to take a more active part in public life; to work for the legal and administrative means that facilitate your aims; to collect and distribute reliable information for this purpose. You are to be alive to the needs of the local, national and international communities in which you live and of which you are vital members. Your accepted duty is to arouse public conscience to supply these needs; to call in specialists in various fields to help you draw up a plan of action, and finally to bring to bear upon this plan the concerted strength of your affiliated societies, and all other forces at your command to meet the needs of the community.

Your record is there for all to see and examine, and to draw inspiration from it. Your achievements are many and important. They have not, however, made you complacent. Very often, unfortunately, achievement can chloroform people into inactivity and smug satisfaction. This is not true in your case. Your achievements have only whetted your desire for more. They have created within you the urge to take up further challenges. For, much, very much remains to be done. It is for this that you have travelled to Bloemfontein, where your 33rd Conference will be the forum of your opinions and ideas, and the incentive to action.

You have chosen as your theme: THE CHALLENGE OF THE FUTURE, and you have come to the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Bloemfontein to dedicate yourselves to this challenge through a religious ceremony. We are very happy to share this ceremony with you, and extend to you a very cordial welcome.

The challenge of the future is the challenge of the unknown. God alone knows his own mind comprehensively. None of us can ever hope to scrutinise it. He alone sees, plans and guides in all its complex detail the future course of mankind. God alone reads into the hearts and minds of men and women. God alone, from the very beginning holds all the secrets of the universe in which we live, and which it is taking humanity millions of years to discover only little by little.

In attempting therefore to meet the challenge of the future, we must first of all turn to God; in humble, persistent prayer for light to see, for initiative to launch out into the future, for the courage to act, and above all for the

perseverance to carry our plan of action to its conclusion. It will be essential for us to turn to the infinite Word of God in the Bible, and there in the Holy Scriptures to seek out His will, respond to His inspiration and obey His law, particularly His law of charity ..... "For YAHWEH is good, His love is everlasting, His faithfulness endures from age to age...

God's help is essential to our plans and endeavours. We must consciously seek after it.

To the chosen people, the people of God, the name Jahwéh meant the God who delivers, sustains, safeguards in their march, very often wavering and uncertain, to the promised land. For you also that name will mean: He who will help, guide, sustain you in your march towards the future and in meeting its challenge. The future lies in his hands and in his hands alone.

The name Jahwéh also means the God who transcends, infinitely surpasses all the accumulated forces of mankind and the universe it inhabits. The challenge of the future must be faced with humble dependence on God, in a spirit of acceptance of his will, and in enlightened compliance with his law, particularly with his law of love.

To know the name of God is already a claim on his help and protection.

The challenge of the future is also the challenge of what God, Jahwéh allows us to foresee of it, judging from the nature and the course of the world in which we live and move.

May I suggest to you this morning that the challenge of the future is the challenge to concrete action towards the complete development of the human person and of the community in which he lives.

What must be aimed at today and in the future is complete humanism, as opposed to the stunted growth of human personality. What is needed is the fully-rounded development of the whole man, of all men. A humanism closed in on itself, and not open to the values of the spirit and to God who is their source, could conceivably achieve apparent success. It is true that man can organise the world apart from God; but without God he can do so only to his own detriment, to the disintegration of his God-given qualities, and to the destruction of the world-community in which he moves and upon which he depends. Isolated humanism is inhuman humanism. There is no human development but that which is open to the Absolute, to Jahwéh, to God, and is conscious of a vocation which gives life its true meaning. Far from being the ultimate, measure of all things, man can only reach full development as a person by reaching beyond himself. In the words of Pascal: "Man infinitely surpasses man".

Yes, Jahwéh is good, his love is everlasting, his faithfulness endures from age to age.

The National Council of Women of South Africa has its part to play in the complete development of the human person. It is essential that it be played in the right perspective.

Man can attain a fully-rounded personality only in a completely developed community. It is therefore essential that one work for the development of all mankind. For development is a new name for peace, and peace is something that is built up day after day in the pursuit of an order of things intended by God, and which demands a more perfect form of justice for all men. In spite of its tensions and wars, the world aches for more fraternity. This is something to which we must become more sensitive and help to release the forces of fraternal co-operation within the community - local, national, international - in which we live.

The hour for action has struck. At stake is the survival of so many innocent children. At stake is access to conditions fit for human beings for so many families overcome by misery. At stake are the peace of the world and the future of civilization. The time is ripe for all men and all peoples to face their responsibilities. All believers and all men of goodwill can come together in a co-operative effort to overcome selfishness, pride, rivalries, ambitions and injustices; to open up to all the road to a more human way of life .... where

each one will be loved and helped as a brother, as a neighbour.

Ladies of the National Council of Women of South Africa, the challenge of the future is before you. Your role in this challenge is unique; only you can play it. Your role is essential and neither justice nor peace will be possible without your part. Your part is vital to the complete development of the human person and of the human community to which he belongs. Your 33rd Conference is convened and planned to help you in the challenge of the future. Keep faith with God, in whose hands this future lies. We pray his blessing upon you and upon your deliberations, and repeat once more with the Psalmist:

YES, YAHWEH IS GOOD, HIS LOVE IS EVERLASTING, HIS FAITHFULNESS

ENDURES FROM AGE TO AGE ...

A D D R E S S

DELIVERED BY

PROFESSOR J. R. WAHL

Head of the Department of English at the  
University of the Orange Free State ,

on opening the Thirty-Third Conference of the  
National Council of Women of South Africa.

Monday, 17th April, 1967.

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I should like to congratulate the N.C.W. on the theme of its Thirty-Third Conference: "The Challenge of the Future".

Many of the greatest poets of our century have thought of the future not as a challenge but as an abyss in which a disintegrating civilization would soon be overwhelmed. In The Waste Land T.S.Eliot presented his readers with an apocalyptic vision of a world on the high road to chaos. In "The Second Coming" Yeats declared:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

In September 1939 Auden, hearing the news of the outbreak of the Second World War, saw the world as lying "defenceless under the night".

There is no trace in these poems of the confident Victorian belief that in the Nineteenth Century, or, at the latest in the Twentieth, freedom would broaden down

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furled  
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

It is not only in poetry that this mood of deep despondency finds expression. Ours is the first age in which major novelists have presented their readers with negative utopias, visions not of ideal commonwealths but of states whose coming they regard with loathing or with dread. Although many many sections of Aldous Huxley's Brave New World read like a Hollywood celluloid fantasy, the pessimism of the novel is as evident as its wry humour.

The most famous of all modern negative utopias is of course George Orwell's 1984, an appalling vision of a world that has lost all freedom of thought and is divided into three great super-states, Eurasia, Oceania and Eastasia. It is a sobering thought that we are now exactly half-way in time between the year when this novel was published and the year in which it is set.

Not all visions of 1984 have been as gloomy as Orwell's. In 1964 Mr Nigel Calder, the editor of the New Scientist, invited nearly a hundred leading international authorities to forecast what developments the world can expect in the main fields of knowledge and technology in the next twenty years. The complete symposium was published in two volumes by Penguin Books in 1965, under the title The World in 1984.

To read the confident essays of the eminent scientists who contributed to Mr Calder's symposium is to realise that the conquest of our external environment is proceeding even more rapidly than either Huxley or H.G. Wells foresaw. One of the few unoptimistic voices is that of the distinguished poet and art-critic Sir Herbert Read, who believes that by 1984 "passive entertainment will fill ever-expanding periods of non-employment" and that "the arts, in any historical meaning of the word, will have disappeared".

On the occasion of your Thirty-First Conference you did me the honour of asking me to address you on "The Importance of Literature and the Arts". I shall

not recapitulate now what I said on that occasion, except to repeat that it is above all in literature and the arts that we become aware of the potentialities for good and evil of the human spirit. A creative artist can express the anguish of a whole generation, and can make articulate the conscience of his age.

What we need if we are to meet the challenge of the future is firstly that the arts must survive, not as luxuries but as necessities. What we also need is education that will enable us to begin to understand a fourth dimension, the dimension of time and of history.

During the past seven years we as a nation have crossed one of the decisive watersheds in our history. The change in the national mood between the last week of March in 1960, the week after Sharpeville, and today is as great as the change in the climate of opinion in England between August 16th, 1819, to date of what Shelley called the "Massacre of Peterloo", and 1st May 1851, when Queen Victoria opened the Great Exhibition and England began to think of itself as the workshop of the world.

In March 1960 most white South Africans would have felt that the best symbol for our nation was that of the laager at Blood River, keeping at bay a bloodthirsty horde. Today we have remembered that in the whole of our nation's history there is no record of a laager that was intended to be permanent. Addressing the graduation ceremony of the University of the Orange Free State here in Bloemfontein last month, three days before the seventh anniversary of Sharpeville, Mr Vorster as Prime Minister spoke for the nation as a whole when he offered aid and friendship to the newly independent states of Africa.

The shadows that lay across England at the time of Peterloo, the darkest period of its industrial revolution, were shadows of poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease. These same shadows lie across our continent today. To play our part in dispelling them is the most urgent task that awaits us as a nation.

To attack poverty and disease on a mass scale calls for governmental action, and I believe that every thinking South African will welcome the initiatives that our government has taken in this regard. In the fight against illiteracy and ignorance, however, every citizen can take a part. There could be no better way of celebrating the coming of age of our country's new international status in 1982 than by making this the target year for the eradication as far as possible of adult illiteracy and preventable disease throughout Southern Africa.

I believe that we have here a task worthy of the energy and the idealism of our nation. If it is to be carried out speedily and efficiently it is essential that there should be set up under the aegis of our Ministry of External Affairs a National Advisory Council on Aid to Africa, on which all interested organizations should be represented.

If you visit the Women's Monument in Bloemfontein you will find that the graves of three men lie within its precincts, those of President Steyn, of General de Wet and of the Rev. J.D. Kestell. The place of honour at the foot of the central panel of the obelisk has, however, been given to a woman, to the ashes of Emily Hobhouse.

Speaking at the ceremony of interment General Smuts, who had known Emily Hobhouse well, declared that her life illustrated the power and profound influence of women in the affairs of the world. "The whole meaning and significance of the Anglo-Boer War was permanently affected by this English woman". And she became "the great symbol of reconciliation between two closely kin peoples who should never have been enemies".

Emily Hobhouse's life in South Africa was a ministry of service and a ministry of reconciliation. Service and reconciliation - if we as a nation dedicate ourselves to this high calling both within our borders and beyond, then, with God's grace, this once Dark Continent may yet become a Continent of Hope.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF SOUTH AFRICA  
NATIONALE VROUERAAD VAN SUID-AFRIKA

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ADDRESS

BY

MRS J.W. DU PLESSIS

Ek wil my nie graag op die terrein van die Burgemeester begewe nie - en ek dink hy sal my dit vergewe as ek van hierdie geleentheid gebruik maak om ook namens die Administrateur, 'n hartlike woord van verwelkoming te rig aan Mevr. Waring, en die afgevaardigdes vanuit die ander provinsies.

Mev. Waring is 'n vrou met baie ondervinding agter die rugsy het die moed van haar oortuiging en skroom dan ook nie ome te sê wat sy dink gesê moet word nie, al beland dit haar ook baie keer in die warm water. Dat sy die vermoë het om 'n mens se gedagtes te prikkel, is nie te betwyfel nie, en ons sien daarna uit om te hoor wat sy vanoggend aan ons te sê het .

Ek bring ook die groete van die Administrateur en dit is one albei se opregte wens dat daar uit hierdie kongres nuwe visie en besieling sal voortspruit en dat dit baie vrugte sal afwerp.

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It is said -- that there is only one way to handle a woman. The trouble is nobofy knows what it is.

This morning I really wish that I knew what to do, or say to Mrs Mackenzie.

Mrs Mackenzie has a way with her and, when she has set her heart on anything, there is just no stopping her.

That you have to listen to me again this year, is entirely her fault, but I shall relieve you by saying, that mine will be a brief, but nevertheless sincere message.

Three years ago I had the honour to open the new conference. I mentioned that day that, knowing you, Madam President, I was convinced that the N.C.W. had not made a mistake by electing you President for the ensuing three years. I mentioned too, that time will prove whether it was advisable and in the interest of the N.C.W. to move their Headquarters to the O.F.S.

Knowing the O.F.S. and the many fine and capable women in this province, I was naturally surprised, and disappointed, that it took the N.C.W. nearly a quarter of a century to make up their minds to take the risk. I therefore feel sure that their faith in your ability and your sincerity, Madam President, was the deciding factor and I have no doubt whatsoever that the manner in which you have executed your duties during the past three years will ensure that the O.F.S. will not be bypassed again in the future.

I would also like to take this opportunity ot congratulate the President elect.

Mrs Cochrane, it is said, that to be happy in this life, a woman needs,

The optimism of the child,  
The chic of a mannequin,  
The diplomacy of a prime minister,  
The nerves of a cold potato,  
The wisdom of Solomon,  
and the complacency of a prize cat.

As President of the N.C.W. you will most probably need most of these small mercies.

If you want to be popular you will have to endure being taught many things you already know and -- if you have not already done so, you will soon have to learn to,

Be brief, politely,  
be aggressive, smilingly,  
be emphatic, pleasantly,  
be positive, diplomatically,  
and to be right, graciously.

Please be assured of our very best wishes for a successful term of office.

To conclude on a more serious note -- I would like to stress the fact that whatever women's ideal may be -- I am convinced that the secret of a great woman can still be found in the 4 S's.

SIMPLICITY,  
SYMPATHY,  
SINCERITY,  
AND SERENITY.

ALL, DIRE NECESSITIES IN THESE DAYS OF RUSH AND GATHER.

and as for the Challenge of the FUTURE, I am inclined to say with Longfellow:

Trust no future, however pleasant,  
Let the dead past bury its dead  
ACT, ACT IN THE LIVING PRESENT,  
HEARTS WITHIN -- AND GOD OE'R HEAD.

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

MRS JOYCE B. WARING

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It must be 25 years ago that I last attended an N.C.W. meeting. Having come to Johannesburg to live after the War, I, as a young married woman looking for an outlet for pent up energies, joined the N.C.W. I remember Mrs Mitchell Hunter was the reigning President and Dr Robertson a very active member.

But then politics, City Council and newspaper work, not to mention children, claimed all my time and I drifted away - but I have been aware always of the pull and energy of the N.C.W. and consider it a signal honour to be asked to address this important body - even if I do not always entirely agree with all your views.

On looking through the Agenda for this, your 33rd conference, I find the scope of your interests most impressive and I remember from my own membership days that the women who dealt with various aspects were singularly well informed, and that if I listened attentively, I could take away with me a great deal of knowledge.

I am certain that to many housebound women, the N.C.W. is a tremendous interest and mental stimulant, a springboard, one hopes, for future enterprise when home and family can be side-stepped a little.

You have asked me to speak on the Challenge of the Future - Your theme for this Congress. Obviously I think you meant me to deal with this with regard to Women's part in the future.

I have had great difficulty when composing this speech, in trying to define particular facets of life, particular jobs which men would consider peculiarly fitted to the tastes of the woman of the future.

Why, I ask myself, must I look for particular jobs? Women are indeed capable of of tackling practically anything.

To-day even engineering has been taken into their compass of their achievements. There are women who run scrap yards, steel mills, shipowners, fly jet airlines, race fast cars and boats, climb the highest mountains, become judges, write great books and perform miracles of science and produce quintruplets. But their numbers are too few.

Why then must I speak to you of particular jobs "fitted" for women. It is not necessary at all. We can and will and must tackle anything in the future of which we are capable and for which we have trained ourselves - my challenge to the future is that in it women will find their place - by their efforts, their intrinsic worth will be recognised, must be recognised. By planning their lives collectively, those fitted to care for children will do so while those trained to go out as scientists, doctors, teachers etc. will have freedom of mind to carry on without the age old worry that perhaps they are neglecting their families.

Too much real talent is going to waste. When there is talk of a blueprint for the future, we women want to be included in this plan. We too want to do our share actively to build a South Africa of which we can proudly say to our children "We, your father and I, were both responsible for the heritage which we hand on to you".

Ladies, let me first state clearly my position. Woman I am, female I certainly am, but feminist I am not. I have been accused of this but never by anyone who understands the real meaning of the word.



Women have a tremendous part to play in the Civic and Business life of the community, but their part must be played in my opinion, as full citizens, not merely "female" citizens. They obviously will feel and put the women's point of view, if they are not to belie their sex but they should never allow the feminine outlook to obtrude on their rational outlook, or on their outlook as a citizen. And this is where I differ from the feminist who sees everything only from a woman's view first and for the betterment, even preferment of her sex. This I do believe can create a bigoted and extreme point of view.

We owe to the feminists of course, a tremendous amount. The vote for women for instance, was obtained by sheer tenacity through the efforts of Emmeline Pankhurst and her intrepid band of followers.

But has this power to vote, this freedom, been properly used? Before I look at the future challenge to women, I would ask you one thing, you the cream of intelligent women that sit here today - are you satisfied with what women have done with that vote? Have women in the 40 odd years that they have had the vote, really justified women's claim to a place in the sun? Are we satisfied with the degree of equality we have achieved? Or do some of us wonder why so few women reach the top?

Take the United Kingdom. A third of the working population is female. Taking that logically, a third of the executive management should be female. But the Institute of Directors of Great Britain lists 44,500 executives of whom only 972 are women! i.e. One in 8,300 as against the male figure of 1 in 400.

And the worst feature of all this, is the prejudices against women one finds in top jobs. a prejudice which gets worse the lower down one goes in the social scale.

In South Africa, a country where women have far more leisure and far more time to devote to the furtherance of their education and degrees, their social work and their political advancement. In South Africa, I repeat, women show up even worse ~~even worse~~ in the world of achievement I am certain, than in America, Europe or Russia.

Now while I admit men, and especially the South African brawny sportsman type are prejudiced against women striking out as a force executively in any sphere, it is chiefly the South African women themselves I blame for the small part they play in South Africa's tremendous surge forward.

Eighty per cent of women are still at heart "harem" dwellers, pussy cats, luxury living, lazy creatures, loath to exert themselves in any field outside their homes.

Work to them on the whole means caring for a husband, or is it being cared for by a husband? A degree at Varsity ends with marriage. All jobs lead to love, husband and children.

The challenge of the future doesn't exist for 80% of South Africa's women, because they are too comfortable and too secure.

SOUTH AFRICA'S CHALLENGE IS GREATER THAN THAT OF NEARLY ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

We have too few scientists, doctors, engineers, nurses, teachers and policemen, amongst others in comparison not only to our wealth but to our basic need of these people. Many of these jobs, including certain police work, could be done by women.

We face the challenge of too much sun and good weather, making us a people who when we stop work, want to get out in the open --- while this is a good and not a bad thing, it is, in the face of European and Eastern competition, not conducive to building the really strong economy we must have in South Africa to face our very challenging future as the world grows smaller, competition fiercer and our position in Black Africa more precarious.

Because we are at the foot of an enormous Black continent, coveted as a prize by East and North, our manpower is of tremendous importance. We face a future in South Africa where women will need to come out of their homes and train themselves in defence, science, home nursing, in public service even if this only means working in an office or nursing aide to get police, soldiers and nurses

out in the field and on to worthwhile jobs.

Women will have to realise that the age of the housebound female is as out of date in South Africa as it is out of date in Europe, America, Russia and China. To-day in South Africa the need for looking after small children is met by creches and nursery schools. Women's work at home is lightened by servants and her hours of freedom will have to be used constructively in working for her country, training herself in some way to help ease the need for trained personnel in all fields.

It is a challenge hard to meet in South Africa where women on the whole are content to take degrees (and especially in medicine, law and social sciences) get married and then let their knowledge be fallow - waiting for the children to grow up - by which time they have generally lost the urge to work and have mentally deteriorated under the deadening effects of a domesticity that is too easy, where bridge is played even in the mornings and women are on the tennis courts at 9.00 a.m.

This is a country where men, churches and tradition itself encourage, nay, almost force women to stay at home.

There is nothing wrong with staying at home - and I refuse to be dragged into the argument by the woman who doesn't work, that the woman who does work neglects her children. The educated intelligent busy woman is as good a mother as the stay-at-home - motherhood is inherent. A bad mother is a bad mother, an incompetent mother is an incompetent mother no matter what they do. The whole thing is based on the slight jealousy that the stay at home feels for the woman who gets out and meets the world. The stay-at-home enjoys making the working mother feel guilty. It compensates her for her lazy conscience which occasionally does prick her.

I repeat there is nothing wrong with the stay-at-home mother who really puts her time into her home and family but there is something very wrong with customs and convention that frowns on the woman who pursues her career as well as runs her home, and only accords her the honour due to her when she has actually reached the top. Then in South Africa she becomes something extraordinary, a nine day wonder, the press photograph her, and small boys even ask for her autograph.

We cannot build up this country on a sound basis unless every man, woman and child works harder and longer than is today the case.

Women realise that instead of expecting the State to pay expensive subsidies for their University training and then dropping the whole thing on marriage, that they should use their degrees and knowledge in some way to help further the country's whole welfare - and it can be done without damage to family life.

I can hear women saying that their higher education makes them better mothers even if they don't use the degrees. My answer of nonsense. I've seen many a University graduate far less able to handle her offspring than her Bantu Nanny.

The mother instinct is one you possess and cultivate - even the animals have it. A woman's education may help her to care for a difficult child, or to guide her in choosing her children's education and reading but with the basic facts of life, such as changing nappies, its plain experience that counts.

She can be as useful, using that knowledge in a job of usefulness - and it can all be kept within bounds while her children are at school.

In one European country, I think it is in Israel (but to this I cannot swear) where women as well as men do a spell in the army and every adult has to give up a year to work for the State for nothing in the capacity of their training. If they are not trained then they do service in offices, hospitals etc. This service is an accepted thing, no one fusses and the children are taken care of. This yearly stint supplies a tremendous need in the Labour field.

In public life alone, in South Africa, in the world generally, there are hardly any women to speak of. Those that are there are, are of tremendously high calibre - but where are the others? Who is keeping them out? Men? To a certain extent, yes, but to a far greater extent, women are barring the way. Women like to have have a man to look to as their M.P., their business boss etc. and basically it is they who play their own sex false.

Do women doctors get top jobs in hospitals, do we see women judges on the bench ? Here a Civil Service mentality weighs against top jobs for women.

But in South Africa, where are the female Captains of Commerce and Industry ? They hardly exist to tell the truth.

I have heard that there is a sad scarcity of executives in South Africa - a lack of able young men. My opinion is that there is a sad lack too of able young women who can forge to the top of the tree, who have the wish and desire to go forward. And this is not the fault of the male !

Our population is such in South Africa that not only do we need Black and White labour, but male and female labour as well, if we are to cope with the needs of a growing country such as this. But today while women are accepted as an integral part of the economy, the economy is actually weighted against women because too many abandon their efforts on marriage.

Perhaps our thinking is wrong. Perhaps we must plan anew - provide for our children as is done in many countries, that special people should be there trained to look after them while those who can and wish to work, are free so to do. This way many a good brain can brush off the cobwebs and many a woman whose trained mind is equally as good as any man's can use that brain to help balance South Africa's economy.?

The N.C.W. and its Afrikaans counterparts have up to now played a tremendous part in interesting woman in public and social affairs, and in bringing to their notice and that of Governments, matters which was felt needed rectifying.

But I believe that 90% of the women who attend N.C.W. meetings are still spectators not doers, content to let their glittering stars, the women at the helm of N.C.W. affairs, glitter even more brightly because of their satellites lack of ambition.

Ladies, I realise this will cause some annoyance and that everybody needs its rank and file.

But I say again a meeting once a month is not enough. It will not set the Thames on fire; it won't help South Africa to contribute to the Challenge of the Future, the menace of Africa, of Communism, of the East.

An afternoon's outing is a sop to the conscience - not a grip with the realities of the harder tougher life South Africa is going to have to face.

We are not, I repeat not stupid.

We are just lazy.

To face this tremendous challenge of building up this wonderful land, and keeping it, we will have to stop living the soft life. The old days of laissez faire are over.

South Africa is the pearl - the very jewel of Africa. The eyes of all Africa are upon her. She would be a prize well worth winning.

Do you imagine we can just leave the keeping of the jewel's safety to the Government, Defence, and the police. Can we safely say that we are taking care of every aspect of our country's safety, security and wealth to make sure we will not lose our country to some avaricious foreign power - can we say we are contributing if we "leave all this to someone else" and pursue our own course regardless ?

We can only do what we can, I hear people say.

But are we doing it ?

We Women ?

I say we are not.....

A D D R E S S

BY

THE PRESIDENT, MRS SHEILA MACKENZIE

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Yet another year has passed and once again we assemble in plenary council to review the undertakings of the past twelve months and to consider a programme of work for the coming year.

The reports of our International Standing Committee Members, National Advisers, Chairmen of Standing Committees, of Provincial Legislation Committees, of Branch Councils and of the Board of Officers certainly reflect a period of continued, indeed, increased activity directed towards promoting the welfare of the individual, of the family and, of mankind of a conscious effort to raise the educational, economic and social standards of all sections of the community.

This conference brings to a close the triennial period 1964-1967, the term of office of the Board of Officers provided by the Bloemfontein Branch Council and entrusted with the administration of our Council on behalf of the Orange Free State. Headquarters will be transferred to the Transvaal for the following three years and to the incoming Board of Officers we offer sincere congratulations, good wishes for a successful, stimulating and rewarding term of office and the pledge of our continued loyalty to them and service to our Council.

In presenting my address this morning, I am particularly conscious of the activities, not of the past year, but the three years of our stewardship - a stewardship of which we shall be called to give an account during the coming days of the conference.

On looking back over these past three years one cannot but be conscious of the tremendous contribution which our members have made in the field of voluntary welfare work in South Africa. As I have visited our Branch Councils from time to time, as I have become acquainted with the work already done and still being done in so many centres throughout the Republic, I have been amazed, on many occasions, that so much could be accomplished by so few. I think I can say here, as I have said before, that any centre without a branch of the National Council of Women of South Africa is certainly the poorer.

What has become increasingly evident is the fact that our Branch Councils, like so many other voluntary organisations, are finding it more and more difficult to continue their work of service to the community due to decreasing numbers and the resultant dearth of persons prepared to accept the responsibility of leadership. In this age of modern devices and techniques, this age of automation, we have been promised a civilisation of leisure. However, the time actually spent in cultural and social activities, in rewarding human interchange decreases from year to year.

The time has therefore come to give serious consideration to the matter. The National Council of Women has all the means at its disposal to provide a training ground for the leadership so desperately needed in our country to-day. We must look to our Branch Councils to encourage women to make that contribution which, as women, is our responsibility, to the community. I think that with sympathetic understanding, guidance and patience, many women could be persuaded to give time, in their busy lives, in service for others.

The need for Leadership Training is closely followed by the need, today, for adult education. I do not think that could be an easier channel for this undertaking than through the National Council of Women, through the various Sectional Committees which play such an important part in the collection and dissemination of information. Civic education for training for responsible citizenship is so necessary today.

The theme that has been chosen for this thirty-third annual conference of the National Council of Women of South Africa is "The Challenge of the Future". This has been no casual choice. There is the realisation that living as we do in a time of rapid change, the time has come for us to assess the role of women.

The great challenge to women in the coming years will be to liberate themselves from their own misconceptions about a women's role. Women must develop courage and confidence to follow wherever their individual aspirations and talents may lead them.

I am reminded of the French axiom that the more things change, the more they are the same - how this was brought home to us during the time of the triennial meeting of the International Council of Women in Tehran last year, when the theme chosen was "Ancient Values in Modern Setting" ! The truth of this is also evident in reading that dynamic history of the International Council of Women - "Women in a Changing World". In tracing the development and achievements of women since the inception of the Council in 1888, we realise that those things for which we are striving today alter very little from the original intent and purpose of those venerable founders, from the strivings during these past 79 years.

Women will progress in proportion to the time and effort they spend in preparing themselves to reach their goals and the hard work they devote to attaining these objectives.

The importance of these fundamentals will never diminish and they must be basic considerations to women who hope to reach the horizons which will come into view tomorrow and the day after.

Today, woman must, above all, be flexible. She must have remarkable agility of heart and mind to cope with the constant and unpredictable changes that will surely come in the course of her life. She must do many jobs well, dividing her time, energy and interest among her family, herself and others. She must be more than willing - she must be determined - to grow, to become the most she can become and to put the fullness of her abilities to the best possible use.

She must have faith that today is a wonderful day to be a woman and that tomorrow will be an even better one. She must have the vision and the courage to take today and shape it into that to-morrow.

In concluding my address as your President, I am deeply conscious that my cup of gratitude is overflowing.

I would like this morning to publicly acknowledge my indebtedness to all those who have assisted me during my term of office.

To the Board of Officers - a small group of women who have given, without thought of self, their energy and talent in the service of N.C.W. - Vice-President Mrs Hugh Wiley, who at 76 worked untiringly - an example and a challenge to the younger women - assisted by Second Vice-President Mrs Deane. Mrs Rice, Publicity Officer who came to our assistance and who certainly gave no thought of her work only. Mrs Walker the Treasurer has had the great responsibility of making cents do the work of Rands. Bloemfontein Branch Council - no Board of Officers could have had more loyal co-operation and support - for one of the smaller Branch Councils to take not only the responsibility of the Board of Officers but two conferences in addition to other obligations, has been no mean achievement. Kroonstad and Tweespruit/Westminster have given their assistance, too, to ensure this Free State undertaking - may I be permitted to say "VRYSTAAT" !!! The support of all Branch Councils has also been appreciated and I am deeply conscious of the spirit of goodwill and loyalty that has prevailed.

Thanks have been recorded in the report of the Board of Officers - we are indeed grateful to many.

I personally would offer thanks for the confidence entrusted in me, the assistance given, the loyalty and friendship I have received. I would thank you all for the opportunity afforded me as President, of attending the meetings in Interlaken and Tehran.

My opportunity of serving our Council has been demanding, no doubt, but both enriching and rewarding - I am deeply grateful.

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