



Radical Dream – transcript – PRG 727/2/9

Women Pioneers Phyllis Duguid 1983

. . . her husband, seemed to me a dreadful thing - a very bad thing – it seemed to me that any mature person to be totally dependent on another person is thoroughly bad, and at that time it was a subject which caused a fair amount of interest. I remember that Dr Edith Summerskill in Britain tried to introduce a measure which would give a woman the legal right to a certain proportion of her husband's wages. I opposed that quite strongly because I said it still wasn't giving a woman her independence, and so very often the woman who worked hardest and had the biggest group of children was the wife of a man on a lower wage and the woman who was the wife of a wealthy husband would have a far bigger income you see, and it seemed to me to be quite a wrong principle anyway. She was still dependent on her husband's wage, and if he was out of work, well that was that and her work went on and as harder than ever, and so I wrote this with the idea of presenting the case, and it's not a very long thing, but it created quite a bit of interest at the time. It's so long ago you see, and then

And what was your solution?

Oh, my solution - which I probably wouldn't put forward now, I'm not sure - but my solution then, which was before there was such perhaps a majority of women earning their own money after marriage - my solution then was that the homemaker, whether wife or maiden aunt or grandmother, but the homemaker who couldn't be earning outside because of homemaking, she should be paid a regular endowment, roughly equal to the basic wage for a single person as it was then. You know, we had a basic wage for a single person. And that seemed to me the thing, that she was pre-eminently really a top public servant, and her work should be regarded as public service, and that she was a person doing a job in her own right and in her own way.

Of course, it bristles with difficulties because arguments were put against it - how could you really supervise this, you see, how could you pay a woman this endowment when she perhaps wasn't doing her job properly? And I said, "Well, you don't oversee all the families who have child endowment, that's a risk you have to take when you're establishing a principle that you think is a just principle". So that little book was the outcome of it all.



And why do you think that you wouldn't be in favour of that now? What made you change your mind about it?

Oh, I really haven't completely changed my mind, though I think I might have written the thing rather differently because if I'd been writing it now I would have taken into consideration the fact that so many women now do a double job of homemaking and income earning, so I see the problem as being a little less simple than I did then, so probably I would have written it a little differently; but I still feel just as strongly as ever that no mature person should be completely dependent - economically dependent - on another person.

And were you able to work that out in your own life?

Oh, well in my own life, before I married I simply stipulated that my husband must put into the bank every year what he thought he could afford for me to own as homemaker and my own needs and the food and clothing for the family and no questions asked. That's the important part of it.

So you must have had a very clear idea already when you were first married?

Oh, I did, I did. I think perhaps it might have been partly my mother's influence. My father was a wonderful man, lovely person, we were very close, but he was altogether too easy about money - he was very careful not to spend you see, but I don't think all the years they were married my mother could get him to sit down and budget with her, you see; and his attitude was, "Well, I'm not extravagant, I never buy anything I don't need to buy, and if I haven't got the money I can't do it, you see"; but I know that this irked mother and she used to preach to my brothers that they simply must have proper financial arrangements with their wives when they married, you see, of budgeting their income; and I was very much in favour of this.

I'm not sure whether I've understood you right - what your mother would have liked to have done was to have known what was coming in so that she could save some money?

I think she did know what was coming in all right because my father's salary was not good; he later became President-General of the Methodist Church of Australasia and so he was very outstanding man in the Methodist Church. Mother knew what his salary was and she knew what was coming in all



the time, but she would love to have budgeted accurately; you know, we need so much for gas, so much for children's clothes and so on, and somehow or other father never got round to this and it was a real irk to her.

And was it seen as a "feminist" issue, that is, as a young woman if you had a very clear idea about economics or about women's rights?

No, not women's rights. Not women's rights exactly. I don't know I'm sure; it's just hard to think back. It was widely and enthusiastically accepted by the feminist women, and the feminist women in those days were very different from the "women's libbers" of to-day, very different; but we were strongly feminist, and I think I was strongly feminist from the time that I was 16 or 17 and realised that if I went to work in the same office as my brother - who was a little older - he would get ever so much higher wage than I. I think this was a fearful injustice, so that from then on I was a strong feminist.

And that was what you would explain it by; was your mother any kind of an influence on you in that area? Did she, too, think that it was unjust that you should get less than your brother?

I don't remember her being very vocal about it, but I think she would have taken that view. She was brought up in a very Victorian family - her father was a wealthy stockbroker of Melbourne; I think he was chairman or president there. Anyway, he was a very wealthy man, and she was brought up in wealthy circumstances and the girls sat round and learnt to paint and do music and all the rest of it, except the youngest girl and she did a little more schooling. But mother always regretted that she didn't have a higher education. She was a very bright, very witty person, but she just felt all along that she'd missed out terribly in education. I don't know how far she went. And she - this is another thing that I suppose - she was ahead of her time in this, she would not allow any of us - she had 4 daughters and 2 sons - she wouldn't allow any of us to stay home and be home girls, as they were called in those days, until we had established a way of earning our own living; she was probably ahead of her time then. I well remember an old friend of hers who lived near us, say, "I can't understand you Mrs. Lade, you've got those 4 grown-up daughters and you don't have one of them home to help you". And she said, "I won't do that until each one of them has a way of earning her own living; I want them to be able to be independent". So I suppose she was ahead, wasn't she, as I look back.



Yes, that certainly sounds like it, doesn't it? About what year would she have been saying that?

Well, I'm just thinking back - it would have been about 1923 or 24, which would have been while I was at the University; my youngest sister would have been still at school and another one was doing some sort of business training - she later became a nurse - and the eldest one went into business; she was always very interested in that, but I don't really remember any one of us staying home with her except myself; the year before I was married I stayed home with her and did a number of things, but that was in the middle twenties and I think, as I say, she was criticised by some of her friends. And another interesting thing of exactly that period, my sister-in-law - she was not married at the time - she was engaged to my older brother - she was working in town somewhere with a photographer doing re-tinting; she was a very artistic girl; and her father brought her home - she was an only child - from the office, and it wasn't because her mother was an invalid or frail or anything, but because he said he didn't want it to be said he couldn't support his own daughter. Even then, I thought, "This is frightful"

And I've heard men of the working class say that often - I mean I heard one on a video tape recently say with great pride, "No, you didn't have a job after we married (but his wife having to go out to a factory) you didn't have to have a job after we married, I could support you couldn't I?" And her saying back with great pride, "Yes you could support me". But that was because the work was so horrid presumably?

Yes, and this is recently, quite recently you heard this?

Oh, a very old man and his very old wife, and they too were talking about those times. He was saying it full of pride that he had looked after her well and she was certainly acknowledging that he did that. But - I mean - tinting in a photographer's office seems to me that it would be rewarding, you said she's an artistic girl.

Well I think so, I think she was sorry to leave.

Yes. So that in a way it was her father saying, "Regardless of your wants and needs this



Yes, this is my price. That's as far as I know. I never discussed it with her. I don't know quite really how she reacted. I only remember my fierce reaction. This was quite wrong.

What sort was available for you and your sisters then? It sounds quite varied.

Well, my eldest sister was a very interesting unusual sort of girl and about that stage she established her own little business. She was very keen on having good uniforms, nice uniforms for nurses and girls in offices and so on, and I remember she established a little business that was a very good little business, high quality material, but she struck the depression you see and it was almost a hopeless thing from the beginning. But then she left home; she went to Sydney; she worked for a time in a big factory there; she was always very interested in business although she did some teaching too. She was, I believe a very good teacher. Then I was the next one you see and I went to the University without any clear idea of what would follow, and I thought I would probably teach.

And this was still in the mid-twenties?

Yes, I graduated in '25 you see.

And what subject did you do at University?

I did Honours English Literature. It was a very fascinating course in those days because it was English Language and Literature, so that we did the early language Anglo-Saxon, and changed to Middle English and all; it was a lovely course. As a matter of fact, I started with Honours Classics as I always really loved language and I had well in Latin and Greek at school, so the first year at University I did Honours Classics with the idea of doing an Honours Classics degree, but the Honours English course was established in my second year - the first year there was a Chair of English. Before that I think English had been combined with History or something. So when the Chair of English Literature and Language was established I decided to switch over, so the next three years completed the Honours English course. And then the next year I was appointed as a tutor in the English school and there were four staff, the professor, two lecturers and one tutor. Then came the depression, you see, and in 1927 the staff was reduced to one professor and one lecturer, so of course I lost my job, and in those days there were no graduate scholarships and that sort of thing to help people carry on, so then I went into teaching and went up to the Presbyterian Girls' College and took the senior English classes there.



Quite untrained. In those it could be done, you know, if you had a good degree - you could be accepted as a teacher without the training.

I am sure all sorts of very good teachers don't get teaching jobs these days because they haven't done their Diploma of Education.

It doesn't really turn you into a it takes more than a diploma to turn you from a bad teacher into a good teacher.

Oh, yes, absolutely.....I really think to be a good teacher you must like teaching don't you

Yes.

And I found I did. I hadn't any clear idea that that was my vocation or anything you see, and I was awfully interested in my University work, but I found after the first term of teaching, during that term I felt all the time as if I was trying to control galloping horses - you know, I hadn't any idea of the best ways of discipline and so on, but after that first term I really loved it - enjoyed it thoroughly.

Was it a disappointment to you to lose a University job?

Yes, it was. It was a disappointment because I was enjoying the tutoring immensely. I don't know if I ever would have enjoyed lecturing so much, but I so much enjoyed the personal contact with the students in a tutoring situation, and also it gave me the opportunity to do quite a lot of coaching, private coaching. In those days that was eliminated because you were on the staff of the University and you could take private coaching as a tutor at any rate. And I had some very interesting people - you know, mature people who wanted to know a little more about the English Literature, and so that was a very happy year for me with this extra coaching and the University work, so I was quite disappointed.



Can you say anything about the depression in Adelaide - how it seemed to you from your position with your eyes?

Yes, one of the sad things I remember was that we used to have people come to our back door asking for work in the garden, and we lived up at Magill then on quite a big property - a 5-acre property - some of it just paddock; we had a cow and plenty of poultry and so on; it was a big place although it wasn't a grand pretentious house or anything, but we used to have people come and ask for work and we just couldn't give it to them. I remember....I'll never forget one time a man came to the back door and my little son was standing by the door just watching him - you know, as a little one will do when they are about two or three or something - and this poor fellow was evidently in a great state of nervous depression you know, and he said, "Don't let him look at me; don't let him look at me!" It was very heart-rending. Apart from that particular incident and similar ones, I don't remember any great hardship myself of course, because by that time I married a man who was older than myself and well established in medical practice, so the depression didn't touch us financially. I think he would have been able to help people who couldn't pay their bills. You know we probably got a few presents instead of fees, and I've heard since some of the tales of hardship from people of my generation who were differently situated, but I can't give any interesting pictures of the depression.

I've read in a few books about things like tents along the banks of the River Torrens and things like that; do you remember

No recollection, none at all

Well, maybe it was very transient; maybe it was only for a few weeks.

It could have been. And then also you've got to remember that just at that time I would have been very much occupied with my early married life and the bringing up of the children and assisting with the practice and so on, so I wouldn't have been in a position to see that sort of thing very much I don't think.

And I assume that you gave up teaching when you got married?



Yes.

And that was the custom of the time wasn't it?

Absolutely. It never occurred to me to do anything different. It was always one thing or the other - except for a few people, a few people who were very much devoted to their work. A contemporary of mine who died a few years back here, who did medicine, carried on all her life with her medical practice. I remember her telling me that she felt she was awfully fortunate because she had three children, but from almost the word go she had a housekeeper who became very dear to them and was housekeeper / nanny / supporter / everything right through the children's upbringing. That was rare. You always felt in those days that it was a choice and that the unmarried woman was the woman who would go to the top in any vocation, any field at all. It was very rare for a married woman to get any sort of distinction.

So that really in making a decision to get married, it was almost as if you said - I don't know whether you did or not - but as if you might say, "I have a choice, I could get to the top in my profession, OR...."

No, I don't think I ever thought of getting to the top in my profession because though I was at the University it would never have occurred to me that I would ever have a Chair or something like that. I really think that in spite of my strong feminism I think that probably emotionally I accepted the fact that I wanted to have children more than anything else, more than to continue on lecturing and tutoring, and so that was that. I would never have had any hesitation - though it was a choice, and if someone then had said to me, "Look, if you refuse to marry and if you go on at the University, this, that and the other will happen.." I would have said, "No way".

Just as a matter of interest, supposing someone like you had got married and didn't have children, what - would it have just been a sorrow?

I think so, I think so. One of my sisters - the one who was a nurse, just next to me - badly wanted to have children and she and her husband never had them and it was a life-long sorrow to her, and she was an absolutely top nurse - lovely nurse. She had a real gift for nursing and wanted to be a nurse from the time that she was about 9 or 10, and in later life she went back into



nursing; she did a refresher course in midwifery and got a great deal of satisfaction in that, so that there were cases when a person who had married and perhaps not had children and perhaps not had a very fulfilling life in that way, did go back. In nursing you could do it because you didn't need a very heavy refresher course to get back into nursing. Teaching I think you could too, but what else I don't know.

I am fascinated by your other sister who was interested in the business world from the start. I wonder with your father not being involved in that kind of world, nor your mother I assume, I wonder what made her....what gave her the idea.

I don't know - she was a very unusual person. She was a very gifted person in many ways and she always seemed a little different from the rest of us. She was five years older than I, you see, and there was a boy in between, and we used to feel that she could have done almost anything if she set her mind to it. She was a wonderful elocutionist - wonderfully dramatic - and we used to think she could act, but no - I really couldn't answer that.

Did she talk about it in terms of wanting to make a lot of money?

No, no I don't think so.

Business people sometimes seem sort of contriving, managing, who want to organise things.

She was a great organiser, a great organiser at school. You know she would organise people into doing plays and this sort of thing. She had a great gift for organisation. It may have been partly that urge.

And what happened to her eventually?

She married eventually, but she was married I suppose late thirties and they didn't have children and she lived aboard; I didn't see a great deal of her because she married a Canadian and they lived in Canada most of their lives and then went to New Zealand, and I saw her once or twice over the years, but we didn't have close contact from then on.



One of the things that has been most illuminating to me since I started this subject is that one of the things I am interested in of course is the changes that have occurred, and if you think about the modern world I think one of the changes is that women are participating in public life much more than they did, like going out and getting jobs and being seen everywhere and being so important in almost every profession even though it is almost only a small proportion, and I suppose I had assumed about the past that women didn't do that, that on the whole they stayed home and enjoyed their private life and didn't participate in public life so much, and one of the great illuminations for me is that although women - married women anyway - weren't in the paid workforce in the past they had a tremendously vigorous public life - or many of them did - in all these organisations and societies and committees and things like that, which I really knew very little about, and things like the League of Women Voters, feminist organisations and things. A lot of these young people think that women's liberation is something that they thought of.

Exactly. And the women here in South Australia were extremely active in the 1890s. South Australia was the first of the States to give women the vote, you know. Oh, they were very active. Have you been in touch yet with the Women's Christian Temperance Union?

Yes, I have.

Yes, well they were extremely active in public life, and have been of course all through the years. If there's a commission, say, on liquor laws or a commission on prostitution - that sort of thing - the WCTU always send in a submission and make some public announcement about it. Just as the League of Women Voters did.

And still are doing it, because if I call on them in Hutt Street they are all of them planning the letter that they are going to write, and what their line is on anything that comes up.

Yes, on any social question at all. Oh yes, that was apparent in quite early times, you know, when I was quite a young woman, I was conscious of that going on in the community although it wasn't strong in the University. For instance, now you've got your political clubs in the University. That was unheard of in my day. In fact, I remember one of my friends being accosted by a man who was handing out How to Vote cards or some sort of literature about a



coming election, and - she was a nurse as a matter of fact, tired nurse you know, down at the Gardens with some of her friends in her time - she told me that this man came along enthusiastically handing out literature, and he said, "You know voting is on such....", and she said, "Oh, I knew that there was voting in the air"; and he looked at her shocked. So that in some ways I think that the women who were not out earning and doing jobs like that were freer, you see, to sit back and form committees and decide what to do. In fact, in the League of Women Voters in the early days of the League there were quite a number of evening meetings and a great many day meetings of course, because there were so many women free and to come in the day, and one of the reasons I think that the League of Women Voters gradually died is the fact that so many more women were busy during the day and couldn't come to day meetings and it's hard to keep an organisation going on just night meetings when people have done their work and are a bit tired.

But I think that if the future pattern is for women to spend their energy on a job and, after all, doing their housework which is something, there is going to be less and less of their time and energy left over. But somehow what has struck me so much is the intellectual content of all these organisations, as if women are having political opinions, social opinions and opinions about religion and morality and about society and way of life, and then one of the results of their intellectual processes they join an organisation of some kind or organise an organisation of some kind, but it's all quite different now isn't it where people get a job in the Public Service and do as they are told.

Yes, I think this is true. There is a sense in which women were more influential in those days, is that what you're saying really? Because we had leisure to speak out and discuss.

Whether they were influential or not is one of the things I'd like to find out and ask you, how it's possible to find out. Leaving that aside for a moment, that wasn't quite what I meant. It was that they their minds were more their own. The fact that all this work was voluntary work made them free.

Yes, yes I see what you mean. I think that's probably true. Yes.



Still, about influential then - I wonder if you could advise me how I could find out; like I can read the minutes of the WCTU and I can see what motions were proposed and things like that, but really you say women were active to get the vote for women, well how would be possible for me to find out whether it was their activity which produced the final good result?

I think if you could get a few important dates from the WCTU - in their records they'll have accounts of marching down to Parliament, you know, and having demonstrations and this sort of thing. It would perhaps entail too much research, but if you could collate some of that with some of the Hansard of the time. I have read occasionally in Hansard, read references to the League of Women Voters you see - that admirable body, or the League of Women Voters say this, that and the other - and I feel quite convinced that the League of Women Voters in particular was influential because it was always very strictly non-party and very keenly political you see. In fact, it was in early days called the Women's Non-Party Political Association, and it was constantly directing its attention to what was going on in Parliament, so I think in its early days it was influential, and the WCTU also, and to some extent the National Council of Women. I know less about that because I have never been very much involved with them, but I expect you are interview some of them, are you, or finding out something about their work, because they've been in existence for a long time and, of course, they represent a very wide group of women.

But you were in the League for Women Voters, and am I right that the National Council of Church Women?

No, I was never a member or on the Council at all. You haven't got the name quite right have you?

No, I don't think I have - that's easy, I can easily find that out. Yes.

Well, any other organisations, Mrs. Duguid, just to.....

That I've been connected with?

Yes, that you've done voluntary work for?



Well, I'll tell you the thing that has probably in my life has given me as much feeling of achievement as anything else - I don't think I've mentioned this to you before. I was for 21 years a member of the Board - the Government Board - of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief. That's what it was called until about 15 years. That Board, which was an executive board, was dismantled and replaced by an advisory council. Well, in my day four men and four women were appointed by the Government to really manage the whole of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief. We were responsible for the Old Folks' Home and all the children's reformatories, foster homes and adoption - the whole of that area - and I was a member of that Board for about 21 year.

When were you first appointed? When was the Board set up?

I was trying to remember that recently, and I'd have to think back. I think the Board was dismantled at the end of 1964 or 65 - one of these dates; you could easily find that out - Government records. I was Christmas time '64 or '65 it was dismantled, and so we'd have to reckon 21 years back from then. It would be '43 or '44 that I was appointed.

And what was the name of

The Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board.

And, again, women like Catherine Helen Spence and things like that had a tremendous influence in public welfare.

Yes. She had been a very influential person and I remember that there was great rejoicing in the League of Women Voters when I was appointed to that Board because the League was always pressing for the appointment of women to such boards, and that of course was a voluntary job and very demanding. The Board met regularly once a week to do the business, and then as well as that every week we would have been going on some sort of inspection or doing something extra.

Like inspecting children's foster



Yes, or going to various children's homes. In those days there were more homes for children, more institutional; as you will be well aware now, the present system is to try and get away from all that. That's rather an interesting comment I might make. In the early days Catherine Helen Spence and afterwards, she and - what was the name of the person who worked with her?

Lucy Morris?

No, she was a kindergarten person. It'll come to me presently I think.

Anyway, these early people in children's welfare in this State were tremendously averse to the big children's homes, you know the great big orphanages and so on, and they started this system here of placing children as far as possible in foster homes, and this of course had been going on for many years when I joined in 1943. And I soon became very conscious of the dangers of the foster home system. It always troubled me a little bit, because I felt that very often a child placed as a foster child in an established family never really felt to be one of the family, and I also felt pretty strongly that sometimes children who have come from a difficult home from which they have had to be removed - which has rejected them sometimes - children like that are not likely to settle easily into another private home and that they are often very much happier with a bunch of other children who have been through the same experience, and the demand is not being made on them you see to relate to a new home. I still feel this.

You would have enjoyed the book that has just come out.

Yes, I did enjoy the book - I was particularly impressed with the very kindly reception some of the letters got from youngsters complaining about their situation, and also I was very much impressed by some of the letters of appreciation that children wrote in to the Secretary.

And some of them did form relationships didn't they?

Oh yes, they did indeed.

That's another thing that strikes me again looking into it now for the first time - how much . . . impossible situation - children who are rejected by their own homes are impossible, they always have been; there's no easy solution for that, no matter what you do it's difficult, and so



much good will in the past, so much good - women like Catherine Helen Spence, really highly motivated and trying to improve things, and

Yes, it is as you say a constant problem, but I used to think, well after all people have sent their children to boarding schools where the children have often been awfully happy. A friend of mine who spent some years in boarding school in England said, "Oh, it was such a happy time of my life" because she said, "I was always an extremely sensitive child and I felt that if I got up to some mischief in school I didn't hurt anybody, but at home if there was any difficulty I was very sensitive to it, and so I felt more relaxed in my teenage years at boarding school than I did at home". And I think there are advantages for children sometimes in living with a group for a time.

One of the things I'd like to ask you is that you said the women's movement was very different then from what it is now. Would you like to comment on that and say a bit more about that?

Yes, I used the term women's libber and feminist as two different things didn't I? Well, the element in the women's libber movement which strikes one now, which was never apparent in the early days, was a certain antagonism to men. I find this so now - I don't mean at all that every woman who is keen on women's liberation is a man-hater, but it does seem to me that there is a fair proportion of them. Their feeling of long injustice has become a little bit over-weighted with a sort of anti-male feeling. That's one thing which I think is different. Then of course another very big difference is the fact that - rightly or wrongly - lesbianism has become so much associated with the feminist movement - not that everyone believes that every feminist is a lesbian, but the word was never even heard of in the early feminist movement you see, and this is a very big change. That's one thing that I think is very different.

But then one of the changes of the modern world is there has been so much more outspokenness about sexuality of every kind, every manifestation.

Yes, that's right. It's quite understandable, but it is a striking difference I think.

When you were young then, with all your sisters and with your mother and things like that, surely you must have found words to talk about these things to each other, although the words would be different from the outspokenness



No, I don't think we did. I don't how far in our generation it was ignorance or how far it was simply lack of interest. I think there was some of both.

Did that not make difficulties in the lives of you and your sisters? Things like - I'm thinking about things like menstruation - as girls together you must have spoken about those things with your sisters.

Oh, yes I suppose. I think we probably called menstruation 'The Curse'. But we were amazingly, I think, ignorant of sexual matters. I think we were just moving away you see from the early-Victorian days. My own mother used to say to us, "Oh, you girls are so fortunate now, you can read books and you have the words". I'll always remember her saying that. She often felt she just didn't have the words to explain things to us, though she was a great believer in teaching us things. I remember how wise she was; when I was a little girl about 8 or 9 I suppose, I came home from school with some elementary botany and I was speaking to mother about this, "Oh, isn't this interesting mother. Did you know a flower had a pistil and a stamen and ovary", and she took the chance at once, "Oh, yes", she said, "did you know little girls have ovaries too", you see; and she explained to me there and then about menstruation. I was about 9 you see; and afterwards I thought again how she was ahead of her time because some girls of my generation were left in complete ignorance until the time came when they thought they had developed some horrible disease.

Some girls of my generation too!

Really?

Yes.

Shocking I think. So I think the fact that my mother took the opportunity when I was 8 or 9 shows the kind of person she was and how later on she said we were lucky that we could read books about sex and about physical things generally, and that was so different, and she "didn't have the words" as she said.



And how do you think that it's going to affect the lives of women? Do you think that girls and things of the future will be different kind of people from your generation of women because of all these things?

I don't think I quite understand your question. You mean that do I think that the fact that girls and women do know all these facts now is going to affect them?

Their behaviour is so much freer - if it is - I mean it just may be something that the press and media say, but if the girls at Blackwood High School have all have sexual intercourse by the age of 16 or whenever it is that these startling figures ... not that my own children experience goes ... but if it's true is that going to make a difference obviously I suppose it will.

Oh yes, it is bound to isn't it? It's bound to. There's a lot of that of course that I regret, and one is very hesitant to speak much about it to the younger generation because they do live in such a different world, and my own feeling is that they are missing out tremendously I think. I believe that although we have moved away from the feeling that sex was something one never mentioned - it was something unpleasant or something you didn't put in the front window, our generation rebelled against that, and this is something natural; it is quite wrong that it should be spoken of in the way it's spoken of or else taboo, and I think that there was a sense perhaps in which we may have over-romanticised it. It wasn't romantic really in the Victorian days; it wasn't. I mean there were flowers and the long dresses and all the rest of it, but underneath the attitude to sex was so bad, and we rebelled against that. I remember how wrong I felt it was when a person of the older generation - a friend of my mother - would say, "Oh, you know, she got married without knowing what was expected of her". And I said even in those days you should say, "She got married without knowing what to expect". And maybe we perhaps over-glamourised it a bit in our freedom; this was a good thing, it was something that brought happiness and joy, which they hadn't regarded it in that light in the Victorian days at all. A woman had to be told "what was expected of her" - a horrible phrase.

Yes. My friend's mother had one word of advice given to her. She was not told anything about sex or anything else. She had one word of advice given to her just before she married, and that sentence was, "Something funny comes over men at night".

Oh, how funny!



That's was the total

Oh, isn't that funny - and as recently as that - a friend of your own mother.

My friend's mother had that instruction given to her, so it was quite a while ago.

It would be like an aunt of yours. I mean it's a generation later than my mother, you see. How extraordinary! Well, you see, we got away from that and we decided that it was a good thing and that we were going to enjoy and all the rest of it.

Yes. But then you say you over romanticised it.

Yes, I wonder if we did. I wonder if we

Gave it too much of build up so that people thought it was too import.

Yes, sort of too precious perhaps. I don't know. I think that the present generation have gone too far the other way, but in my opinion - I don't know whether I'm really wise to say this - but I feel as if it is under precious to them. Almost too natural, almost too animal, and that the other side of sex which the animals cannot enjoy they don't perhaps quite appreciate. You know what I mean?

Yes, I think so, because after all it is an animal function - the animals do it too - but on the other hand if you bring to it your personality which is enriched with

Actual real love

Yes...

Your human love. Yes, I think that's so much in danger of being left out.

And the last question, because I said I'd stay an hour, is - were you influenced by Dr Truby King. Did child care books come your way?



Oh yes. This is an interesting question because my first child was premature and I was trying to feed him every two hours because he was premature. Of course this bore me down terribly and I got ill with pneumonia and all the rest of it, so he had to be weaned and the idea was that it was a strictly four-hour thing and you let a child bawl and yell poor little thing in hunger until the hour struck. But my husband, who was a doctor, was almost very much against this.

He always said it was wrong - that children differ in physique and strength and their need for food and he was almost a...well, he was very modern at that time, but I just the next child that came along was fed more often she dropped into the habit of being fed every four hours anyway. You know, she wasn't ready in three hours, so she was a four-hour breast fed baby.

But I would say that I was influenced by the Truby King movement just then - in fact I think I was a member of the Truby King Society we started up here. I don't think they exist now.

So that in spite of your husband's advice, you were a Truby King mother?

Yes, I think . . . I don't think I was really a Truby King mother because my circumstances were a bit special with his having being premature. You know I wouldn't have been able to follow the exact Truby King method at all, but I was interested in the movement and I think I was a member of it for a while, but I don't remember this lasting very long. There are people here who could tell you more about that. Do you know the name 'Mrs. Effie Best'?

No.

She lives somewhere down at Moana now. She's a graduate; her husband was Dr Rupert Best - I think he's still living. Effie was a contemporary of mine - a little bit younger - and she was a very keen Truby King person at that time, probably has moved away from it. Her husband, Dr Rupert Best, wrote quite an interesting book some years ago after we'd had an ANZUS Conference here in Adelaide. He wrote up a record of it, so he's quite a well-known name. I think he's still living, but I wouldn't be quite sure, because I haven't been in touch with them for some time. They did live at Moana, and she was the leading light in the Truby King Movement amongst the mothers at that time.



Right.

Well, are you sure, because I am free for another 20 minutes - if there's anything you have in mind; you know I don't want to push myself on you, but there might be some other questions.

Well, I'll ask another . . . the date of your children's births, so that I can get the time period right.

Yes. I was married at the end of 1930 and Andrew was born in '31 and Rosemary three years later in 1934. I just had the two children.

And that would be when Dr Truby King's writings were becoming popular?

I suppose so, yes I suppose so. Yes it would be the early 30s wouldn't it? I don't remember any contact with them at all after about '37. We went back to Scotland in 1937 and took the children back to see their grandfather and so on. I don't remember anything about Truby King after about that time, so it would be early 30s. I wonder why you are interested in Truby King - just interested to find out how long it lasted here or what?

Well, as being of the things

That the organisations here

Well, really one of the theories. I suppose that I have a certain interest because my own mother says that her life was made very miserable by Dr Truby King. Now my mother didn't have the confidence when a book came and told her that it was the right way to behave. She didn't have the confidence

To move away from it?

No, so that her first child was actually under-nourished.

Really?



Yes, I think that's awfully interesting. I might mention that at the time the Truby King people started up here the Mothers & Babies Health Association was in existence, but they weren't really terribly efficient because I remember, as I said my son was premature, and the doctor couldn't make up his mind whether he was getting too much to drink or not enough - whether I had too much milk or not enough, you see, because he was crying a good deal in between feeds and so on. So I made the attempt to have a test feed with the Mothers & Babies Health Association - that's right back in

1931 of course - and they didn't have the equipment, and that was astonishing whereas the Truby King people did, but then the Mothers & Babies Health Association, well greatly increased in their efficiency and I'm sure they would have been doing test feeds soon after that. But that is an interesting thing and perhaps one of the reasons why I was drawn to the Truby King Movement because the Mothers & Babies Health Association just really couldn't help me at that rather vital point.

Yes. And the Truby King people seemed as if they had a more scientific approach.

I think so. Yes. Just at that time I think they did, but I think the Mothers & Babies Health Association vastly improved soon after that, and I think they've done a marvellous job.

Then the Second World War - you lived in Adelaide?

Yes.

Have you got any impressions of that?



Yes, of course, pretty strong impressions of that, particularly after the Japanese threatened Australia. I remember my little girl of course going off to school equipped with an air raid bag - all children had these little.... she went to MLC and they had these little red costumes and they had little red bags over their shoulders with certain equipment in them and they were told if sirens went they must get out of the bus and go a certain place, and these children used to have air raid drill. You know MLC was over the Parklands there, and they used to have regular drill in the Parklands, so it was all pretty fearsome and I, myself, did an air raid warden course so that I was an air raid warden for the area up at Magill. And what else did we do? We made an underground verandah place that we had under the verandah which was cement; we had that made into a proper air raid shelter, and took out all the glass and fitted it up with a little stove and books and things. It would have been an air raid shelter to accommodate not only ourselves but perhaps people round about. I well remember that my daughter said - she was terribly afraid that if this happened and we all went there little Mickie would not come in; little Mickie was her dog and she adored this little dog and she was so afraid he would play up and wouldn't come into the air raid shelter. So it was all pretty vivid and, of course, the blackout was intense. I couldn't drive at all - I hadn't good night sight at all. My husband managed; he had good night sight, but the blackout was really very worrying. Did you have experience of it or were you too young?

I've got one faint memory of the thing, but I was in London at the time, of being carried down the stairs to be put under the table they had - there was a table that was designed to be an air raid shelter.

Yes. We were all told to get under a table if possible. Yes, we were affected although we were so far away. See, the Japanese had bombed Darwin quite badly. We were not told at the time quite how severe the bombing was. Of course, we've all learned about it since and - yes, it was a bad time.

And what did you . . . did you have any feelings about being involved in a war which, after all, started in Europe. Were people very loyal to Britain.

Oh yes, I think we took it for granted that once Britain was involved, we were too. I really think we did at that time, and almost as much - if not quite as much - as the First War.



Do you have any recollections of the First War, or were you too young?

Oh no, no. I was about 10 - 9 or 10 when it broke out and I remember my father coming to collect me from the private school I went to nearby, and I so well remember the gravity of his face when he told the Headmistress. "Oh", he said, "England's declared war on Germany", and how terribly serious they were. And I remember all the wild tales that went round the school about the frightful atrocities the Germans perpetrated on the Belgian people. As I see it now, all wild tales I'm sure. But then, of course, I had the sadness of knowing about lots of friends' brothers being killed and so on - so many casualties, Australian casualties in the First War, and my father of course was the minister of the church down here - this beautiful Kent Town church - do you know it at all? It was one of Edmund Wright's architectural joys. It's a beautiful church.

Is that the one in the Kensington Road?

No, it's not Kensington Road; it's on Fullarton Road between here and the Maid and Magpie just down there - it's a lovely church.

Nice inside? One of the things of having this work to do has made me so alert to the old buildings. I feel so ashamed of being here for so long and not knowing them.

Well, this Kent Town church is a lovely church and my father came over here when I was a little girl of six to take charge of that church.

From Scotland?

No, no, Victoria. We were all Victorians. One of us was born in Tasmania, but the rest in Victoria. My mother and father were both Victorians, though their parents came from England and Scotland. I'm second generation, but I so well remember my father going out with a sad face on a great high bicycle - not quite a penny-farthing - but very high bicycle you know - a big tall man - going out to break the news to various families that their sons had been killed. I've a very vivid memory of that, father having to do that.



Was he given the news first?

Evidently, evidently. You know I've no recollection of quite how it was done. But I had the impression that he went to break the news, though it could have been of course that he was told about it and asked to go and comfort the family. I'm really not sure about that, but it was a very, very sad time, and I remember an extremely sad time at school not long before the armistice. I got to school one day and there was a tremendous shouting and cheering and noise going on in the playground, and when I got there I found all the girls saying, "The war is over, the war is over", and when we got into morning assembly the Head Mistress gave us a very sad and severe lecture on doing this sort of thing. She said it wasn't true, and I remember a friend of mine who had twin brothers at the war just bursting into tears; we were all so sad for her - this great build-up of excitement, you know, and it was all rumour and how careful we were after that.

And then the Second World War didn't involve the same sort of casualties, so that.

No it really didn't. It did involve casualties, but I don't think anything like the same number. Such a lot of young men from that church went to the War, and I remember even now the names of some that were killed that my oldest sister knew well. It was a very sad time. They were so young as

I look back on it, you know, when I think of my own grandsons now ranging from 18 to 23.

Children still.

Absolute children, yes, 18.

When my uncle in Scotland came back from the war he and another boy were the only two male survivors of their big class of children at Buckie High School and that meant that there was a whole generation of spinsters of this age - all those women who didn't get husbands.



That's right. It was a bit like that with my generation, though I was only 10 to 14, but my older sister - 5 years older - she and her generation there are a great many spinsters of about my age, quite a number of my friends and people slightly older than me never married. Of course, there was that same shortage.

And then that's been one of the changes hasn't it? What I was going to say is you hardly come across a woman these days who - I mean she may not remarry, but she would have a relationship with some kind of men somewhere, you see.

Yes, I think so.

It is almost impossible to find somebody who hasn't had a sexual relationship.

Yes, I suppose that is true. You see I wouldn't know that from my own experience because of my own friends being older, so that I know that is said to be so and I expect that's your experience.

It would be interesting to see with the students how things are going to work out for the young people nowadays because that generation might have passed, the next generation the pendulum might swing right back.

I hope it does. I hope it does. I can't help feeling that they miss such a lot. Because in my day marriage was something to be looked forward to with pride and joy. It was the beginning of so much, not such sexual relationship, but a great deal that we felt would go with that. Nowadays there isn't that special step. I can't see how it gives quite the same joy. It's not...well in those days it was a great day, it was a very special occasion, and the whole idea of the honeymoon, going away by yourselves and getting to know each other in a different way and being completely relaxed. It doesn't seem to me that with this new way of looking at a sexual relationship....it seems to me the honeymoon will be gone forever. It seems a great pity don't you think? I think the honeymoon was a great institution.

Any other changes? Any other big changes that you would like to comment about - especially the changes that affect women?



I think probably we've really covered it. I think the women have a much greater burden because however good the husband is and however co-operative in my cases where both are earning the woman carries the bigger burden. It seems to me that's so, don't you think?

All the figures show that women do their housework and their jobs, but men don't in fact have an equal share of it.

Yes, I think so. And in most homes too I think the children - especially the little ones - still relate more to mother than to father, so that even if he wants to carry more of the burden emotionally somehow it doesn't work out that way. I think that is one thing. Another big change I notice is the way the children get ferried about. We didn't expect to be taken about. At one stage of my life we lived right down at Brighton when I was at the University, and we used to have early morning practice of hockey and I'd catch an early train up to town, and then a bus and tram out to the hockey field, and if we had some club meeting at night or something we always went by bus and train, and now the poor mothers take for granted that they must ferry their children everywhere. I think it's too big a burden.

Terrible little tyrants the children are too. You know, "You've kept me waiting five minutes".

I expect they say that; I haven't read that, but I'm not surprised.

Oh, mine say that. Also, when the children learn to drive - that's one of the big, big changes that I've noticed.

Oh yes, a big anxiety. It's a very big anxiety I think, don't you?

Yes. Well, it's a big anxiety for me, but for them it's an enormous sign of freedom. You know the 21st Birthday and the getting the key to the door used to be one of the things. Well, the key to the door means nothing - they have that from.

The key to the car four years earlier than that.

Yes. And that is what gives them independence of their mother, because before that they have to ask their mother if they can do this or that and their mother will drive them and pick them up, but after that they don't have the same necessity to ask permission.



And I think this is rather an interesting thing too - I remember now when my daughter was first at the University I had made a rule in late school years that she could not go out on both a Friday and a Saturday evening - it had to be one of the other, and if there was a dance or a party on the Saturday and she was going, then she couldn't go on the Friday. She always accepted this as a schoolgirl, you know 15 or 16. I remember how pleased I was and surprised when she was at the University she came to me one day and she said, "Mother, the Saints are on the Friday and the Saturday nights, what do you think?" I forget what my answer was; I probably said, "Oh, if they are both awfully good and you want to go, perhaps you'd better", but you wouldn't get that now would you? Especially not at the University.

No.

But I was awfully pleased because I felt that she had realised it was a sensible rule and was it time to break it or not. She's got children of her own now at the University. Her three are all at the University, and I'm sure they wouldn't ask her permission, but I think they would consult with her particularly the girl, the youngest one. I don't think there is any other change that I have in mind - of course television has made a tremendous difference I think to the life of women. It both helps them to relax and keeps them in touch with world affairs, but it also I think cuts into their reading.

And is another reason why they don't go out and belong to some kind of groups?

Yes, that's quite true. I expect that's another reason why evening things don't flourish. I hadn't thought of that, but I'm sure you're right there.

And would you say anything about it being a sort of foreign culture imported into the home? In your youth presumably the only thing that came into the home were things that people knew about and understood and wanted.

Oh yes, I think that's very true. I, myself, feel a fierce resentment against things coming into my home - intimacies of bedroom and so on. I think it's a fearful thing. I really do think it's a dreadful invasion of one's privacy and it's so difficult with television because you don't always



know what is going to happen until it has happened. You've no protection against that sort of invasion, and I think that's really bad and I don't see solution, do you?

Well, I'm sure that banning things isn't the solution. I don't see how you could ban television any more than you could ban the motor car.

No. I don't think you could. And the whole question of censorship is extremely difficult, but, oh I am satisfied that some things should be censored because of one's inability to avoid them. If you know a thing - people say there should be no censorship because you can switch off, you know what's coming on, but you don't; until it's happened you don't know that you object.

Anyway, people that say there should be no censorship never really mean it thoroughly, because if you give them example after example there will come a point where they say, "Oh, no, we couldn't have that", especially when it comes to things like child abuse and child pornography and things like that - most people draw a line somewhere about that don't they?

Yes, they do, absolutely. And so you can't say, "This is my principle and I stick to it", you know about censorship, you can't say no censorship. Not realistically - not if you mean it. Anyway, you could say anything, say anything.

No.

Familiarity....people usually do have limits unless they are completely depraved, unless they are going to claim they care nothing about children.

That's right. That's one of my quarrels with the Right to Life Association about abortion. Because if you are going to take the hard line there, that it's life, you see, so there must be no abortion, then you've got to allow a 14-year-old child who's a victim of incest to bear that child because it is life, and I think that's one of the cases where you daren't take a hard and fast line.

Well, I've had a lovely