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### APERTURA DE LA SESION

Se abre la sesion a las 5:00 p.m., ocupando el estrado el Presidente, Hon. Claro M. Recto.

EL PRESIDENTE: Se abre la sesion.

DISPENSACION DE LA LECTURA DE LA LISTA DE DELEGADOS Y DEL ACTA.

SR. GRAFILO: Señor Presidente.

EL PRESIDENTE: Señor Delegado.

SR. GRAFILO: Pido que se dispense la lectura de la lista de Delegados y del acta, y que se de esta por aprobada.

EL PRESIDENTE: ¿Hay alguna objecion a la mocion? (Silencio.) La Mesa no oye ninguna. Queda aprobada.

CONSIDERACION DEL PROYECTO DE RESOLUCION

OTORGANDO EL SUFRAGIO A LOS VARONES

SOLAMENTE

(Continuacion)

EL PRESIDENTE: Esta en orden la continuacion de la discusion del Proyecto de Resolucion concediendo el sufragio a los varones solamente.

MOCIONABELLA.

SR. ABELLA: Señor Presidente.

EL PRESIDENTE: Señor Delegado.

SR. ABELLA: En vista de que hay muchos oradores que todavia no han podido hablar y quieren, consumir su turno ya a favor o ya en contra, pido que se aplace la votacion de esta resolucion hasta el viernes que viene. (Varias voces: No.) Es que la Asamblea no tiene materia de que tratar.

EL PRESIDENTE: No hay ninguna orden especial fijando el dia de la votacion. La orden especial es sobre el tiempo en que debe durar el debate y nada mas, En la sesion de anoche se enmendo la orden especial extendiendo el debate hasta el miercoles. El objeto de la petition de Su Señoria, ¿debe entenderse en el sentido de que el debate, durara hasta el viernes?

SR. ABELLA: Si, señor.

MR. GRAGEDA: Mr. President, I object to the motion just presented by the Gentleman from Camarines Sur (Mr. Abella.) This question was already decided by the Convention; besides this, the draft of the constitution is already finished, so there is no use extending the time for the rotation on the resolution.

MR. ABELLA: But the constitution will be submitted on Monday. What shall we do between now and Monday?

EL PRESIDENTE: La Mesa va a someter a votacion la mocion del distinguido Caballero de Camarines,

Los que esten conformes con la mocion, que digan si. (Delegados: Se). Los que no lo esten, que digan no. (Varios Delegados: No.) Queda rechazada la mocion.

SR. ABELLA: Division, señor Presidente.

EL PRESIDENTE: Los que esten conformes con la mocion se serviran ponerse de pie. (Cuarenta y dos Delegados se levantan.) Los que no lo esten, que se levanten tambien.) (Cuarenta y ocho delegados se ponen de pie.) Por cuarenta y ocho votos negativos contra cuarenta y dos afirmativos, se rechaza la mocion.

SR. ABELLA: El primer orador de la noche en contra del proyecto de Resolucion es el distinguido Ca aplase la votacion de esta resolution hasta el viames que viene. (Varias voces: No.) Es que la Asamblea no tiene materia de que tratar.

EL PRESIDENTE: No hay ninguna orden espe-cial fijando el dia de la votacion. La orden especial es sobre el tiempo en que debe durar el debate y nada mas. En la sesion de anoche se enmendo la orden especial extendiendo el debate hasta el miercoles. El objeto de la peticion de Su Señoria, ¿debe entenderse en el sentido de que el debate durara hasta el viernes?

SR. ABELLA: Si, señor.

MR. GRAGEDA: Mr. President, I object to the motion just presented by the Gentleman from Camarines Sur (Mr, Abella.) This question was already decided by the Convention; besides this, the draft of the constitu-tion is already finished, so there is no use extending the time for the votation on the resolution.

MR. ABELLA: But the constitution will be submitted on Monday. What shall we do between now and Monday ?

EL PRESIDENTE: La Mesa va a someter a vota-cion la motion del distinguido Caballero de Camarines.

Los que esten conformes con la mocion, que digan si. (Varios Delegados: Si.) Los que no lo esten, que digan no. (Varios Delegados: No.) Queda rechazada la mocion.

SR. ABELLA: Division, señor Presidente.

EL PRESIDENTE: Los que esten conformes con la mocion se serviran ponerse de pie. (Cuarenta y dos Delegados se levantan.) Los que no lo esten, que se levanten tambien.) (Cuarenta y ocho delegados se ponen de pie.) Por cuarenta y ocho votos negativos contra cuarenta y dos afirmativos, se rechaza la mocion.

SR. ABELLA: El primer orador de la noche en contra del proyecto de Resolucion es el distinguido Caballero de Manila, Honorable Gregorio Perfecto.

EL PRESIDENTE: Tiene la palabra el Delegado por Manila.

#### DISCURSO DEL SR. PERFECTO A FAVOR DEL SUFRAGIO FEMENINO

SR. PERFECTO. Señor Presidente: Esta es la primera vez que hago uso de la palabra en una tribuna para hablar del sufragio femenino. Hubiera querido guardar silencio, pero el tenor de los discursos que se han pronunciado aqui, las ideas que se han vertido, los prejuicios que se han aceptado como verdades inconfesas, me han obligado a decir unas cuantas palabras para que mi voz, aunque no sea mas que la voz del que clama en el desierto, pueda sonar en protesta energica y ro-tunda contra ciertas proposiciones e ideas que se han lanzado aqui y que de ningun modo pueden honrar a nuestro pueblo.

Es necesario despejar prejuicios, es necesario disipar ilusiones para que nuestro pueblo no se extravie en el

camino del progreso. Por los prejuicios, por el error, la humanidad se ha estancado muchos siglos. A los niños a quienes se les acostumbra a atemorizar con espantajos y duendes, con fantasmas y brujos, esos pobres niños tardan mas en adquirir la mayoría de edad. Antes de que Colon se atreviera a cruzar el Atlantico, la humanidad estaba presa del prejuicio de que la tierra era una planicie cuyos limites llegaban a los confines del infinito. Los navegantes no se atrevian a cruzar el Atlantico temiendo perderse en el abismo de los confines del mar; la humanidad creia que la tierra era algo asi como una cosa incommovible; la humanidad tardo en aceptar la teoria de Galileo de que la tierra no es mas que un planeta que gira alrededor del sol.

Señor Presidente; se ha dicho que la politica es algo asi como una cisterna encenagada, en donde no pueden zambullirse ni hombres ni mujeres sin mancharse. Se ha dicho aqui que la pureza y la virtud de la mujer, naufragarian el dia en que se les permitiese votar a las mujeres. Esto no es mas que una ilusion; pero no porque sea una ilusion, me levanto aqui para protestar energicamente contra las insinuaciones que se derivan de ese prejuicio, sino porque parece que se hace creer que la virtud de nuestras mujeres es algo tan fragil que se quebraria con el mero contacto del sufragio. Es algo asi como la miel que se diluiria al contacto de una gota de rocío. Pompa de jabon, que desapareceria al menor soplo del halito. Es mas, parece que se da a entender que el campo masculino esta integrado de satiros; que los varones en nuestro pueblo tienen todavia los instintos desencadenados del hombre de las cavernas, parientes de las razas de Neanderthal y de Cromagnon, que basta que se les presente la oportunidad de que las mujeres vayan al precinto para votar, para que como unos machos impulsivos, se apresuren a asaltar la pureza femenina y repetir en cada eleccion la escena del rapto de las Sabinas. Hay la creencia de que el dia que las mujeres puedan votar, la eleccion se convertira en una especie de bacanal. Si la virtud de nuestras mujeres fuese tan fragil que por el mero hecho de votar la tuviesen que perder, bien menguada seria entonces esa virtud ; seria preferible perderla ya de una vez y no tratar de proteger una virtud mentida, porque una virtud que se destroza al menor contacto de una prueba, no es mas que un engaño, una ilusion.

No puedo menos de levantarme ahora para anunciar que las ideas vertidas en esta Convencion me han inducido a declarar, de una vez claramente, que el sufragio femenino no puede poner en peligro la virtud de las mujeres filipinas. La virtud de las mujeres filipinas no es algo pasivo, no; es algo activo y militante que esta puesta a prueba y en todo tiempo, esta a prueba para demostrar, que es algo de que debe honrarse la mujer filipina. Si no, que digan esas doncellas, que, no obstante el hecho de que tienen entregado el corazon al novio, no le pueden permitir la menor libertad sin arrancar una navaja escondida y preparada para defender su honor. Para la mujer filipina es antes el honor, que el amor; y si la virtud de la mujer filipina fuese cosa tan fragil, como se han hecho creer aqui, ¿que diriamos de la caballerosidad, de la dignidad, del sentido de honor de nuestros varones? No puedo aceptar que el sentido de caballerosidad de los varones haya desaparecido en Filipinas, para que nuestras mujeres, por el mero hecho de ir al precinto para elegir a los hombres que han de dirigir los negocios de nuestro gobierno, queden mal protegidas. Si las mujeres mismas no pueden protegerse, ahí estan los varones que estan dispuestos a sacrificar sangre y vida para mantener enhiesto el honor de la mujer filipina.

Y ¿que hay de la politica? ¿Es tan sucia, tan turbia la politica que no puede ponerse en contacto con ella la mujer? Parece que se ha hecho creer a tirios y troyanos que la politica es esencialmente corrompida y corruptora. No se ha dicho aqui nada noble en favor de la politica, y sin embargo, señor Presidente, tengo para mi, que no hay actividad humana mas noble, mas grande y mas sublime que la actividad politica. ¿Hay algo mas noble y desinteresado que el servicio a la comunidad? Esa es la politica, servir a la comunidad, servir al Estado. Si la politica es algo tan corrompido y corruptor, ¿como es que en nuestro pais que se esta desenvolviendo ahora como lo estaba en el pasado, la mayor parte de sus personalidades se han destacado en las filas de la politica?

Señores miembros de la Convencion: Yo os invito a que recorrais las paginas de la historia de otros pueblos y de

nuestro pueblo. Repasad esas paginas y no encontrareis una figura mas noble, mas pura, mas digna de ser respetada por la humanidad, que la figura del hijo de Calamba, Ya sabeis quien es. Y sin embargo, Rizal, que es el tipo mas alto de la raza malaya, se ha destacado principalmente por sus actividades politicas. Fue medico, fue artista, fue benefactor, fue un sabio, y sin embargo, no le rendimos homenaje a Rizal como medico, como poeta, como escultor. Le admiramos antes que nada, como politico que ha sacrificado, todo: honores, vida, para servir a su patria. No juzguemos la politica por la conducta de unos cuantos individuos que la prostituyen. Pocos probablemente de vosotros que me escuchais, han emprendido campañas mas agresivas contra la corrupcion politica, contra la corrupcion electoral, como el que tiene el honor de dirigiros la palabra. Pocos de vosotros han afrontado procesos criminales en los tribunales de justicia, en aras de la pureza y la limpieza del sufragio, sin embargo, yo os digo que como en ningun tiempo he transigido con el fraude, puedo deciros muy alto que la politica en Filipinas es algo que debe enorgullecer no solamente a los politicos sino tambien a todo nuestro pueblo.

SR. ALTAVAS: Señor Presidente, el tiempo del orador ha terminado ya.

EL PRESIDENTE: ¿Que dice el Señor Abella?

SR. ABELLA: Quisiera conceder cinco minutos mas al Caballero de Manila.

SR. PERFECTO: Agradezco a los Caballeros de esta Convencion esta oportunidad que me conceden para terminar el concepto que estaba desarrollando. Asi como hay profesionales que prostituyen la profesion, que hacen de la profesion una mercancia, asi tambien hay po-liticos que no comprenden el alto sentido moral de la po-litica. Pero no porque haya profesionales que prostitu-yen su profesion, se ha de despreciar la Abogacia, la Medicina, la Ingenieria, ¿Hay actividad mas noble que la religion? Sin embargo, ¿no sabeis que hay apostatas, hay herejes, hay lo que se llama simonia? Pero no porque haya simonia; no porque haya habido apostatas y herejes, se ha de negar la nobleza y dignidad de las religiones. De igual modo, Señor Presidente, hay politicos que pueden abdicar de sus convicciones, hay quienes apostatan de sus principios, pero esos no son mas que una excepcion. El elector que, enfermo y debil, incapaz de levantarse de la cama, hace esfuerzos para llegar al precinto, para cumplir el deber civico de votar, es un tipo que representa la generalidad de nuestros electores. Tenemos electores corruptos, pero no son mas que una excepcion. Asi es que, Señor Presidente, al plantearse esta cuestion, se ha convertido en un reto a esta Convencion. Si rechazamos el sufragio femenino quiere decir que realmente tenemos mucho miedo por la virtud de nuestras mujeres, creemos que la virtud de nuestras mujeres es algo tan fragil y que facilmente puede perderse por el mero hecho de que puedan votar. Pero si no han perdido esa virtud, ¿por que se les ha dado oportunidad de comparecer ante los tribunales de justicia como abogadas, de recorrer el pueblo para atender a sus pacientes como medicas, y de servir en mil y una actividades humanas? ¿Por que se han de perder por el mero hecho de votar?

Asi es que yo patrocino el sufragio femenino, porque creo que la virtud de la mujer filipina no puede peligrar por el ejercicio de este derecho civico, Ni permitiran los electores que naufrague esa virtud, porque creo que la politica es la actividad mas noble a que puede consagrarse un ciudadano. He dicho. (Aplausos.)

SR. ALTAVAS. Señor Presidente, el siguiente orador de parte de los propugnadores del proyecto de resolucion es el Delegado por Cebu, Señor Carin.

EL PRESIDENTE: Tiene la palabra el Delegado por Cebu;

DISCURSO DEL SR. CARIN CONTRA EL  
SUFRAGIO FEMENINO.

MR. CARIN: Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: In rising to speak in favor of the resolution under

debate, it is not my desire to cross swords with the ablest blades who are championing the cause of woman suffrage; neither do I wish to be understood that I am an arch enemy of any cause or movement for the betterment and welfare of our women population. On the contrary, in speaking in favor of the resolution before us, I feel that I am advocating a woman's cause, not the woman's cause for the preservation of her Filipina virtues and ideals but her cause to maintain her present exalted position in the Filipino home and society. If suffrage were only a bunch of flowers the immaculate beauty of which enhanced the exquisite tenderness of a Filipino woman, if suffrage were only a crown of jewels which added to the brilliance of her feminine qualities and virtues, I would be the first Delegate to gallantly proffer to her the right to vote, I would be the first troubador to tender to her a song of her suffrage right as a sign that I was for a woman's cause if that cause brought happiness and contentment to her.

But, Mr. President, those born and reared in politics know by actual experience what an electoral fight signifies; "we, who have been participants in many political battles, managed electoral campaigns, heard political speeches, witnessed political intrigues and schemes, can vouchsafe how dangerous it is for our women to enter into the political strifes and swim into the boiling water of political wrangles and skirmishes. Verbal battles of calumnies, mutual hurlings of insults, scandalous vituperations and defamations which are usually resorted to by candidates and their leaders in the political arena to humiliate and eliminate their adversaries, are too risky, too unsightly, too filthy for our women to participate in. I am sure that every one of us is proud to be a Filipino, and to have been born in these blessed beautiful isles, not only because the pages of our history are replete with accounts of the marvelous deeds of our heroes; not only because the Philippines has produced martyrs and patriots who willingly offered their lives for the defense of their motherland, but also because the Filipino woman is looked upon as the sweetest, the most delicate flower, the most adorable being for whose welfare men have fought and perished.

What will be the direct result if our women are huddled into the political arena? One of the surest and most direct results is that in the heat of the struggle, when passions surge high, when considerations of dignity and honor will be cast aside in order to vanquish the enemy, our women in politics will be pitilessly lampooned, subjected to calumnies, and other sorts of degradation. Instead of being the flower whose exquisite tenderness is the object of our love and adoration, they will become the miserable object of humiliation and pity, their petals no longer of the immaculate whiteness of virtue, but thrown to the ground, trampled upon by inconsiderate enemies, disfigured and mutilated.

And what will be the effect upon the home and family if women are given the right of suffrage? Mr. President, a part of our precious heritage we take pride in is our family tradition — the solidarity of our family institution, the harmony in our home. The solidarity of the family institution is the pillar which supports the stability of a nation. In the past, as in the present, we considered the home as the proper sphere for our women, a place where the wife was crowned and worshipped as the queen. The duties and responsibilities of a good and dutiful wife are centered in the home which she dignifies with the purity of her person. Her untarnished honor and good name command respect in the community. The entrance of our women into politics will mean the abandonment of the home which every good wife is obliged to preserve; desertion of the family, which is the mission of every woman to take of; the creation of unnecessary causes for family frictions, thereby threatening the peace and harmony of the homes; and the weakening of the solidarity of our family institution which will eventually cause its breakdown. Mr. President, it is my fervent hope, as it should be of all patriotic Filipinos, that our present family institution, which is the solid rock supporting the stability of our nation, and our homes, which are the repository of all the good qualities of our race, will be preserved intact, free from the impurities of the imported ways of modernism.

Mr. President, woman suffrage will not only wreak havoc on our women's virtues, our homes and families, but will also drain our treasury of a good portion of money. It is admitted by the advocates of woman suffrage that

the enfranchisement of our women will mean an enormous increase not only of the election expenses of the Government but also of the expenses of the candidates. The Government will have to face manifold financial problems, both during the transitory period and after when a free and independent existence will have been achieved. Delegate Marabut of Samar, in his able defense of unicameralism, has cited to us facts and figures tending to show conclusively that our government revenue will suffer considerable diminution, in view of which a considerable number of Delegates voted for the abolition of the Upper Chamber. We have agreed to discard the Upper Chamber and to adopt unicameralism because it is believed that our Government can-not very well afford to maintain the luxury of a senate during the transitory period, and yet we all know that bicameralism is an accepted principle in political science the utility and advantage of which had been tested and proven for centuries. Some of those who advocated unicameralism for the sake of economy are now the conspicuous champions of the enfranchisement of our women, an idea which will double or treble not only the government election expenses but also the expenses of the candidates. The increase of government election expenses, if suffrage is granted to women, will be more than enough to maintain the Upper Chamber which this Convention has seen fit to abolish for the sake of economy.

And what is the practical advantage of woman suffrage to justify its adoption by this Convention in preference to unicameralism? I want this question answered specially by Delegate Abella of Camarines, Delegate Osias of La Union, and Delegate Bocar of Samar, who are the ardent advocates of the abolition of bicameralism for the sake of economy, but who are now the uncompromising paladins of woman suffrage, notwithstanding its patently ignominious luxury. As for me, if we take into consideration the undeniable fact that husbands are the portavoces of their wives and fathers the spokesmen of their daughters, I cannot see any practical advantage of the women's ballots except that they are a mere duplication of the votes of their husbands, fathers, and brothers. If the grant of suffrage to women has any purpose at all, it is just to satisfy the vanity of a few women leaders who are spinsters, widows, and wives who do not find happiness in their homes.

It is amazing to note that one of the salient arguments for woman suffrage is that women's entrance into politics will revolutionize the present-day campaign methods and eliminate the practice of political frauds and corruption. Women believe that, with their feminine charms and enchanting personality, they can effectively purge politics of impurities, bring about purified government officials, and establish a better government architected by feminine hands. It is illusory, not to say highly preposterous, to claim that the intervention of women will result in the miraculous disappearance of mudslinging, mutual defamation, and loathsome personalities which candidates and their leaders usually adopt in their endeavor to bring their adversaries into disrepute, contempt, and public ridicule. No suffragist in the whole Philippines can mention any woman politician of any country, where women are allowed to vote, who has started a crusade against corruptions and profane practices that go hand in hand with politics. Mrs. Josefa Llanes-Escoda, a prominent suffragist, in her article published in the Sunday Tribune of August 26, 1934, admits that "to expect women — even American women — to revolutionize a nation's political system with the ballot is to ask the impossible." And she asks, speaking of American politics, "Why should women be expected to achieve in a few years what men have been unable to accomplish in 150 years?" This admission belies the claim of some of her sisters and of the leaders of the negative side that the entrance of women into politics will bring about healthy changes and innovations. In fact, Mrs. Llanes-Escoda is right in her assertion, for if we take into account women's natural modesty and shyness, their delicate refinement and meek disposition, women cannot be expected to accomplish the task of revolutionizing politics which is outside of their proper sphere of action. Instead of purifying politics, they will be contaminated with its vice as proven by the quotations of the Delegate from Palawan, and dragged into the political turmoils where they will become the pitiful victims of the intriguing politicians.

The suffragists often claim that if women are granted the right to vote, they can work better for the adoption of

social legislation, prevent the passage of discriminatory laws, and improve the laws which concern them. This claim is femininely egoistic. It is not denied by any suffragist that our National Legislature, which is composed of men, has passed and adopted, during the 38 years of its existence, many important pieces of social legislation without the least initiative or intervention of any woman who arrogated to herself the title of "social worker"; it is not shown by any advocate of woman suffrage that our legislators have tarnished their glorious careers as such by the passage of laws discriminatory to our women; neither is it proven that our legislators have been unmindful of improving the laws concerning the rights of women, because lately, laws amending the Civil Code have been passed to eliminate unjust provisions concerning the paraphernal property of women. If that is the end sought by our women in their demand for the right of suffrage, then there is no necessity of granting it to them because it is properly attended to by our male legislators who, theoretically and practically speaking, represent, not only the male but also the female population. But, is it really true that they will work better for the adoption of social legislation if they are granted the right to vote? Mr. President, I contend that women can accomplish more results in the passage of social legislation without suffrage than with suffrage. Without, suffrage, our social workers have free access to all warring parties. Their movements, views, and opinions will receive sympathetic attention from all political camps, because, without suffrage they are not a party to any political wranglings and animosities. They do not have political enemies in either the majority or minority party, and all the solons are their friends, regardless of political color. The social workers can easily approach any legislator to patronize any social legislation or any law concerning our women. But, if they are granted "the right to vote, they will have to affiliate with the majority or minority party, depending upon the affiliation of their husbands, fathers, or relatives. If social workers or women leaders happen to be in the minority party, they better stay home and care for their children, for they cannot do anything toward social legislation because partisanship and party spirit will not give them support. The women will be divided; there will be no concerted action on the part of the women population concerning the passage of laws which affect their welfare because of their animosities and party lines.

The clamor for woman suffrage, initiated by a handful of women in Manila, is based on the assertion that the women of today are the equal of men in point of intellect, capacity, and talent. This argument is founded on the erroneous assumption that the standard of education, the degree of culture attained by the few women leaders who demand the right to vote is the standard of education of the overwhelming majority of the women residing in the hills and hamlets, mountains and villages of this country. Mr. President, while it can be admitted that some of our women are already the peers of men, most of our women are yet denied that degree of culture, that standard of education, which may entitle them to the exercise of a right which has been exclusively for men. I know that the ways of Maria Clara, whose feminine virtues were beautifully sung by our national hero, still obtain today among the overwhelming number of women in the barrios — women who, conscious of their sacred duties and responsibilities as mothers or daughters, do not presumptuously claim equality and do not want suffrage.

But, admitting that some of our women have already attained a standard of education and culture to make them the equal of men, are there no other activities to which their developed talents, their acquired wisdom, can be applied? Are the fields of feminine activities already so saturated that the women have to overflow and inundate the fields designated for the activities of men? Gentlemen, the supposed wisdom and talent of some Filipino women can best be applied to or utilized in the sciences, the arts, social-welfare work, and such other things as are agreeable to their sex and suited to their delicate nature and inherent sweetness with which our Almighty God has seen fit to embellish their feminine form. If our women, with their developed abilities, should be allowed to invade the realm of political strifes and struggles when men, in their eagerness to vanquish an enemy, are necessarily compelled to dissect the ugly, putrefied items of a woman's life and expose her to public ridicule and contempt, I will be the first one to construct a barrier in the form of constitutional precepts to prevent our women from going into the dangerous field of politics where their feminine endowments are desecrated and

defamed. I thank you.

MR. SEVILLA: Mr. President.

EL PRESIDENTE: Señor Delegado.

#### DISCURSO DEL DELEGADO SEVILLA DE BULACAN

MR. SEVILLA: Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: Granting suffrage to Filipino women is probably one of the extensively discussed subjects that have ever occupied the minds of our people, men and women alike. Schools, colleges, and universities have time and again chosen it as a proposition for their de-bates. The press has dissected the subject and editorialized it from every conceivable angle until all thinkable arguments for and against it have almost been exhausted. Past legislatures hardly had any session wherein this perennial topic did not come up to demand the serious thought and attention of our legislators. It is probably not only because women are intertwined with our hearts, our thoughts and our sentiments but also because they are so much a part of our very lives and beings that no question affecting them, in however a slight degree, can pass without men taking a solicitous and active part in its discussion and resolution.

When the last Philippine Legislature passed the Equal Suffrage Law qualifying our women to exercise the right of suffrage by 1935, everybody, and I for one, thought of taking up this question again when the Committee on Suffrage of the Constitutional Convention rendered its report granting the right of suffrage to men alone and erasing women altogether from the picture. Hence, we are here again, back to the discussion of the same old question.

The resolution, now under discussion, says that the right of suffrage, under the Constitution, shall be granted to male citizens only. One glance at this resolution, and a sense of injustice will at once assail your conscience. We must bear in mind that we are gathered here not to enact an ordinary law which may be changed or amended at any time by subsequent legislatures. We are called upon to frame a Constitution which, by its very nature, ought to be stable and enduring. No constitution is worth its name, or even the paper on which it is written, whose provisions may be altered as easily as any ordinary law. We are expressly committed to the principle of incorporating in our fundamental law only matters of an immutable nature and leaving out those which, because of the rapid changes and developments of the times, can best be taken care of by the Legislature. One of these matters, which can be properly left out, is the question of enfranchising women.

The United States Congress, in extending to us the Jones Law of August 29, 1916, which up to now is the Organic Law governing this country, wisely left to the discretion of the Philippine Legislature the question of determining the qualifications of voters and whether to enfranchise women or not. This admirable flexibility of the Jones Law regarding the qualifications of voters is attributable to the prudence of the American law-makers who know how best to draft an organic law that can easily meet and adapt itself to the changing demands of progress and civilization. The United States Congress, in leaving the matter of woman suffrage to the Philippine Legislature to decide, rightly foresaw that under the democratic government which it had established in these islands, women would sooner or later voice their demands and get their share of the determination of their political affairs. This foresight of the American Congress was more than justified when the Ninth Philippine Legislature passed Act 4112, and thus gave a belated sanction to the clamor of our female population to be able to use the ballot. And yet, Gentlemen of the Convention, the resolution under discussion would incorporate in our Constitution the complete disbarment of our women to vote without as much as affording the Philippine Legislature, granting that it has erred in passing that law, a chance to correct its mistake.

All of us know how hard it is to amend a constitutional provision. It takes years, decades, probably centuries to append an amendment to a Constitution. The Committee on Amendments of the Constitutional Convention has

reported that amendments may only be pro-posed by a majority of the members of the Legislature or by a majority of the municipal councils, to be ratified by 2/3 of the electors voting in the ensuing general election. Urgent cases require the vote of 3/4 of the members of the Legislature and ratification by 2/3 of the municipal councils. Amendments are rejected if not ratified by the Legislature before the expiration of its first regular session or by the municipal councils with-in one year after initiation or by the voters at the gen-eral election. This only shows, Mr. President, how dif-ficult and almost impossible will it be for us to correct our mistakes, if we commit mistakes in this delicate task of drafting our Constitution.

If this resolution is passed, not only shall we com-mit an injustice by denying suffrage to our women; not only shall we demolish a beautiful structure of political equality between men and women built by our Legisla-ture after decades of painstaking and untiring labors; not only shall we dishonor what in justice and in honor has become a law; but we shall also condemn our women, perhaps forever, to a perpetual status of political slavery. And what, may I ask, have our women done to deserve such a cruel and unusual punishment? Their only crime, if crime it is, is begging their brothers for something which will neither add to nor detract from whatever rights the brothers have been enjoying. Their only sin, if sin it is, consists in peacefully clamoring for what they honestly believe in, a privilege to be able to help their men perform the socially useful task of choosing the officials to govern them for the simple reason that they also form a part of the governed. But will they get this if this resolution is passed? Without being given a chance to a fair trial, they will be convicted instead to suffer the penalty of cadena perpetua.

One of the prides of our democratic system of government is the constitutional guarantee that an accused person shall have the right to be heard in a public trial. Because of this guarantee, even the hardest criminals cannot be convicted of a crime without having his day in court and the benefit of an impartial trial. But with the resolution, women will not only be deprived of the benefit of trial, which the Philippine Legislature pro-vided for them in 1925, but will also be forever doomed to suffer political ignominy and oblivion. We glory in and boast of the effective checks placed in our Bill of Rights against the excesses of the State — a person, for in-stance, is protected against a second jeopardy of punish-ment for the same offense — and yet, with this resolution, coming as it does after the passage of a law emanci-pating our women from their political servitude, we are depriving them of their opportunity to use the ballot. Democracy! There can be no real democracy in a coun-try where only one class of the population is privileged to choose the officials who are to shape the policies of the State, for I understand a democratic form of government to be one which derives all its powers from a great body of the citizens and not from an inconsiderable portion or a favored class. Equality? There can be no true equality in a country where men are supposed to be the only ones favored by divine right to assume the duties of government. Fraternity? There can be no genuine fraternity in a country where women are unjustly deprived of exercising one of the most sacred duties of citizenship.

Gentlemen of the Convention, let me now invite your attention to our Election Law. Let us glance at its provisions regarding the disqualifications prescribed for prospective voters. Section 432 says: The following persons shall be disqualified from voting: 1. Any per-son who has been sentenced to suffer not less than 18 months of imprisonment. 2. Those who have vio-lated an oath of allegiance to the United States. 3. Insane and feeble-minded persons. A. Deaf-mutes who cannot read and write, etc. Gentlemen, I must confess that I cannot read this section of our Election Law and remember at the same time the present political status of our women without my conscience rising in revolt. Just why our wives, mothers, daughters and sisters should also be disqualified to vote and placed in the same class as criminals, imbeciles, and deaf-mutes who cannot read and write is beyond all comprehension and should merit the righteous condemnation of any sane thinking individual. Thanks to the last Philippine Le-gislature this anomalous situation of our women has been corrected. But if this resolution, now under discussion, is passed, we will again place our women in the out-rageous position they were

before. I, therefore, appeal to each and every one of you to defeat this resolution if only to vindicate the integrity and the intelligence of Filipino womanhood.

The speakers who, up to now, have upheld the affirmative side of the proposition, centered their main objection to woman suffrage on the fear that family ties will be broken and homes disrupted. The lurid picture of abandoned families, the appalling scene of destroyed homes painted before you by these speakers would even put to shame the disaster wrought by the typhoon that recently hit Manila and the nearby provinces. It is strange, indeed, how a simple typhoon can stimulate the powers of divination and work hallucinations in the imagination of man! If we but calm our excitement, however, and view the question from a dispassionate angle, we shall find that the prospects are not altogether so terrifying. I still don't see how the mere exercise by a woman of the simple right to vote, which is done only once during an election day, will wreck the family abode. It will take more than mere words for anyone to convince me or anybody else that such a thing will happen, should the female population of this country be extended the right of suffrage. At least, I can say that those who voted for me last July 10, 1934, went, on that same day, back to their farms to resume their work as if nothing had happened and, as far as I know, no family ties were broken and no homes were destroyed. So I don't see any reason for hoisting a typhoon signal and getting alarmed.

Mr. President, it is our duty to provide not only for the needs of the present but also for the demands of the future. It would be gambling too much on the fate of our womanhood if we were to imprison their fundamental right to use the ballot in a constitutional precept, which, for all we know, may never be repealed, owing to the inherent difficulty of amending the Constitution. The Filipino woman today stands on the threshold of a new and more progressive life. She has, in the past, admirably kept pace with her brother in every phase of human endeavor. She has successfully answered the challenge and met the trying demands of progress and civilization. We cannot stem the tide of her advancing culture, for if we did this, we would also be putting a hindrance to the development and education of our children. If we believe that the passage of the Equal Suffrage Law was a mistake on the part of the Legislature, let us leave the correction to the Legislature. In the name of reason and fairness, let not the Constitution, which we are now drafting to symbolize the triumph of Philippine liberty, be, at the same time, a calvary of intolerance and selfishness on which to crucify the destiny of our womanhood. That would be unfair, that would be unjust, that would be cowardly.

SR. ALTAVAS: Señor Presidente.

EL PRESIDENTE: Señor Delegado.

SR. ALTAVAS: El orador que va a seguir en el uso de la palabra para sostener la resolucion es el Delegado por Cebu, Hon. Vicente Sotto.

(En este momento el Presidente deja el estrado al Vicepresidente, Sr. Sandiko.)

EL VICEPRESIDENTE; Tiene la palabra de el Caballero de Cebu.

DISCURSO DEL DELEGADO SOTTO (V.) EN CONTRA DEL SUFRAGIO FEMENINO.

SR. SOTTO (V.): Señor Presidente, en el "Herald" de esta tarde he leído una información con este llamativo título: "Only Sixty of Two Hundred Two Delegates Back Women." Francamente confieso que, cuando lei la noticia, perdí las ganas de hablar aquí esta noche. ¿Para que hablar, si el triunfo de las anti-sufragistas ya está asegurado? Ello equivaldría a empeñarse en convencer al convencido. (Risas.) Momentos después, sin embargo, al ver al numeroso público femenino aquí congregado, me decidí a hacer uso de la palabra, siquiera para que estas bellas y distinguidas damas se enteren de algunas razones por las cuales nosotros, los anti-sufragistas, nos oponemos a incluir el derecho de la mujer al voto en la Constitución que se está redactando. (Espectación en el

Publico)

He oido con verdadera delectacion, Señor Presidente, los himnos que aqui se han entonado a la mujer filipina por los oradores que me han precedido en esta tribuna. Por ejemplo, he oido las filigranas literarias del diputado azucarero Locsin. He oido tambien los inspirados versos del diputado-poeta Bocar. No voy a seguirles por ese camino. La literatura a veces deleita, pero no siempre convence al adversario. Todos los defensores del sufragio femenino han incurrido en el pecado de ser demasiado "teorizantes," que diria el docto Diputado Palma. Olvidan que una cosa es la "teoria" y otra, la "practica". Schiller dijo: "los hechos son mas elocuentes que las palabras." De ahi que me limite esta noche a aducir hechos para convencer a los pocos que aun no estan convencidos, de que el sufragio femenino debe ser rechazado por esta Asamblea.

No hay duda, Señor Presidente, que en el terreno de las teorías, o, mejor dicho, en el terreno de la discusion, los partidarios del sufragio femenino tienen argumentos contundentes. Por ejemplo, es contundente el argumento del Diputado Osias de que el cincuenta por ciento de los filipinos son mujeres, y si al varon se le ha concedido el voto, no hay razon para que se le niegue a la mujer. Realmente, si lo que se llama "pueblo" es el conjunto de habitantes de un pais, el pueblo filipino debe ser integrado no solamente por hombres, sino tambien por mujeres. Tambien es contundente el argumento aducido por una sufragista belga, que, invocando el principio democratico de "Obedeced la ley que habeis hecho," preguntaba: ¿"Como debemos obedecer unas leyes, en cuya confeccion no hemos intervenido?" Es, asimismo, contundente la respuesta de una sufragista francesa, cuando un diputado frances dijo: "¿Como quieren las mu-jeres igualdad de derecho, si ellas no pueden ser soldados? Y la sufragista contesto: "Es cierto, señor Dipu-tado, nosotras, las mujeres, no podemos ser soldadas, pero nosotras hacemos los soldados." (Aplausos y risas.) Pero todos estos argumentos pueden ser refutados con el hecho de que las condiciones imperantes en los paises occidentales son muy distintas de las que predominan en el Oriente. En Filipinas, nuestras familias continuan aun bajo un regimen patriarcal, donde hay un "cabeza de familia" que ordena y manda, y todos le acatan y obedecen. En el hogar filipino, un abuelo conserva su autoridad moral sobre sus hijos, nietos y biznietos hasta la muerte. ¿Cuantas veces, nosotros, los que hemos sido candidatos a puestos electivos, para obtener los votos de los electores, hemos tenido que visitar al abuelo de una familia! (Aplausos y signos de asentimiento en el publico.) Aqui no hay mujeres independientes; casi todas dependen del abuelo, padre, marido, tio, hermano o cuñado. ¿Por que y para que han de reclamar el voto si las mujeres ya estan debidamente representadas bajo el regimen patriarcal de nuestros hogares? (Aplau-sos.)

Hay un hecho que salta a la vista, Señor Presidente, y es que las mujeres del pueblo no quieren el voto. Nuestras mujeres plebeyas no reclaman ni necesitan el voto. No he oido de ningun mitin popular femenino en pro del sufragio. Ni siquiera ha habido los llamados "banquetes de avance" de que hablo aqui la otra noche el Diputado Abordo. ¿Quienes comparecieron en las audiencias publicas celebradas por el Comité de Sufragio de esta Asamblea? Quienes estan ahora aqui haciendo acto de presencia y perfumando el ambiente de este augusto recinto? Ellas son pedagogas, medicas, abogadas, pero, con sentimiento digo que ninguna de ellas ostenta la representacion popular femenina. Ninguna de ellas esta autorizada para llevar la voz del pueblo femenino. Entre ellas no veo a ninguna mujer del pueblo. (Aplausos en las filas antisufragistas.)

Señor Presidente, una de las razones alegadas por las distinguidas damas que comparecieron ante un Comité de la Camara de Representantes, para combatir la liberalizacion del divorcio, es que ellas representan a las mujeres catolicas; que las catolicos forman una inmensa mayoria en este pais; y que todos los catolicos se oponen a la medida legislativa en proyecto. Ahora voy a utilizar ese mismo argumento en apoyo de mi oposicion al sufragio femenino. Por lo tanto, dos prominentes Compañeros de esta Asamblea, los Honorables Norberto Romualdez y Jose Maria Delgado, de cuyo sincero catolicismo nadie puede dudar, me han asegurado que las mujeres catolicas de Manila estan divididas en esta candente cuestion. Esto en lo que respecta a esta capital. Si vamos a las islas del

Sur, donde existe mayor nucleo de habitantes, vemos que los catolicos bisayos se oponen resueltamente al voto femenino, a juzgar por las informaciones y editoriales que trae la prensa de aquella region. Por ejemplo, aqui traigo un recorte de este organo o portavoz de los catolicos de Cebu, que dice asi: ....

SR. ABELLA: Señor Presidente, para una cuestion de orden.

EL VICEPRESIDENTE: ¿Que dice el Caballero de Camarines Sur?

SR. ABELLA: Ha transcurrido ya el tiempo concedido al orador. (Varios Delegados: Que siga, que siga! Que hable media hora mas!)

EL VICEPRESIDENTE: Puede el orador continuar.

SR. SOTTO: (Prosiguiendo): Emancipacion de la mujer filipina! Bellas palabras! Pero, Señor Presidente, ¿que es lo que aqui se ha de emancipar, si la mujer filipina ya esta emancipada? No solo esta emancipada, sino que es Reina del Hogar. (Aplausos) Aqui, por ejemplo, es muy corriente oir de un marido, a quien se propone algun negocio, esta contestacion: "Voy a consultar con mi mujer." Aqui la mujer es administradora y maneja los fondos del hogar. En China y el Japon la mujer ni siquiera come en la mesa con el marido; tiene que servir al marido. Pero en Filipinas, cuantos maridos estan dominados o controlados por sus mujeres! (Risas) No en balde somos el unico pueblo cristiano del Oriente, y el cristianismo es incompatible con la esclavitud de la mujer.

Ahora, pregunto, Señor Presidente, suponiendo que concedamos el voto a la mujer, ¿votara ella por conviccion o no? He ahi otro problema a resolver. Puede darse el caso de que un candidato "anti" tenga una esposa "pro". ¿Permitira o tolerara el marido que su propia esposa haga propaganda por la candidatura de su propio contrincante y vote por este? ¿No seria esto destruir la paz y la armonia de nuestros hogares? (Aplausos.)

Hay que tener en cuenta otro hecho, Señor Presidente, que surgiria automaticamente de la inclusion de nuestras mujeres en el Censo Electoral, a saber: sera mas dificil para el pobre ser candidato a puestos electivos, porque se duplicaran los gastos. Aun prescindiendo de la compra de votos, hay gastos imprescindibles para todo candidato. Me refiero al transport ey comida para los electores. Las elecciones de Diputados a la Asamblea Constituyente, por ejemplo, fueron las mas limpias que se han registrado en este pais. Prueba de lo que digo es que ninguna protesta se ha fundado en fraudes o compra de votos. Todas las protestas recibidas se basaban en la cuestion de residencia legal. Y, sin embar-go, hay que admitir que nosotros, quien mas, quien menos, salvo raras excepciones, hemos gastado dinero en comida y trasporte de electores. ¿Uor que? Porque hemos llegado a un punto en que el elector no quiere bajar de su domicilio, si no ha de ir en autobus y comer fuera de casa. (Murmulllos y signos de aprobacion en todos los sectores.) Pues bien, el dia en que las mujeres voten, creeis que ellas bajaran de sus casas, si no se las ha de tratar igual o mejor que a los hombres?

Deseo tambien llamar la atencion de esta Asamblea, Señor Presidente, hacia el reciente caso de España. Por la religion, usos y costumbres, por nuestra convivencia de mas de tres siglos con los españoles, hay mucha afinados o controlados por sus mujeres! (Risas) No en balde somos el unico pueblo cristiano del Oriente, y el cristianismo es incompatible con la esclavitud de la mujer.

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Creo, señor Presidente, que debemos hilar delgado en este asunto del sufragio femenino. Se trata de un nuevo experimento. No olvideis, que si cometemos un error, sera dificil rectificarlo a tiempo. Una Asamblea Constituyente se reune de higos a brevas. En cambio, si dejamos este asunto a la Legislatura Nacional, este tendria las manos libres, y podria rectificar su error al siguiente año. De ahi que "The Dawn", revista portavoz de las damas aqui presentes, enseñando la oreja, dijo en reciente editorial:

"Let us hope that our Fjlipino leaders will respect end safeguard the woman's rights won during the American regime, writing them in the Constitution of our Republic so that no Legislature shall tamper with them in the future."

Se ban percatado los Caballeros de la Asamblea de la frase "so that no legislature shall tamper with them in the future?" (Murmillos en la galeria.)

Que el movimiento femenino esta fracasando en el mundo, lo demuestra, Señor Preesidente, la vida languida de la "Alianza Internacional para el sufragio femenino." Segun una moderna enciclopedia mundial, se fundo en Washington el 14 de febrero de 1902. La Alianza tiene por objeto el sufragio y la elegibilidad para las mujeres en todos los paises, y unir a todos los partidarios del veto femenino del mundo entero en una organizacion eficaz y fraternal. Pues bien, esa sociedad edita ahora en Rotter-dam un boletin mensual, titulado "Jus Sufragii" redactado en ingles y frances y tiene solamente novecientos

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