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APERTURA DE LA SESION

Se abre la sesion a las 5:15 p. m., bajo la presidencia del Presidente, Honorable Claro M. Recto.

EL PRESIDENTE: Lease la lista de delegados.

MR. GRAFILO: I move that the reading of the list be dispensed with.

EL PRESIDENTE: ¿Hay alguna objecion? (Silencio.) La Mesa no oye ninguna. Se dispensa la lectura de la lista. Hay quorum. Lease el acta,

APROBACION DEL ACTA

MR. GRAFILO: I also move that the reading of the minutes be dispensed with and that the same be approved.

EL PRESIDENTE: ¿Hay alguna objecion? (Silencio.) La Mesa no oye ningnna. Mocion aprobada.

SR. ALTAVAS: Señor Presidente, referente a la discusion pendiente, el siguiente orador por el lado de los que no favorecen la proposicion, es el delegado Señor Grafilo. Pido que se le conceda la palabra.

EL PRESIDENTE: El Delegado Grafilo tiene la palabra.

DISCURSO DEL DELEGADO GRAFILO

MR. GRAFILO: Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: One of the propositions in our constitution-making that tax our brains, thrill our hearts, and demand our foresight and vision in order to arrive at a blissful conclusion, which will be the genuine reflection of our national, Oriental tradition, is suffrage for women. Reasons and arguments for and against the proposition are not wanting. The distinguished gentlemen who preceded me in this debate have ably presented their side clearly and logically. Arguments in committee hearings from our intellectual aristocracy, published and well commented on by the fourth estate, have aided in the illumination of this question. Personally, I wish to remain silent and noncommittal, but, Mr. President, when I think of the duties reposed on me as a member of this august and sovereign Body, and when I think of our responsibility in the discharge of such duties before our people and posterity, I cannot help but rise and voice my opposition to the granting of suffrage to women, not for any selfish motive, nor for fear of competition, not because I am a women-hater and the like, but, following the dictates of a conscience clear for home tranquility, social stability and national economy, and being a lover of women and everything that is womanly beautiful I now venture to speak against women's political emancipation, Mr. President, the discussion of the proposition brings to our minds, first and foremost, women. Yes, our women, our dear, honored and adored Filipino women. I see then clearly in my vision. There is not on this earth a lovelier one; there is not in the Orient a more precious gem than our modest maiden, clothed in Malayan-Balintawak chastity, the prized Maria Clara of the masculine Filipino Romeo with a throbbing heart is dreaming to woo and win her! Our women know that men forget floods, brave tempests, cross mountains and seas, unmindful of danger and darkness of night, just to hear them whisper and drink from a blissful cup the ambrosial wine of their smiles. Yes, any of them knows, as evidenced by her

responses to eternal love, sanctified by vows and pledges to be with her lover forever, body and soul. When their mutual and true affections are crystalized, consumatum est, we see a beautiful panorama which we call a Filipino home. Yes, the home, the true Filipino home. Be it a palace in a city, a humble nipa and bamboo shack in a town or remote barrio, it remains a Filipino home, and there she is, on the altar of her husband's heart, loved and adored, enshrined and enthroned. The man goes out and toils under the burning tropical sun, or under a torrential rain, clearing his field and transform-ing it into a fruitful and beautiful garden in order to give comforts and luxuries to his only star and inspira-tion—she, the mistress of the home.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention, I have described to you the esteem of men for our women and pictured the Filipino home, together with its com-ponents, because Philippine womanhood is now being attacked and challenged. It is really the tranquility of the home that is now being assailed and undermined by this invading catastrophe called woman suffrage. The foundation of our family and consequently our national edifice may be endangered. The destructive effects of suffrage upon our women, home and nation will be worse than the evil effects of plagues, Reds or Bolsheviks, Filipino woman lover and home lover, beware, be steadfast, be brave. Oh! heavenly Father, please en-lighten our women so that they may see the evils of bathing in the muddy water of politics, so that they may cry and abhor going into it; and strengthen our men, especially the members of the Constitutional Assem-bly, so that they can protect our women, home and nation against the dangerous havoc of women's political emancipation!

Mr. President, some of my colleagues may claim that I am not arguing but jumping at conclusions, so I shall now discuss the general effects of woman suffrage.

If women are granted the right of suffrage, the gen-eral effect will be the experience that we have had in the arena of politics. Like men, woman will go out campaign-ing and electioneering, for days, weeks and months. It being a contest between candidates of parties, "amor propio" will not be absent. When "amor propio" is in, everything is wagerd and risked—wealth, health, time, etc., in order to make the chosen candidate win. Our woman have the same "amor propio," if not more than that of our men. Shall we put at stake everything, including our Philippine womanhood, home, nation and future, just to conduct the experiment of granting our woman the right to vote?

Campaigning and electioneering, as experience has taught us, means going to the masses. To me, when it affects our women, it is vulgarity, clear and simple; and vulgarity is cheapness. Mr. President, I hold our women so dear and precious that I do not want them to be vulgar or cheap.

But let us return to the prime root of our national existence—the family, the home. When the woman, the mother, is out campaigning and electioneering, who will take care of the home and the babies?

The woman suffragists may answer me that their political duties will not be incompatible with their duties at home. They may add by citing women sovereigns of world renown, like Catherine the Great, Queen Elizabeth, and many others. They may also say, as was said by a distinguished lady in the committee hearing, that well-trained nurses will be left at home to care for the babies. Apparently the answers and citations are convincing, but should we analyze them carefully, the effects will be horrible.

It is true that some women have ruled efficiently as queens. But it is also true, and men cannot deny the fact, that these women ascended the throne either be-cause the male heir was an idiot or no other heir was available. Besides, they either had no family to care for, or if there was, it was cared for by the government— a monarchy. But in our country today and in years to come, under the democratic form of government that we cherish, who can tell us that all men are and will be idiots, that none or no group of men will be available to run the affairs of the state, such that we shall need women in their places? Have women lost faith and con-fidence in the ability of men to run the affairs of the State? Moreover, which is the state that will take care of the private home and the babies

in the absence of the mother?

Analyzing the contention that well-trained nurses can be employed to take care of the home and children, I will answer with this question: How many of our Filipino families can afford to employ well-trained nurses to take the place of the wives who may go out campaign-ing and electioneering? We who have grown up under the tender care of a mother, we who have known the warmth of maternal affection, who is there to tell us with precision that a nurse, however well-trained, can take the place of the tender caress and affection that a genuine mother lavishes on her children? Let the throb-bing of our hearts answer. Shall we barter the home for the woman's vote? Shall we exchange the care of children, the hope of our Fatherland, for a woman's glorification? What reason is there for our women to enter politics? Is it not enough of a deterrent that they will be prone to abandon the children in the house?

Mr. Speaker, I can imagine one afternoon in the future when a newsboy will be crying "Extra, extra, extra—our President has delivered a baby boy — the blasphemy has been augmented"—and what a big sur-prise if they find out that the President is unmarried, and they cannot locate the father! Some people may claim that this will not happen, but they will agree with me that this is not improbable or impossible. The grant-ing to women of the right to vote carries with it one of two results: (1) that a woman follows her own conviction and goes against that of her husband or father; or (2) that she follows that of her husband or father, which is the more logical one.

The first alternative, that of following her will against that of her husband or father, will prick our paternal tradition if not violate her sanctified vows of being with her husband body and soul, which means any-thing. By the other alternative, that of following the will of her husband or father as the logical consequence of our paternal tradition, woman suffrage will become superfluous and unnecessary. It will become a mere duplication, if not multiplication of time, energy and money.

Today our Government spends approximately P1,500,000 for every election. Should we enfranchise the women, the expenses of the Government will be doubled because we shall increase the number of precincts, the number of election inspectors and poll clerks. We shall also increase the number of government employees to supervise the elections. The expenses of the candi-dates will also increase because more banquets will have to be held, more cigars and cigarettes will have to be distributed. Such eventualities, without a positive result in view, will constitute an economic suicide.

Last night the Gentleman from Camarines (Mr. Vinzons) mentioned woman suffrage movements in other lands. He sounded convincing, but he spoke of Occiden-tal countries, Occidental peoples. Mr. President, if I were an American, if I were a European—a white man—I would not hesitate to give my vote in favor of woman suffrage. But being from the Far East, whose traditions I must follow, I register my vote against granting suf-frage to our women.

Has there been, Mr. President, a general clamor that our women be given the right to vote? Do we have in our possession resolutions or petitions signed by municipal and provincial corporations to that effect? My answer is "No." On the contrary, I have resolutions of the municipal governments of my province protesting against granting suffrage to women, and I also have letters signed by respectable leaders of my province urging opposition to woman suffrage.

The Gentleman from Camarines Norte mentioned as his last point the process of expediency. He went to the extent of even citing the provisions of the Tydings-McDuffie Law, which requires that our people approve in a plebiscite the Constitution that we shall make. To that extent, I agree with him, Mr. President. For the purpose of expediency, the Constitution that we shall draft must receive the sanction of our people. I reg-ister my protest against the granting of suffrage to women because, should we incorporate it in our Constitu-tion, the people may

not be responsive to it and reject our Constitution. This will mean delay in beginning our Commonwealth Government,

Mr. President, to preserve national tradition, in the name of our homes and our posterity, in the preservation and care of our children, in the simplification of our Government and its economy, I voice and register my vote in favor of the proposition—against granting our women the right to vote.

MR. BOCAR: Mr. President, will the Gentleman yield ?

THE PRESIDENT: The Gentleman may yield, if he so desires.

MR. GRAFILO: Willingly.

MR. BOCAR: Does the Gentleman from Sorsogon believe that by education, training and background, Philippine women are qualified to exercise the right of suffrage?

MR. GRAFILO: Some of them, but not most of them. And there are women who, though qualified to vote, have registered their opposition to exercising that function. I have in my hands, Mr. President, letters signed by, such women,

MR. BOCAR: Generally speaking, what, is the opinion of the Gentleman about the capacity of our women to vote?

MR. GRAFILO: My personal opinion is that some of them are just as qualified as men, but many of them do not like to vote, as demonstrated by their small attendance here during the several nights that we have debated on the question. Only a handful are interested.

MR. BOCAR: You brought out, in your speech, the point that granting women the right to vote would lead to the abandonment of their homes.

MR. GRAFILO: No other consequence will follow.

MR. BOCAR: Is the Gentleman from Sorsogon aware that at present there are thousands of our women who, because of business, their professions or employment, like doctors, lawyers, teachers and office workers, have to go out of their homes every day?

MR. GRAFILO: They do not constitute two per cent of our female inhabitants, and going to their schools or to their business is very different from going out campaigning and electioneering.

SR. ALTAVAS. Señor Presidente, el tiempo del orador ha expirado,

MR. GRAFILO: Mr. President, I would like to honor, my friend, Mr. Salumbides.

MR. BUSLON: Mr. President. I request that the Gentleman be given five minutes more.

SR. ABELLA: Señor Presidente, concedo varios minutos al Delegado por Negros Occidental, Señor Locsin.

MR. SALUMBIDES: Mr. President, may I ask the Delegate from Sorsogon some questions during the ten or five minutes that will be given to me? I shall ask only two questions, after which I will give whatever is left of the time back to Mr. Grafilo.

EL PRESIDENTE: El Delegado por Camarines Sur no tiene el control del tiempo de los que, estan a favor del proyecto de resolucion. Tiene la palabra el Delegado por Negros Occidental.

DISCURSO DEL SR. LOCSIN

SR. LOCSIN: Señor Presidente y Caballeros de la Convencion: Me levanto, no en interes de la mujer que por su gracia y por los encantos de su belleza con retoques de colorines, llena de fragancias artificiales la sociedad frivola y galante, No. Al solicitar hoy por breves momentos los favores de vuestra atencion, lo hago para sumarme a un empeño de dignificacion politica de la mujer filipina, la Tandang Sora, de las rebeldias redentoras y la Teodora Alonso de las formaciones ciudadanas hogareñas. "sa bahay na ating minumutya" que diria la madre excelsa en carta al hijo ausente.

Si en las justas culturales, ya no quedan honores exclusivos para el hombre; si en el campo de las actividades por el sustento, se resiente el hombre de la agresiva competencia de la mujer y si en la hora de las inmoluciones por la patria, la mujer es tan espontanea en el ofrecimiento y tan heroica en la accion como el hombre . . . ¿que nos detiene hoy para concederle el ejercicio de uno de los atributos del ciudadano libre en una democracia?

Impugnadores del sufragio femenino expresaron sus razones en un vano intento de disfrazar lo que para nosotros es un simple resabio de una pagania que, en determinados momentos de la vida del hombre, se reactiva por atavismo, para determinar la supremacia de sus instintos de animal sobre los mandatos de la justicia y los consejos de la razon. Entonces triunfa su egoismo, y no se recata en revelarse el macho que se arroga desde tiempo inmemorial toda la fuerza del poder para defender los ultimos reductos en su mentida superioridad.

Se quiere exigir un imposible, cuando se pide que todas las mujeres reaccionen favorablemente por el sufragio. Lo natural es que no haya unanimidad entre ellas en una cuestion tan candente y de actualidad. ¿La hay acaso entre nosotros los hombres? Aquellas que no quieren el sufragio, engrosaran ese por ciento grande de electores pasivos, no bajando de sus casas en el dia de las elecciones. Pero, aquellas otras que constituyen legion, que de una manera directa y efectiva, quieren influir en la marcha de los asuntos publicos, ¿por que negarles la oportunidad que piden? . . . Esta nacion es de todos los filipinos, hombres y mujeres, unidos bajo una responsabilidad comun. Es nada mas que justo, que se haga militante esa responsabilidad de todas las mujeres filipinas, mediante el ejercicio del sufragio. Sin esto, no podemos legitimar la expresion constitucional de que todos los poderes emanan del pueblo. Si se ha de negar el voto a la mujer, entonces diriamos, parafraseando a Campoamor, que para la mujer filipina y para los filipinos que estiman el principio democratico como obligatorio, Filipinas constituira una Republica de privilegio masculino.

Un verdadero castillo de naipes se ha querido construir con las razones sentimentales aqui expuestas en contra del voto para la mujer filipina, y, como siempre, hemos oido al engreido varon apostrofar diciendo, que para el propio bien de la mujer filipina, debe negarsele el voto.

Se señalo el ejercicio del sufragio por la mujer como razon de discordia conyugal que causaria la perturbacion de los hogares, donde hasta el presente, arrullada por el cariño, es reina y señora la mujer filipina. Se repitió con insistencia, dramatizandola, que la politica es una actividad sucia, donde el salivazo no respeta prestigios y sexos . . . Y, ¿por que empeñarse en hacer a la mujer actriz de la politica? . . . ¿No consigue acaso del hombre todo lo que desea? ¿Por que concederle el voto, con el consiguiente aumento de los presupuestos de una eleccion, dinero adicional que con mas urgencia reclaman perentorias necesidades publicas, imperativas de una justicia social?

Cuando pienso en la naturaleza pueril de todas estas alegaciones, me sorprende como mentalidades tan ponderadas y excelsas, las exponen aqui para legitimar su opinion sobre el sufragio femenino. Señor Presidente, cuando de la mujer se trata, precisa hacer una distincion entre la mujer que se vio perdida y la mujer que moria redimiendo. Aquella, carne de liviandades que deshoja su juventud trasnochando, y pone precio a sus caricias, no es puntal del hogar y de la familia y podemos decir de ella, que ya no hay lodo de la politica que al mancharla, la rebaje mas en la estimacion popular, despues de que nuestra impiadosa acometividad de varon, haya roto para siempre la gracia del cristal de su virginidad . . . Pero la ultima, que es verbo de amor casto y sereno en la vida,

flor de recato y honestidad, siempre sera la sacerdotisa de todos los ritos familiares dentro y fuera del hogar. Por donde vaya, hara sentir su influencia dignificadora y con sus encantos de doncella y de madre. desarmara a la maledicencia mas soez. La mujer que Maria redimio, da alegria al campo en la epoca de siega, encantos a la dura labor del taller; esperanza de vida a los enfermos de los hospitales y a los heridos que al caer llenan de gloria los campos de batalla . . . es la sampaguita perfumada de virtud en nuestros saraos y fiestas; es la educadora llena de ciencia y de paciencia en nuestras escuelas; es la mujer que, con el niño pegado a los pechos turgentes — que son manantial de vida, se dignifica con la gracia inmortal que compendia todas las promesas del porvenir ... La mujer a quien Maria redimio, dara nuevas modalidades a la politica y al cuerpo politico de la nacion en esta hora y estado seguros de que representa una valiosa aportación... Para esta clase de mujeres, yo reclamo el voto. magnitud de la obra de edificación de su porvenir de libertad ha de requerir de todos los filipinos, la plenitud de sus servicios patrióticos,

Se menta a la institucion de la familia, para negar a uno de sus mas recios sostenes, la mujer, el voto que es instrumento esencial en toda democracia, para la seleccion de los oficiales, que han de dirigir los destinos de todos los valores de la nacion.

Se quiere con el divorcio asaltar el ultimo reducto misional del corazon de la mujer. Pero se le niega intervencion y acceso en el poder, para defender con armas iguales a las del hombre, los fueros de su amor.

¿Consiguiera la mujer filipina, no ya todo lo que desea, sino siquiera buena parte de lo que ella se merece? Los enemigos del sufragio femenino quieren economizar hasta el ultimo centavo de los fondos publicos, para facilitar la materializacion de medidas de beneficencia social, la promulgacion de las cuales es de urgente necesidad. Esta es una confesion de parte, de que muchas cosas que son caras para el corazon de la mujer, fueron dejadas de la mano de Dios.

La instruccion de sus hijos es una preocupacion que ha adquirido carta de permanencia en su vida. Un gobierno consagrado por los sufragios de los hombres exclusivamente, fallo en resolver la instruccion gratuita de sus hijos. La excesiva mortalidad entre los frutos de sus entrañas, llena de congojas su ya misera existencia . . . Un gobierno consagrado por los sufragios de los hombres exclusivamente, fallo asimismo en organizar la amplia y efectiva asistencia social. La falta de buenas viviendas, de un jornal adecuado para sostener una vida decorosa y decente, de una politica de fomento y multiplicacion del llamado patrimonio familiar, de pension pre y postnatal a las obreras, el seguro de maternidad, etc. etc. señala los olvidos de un gobierno consagrado por los sufragios de los hombres exclusivamente. Se enarbola la bandera de la economia para negar la franquicia del voto a la mujer filipina, despierta e inteligente, que ha de dar nuevos valores a la democracia y a las instituciones de nuestro Gobierno, pero con indiferencia estamos viendo como se esta aumentando el cuerpo electoral del pais con analfabetos y con electores muertos y fabricados.

A veces me pregunto, si los fondos publicos constituyen un patrimonio exclusivo de la mitad masculina de nuestra poblacion, que para prestigiar a la democracia, vigorizandola con la aportacion de la mujer, tenemos que retener hasta el ultimo centavo en interes de la economica.

Señor Presidente y Caballeros de la Convencion: hay motivos para sentirnos altamente complacidos, porque en virtud de nuestra emancipacion politica, estamos en condiciones de dar una recia estructuracion y alcances ilimitados a la democracia filipina. La atencion del mundo esta hoy enfocada en este rincon del extremo Oriente porque siempre despierta interes el advenimiento a la vida de una nueva republica con ideales elevados de paz y progreso. Es imperativa la concesion del voto a la mujer filipina, para que la humanidad que nos observa sepa que el movimiento liberal que realiza las conquistas con esperanzas en el orden politico y social, recibio de nosotros nuevos y positivos impulsos. En la hora de la gloria, cuando los clarines heraldiscos anuncien al mundo la feliz

realidad de la Republica Filipina, al pie de su enseña tricolor, todos los filipinos, hombres y mujeres, fuertemente unidos se llenaran de fe en el porvenir. Hay que hacer solidaria a la mujer filipina en esta obra de responsabilidad, concediendole beligerencia dentro de la organizacion politica de la nacion, para que se identifique con el empeño constructivo por un porvenir de estabilidad y de progreso en un regimen de libertad. Fernando de los Rios cincelo el pensamiento, de que en una democracia, la obediencia es una necesidad. Es imperativo por tanto, incorporar a la mujer filipina por medio del voto, al cuerpo de nuestra democracia, si queremos retener su obediencia a los acuerdos de la mayoria.

La Constitucion que estamos formulando se distinga como la sintesis del empeño comun de puntualizar las principios fundamentales necesarios para el desenvolvimiento del ciudadano y de la heredad y la creacion de aquellas agencias del poder para la ordenacion de la vida. Que la misma sea una carta de redencion social y politica para todos los filipinos, por ser la obra de los representantes del pueblo. Y me empeñare dentro de mis habilidades en que asi resulte para que despues de la delicada y dificil tarea de volver al seno del propio hogar, satisfecho del deber cumplido, orgulloso y sonriente, pueda ofrecerla bajo una sinfonia de besos, a la hija llena de encantos, a la esposa querida y a la madre venerada, las tres gracias que inspiran mis empeños, señores, por una Filipinas libre y feliz, patria de filipinos libres y felices!

He dicho.

SR. ALTAVAS: Señor Presidente,

EL PRESIDENT: Señor Delegado.

SR. ALTAVAS: Presentamos como orador a favor de la Resolucion al Delegado por Palawan, Señor Abordo.

EL PRESIDENTE: Tiene la palabra el Delegado por Palawan.

DISCURSO DEL SR. ABORDO CONTRA EL SUFRAGIO FEMENINO

MR. ABORDO: Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: The right of suffrage granted to male persons has been universally accepted since time immemorial, and has worked to the advantage of mankind in the exercise of political rights. Here in our country, we have followed closely the same trend of world policy for the last three decades. This privilege serves as a medium of popular expression in selecting our representatives in the Government. During the Commonwealth Government and thereafter, I shall advocate still for the continuance of the system, founded, among other things, on the proposition that the time for woman suffrage has not come.

Mr. President, I stand to speak against any move to provide in our Constitution the right of our women to vote, premised on three fundamental reasons, namely — that the demand for suffrage at present is not universal, that it would poison the minds of our youths not only at home but also in school and in their future callings, and that politics, to my mind, is not the proper place for them to assert their individual rights.

As to my first proposition, let it be said that in the solution of any question pending in any organized government, it is the welfare of the majority of the constituency that prevails and not the limited few. That is a principle consistently advocated by those favored by fortune to be at the wheel of any government, transmitted to us a long time ago and is now the basis of sound and stable government. In this connection, the question arises: Is the clamor for enfranchisement of our women common throughout the country and does it need immediate action on the part of those called upon to grant this privilege? At this juncture, I say in all candor that, considering the question dispassionately and laying aside any spirit of partisanship, the cry for suffrage far from being a general sentiment of our women populace, is nothing more than a resolution of the few intellectual women of the day.

When this question came to the Suffrage Committee of which I am a member, it produced, contrary to my expectation and belief, an unsavory, pathetic and sorrowful sight for it was found that, right in the very capital of our country, among our women there is no such unanimity of opinion as to their avowed willingness to participate in expressing the popular will at the polls. As I listened attentively to the speeches of the women, pro and con, I found that there exists a real demarcation line between the conservatives and liberals, the former championing the veritable heritage of the past, the pro-secution of those sweet, delicate qualities of our women which find their beauty, glory and accomplishments in the person of Maria Clara, and the latter bent on a new conquest even at the risk of their sublime virtues.

In fine, the plain fact remains that a considerable number of our women in the city do not find politics wholesome, and have considered from all angles the question as pernicious to the future welfare of the panorama of vast lands in the provinces, dotted with thousand and thousands of houses where couples live in perfect peace and complete harmony, where their only dream is to make the home congenial, free from discord and discontentment, and their sons and daughters worthy of their names and of our country's future. It will be a betrayal of trust and responsibility if I proceed without making mention of those women in the provinces.

To begin with, I have every respect and admiration for our women, and unlike others who have been disillusioned, I have no axe to grind. It is my living sentiment, if at present I consider woman suffrage as untimely and would work havoc not only on political reform but also on social evolution, I repeat, it is my living sentiment to place our woman, beyond reproach and suspicion, on that pedestal of glory unspotted and pure, revered and adored by us all.

Having demonstrated that the circumstances in the city with respect to woman suffrage are such as to make my stand impregnable, even against the systematic assault of women leaders, thus making the situation unfavorable to the suffragettes of the day, I shall take you to that land yonder, the abodes of the great majority of our women today, and as we make a thorough survey of their situation, particularly as to their customs, habits and inclinations, tell me if the cry for suffrage has found spontaneous echo and reaction on their part to make the issue clear and definite and give this Convention no other alternative. Only the rabid pros and the blind will dare say in the affirmative, and when the smoke of battle will have cleared, there will stand on the clear horizon the Filipino women, acting in unison, valiantly proclaiming no particular attachment to and interest in woman suffrage. On the other hand, I see them completely attached to their homes and dear ones. I see them as a caravan of heroic mothers and would-be mothers in search of an honest living, working hand in hand with their husbands and parents, to make their homes, no matter how humble and insignificant they may be, congenial and peaceful to all concerned. I see them in the height of their enthusiasm, personally taking care of their children, giving the latter the benefit of their motherly love, determined as they are of making the children the future hope of the only country that God has given us. Finally, I see them assemble, together with their husbands and parents, to consider the many intricate problems of the home, and above all, the future happiness of the children, on whom they have pinned their hopes for a better future.

Such in effect are the multifarious problems affecting the homes of our women who, because of the magnitude and importance of such problems, are daily brooding over them, mindful of the grave responsibility they owe to themselves, to their children and to the country. A question like woman suffrage is to them of such minor significance that to work for it and then exercise it would mean a complete divorce from the family and the children, the consequence of which would bring to ruination the homes of our people hitherto conducted in a way peculiarly ours, in contrast to that in which the homes of other peoples are kept. My conclusion, therefore, is that our women in the provinces view the issue with indifference and aloofness, some even going to the extreme of registering their opposition in due form, since they have yet plenty of other patriotic services, which are decisive

and urgent to contribute for the good of the country.

As to my second objection, I wish to be quoted as saying that the education of the children depends essentially on how they are reared and brought up in their respective homes. There is where the children get the necessary training and experience preparatory to their being ushered into some institutions of learning, or to finding some lawful means of pursuit. Their constant association with their parents, the training they get, and the existing environment fundamentally contribute to the future traits and idiosyncracies of the youths, grounded on the established creed that mothers are the great teachers of their children. The building of character in the children starts at home, and their future make-up is fundamentally influenced by the inspiration and guidance of their mothers. Were we to permit our women the right of suffrage, we should be bringing to the Filipino home something, which, among other things, would not only augur the coming of a rupture in the family but above all would mean the injection of politics into the minds of the children even at a tender age. Because of frequent talks of politics in the house, between father and the mother, and many clashes due to differences in opinion, it cannot be denied that there will exist predominantly that pervading thought of politics in the minds of our youths, thereby giving them an idea as to what is in store for them in the future. Under this proposition of giving to women the right of suffrage, the mothers of today and of tomorrow, judging from our attachment to our mothers, will automatically be sending out men or women pre-eminently politicians by traits, habits and idiosyncracies, abandoning in the majority of cases other legitimate callings, which are more honorable, more dignified, and more sacred than an elective post, which is flitting, temporary and changeable, depending on public opinion and popular will. We shall, in doing so, be crowding the country with that influx of youths whose ultimate end for *modus vivendi* is to enter the political arena where many victors and losers are reduced financially to nothingness. We shall be solving only the political aspect of our country's future, forsaking those traditional characteristics which are essentially ours to be proud of, to preserve, and to sanctify always. But on top of this desire to enfranchise our women, you and I are equally responsible for the partial, if not total, collapse of our economy, which, more than ever, needs the immediate attention of every living Filipino. This cannot be if we shall already be imparting things about politics to our children, and to make them change a course of action thereafter will mean going against the spirit and nationalistic tendencies of our youths to do things as inculcated into their minds by no other than their guides, counsellors and helpers — their mothers.

Politics, as it is practised in our country, is not altogether inviting to our women. Personal issues which affect the honor and reputation not only of the candidate and the candidate's relatives but also those of his leaders are the order of the day. Party and national issues are relegated to the wayside. All these go to show that, far from purifying the elections by reason of the intervention of our women in politics, the same conditions will exist and prevail, and most probably endanger the security of our people, who, by temperament and character, want our women to stand sublime and highly honored rather than see them mercilessly attacked by unscrupulous persons in any political meeting. There is in most instances no principle presented to the electorate during election time, and personal mud-slingings are the only joys and satisfaction of every hearer, without which no political meetings, with few exceptions, can ever attract a big audience.

Respecting and adoring as I do the Filipino women, the pride of our race, I would want them to be on the altar of peace, the home, and not of politics — adored, cherished and respected by all. I cannot, under the present circumstances, and to my regret, vote for any precept in the Constitution allowing women to exercise the right of suffrage.

Mr. President, I wish to make of record that the suffragettes of today are women belonging to a certain federation of women's club all over the Philippine Islands. What I want to state is that women in their respective clubs have done things which are not at all conducive to the proper holding of an election. Mr. President, if, in the very circle

of their own organization, frauds have been committed, how much more will they commit frauds when they go to the extreme of entering politics? On this proposition, I wish to cite instances to prove that in the election of officers for the federation of Women's Club on January 26, 1929, frauds were committed. First, the creation of imaginary clubs; second, voting by proxy by persons not authorized to vote; third, other frauds; and fourth, issues, respecting religion, age, and others. All these charges, Mr. President, stand unchallenged, and I hold that those charges are true. Furthermore, in the deliberation of the question, whether we should grant women the right of suffrage or not ...

MR. CONFESOR: Mr. President, will the Gentleman yield to a question?

THE PRESIDENT: The Gentleman may answer.

MR. ABORDO. Not until I am through.

(Continuing.) In the issue of the Sunday Tribune, first edition, January 27, 1929, we find the following story:

MANY FRAUDS, SAY LEADERS

Mrs. Ventura Calls Election Dirty; Mrs. De Veyra

Answers "It's Sickening"

Mrs. Ventura Charges:

"Formerly I was in favor of woman suffrage In the Philippines. In fact I had been fighting for it consistently. But after the elections held this noon by the Federation of Women's Clubs, I changed my mind. Frauds galore were committed by our opponents. Non-existing women's provincial clubs were created in order to produce more votes. By some trick of a magician, a crop of women's clubs in the provinces of Leyte and Iloilo, never heard from before, sprang up with proxies for the winning candidates. It was the dirtiest election I have ever known, and it seems to me that to give our women the right of suffrage will make our politics dirtier than what it already is."—Professor Maria Valdez Ventura, outstanding leader of Dr. Paz M. Mendoza.

Mrs. De Veyra Replies:

"I have nothing to say. As soon as I had appointed an election committee, I left the convention hall and went straight home to lie down and rest. It was sick-ening to see how the other party was campaigning and resorting to all means to win the election. Instead of attending the convention and taking part in the deli-beration, they were devoting their time to electioneer-ing. They even had a series of dinners, and they held what they called "Banquete de Avance" in one of the pansiterias last night in which all those on their ticket delivered fiery speeches. We did nothing of the sort. I thought that women cannot stoop to such methods in politics and even out-do men. It was sickening." —Mrs. Sofia R. de Veyra, reelected President of the Federation of Women's Club.

Personalities, Prejudices and Religion

Are Election Issues

The two preceding statements embody the oppos-ing views of the two factions in the Federation of Women's Clubs whose convention closed yesterday after one of the most bitterly contested elections ever held in the Philippines. It was an election in which personalities, as well as principles, were discussed, and religion, it is understood, also played an important part.

From the opening of the convention until its close, there was a silent but determined fight for supremacy. One faction was bent on ousting the other. Dr. Paz Mendoza questioned the standard bearer of the group that was fighting to gain ascendancy over the faction of Mrs. Sofia B. de Veyra. As soon as the delegates registered their names and were given their credentials, Mrs. Isaac Barza, Mrs. Tomas Fonacier, and Mrs. Maria V Valdez Ventura, the campaign managers for Dr. Mendoza, copied the names and addresses of all the delegates and, according to Mrs. De Veyra, conducted a house to house campaign.

The element of religion, it is said, was injected in the campaign. The three campaign managers of Dr. Mendoza are outstanding Protestant leaders, while Mrs. de Veyra, Miss Dowyer, Miss Macaraeg and the others on the De Veyra ticket are outstanding Catholics. One side said that the Catholics should not be allowed to rule the Federation. The other side countered that the Protestants must not be given a chance to gain a foothold in the organization,

Both parties alleged that a whispering campaign was conducted. One side pointed to the other as responsible for the "whispers." The ages of the two candidates were also one of the issues. It was stated that the younger candidate should be given a chance to lead the Federation as she would infuse it with new blood. The other side maintained that the older candidate should be elected because she had more experience in running women's clubs and she was more responsible and conservative in her views.

The election was held yesterday, with the result that the straight ticket of Mrs. De Veyra won by a big margin. That was the beginning of the end. The hullabaloo started and indications are that it will last for some time.

MAGICIAN PRODUCED NEW WOMEN'S CLUBS

This is what Mrs. Valdez Ventura has to say on the election: "Frauds galore were committed by our opponents. Non-existent women's provincial clubs were created in order to produce more votes for the opposing side. By some trick of an illusionist or a magician a crop of women's clubs in the provinces of Leyte and Iloilo, never heard from before, sprang up with proxies for the winning candidates. The radio and the telegraph were resorted to, and as the granting of credentials and records of the Federations were in the hands of the Chair, we were helpless.

"I had the proxy of the Bulacan Clubs, but the Constitution provides that proxies must be given first to delegates who are residents of the province. Suddenly, from the air, as it were, a delegate from Bulacan appeared and claimed the proxy. After the election, she confessed to me that she was neither a delegate nor was she from Bulacan, but that she was asked to claim the proxy by one of the opposing side."

"I can cite many other frauds, but a few examples, I believe, are sufficient to show the public that the last election of the federation of Women's Clubs is the dirtiest that organization has ever had. I am ashamed of it. That is why I am no longer in favor of woman suffrage. With what I saw yesterday, I am convinced that our women will make our politics dirtier than what it is now."

That is as far as Mrs. Ventura would go last night. Now, let the other side be given a hearing. Here is what Mrs. de Veyra said:

"Mrs. Ventura, I am sure, cannot prove her Statement; everything has been done above board. I left the convention hall after I had appointed an election committee in which the other party was represented. I left the meeting because I could not stand it any longer. It was sickening to see how electioneering was being done. I even told Mrs. Barza, I never thought women could go as far as men in their electioneering methods.

"I have nothing to say about this fraud accusation. All I can say is that we have refrained from indulging in tactics unworthy of women engaged in the service of the public not for any pecuniary gain. While the other party made a house-to-house campaign and gave dinners and banquets, we gave nothing of the sort. We allowed the delegates to express their free will without influencing them in any way. I tell you, I never thought women can stoop to such methods in politics and even outdo the men. The whole affair was sickening indeed."

Mrs. De Veyra ended there.

THE TRIBUNE, January 29, 1939

WOMEN'S WAR ON; CHARGES ARE RENEWED

MRS. VENTURA FINDS ALLEGED CREDENTIALS FROM ILOILO MISSING; WOMEN ALLUDED TO, REPLY.

"After spending more than two hours at the office of the Federation of Women's Club, I failed to locate the papers supporting the existence of a provincial women's club in Iloilo," said Mrs. Maria Valdez-Ventura, one of the leaders of the defeated party in the election of officers of the Federation, when seen last night.

In the opinion of Mrs. Ventura, the result of the election depended to a great extent on the IT votes cast by Mrs. Herran, niece of Mrs. De Veyra, "sup-posedly representing a provincial women's club in Iloilo (home province of Mrs. De Veyra), all of which were in favor of Mrs. De Veyra. She said: "In my investigation, I could not find even the credentials for the Iloilo delegates among the credentials handed to me by the clerk. When I arrived at the office of the Federation, I requested Mrs. Mardo, the clerk at the office, to show me the documents purporting to prove the existence of the Iloilo Clubs. After ransacking shelves and drawers, Mrs. Mardo told me that they were possibly in the press. She left me with the rea-son that she was going to the press to get the papers and show them to me. Since the time she left until now she has not shown up."

It was a long story, but this quotation is sufficient to show our purpose.

In the same issue of the Tribune, we find the fol-lowing about Mrs. De Veyra:

"When seen last night, Mrs. Sofia R. de Veyra, reelected President of the Federation of Women's Clubs, sickening affair must be allowed to blow over, as it does not any good to anybody, and it hurts the interest of the Federation for which, we would be willing to sacrifice everything in our powers. I shall be-gin to remain silent."

Respecting and adoring as I do the Filipino women, the pride of our race, I would want them to be on the altar of peace, the home, and not of politics — adored, cherish-ed and respected by all. I cannot, under the present circumstances, and to my regret, vote for any precept in the Constitution allowing women to exercise the right of suffrage.

Mr. BOCAR: Mr. President, for an observation, I want to insert the constitutional precept presented by Delegate Abordo for purposes of record.

Mr. GRAGEDA: I raise a point of order.

MR. BOCAR: Mr. President, I want to insert in the record the constitutional precept favoring woman suffrage. This was submitted by Delegate Abordo to the effect of granting the right to vote to all citizens of the country, irrespective of sex.

MR. ABORDO: I wish to state, for purposes of record, that that precept was presented long before the issue was discussed by the Suffrage Committee. As I said in my speech, what I observed at the Suffrage Com-mittee meeting was pathetic, unsavory and sorrowful be-cause, right in the very capital of the Philippine Islands, women are not united, or are indifferent to the question. Moreover, Mr. President, after the filing of that constitu-tional precept, I received instruction from my district to the effect that I vote against woman suffrage; and it being the mandate of the sovereign people, and on that basis, I am in favor of the resolution.

SR. ALTAVAS: Señor Presidente, el tiempo del orador ha expirado y pido que se le concedan diez minutos mas para contestar a las preguntas.

MR. PEREZ: I rise to a point of order. According to our rules, no Delegate can speak twice on the same subject on the same day.

EL PRESIDENTE: No.

MR. ABORDO: Mr. President, inasmuch as reference has been made to my constitutional precept, I wish to go on record that that precept was filed long before the discussion of woman suffrage. While the question was then

pending before the Suffrage Committee, of which I am a member, I made an effort to find ways and means which would ultimately convince me that the women of today are by law entitled to the exercise of the right of suffrage. Contrary to my expectation, as I said, I un-earthed things, which I have just read before this Con-vention to prove that in their clubs women go to the extent of committing frauds. How much more, Mr. President, if we grant them the right of suffrage, when their very honor and pecuniary interest that goes with the po-sition are involved?

MR. CONFESOR. Mr. President, will the gentleman yield?

THE PRESIDENT: The gentleman may yield, if he so desires.

MR. AEORDO: Willingly.

MR. CONFESOR. When you filed that precept, had you read those newspaper items that you cited to us to-night?

MR. ABORDO: As I said, not yet.

MR. CONFESOR. So that if you had read them, you would not have presented the precept?

MR. ABORDO. Absolutely not.

MR. CLORIBEL: Mr. President, win the gentleman yield?

THE PRESIDENT. The gentleman may yield, if he so desires.

MR. ABORDO. Willingly.

MR. CLORIBEL. After you changed your mind with regard to woman suffrage, did you withdraw your precept ?

MR. ABORDO. What is the use of withdrawing a precept once it is submitted? The rules of the Convention do not provide that any Delegate has the right to with-draw any precept once presented.

MR. CLORIBEL. Yes, but would it not appear to you anomalous, your being on record as in conformity with woman suffrage?

MR. ABORDO. Absolutely not, because a man may change his mind, provided the change tends to the bene-fit of many and not a few.

SR. ALTAVAS: Ya ha expirado el tiempo del compañero.

SR. ABELLA: Pido que se le concedan diez minutos mas para contestar a las interpelaciones.

MR. BOCAR. Mr. President for an observation. I want to make it of record and insert the constitutional precept presented by Delegate Abordo.

LEVANTAMIENTO DE LA SESION

SR. ROMERO: Señor Presidente, pido que se levante la sesion hasta mañana.

EL PRESIDENTE: Si no hay objecion, se levanta le sesion hasta mañana. (No la hubo)

Eran las 6:30 p.m.

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