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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 transforming it into a fruitful and beautiful garden in order to give comforts and luxuries to his only star and inspiration—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 components, 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 enlighten 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 Assembly, 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 general effect will be the experience that we have had in the arena of politics. Like men, woman will go out campaigning 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 wagered 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 because 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 confidence 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 campaigning 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 throbbing 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 surprise 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 granting 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 anything. 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 candidates 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 Occidental 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 suffrage 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 register my protest against the granting of suffrage to women because, should we incorporate it in our Constitution, 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, Ilena de fragancias artificiales la sociedad frivola y galante, No. Al solicitar hoy por breves momentos los favores de vuestra atencion, lo hagapara 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