

GIRLS looking for SNAP JOBS shouldn't run for CONGRESS

By Flora G. Orr

NICE work for a girl if she can get it—being a U. S. Senator or Representative.

Where is the ambitious young woman who wouldn't be tempted were some modern Satanic Majesty to take her up into the hills and show her this kingdom?

Come, ladies, all six of you who are working in these important offices on Capitol Hill today. (Yes, we know there are seven of you now, but Senator Dixie Bibb Graves hasn't had a chance to go to work yet.) Out with those secrets lying close to your hearts! What's it really like?

A letter from a constituent? Splendid. Read it aloud, please.

"Dear Mrs. X: I hope you won't

woman to reach for her pen and stationery.

"Oh, my dear," she admonished the U. S. representative, "you must never wear a dress without sleeves."

"I'm so glad," said the woman criticized, "that the picture did not show that at that moment I was wearing no stockings either."

Last March, the Women's National Press Club produced an eccentric, surrealist sketch, taking off several



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Among the many duties of a congresswoman is the entertainment of Washington visitors. Here are Representative Edith Nourse Rogers (left), Senator Hattie Caraway (center) and Representative Caroline O'Day (second from right) welcoming two visiting Girl Scouts.



One letter to a congresswoman read, in part, "It might create just a little better impression if you wore darker hosiery, not quite so sheer. I want people to see that you are as nice outside as you are inside."

take it amiss if I suggest that it might create just a little better impression if you wore darker hosiery, not quite so sheer. I want people to see that you are as nice outside as you are inside."

No, we won't tell which gentlewoman from what state received this admonition, but Mrs. Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts is laughing and Mrs. Caroline O'Day and Mrs. Nan Wood Honeyman both look a trifle like the innocent cat which has just consumed the canary.

What about constituents? Do they look upon a woman representative more as a personal possession than they regard a man in the same position? Are they more critical of women? More bossy toward them? More vindictive when displeased?

Take that one item of clothes and personal appearance, for example. Would constituents tell a male legislator how to part his hair, what color neckties to wear, or suggest that he ought to reduce?

Occasionally they might, but usually they wouldn't. (History does record that Abraham Lincoln first grew a beard at the suggestion of a young correspondent. But there you are. When such a thing happens to a man, it's news.)

Congresswomen's clothes, while watched very carefully, usually have escaped adverse comment, because the women M. C.'s have for the most part dressed quietly, conservatively, often exclusively in black. Once upon a time a photograph of a lady much in the public eye was snapped in a garden on one of Washington's broiling midsummer days. Eventually it reached the newspapers, causing one horrified club

women in public life in exaggerated style. Mrs. Caroline O'Day, who has been active in peace movements for many years, was portrayed by a young woman wearing a huge peace sash, and a hat on which battleships, airplanes and so on were mounted precariously. An opposition paper in Mrs. O'Day's state played up the picture with the caption, "This, ladies and gentlemen, is the way our congresswoman goes about Washington."

MR. O'DAY let it pass. She could do so, since she has been called the best-dressed woman in the capital.

Unquestionably, the women members say, constituents are more possessive toward them than toward their male contemporaries. "Because you're a woman, you will understand—" run hundreds of letters which come to them. A man once wrote Mrs. O'Day asking for a canary for his old mother. The canary was dispatched. In a few months the man wrote that the canary was dead. In the meantime, he said, his old mother had also died. However, he went on, he would now like a canary

to remind him of his mother. Mrs. O'Day was beginning to wonder just what this was anyhow, but she put in the order for canary number two.

Constituents are likely to get very chummy and chatty with their women representatives, after a few letters have passed back and forth. If they are in trouble, they literally write a heart-throb manuscript and send it to a certain office on Capitol Hill. All this is very nice, but it means that the stationery allowance can't be stretched to cover all the necessary correspondence. Additional clerical work in the office has to be paid by the representative.

One or two of the women maintain that all critical letters they get are meant to be helpful and are written in a nice spirit. Inside spy work in the offices, however, would reveal that some of the most vitriolic and vindictive letters ever seen on Capitol Hill come to the women members of Congress. Some are so strong and so bitter that secretaries say they try to keep them hidden from their employers' eyes. The moment that a woman in public life takes a definite position on some controversial

Mrs. Caroline O'Day, Senator Hattie Caraway—sees a day pass that she is not working on claims bills and veterans' needs. Mrs. Rogers has made something of a specialty of helping ex-soldiers, but she had to draw the line one day when an ex-fighting man asked her to introduce a bill to make the U. S. government finance divorces and pay alimony for veterans.

WHAT about unfair tactics in a campaign? Do the women find men berating them because they are women, "and woman's place is in the home"?

Yes, this happens. Virginia Jenckes had a man campaigning against her in Indiana last year, using as a slogan, "What this district needs is a congressman!" But since Virginia Jenckes was re-elected, it would seem that the electorate had its own ideas.

The women M. C.'s probably find it fully as difficult as the men to save any money from their \$10,000 a year salaries. Most of them travel about their districts when Congress is not in session and work directly with their people on the varying needs in the communities. This means office rent, clerical hire, hotel expenses, all in line



Representatives Virginia E. Jenckes, Mary L. Norton and Nan Wood Honeyman, three women who will tell you that a feminine member of Congress is kept very busy indeed.

subject, the abuse begins. Of course, the same mail will bring letters of praise as well.

It is almost as bad, however, when the woman representative refuses to take a definite stand on a piece of legislation until she knows in what form it is to appear on the House floor.

Not one of the six women who have just finished a strenuous session on Capitol Hill—Mrs. Mary Norton, Mrs. Edith Nourse Rogers, Mrs. Virginia Jenckes, Mrs. Nan Wood Honeyman,

of duty, but which must be paid out of pocket. Often they have quite sizable little private payrolls to meet. In Washington rents are high and a representative must have a good, though not a swanky, address. No woman M. C. has ever attempted, as did a one-time senator from Florida (a man), to sleep and dress in her office.

Entertaining tourists from the home district is an astonishingly high item, particularly if one's state is fairly close to Washington.