

World Mellows On Question Of Women

By Joy Miller

NEW YORK (AP) — Indira Nehru Gandhi's election as India's prime minister is a spectacular example of how far women have come in a world that apparently is growing mellow all the time toward the second sex.

Feminists everywhere are hoping it may usher in a new era of women's advancement. As it is, they already are heartened by these recent events:

Justice Elizabeth Lane appointed to a high court bench in England, first time for a woman.

Dr. A. A. L. Minkenhof sworn in as first woman solicitor general in the Netherlands.

Princess Lalla Aicha of Mo-

rocco sent to England as her country's first woman ambassador.

Mrs. Constance Baker Motley named by President Johnson to be the first Negro woman federal judge in the United States.

Golda Meir, Israel's foreign minister since 1956 and labor minister seven years before that, retiring at age 67, stoutly maintaining that she will keep on working in politics and labor.

Uncounted numbers of women around the world, though, still face discrimination in work, pay, educational opportunities. Many are deprived of personal and property rights as soon as they say "I do" in whatever tongue they speak.

Often the husband has the only say-so about the children. He can legally prevent his wife taking work outside the home. He owns everything. He can divorce her and toss her out without support, keeping the children.

For 20 years the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women has worked hard to help point out a more fair and humane way to the nations in which these rules of family life exist. But it is frequently a slippery balancing act to keep peace in the family of nations when proposed changes to improve women's lot runs counter to age-old traditions.

The commission believes in the right of people to choose their own spouses, in monogamy, in equal right to dissolu-

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Mme. Indira Nehru Gandhi

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tion of marriage, in widows getting custody of their own children. It wants the practice of bride price and child marriages abolished.

Slowly some of the nations are coming around. The biggest hassle at the moment seems to be over the U.N. recommendation of age 15 as the worldwide minimum age for girls to marry. Opposition is serious, and at least one delegate argues that in many tropical countries girls are mature at 12 or 13.

Looking over legislation enacted in just the last decade indicates much progress:

Guatemala: 1956, women given the right of access to public employment.

Italy: 1956, women given the right to serve as jurors.

Belgium: 1958, married women allowed to open savings accounts in their own names and dispose of the funds.

General Republic of Germany: 1958, married women allowed to engage in independent work outside the home without needing husbands' consent.

The Netherlands: 1958, women civil servants and public school teachers given the right to continue in their posts after marriage.

Sweden: 1959, women given the right to occupy all religious posts in the state church on equal terms with men.

Korea: 1960, widows given the right to become guardians of their children without requiring consent of the family council.

Pakistan: 1961, minimum age of marriage for girls raised from 14 to 16.

Guinea: 1962, married women given the right to administer and dispose of their personal property and earnings.

In political rights women may be making the most progress.

The United Nations lists 112 countries in which women may vote in all elections and run for office on an equal basis with men. About 80 of these gave the franchise to women after 1945.

More and more women are being elected to their parliaments and appointed to high administrative posts.

A recent U.N. survey, in

which 54 governments reported, showed that 47 of the countries had had women elected to the national parliament; 23 had held ministers' posts—often of social welfare and housing; 14 had judges of high courts, 14 had women ambassadors.

Probably the only woman parliamentary president, Mrs. Istvan Voss, 49, of Hungary undermines that comfortable persuasion of the homebody that serving in high public offices makes a woman unfeminine. Mrs. Voss has a weakness for clothes and beauty shops as well as hard work.

When the Cook Islands recently gained self government from New Zealand, an attractive brunette mother of five, Mrs. Marguerite Story, became speaker of the legislative assembly.

In South Africa the only member of parliament for the past four years who stands for multi-racial government is outspoken Mrs. Helen Suzman.

In other areas of achievement, ardent feminists always

mention that in the Soviet Union 75 per cent of all medical doctors are women. The Russians have other recent figures: of every 100 workers in industry, 46 are women; in education and culture it's 62; on public health, 86.

In the world as a whole 27 out of 100 women work outside the home. One-third of the world's labor force is made up of women. Married women represent more than half of all women in the labor force.

The Social Secretary

TOMORROW

Infant of Prague Adoption Service Auxiliary, fashion luncheon, 11:30 a.m., Rainbow Ballroom.



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