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WIGS, GOWNS, TYPEWRITERS

THREE weeks ago, *The Listener* published an interview with a well-known woman barrister and solicitor who was convinced that, as a profession for women, the law has little to offer. Since then, however, we have discovered one branch of the law which has provided for a small number of very fortunate women a position which seems specially suited to the sex, requiring as it does a high standard of secretarial efficiency and some social graces such as tact, charm, and companionability. The position of Judge's Associate—once almost a masculine monopoly—has given several women a wartime career, and it is possible that some of them will continue their work after that.

Being a Judge's Associate means just what it says, one of them explained to me as we chatted over morning tea in a room set aside for the associates. "Our job is to go with our particular judge on his circuit from place to place and from court to court. Most of the Judge's Associates are here in Wellington at the moment, because the Court of Appeal is sitting."

"The room isn't usually as crowded as this," someone else pointed out. "There's usually only one person here, but now there are two extra desks and typewriters."

His Honour's Luggage

The room certainly had a much more lived-in atmosphere than most legal chambers, in spite of the fact that it was buried deep in the Supreme Court building. A bright fire lit up the dark corners and flickered on the array of tea things. In addition to the usual legal clutter there were sketches on the walls, female coats and hats behind the door, and a ready-strapped travelling bag near the desk.

"That's for my judge," said the first speaker. "We're going away to-night, and it's part of the Associate's job to pack all the gowns and wigs."

"What about the other packing? Is that part of your job, too?"

"No, he manages that himself. There are just gowns in there; the wigs go in a special box and have to be treated with the greatest care. Being an Associate wouldn't be much of a job for anybody who didn't like travelling, or who couldn't cope with luggage."

"Yes, you've got to have a certain capacity for organisation. You just can't be the sort of person who's vague about parcels. You see, we have so much stuff to look after. First of all our own luggage, then the robes and wigs, then all the correspondence files and reference books, then our typewriters."

"Why do you need to carry typewriters round? Couldn't they be supplied at each court?"

"We have to use special noiseless typewriters, and you can't get those any more. And besides, you get used to your own particular machine and feel much safer with it than you would with a strange one that mightn't have been looked after properly. Our peace of mind more or less depends on the state of our typewriters. That's why we look after them so carefully."

Women As Judges' Associates



"Very embarrassing, I should imagine"

"You see," began someone else, "one of our chief duties is to sit in court by the Judge's Bench and take down *verbatim* all the evidence in a Supreme Court case. You have to go for your life all the time, and it would be simply fatal if anything jammed or the ribbon broke. I once heard of a case having to be held up while the Associate tried to fix a typewriter. Very embarrassing, I should imagine."

"A day's court work is something of an endurance test," said another Associate. "You're listening to what the witness says and typing furiously at the same time, and that goes on for hours. Our typewriters are all fitted with a silencing gadget, and besides that you have to type inside one of these glass typewriter canopies." She showed me how the lid slid back to allow fresh paper to be put in. "Until quite recently we used to have to move our typewriter canopies as well as our typewriters from place to place, but now every Judge's Bench is fitted with canopies. But they're rather awkward things to manipulate, especially when you're typing in court and have to slide the roof back, insert the paper, and go on typing all in one movement. We leave all the paper ready at one side inter-leaved with the carbon."

"So you can see that we're rather exhausted at the end of the day. Actually criminal cases are rather less exhausting (and usually more interesting) than civil cases. Civil cases often involve very detailed accounts of business transactions, and it's difficult to get all the figures down correctly. And again in criminal cases we usually have some knowledge of the evidence given previously in the Magistrate's Court, and so we find it easier to follow. Moreover we're not typing throughout the whole of a case. During the addresses of counsel we can usually relax. We don't take those down *verbatim*, though if the Judge requires it we make a summary."

"But even if we're not typing we're still on duty. Often we are sent out to get any special reference books the Judge may require during the session, and this presents many difficulties when you're new to the game, because there's a strange legal phraseology that turns a simple request into something rather like a treasure hunt. At first you're likely to find yourself in the corridor outside the court room wondering just what you've been sent for."

There Are Compensations

"It sounds to me," I remarked, "as though being a Judge's Associate involves a lot of hard work and not much relaxation."

"The work isn't any harder than ordinary secretarial work. We have to superintend the business side of things, attend to the routine details of travelling, look after the correspondence, prepare digests of necessary facts. The chief requirements are a good business head and a fast typing speed, and you acquire some knowledge of the law as you go along."

"And there are compensations," chimed in someone else. "You may not see the world but you do see New Zealand, and you always stay at the best hotels."

—M.B.

Advice On Health (No. 51)

ARE WOMEN COLDER BLOODED MORTALS THAN MEN?

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. H. B. TURBOTT,
Director of the Division of School Hygiene, Health
Department)



WINTER is round the corner. There's a coolness in the air. Some folk have started fires already. Those long nights are coming when windows are shut, curtains drawn, father drops off to sleep over his paper, and mother still feels cold, stops a draught under the door with a cushion and puts on more fire. Father goes to sleep not to be unsocial—"That's all you do during the winter; you start reading the paper after dinner and then fall asleep in your chair." He goes to sleep, not because he's had a hard day at the office, but because it's warm in the room and too dry. Yet if he let the fresh air in, he'd keep awake, but mother would feel cold right away. When away from home, at the pictures, visiting friends, mother always comes home colder than

father, and thinks gratefully of the hot water bottle awaiting her in bed.

Some think that this difference is accounted for by physical differences between men and women; that women are colder mortals and need more heat. Well, they are! But not because of bodily disparity! The Harvard School of Public Health recently conducted an experiment in which 22 men and 28 women spent several hours in the same air-conditioned room. For one part of the test they dressed and ate as usual; for the other part women dressed as men, and the men as women. Temperatures of skin and body were taken, and by using many readings of a special instrument, the mean skin and clothing

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