

# Rep. Schlapp for Women on Juries

Representative Alyce M. Schlapp, Republican, of Methuen, addressed the lower branch of the Massachusetts legislature Monday in support of the bill to permit women to serve on juries in this commonwealth.

Her remarks were as follows:

"Today, we members of this house are confronted with the question of whether or not women shall sit on juries in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It would seem only fitting at this time in the history of the world that we here should recognize the splendid example of patriotism, leadership and service being set by our American women in this present great struggle to preserve our democratic principles of liberty, freedom, equality and justice for all—principles that have been handed down to us by the sweat and blood of our forefathers—so that women may enjoy the inalienable rights equally with men.

"The responsibility placed upon women today makes it imperative that we recognize their rightful place in the scheme of life. Whatever may have sufficed for the past, today both men and women have equally qualified to work co-operatively. The question is not simply a question of whether the practice of jury service should be changed by admitting women into the service. It is a matter which reaches back to the greater question of whether the principle of trial by jury as it has always previously existed, shall be preserved.

"Under an amendment to the federal constitution, women were given the right of suffrage. This took many years of effort before it was an accomplished fact. I do not believe that any one can conscientiously say that politics have suffered because of this. Women are active and are recognized in the fields of medicine, law, science, government and jurisprudence. Twenty-eight states already have allowed women on juries. Those states

must be satisfied for there is no indication that they wish to repeal this law. Are we to lag behind in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts? Massachusetts has always been a great and progressive state. Its legislature has always led the parade. There is no good reason why it should not join the parade now and allow women to sit on juries. Equal sacrifices demand equal opportunities. The wartime demands upon women are the same as on the men. If they can not serve directly, they do so indirectly through their husbands, brothers, sons and sweethearts; they work in war plants and do their bits in the defense effort; serve as WAACS, WAVES, SPARS, and in the Marine Reserve. I say to you in all sincerity that they should be given the equal opportunity to serve on juries."