

□ INTERVIEW □



Miss Julie Loranger, in her office at the Department, before her posting in Madrid.

their office, but they are becoming fewer in number.

Of the nine female heads of mission I mentioned earlier, not one is living a traditional married life. That is in itself revealing and I can't deny that in my case it was a lot easier for me to do the kind of work I do, to bear the kind of responsibilities I have, because I did not have any family obligations. But that is a choice too. It is a choice not to get married and have children, but it is a choice that women should no longer have to make. In my generation, it was more difficult to find a husband who would be willing to live with a career woman.

I chose a career. Of course, there were many others who did get married and who managed to do both very well. Personally, I would not have had the physical energy to do it all.

S. G.: *Doesn't being a woman create credibility problems, particularly for an Ambassador?*

J. L.: It probably poses a problem for some of the people you deal with.

S. G.: *And some of the countries too?*

J. L.: Yes, but after all, I have not been asked to go off to a fundamentalist Islamic country, and I think my superiors would have the good sense not to ask me to. Credibility is a problem for the person listening, not for me. My own experience, particularly in the United Nations, where I have been working for several years and have contacts at all levels and among the representatives of many different countries, has been that if you know what you are talking about, people listen. At first, people who are not used to dealing with professional women may hesitate

to have a serious conversation, but once things get under way, there are no problems. It is simply a matter of knowing what you are talking about and of knowing the issues inside out. I do not think that I will have any trouble in Madrid, although Spain is a European country that is still fairly traditional. I know that I will probably seem rather exotic, as I will be the only female Ambassador, but I think that should be fun. I find it stimulating.

S. G.: *Are there any advantages to being a female Ambassador?*

J. L.: There is one advantage that most people would not think of; it occurred to me one day in the midst of an official dinner. The women are usually seated next to VIPs. Often I can accomplish things much more quickly and easily at dinner than the men who are seated at the same table, because the people sitting beside me are often people with whom I have business to discuss. What's more, you sit beside them for as long as two hours, while you would never have the opportunity to speak to them in their office for two hours, and if by chance some matter needs to be settled, you can sometimes do it then.

There is one other advantage, which might actually seem rather negative. It's a matter of knowing how to use it. People find the idea of a female head of mission intriguing, so they want to meet her. That can help open doors and make people more willing to see you. I must say that as a rule, the doors will open for representatives of Canada, but being a woman adds an extra dimension.