

proposal was defeated, however, and, on the vote of a slender majority, the Commission decided to submit a draft convention and a draft recommendation to the Economic and Social Council. Both instruments dealt with the three aspects of the question, and 15 years was inserted as the legal minimum age of marriage, "except where a competent authority had granted a dispensation as to age for serious causes, in the interests of the intending spouses."

For some years members of the Commission on the Status of Women have been concerned about the physical and psychological effects of ritual operations that survive in certain parts of the world. Because of the social and cultural origins of the custom, the Assembly of the World Health Organization had declined to undertake a study of the subject, considering it to be beyond the competence of the Organization. The WHO, however, had expressed its willingness to make available medical information on the subject to any other organization prepared to carry out such a study. The Commission adopted a resolution requesting the Secretary-General to appoint a representative to the next session of the WHO Assembly who would be competent to interpret to that body the Commission's position on the matter, and also invited the WHO to communicate the medical information at its disposal to the Secretary-General for submission to the Commission at its sixteenth session.

Equal Pay for Equal Work

This subject, so vital to the economic status of women, is one of continuing interest to the Commission. This year, Mrs. Elizabeth Johnstone, the representative of the ILO, presented a report on relevant developments over the past two years. Between January 1, 1958, and February 1, 1960, eight countries had ratified the Convention on Equal Remuneration for Men and Women for Work of Equal Value, bringing to 32 the total number of ratifications. However, despite this evidence of growing recognition of the principle of equal pay for equal work, the representative of the ILO emphasized that the past decade has seen little real progress in the narrowing of the gap between the wages of men and women. She urged continuing study and action in relation to economic and social factors that contribute to the comparatively lower wages of women.

Economic Opportunities for Women

Two decisions on this item of the agenda are of special interest. In the first place, recognizing the widespread inadequacy of the vocational preparation, guidance and training of girls and women, the Commission passed a resolution recommending that governments do all within their power to bring about rapid and substantial improvement, inviting the ILO to give priority to questions in this field and to report to the sixteenth session of the Commission on the situation in various countries.

Secondly, a resolution was adopted inviting the ILO to make a study of the age of retirement for women and their right to pension. This subject had been