

## Virginia Prewett

## Ladies show how



IN a milestone five-day meeting, the first International Congress of Women Journalists met in Washington last week. Publishers of U.S. newspapers that are guilty of the enduring charge of neglecting Latin America should have been observers.

More than 60 women, nearly all Latin Americans, delved deeply into today's problems of development. This means, above all for them, the economic relations between the United States and Latin America.

Today, lamentably, not even our Congress much less most of our press is delving into the economic relationships that the Latin American women are mastering.

The meeting was organized by Mrs. Yolanda Sanchez, the dynamic president of Mexico's Women's Press Club, who is stationed in Washington as a TV broadcaster to Mexico. The Inter-American Commission of Women and the Pan American Health Organization added.

## HEAVY SCHEDULE

Delegates were mostly reporters. A few were public information specialists for government. Another handful were desk editors and even full editors. All media were represented. The interest and tireless application with which the women pursued a very heavy work schedule illustrates the explosion of energy that can be released into Latin American societies as the intensely concerned female sex fights its way into positions of influence.

One of the very few U.S. delegates, the "Miami Herald's" Mary Anderson, told the meeting that the United States is not using its womanpower to its full potential. She called

womanpower our "most wasted natural resource."

In a world where international gatherings abound among the dominant sex, men could learn a lesson from the tone and tempo of the woman journalists' meeting. The delegates' papers were short, crisp and to the point. Nationalism raised its inevitable head only rarely. The delegates passed up more than one social event, including a visit to the White House, for longer work sessions.

## SLANDERS SWALLOWED

Though the women journalists as individuals proved personally well disposed to hear both sides in discussions of U.S.-Latin American relations, it was distressingly evident that many have gone far in accepting many anti-Yankee slanders that the United States has allowed to go uncontradicted in Latin America for too many years.

For example, one intelligent, open-minded woman editor from a Latin American country now going leftward in government policies assured me that our Peace Corps personnel make political reports to the CIA so it can "distort the image of Latin America among the U.S. public."

This view was supported by a journalist from a country that is not going left. When I assured them that lack of balanced information about Latin America among our public in general made any such elaborate and ridiculous operation unnecessary, they were ready to hear reasons for this. They were both shocked to learn that their own embassies in Washington make no perceptible effort even to reach the best-known specialists on Latin America who write here. Both resolved to try to do something about Latin America's own notorious neglect of efforts to inform our public.