

## The Federation Today

When World War II ended, the Iowa Federation, like many other organizations, was almost pulled off balance due to the sudden relief from war pressure. However, after a momentary gesture of joy over the victory, it steadied itself, took a deep breath, and faced the aftermath of war.

It faced a time in which wartime restrictions were gone, inflation was mounting, housing was inadequate, home and business equipment was worn out, reconversion of industry was in process, the population was restless, delinquency among young people was on the increase, schools were inadequate in staff and equipment. Larger numbers of little children and old people had to be cared for; many soldiers and civilians, mentally damaged by the pressures of war, had to be treated. Obligations to former ally and enemy must be met, and peace must be secured — in short, there was work to do.

It could not quite slip into its prewar habits of procedure — civvies seldom fit the returned soldier — but they were not to be discarded, for they had been tested and found good. But it must alter and streamline them a bit. Fine arts, education, the American home, community service, conserva-

tion, public welfare, and public affairs were still valid fields of endeavor, and that work must be continued.

During the war the youth of the land had been cruelly beset by pressures much too great always to be withstood. Now they must be helped with understanding and love to reorient their lives. At the insistence of Mrs. W. A. Seidler of Jamaica, the Federation undertook its important work of youth guidance. To that end, all departments and committees were asked to key their plans into the youth guidance program. This resulted in a unified program which could be incorporated into club work. In 1953, department chairmen became advisers to the youth guidance committee, and a division of "Character Building and Guidance" was placed in the education department.

The plight of the mentally ill was recognized, and a division of mental health was placed in the public welfare department. This division prepares material, furnishes speakers, sponsors workshops and conferences for mental institutes, and is seeking to create a healthy climate of public opinion toward mental illness as the first essential of successful treatment.

In spite of the vicissitudes of modern life, more people are living to a greater age than in the past. But the blessing of a long life may become a burden unless help is given. So the division of gerontology has been placed in the public welfare de-

partment to provide that help. The health, usefulness, mental and spiritual welfare of elderly people must receive expert attention. Thus, gerontology projects have been adopted by clubs and counties.

Remembering our almost prostrate allies after the war meant participation in many good will projects. Through its department of international relations the Federation shared in the national clothing campaign, the collection of canned goods, the "Mounds of Cloth," the wedding gift to Princess Elizabeth of CARE packages for needy Britons, the "Share a Shawl" project, cooperation with CROP, and others. In time the needs of the even more prostrate enemy were remembered, for children must be cared for even though their parents had been enemies. Again CARE and the "Save the Children Foundation" would carry out Federation behests, and supplies are going out to the German Youth Assistance Program.

Community service was resumed and many ideas for bettering communities were carried out. Increased interest in education and its changing emphases has been evident in work for school aid legislation.

After the war the Federation resumed its biennial conventions, but since proportionately few attend a state convention, the president borrowed an idea from a neighboring state and arranged for the officers and department chairmen to tour the

district meetings by bus during the fall of 1947, thus making possible more personal contacts between members and leaders. The resultant exchange of ideas led to better understanding and efficiency. The tour was repeated in 1949.

Other changes in Federation work were made, including making the Junior extension secretary a voting member of the Board of Directors. Higher rentals necessitated moving the headquarters into one room, Room 341, in the Hotel Fort Des Moines. Packets of club procedure material were prepared, member recommendations were assembled, and another reorganization of committees was carried out.

Then suddenly, under the guise of a police action to contain communism, all the anxiety and strain of war had to be faced again. Candles for South Korea were collected by the Iowa chairman of the Council of International Clubs, a Korean scholarship was created, aid to refugee children was provided, and over \$12,000 for CARE was sent by clubs in 1951-1952.

During this postwar period the Iowa Federation had the privilege of closer contact with the General Federation because one Iowa woman who had been Iowa's president was called into the line of General Federation vice-presidencies. Mrs. H. C. Houghton of Red Oak had given such excellent service to her state that her talents were widely recognized. From her father, Judge Hor-

ace Deemer, she inherited her gift of oratory and from her mother her executive ability. She was educated in Iowa schools and is a graduate of Wellesley College. She married Hiram Cole Houghton and they are the parents of three sons and one daughter. Mrs. Houghton served several terms on the State Board of Education. She began her service to the Iowa Federation as a young woman, holding many offices preceding the presidency, to which she was elected in 1935. She was elected president of the General Federation in 1950 at the Boston convention. Her two years as executive officer of this great organization demonstrated her broad interests. She led groups of officers and members on tours of Europe and South America. Resulting programs of friendship and good will have brought her decorations from the Greek and Dutch governments. She was honored by the state Federation with a UNESCO Scholarship named for her. The Iowa Federation is proud of Dorothy Deemer Houghton.

The Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs, now sixty years old, is composed of 843 clubs having 34,249 members. It is well organized to promote service, culture, and social life. The officers are devoted, and they secure results. It is progressive in program while conservative in character. The Federation is represented on educational and welfare councils and conferences by its president, thereby insuring active participation in progres-

sive movements other than its own. Its members are alert, generous, and responsible. At this milestone the Iowa Federation is what it always has been.

The officers for this thirtieth biennium are:

President — Mrs. Martin Van Oosterhout, Orange City.  
First Vice President—Mrs. Harold Nissen, Walnut  
Second Vice President — Mrs. E. E. Taylor, Traer  
Recording Secretary — Miss Sara Nott, Marion  
Corresponding Secretary — Mrs. C. Mechem, Thompson  
Treasurer — Mrs. Emil Hesselschwerdt, Kalona

The Iowa Federation passed its fiftieth birthday almost without notice, for it came during the war, but in 1953 it celebrated its sixtieth birthday at the biennial convention at Burlington in May. As the delegates assembled they looked very different from those who gathered in Des Moines sixty years ago, though their hats were as daintily absurd, and their frocks as modish. But their purposeful, forward-looking spirit was the same. They came to hear the officers give an accounting of their stewardship, to listen to the summary of the two years of work, to compare methods and exchange ideas, to elect new officers, to catch a vision from some great speaker, to play a little and to dream a little, but always, while looking back for a moment, they also looked ahead, and they asked for —

Guidance divine for clear constructive thought,  
For chosen words with truth and wisdom fraught,

For deeds that fit Thy plan; and may we be  
Through every hour in sweet accord with Thee.  
Then lead us, Lord, in thought and word and deed,  
That we may know and meet the greatest need.

HAZEL P. BUFFUM