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Head Of Women's Clubs Urges Uniform Divorce Laws As Protective Act

Mrs. Thomas Gerald Winter, President Of General Federation, Deplores Tendency Of Times To "Get Rid Of Personal Responsibility" And Advocates Cultivation Of Affection—Understanding Of Social Questions Is Necessary, She Asserts.

By EMILY EMERSON LANTZ.

ROMEO'S disdain of names was justified at the annual meeting of the Maryland Federation of Women's Clubs, when Mrs. Thomas Gerald Winter, president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, infused into the spirit of the meeting an atmosphere so warm and genial as to make delegates forget the unforgivable caprice of the weather.

Mrs. Winter brings to her office as chief executive of what may be called the woman's parliament of the United States a breadth of vision, a sweet reasonableness of spirit, an understanding of conditions and a sympathy that proved inspirational to those who met her and listened to her speak upon the perplexing problems that today confront the womanhood of America.

Mrs. Winter is the daughter of a clergyman, a graduate of Wellesley College, a woman of wide experience in many fields of activity now occupied by women and seems qualified to guide and assist American women in the constructive work which she believes it to be woman's mission to accomplish.

She described the federation as a great cross-section of America that includes every kind of woman and women of every race and creed—more thoroughly democratic than any other woman's organization because wider in its scope.

More Laws No Solvent.

She urged strongly that members of the federation recognize their potentiality which lies in the fact that their unity is greater than their differences. She said that having lived long in the West, where women have for several years been accustomed to vote, she has perhaps acquired a certain temperance of view in regard to woman's new citizenship and she discouraged feminine belief in enacting laws as the solving of all difficult problems. Laws, she said, are shifting things, inefficient, unless supported by law-abiding spirit, which she said we need infinitely more in America at the present time than new laws.

She believes that women create public opinion, and urged strongly that they direct their energies toward the enactment of one new law which would be the establishment of uniform divorce laws in America for the better protection of "the most sacred of human institutions." She deplored the tendency of the times to get rid of "personal responsibility" and urged the cultivation of human af-

fection as the basis of a delegation of the federation committee urged upon him the need of a mandatory and State-wide compulsory school attendance law, and when the State survey was completed by experts from the General Education Board it was found that the State was securing but poor returns for the money expended for public education, the causes of this being poorly trained teachers and the grip of the politicians upon the system.

Upon the survey report was based the comprehensive school bill which the General Assembly of 1916 passed and which continues to stand staunchly upon the statutes despite all attacks upon it, its bulwark of strength being the support of public sentiment. At present attention is concentrated upon enforcement of the law, with constantly brightening outlook, but there are still, according to the report, obviously weak spots, which Mrs. Buchner pointed out, among them, some "five or six county superintendents who do not measure up to the professional requirements of the law." In the matter of salaries, much progress has been made and even greater has been planned. Maryland can now calmly challenge comparison with other States in the salaries paid her chief school officials. Alluding to women upon State and County Boards of Education, the speaker said: "Last year there was one woman serving in that capacity; there are now five—one each in Harford, Montgomery, Dorchester, Caroline and Talbot. There will be one or two appointments to all the county boards and two to the State board next year."

The committee speaks in high praise of the work of the School Improvement Associations. This work, it was said, is "peculiarly dependent upon the attitude toward it of the county superintendents and their attitude is a pretty reliable index of their general effectiveness."

Anne Arundel county is believed to have the honor of providing the first teacherage in Maryland, located at West Annapolis. Its furnishings were provided by the School Improvement Association, and it is successfully managed by the association and the trustees. A number of counties report public health nurses doing splendid work in health education. Public health work is essentially economical. One county reports that of its 7,600 school children, 2,000 are absent from school daily, largely because of preventable ill health.

According to Mrs. Buchner, Talbot county is doing fine work along lines of public welfare, recreation and the promotion of children's reading.

In point of organization for thorough and co-ordinate work, Montgomery and Prince George's counties lead the State. Both have county-wide education committees and one, if not both, has an education chairman. In Prince George's county there is a colored woman's federation under intelligent and educated leadership.

"In a number of counties," said the report, "teachers enjoy opportunities to do professional studying without interrupting their professional duties. Hood College, Western Maryland College and George Washington University are doing Maryland this service. Attendance upon summer schools is also widely and usually financially encouraged. During the last four years also the superintendents of Harford, Wicomico, Cecil, Montgomery and Frederick counties have arranged with the Johns Hopkins University for professional courses to be taken by teachers in service. Montgomery has eight

schools which have just been adjudged standard schools by the State Department of Education.

"Before the federation's next annual meeting," concludes the report, "it will have an opportunity to aid the State Department and the Governor in carrying out the legislative program which they are planning. There will probably be a report of the survey of the colleges of the State which is now being carried on

under the direction of Mr. Flexner and on that report will rest a regrouping of the institutions and the elimination of much futile and wasteful overlapping. Governor Ritchie's hope to reorganize the State government along modern businesslike lines is one of high patriotism and it is one in which he cannot rely upon the politicians for support. This college problem is part of the plan. Let

us all help individually and through our organizations, when the times comes, but not until we have made ourselves thoroughly familiar with the entire situation. Let us never forget what a mighty tool we have in our vote!"