

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

NEW OCCASIONS AND NEW DUTIES

Serving the State and the Nation

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Then came the Great Depression! The best-laid and longest-visioned plans were not proof against a basic economic disturbance that reached all business and all aspects of life. The full repercussion came to the Corn Belt just about the time that the Twenty-Year Program was issued. The economic upheaval did not invalidate the plan but rather put new demands upon it and necessitated unforeseen adjustments. It indicated, too, that no specific program in material requirement and subject emphasis could be made for two decades when the fortunes of a fortnight—certainly of a quarter—might be seriously in doubt.

THE COLLEGE MEETS THE DEPRESSION

The storm hit the College and the College bowed to it as gracefully as might be. The Diamond Jubilee in 1933 came upon troubled times, but the College had been born in critical years and had lived through other stressful periods. Enrollment for 1932-34 dropped about 25 per cent under that of the 1930-32 years. The state appropriation for the biennium 1933-35 was cut 27 per cent and was increased but slightly during the remainder of the decade in spite of the marked increase in enrollment. The policy was adopted of retaining the regular faculty members but of shortening time in many cases, of employing fewer assistants, and of not filling vacan-

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cies, temporary or permanent. In spite of such measures drastic salary reductions were necessitated.

With all the decreased enrollment the problem of student aid to aspiring, ambitious, but impecunious seekers for special training was a desperate one. Outside employment was at a minimum, fee exemptions were already embarrassing to the budget, and the regular loan fund was soon overdrawn. Emergency measures were the institution of cooperative dormitories where expenses were markedly decreased, rental and loan of books, increase of loan fund by temporary borrowings, and the extension and staggering of student employment by the College. In the later stage of the crisis as well as in the early years of recovery, the federal N. Y. A. grants were a saving provision. Every effort was made to secure placements for graduates—even the most temporary. In this extreme test the personnel system demonstrated its peculiar effectiveness.

AIDING IN STATE RECOVERY

The College's part in the depression, however, was not wholly or mainly one of survival and keeping afloat until the storm passed. It had a very active and positive part in efforts of recovery and stabilization. The research and the extension services turned their efforts to immediate problems of readjusting and stabilizing production, living standards, and marketing. The agricultural economics staff brought out a group of scholarly but popularly understandable studies on the "Agricultural Emergency in Iowa" dealing with all aspects of the background, immediate causes, and proposed adjustments. Especial attention was given by the agricultural economics section of the station to banking, credit, and farm tenure problems. The rural sociology investigators were at the same time concerned with state administration of social security and subsistence homestead projects. Dean Kildee served as chairman and Professor P. H. Elwood

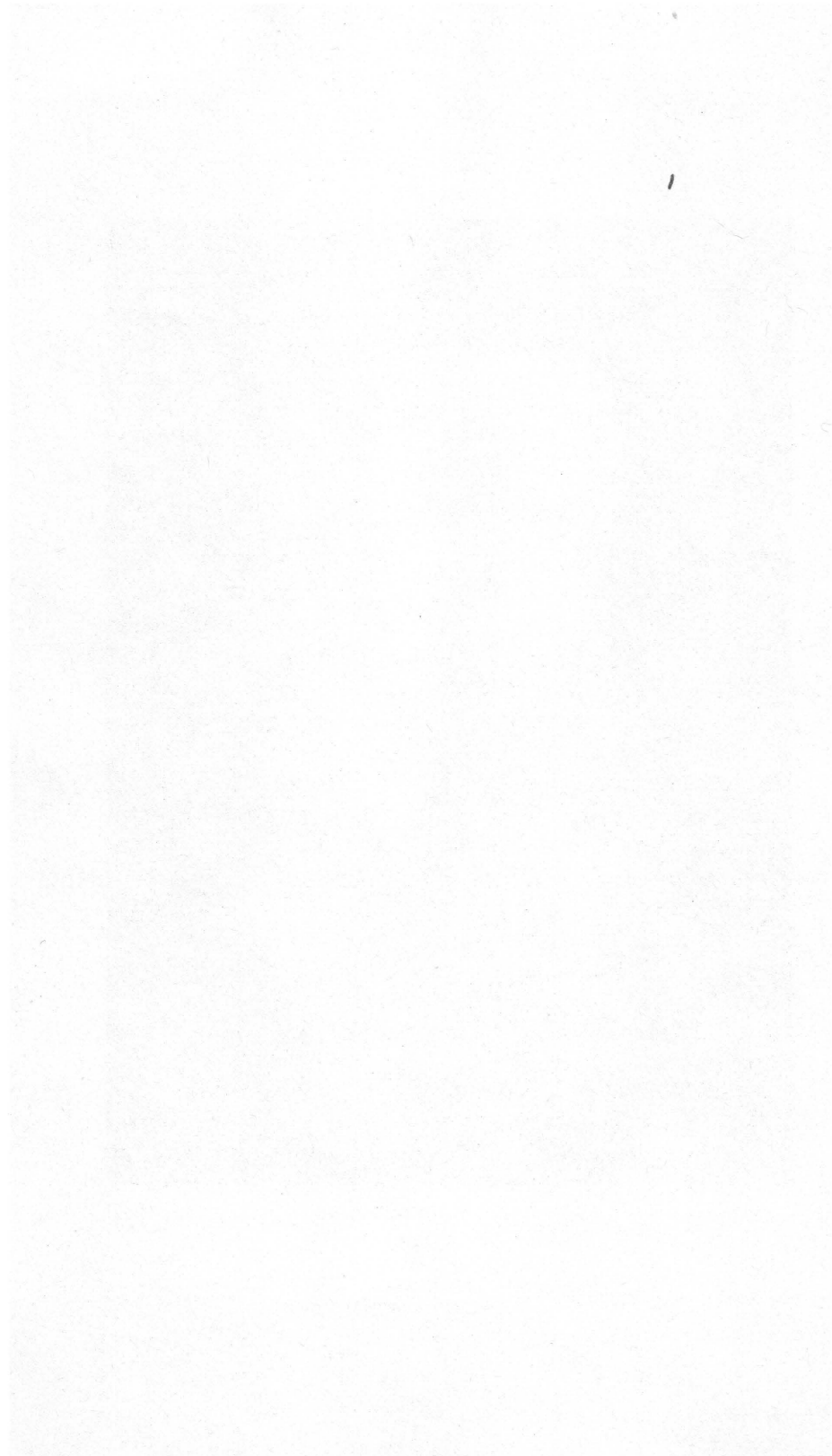


HENRY A. WALLACE



VEISHEA SCENES





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of landscape architecture as technical adviser of the state planning board.

LEADERSHIP AND COOPERATION IN NATIONAL PROGRAMS

Iowa State had a peculiarly intimate relationship to the federal recovery program. Three alumni, Cap E. Miller, '17 G, the father of agricultural club work in Iowa and professor of agricultural economics at the North Dakota Agricultural College, Milburn L. Wilson, '07, of the Montana State College, and Henry A. Wallace, '10, the editor of the paper founded by his grandfather, were the most prominently mentioned names for secretary of agriculture. Wallace was chosen for the position which his father had held in the twenties, and Wilson became assistant, later under-secretary. Other prominent alumni were called to join their fellow graduates in the department and there was an unusually heavy drain upon the College's staff, especially in the Department of Agricultural Economics. There were many temporary appointments and a considerable number of permanent contributions to the federal service. Members of the Department of Vocational Education carried on research in Washington for President Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Education, and Professor Barton Morgan, the new head of the department, collaborated on the volume of the report dealing with the land-grant colleges. Dean Marston was a member of President Hoover's inter-oceanic canal board and served as chairman of the state Merit System Council which organized the social security work. Lester W. Mahone of civil engineering was appointed supervisor of the system.

At the College the exigencies of the hour, economic and social, brought new types of research and service contact which, designed directly for emergency conditions, were to have lasting significance for the college program. Cooperative research of the College with the federal Department of Agri-

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culture, and of the varied departments within the College with each other reached a new high in integrated effort by the establishment of the Corn Institute to investigate all aspects of production, processing, and distribution, and in the similar foundation of a Swine Laboratory. Regional research programs, characteristic of the period were carried on in the study of pastures, erosion, and farm planning. The annual Country Life Institute brought together at the College specialists in all phases of the agricultural problem and its interrelation with the industrial.

In the administration of the federal agricultural recovery program in the state and in regional cooperation, the College was a key agency. The extension staff aided in organizing farmer groups and providing information to the constituency, while the station conducted research on the technical problems involved. The College was thus a unifying and coordinating agency in the administration of state, regional, and national programs, without becoming in any way committed to the policy-determining aspects. The desirable relation of the land-grant college to such policy formulating and testing was admirably and convincingly stated in a study made in 1938 by a representative committee of the staff on "The Role of the Land-Grant College in Governmental Agricultural Programs."

PRESIDENT FRILEY AND THE PASSING SCENE

In the midst of the recovery program there was a change of leadership but without a marked break in the continuity of essential policies. In November, 1935, President Hughes suffered a physical breakdown and was given a leave of absence in the hope that he might resume his full responsibility. Vice-President Friley was made acting president. On February 29, 1936, Dr. Hughes sent his resignation from England, and on March 17, Vice-President Friley was selected as his successor. Dr. Hughes was made president emeritus, and

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George W. Godfrey was appointed to the new position of Director of Agricultural Relations.

The new executive was a representative of a forward-looking type of land-grant educators with vision both of the technical field and the social mission—a fitting head of a land-grant college that had become a “technological university.” A native of Louisiana, his undergraduate training had been secured at the Sam Houston Teachers College, Baylor University, and the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, and his research in educational administration had been carried on at Columbia and Chicago. He had been professor and registrar at the A. and M. of Texas and had organized and become the first dean of its division of science. A specialist in college administration—in which he was to find time to offer advanced courses—he had special training in the social sciences and an understanding appreciation of their needs and values. As a musician of unusual ability he had the fullest sympathy for the cultural emphasis on the campus. The President continued as dean of the Science Division until 1938 when Professor Harold V. Gaskill of the Department of Psychology was appointed to that position.

President Friley's inauguration on October 6, 1936, was the largest and most representative educational convocation in the history of the College. President William B. Bizzell of the University of Oklahoma brought greetings from other state-supported institutions. Dr. Friley's inaugural address on “The Place of the Technological College in Higher Education” was a plea for the broad and inclusive view of land-grant education that would enable it to meet its modern responsibilities. Dr. Hughes was awarded an LL.D. As President emeritus he was to conduct research in special phases of the organization of higher education.

The administration thus auspiciously inaugurated, while falling in the contemporary years of stress and strain, has been none the less one of unprecedented advancement—not only

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in education and scholarship but as well in an increased range of public service to state and nation. The achieving lines of growth characteristic of the past generation and especially accelerated in the previous administration have been carried forward with innovations in harmony with the progressing trends of higher education.

An unprecedented increase in enrollment brought the College into the class of the large universities and raised questions of the future limits of growth. A balanced liberalizing of the curriculum was being made as a proper basis of the sound development of technological education and without the old fears of encroachment and neglect. Continuing efforts for teaching effectiveness gave less emphasis to formal procedures and more to the scholarly attainment and social awareness of the instructor.

Student relationships have involved an increased recognition of adult responsibility. Student government has grown in spirit and substance of participation with lessened emphasis upon forms, procedures, and petty jurisdiction. Student activities have shown the sanity and moderation characteristic of the period. The interest in current issues as discussed in conferences, forums, and student legislative assemblies has been especially marked. The social program has shown better proportion and balance. The religious program has marked a progressive and wholesome adaptation to modern thought and institutional functioning through the continuing work of the Ys, the church foundations, and the instruction and leadership provided by the College. Following the retirement of Dr. Cessna as college chaplain, Dr. Nelson P. Horn was brought to the College as director of religious life and professor of the history and philosophy of religion. Dr. Horn was called to the presidency of Baker University in 1936, and after an interim of visiting professors the Rev. Jack Finegan, who had studied in leading universities and theological schools in this

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country and Europe, was selected to head a department of religious education.

The campus has witnessed a new building era. With extended program, optimum enrollment, and an approach to definite plan, the matured rounded-out campus seemed in sight. The planning has taken account of instructional needs, research facilities, public services, recreation, and esthetic effects. The modern campus, an expansion and adaptation of the plans of President Welch and of the grounds committee of the Storms and Pearson administrations, has owed much to the expert planning and designing of Professor Allen H. Kimball of architectural engineering and Professor Philip H. Elwood of landscape architecture.

The research program of the station has been systematized and standardized at a high level and at the same time individual productive scholarship has been encouraged as never before. Public contacts and services have been progressively extended. The alumni ties are closer and more harmonious by reason of effective organization and sincere mutual interests. Research agencies are dealing with the specific needs of the state's and region's industries, the extension service is bringing the available portions of the college program to every part of the state, and short courses are being introduced and adapted for every cooperating group. The vocational training and direction from the College and the varied functioning of the club work have provided an effective contact with the schools and with the whole range of youth interests.

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

With such inclusive reaches and activities it is evident that the Iowa State College, like other typical land-grant colleges is not a mere "college" in the conventional meaning but rather a great instructional-research-service foundation. As such, this particular land-grant college, so strategic in situa-

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tion and so socially purposed in traditions, has come to realize under conditions far removed from their ways and relations alien to their experience the vision of the long line of industrial education pioneers stretching back a full century: a harmonizing of a state A. and M. college with a national school of science, a reconciliation of the claims of science and practice, an attainment to the truly cultural through a socially utilitarian program, and the truest and fullest realization of the democratic ideal in higher education. With such ideals and such a record of achievement, the College faced the second world crisis of the generation with determined and assured purpose.