

ALTER NCNW LAW TO RE-ELECT MRS. BETHUNE

WOMEN HAVE BUSY SESSION IN WASHINGTON

Chicago Will Entertain Meeting To Be Held October 1942

By REBECCA STILES TAYLOR

WASHINGTON, D. C. — The National Council of Negro Women decided at its eight annual meeting here last week that henceforth stronger and more militant representations shall be made to the various federal departments for a more equitable distribution of opportunities for Negroes to serve national government in its many ramifications.

Details of specific requests and plans for the furtherance of the program have been left in the hands of a permanent corps of officers of the council whose headquarters will be situated in the nation's capital.

The findings of the recent convention will form the basis for the news year's work, it was announced by the president of the council, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune. More than 700 women representing all walks of life, were in attendance on the convention.

The sessions were held in the Interdepartment auditorium of the Department of Labor building, in the dining room of which the delegates took their lunch each day.

On Wednesday night before the opening of the council, the executive committee met at the headquarters of the National Association of Colored Women, 1114 O street, when committees were organized and appointments made.

Registration and other preliminary matters pertaining to the opening of the council composed the work of the Thursday morning session and by noon the convention was in running order.

The opening number was a symposium, entitled "The Role of the National Council of Negro Women in the World Today." Participating in this number were Mesdames Sadie Mossell Alexander, Ora Brown Stokes, Florence K. Norman, Ruth Whitehead Whaley, Mamie Davis, Mesdames Lugenia Hope, W. Gertrude Brown, Mary J. McCrory, Bessie E. Bearden and Edith Sampson discussed resources

Thursday Afternoon

The Thursday afternoon session was scheduled for the White House but the demands for tickets were so large that it was decided to have Mrs. Roosevelt meet with the women at the Labor building. This she did and listened to Vivian Carter Mason tell of "Opportunities for Work and Influence in Social Welfare," Carita V. Roane, "Industry and Labor," Dorothy Height, "Youth Counseling," Sue Bailey Thurman, "Inter-Cultural Relations" and Elsie Austin, "Citizenship." At the close of this symposium, Mrs. Roosevelt spoke. Among the topics touched by her were: "We hope to have bureaus for training volunteers for civilian defense work in which there will be no discrimination and all citizens will be treated alike. The nutrition program especially in the South must be made better. Sanitation must be improved.

"If we are to make our country a real democracy, we must have in mind that everybody has made the country. We are moving in the right direction. Our country was built around an idea." She urged that we do not give up the fight and that we hold what power we have in our hands; for only in that way can we move forward in this country that, together we have built year by year.

White House Tea

Directly at the close of the afternoon session fully 700 women were entertained at tea at the White House by the First Lady of the Land. There was a short musical program highlighted by Sylvia Olden, pianist and Carol Brice, contralto. Dainty refreshments were in abundance and hospitality and good-will permeated the air.

Division of Work

The work of the convention was divided into five divisions and all women were permitted to sit in on the discussions of these committees: Mrs. John Hope, chairman of citizenship; Mrs. Christian Smith, chairman of Spiritual Values; Mrs. Vivian Carter Mason, Social Welfare and Labor; Mrs. Carita B. Roane, Economics and Employment; Mrs. Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Reconstruction or After Peace, WHAT?

Thursday Evening

Mrs. Mary H. Plummer of Washington extended the welcome to the delegates with the response from Mrs. Leila T. Alexander. Addresses from Atty. Eunice Hunton Carter, "The Stakes of Democracy in the Present World Crisis;" Hon. Lucille Foster McMillin, Commissioner, U. S. Civil Service Commission and Lester Granger of the Urban League, on "The Responsibilities of Minorities in the National Emergency." Mary Caldwell Dawson of operatic note, sang. President Bethune was assisted in presiding by Vice Presidents Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Mrs. Christine Smith, Mrs. Estelle Massey Riddle and Harriette B. Hall.

Friday Morning

The Friday morning session was devoted to the work of the committees and the general program. Dr. Dorothy B. Ferrebee spoke on "A Program for Home Planning." The Hon. Paul V. McNutt addressed the afternoon session. He said that

"We are creating a new world—either Christian or not Christian."

A panel discussion of "Immediate Council Objectives" was participated in by Mesdames Mayme Higgins, Jenetta Welch, Sarah Lee Fleming, Margaret Sims, Norma Boyd, Bertha Black, Hattie M. Hale and Harriet S. Butcher. Nannie M. Burroughs assisted at devotions.

Friday Evening

The Friday evening session was held in the Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel of Howard university. Rev. Stephen Spottswood opened with prayer, Dr. Mordecai Johnson, president of Howard, was presented by Dr. Bethune. He extended greetings and made pointed remarks on the work of the council and world conditions today. Dr. Johnson urged that the government "set an example" to private enterprise by employing colored persons. Referring to President Roosevelt's declarations against race discrimination in defense jobs, Dr. Johnson declared that it is necessary for the President's words to be accompanied by action. While there has been much improvement in wider employment of colored people, there is yet much to be desired, he held.

Dr. Johnson said that if what the government does for colored persons is not more far reaching than ever before, the colored people will suffer more than they ever have done since the days of slavery. Hon. A. A. Berle, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State, addressed the council on "National Defense Includes Everybody." He declared "defense is for every one" and developed the thought that in the defense program any idea of race discrimination in jobs may be overshadowed in picking persons best qualified to do certain types of work.

Mr. Berle suggested that under a Nazi regime, the colored people would be relegated to a low standard and said that under it even the chapel in which last night's meeting was held would be "outlawed."

Sees No One As Safe

"We of this nation have something to defend, regardless of race, color or creed," he said, holding that no one will be safe until the would-be world conquerors of Europe are subdued.

Mr. Berle told the assemblage it will be necessary for this country to double the size of its navy, in building up our own internal defense, and added: "We must produce twice as much as this country has ever produced before."

He told the assemblage one of the most important things the National Council of Negro Women can do will be to teach persons in the homes to stop waste—even to wasting a nail. He predicted that before long there will be "shortage after shortage" of many things of which persons of this nation have been used to having plenty, due to the necessity of using materials for preparedness.

Mr. Berle urged that persons seek training to equip themselves for work in the defense program.

The speaker praised the democratic form of government of this nation and pointed out that there are poor men in this country who are better off than those elsewhere who think themselves well off.

Dr. Rayford Logan spoke, after which a "National Defense Round-table" was held with the following national workers participating: Charles Collins, Constance Daniels of FSA; William Hastie war department; T. Arnold Hill, NYA; Frank S. Horne, USHA; Campbell S. Johnson, selective service; Venita Lewis, children's bureau; George W. Crockett; Edgar G. Brown, CCC; Alfred E. Smith, WPA; Crystal

Byrd Fauset, Ira D. Reid, social security; Emmer Lancaster, commerce; Thomas N. Roberts, agriculture; Robert Taylor, defense housing; Robert C. Weaver, OPM; Frances Williams, Jane Williams W. L. Houston and others.

Questions were asked these workers by members of the council and answers given. Howard university's girl's glee club furnished music and Nell Hunter sang, accompanied by Camille Nickerson. Dean of Women Susie Elliott received the guests in the Art Gallery at the close of the night session. Saturday morning was a closed session at which time the committees and conference commissions reported. Election of officers was held. The constitution of the council was revised so as to permit the founder and first president, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune to be elected for another term. She had reached the end of her term set by the constitution.

It was felt that it would be suicide just now to relieve her of the responsibility of leadership. The parliamentarian, Atty. Eunice Hunton Carter presided at the election. The result was as follows: president, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune; vice-presidents, Mesdames Vivian Carter Mason, Estelle Massey Ridley, Edith Spurlark Sampson and Margaret Sims; Dorothy Height was elected executive secretary; Miss Harris recording secretary; Mrs. Bessie Bearden, treasurer; Atty. Sadie Alexander, parliamentarian and Mesdames Ilery, Abernathy, Anderson and Miss Buena Kelly were elected to the executive board.

Saturday Evening

The closing session of the council was the dinner meeting in the dining room of the Labor building. Mrs. Julia West Hamilton was chairman of the dinner committee. Dr. Bethune presided. Dr. William Stuart Nelson invoked the blessing. Louia Vaughn Jones gave a violin selection. Louise Burge sang. The honored guests were Mesdames Mary Church Terrell, Anna E. Murray and Miss Hallie Q. Brown, each brought greetings.

Congresswoman from Ohio, Frances P. Bolton and Walter White were the guest speakers. Mrs. Volgt, president of the National Council of Jewish Women, Mrs. Seigel of the Jewish Women's Congress, brought greetings from their organizations. A representative of the National Educational association brought greetings as did a representative of Bethune Cookman College Trustee board.

Atty. Sarah Pelham Speaks reported the findings of the five committees. They dealt with education, economics, central bureau of information, curricula of schools, international relations and South American relations. The findings touched social security for all, defense program, discrimination of Negro soldiers, union labor and activities, skilled workmen, housing, citizenship schools, army compensation and peace plans against war. Mrs. U. G. Dailey, chairman of time and place, announced that the next annual meeting of the council will be held in Chicago, in October of 1942.