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Miss Florence Fallgatter tells of
Convening In Sweden

by Janet Sutherland

PROOF that baking cherry pies and rearing children is just about the same the world around was found in the International Home Economics Federation meeting held last summer in Stockholm, Sweden.

In spite of language barriers and differences in customs, the delegates from 24 countries were able to understand each other's problems through personal contacts made possible by the friendly Swedish hosts.

The convention meant even more to Miss Florence Fallgatter, head of the Department of Home Economics Education at Iowa State and one of the 40 United States delegates. Her 9 weeks in Scandinavia, England and Scotland fulfilled her life-long dream to visit Europe.

Entertained in Homes

In a group of 12 women with 7 nationalities represented, Miss Fallgatter was entertained in several Swedish homes. One noon they were luncheon guests in the ballroom of the governor's medieval castle, one of the oldest in Sweden. On bus and boat trips the delegates saw schools, parks, museums and unusual commercial centers in Stockholm.

The hospitality of the Swedish families was particularly noted by Miss Fallgatter. She and Dr. Pearl Swanson, who also attended the congress, were entertained by many of the latter's distant relatives there. Several young Swedish women who had studied at Iowa State also wanted their former professors to meet their families and friends.

"It seemed to me that we caught something of the people's problems and their basic philosophy as we visited, discussed and photographed their homes and family life," she said.

The education head tells that she found herself continually wishing that she could stay in the small communities to become better acquainted with the people.

"We gained understanding of the problems and goals of home economists everywhere," Miss Fallgatter emphasized. "It was obvious that all countries are recognizing the importance of child development, home management, family finance and family health problems as well as the usual ones of feeding and clothing the family."

The congress not only summed up progress in the last 10 years, but also looked ahead and set up a committee to work on common problems until the next meeting, temporarily set for 1953 in Great Britain.

The language problem was one of the few barriers Miss Fallgatter experienced in the world congress. On the tours it was handled by placing a language label on each bus. In discussion during the business of the congress it was a different problem. Interpreters had to repeat what was said by each person in Swedish, French, German and English.

"The culminating value which we all seem to sense was that of general good will," Miss Fallgatter concluded. "We made new friends, broke down certain barriers each may have had and left hoping we might have further opportunities for international meetings."

Miss Florence Fallgatter, right, and Dr. Pearl Swanson as they visited the Fredin Garden in Gothenburg, Sweden.