



High spot in a fruitful career: Miss Dunne addresses UN members on U. S. contribution to relief program.

back home after this session of the General Assembly, I'll be an enthusiastic saleslady for the UN as an essential force for world peace in this age of atoms and outer-space moons."

WORKING in public affairs is no new experience to Irene. She's been active in Republican party affairs in California for many years. And she's been even more active in bipartisan humanitarian efforts which have won her awards from such organizations as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the American Mothers Committee of the Golden Rule Foundation, and Notre Dame University. She also has been married to one husband, Dr. Francis Griffin, since 1928 and has raised a daughter who is married and now lives in San Francisco.

Irene represents the Hollywood that often goes completely unrecognized: the stable, thinking, public-minded citizens of the movie colony who don't collect divorces, smoke marijuana, or crack up their cars—and thus don't generate sensational headlines.

"There are a great many thoughtful people in Hollywood," Irene says, "especially among the writers, directors, and technicians. I think they are aware of Hollywood's impact on people all over the world, but even they have no idea of how tremendous that impact is. I know now—from talking with the other UN delegates. And I'm going home and try to tell the people back there what an important contribution Hollywood can make, or how much harm it can do. I hope that someone listens, and that before long a film can be made about the UN. It needs desperately to be better understood by people everywhere. A good motion picture about it could greatly increase that understanding."

Time and again the far-reaching impact of Hollywood was brought home to Irene Dunne at the UN. Dozens of delegates from all over the world sought her out to say how much they enjoyed her movies. One member of the Indian delegation was familiar with every film she'd ever made—including some that she herself had forgotten, or would have preferred to have forgotten.

This led to one embarrassing moment. Some years back, Irene played Anna in "Anna and the King of Siam," a motion picture which gave a sympathetic but rather controversial portrayal of the king. Remembering apprehensively some of her "criticisms" of the king, she found herself rather self-consciously avoiding the delegation from Thailand (formerly Siam). Finally Prince Juan of Thailand cornered her, complimented her on her film work, and made small talk for a few minutes. Then he brought up the movie about the ruler of Siam.

"He said he thought the part of the King was inaccurate and left a wrong impression in the minds of the audience, but except for that it was a fine picture. And he complimented me for my work in it," Irene recalls. "I only wish other international disputes could be settled as easily and as amicably."

The alphabetical seating arrangement in the UN committee meetings has the delegate from Russia (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) sitting between the United States and England (United Kingdom). Through these contacts and casual meetings in the delegates' lounge, Miss Dunne has found the Russians generally friendly and easy to talk with. They are about the only delegates, though, who haven't mentioned her films; delegates from the other Soviet-bloc countries seemed quite familiar with them.

MISS DUNNE sees the job of UN delegate as involving three main areas of responsibility.

First, a delegate must get to know as many of the other 820 delegates as is physically possible, to learn their viewpoints and interpret America to them. This isn't just a matter of winning a few individual friends for your own satisfaction.

Most of these people have influence back home. If they get to know the problems of other peoples and understand them better, they can have an effect upon national feelings and government policies.

As Irene points out: "Before you can get along with people, you have to know them. You have to overcome your own biased and stereotyped ideas about people who are 'different'; you have to learn what motivates other people, the reasons for their actions, and the intensity of their feelings. Our work here

reminds me of the song from 'The King and I'—'Getting to Know You.' It's so simple, and yet so fundamental in international relations today."

The second job of a delegate is more like work: to study, learn, and take an active part in complicated international problem-solving. Each delegate sits on one of the UN committees dealing with specific international problems. Miss Dunne was asked to work on the committee dealing with the 10 trust territories administered by the UN.

Her first speech was on the trusteeship problem of Southwest Africa. She was briefed by State Department officials and given reading material on the issue, a dispute between the UN and the Union of South Africa, which feels that the UN has no legitimate interest in Southwest Africa.

When a retinue of native people in bright-colored shirts and flowing white robes appeared before the trusteeship committee, Irene wasn't watching a group of Hollywood extras in a remake of "The Desert Song." She was looking at real people pleading a real cause—freedom. This impressed her more than a quarter-century of Hollywood ever had.

On Oct. 2, before an audience quite dissimilar to any Miss Dunne had ever known, she made her first UN committee speech, summarizing the U.S. position on the Southwest Africa question. It was a routine sort of diplomatic address, but it gave her a tremendous thrill.

Her first platform appearance in the main arena—the UN General Assembly—was to announce United States financial pledges for the UN refugee-relief programs. She wasn't nervous.

"This was real," she pointed out. "I suppose people aren't so nervous when they're not playing a part."

Once he has completed his tour of duty, a delegate becomes a salesman for the UN. This is his third area of responsibility. He goes back to his home and his job and helps to interpret the United Nations to his fellow citizens. Irene is prepared to embrace this task enthusiastically. And the UN needs saleswomen of her competence and charm because only public opinion can support the UN and make it effective. It can never impose its will against a member state, levy a tax, or enlist a soldier. It exists through the sufferance of the peoples of the world who are earnestly seeking an instrument capable of achieving and maintaining world peace.

"Don't ever doubt your own importance in this effort for peace," Miss Dunne says, "for you and people like you throughout the world make up public opinion, and only this can achieve lasting results in peace-making. I firmly believe that the UN has several times averted war in the last decade. Along with all the other humanitarian programs it administers, this makes the UN one of the greatest bargains in human history. It costs each American citizen 42 cents a year—or the equivalent of what 10 hours of World War II cost us.

"The UN," she concludes, "is tremendous. I've certainly caught the fever for world understanding since I've been here. You know what I'd like to do when my work is finished? I'd like to take a trip around the world and renew the acquaintances I've made at the UN and get to know and understand more people from other nations—and maybe help them to know us better. I may do it, too."

If she does, Irene Dunne will be the most attractive good-will ambassador ever to hit the road for the United States. And from what I saw of the other delegates' feeling toward her, she'll be gratefully received wherever she goes.