This imposing library with fireplace and massive tables serves also as board room and is used for other meetings.

President Leonard Read's bright second floor office was once master bedroom.

Locating such properties was not difficult; almost every community in Westchester County had not just one but several which had been abandoned for taxes, or the next thing to it.

The property now owned by F.E.E. was acquired in July 1946, renovated that summer and occupied that fall. It has 34 rooms (16 fireplaces, not used) besides a huge basement and attic.

The property was acquired for the equivalent of about 15 years' property taxes on it. Renovation was considerably more than this amount, due in part to the fact that the premises had not been occupied for about eight years. But the total investment has provided quarters that would not be available in New York City at any price. F.E.E. now has at least four times the space available that could be rented in New York for the annual maintenance costs involved.

Since this estate was in an area zoned as "residential," an exception had to be granted by the local zoning board before the conversion to offices could be made. (There are, of course, some kinds of activities for which such zoning exceptions cannot usually be granted, so any organization considering a similar move to the suburbs might well explore this matter at an early stage.)

As indicated by its name, the original purpose of F.E.E. was "economic education." Constant conflict in labor and industrial relations; demands for "protective" legislation of various kinds, and for price supports and subsidies; the stupendous costs of two world wars in a generation, with all the problems of inflation and debt management—these and similar problems seemed to point to the need for extensive research and education on economic affairs before the chaos ended in catastrophe.

This original purpose of F.E.E. has continued, but its functions have been expanded to include an examination of those institutional arrangements that underlie the system that has come to be popularly called the American System. Many of these institutions and institutional arrangements—the concept of private property; the idea that individual persons have inherent significance that should not be transgressed by organized society, so long as the individual does not interfere with equal rights of other persons—seem to have become so taken for granted that little effort is made to understand them. Hence, their significance to the maintenance of the American System itself is often lost sight of.

The function of F.E.E. as a private research organization, with no affiliations with other organizations, staffed by some of the best students of these ideas who could be brought together, is simply to examine into these problems and to issue reports that give the results of these examinations. These reports take the forms of single-page "Clippings of Note," pamphlets of up to 60 pages, booklets and full-sized books of up to about 500 pages.

The subjects dealt with cover a wide scope—from the latest one on *Social Security* to *The TVA Idea, Inflation, The Tarriff Idea, Two Ways to Stop Strikes, The Communist Idea, The Bill of Rights, The Origin and History of the Constitution* (in process), *Price Supports, Public Housing, Gaining the Free Market* and a long list that includes more than 150 others.

In addition, study guides are being prepared for use by teachers and discussion groups. And other related projects have evolved during the last eight years as demand developed for them.

One policy inherent in all F.E.E. programs is voluntary participation; releases are sent only to persons who ask to receive them, and the same applies to other materials that are prepared. With limited resources, efficient use of the products of the studies that are made is highly important.

This brief statement of purpose and objectives may serve to illustrate why F.E.E. requires a wide range of talents other than research staff members. For example, a research library is essential, and it is important that a competent person be in charge of assembling desired materials from a wide range of sources. A catalog service—wherein all volumes in most of the libraries in Westchester County are duplicated in this one point in White Plains—is available to facilitate inter-library loans, a most useful service. The multilithing process is used in duplicating many items for various purposes; an addressograph system is used for the handling of the mailing list. Local persons have been trained for these and also the regular supervisory, accounting, filing, clerical and other functions.

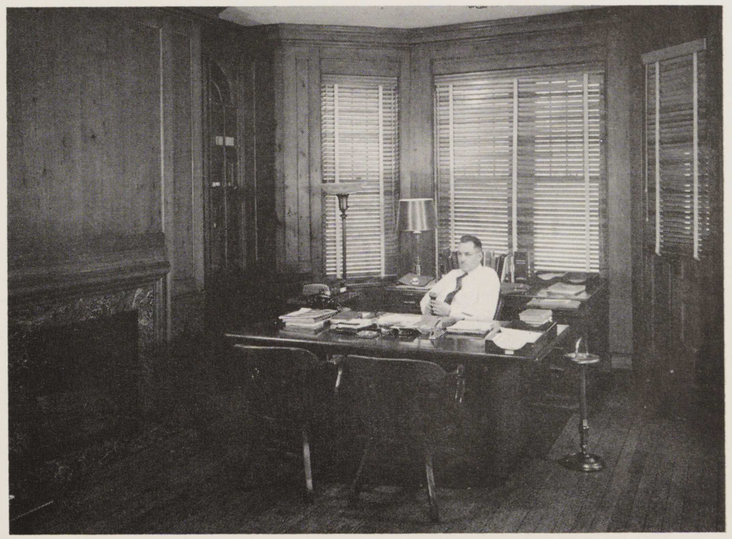
Workers Available Locally

Actually, the problem of finding persons for some of the more highly skilled positions has been solved by persons who have simply said, in effect if not in about these words, "I'm tired of spending two hours a day commuting to the city—and commuting costs money. Do you have something here that could use my talents."

Except for the research staff, only one of those employed at present did not live in the immediate area prior to employment at F.E.E. In other words, almost all the skills that were needed for the office force of 24 full-time and about 12 part-time persons were available in Irvington or adjoining villages.

While it may not be typical, one of the other organizations now located in Irvington reports that it had 11 employees when its offices were located in New York City; the same volume of work is now being handled just as well by seven persons. Perhaps the conclusion is justified that while the atmosphere is somewhat less hurried in a suburban setting, accomplishment is just as good if not

One of the clerical work areas on first floor. Note ample room for future expansion.



Executive Secretary Bierly's den-like office is just off main entrance hall.