

## ABOUT SCHOOL LUNCHES

—Should Your Community Be Concerned—

Have you a genuine concern to see that the children of today grow into strong citizens of tomorrow? In these war days when we speak so much of conservation of resources, what could be more important than the conservation of our human resources—the children of our country. It may be that the job which should be done lies close at hand. The school lunch program is a job for local people—yourself and your neighbours. You may secure technical assistance but the primary responsibility is yours.

Are all the children in your school well-nourished? Have they an air of contentment, plenty of vigour and interest in life, clear bright eyes and an alert, happy facial expression? Or in contrast to this are there signs of malnutrition, lack of appetite, failure to gain in weight, indifference to play and to work, backwardness at school, nervousness or irritability? If you have any children in the second group then there is a job for you and your community right at home.

### School Lunches Are Meals

The noon-day meal should provide at least one-third of the day's food. For one day this is a small item; but, for over one hundred and ninety days a year for the five or six years while the child is at elementary school it is an enormous problem. No amount of good food and care in later life can make up for the lack of the right food during the growing period.

These are the years of growth which lay the foundation for physical and mental health, and offer opportunity for general social development. Moral standards, cleanliness, co-operation, hospitality, social usage and the small courtesies which we can group under the title of good manners are laid in the short noon hour of each school day. The teachers and the pupils need the interest and co-operation of all community groups, working together constructively, if this problem is to be solved.

### Building Good Food Habits

Have the children in your school good food habits? Good food habits established in the growing years are almost certain to be practiced throughout life. Good food habits mean, first, time to eat a wholesome breakfast to start the day and to carry on with an alert mind until noon. The indifference of the child to the school program during the last hour of the morning session is due to physical, more often than to mental weariness. Do your children eat their lunch at recess? A light hurried breakfast encourages the eating of the carried lunch at recess. This interferes with the appetite for the noon meal and encourages heavy lunching after school which takes away the appetite for meat, vegetables, fruit and milk—the builders and protectors of health which should be included in the dinner at night.

Second, the afternoon work depends on what the child has to eat at noon. The lunch hour must not just be a "filling up" or tiding-over idea rushed through as rapidly as possible so that the child can play. It is a time to include one-third of the daily food needs, to make up deficiencies of the other two meals, to put into practice the school health program, to make certain the child is getting his A.B.C.'s—the valuable vitamins needed for growing bodies. Other problems which centre around the noon hour lunch are absenteeism, conduct problems, lack of co-operation, interest and dependability as well as real health.

In schools where noon lunches are prepared and served a large percentage of these difficulties have vanished. Children want to learn good food habits. They want to be healthy and strong and be an asset in their com-

munity. The school does more than teach school subjects, it influences the whole life of the child. It should do what it can to make all living better for him in school and out.

The need for a nation-wide school lunch program in Canada has been supported by a number of surveys and was urged by the Canada Newfoundland Education Association. Mothers, fathers, teachers, inspectors, doctors, health authorities, all know the importance of having children eat properly.

### Canada's Food Rules—A Guide

We have Canada's Food Rules to guide our meal planning and so our lunch boxes should be planned just as the meals at home. The box lunch gives the opportunity for the inclusion of raw fruits which are excellent for minerals, vitamins and bulk. Raw vegetables as carrot or turnip sticks or salads should be found there. Yet these inexpensive healthful foods are a rarity in lunch boxes. Their crispness, colour and flavour perk up a monotonous and drab meal.

Sandwiches are the backbone of the lunch box. The sandwich offers an opportunity to include whole wheat bread, yet, recently in observation made of 260 urban school lunches in Ontario, only 10 had whole wheat or brown bread. Is this because of the child's or the adults' taste? In another school where complete lunches are served and whole wheat bread only is offered it is liked by all the children; and, when given a choice, practically all chose the whole wheat as they acquired a taste for that health-giving food. Sandwich fillings offer the opportunity for using building and a discussion with the mothers help? growth-promoting foods—meats, fish, poultry, eggs, cheese, nuts, peanut butter and raw vegetables. Yet out of 320 rural lunches observed in Ontario schools there were 83 which had only a sweet sandwich. Sweet sandwiches provide only heat and energy. They satisfy the crying hunger but leave the hidden hunger of bones and tissues uncared for and ready for disease.

The beverage of the lunch box should add value, not just be a liquid to wash down the food. Pasteurized whole milk is our most nearly perfect food, supplying calcium, phosphorus, protein, Vitamin A and Vitamin B2. Yet 63 per cent of urban and rural pupils when given a choice chose chocolate drink which contains less milk fat and added sugar. Taken day after day the sugar eventually may affect the teeth. As children readily follow others in eating habits, would a discussion with the mothers help?

### Money for Health

Others methods of overcoming deficiencies are to serve a supplementary dish or a complete lunch at the school. These will require more thought and planning but in general the improvement in health, records, attendance and deportment will readily repay you for your effort.

To carry out lunch improvements may cost you dollars and cents but what use is knowledge without health. There is a difference between health and money; money is the most envied but the least enjoyed; health is the most enjoyed but the least envied. The poorest man would not part with health for money, but the richest would gladly part with money for health. Money that buys health is not wasted.

Today people are willing to work together for the common good. If the local group, the provincial group and the dominion group will work together to solve a common problem, a solution must evolve. This is the ideal method in any democracy.

(Contributed by Miss L. Brill, Women's Institute Branch).

## NEWS FLASHES

Romney, Kent West: Secured about 400 trees from the Forestry Department and distributed them among members and others.

Newbury-Mosa, Middlesex West: Assist the Park Committee in placing amusements in the Park for the young people, have purchased an enlarged picture of Mrs. Hoodless for their Village History.

Orkney, Wentworth North: Are starting a Girls' Homemaking Club and are giving prizes to the school children for the best essay on the history of Orkney School; have had the Institute Hall wired for hydro.

South Gillies, Thunder Bay: Belong to the Plan for Hospital Care and one member has benefited already.

Sparta Sorosis, Elgin East: Has been presented with an historic property known as the Sparta Blacksmith Shop, one of the oldest buildings in the community. They plan to convert it into an Institute Hall and preserve this historic landmark as nearly as possible in its original form.

Bonnechere Valley, Renfrew South: Has purchased a blood bank for the local hospital, costing about \$400.00.

Hurdman's Bridge, Carleton East: Sponsored a music festival in the community.

Utoka, Wellington South: Have three Pen Friends, one in the U.S.A. and two in England. Have sent them a program and copy of Home and Country and in return had a program from them which was greatly enjoyed.

Bethany, Durham East: Put the names of all local boys overseas in a box, each member choosing one to whom she would write. They plan to read some of the interesting replies at the meetings.

Winterbourne, Waterloo North: Are making use of travelling libraries, co-operating with the school section.

Richard's Landing, St. Joseph Island: Had the school wired for electricity.

Rugby, Simcoe East: Our teacher is a member of our W.I. and co-operates with us in our health and community activities such as hot lunches, immunization, etc.

Lyn, Brockville: Promoted Public Speaking Contest in the public schools of the district.

Torrance, Muskoka South: Can any Institute beat the record established at the last municipal election? Every woman except one voted or tried to vote. For a number of years women have been elected to the Board of Trustees (Township School Area).

Pakenham, Lanark North: Bought a radio for the public school to assist in classroom education.

## SPRING MEETING F.W.I.O.

(Continued from page 1, column 1)

Miss Clarke also dealt with the A.C.W.W. Memorandum on Post-War Reconstruction in relation to Education. It discusses education for International, National and Community living and for individual growth. Surprisingly enough, the basic problems in every country seem the same. The Memorandum is well worth study and may be obtained from the Loan Library, W.I. Branch.

### Preparation for F.W.I.C.

Mrs. Clarence Holmes reviewed recommendations from the meeting of the Sub-executive of the F.W.I.C. held at St. Anne de Bellevue, in Quebec. These have been published in the Summer 1944 Home and Country.

Miss Clarke presented the Ontario brief to be sent to the F.W.I.C. Biennial Meeting to be held in June 1945 as prepared by the committee appointed at the November Board Meeting. Matters dealing with reconstruction formed a large part of this. Requests were made for the support of resolutions asking for changes in the Naturalization Act and the Oath of Allegiance. These were based on resolutions from the November Board meeting.

The brief also suggested that Historical Research be added to the F.W.I.C. standing committees; that points be clarified in relation to the Emergency Fund; and that the F.W.I.C. investigate the publication of a National Magazine.

### Song Sheets Ordered

The song sheets, which will be published at once, will be in book form with words only and a few blank pages on which members may add favourite songs. The music book to accompany these is "The Everybody Sings Book" and may be purchased from Canadian Music Sales Co. or firms selling these. The words edition, as before, will be ordered from Mrs. W. B. Leatherdale, Coldwater.

Mrs. Fitcher was appointed liaison officer to the W.P.T.B. for the province; and Mrs. J. R. White, Mrs. P. W. Merry and Mrs. R. Mortley, with Miss Clarke and Mrs. Summers as advisors only were appointed a committee to prepare a Brief for the Royal Commission on Education.

Miss Clarke urged support of the Jam For Britain project, the objective for Ontario for 1945 in 250,000 lbs. The outline for this work will very soon be in the hands of the Institutes.

A heavy budget of correspondence was dealt with, and time was spent in discussion of problems in preparation for the District Annual meetings.

(Contributed by Mrs. N. J. White, Publicity Convener, F.W.I.O.)

## IS IT WORTH WHILE

### To Send Jam?

Here is a letter from an overseas soldier:

"Today I had the pleasure of opening a case of jam sent to the unit I am with, and inside I found the envelope you expected to get sent back to you. Well, I couldn't disappoint you, and in any case we owe all you ladies a debt of gratitude that we shall not easily be able to repay, so will you kindly, on behalf of the men of my unit say "Thank you very much" to all concerned. We have enjoyed such gifts in the past and they are most welcome and your kind thoughts and labors will not be forgotten by us, I can assure you."

"About my life I cannot write as it wouldn't pass the censor, but the news is good over here and we all hope the war, in Europe, at least will end soon."

"Once again, very many thanks for all your labors."

### To Send Seeds?

Here is a letter from the Isle of Wight W.I. County Secretary:

"I have wanted so long to send a few lines of greeting to you, and to thank you and the Ontario Federation of Women's Institutes for the Canadian Tomato Seeds which have given us lovely fruit during the year. You have we hope received letters from Institutes expressing their grateful thanks, as most of them have told us they had written. One thing we do know is, the seeds were very much appreciated and the County Federation would like to thank your Federation on behalf of all for their very kind thought. And how wonderful Canada has been in supplying us with food of all kinds during the war, and never, never will it ever be forgotten."

With the very best of good wishes for the many activities your Federation undertakes."