

USING RURAL SCHOOLS FOR ADULT EDUCATION

In our last issue mention was made of the Universities' Adult Education Board. Since we, the Women's Institutes, are considered the mothers of the community, ever alert and interested in bringing the best to our community family, we follow with keen appreciation the progress of the Universities' Adult Education Board. It is with considerable pride that we accept the tribute paid to the Women's Institutes for their pioneer work in adult education for rural areas. Just 49 years ago plans were started by our women for the first adult education for our rural folk. Now, as a result of a felt need by our people, an expanded Adult Educational program is under way. This will in no way interfere with the progress of the Women's Institutes but rather will provide us with an opportunity and a challenge to bring our communities the advantages for which we have long been striving.

Mr. Norman Lindsay Speaks

Mr. Norman Lindsay, Director of Rural Adult Education, in speaking before a group of township school area trustees, made the following comments:

Canadian Agriculture today is facing a terrific responsibility. According to statistics, our country ranks thirty-fifth in point of world population. Canada ranks first in the production of foodstuffs for the United Nations. For every dollar of foodstuffs produced in Ontario the remaining eight provinces produce two dollars worth.

Our rural young people will be faced with the responsibility of feeding millions of starving people. Many of them at the moment are the junior partners in their home enterprises—many of them will be taking over full responsibility in the near future.

I wonder how well prepared they are to accept this responsibility. One means of measuring this preparedness is to review their educational background. The figures I will quote are obtained from the Ontario Department of Education and cover the years 1931-1941. These years were chosen because they apply to the group of young rural people we have just been considering. Quote:—

"Out of every 100 students enrolled in Grade VIII at the end of May: 79 completed Grade VIII; 53 commenced Grade IX; 46 completed Grade IX; 29 completed Grade X; 19 completed Grade XI; 14 Completed Grade XII; 10 completed Grade XIII.

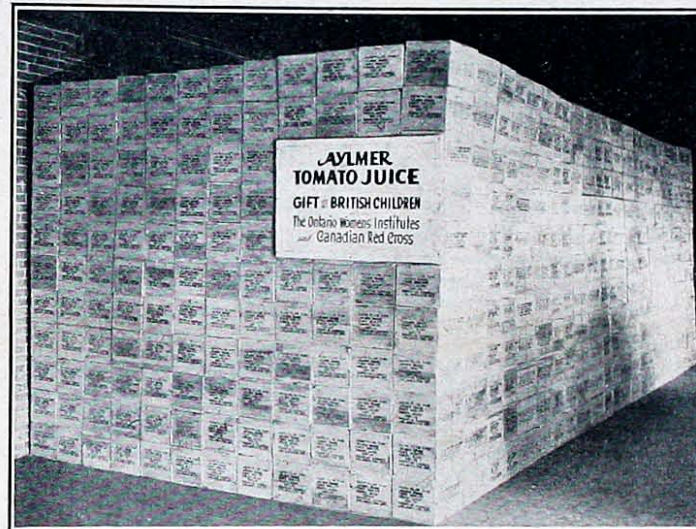
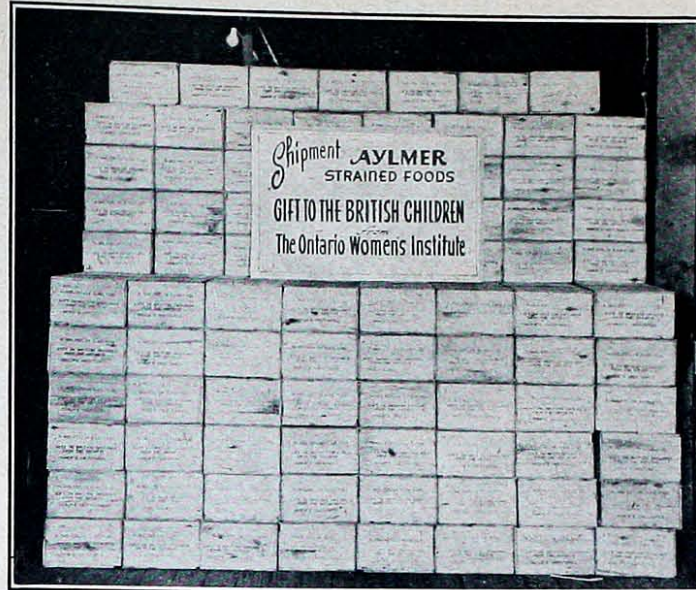
THE RURAL ONE ROOM SCHOOL

Not so many years ago this building played a vital part in the life of the Community. It was used for gatherings of all kinds. In the last few days it has lost this major use. Now is the time to recognize its full value in the Community. Its big advantage is its location. The people can do their chores and still be at the school house in a few minutes to attend meetings or classes. It is possible that the building would require considerable renovation. A good heating plant, toilets, a kitchen, and a library might be added. The building could be painted. A good sized playing field could be readily added to the small school property and a program of landscape gardening could take place. The important thing is this—every man, woman and child could contribute something to the rehabilitation of their school. It would then become their local pride and their local Community Centre and would then provide facilities for all types of group meetings and programs, both educational and social.

SECONDARY OR HIGH SCHOOLS

What are you as a group and as individuals going to do about Adult Education for the 47% who do not enter High School and the 71% who do not go past second year? The Educational Program of Ontario is under review. A Royal Commission has been studying for over a year.

SURPLUS JAM MONEY USED FOR FOOD SHIPMENT OVERSEAS



A total of \$5,946.81 was raised by Ontario Women's Institutes for the Sugar Fund for the year 1945-46. 79 tons of jam, jelly and honey were shipped overseas. The surplus jam money \$3,062.17 was used to send concentrated fruit juices, strained foods and tomato juice to British children.

The Ontario Division, Canadian Red Cross state "It has been a great pleasure to work with the Women's Institutes on the jam project. It is because the Women's Institutes started this project that we were able to participate and assist in sending such a tremendous contribution to Britain".

THANKS RECEIVED

The following excerpt has been taken from a letter received June 1946 from the Women's Voluntary Services, London, England.

"We have just received a magnificent present from the Ontario Women's Institutes consisting of 255 cases of strained vegetables. This lovely surprise present has encouraged us enormously, particularly as every day we read that our rations are to get smaller and smaller. I know that many mothers in this country will be delighted to have the opportunity of supplementing their children's rations with these vegetables. I would like to say thank you to the women who have collected this beautiful consignment for us."

It is safe to say that the Rural Schools will be changed. We now think of larger sections.

Township Area Schools should be large enough and have the staff and facilities to provide for our young people of school age. The facilities could then be used by our adult group in the evenings.

The school should have a Library that is modern in every respect.

I can see our adults coming together for discussion groups. Maybe their thoughts are centred on a book review or perhaps they are studying current events. What would be the effect on our local politics if the nominees knew they would face a well informed electorate?

I can see groups studying local History. Such a program would make many of us swell with pride if we

realized and understood our heritage.

My idea of the new school is one that will provide a program for the Community. I can see groups of teenagers carrying on their program. I can see grandmothers and grandfathers actively engaged in programs to suit their interests.

THE RURAL COMMUNITY CENTRE

This type of school is definitely in its infancy, but it has made a start. During the past winter a school was held at Cayuga and met with marked success. The Department of Agriculture provided a school to give adequate supplementary Education in Agriculture and Home Economics to farm young people who cannot continue at a regular High School.

(continued on column 4)

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN VISITS THE N.F.W.I.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth spoke to the General Assembly, N.F.W.I. of England and Wales this year. We quote from her speech,

"It is difficult to put into words all that a good Women's Institute can mean to a village. It has such great and varied possibilities, not only in keeping the standards of home-making high, and in acting as a centre for the production of useful knowledge, but in carrying out the ideals of mutual help which are implicit in the motto "For Home and Country"

"In our own Institute at Sandringham we have recently started a good neighbour scheme, and we have great hopes that it will prove a blessing to the community. A good augury for the future are the many links of friendship which have been formed at home and far afield by war-time help given and received. We shall never forget the presents which have been showered upon our Institutes by the Dominions. Such kindness touches our hearts most deeply, and forges ever more securely the chain of love which binds our great British Commonwealth together.

"I am sure the gifts, such as our members have sent overseas to Frenchwomen, and the many thousands of garments which have been made by Women's Institutes for the children of Holland, are of greater value than we can any of us imagine, because of the goodwill and fellowship which will be a lasting bond between givers and receivers."

The plan involves a rural Community Centre with fully equipped classrooms and shops where Winter Short Courses can be held. In addition, playing fields, auditorium, etc. will be added if required by the district. The Department has made one stipulation that I think is a wise one. It is the Community's responsibility to show that it needs such a Centre and guarantee that full use will be made of its facilities. This proposed Centre will have as its primary function—Adult Education.

SHIFT IN POPULATION

In recent years a goodly percentage of our young people flocked to the urban centres. In 1871—80% of Canadians were classified as Rural. In 1941—45% were rural. What will be the figure for 1951? That is the problem facing all of us today.

I would like to see a Vocational Guidance program developed for our rural areas, the expert to be well versed in all phases of the Agricultural Industry. I don't think we should assume that just because a boy was born on the farm, it is a sure indication he will be a farmer. Maybe he has the abilities to become an outstanding research man. With guidance, he could possibly be interested in doing his research work in some agricultural field and so, although he has left the farm, his talents are still of real value to his Community.

Far away fields look green. I feel sure that if our rural young people knew more about the possibilities of Agriculture and more about the advantages and disadvantages of Urban life, that we would keep more of the boys and girls in the Rural Communities. Such information would be of value to many of our rural parents, because after all the parents' viewpoint is bound to have an influence on the viewpoint of the child.

Where this Guidance expert would be located is open to debate. He could be located in open to debate. The main thing is that he should be readily accessible to everyone in the Community.

The U.A.E.B. stands ready and willing to assist every organization in the preparation and carrying out of its program. We hope that you will give us this opportunity to help you.