

The Girls' Conference

ON THE LAST week of June, one hundred and eighty-two 4-H Homemaking Club girls from Kenora to Carleton and Essex to Cochrane, converged on the Ontario Agricultural College for a conference on the theme "You and Your Home." They lived in the Macdonald Institute students' residences. They played games on the campus and swam in the college swimming pool. They visited the green-houses and had a bus tour to places of interest over the college farm. They were associated throughout the conference with Miss Florence Eadie, Miss Jean Scott and Miss Lulu Row of the Home Economics Extension Service and the County Home Economists, Misses Ruth Shaver, Marilyn Huber, Robin Fatcher, Barbara Bull, Sandra Thibaudeau and Shirley Bullock. They saw demonstrations and listened to speeches and they did some demonstrating and speaking themselves. They took part in discussions, they asked questions and they learned something about choral singing. They also made a lot of new friends. Altogether it was quite an experience.

A Welcome to the College

Welcoming the girls to the College, the President, Dr. J. D. MacLachlan told them that there was a time when it was considered a privilege to live in the city. Now everyone wants a nice home in the country, and the girl who lives in the country has a great opportunity to create good standards in country life. To do this she needs the best she can get in education and training for the life before her.

Dr. Margaret McCready presented some of the problems of the times affecting family life and some current criticisms of "teenagers."

One of the pressures of modern living is caused by the efforts of advertisers to convince us that the first duty of an American is to be a consumer, that the more conspicuously we consume the more conspicuously we do our duty, said Dr. McCready. So we have the glossy magazines devoted to fashion and man-catching. The age of sex-consciousness is being pushed lower and lower. We see red fingernails even on babies. The corsage business is flourishing—flowers being a must even for the sub-teenager. And fathers are depicted in cartoons, slaving away that their families may consume more conspicuously. At the same time magazine advice columns are filled with emotional problems and suggestions for having dates a-plenty. "What a picture!" said Dr. McCready. "What an indictment of wives and young women!"

Recently there seems to be an upsurge of opinion against this popularity of spoiled youth. Dr. McCready quoted Frank Tumpene

who, writing in Maclean's Magazine, said "Stop pampering our smart-aleck teenagers. They know the answers before you raise the question. They know and they want to tell you." The obvious conclusion, Dr. McCready said, is that there is a gap to bridge between adolescence and maturity, and one way to help is to have more understanding of democratic family life and of the life of the individual members.

Speaking of careers for girls, Dr. McCready said that careers did not necessarily lead a girl away from marriage, and that educated men need educated wives for their own best happiness and development. An education in home economics, in addition to preparing a girl for a satisfying vocation, helps her to be effective in her main job of personal living and in the life of the family and the community. Following Dr. McCready's address the girls were taken on a tour of Macdonald Institute where staff members explained the school's courses in Clothing, Textiles, Foods and Nutrition, Home Planning and Art, Home Management and Social Sciences.

A Girl and Her Home

Rev. W. A. Young, the College Chaplain, spoke on the conference theme "You and Your Home." Following is a part of Mr. Young's address:

"When I started to look up definitions of home I was confused. There were so many because home is something bigger than anyone can put into words. Let's us put it this way. Away back in the time of primitive man when your forefathers wandered from place to place, there were times, just as now, when storms came, or cold, or danger, and the people found a cave where they might have shelter. When father caveman was tired hunting all day, here was a place where he could rest without fear of his enemies. Mother cavewoman could put her babies there, and know they would not be harmed. When Johnny and Mary were out playing, and danger threatened, they could scamper back to the shelter of the cave. That was the beginning of home.

"That is what home still is,—a shelter, a refuge where we find warmth, and love, and safety, and peace. And, in the future, when you have a home of your own, you will look back longingly many times to the shelter of home,—with Mom and Dad to protect you and to love you there.

"Today, the cave has become an amazing place with furnaces, and electricity, with washing machines, and telephones, and television sets. But, essentially, it is still what the cave was, a shelter from the storms of life, a retreat from the hardness of the outside world.