

# A Summing Up By Mrs. Summers

The Eighth Triennial Conference of the Associated Country Women of the World was the first to be held in the Eastern part of the world. To live for two weeks among people of a different race in a strange but beautiful country would mark this conference as one of great interest.

For the hostess society in Ceylon, the Lanka Mahila Samiti, it was a major undertaking, but one which they carried to its conclusion efficiently and graciously. For Western constituent societies, heavy financial commitments were entailed in sending delegates so far and so there were only about three hundred voting delegates and a small number of observers and visitors. In spite of these handicaps I believe that great good may come from the mingling of delegates from the West with people of the East, because we came to know and appreciate Ceylon folk for their many fine qualities and we valued their friendliness and their kindness toward us.

The main concern of the conference both on the Agenda and in Round Table Discussions was the U.N. and its Specialized Agencies. Outstanding speakers told us of the projects and the accomplishments of F.A.O., UNESCO, UNICEF, and W.H.O. Once more we were impressed by the need for members of the A.C.W.W. to continue their

study of these organizations and thus be in a position to help formulate a favourable public opinion concerning them.

Round Table Discussions which I attended were the following: "Means of Preserving and Sharing the Best of our National Cultures" and the one dealing with "Ways and Means of Spreading Information about the UN and its Specialized Agencies." The comments of women who are leaders in their countries merited our complete attention, especially those offered by delegates from the underdeveloped countries. Their problems are greatly due to lack of funds and the poor facilities for happy living for the majority of their citizens.

Perhaps we are not yet able to properly assess the worth of this conference because sufficient time has not elapsed for us to take the long view. But we do know that delegates from so many countries, East, West, North and South, had a common aim which was to work for the advancement and betterment of all people in need of help and to try to understand each other and each other's problems. We shall treasure, too, the friendship of delegates of different creeds, cultures and religions.

MILDRED SUMMERS

twenty per cent of the population is literate, each literate person was asked to teach ten others.

In a Statement of contributions to the A.C.W.W./UNESCO gift coupon project for Ceylon it must have been interesting to Canadian delegates to learn that of all countries Canada made the largest contribution.

## CONSERVING NATURAL RESOURCES

In the Round Table on the Conservation of Natural Resources, some of the questions dealt with when the session broke up into small discussion groups would make very good subjects for panel discussion in an Institute. And some of the problems of other countries will surely make us realize how fortunate we are in our water supply in Ontario—up to the present. These are the questions given to the groups:

"What methods can be used to overcome erosion of soil where grain crops are grown? What can be done to remove minerals from water in wells for stock watering? How can we best study our problems of forest preservation and reforestation? What is the best method of rehabilitating families on virgin land and reclaimed land and utilizing their energies and their natural resources? How can we exercise control over mineral resources? How can information be spread on water conservation, especially work on anti-evap-

oration, irrigation and rain-making, and how can farmers be educated on fire prevention and control? How can we best do long time planning for the preservation and equal distribution of our natural resources?"

In the discussion of these questions it was found that many farmers when ploughing list the land, do strip cropping and plant wind-breaks. In Kenya a Soil Conservation Unit assists with this particular problem and encourages farmers to terrace their land. In Southern Rhodesia a Natural Resources Board with wide powers and run by the farmers themselves conducts an intensive conservation scheme. In Australia, key-line ploughing, similar to contour ploughing is being practised and the land sown with rotation crops. It was reported that in Australia and Canada, anti-evaporation liquid is sprayed on dams and large areas of water. In most countries where bush fires occur, Volunteer Fire Brigades have been set up and valuable assistance in spotting fires is given by Commercial Pilots. Walkie-talkie units are used to help direct operations. Annual competitions among Fire Brigades help to educate farmers on the prevention of bush fires and radio talks to children serve the same purpose.

Water is mostly conserved in lakes and dams. In Australia the gates have just been closed on one of the largest earth built dams. Water thus conserved is used for irrigation and hydro-electric schemes. It was stated in