

Junior Programmes and Projects

HELPING THE LAYETTE LIFT

By Mabel Borgstrom

Junior Institutes as well as Seniors heard the cry for help from Dr. Hitschmanova of the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada, when she sent out her plea last spring for layettes for Arab Refugee Babies.

No doubt later accounts will report on the response which all Juniors gave to this request but the Counties of Peel and Halton were able to have a special part in the presentation of their layettes and so their story has particular interest.

When the subject of Milton Fair came up for discussion with Halton Juniors and a decision had to be made regarding Junior Institute exhibits, the Home Economist suggested, since all four groups were planning to collect layettes, that they make this their feature at the Fair. This provided an incentive for getting the layettes finished and collected, as well as giving a worthwhile topic around which to build their Fair exhibits. Dr. Hitschmanova was contacted and very kindly supplied illustrative material in the form of enlarged photographs of views in the Arab Refugee Camps as well as U.S.C. crests, the story behind the request and pamphlets for public distribution.

The four Junior Institutes of Acton, Milton, Norval and Palermo each set up an exhibit putting forth the plea of the U.S.C. and showing a basic layette of 4 diapers, 2 nighties, 2 jackets, 2 shirts, 1 towel, 1 cake of laundry soap, 1 binder, 4 safety pins. Criticism of this as a Fair exhibit might be that the four exhibits on one topic resulted in monotony and therefore lacked interest. However, the girls felt this was offset by the fact that they were able to show the public how the Junior Institutes were taking part in something beyond their own selfish interests. It stimulated concern in their members too, for the plight of other less fortunate people.

This was not to be the end of the story for in October Dr. Hitschmanova, in her cross-Canada speaking tour, asked that she be allowed to include their territory in her itinerary. Because of convenience, Brampton was selected as the centre with Peel County Women's Institutes as sponsors of the meeting. Women's Institute members from Halton County came as special guests as did representatives from the women's groups in Brampton and a most stimulating experience was that of all who heard Dr. Hitschmanova's message.

The Junior Institutes' special contribution to this occasion was made by Milton Juniors who set up their exhibit from Milton Fair. Each Junior Institute from Halton County also presented one complete layette to Dr. Hitschmanova. Janet Laidlaw, Junior Board Director for F.W.I.O., spoke for Junior Institutes and Junior Farmers all over Ontario, and for her own Alloo group in Peel County, who have taken an active interest in United Nations' Affairs and in the layette project of the U.S.C. Alloo Juniors made their contribution of layettes some months before Dr. Hitschmanova's meeting.

In order that Juniors and others whose work kept them from the afternoon meeting, might have an opportunity to meet and talk with Dr. Hitschmanova, a dinner party was arranged in the evening. This was attended by president and secretary of both North and South Peel Districts of Women's Institutes and representatives from the Junior Institutes of Norval and Milton in Halton County and from Alloo in Peel County. The girls were most enthusiastic about their informal chat with Dr. Hitschmanova over the dinner table and she in turn was thrilled by their interest and concern for her work. She then left by train for Saskatchewan with the feeling that she had had a very fine send-off in Brampton.

Milton Junior Institute set up this exhibit at the county fair to promote the cause of layettes for Arab babies.

