

Twenty - Five Years Growing

A History and Appreciation of
4-H Homemaking Club Work

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HOMEMAKING CLUBS ARE celebrating their twenty-fifth birthday. They have grown from one club project to seventeen, from 200 clubs to 1,400 and from a membership of 1,000 to a membership of 7,800 with 12,000 completions in the past club year. Garment Making clubs in 1923 and Garden and Canning clubs in 1927, started by Miss Ethel Chapman, then Assistant Superintendent of Women's Institutes, marked the beginning of clubs for girls and young women.

In the early thirties it was evident that there was a need for a more comprehensive all-year-round club programme of a study and work type, to replace coaching classes and judging competitions. A Food Club and a Clothing Club came into being, but it remained for Miss Bess McDermid, Superintendent of Women's Institutes, to launch the Homemaking Clubs in March 1935. Clubs for girls and young women directed by local leaders who were required to attend a one-day training school, entirely replacing former coaching classes and judging competitions, were somewhat revolutionary. However, the Women's Institutes, ever alert and zealous to meet the needs and interests of rural daughters, immediately indicated a readiness to share in establishing such a programme. With their loyal and active support and that of the Agricultural Representatives, a few of whom doubted the wisdom of such drastic changes, Homemaking Clubs were started.

In 1935 forty-one counties and districts sent leaders to one-day training schools, over 200 clubs carried on and 1,000 club members planned and made a cotton dress, attended Achievement Days and received their Records of Achievement. Probably no year of club work has given members, leaders and Home Economists a greater thrill, satisfaction or pride than the accomplishment of the 1,000 club members with their 1,000 simple cotton dresses.

The name "Homemaking", selected at the beginning, is basic to the entire programme and expresses the purpose of the clubs — that is, to give members an opportunity of acquiring information and developing techniques and skills in Homemaking, to help them in performing their daily tasks, in meeting personal, family and community needs and to assist them with their personal growth and development. With Canada adopting the name "4-H" in 1956, clubs are now "4-H Homemaking Clubs".

For a quarter of a century thousands of club members have been gaining information, developing new skills, learning to do by doing, doing something better than before, acquiring ability to weigh values, make decisions and express themselves. Club experience has been this and more. It has meant learning to work with others, to respect the wishes of others, starting something and completing it, assuming responsibility, growing in dependability and experiencing the joy and satisfaction of achievement.

The progress and development of each individual club member has been considered all important — recognizing always that what she does is important, but that what happens to her in the doing is of more importance. With the wide range of age and experience, members start at different places, therefore they have been encouraged to strive to improve in respect to their own previous records, rather than to do something better than another club member.

As one who has worked from the beginning with Homemaking Clubs, I am deeply grateful to all who have contributed to their success.

Thanks! Many thanks, to leaders, parents, Women's Institutes, Home Economists, Agricultural Representatives, Departmental personnel and friends who have shared so magnificently in creating, building and carrying on clubs. Your understanding, wisdom, vision, advice, high hopes and untiring effort have built the Homemaking Clubs year by year to their creditable 1960 status.

Great commendation goes to local leaders, legions of them, who have done a tremendous task and really made club work possible. Sincere gratitude is due the Women's Institute, the godmother of Homemaking Clubs, for their sponsorship, for locating leaders and taking a personal interest in members, ever encouraging and challenging them, and for their generosity in providing scholarships for club members.

Parents have played a most important part at the home base as they have opened homes for meetings, encouraged daughters to keep at it and helped them over difficult spots without doing their work for them. Father's pride in daughter's accomplishment, his willingness to try those first food dishes, to give