

The Officers' Conference

NEARLY EIGHT hundred delegates—Public Relations Officers this year—attended the twelfth annual Ontario Women's Institute Officers' Conference at the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, on May 5 and 6. In previous years only half of the Institutes of the province were allowed to send representatives each year. This year the conference covered the whole province. It made rather heavy duty for the Conference Secretary, Mrs. E. V. Thompson and for some members of the College staff, but it provided a stimulating assembly of women.

The Institutes and the College

Welcoming the visitors to the College Mr. J. A. Eccles, Director of Public Relations mentioned some of the services of his Department to the Institutes, such as setting up exhibits for the Royal Winter Fair and other events, taking photographs, "duplicating" manuals, making tape recordings of talks by home economics personnel. At the close of the conference the F.W.I.O. President, Mrs. L. G. Lymburner thanked the College staff especially for their hospitality to Women's Institute gatherings. She said, "If they wouldn't have us, where would we go?" A part of this hospitality particularly appreciated by the women who cook for their families the year round, Mrs. Lymburner said, was the good meals provided by the dietitian Miss Beck and her staff.

Outlining the College programme Dr. J. D. MacLachlan, President, explained that it was three-fold, dealing with education, research and extension and that seventy per cent of the budget is spent in research on the farmer's problems and on extension work. Dr. MacLachlan's reference to the educational programme of the O.A.C. had this point of special interest concerning the two-year or Diploma Course in Agriculture. He said that many boys who take this course and whose fathers are still young enough to operate the home farm for some years without their help, take a job in the meantime—a job for which the course has prepared them. Students who graduate from the degree course in agriculture have a wide variety of specialties—as scientists, teachers, extension workers. With an extra year at Toronto University they can graduate as engineers. Dr. MacLachlan stressed the need of education in these times to enable young people to adapt themselves to change, to think beyond their own experience.

Dr. Margaret MacCready, Principal of Macdonald Institute also emphasized the importance of education in home economics if we are to keep the home on an even keel in spite of the influences affecting it. The research being done in agriculture is not enough, Dr. MacCready said. In home economics we must study not only science but the social sciences and the humanities and the applied fields of food, clothing and shelter; and Home Economics Service deserves credit for

digging into the problems of rural living in the Survey of Farm Homes and Homemakers. Dr. MacCready told of the introduction of a Nursery School at Macdonald Institute last year and stressed the importance of child study for both young men and young women.

Describing the courses at Macdonald Institute, Dr. MacCready said that the Diploma Course, open to girls who have completed Grade XI at high school, could be highly recommended for any young woman. The Degree Course, open to students who have completed Grade XIII, not only equips a girl for an interesting and exciting vocation. It provides an education needed to stimulate her faculties for creative living and to help her to be an understanding, capable homemaker.

Dr. MacCready thanked the Institutes for their support by way of scholarships, and expressed her appreciation of having the F.W.I.O. president on the Macdonald Institute Advisory Committee. She spoke of the need of expansion and said "We want your support in our progress. We must not allow our young women to slump in their education."

The President Speaks

"No operator of a business today, whether it be large or small, can afford to be unaware of the new trends within his industry or of the new developments outside his industry which may affect it seriously," said the Ontario Women's Institutes' president, Mrs. L. G. Lymburner. "As an organization we must accept the fact that times do change and that we must gear our activities to the needs of the people, not sacrificing ideals but providing stimulation of thought and action."

Observing that in the process of earning a living the future will demand from almost everyone more intellectual skills, Mrs. Lymburner said this would be especially true in the field of communications, the ability to convey one's thoughts and ideas effectively and to grasp the thoughts and ideas of others; and that this would be increasingly important for intergroup communications of all kinds.

This art of communication includes language skills (in our case the English language, the French language or both), the ability to express ideas both orally and in writing, concisely, logically and if necessary compellingly. It requires a background knowledge of the world and its peoples. And neither of these is acquired without effort. It also requires the courage to think independently, to be "different" if necessary. Mrs. Lymburner made special reference to the problem youth has to face under the popular pressure to conform. She said:

"Thus many persons of potential value deliberately lose their identity by submerging it in the mass of people with whom they live. They just ignore human problems. Our generation has concluded it is unwise to 'stick our necks out' or to