

her message said "Your aim to educate mothers to make better homes has set the pace for us in every country."

A Message of Inspiration

The provincial executive was both wise and fortunate in securing as guest speaker, Mrs. Haven Smith of Nebraska, a World Vice-President of the Associated Country Women of the World. Mrs. Smith is dynamic and charming, an artist in reaching and holding an audience, forthright and practical, far-seeing and sympathetic. She belongs to the eleventh generation of a family of American farmers and is a graduate of the University of Nebraska. She launched her address from the life story of a great woman, her own "great aunt Annabel."

As a young wife, aunt Annabel left her home in Iowa to go with her young husband to take a homestead on the Canadian prairies. One day a rattlesnake came through the wall of the sod shack and fell close to the baby. Annabel killed it with the fire-shovel, the only weapon at hand.

As the farm began to bring returns, the soddy was replaced by a comfortable farm house and two more children were born. When the oldest boy was ten and the youngest a baby, word came that the husband's mother was dying and wanted to see her son. Annabel said of course he must go. It was winter, the stock in the barn would have to be cared for, but she could manage. Then, soon after her husband had gone, the oldest child was taken ill. The nearest neighbor was eleven miles away, a doctor miles farther than that; she had no one to help her and the little boy grew steadily worse.

In desperation she turned to her little eight-year-old son. There was nothing to do but put him on a horse, give him a note and send him the eleven miles to the neighbor's. He didn't want to go; he was frightened; he had never made such a journey before, and any mother knows how Annabel felt as she watched the tiny figure on the big horse ride over the rim of the prairie and out of sight. She tried every way she knew to save the child who was sick. If only someone would come! But no one came. Only the sky darkened and in a few hours the prairie was swept by a blizzard, the sort of storm in which grown men often got lost and died of exposure — and a little boy was out in it all alone. But there were things at hand to attend to — she put the baby in its "pen" and managed quick, short trips to the barn to do what had to be done. Then she waited; and at three o'clock in the morning the sick child died.

"But," said Mrs. Smith "she must have 'built

a statelier mansion for her soul'. In the morning when a sleigh came over the prairie bringing the neighbor and his wife and the doctor and the little messenger boy safe and sound, they found the stock fed, the cows milked, the house in order, the child who had been sick in his best suit with his fair hair brushed, waiting; and his mother shaken but serene."

Annabel had seven children. One was a doctor, one a missionary, one a college president. Three stayed on the land. She started a Sunday school and a lending library in the community; she helped the sick and suffering and came to be known as the angel of the prairie. She lived to be a very old lady and her influence was with her to the end. The point of the story was that women of her calibre are needed as much as they were in the pioneering days on the frontier.

"You and I stand at a crossroads," said Mrs. Smith. "Since World War I we have lived in a world of terror. And I know it is not the hydrogen bomb that makes a nation great; it is honesty, integrity, hard work, a willingness to hold fast to values. And never before have we had greater need for Christian men and women, especially women, with the courage to do what must be done to preserve honesty, integrity, industry and a sense of real values."

Mrs. Smith protested that people today in a country like ours don't know the meaning of freedom. To many it means the right to do what they like; to some it means getting ready to do, tomorrow, something that should be done today; others, with so much beauty, so many opportunities all along the way miss them because their energies are wasted in things as futile as fear and worry.

Referring to the opportunities for neighboring open to Institute women through A.C.W.W. Mrs. Smith said: "A.C.W.W. won't save the world in one fell swoop, but by hundreds of little acts of understanding." She told of a mother, busy with her family responsibilities who felt she was doing nothing toward a more friendly, peaceful world; and all the time her children, because of her teaching, were making friends of new Canadian children and, through correspondence with children in other parts of the world were drawing whole families together in friendliness and understanding. "Think what such understanding would mean," she said, "if it were multiplied by the six and a half million women represented in A.C.W.W."

Mr. Adam Gaw, Guelph, popular Irish tenor, accompanied by Mrs. Edith Kidd gave a delightful song recital. And Institute members in period costumes presented the pageant "Women's Institutes 1897-1962" arranged by Mrs. Lymburner for the national convention last year.