

Country Women in a Changing World

Notes From the A.C.W.W. Conference

OPENING the Tenth Triennial Conference of the Associated Country Women of the World at Melbourne, Australia on October 2nd, the President Mrs. Geerda van Beekhoff of the Netherlands urged the members to cultivate a fuller understanding of the power and possibilities of their organization. She said:

"When we really succeed in throwing open the famous windows on the world for the individual member, as has been the case with the constituent societies who are very well aware of their neighbors and always on the alert and ready to help and to co-operate, it would be a force we hardly could control.

"Fancy, when all the members belonging, via their society, to A.C.W.W. stood as one body to pay their pennies (or their coins) for friendship, we would have no financial problems in contributing to the Lady Aberdeen scholarship. How many a woman from a less fortunate area we could help in her training to help her women who are depending much on the best form of extension we can think of! We could release a wave of direct self help. In a joint effort we could stamp out at a terrific speed hunger and malnutrition."

The president asked "How can we distinguish the worthwhile from the things of no value at all? As 'the hearts of the home,'" she said, "we are asked to have the confidence based on knowledge to be able to guide a younger generation, to understand our husband's new farming methods, to know what we are buying in our new household gadgets and spending the family income. Psychological research should have a woman's interest to enable her to fully understand those around her, her fellow travellers to the better world we hope for." But Mrs. van Beekhoff reminded the women that some of these fellow travellers are women in countries far away and that every member of the Associated Country Women of the World needs to be aware of the importance of her co-operation in a world in which we will become more and more interdependent.

Nearly 3,000 women from 25 countries and representing a membership of six million met at this conference to discuss "The Country Woman's Part in a Changing World." Among the Australians at the opening reception were two aboriginal women from the Northern Territory who received an especially warm welcome. Members of the Maori Women's

Welfare League in traditional costume were there as observers. The Fijian group, also in national dress "tall, striking women, were noticed for the grace of their carriage." Scandinavians added color in the vivid reds and blues of their long flowing skirts edged with native embroidery. A representative of the All-Pakistan Women's Organization wore a sari of peacock blue banded with gold and embroidered with sequins. The leader of the Irish delegation was in white lace and carried a handkerchief of Carrickmacross lace which she had made herself. And one reporter says: "Another national touch was the sash of the McGrigor tartan worn over a strapless evening gown by Mrs. D. M. McGrigor, treasurer of A.C.W.W.

The four special concerns of the conference were listed as Food and Friendship, Leisure and Learning.

Freedom From Hunger

At the last conference in 1959, A.C.W.W. pledged five years' support to the Freedom From Hunger Campaign and one of the key speakers at this conference was Mr. Frank Weisl, Assistant Director of F.A.O. (Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations). Following are excerpts from Mr. Weisl's address:

"The Freedom From Hunger Campaign was officially launched by F.A.O. just over two years ago. Its objectives were and are twofold. First, in the developed countries the campaign seeks to arouse and educate public opinion to just how immense is the extent of undernutrition and malnutrition in the world, to the threat which this poses to our peaceful and orderly progress, and to the need for a continuously expanding mobilization of efforts toward helping the developing countries in their economic plans and tasks. The campaign's second aim is to help the developing countries to help themselves in their agricultural development.

"For example, many developing countries lack basic capital for investment in land improvement. Then, incentives to the farmer to increase production, such as credit and marketing facilities, are often not available in sufficient measure . . . or not available at all. Also, badly organized in many countries are the extension services needed to bring the knowledge of modern farming and nutritional practices to rural communities. Agricultural services designed to help the farmer in such