

The Officers' Conference

Leaders of Discussion Groups. Left to right: Front row, Mrs. R. C. Walker, Chairman of District Tweedsmuir History Curators' group; Mrs. George Bolt, Mrs. B. Brownlee, Chairman Home Economics and Health Conveners; Mrs. Clarence Mann, Mrs. Elton Armstrong, Chairman Presidents' group. Second row: Mrs. Maryn Pardy, Mrs. F. Moyer, Mrs. J. Sherman, Mrs. B. R. Connell. Third row: Mrs. J. Hermansen, Mrs. R. Johnston, Mrs. Keith Arnott, Mrs. H. Durham.



NEARLY SIX HUNDRED WOMEN representing about every county and district in the province attended the eighteenth annual Ontario Women's Institute Officers' Conference at Guelph University on May fourth and fifth. This year the conference was for Branch Presidents, Branch Conveners of Resolutions and Home Economics and Health, and District Tweedsmuir History Curators.

Mrs. Leonard Trivers, Past President, F.W.I.O., introduced the new provincial President, Mrs. Everett Small, commenting on the originality Mrs. Small had shown in her thinking as a former F.W.I.O. Board Member. Mrs. Small, replying, told that a friend, trying to encourage her when the responsibility of her new office seemed very formidable, had said: "Look at Mrs. Trivers. She carried it for three years and ended with her head on her shoulders and her feet on the ground."

The theme of Mrs. Small's address to the conference was the Mary Stewart Collect. She told how the young Colorado school teacher, Mary Stewart had belonged to a women's club and had found it good except for some of the smallness and pettiness that sometimes crept in to spoil things. So she wrote this prayer and showed it to the president who began using it in the meetings. This was in the early 1900's. In 1904 it was published in an obscure corner of a magazine; and by 1910 it was the official prayer of thousands of women's organizations.

"As you repeat the Collect, remember that it is a prayer," Mrs. Small said; and she emphasized the special importance of the last clause, "And Oh, Lord God, let us not forget

to be kind." "We feel a special warmth; we hold our heads higher in the presence of a kind person," she said. A study of the lives of great men and women showed that they all had the quality of kindness—as for example Florence Nightingale and Edith Cavell. As Institute members, Mrs. Small asked the women to check their own habits of kindness. Do they speak to newcomers at a meeting and let them know they are glad to see them? Can they listen to another woman's trouble and not divulge a confidence? "Kindness," said the president "is as much an art as painting or figure skating."

Substituting for Dr. J. D. MacLachlan, N. R. Richards, Dean of the Ontario Agricultural College, welcomed the conference delegates. "We are pleased to welcome any group to the University campus," Dean Richards said, but we are especially glad to welcome those such as the Women's Institutes who have been our friends for a long time." The Dean spoke of the marked changes in agriculture in the past decade. One of these was the new emphasis on food. Not long ago we were concerned with surpluses. Now we are assured that we are coming into a period when there will be a market for all we can produce. This means that we will need more people educated in agriculture and home economics. We are short of resource persons, researchers, technicians and labor at production level. In order to take more students at the agricultural college and Macdonald Institute an extra semester had been opened to Grade XIII students in April. It was of interest that of the twenty-three students admitted, nineteen came from Ontario farms.