

Institutes and Agriculture

The Hon. W. A. Stewart, Ontario Minister of the Department of Agriculture and Food congratulated the women on what the Institutes have done to lift the standard of living in the province, on their influence on both home and community life and on their provision of scholarships, both for post-high-school education for Ontario girls and in the Freedom from Hunger crusade. He paid a compliment to their work with Tweedsmuir Histories, recording local history so important that the Department of Education is recognizing the books in the teaching of history in schools. He thanked the Institutes for their part in supporting and promoting 4-H Homemaking Clubs for girls and had a special word of appreciation for homekeeping women and their influence on "the way youngsters think and act and develop a sense of responsibility and a response to discipline." He spoke too of the part many farm women are taking in farm management, especially in the keeping of farm accounts. "Our farm income has not kept pace with the cost of things the farmer has to buy," the Minister said, "which is one reason why the Department is interested in farm accounting."

The Minister suggested that women could be of special help in urging care in the use of pesticides. Modern agriculture cannot be carried on without pesticides so we have a responsibility to study directions and to exercise care in using them. Along the same line, the farm wife can do a great deal for safety on the farm by bringing to the attention of her husband and family the need of care in handling machinery and livestock.

Mr. Stewart spoke of the steadily growing need of education. Three-fourths of the young people on Ontario farms, he said, must be educated for off-the-farm jobs. The Universities and the technical schools would attract many of these. And the Department of Agriculture, along with its agricultural schools at Kemptville and Ridgetown will provide a school for northern Ontario young people on the Experimental Farm at New Liskeard. Across the highway from Guelph University the Department will build an Agricultural Complex, including an auditorium for Women's Institutes and other organizations (because the University will have new demands on Memorial Hall); and there will be dormitories and class rooms for agricultural diploma course students. Also the Department is introducing a pilot project at Kemptville, to train inexperienced young people for work on farms and to give short courses to retrain farm people in new farming techniques and farm management.

The women appreciated the Minister's report of government response to two Women's Institute resolutions: first the government's rejection of an effort to lower the age for legal drinking; second, replying to a resolution asking that something be done to get more dentists (and doctors?) to serve in rural areas. The Minister reported that plans are underway to provide two more schools of dentistry in Ontario, and that bursaries are offered to either dental or medical students who will contract to serve for a definite time in a rural area.

Mr. Stewart paid tributes to several women for their contribution in public life: Agnes McPhail and Mrs. Ada Pritchard, Madam Vapier and others but he still declared his belief that the thousands of homemakers and mothers in this country have an influence that cannot be duplicated by anyone else.

Home Economics Extension Service

Introducing a symposium of specialists on the Home Economics Branch staff, the Director, Miss Helen McKercher said that education for adults is changing just as fast as education in the secondary schools. Through the efforts of Adelaide Hoodless, as far back as 1903, Macdonald Institute was opened because women needed education in homemaking. At first teachers from Macdonald Institute had gone out, occasionally to lecture and demonstrate to Women's Institutes. Later the women asked for courses of a series of lessons and this was the beginning of the first itinerant demonstration-lecture courses in Foods, Sewing and Home Nursing. Since then Departmental services have changed with the changing needs of the homemaker. "We want to meet your needs," Miss McKercher said, "but we don't want to give services that are men-



Dr. W. A. (Padre) Young as song leader. No wonder the community singing sessions were so popular.