

Services for the Elderly

From Canadian Nutrition Notes Meals on Wheels

At the present time there are six centres in which Meals-on-Wheels projects are in operation (Brantford, Peterborough, Winnipeg, Toronto, Calgary and Kingston). At least six other centres have projects at a definite planning stage.

The first Meals-on-Wheels project in Canada, that in Brantford, was supported by the Red Cross, as is one of those presently planned in Toronto. Other projects are sponsored by church groups or volunteer social service agencies. (In the United States there are four Meals-on-Wheels projects sponsored by hospitals and utilizing dietary department facilities .

In a fully developed Meals-on-Wheels service there is usually delivery five days a week of a hot noon meal and a cold evening meal. Most of those now operating in Canada in their initial stages of trial and development are providing one hot noon meal per week, although one at least has commenced with a hot meal for five days per week.

It must be appreciated that home delivery of meals is a complex operation in food preparation, packing, transportation and serving, requiring a large number of volunteers. There are multiple problems of organization, food preparation and handling, sanitation, financial administration. Apart from administration and marketing the food preparation requires usually four to six workers, who also pack the prepared food into the hotpacks and hampers for transportation. While the food handling is generally under supervision or guidance of a professional dietitian, the use



At left, Mary Silverthorn, 1966 winner of the Flora Durnin Grey County Ontario Women's Institute Scholarship, with Miss Flora Durnin, recently retired County Home Economist, centre, and the newly appointed County Home Economist, Miss Lera McCormich. Mary has completed thirteen 4H Homemaking Club projects and is assistant leader of the present local club. Her plans are to attend Teachers' College this fall and to teach Kindergarten next year.

of kitchen facilities not designed for this type of operation demands additional caution regarding sanitation. In the most common method of operation three volunteers will accompany each car: a driver, one volunteer to handle the hot-packs and hampers in the car to assist the server, a member who actually takes the food into the home and serves it up for the client. Such a team of three members will commonly serve six to eight clients. Thus, without allowing for any replacements or rotation, providing service for 12 clients requires a minimum of ten volunteers, for 24 a minimum of sixteen, who will give at least three hours of their time for each day of meal service.

(Editor's Note: If a Meals-on-Wheels service is to be provided in a small centre might it not be practical to get a local restaurant keeper to supply both the meals and their delivery as an experiment? There may be communities where volunteer workers are not available.)

A pertinent question to answer with regard to home meal delivery, and one which determines the scope of the operation within the community is, "Who can benefit from the service?" Can we agree that we are not benefitting an individual where the service promotes social isolation? It would seem advisable that for any recipient of long-term meals-on-wheels service the situation should be reviewed periodically to ascertain that social contacts are adequate to maintain a healthy mental outlook, and, if not, to determine what other mode of service is advisable to encourage broader social activity. Neither should home delivery of meals be permitted to be a half-step



Welland City Women's Institute entertained at a luncheon for a visitor, Mrs. D. Fry, past president of Dorset Women's Institute, England. Mrs. Fry is seated. Mrs. J. T. Green, left, pen pal of Mrs. Fry, presented her with a silver Maple Leaf pin.