

Work and Play

Dr. John T. Powell, Professor and Director of the School of Physical Education at the University of Guelph addressed the Conference delegates using the theme, "Work and Play."

Quoting L. P. Jacks, a head master in an English School, Dr. Powell said, "A master in the art of living draws no sharp distinction between his work and his play — he hardly knows which is which."

Work must be looked upon in the light of accomplishment, of mastery, just as craftsmanship always was — not as a necessary evil. Through achievement, by skill and work we have a chance to expand and our work becomes a part of us. We need challenging work, work which allows certain success. Happiness comes from facing up to challenges with the hope of success; we need struggle where the outcome is in doubt, where there is no guarantuee. The University of Manitoba opened with a group of 4H Girls' Homemaking Club members carrying the flags of provinces to the platform. Music by the official music conductor Mrs. Elma Gislason accompanied by Mrs. E. R. James provided a background for the presentation of the flags.

With Mrs. Clarke presiding, the formal sessions were opened by singing O Canada, repeating the Mary Stewart Collect and a moment of silence for Women's Institute members no longer living. A message from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth patron of the Women's Institutes was read.

Greetings were read from the Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, who said in part "Participation in the work of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada encourages women to take part in public affairs."

Other greetings had come from the Honourable Jean Chrétien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, who said that he was impressed by the work of the Women's Institutes in Northern Canada.

Other greetings and welcomes came from the Honourable H. A. Olsen, Federal Minister of Agriculture; Assistant Deputy Minister Dr. Austin representing the Honourable Edward Schreyer, Premier of Manitoba; Winnipeg Mayor Stephen Juba; Fort Garry Mayor R. A. Wankling; Dr. H. H. Saunderson President of the University of Manitoba and Mrs. A. J. Poole, President of Manitoba Women's Institutes.

"If leisure time is not to be a burden then we must start now to educate, to prepare for the wise use of time."

Dr. Powell said, "Let us define work, play and recreation."

Work. Accomplishment in any sphere of activity by whomever it is employed. It is not what is done that matters, it is what the work does to the individual that matters. If the worker does well he or she will see significance in living today and have faith for and in tomorrow.

Recreation. Quoting the late Dr. Jay B. Nash, Dr. Powell said, "As work becomes mechanized and ceases to be an outlet for creativity, recreation comprises those activities which form an outlet to creativity, both in a physical and a spiritual sense."

Play. Play is just for the heck of it. It requires no excuse or apology. He who indulges in play is just being what he is with his limitations, habits and attitudes and with all the motivations that drive him to express himself.

Thomas Edison said that his work was his play — for him there was no line between work and play. At the highest levels of life the distinction between work and play fades to nothingness. A great artist finds his play in his work. Is a superb artist playing a concerto working? Of course he is but he cannot perform unless he enjoys it for otherwise it would be a poor performance. Play becomes art when done as well as possible. To the elite men work and play are synonymous.

In conclusion Dr. Powell referred to his warning that now is the time to prepare for work, for recreation, for play. "Get the best education you possibly can," he said, "and keep yourself mentally and physically fit."

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If Dr. Powell would excuse me, I would like to say that his quote from Thomas Edison, to the effect that his work was his play, best expresses my feelings of this Conference. Locked doors of my mind were opened by the speeches, tours, and discussion, and I was able to reach a decision as to my career. I feel I can honestly say the most interesting hour of the Conference was the talk given by Miss Helen M. McKercher on the topic, "Investments in Yourself", though many other activities follow in a close second.

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