

The Twenty-Sixth Annual Women's Institute Officers' Conference

Explaining the conference theme, "Thought and Learning are Worthless Unless Translated into Action," Mrs. Austin Zoeller, President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario urged the delegates that when they returned to their own branches they would project their thinking and ideas. "Try to establish a two-way flow of conversation," she said, "and if this two-way flow is carried on among the 31,000 members, the Women's Institutes will become Adult Education Centres."

Dr. Branion, assistant to the President of the University of Guelph welcomed the delegates to the University and told of his high regard for the work of the Women's Institutes.

Miss Helen McKercher, Director of the Home Economics Branch of the Ontario Department of Agriculture and Food brought greetings to the delegates from her department. Miss McKercher spoke of her constant admiration for the work of the Women's Institutes, mentioning particularly the sponsoring of the 4-H Girls' Homemaking Clubs and congratulating those Women's Institute members who are leaders of the Clubs. The Director also mentioned the participation of the Women's Institute Branches in the program of the Home Economics Branch, expressing pleasure at the enthusiasm shown for the various short courses, local leader training schools, forums and workshops offered. At the conclusion of her greetings, Miss McKercher introduced two of her staff members who were attending the conference. They were Miss Jean Scott, Supervisor of Junior Extension, and Miss Dora Burke who had arranged a fine display of the samples of some of the work done in the courses offered by the Home Economics Branch program.

Farmers Are Staying Put, Not Leaving The Land

Dr. Helen Abell, a Sociology Professor at the School of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Waterloo addressing the 630 conference delegates explained her theory that farmers, especially self employed farmers, are "staying put." Dr. Abell was basing this theory on statistics gathered in a survey first conducted in 1959 and then again in 1968 in which 352 farming families were interviewed. In the nine year period, 218 of the same farm families had not moved. Seventy of the families which had moved had gone to a nearby village or town for retirement and 4% of the remaining farms were occupied by new families.

Using the topic, "The Hypothetical Agricultural Ladder" Dr. Abell divided the farmers into four categories — the unpaid family worker, paid farm workers, those combining farm and non-farm work, and the self-employed farm operator. "In the survey," Dr. Abell said, "it was discovered that farmers' sons, those who worked on the farm unpaid, were most likely to stick with farming because it was traditional and they were expected to one day become self employed farmers. Changed social attitudes towards farming may be one reason why many sons are staying. Society by and large used to feel sorry for the farmer, but this isn't true today. Because of modern technology and farm machinery the farmer's image has changed."

"Encourage young men who want to farm to stay with it," urged the speaker. "There most certainly is a future. Someone has to produce the food we are consuming."

Captions for pictures on page 5

1. Discussion Group Leaders at the 1971 Officers' Conference of the Ontario Women's Institutes. 4th row from left, Mrs. R. C. Alexander, Mrs. Fred McBride, Mrs. James Bird, Mrs. George Meredith. 3rd row, Mrs. Harvey Noblett, Mrs. John King, Clarence Shoemaker, Mrs. Roy Westlake, Mrs. John Rumble. 2nd row, Mrs. Wiseman, Mrs. Edison Sine, Mrs. Carman Stubinski, Mrs. Ercell Merritt, Mrs. Calvin Carmichael. Front row, Mrs. Clarence Diamond, Mrs. William Miller, Mrs. Austin Zoeller, F.W.I.O. President, Mrs. Stanley Bride, Mrs. R. C. Walker, Mrs. Vern O. Hare.

2. Mrs. Austin Zoeller, right, with the Discussion Group for District Presidents.

3. Mrs. William Miller, right, with the Discussion Group for Secretary-Treasurers.