

Conveners' Speak

AGRICULTURE AND CANADIAN INDUSTRIES

Mrs. John A. King, Convener



These are very trying times in the agricultural picture. At the time of writing, there is very sad news of many millions of eggs rotting in storage when so many people of the world are starving, and when we, as consumers, find our market basket less full each week as we try to meet our food budget. As producers, we are indeed unhappy when we realize the amount of work, time, feed etc. that went into producing those eggs. However, as consumers, let us not be too critical of the marketing system until we know all the facts. There are accusations from representatives of the Food Prices Review Board, Canadian Association of Consumers, and even newspaper analysts condemning the system and marketing boards in general. But we must say to them that producers do have to have some control over supply. Remember twenty-five years ago when eggs were selling at 60-75c per dozen. (I remember because I was delivering eggs door to door for my father in those years!) And think how production costs have multiplied since then. Just two years ago my W.I. neighbour was getting 18c a dozen!

At the present time too, there are members of society who feel consumers should be represented on marketing boards. Would those same consumers want other segments of society sitting on the financial boards of their husbands' business telling them how much they should receive for their products or professional services? Many of us question the right of those same people to decide the prices of our farm products. This does not condone what has happened regarding the bad eggs, but do let us not condemn the marketing system until we have something better to offer.

An article in one of the periodicals which pointed out that in early August, the peak of our growing season, there was a wide discrepancy between various chain stores in their use of Ontario-grown produce.

— the independent IGA in Harrow advertised 100% imported produce. This is right in the heart of one of our major growing areas.

— compare this with the corporate IGA's in Toronto that had about 80% Ontario grown produce advertised.

— Steinberg's advertised about 50% Ontario grown produce, while Food City advertised about 60% Ontario grown produce.

— Red and White had 3 of the 4 items listed as Ontario grown and Dominion and A & P topped the list with 100% Ontario grown produce listed.

— Loblaws, in spite of a great proclamation in the papers some two weeks earlier to the effect that they were providing consumers with Ontario grown fruits and vegetables, did not list a single Ontario item in their advertisement. In fact, not only did they not advertise Ontario produce but, to date, they have refused to purchase any early Ontario apples. Their policy has been to import apples from the States."

Unfortunately many urban people feel farmers are "just raking the profits in" when newspapers report the costs of food increases are due to increases to the farmer. Let us not hesitate to tell our friends our side of the story — our increased costs, the percentage that is still being taken by others in the market chain. We should continue to remind them of some of the ways in which they can save money — by buying directly from the farmer, by "pick your own" farms or by using the farm-owned retail outlets.

The structure of our organization is such that good programming is the key to our success. So let us keep in mind, speakers, panel discussions etc. that can keep us informed and up-to-date on problems pertaining to agriculture and its related industries.

So the onus is on us as shoppers. Let us check the ads. Let us support our own agricultural products and support the store that supports our husbands' industry!

CITIZENSHIP AND WORLD AFFAIRS

Mrs. John Hermansen, Convener



"Responsible Citizenship" has been accepted as an ideal — an outgrowth of "Home and Country".

Are we living up to this ideal? Or do we say — "We are not really interested in what the governments, at whatever level, expect of us as responsible citizens".

As we near the close of this year 1974, we will have municipal, regional, town, city and metro elections in a greater part of the province. Are you fully aware of the ideals and platforms of each and every candidate? Do you accept your responsibility and cast your ballot for the individual who best represents these ideals?

It is very important to our members of the Women's Institute to know the existing laws as they refer to women, to know what recommendations are proposed, and to have, if they wish, a say in any changes that are made.

The Ontario laws on Family Property and Women's Rights, are about to be revised. The Law Reform Commission has made some recommendations that should be studied by us all.

To get copies of the existing laws write: Ontario Law Reform Commission on Family Law, Queen's Printer, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario.

For 25¢ you can get a copy of "Ontario Married Women's Property Rights" and a Summary of the Recommendations of the Ontario Law Reform Commission. Send your request to: Ontario Committee of Status of Women, 511-300 St. Clair Ave. W., Toronto, Ontario M4V 1S4

Please study these carefully and make your views known to the Attorney General, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario.

Also may I suggest that you get a copy of "What's Been Done" by Katie Cook. This is a report by the