

Miss Helen McKercher

The Director of the Home Economics Branch said one of the nice things about Officers' Conference is that Spring is either here or about to be. In a sense this means that many Branches are getting ready to have new programmes or are deep in plans for the next year. Many of you are new officers and you are reviewing the current year and stacking the pluses and minuses here. This is what Officers' Conference is all about. We hope you will all share your plans and evaluations with one another.

We are indeed appreciative of your support and interest in the Nutrition Workshops, paying for halls and advertising. Approximately 4000 women have attended. Your support for the Nutrition Workshops is a vote for progress — you are not through. It is an investment in dramatic and responsible action.

It is a guarantee that noble purposes will become realities in which we can all take pride, if we do some of the things suggested by the W.I. An evaluation sheet (see centre fold in this issue) is to be filled out by the members, could you do this at your next meeting?

Education changed behavior in a desired direction, evaluation will help in the process of determining the extent to which our objectives are being achieved. Are W.I. members changing some food habits at home or in the Community? If we ask the right questions, we hope to have some reliable information. We want to be able to say, as a result of the Nutrition Workshops, a national and international project, the Ontario W.I.s have done this. In other words, we will be able to say, the Women's Institutes have done this in International Women's Year. To postpone doing this evaluation can only retard our individual and organizational progress. It will help us provide statistics — it will give a sound basis for programme justification.



Delegates meet to discuss the work of the WI, a group stop to ask a question of Miss McKercher. L-r Mrs. Howard Crow; Mrs. Don Caza; Miss McKercher and Mrs. Helen Stafford.

Plenary Sessions

This is the session the delegates go back into, knowing what they don't know. The opportunity arises for all to straighten out their thinking, a final chance to ask questions.

Secretary Treasurers and Members at Large used the Discussion group leaders for resource and panel members, while Agriculture and Canadian Industries in addition to their own leaders relied on Mr. K. E.

Lantz, Assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture & Food, in charge of Production and Rural Development to field the questions on land use as it affects Agriculture.

Agricultural Tour of China

Mrs. Abner B. Martin, West Montrose, a discussion group leader for Agriculture and Canadian Industries, recently returned from China, and related to the delegates some of her experiences. A country of 800 million people where every inch of land is utilized effectively, no waste areas, and cows are milked three times a day, were among the many stories she told about this vast country. Communes are a way of life, it shows what you can do without, and still be reasonably happy. The children were healthy, there was no evidence of junk foods or coke machines, all students were dressed in uniforms, bicycles were common and they appeared to be happy.

A visit to a commune was most interesting. The versatility of the group was evident in such a structure. On the commune, pear trees were growing around the compost pile, there were lots of pigs, they grew their own grain, had flour mills and a chemical fertilizer plant. Some of the furniture was made on the property, machinery repaired; the whole set-up was totally integrated into Agriculture and small industries. Mrs. Martin concluded by saying Agriculture has top priority.

Land Use

Land use is so important that the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture & Food has established a Food Land Development Branch. K. E. Lantz, Assistant Deputy Minister, told the delegates. Part of the job is to promote and encourage the retention of prime land as well as co-ordinate the development of long range programmes and aid the input to policies of other agencies involved with land use.

The business of farming is so dependent on the climate, price fluctuations, and labour, but the time has come when the producers are no longer prepared in this high economic period to produce for low prices. Some additional forms of stabilization are needed.

More important than ever before in our history is a need to preserve land and provide food for domestic use. So much has happened in the last twenty years, so much of what we anticipate that we are part of the self sufficient economy. The advent of fuel has created a revolution — to grow two blades of grass where one grew before.

At the turn of the century two-thirds of the population in Ontario was rural, today it is the reverse with only seven percent actively engaged in Agriculture. Ontario has twelve million acres of prime agricultural land with a total of eighteen million arable acres, about twenty-five percent of the total class one-two-three acreage in Canada. Some class 4 land could be improved, an example, through drainage.

Food is a better buy in Canada than anywhere else, with the amount of money spent on food surpassing anywhere else in the world. The question remains — with such dramatic global occurrences over the last five years, can the world continue to feed itself? The present world population of 3.5 billion will be 7 billion by the year 2000 according to projections, with 180,000 new mouths to feed daily.