DISCUSSION GROUPS

That's where the action was. This is the most useful part of the Conference and it's good to hear the delegates say, "we didn't have enough time, we could have gone on for another hour." The groups were divided into Presidents, Public Relations Officers and Members at Large.

Public Relations group leaders plan final strategy for their group discussions. L-r Mrs. Harry Smith; Mrs. J. Harvey Houston, PRO Chairman, also PRO for the FWIO; and Mrs. Donald MacLachlan, former Board Director.

The "President's" group leaders, review the information on a flip chart, before the discussion group sessions. L-r Mrs. Delmar Smythe; Chairman, Mrs. Harvey Noblitt; and Mrs. Keith Hiepleh, Board Director.

PLENARY SESSION

The three plenary sessions were carried on simultaneously. In charge of Presidents, was Chairman, Mrs. Harvey Noblitt assisted by group leaders Mrs. Delmar Smythe and Mrs. Keith Hiepleh.

The PRO's in charge of Mrs. J. Harvey Houston assisted by Mrs. Harry Smith and Mrs. Donald MacLachlan. Members at Large under the direction of Mrs. Rebecca Johnson assisted by Mrs. E. G. Urstadt, Mrs. Orval Jordan, and Mrs. Norman Tuck.

Conferences are useful in bringing together members for discussion of problems and for friendly contacts.

In one of the plenary sessions delegates were heard to say, "I wonder when I can come again?" Or another, "I wonder why the leaders made us forget the beefs we came with?"

The challenge now is to utilize all the ideas and share the knowledge gained with the Branches.

RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURE

Dr. J. C. Rennie, Executive Director, Education and Research for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food spoke to the delegates about Agricultural Research. He covered the broad spectrum, relating the technological changes from the producer through to the consumer's plate.

Research produces definite benefits. Dr. Rennie cited many examples, one of which resulted in a billion dollar saving, having world-wide economic value of a vaccine to protect poultry against Newcastle Disease.

Today's research will be tomorrow's applied technology. Many of the production, processing and marketing systems, which are considered by many as normal procedures were merely research results not many years ago. Perhaps too, we fail to appreciate the time element involved in developing new varieties of grains, cereals, fruits and vegetables.

Presently the Province of Ontario has the most diversified and important Agricultural Industry in all of Canada with a gross value of Agricultural production of over 2.5 billion. In addition, the Agricultural and related industries provide work for 20% of Ontario's population.

New technology generated from Research and Development programmes on a continuous basis often goes unnoticed but soon are accepted as a fact of life. Only through research can we expect to supply the present and future requirements of the people in Ontario.

In 1951 in Ontario one agricultural worker produced enough food to feed approximately 31 people. At present that worker produces enough to feed 50 people. How has this come about? Dr. Rennie feels that, farmers are innovative people with a willingness and drive to accept and apply new technology. Also, Ontario has maintained an effective research programme for Agriculture.

Thirty years ago, it took four pounds of feed to grow one pound of chicken, today, only two pounds is required. Both chickens and pigs have been redesigned to have more meaty portions. Not many years ago, a six month period was considered standard to get a hog to market, today, four and a half is commonplace.

Corn research has benefited the industry. Corn crops in Ontario now cover 2 million acres, much of this in early maturing hybrids. It has been estimated that through the use of herbicides there has been a 30% increase in yield.

Extensive research is being carried on in all phases of crop products from cucumbers to apples, from grains to soybeans. Approximately two-thirds of the apple trees are planted at a density spacing of 200 per acre compared with 28 in the past.

Because of economics, critical labour situations, land use, energy shortages, conservation management, it becomes more apparent that mechanical harvesting systems will play a more important role. "Research" must strive to develop the varieties of fruits and vegetables suitable to this specialized equipment.

Dr. Rennie illustrated that Agricultural Research in Ontario is extensive, dynamic and in tune with the times.