

# Education Is With Us All Through Life

*Mrs. R. McKeown, Home Economics teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, at the E. C. Drury School, Milton and member of the Greenock W. I. Wellington Centre District, spoke at a Branch meeting on Education.*

Education is a voyage that we embark on through life, but we never reach our destination.

Education starts as soon as we are born. We learn that crying will bring us food, comfort and a dry diaper. A little later, we learn that smiles and acting cute will get rave reviews from our elders. But also, the sad day arrives when we have overshot our mark and receive Mother's disapproval in the form of a cross look, a sharp word, or a smack on a little hand. From that day forward it is a constant reward for good behaviour and a reprimand for unacceptable behaviour.

Formal education starts at school at the age of five and continues on for a varying number of years. Some youngsters find it difficult to stay in school until they reach sixteen. This may be because of low intelligence or even unchallenged super-intelligence. Sometimes we as teachers and educators fail to teach children—we only teach courses. Or maybe we measure the wrong things when we evaluate a child. This does not mean to say that the student has learned nothing but rather that he/she has pursued his interests. This might be learning to operate farm equipment, apprenticing to become a mechanic, learning beekeeping or dressmaking etc. We try to give everyone a wide general base in education and not everyone has academic aptitudes.

Then on the other hand I'm sure we have all known people who have stayed in school as an escape from accepting their responsibilities as a contributing member of our society. They get their degree then their masters and finally their Phd. with no goal in mind except education for its own sake and no thought as to how this can contribute to our gross national product or how it can help the less fortunate in our society. I know a father who once said to his son-in-law "You have a wife and two children. Now that you have your doctorate done, you think you could get a job and help support them for a change instead of hunting around for more courses to take?"

Now that I have talked about the extremes on both sides of the formal education spectrum, I must not forget the thousands of young people who cheerfully work their way through our school system and lead normal useful lives. Dr. Bette Stephenson, Minister of Education, is attempting to make the public more aware of technical education and its acceptance. This is an area that has been down-graded and neglected for too long. Snobbish academia have held all the key positions in our educational hierarchy for many years. They have felt that a high academic education was the ultimate and would cure all of Canada's ills. They now find that technical jobs must be filled by people from other countries because we have failed to put emphasis on job-oriented training.

I know from talking to people from various schools that this has been their attitude. Educators, parents and the general public must re-think their priorities in

education and give equal emphasis to both areas. When it comes to the crunch and people must earn a living, instead of accepting government hand-outs, the people who have a skill can earn a living much more easily than a pure academic.

Education can be in the form of an interest group such as the Women's Institute. Here we can expand our social contacts, learn parliamentary procedure, exchange cooking, sewing and craft ideas with our members, sponsor workshops and courses taught by group leaders who have attended leadership training courses provided by the Home Economics Branch. We benefit from consumer information. Conferences are held in our immediate area, Canada-wide and world-wide which give us a broader knowledge and understanding of not only the diversity of our own country but the nature of other lands as well.

Education very often comes from necessity. I'm sure all of you have had nursing experience through necessity. Someone in your family has had an accident, a cut, or burn and you were the person who had to make a decision about what was to be done.

I'm certain that as each milestone in our life is passed, we must look into our future with anticipation. We must educate ourselves so that we can look upon it as a challenge. Life is an educational journey from the cradle to the grave. Let us meet it face to face without self pity, without prejudice and not allow ourselves to become drop-outs from the school of life.



**MOOSE CREEK WI, STORMONT DISTRICT** celebrated their 65th Anniversary by entertaining neighboring branches in Stormont. L-r Miss Florence Gentles, Secretary; Mrs. Elmer McDermid, President, is seen receiving a plaque from the Ontario Government, presented on behalf of Premier Davis by MPP Osie Villeneuve; Mrs. H. L. Noblitt, FWIC President elect, guest speaker.

**CALEDON WI, PEEL NORTH DISTRICT**, have plans during 1981 for the Year of the Disabled.

At each meeting during the year, there will be a portion of the program devoted to this subject, i.e. a reading, an experience or something relating to the handicapped.

Caledon are already involved with children of the St. Joseph's Mission in Mzimofu, Swaziland. The members make layettes for these handicapped children, through the Unitarian Service Committee.