

Ontario Delegates Attend Edinburgh Convention

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Highlights of Edinburgh Convention Reviewed by Mrs. Somerville, Delegate

Mrs. G. Somerville, R. R. 2, Acton, past president of the Hamilton District Women's Institute, recently attended the Associated Country Women of the World Conference held in Edinburgh, Scotland, last month.

One of 14 delegates from Ontario, the Acton woman joined with 1,100 other delegates at the conference, representing 30 other countries.

The exciting and memorable month stay was crammed with business sessions, tours and many unforgettable moments and experiences.

Since her return to Acton, Mrs. Somerville has prepared especially for the Free Press, her own story of the month long visit, not only to the conference but highlights of her visits to Wales, Ireland, Amsterdam, Paris and many other places.

The following is the story as told by Mrs. Somerville:

I have been asked to give a story of some of my experiences and impressions of my trip to the Associated Country Women of the World conference, including some extracts from their speeches. Sponsored by the Federated Women's Institute of Ontario and with the B.O.A.C., this trip was arranged for 14 delegates to the A.C.W.W. in Edinburgh, as well as 16 days in Ireland, Wales and the Continent.

The A.C.W.W. is an organization represented by groups from 34 countries of the world. Our hostesses were the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes and their task was a gigantic one. Over 1,100 women registered at this conference. Official badges were presented to each on registering and were worn throughout the conference period. These were a means of identification at meetings, social events, excursions, receptions and "Beating Retreat". Even in restaurants and shopping, we noticed courtesy and preference by all. We were billeted in hotels and university hostels as well as many private homes.

Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony was held in Usher Hall, which has a very large platform and a large auditorium with gallery. A profusion of flowers was seen everywhere. The first moment of real drama came at the beginning of the opening ceremony when the flags of 30 countries were carried in solemn procession by tartan-skirted lassies onto the platform of Usher Hall.

This was only one part of the multicolored scene for many of the delegates had worn their national costume for this ceremony. The Eastern delegates are relied upon to give color but they were rivaled by many of the European visitors in gay woven skirts, starched white blouses and the loveliest of lace and lawn decorations on their heads.

With the opening words of the chairman, Mrs. E. Shann, president of the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes, "We want you to know how happy we are to have you here — we Scots love making friends", the conference was off to a good start.

Welcomed by Speakers

Baillie E. Jamieson, who spoke for the Lord Provost, said, "Nothing but good can come of a conference such as this". Lord Forbes, minister of state for Scotland, welcomed them on behalf of the government. He told the overseas visitors of some of the work which the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes were doing. "I can assure you," he said, "their views are listened to with respect by the authorities concerned. Long before your conference draws to a close, you will have learned that no matter what country is your homeland, country women the world over are very much alike in their aims, ideals and ways of life. We must remember that one thing and in that way we will be making a big effort to bring about peace on earth, goodwill towards men and women."

Next to say "welcome" was Baroness Elliott of Harwood, who spoke as a member of the S.W.R.I., a farmer and three times a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly. She said that fear was at the bottom of many of the 12 subtleties in the world today. Baroness Elliott told them it was women who set the standard of home life and of community life in a country. If women were educated to play a responsible part in any community, that community would continue to advance.

Accept Responsibility

The value of such an educated and sincere person was enormous. Country women had the advantage that they had to take responsibility and make decisions every day. Agriculture, even if mechanized, had to be run by people who had to make decisions and they had to take the consequences when they had made a wrong decision. Lady Elliott made a special appeal for support of World Refugee Year, which was a great humanitarian effort to end the suffering and loneliness of millions of people.

Mrs. Berry, president of the A.C.W.W., stressed in her vote of

thanks that the conference was a family gathering. It was true that the conferences did not bring solutions to all their diverse and complex problems but they did act as a clearing house and provide them with an opportunity to share their experiences, get to know one another and create a spirit of goodwill and friendship.

She remarked that we come together in this lovely city of Edinburgh from all the continents of the world, to meet together. We represent a diversity of races, nationalities and creeds but are bound together by friendship and goodwill and above all by a common purpose, that of improving the conditions throughout the world through the home and family. We realize that the resources of a country are its people, not the material things of life, but human beings with hearts and souls, with the capacity to think and work, not for reward or greed but for the uplift and good of all.

Personal Effort

She said that the motto of the A.C.W.W. could well be, "If you want anything done, do it yourself". Treventions personal effort is put into the programs of the affiliated organizations and these programs are as varied as the countries from which the delegates come. Every society works according to the needs of that country.

The financing of the A.C.W.W. is perhaps unique in the world. The fund known as the Pennies for Friendship is made up of individual members making their personal contribution of a penny which gives a feeling of personally belonging.

Most of the regular meetings were held in the Music Hall on George St. This was a huge building with a very large assembly room which could be made various sizes by sliding doors. Individual post office boxes, conference information and tours, banking facilities by the Bank of Scotland, representatives of British railways and Scottish omnibuses were all included.

Souvenirs Available

The S.W.R.I. had many tables with traditional souvenirs of size visitors could "carry home". Tartans were in the fore and listless, bluebellis and lions were most usual. Each day a group of cooks from S.W.R.I. arrived to run a cafeteria where Scotch menus were served. These menus included sausage rolls, chicken turnovers, scones, biscuits, salads on bun, shortbread, oat cookies, fruit cake and bread. For these lunches, Kenya had donated coffee, Ceylon sent tea, New Zealand sent butter and Australia dried fruits. Many other gifts were put in the post office boxes in the Music Hall by the different countries.

One evening the delegates were divided into groups and entertained by organizations of Edinburgh such as Business Women, Sorptomists, Townswomen's Guilds, Women Citizens and others. I was invited to the British Overseas Club. We were met very formally by their officers but we found them very informal and hospitable. They were very interested in Canadian people and their country and many knew someone whom they had met in Scotland. Our program included songs with harp accompaniment, dances by four Scottish dancers, songs by a group of singers and Scottish readings. A real Scottish lunch was served.

Garden Party

By invitation of the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council of

Edinburgh, a civic garden party was held at Lauriston Castle. Lauriston Castle stands high above the Forth River and yet commands an excellent view of the river and its craft. This castle was of great historic renown from 1290 to 1902, when it was bought by William Robert Reid. He personally supervised redecoration and with his wife, retired to this beautiful home in 1903. They made it a residence of great beauty within and without. These grounds were left to the city of Edinburgh in 1920 by its owners. It is maintained as a lived in home and is under the control of the Lord Provost.

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Hamilton Chairman

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As a memorial to Lady Aberdeen, a permanent international scholarship in home economics was to be established in sending trained personnel to work in underdeveloped countries and to bring students from there to study in the more developed countries under an agreement with their own government to "return to work among their own people."

Another resolution pleading for the suspension of all nuclear tests destructive to humanity was passed.

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On coming from The Mound following the entertainment, Edinburgh Castle was flooded in honor of the conference. On top of a very high hill overlooking The Mound and Princess St., this was one of the unforgettable scenes. The lights made the castle look like a fairy palace over the enchanted city.

On Sunday, the conference had an invitation to attend the regular service in St. Giles' Cathedral. It is the High Kirk of Edinburgh. It is of unknown date and existed before history was written. It has suffered fire and pillage and has seen religious dimensions but despite abuse and desecration, it has emerged with a historic crown. At different times it has been made to house four separate churches, a police station, a prison, a grammar school and a town clerk's office.

Gothic Cathedral

Today it is an imposing and lofty Gothic building, dimly lit with soft lights that filter through the stained glass windows. Many historic regimental colors have

been placed in the cathedral. Between cathedral and Parliament House, the initials, J. K. 1572, appear. They mark what is believed to be the grave of John Knox. At the end of High St. is John Knox's home, which is open to visitors.

Palace of Holyroodhouse is the official residence of the Queen when in Edinburgh. The palace was originally built in 1128 but has not always been in use. After the fall of the House of Stuart, Holyroodhouse fell into disuse, and was not used as a royal palace until George IV in 1822. The palace was regularly used as a residence by King George V, King George VI and is frequently used by Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Boat Trip

One of the many highlights of the conference was the all day outing by steamer "down the Clyde". Special trains left Princess Street station via Glasgow for Gourock, where we joined the steamer, Duchess of Hamilton, specially chartered for the occasion. The weather was perfect with warm sunshine and no mist, which had been very common. Leaving the Forth of Clyde, we passed parallel with the Ayrshire coast over the Measured Mile where speed trials are conducted by new vessels.

Passing many summer resorts and castles, among them the home of Sir Harry Lauder, we entered the Kyle of Bute. This is one of Scotland's showplaces. An old guide book describes this stretch of water as "a necklace of shining waters with studded gems." A look out showed two rocks side by side on the Bute hills which bears a resemblance to two women and has the likeness increased by being dished with paint. An hour on board the ship, lunch and tea were served in the three saloons. The return trip to Gourock on the Clyde by moonlight was beautiful.

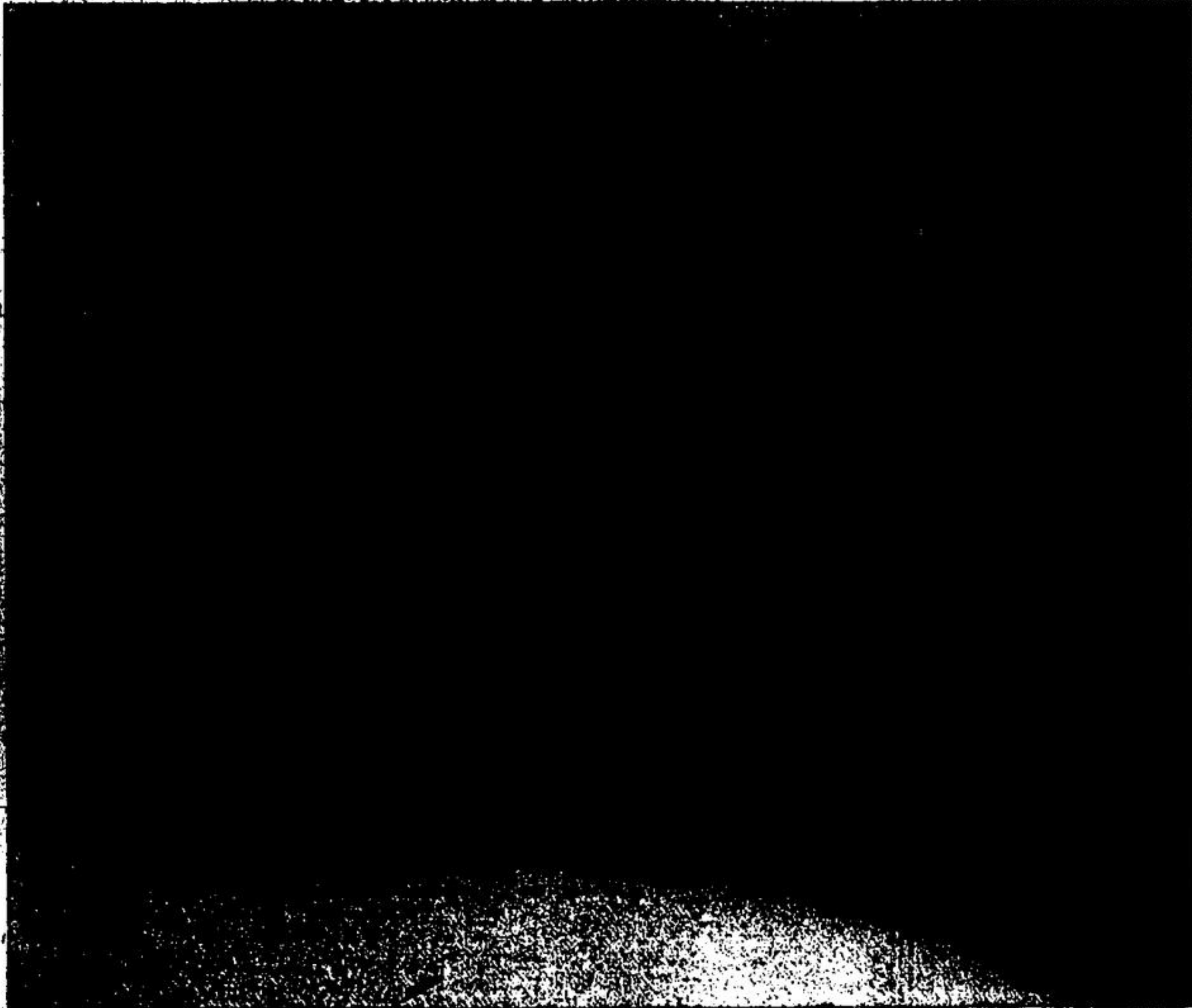
Visit Countrywide

The S.W.R.I. also arranged an afternoon and evening to entertain their guests in visiting in the country. Our bus took us out from Edinburgh on a very narrow road. In passing Tweedsmuir church, we stopped so we could get out and take pictures. A woman came out of a house by the side of the road and she was expecting a load of A.C.W.W. delegates for tea. However, it wasn't our load.

We passed a very small red schoolhouse, the smallest in Scotland, and thence to the Reservoir where Edinburgh gets its water supply. On proceeding up the hillside we followed a very narrow, winding road. The courier said the snow storms here in winter were terrific. The high hill ascended to the great Pines Bowl, known as the Devil's Beef Tub, where rustlers carried on their cattle rustling in the mountainous country.

In the Valley of Ayr we were welcomed for tea by Mrs. Smith of Dumfries. This was in a two room school, the most modern and best equipped rural public school I was ever in. The outside surrounding the school was covered with flowers everywhere. A large ball field was past the pavement. At the entrance to the grounds was a brick bicycle shelter. The school had two classrooms, a large auditorium, a library, principal's room and wash rooms. There was also an equipped kitchen with supplies for hot lunches.

After leaving here, we motored to Quothquan, where two instit-



—Emerald Press, Ireland, Photo.

ONTARIO DELEGATES to the Associated Country Women of the World Conference in Edinburgh, are pictured as they stood in front of the gates to the National Botanical Gardens in Dublin, Ireland. The ladies visited many places during their month long stay at the conference. Pictured left to right are: Mrs. A. Baillie, Galt; Mrs. M. Corson, Lindsay; Mrs. S. Carr, Barrie; Mrs. R. Penny, Kingston; Mrs. F. Hunt, Stoney Creek; Miss Helen McKercher, Home Economist for Ontario, Toronto; Mrs. G. Somerville, Acton; Mrs. E. Lymbourne, Smithville; and Mrs. C. Rinehart, Puslinch. Missing from picture were four other Ontario delegates making up fourteen who were sponsored by the Federated Women's Institute of Ontario.

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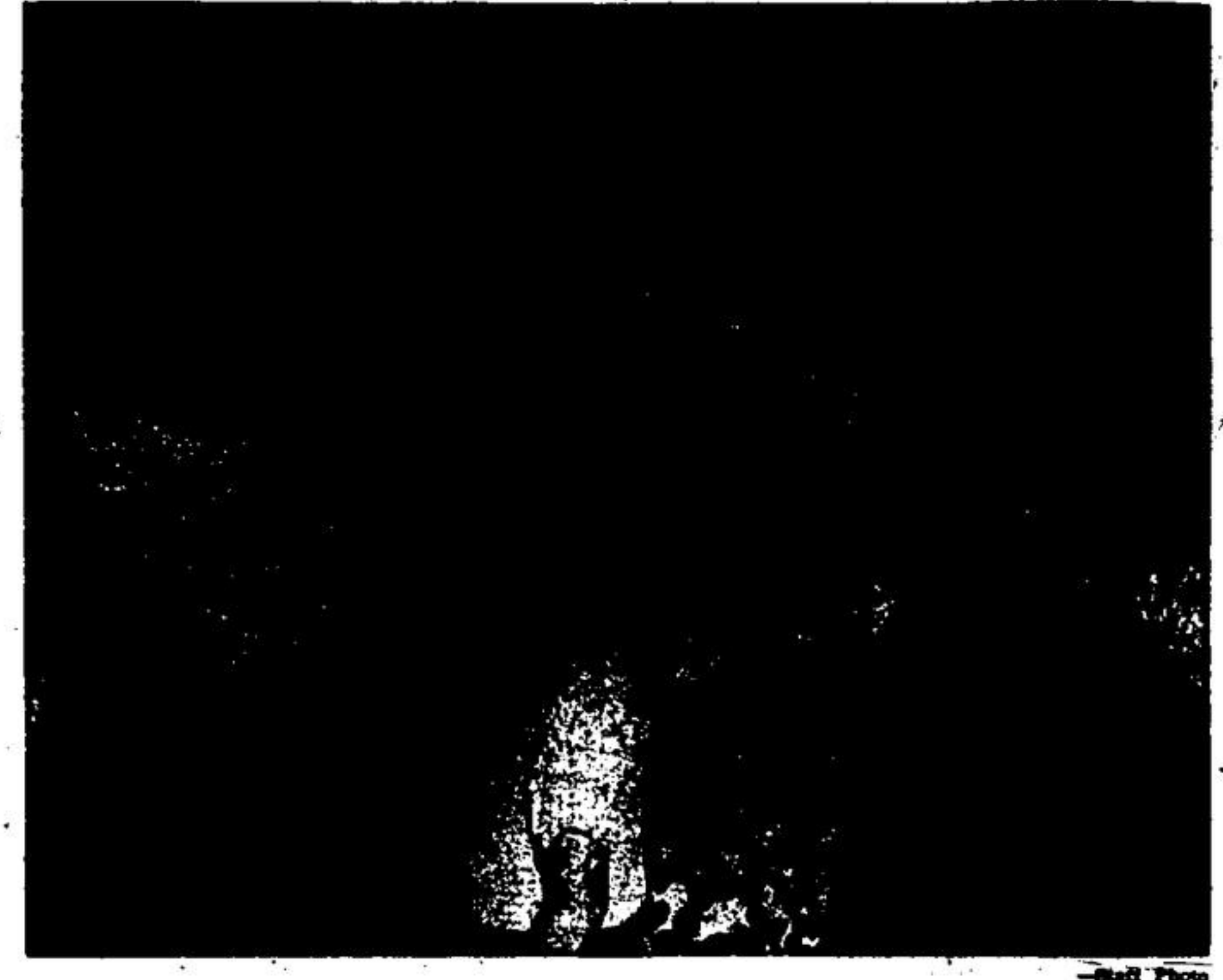
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—Staff Photo

BACK FROM EDINBURGH were she attended the Associated Country Women of the World conference, Mrs. G. Somerville, R.R. 2, Acton has plenty to tell her grandchildren. Pictured above, the grandmother tells a story to three of the grandchildren as two of the girls hold skirt lengths of tartan cloth from Scotland. Shown left to right with Mrs. Somerville are Carol, Scott and Susan, children of Mr. and Mrs. Fyle Somerville.