



Canadian Women's Institutes

Homemakers'
Club

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Home Economics
Society



Social Service and Its Relation to Patriotism and Race Culture

WE give below some extracts from an address given by Miss Stover at the recent conference of Institute lecturers. Miss Stover has assisted in philanthropic and rescue work in some of the large cities of the United States. Miss Stover is a Canadian.

"The children of Ontario pioneer settlers were bred where patriotism was expressed in deeds, not words. The heroism of the daily round, the healthy, hopeful industry, the neighborliness and sincerity and simplicity of that life in the Canadian woods gave to this country a period of the best kind of social service and race culture. Eugenics and eugenics were unknown words, and little was said about heredity and environment in the province known as Upper Canada. Those sturdy hewers of wood and drawers of water were laying the foundations of the nation toward which the eyes of all the world and the republic across the line turn to-day with prophetic problems, and know little about conference discussions, but they practised neighborliness. Possibly much that we regard as wisdom they might have counted foolishness, but let us hope that we, in our time and under changed conditions, may learn how to carry forward the work of nation building which in this province was so splendidly, so wholesomely and so sensibly begun."

"It is not given to us to spin and weave in our own homes the garments for the family, and we send our children to schools to be taught domestic science. We would not, if we could, restore to their old service the household loom, or the spinning wheel; and we are glad that there is a MacDonald Institute at Guelph. But we would like to know how to keep the home and family life here sweet and clean and healthily industrious under the changed and changing conditions. We should like to send from the farm houses and from all the homes of Canada, to the work that awaits them, young men and young women who shall prove that the Canadian race is the best product of the good land we have inherited from our pioneer forefathers. We live in an age when organizations, like this Women's Institute, are evidence that the whole people feel the responsibility and privileges of social service and race culture. It takes fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, grandparents and all the rest of the relatives to bring up a child in the way he should go. And there is always a chance to blame somebody outside the family when the child goes wrong. Not only may the teacher or the minister be held responsible, but the employer comes in for his share of censure or credit, and directly or indirectly everybody in the neighborhood has a hand in bringing up every child that is born there."

"This organization and the subjects considered at these conferences are evidences of our belief that the wealth of the Dominion is her sons and daughters. The greatness of the Canada to be depends not upon the flocks and herds which we do well to breed intelligently, nor upon the fields of grain or orchards which we need to cultivate wisely, but it does depend upon the kind of men and women who will constitute this nation when the days of opportunity shall determine its destiny. Side by side along the great lakes and westward to the Pacific Ocean, under two distinct flags, new English speaking races are forming; but not yet is the distinct character of either one established. Into these melting pots, people of all lands and characteristics of all nations are being poured, and we dare to hope that there will come forth two nations which shall furnish proof that the trend of civilization is Godward. While it is true that inherited traits are persistent and tendencies are transmitted from generation to generation, it is also true that sons and daughters of other nations brought up in America will be products of transplantation; and nowhere

in the world have there been such experimental stations in race culture as these two countries provide. Sons of men may be "chips of the old block," but they are never merely wooden. There can be little question that the character shaping conditions of the place where they fall will do much to determine whether the chips will be stumbling blocks or steps. There is not time for many words about heredity in this discussion. To people whose cattle and horses and orchards and granaries furnish abundant and convincing proof of the transmission of family characteristics and the persistence of tendencies, there is little need for reminders touching these things. But we do well to remember the close relationship which high ideals of parenthood and patriotism bear to each other, and to realize that race culture is promoted by clear understanding of both, and by comprehension of their interdependence. It is a splendid conception of patriotism that sees nations so linked together that one cannot fail without dragging all the others down, nor rise without lifting the whole world."

There is no doubt that the Women's Institutes can and do reach the people who are to declare Canada's standard. We may trust that they will not hold up the tinsel banners of a cheap jingo patriotism that is born foul and fatal, teaching a benighted, self-seeking doctrine by which the soul of a nation is lost. "My country first, right or wrong," is the slogan that must lead to destruction. But "My country which I must keep true because all nations are affected by its justice," can be the watchword that will lift the heads and square the shoulders of the whole human race. Our time is one when all the conditions of life teach, as never before in the history of the world, that no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. To-day all the ends of the earth are called upon to supply our tables, to furnish our houses and to clothe our children. Just the conditions of our material life play a large part in the education of this generation. If Paris milliners shape the Canadian girl's taste in hats and New York tailors decide the cut of her skirts, it is none the less certain that China and Japan and Turkey and India influence our students' thinking and their careers. Since we know that many of the foul weeds and destructive parasites that menace Canadian orchards and grain fields and flocks and herds, have been imported along with good things which have been brought here to increase the wealth of this country, shall we not be alive to the subtler influences of world communication and commerce? Are not the social problems of the old world just as certainly our problems even now?"

"The Canadian government has declared that I must help to protect my neighbor's flocks and crops. Through the Women's Institute, it indirectly calls upon me to do my part to help to protect my neighbor's children."

"It has been my privilege during the last four years to have some small part in work for the protection of womanhood. We have heard much recently about the international movement to suppress and prevent what is known as White Slave traffic. We realize, however, that national and international organization and enactment will be futile unless they express genuine intelligent citizens' concern and service for the conservation and culture of the human race. Although both may be safeguarded, neither law making nor prosecution of offenders can touch those roots of the social evil which run still deeper than greed. Only when the hearts of the people are pure can the nation stand free upon the plane of its potential or realized achievement. We need to bear in mind that the sexes stand or fall together; that white slavery is race bondage, and that it means the degradation of the whole people. So our most effective social service must call

men and women to co-operative activity and it must work for this and future generations. Their work, to be effective, must be done with sane, intelligent vision and insight and with faith and hope."

"When I am asked to talk about teaching children and young people, I always want to prove that the process of education is not the training of one group of people by another group, but the interchange between them. One of my girls says civilization and race progress just means people getting acquainted well enough to do things together that ought to be done. She is pretty nearly right. If people generally were well enough acquainted to establish real mutual understanding, more than half the ills of the world would disappear."

"We do well to remember that social service is not a matter of organizations and constitutions and conferences and great philanthropies, nor of legislation or educational institutions, although all these are a part of it. There may be some of the finest line of social service and race culture in the playgrounds and athletic fields. Team play is just as much needed in families and in neighborhoods as it is to make the score for the base ball team. In the healthiest race culture there will be lessening tendency to cleavage along lines of age and sex. There is mutual need for normal association of people of all stages of experience, and the constant co-operation and exchange of all ages and both sexes is required to make a rounded and complete national life."

"See the whole world grouped about the babies and realize what it means. What in our times does the movement to check infant mortality mean? What is inherent in the child labor agitation? What has started the movement to protect motherhood? What has called into being the parent and teacher associations? What is the meaning of the child welfare exhibits? What inspires the fresh air philanthropies and the little mother's clubs and the tuberculosis battle? We are learning to live with and for our children. The little child is leading us to knowledge. And because we Canadians have little children set in our midst, this nation has its chance to help the world to the kingdom of heaven. Our love extends to the unborn children, and our dream to the race of men and women that they and their children shall grow to be. It is expressed in the endeavor to care for the feeble minded and the unfit so that there shall not be needless suffering and tragedy. It prompts us to look out for the conditions which weaken the race. Chief among these, robbing children of their birth right and men and women of the blessing of the love of little children is the tangle of wrong ideas about parenthood and the racial instincts. These wrong ideas are so prevalent that few escape them entirely. They have set up a double standard of morals for men and women, which is responsible for so much that is evil. Somehow it has come about that there has been mixed with the instinctive reticence of our finest feeling certain distorted traditions about human reproduction. This has led to a misleading kind of silence and avoidance of reference to birth or to sex as a factor in the perpetuation of the human race. During the past few years, however, there has been, perhaps, too much agitation and press discussion of the need for instruction in what has been termed 'sex hygiene.' The question is no longer, 'Shall such instruction be given?' but 'how shall it be given?' The consensus of opinion of the most reliable educators is that it is seldom, if ever, safe to trust the printed page unsupplemented by personal teaching, as a means of instructing young people on these matters. The subject matter should not be massed and isolated, but taught in its natural relation to other subjects, with the dignity and fine reserve that its place and importance merit."

"The wise teacher answers these questions, but takes care to leave the minds of the children satisfied and their thoughts directed into some channel of helpful expression leading away from self-consciousness. Upon the older children she impresses (with no obnoxious pointing of the moral) views of historic incidents and characters tending to inspire admiration for the people and nations that have passed on to succeeding generations something of certain value. She will avoid the sensational and sentimental and will not do preaching, but will make the drama of life and the romance of history impress its lessons."

"It has been proved conclusively that well qualified instructors can perform much needed social service along these educational lines, but nothing could be more disastrous than to have it attempted by unqualified teachers. The facts to be told and the points to be impressed are, after all, so simple and beautiful that there seems endless ways of presenting them and all sorts of opportunities to relate this instruction quite naturally to other subjects. But the need for careful preparation and personal fitness for the work cannot be too strongly emphasized."

Note.—Miss Stover's paper will appear in full in the next annual report of Women's Institutes.

What Some Institutes Are Doing

THE Violet Gill branch in Dufferin, organized in June of 1911, with a membership of six, secured eighteen additional members during the year, and at the summer meeting in June, 1912, added ten more new members to the list. This Institute is working for the Orangeville hospital.

The Institutes in North Hastings are anxious to have medical inspection in the schools and will interest themselves toward that end during the present Institute year. Other Institutes are interested in similar work.

The district annual meeting should hold as important a place as the regular monthly meetings of the Institutes, and it is gratifying to note from recent reports that more of the individual Institutes are realizing this. At the Haldimand annual, seventeen of the eighteen branches were represented. This experience should be repeated in every district.

The district of South Essex reports an increase of 318 members in 1911-12 over the membership of 1910-11. This is stimulating. Many of the other districts also report a splendid advance along the same line.

The Dundalk Institute in Centre Grey is represented by several of its members upon the Public Library Board of that town. This is suggestive to other Institutes.

The Belleville Institute has opened its playground again this year, and it is just possible that a second one may be added. The success of the playground last year gives the Institute every encouragement to do this. The playground is open from June 15th to September 15th. Opportunity will be given to a certain number of young women to take training under the experienced supervision of the playground.

Everywhere such work is commending itself to the public interest, and nothing better could be undertaken by the Institutes. It is a phase of Social Service which is of importance.

The Morrisburg Institute is seeking to develop a patriotic spirit among the boys and girls of that town. Prizes have been given to the public school children for the best essays on "Why I am proud I am a Canadian."

The Iroquois branch has a Look-Out committee for new members composed of half a dozen members taken alphabetically each month. The membership has been brought up to fifty-five.