

HERITAGE AND CHALLENGE

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We as Home Economists in the Province of British Columbia have a heritage dating back to 1905. It would be rash to list names, however Miss Elizabeth Berry, who was the first home economics teacher in Vancouver, the first in the high school, the first supervisor in the city, is remembered by her former pupils for her personality, her standards and her sound teaching. Soon she was joined by teachers with diplomas from Macdonald College and Macdonald Institute, young women from British Training Colleges and from American schools to firmly establish our field. These teachers were "specialists" responsible more to the school board and supervisor than to the principal of the school - they were often alone and unsupported, but they established home economics. With the opening of Junior High Schools in 1927 the home economics teacher became integrated with the teaching staff of her school, sharing privileges and responsibilities,

It was in 1926 that Miss McLenaghan was appointed Provincial Supervisor and to her goes credit for winning recognition for home economics as a matriculation subject, for up-grading requirements for the certification of teachers and for establishing a course of study worthy of recognition. Miss McLenaghan's efforts contributed substantially to our survival during the Depression Years when the Minister of Education was ready to wipe us out with all the other "frills." Her personality and leadership qualities were recognized beyond our province when she was elected first president of the Canadian Home Economics Association in 1939.

To many who may read this it will sound like ancient history, others will remember some of those days. Along with these two leaders and a score or more of teachers we must list the Parent-Teacher Federation which has stood squarely behind home economics in the schools through the Federation and associated years and contributed to its success. It was the women women's associations which were instrumental in having our School of Home Economics in 1943, after work that continued Economics at UBC established final from 1925. These women believed wholeheartedly in the worth of home economics. Their belief bore fruit on which we feast today. Herein lies our challenge. Each of us bears responsibility to carry on the traditions.

It is essential that all of us as teachers of home economics BELIEVE in home economics, that it has importance to everyone including ourselves, that it has a contribution to make to all lives including our own. We must realize that our interpretation of our subject matter affects the life of every girl who goes through our classroom - yes, they all learn from our attitudes, manner, expression and appearance, even though they may not pass written tests, but they should do this also. There is in our never-static subject much intellectual challenge, necessity to reason, to associate ideas and experiences, to arrive at-considered conclusions, to make decisions, to solve problems. There is opportunity for pupils to learn to organize, coordinate and cooperate, to understand others and themselves better. All these mental skills, along with certain personality traits, the woman in the world of today and tomorrow must have assistance in developing.

The role of women in the world of the sixties differs even from that into which the mothers of today's pupils went on leaving high school twenty years ago or less. As we teach subject matter and arrange practice in skills we must aid in the development of reasoned flexibility and of resiliency of spirit so the young women may be equipped to withstand the tensions, pressures and -frustrations of the ever-changing world into which they will go.

AND who is going to take your place when you leave the teaching profession? Are you making sure every year that some of your pupils are convinced that a career as a home economist will be both stimulating and satisfying, and are willing to undertake the rigors of preparation at university? The greatest recruiting power for the future of our profession is that of the teacher who obviously, sincerely believes in the worth of what she is doing.