

## TAKE TIME TO BE A GOOD CITIZEN

### "Your County Government and You"

What kind of program is this? Are we not good citizens? Let's decide what we are after the meeting and then answer this question. We will agree that none of us are so good a citizen that we can't be better. The demand for loyal, courageous citizens is greater now than we have ever known.

"We, the people..." begins the Constitution of our United States of America. "We, the people..." are you and I. We must know more about what is expected of a good citizen --- our duties, our responsibilities, and our privileges. We are, every one of us, a part of our Democracy. And democracy is not to be taken for granted. It is a trust to keep. This trust begins where we are, in our homes, community, and county. Democracy cannot survive merely on formal grounds like loyalty, oaths, and flag salutes. We only, "We, the people..." can make democracy live.

Therefore, let us, citizens, make the four government and citizenship programs truly representative of the best we know and are in \_\_\_\_\_ Home Demonstration Club of \_\_\_\_\_ County.

Note, I said "let us do this" not let our neighbors do it. Knowing more about county and state government and qualities of a good citizen is a duty. We've been dodging this duty too long.

#### Responsibility As Citizens:

##### A. To the Home.

The home is the basic foundation for good citizenship - the most important institution in existence. It is here that the child learns his first lessons. Citizenship should be taught at the mother's knee. It is here that parents can set examples that will help the children build high standards of integrity, morality, and of consideration for others. Our community is made up a lot of families and if we are to have a good community it is the responsibility of each individual in the home to uphold:

- a. Good standards of conduct.
- b. Respect for rights and property of others.
- c. Loyalty to each other.
- d. Tolerance of others - cooperation, self-reliance, consideration.

(You may wish to have Family Life Leaders take part in discussion on using Mrs. Swain's material.)

##### B. To the School.

The general purpose of the public school is to help all children and young people to grow up as healthy, happy, and useful citizens. It is here that the child is trained for living, for doing his share of the world's work, for solving public problems by intelligent thinking and action, and for the kind of good citizenship that is based on strength and character. We should not educate the children without educating the parents, and as we develop an effective program for the children, we shall bring a vital adult education to the parents. Schools are financed by our taxes for the benefit of children of the community.

- a. Make a study to find out: (Committee of Club Women)

- (1) Are sanitary facilities adequate?
- (2) Is there a hot school lunch program in every school?  
(Foods and Nutrition Leader, requirements for program - County Superintendent of Schools.)
- (3) Is there a good library in every school? (Education Leader)
- (4) Are school grounds well cared for?

#### C. To the Church

The church is perhaps the next in importance because of its task in the spiritual development of the community. In a prosperous community, there usually is a prosperous church. Every family has a responsibility towards making the church the center of spiritual life in the community. "How good a church would my church be if all of the members are members like me?"

Do we support our church by:

- a. Regular attendance?
- b. Financial assistance?

Suggest a study to find out:

- a. How many churches in the community need improvements.
- b. Condition of buildings.
- c. Condition of grounds, including cemetery.

#### D. To the Community

Citizenship starts in the home as soon as you are born. The man, woman, boy or girl who has no interest, no love for the community in which he or she lives is in a pitiable condition. We cannot learn to be good citizens by listening to lectures on citizenship; we must actually be a citizen and practice the skills, knowledges, and attitudes of citizenship. It is the responsibility of every individual and every family to make the community a better place in which to live. (Perhaps you would enjoy making an inventory of the needs of the community.)

a. Have you

- (1) A community social center for wholesome recreation?
- (2) Good schools and well-kept grounds?
- (3) Good churches and planted grounds?
- (4) Improved health conditions?
- (5) Better housing?
- (6) Telephones?
- (7) Electricity?

b. To meet the needs:

- (1) Use county map to show where community is in relation to the county.
- (2) Plan with representatives of all organizations to establish a community center to be used by all groups, adults and youths, for educational and recreational purposes.

- (3) Cooperate with teachers, ministers, and leaders to improve schools and churches.
- (4) Plan with Health Department for testing water supply in homes and public places.
  - (a) For better sewerage and garbage disposal.
  - (b) For holding clinics - typhoid, well-baby, pre-school, etc.
- (5) Cooperate with telephone and power companies in extending lines through the community.

Every individual should find time for at least one community activity in addition to church and school. These require interest, time, and ability rather than money, but every citizen will have pride and satisfaction for having done them. A good citizen should attend meetings where community matters are discussed. He should express his point of view.

#### E. To the County

Regardless of how busy we are, the time has come - its past due - to make a vigorous effort to know more about the county in which we live - its development, its problems, its values and contributions of those values to rural life. This calls for action. It is more than listening to someone talk, read, or lecture. Everybody must study, get down and search for information.

Every citizen has an obligation to scrutinize his county services, his county facilities for meeting the felt needs of the people. Every citizen has an obligation to scrutinize his contribution to the common life he shares with his neighbors. Citizens, all, have an obligation to maintain the wholesome, constructive activities and services which they know to be thoroughly democratic and typically American. We owe much to the less privileged citizens. They will and can grow into useful people with help. Rejection fundamentally affects character and the capacity of the individual to measure up. Every person needs to be wanted and challenged for good.

#### Opportunities:

We face new opportunities and new responsibilities in home demonstration work. We are a great group of farm women. There is no greater nor a more powerful educational organization in the world - the type of education that develops values and attitudes to meet individual needs and changing times. As a people we are in a state of confusion. What we need is more adequate means for establishing understanding of duty to our fellowman; the feeling of self worth; the feeling of respect; the feeling of personal pride that can come from knowledge and understanding of the world's work.

#### Know Your County Officials:

Enlightened and enthusiastic leadership coupled with local citizen interest can build or rebuild a government truly democratic in structure from the community through county, state, national, and international levels --- We want to know what is meant by good people for the job. What does "best qualified person" mean? Able representatives? What requirements have such persons met? Now, what do you think?

(Discussion led by agent or qualified club woman.)

#### County Government and Citizenship Quiz:

If you can answer all of the following questions, you are an excellent citizen of

the county. If you can answer 12 your rating is good; 10, fair; 8 -- well, let's get busy and educate ourselves. (Get answers from your county officials. It might be better to have County Education Chairman get the answers.)

1. County Commissioners

- a. How often are county commissioners elected? Number persons on board?
- b. How often do they meet?
- c. What are their major duties?
- d. When are board members elected - county or state elections?
- e. Who controls the finances of the county and sets up the budget?

2. County Manager

Name?  
How elected?  
Duties?

3. County Attorney

Name?  
Duties?  
Term of office?  
Is he elected or appointed to office?

4. Tax Supervisor

Name?  
Duties?  
Is he elected or appointed to office? Get rules and regulations from County Tax Department. (Wouldn't be bad idea to have some of the county officials speak themselves. They could be introduced when their question is asked, not before.)

5. Tax Collector

Name?  
Duties?  
Why do we have taxes? Explain how property is assessed for taxes. What services to rural people for their tax dollar? What happens to gaso- line tax? City meter tax? What proportion of auto license fee is paid by state to the county and for what purpose?

6. County Accountant

Name?  
Duties? How does he serve rural people?

7. County Judge

Name?  
Duties? Find out what type court cases he handles mostly. What per cent are rural? Charges? Law is a function of power. Law is a guide to conduct. Law is a warning to you of what you may or may not do.

8. Clerk of Court

Name?  
Duties in relation to rural people?

9. Sheriff

Name?  
Duties in relation to rural people?

10. Coroner

Name?  
Duties in relation to rural people?

11. County Board of Education

Name?  
Duties?  
Consolidated - non-consolidated?

- a. Number schools - white and negro?  
School lunch program - Federal aid?
- b. How is this office filled? Elected - appointed?

12. County Superintendent of Schools

Name?  
Duties?  
(Above)

13. Superintendent of Public Welfare

Name?  
Duties?  
Welfare families in neighborhood? How can we help them to help themselves?

14. County Farm and Home Demonstration Agents

(Refer to January meeting on our duties, objectives)

15. County Health Department

Name?  
Duties?  
Whom are they to serve? Major programs that county people need?

What is your score?

"It's good to have money and the things that money can buy, but it's good, too, to check up once in a while and make sure that you haven't lost the things that money can't buy." ---  
George Horace LeRomor.

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