

Women's Association VISIT OF LADY MITCHELL A SHEPPARTON BRANCH FORMED

Lady Mitchell, president of the Victorian Women's Association, has spent an interesting three days in Shepparton and district this week. She arrived on Monday and was met by Mrs. O. A. Hicken, one of the vice-presidents of the organisation. On Tuesday she was shown round the town and, in the afternoon, addressed a well-attended meeting of ladies in the Lyric Theatre. Mrs. H. E. S. Bird was voted to the chair. In the course of her address, Lady Mitchell expressed surprise at the size and importance of Shepparton. A branch of the Association was formed and officers elected.

Mrs. Bird said they were delighted to have Lady Mitchell in Shepparton. It was gratifying to observe that such general interest was being evinced in the association, the chief object of which was to be of service to others. (Applause). She introduced Lady Mitchell.

Lady Mitchell, who was well received, first referred to the great International Association of Women's conference held in London. The delegates thereat, she said, were anxious to further the end in view of promoting the welfare of women. It was satisfactory to know that Australian women were well represented at that convention and that their delegates made a very good impression. The Country Women's Association was not parochial, but was working to do all that was possible to help the women of the community and the children. She told of the origin of the Association in Australia and said that in Queensland wonderful work had been done. Victoria came in later and was already achieving gratifying results. Incidentally she alluded to the work of the Women's Institute in England, where, as a result of its efforts, the lives of the women in the

efforts, the lives of the women in the country centres had been greatly improved. Several causes contributed towards the creation of the Country Women's Association in Victoria, which, she said, had a wider basis than sectional departments connected with other organisations. She paid a tribute to Lady Somers for her efforts in the inaugural stages of the movement, once formed much work was entailed in preparing a constitution. The association had definite ideals which included desires for promoting opportunities for lightening the homes and lives of the country women. The association welcomed, as members, women of all shades of political and religious opinion, the organisation being non-political and non-sectarian. The objects of the association were:—

To establish throughout the State of Victoria, non-political and non-sectarian councils of women who desire by community service to improve the conditions in the country, more especially as they affect the health, welfare and education of women and children.

To arrest the drift from country to city.

To establish, wherever possible, community clubs on the lines of the Women's Institutes in Canada and Great Britain, for the furtherance of the aims of the Country Women's Association.

To support schemes for providing:
(a) Skilled maternity treatment and proper accommodation for maternity cases. (b) Bush nursing and bush nursing hospitals. (c) health centres and baby health centres in the country. (d) Ambulance services and teaching in first aid and home nursing (e) Hostels for children attending high and technical schools in the country towns. (f) Training in domestic arts and domestic help in the country homes. (g) Rest rooms in country towns for women and children. (h) Seaside or mountain holidays for country people at moderate cost. (i) Books, magazines, and li-

cost. (i) Books, magazines, and libraries in country districts. (k) Telephones and wireless installations at a cost within reach of all small householders.

To welcome and take a kindly interest in all newcomers in every district.

To encourage women and children to interest themselves in town improvement and town planning schemes and in the beautifying of their own homes and general surroundings.

Means had been provided for working towards the attainment of the ideals in view, in the hope that all would, in time, materialise. Healthy rivalry amongst members was promoted through the medium of the handicrafts committee. The whole success of the association depended on the branches, which required to do good team work if maximum results were to be secured. The membership fee was 4/. It was desirable to attach

younger sets to the branches. The metropolitan younger set had set as its objective the establishment of a seaside home at which country women could spend a holiday at a comparatively small cost. Although the home had not yet been built some good work was already being done in assisting needy country women in certain circumstances. The metropolitan branch had a comfort cupboard, through which clothing was sent to people in the country in need of it. Some of the girls in the employ of the Migration Commission and of other Government departments had been very generous in contributing to the movement. She hoped Shepparton branch would become a very important one in the operations of the Association. She was surprised at the size of the town and pleased with the confidences of prosperity on all sides. She felt sure that a live branch would be formed here. (Applause). She alluded to the efforts being put forth through the association at Katandra and then remarked that many who engaged in handicrafts organised by

engaged in handicrafts organised by the association were able to earn quite respectable sums of money. An exhibition was being arranged in Melbourne of handicraft work done by members of the country branches. In regard to the work of administration in Melbourne it was being done to a very considerable extent gratuitously. The association was under an obligation in return for a subsidy received from the Government to look after new arrivals, which they were pleased to do. (Applause).

Mrs. F. Furphy moved a branch of the association be formed in Shepparton.

Mrs. Dudding seconded the motion, which was carried.

Lady Mitchell said that six women in any centre could form a branch. She would like to see several branches in the district with Shepparton as a centre.

The election of officers resulted:—President, Mrs. G. Foster; vice-presidents, the Mayoress (Mrs. J. F. Fairley), Mrs. J. Riordan, Mrs. E. H. Miller and Mrs. F. Furphy; secretary Mrs. O. A. Hicken.