

of interest to WOMEN



Katherine MacCrimmon, assistant executive director of the centre initiates Kathleen Gall into the mysteries of budgeting. Miss MacCrimmon is a graduate of the Toronto University of Social Work with psychiatric social work training.



Beverley Smith is pleased with the results of her turn to help in the kitchen.



Jean Short, centre, executive director of the Girls' Counselling Centre, helps teen-ages Kathleen Gall, right, and Beverley Smith, left, with skirts they are making. (Gazette Photo Service.)

Centre Gives Working Teen-age Girls Friendly Aid With Their Problems

By OLIVE DICKASON

Montreal, for all its attractions, can be a formidable city to a teen-ager earning something like \$70 to \$100 a month. "Just the question of keeping solvent can be more than a teen-ager can handle," Miss Jean Short, executive director of the Girls' Counselling Centre, said yesterday. "It's not easy to pay rent and buy food and clothes on that kind of a salary."

The centre is a Red Feather service that provides quarters for teen-age girls away from home, the only one of its kind in the city. "We're a home away from home, and we provide a program of guidance, counselling, recreation and instruction," Miss Short said.

Life Not Dull

The centre is located in a large, pleasant house on Crescent street. It has accommodation for 14 girls, who pay according to their earnings. Miss Short said, however, that the centre gives counselling service to about 400 girls a year.

"Life here is far from dull," the tall, brunette director said. "Each girl takes part in the activities here. She keeps her room clean and attractive, and takes care of her clothing. She meets boys and girls her own age at special parties."

Most of the girls who stay at the centre have jobs, and the supervision of the centre over their private lives is what it would be in a well supervised home. Boys call on date nights, and are received in a large living room. Informal parties are given in the rumpus room where a radio and phonograph supply a suitable background for dancing.

Friendly Approach

Miss Short said that girls who come to the centre are referred by an agency. These girls may be maladjusted at home, at school or at work. "We make a friend of each girl who comes to us," Miss Short said. "Our treatment is to show where she has failed, and to show her the right way with kindness and un-

derstanding. We make her feel that she is a vital member of her family and society, and that we are counting on her to fulfil her obligations."

Teaching these teen-agers a proper sense of values, "to learn the art of successful living through understanding of human relationships so that they will know how to get the most out of it, without expecting too much for too little" is the objective of her work, Miss Short said.

Budgeting is an important problem for the girls. On pay days they settle their room and board. Each girl keeps track of her personal expenditures, and learns how to get along on her income. They hold down such jobs as messenger girls, filing clerks, etc.

Holiday House

The centre also keeps Holiday House at Morin Heights, where the girls can spend free time. Said one enthusiastic teen-ager: "it is something very wonderful for girls who cannot afford a regular holiday, or who have nowhere to go on weekends."

Miss Short said the centre can't begin to accommodate all the girls who come to it. When they haven't got their own homes in the city, they are found foster homes, or other quarters within their abilities to pay.

The teen-age period is a diffi-

cult one, she said. "The adolescent girl is appealing because she is strongly conscious of herself, her looks, her personality. She is a bundle of emotions she cannot understand, of contradictory longings. She is in a 'handle with care' period." Proper guidance at this time can do much to mould her into the desired citizen of the future.

"There is a crying need for more residences of this type in the city," Miss Short said.