



MRS. MARIA FRUTTI
Shy about speaking English



MRS. BESSY ANTONAKIS
Doesn't approve of early dating



MRS. LURDES MIRA
TV helped her learn English



MRS. HISANO OKURA
Would limit freedom of teens



MRS. ISABEL DE ALMEIDA
"Try to solve our own problems"



MRS. BRUNA SCHUCH
"Ghetto" is cushion for immigrant

Family ties help immigrants adjust to new life

The close-knit family ties proudly maintained by Toronto's New Canadians are one of the best aids in adjusting to life on a new continent, a group of New Canadian mothers agreed during a recent Star Travelling Family Forum.

Mrs. Lurdes Mira, Madron Cresc. in Downsview, was hostess as six women, from Portugal, Spain, Italy and Japan, talked about women's liberation, teen power, and their experiences in learning a new language and coping with the "culture gap" in the younger generation.

The six, who have lived here from four to 14 years, came down heavily for a strong family unit as opposed to greater freedom for women and young people.

When an immigrant husband says he expects his wife to be at home in the evening it's because he wants the comfort of her company. He's not trying to enslave her or keep her from becoming Canadianized, said Mrs. Isabel De Almeida of Clearview Heights. A mother of two, Mrs. De Almeida emigrated from Portugal five years ago and is secretary of the Portuguese Congress, an organization serving Metro's nearly 70,000 New Canadians from Portugal.

"I'm not a slave or a housekeeper because I don't go out to work," said the hostess, Mrs. Mira, who was also born in Portugal and arrived here in 1957. "You have to let a man be where he belongs. I don't feel inferior or less intelligent just because I'm not the head of the house."

tell people about it," said Mrs. Schuch who emigrated from Milan, Italy, four years ago.

As far as handling children is concerned, loving but firm control is still the answer, the women agreed.

If children of ethnic parents complain that they have to lie about their outside activities more often than Canadian children, it's probably because the foreign-born parents are more interested in what they're doing, suggested Mrs. Mira.

"My daughter, for instance, won't need the Pill when she's 14," said Mrs. Mira. "It's not normal to need it at that age. Besides, I won't give her the freedom to have to need it," she laughed.

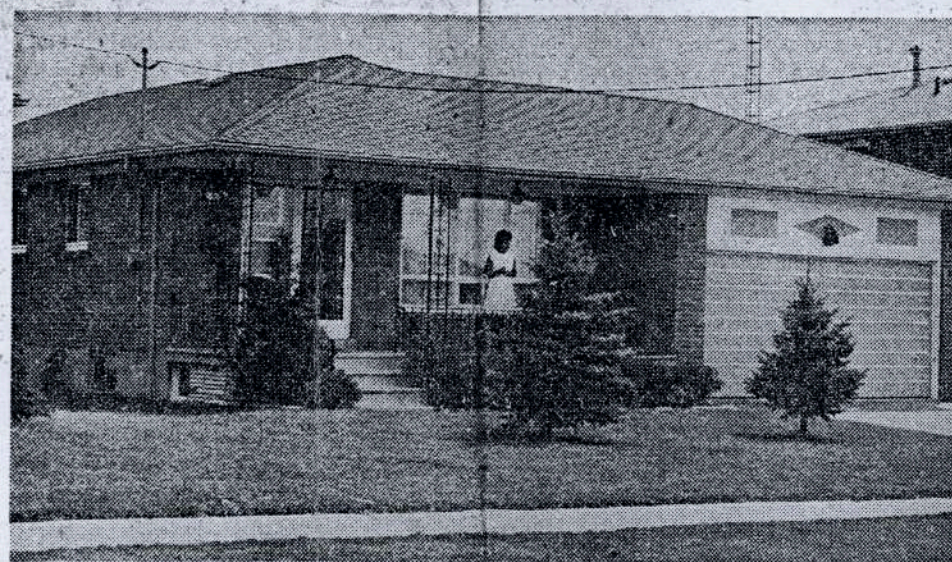
Dating problem

"I want to be friends with my daughter, but I don't believe she should start dating before she is 18," said Mrs. Bessy Antonakis of Bathurst St.

Mrs. Antonakis, who emigrated from Greece in 1966, added: "Teenagers should go out in groups, boys and girls together. I don't like the idea of girls going out together, or singly with a boyfriend. It's too easy to make mistakes."

Mrs. Schuch, who has a master's degree in sociology and counsels New Canadians, is unhappy with the Canadian concept of the family.

"I dislike the idea that if a youngster is in trouble, his teacher talks first to the school counsellor, then to the police. I feel



● The Star's Travelling Family Forum regularly visits with groups of women in various areas of Metro to hear them discuss the problems that interest them.

Recently Star writers Andrea Merry and Betty Stapleton visited the Downsview home, above, of Mrs. Lurdes Mira where they discussed issues with a panel of six New Canadian wives and mothers.

"She offered to take her teenager to a psychiatrist, but the doctor refused to see the boy unless he agreed to come on his own."

teenagers to such an extent, it almost borders on indifference, she complained.

Mrs. Hisano Okura of Gracefield Ave. arrived here six years ago from Japan

that doesn't necessarily mean it's a good situation for either group.

In a way, European families are more private than Canadians, said Mrs. De Almeida. "We try to solve our own problems and we cultivate family ties. We want our children to remember they have roots in another country through their grandparents and relatives."

Mrs. Mira and her husband, Toronto manufacturer Manuel Mira, do this by taking their boy and girl to Portugal each summer. And the Miras "work hard" to bridge the culture gap with their Canadianized children by learning about, and taking part in, activities their youngsters enjoy.

Sometimes that's not an easy task. "Skiing, for instance," said Mrs. Mira. "My husband broke his leg out on the slopes with the children this spring."

Although her role as a homemaker satisfies Mrs. Mira, she believes her daughter Theresa, 12, should make up her own mind about her future lifestyle. "I'd like her to go to university if she wants to. And I'd be very happy if she wants to have a profession."

The women agreed that the trend among immigrants in Metro today is to limit families to two or three children. They are also freeing themselves from the influence of church leaders, even though they still believe that strong spiritual values are important for maintaining family ties.

Many Catholic immigrants for in-

nic and religious—the women agreed to some Italian and Portuguese parents still disappointed when their child marry outside their own group.

One of the problems is that the Canadian partner tends to resent the family attachments of the ethnic spouse, said Mrs. Schuch.

Although she agrees that the "ghetto" form of living in ethnic neighborhoods can be a "good cushion" for a newcomer Mrs. Schuch fears it can also become a trap.

"You need to feel uncomfortable in order to change"—learn the language, customs of a new country, she said. The women agreed that learning to speak English was their greatest problem here.

Language difficulty

Italian-born Mrs. Maria Frutti of Gracefield Ave. has lived here 13 years. She is a Canadian citizen now, but still has difficulties conversing in English.

She had no opportunity to speak in her first few years because she was home minding her children. Now she is embarrassed to speak English because "my children correct my errors."

The many language classes that are available to immigrants in Metro today were almost non-existent when Portuguese-born Ms. Mira arrived here 14 years ago.

She lived in Toronto's Italian district and learned to speak Italian before English because she needed that language