

## *Growth Seen for Co-ed Scouting*

The Nassau County Council of the Boy Scouts of America, whose membership had been declining for several years, reported yesterday a 10 per cent increase in the number of boys who participated in scouting programs in 1971. And Scout Executive James M. Davenport Jr. predicts that the growth will "mushroom" this year because of a new Exploring program for boys and girls 14 to 18 years old.

The co-ed experiment started in Nassau in November, and this month the council's executive board approved Camp Wauwepex at Wading River for co-ed overnight camping trips chaperoned by married couples. "Of course, with the girls, it will attract more boys, so we expect a sizable growth in the Exploring program this year," Davenport said.

The co-ed experiment was not responsible for much of last year's growth. Scout membership in Nassau increased by more than 4,000 boys in 1971, to a total of 44,235. Only 300 girls have joined the new program so far. A special grant of \$5,000 from the United Fund and a \$10,000 grant from the Clark Foundation, a New York organization interested in youth work, enabled the council to increase its staff and intensify recruiting efforts last year, Davenport said.

The United Fund grant was made so the council could step up recruiting efforts in disadvantaged areas of Roosevelt and Freeport, where four new scout groups with more than 100 members were formed last year, Davenport said. In the co-ed program, three new Explorer posts were started at Franklin General Hospital in Valley Stream, where 159 teenagers, half of them girls, are working in voluntary programs while learning about careers in hospital work.