

South Renfrew Women's Institutes

Observe Fortieth Anniversary

May 26 1953

Forty years of achievement were viewed in retrospect by South Renfrew District Women's Institutes, when on Tuesday of last week over 180 members gathered at Combermere in celebration of their fortieth anniversary. A full day of reports, discussion, and reviewing of the many phases of Institutes work, under the chairmanship of Mrs. R. M. MacGregor of Lochwinnoch, district president, was climaxed by an anniversary banquet in the evening, when business and financial matters were forgotten and good fellowship reigned supreme.

The day began at an early hour, when four chartered coaches from the Renfrew County Bus Lines were on hand to pick up passengers at various points in the district, to assemble them all in the town of Renfrew, and thence to continue the trip up through the hills, the lake and river routes, for which Renfrew County is justly famous, to the beautiful village of Combermere. Nor were the Institute members at the "lower end" of the district the only ones up and doing before the sun that morning. The hostess group at Combermere were likewise bustling about at an early hour, setting the banquet tables, preparing the hall for the business meeting, and, to the surprise and delight of the trippers from 75 to 100 miles distant, making ready quantities of steaming coffee and great platters of doughnuts for gratifying refreshments before starting in on the business of the day.

The business meeting took place in the parish hall of the Church of the Sacred Heart, and a cordial welcome to delegates and members was extended by Mrs. H. Stevenson, president of the Combermere branch. Mrs. Hector Scheel of Stewartville, replied on behalf of the visitors.

In her president's address to the meeting, Mrs. R. M. MacGregor gave high praise to the 19 branches in the district for excellent work carried on all through the year, and expressed appreciation of the help and co-operation she had received. She urged continued support of the high ideals set by the Women's Institutes and made special mention of the need for branch members to prepare themselves to follow the work through and take on district offices.

Mrs. W. H. Hamilton, district secretary, presented the financial statements and secretary's report, which included the results of the special drive put on by the district Institutes last fall to raise money for hospital equipment.

An interesting explanation of the set up of the whole Women's Institute organization was given by Mrs. Leslie Davis of Eganville, provincial board director. Mrs. Davis also dealt in some detail with the coming triennial conference of the A.C.W.W., to be held in Toronto this coming August, describing some of the plans for "Canada Day" which may be attended by Institute members from every district, and which will be held in the Maple Leaf Gardens. Mrs. Davis closed a most interesting address with the warning note: "Don't lose sight of your educational opportunities by stressing too much the money making activities. Women's Institutes are educational groups, not service clubs."

Guest speaker from the Women's Institute department, Toronto, was Miss Grace Hamilton, who explained the extension services for branches. She outlined some of the short courses offered through the branch Institutes by the department, with the procedure necessary to obtain these. They covered many useful topics, from home economics and health to child psychology, and were of varied lengths, from one half day to two weeks.

At local level, a full account of the activities carried on during the past year was given by the conveners of standing committees for the district. Mrs. Duncan Wallace of Renfrew gave a report on agriculture and Canadian industries; Mrs. Harvey Shaw, Pakenham, on citizenship and education; Mrs. A. Bennett, Arnprior, on public relations and community activities; Mrs. John Henderson, Renfrew, on historical research; Mrs. Louis Emon, Calabogie, on home economics and health.

A report of women's work in connection with the Federation of Agriculture was given by Mrs. Kenneth Briscoe, Northcote, and a discussion on fair work, led by Mrs. John E. Miller and Mrs. A. Bennett. Reports on the work of hospital committees were given by Mrs. J. H. Findlay for Arnprior and Mrs. W. Galbraith for Renfrew.