

HOME AND COUNTRY

Published Quarterly by
The Federated Women's Institutes
of Ontario
and
The Women's Institute Branch and
Home Economics Service
Department of Agriculture
Ontario

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"HOME and COUNTRY"

The Women's Institute Branch and
Home Economics Service
Department of Agriculture
Parliament Buildings, Toronto 2.

This paper is distributed through the
secretaries of Women's Institutes to the
Women's Institute Members.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

TRIBUTE TO STONEY CREEK
1897 INSTITUTE 1947

It is with deep and sincere gratitude that we pay tribute to our Mother Institute, Stoney Creek.

Little did our first members realize that out of that memorable meeting held fifty years ago would develop our vast Women's Institute organization as we know it to-day.

What an inspiration and thrill it has been to read and re-read the early records and follow through the accomplishments of our women throughout the years.

When we meet and talk with our charter members and read their first much treasured minute book, Thomas Campbell's poem "Hallowed Ground" comes to mind.

"What's hallowed ground? 'Tis what gives birth
To sacred thoughts in souls of worth!"

Surely Stoney Creek is hallowed ground in Institute history! Have not "Sacred thoughts in souls of worth" been born in this village? To think that from this nucleus Women's Institutes have spread until now, fifty years later, instead of 76 members as there were in the first year of Institute history, Ontario now has 36,000 members, Canada 70,000 and Institutes have spread throughout Ontario and Canada to Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Holland, Ceylon, Africa as well as other countries. And from the idea of Countrywomen meeting together our far reaching organization, The Associated Country Women of the World, has developed and thrived; the will to do good has prevailed.

"What's hallowed ground? 'Tis what gives birth
To sacred thoughts in souls of worth!"

STONEY CREEK OFFICERS 1947



Mrs. Angus B. Jackson, President



Mrs. Lyle Nash, Secretary

Peace! Independence! Truth! go forth earths compass round;
And your high priesthood shall make earth All hallowed ground!"
May we the daughters and granddaughters of the first Institute women go forward with dauntless courage, determination and faith to help bring "Peace! Independence! Truth!" to all mankind.

Matthew Arnold has said, "If ever the world sees a day when women shall work together purely and simply for the benefit of mankind, it will be a power such as the world has never known".

Surely this is our Women's Institute challenge today. With chaotic conditions as they still exist throughout the world it will take all the power we possess and can create to build right principles and relieve human misery. As our organization has expanded so also our responsibilities have increased. We have accepted the countries of the world as our neighbours. Are we ready to perform the neighbourly acts of kindness, understanding, tolerance and mutual help in order that we may live in harmony with our neighbours? This is a challenge which must be met if we are to help bring true peace to our world.

"And is he dead whose glorious mind
Lifts thine on high?

To live in hearts we leave behind
Is not to die!"

Are they dead whose "glorious minds" have lifted ours on high? Have we not been stimulated to greater and nobler thoughts and deeds because our early Institute women lived and had a vision?

Are we, the young women, measuring up? Does this same courageous unselfish spirit and will to serve live in the hearts of all Institute women today? Let this be our aim. May our ever increasing membership follow on to greater accomplishments because this Institute idea was born and because these noble women lived and inspired us.

Truly WE TREASURE THE PAST. We pay high tribute to our Mother Institute, to those who helped with its organization and to our charter members (several of whom, we are happy to say, are still with us to celebrate this great occasion).

The finest tribute we could pay is our assurance that we shall go on, keeping our standards high, to build our great Women's Institute super structure on the firm foundation already laid. The thousands and thousands of Institute members regardless of colour, creed or politics who go about doing good the world over form a living memorial to the great Women's Institute idea originated at Stoney Creek.

WE FACE THE FUTURE keeping ever before us our great motto "For Home and Country" and the words of our Ode "Each shall seek the common weal—the Good of All Mankind".

A. P. L.

(Continued from page 1 column 4)
Minutes Recorded

"Name of Society discussed.
"Moved by F. M. Carpenter, seconded by Mrs. Melson, that the name be changed to 'The Woman's Institute of Saltfleet'. Carried.

"The constitution and by-laws as prepared by the committee was submitted.

"After constitution was read it was moved by Mrs. Dean, seconded by Mrs. Melson, that said constitution be adopted. Carried.

Letter read by secretary from Hon. John Dryden to Sec. Erland Lee in reply to a request for a grant.

"Address by Miss Watson who gave an interesting paper on foods.

Directors were then appointed.
"Moved by Mrs. Carpenter seconded by Mrs. Pettit that Mrs. Erland Lee be a director. Carried.

"Moved by Mrs. McNeilly, seconded by Mrs. Melson, that Mrs. C. Dewitt of Tapleystown be a director. Carried.

"Moved by Mrs. Marcus Lee seconded by Mrs. Dean that Mrs. F. M. Carpenter be a director. Carried.

"Auditors were then appointed.
"Moved by Mrs. Melson, seconded by Mrs. McNeilly that Carlotta Orr be an auditor. Carried.

"It was also moved and seconded that Mrs. (Dr.) Thompson be an auditor. Carried.

"It was decided to hold meetings once every fortnight, Thursday afternoon at 2 o'clock".

Pres. Mrs. E. D. Smith
Sec. M. E. Nash

The significance of this cherished minute book, still clearly legible in the neat handwriting of Maggie Nash, impresses one deeply. The concise but meaningful records depict a turning point in the history of womankind. An idea was born. An idea which has broadened the outlook and given a new lease on life to homemakers everywhere. Through the vision and inspired action of Adelaide Hoodless, the courage and perseverance of this broad-minded and public-spirited young farmer, Mr. Erland Lee, and the co-operative action of charter members and interested friends, adult homemaking education in its broadest sense had its birth.

Through this newly formed organization the members hoped to improve conditions in the home from the physical, intellectual and cultural standpoint—to raise the standards of homemaking. The idea has spread. Now groups of women all over the world meet to study and work toward the best FOR HOME AND COUNTRY.

The First Constitution

The original objects appearing in the Constitution of the Woman's Institute, drafted in February 1897, are almost identical with the objects as they appear in our present Hand Book. We quote these objects from the original Constitution. The bracketed clauses have been added since.

"The object of this Institute shall be to promote that knowledge of Household Science which shall lead to

the improvement in household architecture with special understanding of the economic and hygienic value of foods and fuels; and to a more scientific care (and training) of children with a view to raising the general standard of health (and morals) of our people; (and the consideration of any problem or the carrying on of any line of work, which has as its object the uplift of the home or the betterment of conditions surrounding community life)".

We also observe in this Constitution the forerunner of our standing committees. We quote: "For the better carrying out of the objects of this Institute it shall be divided into six divisions or branches as follows: (1) Domestic Economy (2) Architecture with special references to Sanitation, Light, Heat, etc. (3) Physiology, Hygiene, Medicine, Calisthenics, etc. (4) Floriculture, Horticulture (5) Music and Art (6) Literature and Sociology, Education and Legislation.

Early Programs

It is interesting to note that many of the topics considered vital fifty years ago still have a large place in Women's Institute activities today. It is recorded that on February 25th, Miss Watson gave an interesting paper on Foods; on March 11, 1897, Mrs. McNeilly gave an interesting and instructive paper on "Proper Food for Children", at the meeting March 25th Dr. Mabel Henderson gave a paper on "The Child in Health and Disease". Thus from the outset, health, nutrition and child care were subjects which commanded the attention of the organization.

Other topics dealt with in this first year of organization included: Art, Our Children, Women on the Farm (by Mrs. A. T. Rorer of Philadelphia "the great scientific cook of America"), Sunshine—The Light and Life Giver, Home Decoration by Girls, How to Cook Vegetables, How to Make Coffee, Gleaned Thoughts, Housekeeping versus Homemaking, A Talk to Girls, Buttermaking, Floriculture, The Science of Keeping Clean in the Household, Food Values in Whole Wheat.

Humour, fun and happy social intercourse all found their place in these early programs. One humorous reading "How to be Happy Though Married" must have caused jovial comment.

Special Reading Courses are mentioned as being held by this progressive group of women in between meetings. On February 10th, 1898 a Chatauqua reading course on Domestic Science was started and proved to be very educational.

Could not many of the above mentioned subjects be termed "Timely Topics Today"? Would it not add interest in planning 1947 programs to choose at least one topic from this 1897 list?

The Superintendent's First Report

In the annual report of the Superintendent of Farmers' Institutes for 1896-1897, Mr. F. W. Hodson writes: "South Wentworth is the first institute to take up this important department, but it is to be hoped that the day is not far distant when each local Farmers' Institute will have a Women's Institute affiliated with it. The fact is now recognized that young women, as well as young men, require special training to fit them for life on the farm. Whether a Provincial institution for young women only is likely to be established soon is a matter for the future. Meanwhile these Women's Institutes may be of great service in improving the conditions of women on the farm".

Dr. G. C. Creelman, as Superintendent of Institutes, records in his 1899-1900 report, "At the beginning of this year two thriving Institutes, organized and conducted by women, were found to be in a thriving and prosperous condition. I refer to the Women's Institute of Saltfleet and the Women's Institute of South Ontario. Later in the season other Institutes wrote asking for information".

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