

## REPORT ON ONTARIO ROYAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION

"No matter how fine the equipment, or how splendid the school, the key to good and inspired education is the teacher," said Mrs. J. E. Houck, R.R. 6, Brampton, member of the Royal Commission on Education and president of Peel County Women's Institutes, in a report given at the Peel District Annual Meeting. "Therefore, one of the most important tasks of any Government is the selection, training, paying and keeping of only the best-qualified teachers.

"Following that idea further, no matter how good the teacher, the kind of citizens Canada needs cannot be successfully moulded unless the country's boys and girls have security and good home training. Each complements the other. This is where the co-operation of every citizen must be enlisted to provide Ontario children with the best opportunity possible to become useful and helpful citizens of a great country," commented Mrs. Houck.

The Royal Commission on Education was appointed in the spring of 1945 to study the present system of education in Ontario up to University entrance level, and to accept from individuals and organizations criticisms and suggestions that would improve and facilitate the education of Ontario children.

Many phases of education and school administration were considered by the commission, including school buildings and architecture, finance, transportation, curriculum, text books, types of schools, kindergartens, nursery schools, teaching of the handicapped, music, vocational work, special subjects, rural and urban schools teachers, their training, pay and selection, administration, taxation, trustees' problems, inspection and superannuation, separate schools. The subject matter studied included more than 200 briefs, some of them requiring a day or more to present and more than 2½ million words of material and testimony.

Chairman of the Commission is the Honourable Mr. Justice Hope of the Ontario Supreme Court. Dr. R. W. E. Jackson of the Research Department of the Ontario Department of Education is secretary and official counsel is Major Angus Dunbar of Guelph. Included on the 20-member commission is a librarian, representatives of rural and urban trustee groups, a male and female teacher, three people from Northern Ontario, a labour representative, a French Canadian, a book publisher, a clergyman, three members from Separate School boards, four women, a university president and several men who have been connected with Toronto Boards of Education.

With the completion of the research work and the material assembled, commission members have been divided into small groups to consider various parts of the information at hand. Each committee will try to submit to the commission as a whole alternative suggestions on the various subjects under discussion by the particular committee, with arguments pro and con, so that recommendations will come only from the full commission and not from the smaller groups.

"In order to broaden the vision of commission members and help them to see and realize certain education problems, small groups had trips to educational institutions to see 'Education in Action'. The commission as a whole journeyed to Northern Ontario and observed the problems of schools there," said Mrs. Houck. "There, town and village schools compared very favourably with some of the best in Southern Ontario, but the problems of transportation and taxation in the sparsely-settled regions are most distressing," she said.

One group, of which Mrs. Houck was a member, visited teacher-training schools in Connecticut, New Jersey and New York, as well as two Ontario Normal Schools. Members

## DISTRICT ANNUALS

The District Annual meetings of Women's Institutes of Ontario in May and June, were marked by an enthusiasm and an earnestness of purpose on the part of the women who attended that was an inspiration to the staff members who took part in their programmes. With so many annuals being held, in every section of Ontario, it is naturally impossible to differentiate between them. The Acting Editor of Home and Country has pored over scores of newspaper clippings and reports,—and incidentally this indicates the excellent work done by the publicity conveners—and feels that, with so many wonderful meetings being held, it would be unfair to single out any for special mention. Well-arranged programmes, keen and interesting discussions, and excellent reports of worth-while activities featured all the meetings.

At some of the meetings, stress was laid on training for citizenship, the acquisition of Canadian citizenship by law on January 1 of this year having acted as a spur to citizenship conveners to stress the meaning and responsibilities of citizenship in a vast country such as Canada. The problems of keeping rural youth on the farms, the training of leaders and officers, and the recruiting of greater membership among the young women of the rural communities were all brought to the fore at district annuals in many sections of Ontario, showing that the members were thinking ahead, and planning to take advantage of the opportunities of the future.

Special mention might be made of the series of district annuals held across the northern fringe of the Province, where the population is sparse and women often have to travel long distances to attend such meetings. It was most encouraging to note in reports of these meetings the enthusiasm of the members, and the expansion of the work of the Institutes into new areas by the formation of additional branches.

Naturally, the meetings, held just prior to the 50th anniversary celebration at Guelph, were tinged by thoughts of the treasured past, and inspired by the challenge to face the future. The keynote was given, perhaps, by Miss Anna P. Lewis, Director of the W.I. Branch and Home Economics Service, speaking at the Sudbury district annual. Miss Lewis quoted a message from Lady Tweedsmuir, as follows:—

"We have a great future before us; we have a steady influence because our roots are in the past, our minds and hands are working in the present, and our eyes are looking clearly into the future." Then Miss Lewis continued, "What a thrill it has been to hear of the accomplishments of the women who have gone before. Are we not inspired by their good works? They truly lived and had a vision. The firm foundations they built are a challenge to us to carry on."

were much impressed by the variety and scope of subject MATTER taught in these colleges.

Commenting on the trip to the United States, Mrs. Houck said: "Another unusual feature of the work at the Buffalo State Teachers' College was the outstandingly good industrial arts and household science courses. A single course like that over a ten-year period in one of our colleges would give new life and vigour to vocational education in Ontario."

Mrs. Houck stated that if suggestions and ideas which will be embodied in the final report of the commission are implemented, there will be many far-reaching changes in the educational set-up of the province. Gathering of the details and information has been an enormous task and when the commission started work, no member had any conception of the magnitude of the undertaking or the great interest that was being taken in the project by people from all walks of life.

## OUTLOOK BROADENED BY CORRESPONDENCE WITH SISTER INSTITUTE

Many valuable friendships have been set up and new and interesting ideas and program suggestions gleaned through our letter friendships, our "adoption" of overseas Institutes, and through our program exchange scheme.

Have you discussed this in your Institute? Perhaps you, too, would like to engage in one or more of the above named projects. We highly recommend these for your consideration and shall be glad to send further information on request.

The letter published below from Willingdon W. I. in Great Britain contains many interesting sidelights on Institute work in England. Several suggestions are worth duplicating in our work. This letter has been sent in by one of our Ontario Institutes which has adopted an English Institute.

"Dear Canadian Friends:—

How very kind of you to send us such a generous gift for which we are deeply indebted and for which we thank you most warmly and gratefully.

Our Willingdon Women's Institute was founded about sixteen years ago and to-day has a membership of about one hundred and forty-six members. Our size could be a weakness, if we were unaware of the effort always necessary to maintain an intimate family atmosphere. This happy state is in existence, I am glad to say, and we hope will long continue. In a large Institute like ours, it is difficult to give jobs to more members but the spirit of personal responsibility is encouraged by means of our various sub-sections.

**Sub-sections Cater to Special Interests**

Our president is a handicraft specialist and consequently our "Guild of Learners" (as the Handicraft section is called), is strong in membership and active in achievements. This group meets monthly and members have been preparing a sampler, as in days of old, showing various embroidery stitches. Several classes have been held during the past year for members and non-members alike, in sandal making with wedge heels, glove making, bag making, dressmaking and upholstery. Talks on smocking and exhibition work were also arranged.

**Well Balanced Program**

A successful Institute must be well balanced and thus the Choral and Dramatic Groups are well supported. The two sections combined to present the Nativity Play at our Christmas party. This piece of successful team work has proved so happy these last two years that it seems likely to become a tradition. The Choral group meets weekly, except in mid-summer, and has proved successful in county competitions and a great pleasure to the Institute. The Dramatic group meets for play readings but is responsible for at least one production annually, usually in the spring.

**Produce Guilds**

Life is not all pleasure, however, and we are members of rural activity so our Produce Guild, too, has an important role to play. Talks and demonstrations are arranged and every encouragement is given to fruit bottling and jam making and other forms of preserves. We are rather weak in this group at present due to our rationing system. Our reserve stocks of sugar are sorely depleted, also it is not easy to replace our preserving pans and bottles. Again our gardens are in need of replenishing after our exile during periods of evacuation and good bushes and plants and seeds are not easy to obtain at reasonable prices. The weather last summer was against us but we look forward to better produce results this year.

**Savings Group and Trading Stall**

Finally we have a savings group, which functions assiduously at the monthly meeting, at which also the trading stall is held. At this it is possible to sell surplus produce and handi-

work and the Institute Funds benefit by one penny in the shilling. Under rationing we were not able to sell jam or honey or any rationed commodity and this stall has become a general stall, selling old clothes, china, etc. all in good demand, but we hope that before very long, we shall return to our 'Produce' trading stall and forget our 'Junk' days!

## BOOKS DEPICTING LIFE IN THE BRITISH ISLES PRO- CURABLE FROM LOAN LIBRARY

The Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario are most grateful for the generous gifts of books sent from English sister Institutes.

\* These books have been sent as a token of appreciation for the help given during the war years. 41 books have been received from the Wiltshire Federation, 106 from Dorset, 65 from Hampshire and 24 from the Isle of Wight. Lists of these books may be secured on the request from our loan library and shipments of books will be made to any Institute in the province. Apply to Loan Library, Women's Institute Branch and Home Economics Service, Parliament Buildings, Toronto 2.

## TRIBUTE IS PAID INSTITUTE GIFT TO SUNNYBROOK HOSPITAL

Permanent tribute to the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario for their donation to the Sunnybrook Hospital from the Central War Charities Fund, is being provided in what is known as a "Tribute to Donors" Book which is being prepared, to be kept as a permanent record in the hospital library for inspection by the public at all times. In a letter written by W. J. Stewart, Chairman of the Greater Toronto Veterans Hospital Committee, it is intimated that the following tribute will appear in the book:—

"The Officers and Members of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, on June 19th, 1946, presented to Sunnybrook Hospital the furnishings of a four-bed ward, with radio, electric fan and thermos jar."

In addition, a plaque has been placed on the door of the ward equipped by the F.W.I.O. contribution, bearing the words:

"Presented by the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario."

The furnishings for the ward in question were provided through a donation of \$1,000 made to the Sunnybrook Hospital, and a further gift of \$45 made to meet the cost of the plaque which has been placed on the door of the ward. This was only one of many donations made by the F.W.I.O. from the Central War Charities Fund for benevolent, charitable and patriotic purposes during the war and since its close. This fund was officially closed on April 30th, 1946, by the distribution of the balance of funds on hand, the Sunnybrook donation being part of this final distribution.

## WHEN SENDING MONEY

When sending money please remit by postal note, money order or postal note stamps.

## HOW TO SECURE PINS

F.W.I.O. pins may be secured at 55 cents each from the Women's Institute Branch and Home Economics Service, Parliament Buildings, Toronto 2, Ont.

All other pins are secured from Mrs. J. H. McCulloch, R.R. 2, Brampton; The F.W.I.C. pins come at \$1.40 each; board directors' pins at \$2.25; and life membership pins at \$2.00. Before a life membership pin may be purchased it is essential to send in to Mrs. J. H. McCulloch the necessary \$5.00 for life membership certificate. See new board ruling in Home and Country, Summer 1946.