

# HOME and COUNTRY

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## NORTHERN CONVENTIONS BRING INSPIRATION AND IMPETUS TO INSTITUTE WORK

### MY IMPRESSION OF THE NORTH

(Contributed by Mrs. J. R. Futcher)

On September 8, 9 and 10 I had the pleasure and experience of attending two conventions in our Northland, the first a one-day convention at Little Current, Manitoulin Island and the second a two-day convention at Sault Ste. Marie, combining the Districts of Algoma and St. Joseph's Island. It was my first trip north past the Muskokas and I thought you might enjoy going along with me.

We (Miss Lewis and I) took a sleeper out of Toronto at 11:35 p.m. and early morning found us an hour and a half's run out of Sudbury and out on the observation platform, basking in the early sunlight and marvelling at the rugged and beautiful surroundings. In many places the C.P.R. roadbed was hewn through solid rock and we went through many cuts with the rocks towering over us. Big rocks were strewn all along the way, jagged and piled at every angle. Behind were hills of large, bare rocks, wooded where the trees could find a place to root. These bald, bare hills are very much in evidence in the Sudbury District.

We waited a few minutes on the station platform for our train to McKerrrow, on our way to Manitoulin Island. Past Sudbury, through foliage of jack pine, spruce and birch, you catch glimpses of lakes nestled in the hollows and the next minute you are out of the forests and going along the edge of one. You see loons and wild ducks out from shore diving for fish and swimming along gracefully on the beautifully clear blue water. You pass isolated homesteads with small barns and maybe five or six cattle grazing in the handkerchief fields spread out on the rocks. In all the way to McKerrrow we saw only two grain fields in shock—one a splendid crop for any locality in Southern Ontario and the other, short and poor. This is not farming land but rather a wooded area with bald, bold, desolate, rock formation and myriads of beautiful, blue lakes.

In the smaller lakes you see log booms—for this is pulpwood territory and you see it piled high in many places in the regulation-size log of 4½ feet.

Brightly painted summer cottages here and there rim the small lakes and you have a swift feeling of envy for the fresh fish dinners these vacationists must enjoy along with fresh blueberry pie, which fruit, on low bushes, is plentiful here.

All along the track you notice rocks, piled around fence posts and telephone posts to keep them upright and in position as there is no soil to support them.

At McKerrrow we changed to a train going south to Manitoulin.

To reach Little Current, which is on the North Channel looking over to the District of Algoma on the mainland, you pass over islands which the C.P.R. has bridged. It is amazing the way the track circles and bends as it skirts islands and lakes. A trainman told me that in some places here the engineer shakes hands with the man on the caboose. You can almost imagine it happening. It is exceedingly picturesque and scenic country, lakes everywhere and here and there logging settlements and summer homes. Lately these bridges have been plankled and are used for motor travel as well. There is only one train a day in and out of McKerrrow. Our companions on the coach were Indians who sat in their seats, stolid and uncommunicative. It is a lovely ride, the green hills



SUDBURY CONVENTION GROUP

In the front row are the executive officers and special speakers. Mrs. J. R. Futcher and Mrs. Laura Stephen centre front.



MANITOULIN CONVENTION

Manitoulin ladies busy preparing noon luncheon for convention group take time out to have their picture taken with Mr. Cotton, Agricultural Representative for the Island.

sides turning to yellow and, here and there, an isolated tree in its brilliant red autumn foliage. The lakes vary, adding to the travellers' interest. Some are shallow at the shoreline and choked with rushes, weeds and water lilies. Others are deep at the water's edge and quietly mirror the shoreline.

We reached Little Current about 3 p.m. From our hotel windows we could see the Northern Passage and the District of Algoma. To our right, on an island off from Manitoulin, are great piles of coal brought here by boat from the United States and dumped ready to be taken by rail to the nickel refineries at Sudbury.

#### Manitoulin Convention

The convention started the next morning at 10 with 86 present—all 20 Branches represented. Rural women of Manitoulin are keenly interested in Institute work and their reports show splendid personal and community effort. Women's Institute day, cattle sale day and the fall fair days are important days on the Island.

These are a few of the outstanding thoughts I gleaned from the well-summarized reports:

"What we make of our homes is more important than what our homes are made of".

"Happy homes do not happen, they are the result of combined effort".

"Let your light shine—Modesty can be a doubtful virtue".

"Institutes houseclean the communities".

After the convention closed one of the members took us for a drive into the country to a high point where the scenery would be comparable to any place in Canada. We saw where silica deposits are mined for use in smelting and in the tempering of steel. The residue, a very fine sand, is used in the making of glass. We saw the famed Manitoulin cattle and great flocks of turkeys.

The people are thankful for two cold storage lockers, recently installed on the island, aiding them to preserve their food. The residents are hopeful that more industries will be established here. They want jobs for their boys and girls on the island. Catering to the wants of the tourists is a major industry on Manitoulin. Outside of the

tourist trade and the mining of silica, agriculture predominates.

On the morning of the 9th we said good-bye to Manitoulin, with its friendly, interesting people and drove on a beautiful bright morning along the winding scenic highway back to McKerrrow, then by train to Sault Ste. Marie and another convention.

#### Algoma Convention

Here again I was delighted at the capable way our women presided at the sessions and amazed at their vigour, earnestness and accomplishments in these territories of isolated communities. These are some of the thoughts gleaned:

1. A member raised \$500 in a summer by making dill pickles and supplying them to the hotels.
2. The convener of agriculture passed along the slogan "clover seed in every grain drill that goes to the field".
3. What education children fail to get in the home and school, they will get on the street.
4. Russia is as she is because of the lack of opportunity to practice religious beliefs.
5. Each Institute keeps "Home and Country" on file for reference, each secretary passing such file on to successor.
6. Sault Ste. Marie Daily-Star has a column for Institute activities headed by our crest.
7. Institutes in this area present each new baby with a bank account of one dollar.
8. In both these convention areas they have the nice custom of letting their vice-president or district president preside at some of the sessions.

After the sessions we had time for a short tour of the city. We saw the "Soo" locks and drove around the major industry, the big Algoma Steel Mills.

I want to tell you something of interest about St. Joseph's Island. The Institutes help maintain the Red Cross Hospital there. It was built by a \$32,000 gift of an Island tourist resident in memory of her husband. The Institutes make one big effort each year for the maintenance funds. In one night they raised \$500 by starting off with a dinner followed by an auction sale, to which everyone donated.

The Island is unique in Canada for its health scheme. They have a resident doctor on the Island. Each family subscribes to his salary and the rate is reasonable—\$2.50 per family. They advertise it as the only place in Canada where you can have a baby for \$2.50. Every Institute is doing a splendid job, adequately meeting the need of the community and working toward a worthwhile future.

Then, on September 23, Miss Lewis and I "took to the North again" for the conventions of Sudbury, Rainy River and Kirkland Lake. The one and a half day convention at Sudbury came first. A panel discussion on "Members of the Women's Institute Serving in the Present" was one of the highlights of the sessions. It was emphasized that Women's Institute meetings should possess "dignity without too much formality" and chit-chat should be kept until the social half-hour—we don't get results in our work if we don't plan well—leave criticism and jealousy at home—in your community work remember the member with limited income and don't attempt too much or you will discourage membership. In our work we must remember character building is the most important thing in life. Teach our children the principles of good citizenship for to-day's children are tomorrow's citizens. The reports were outstanding in arrangement and exceptionally noteworthy in effort and

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