

TWEEDSMUIR HISTORY ESSAYS

First Award

"Our Women's Institute Takes a Forward Look"

Time is divided into three main parts—past, present and future. Each is a link in the chain of time which cannot be broken. These links are interdependent and equally important.

All our present and our future are built on the past, whether we wish it so or not. In 1947 we had a year of commemoration of the past. We celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Women's Institutes of Ontario. We cast a glance backward at our founder, Adelaide Hoodless, and the accomplishments of the past fifty years. In so doing, we realized the heritage which is ours. The past has been an honourable one and we must build on its achievements.

The present is with us. Soon it too will become a part of the past. We must act now so that we shall not be ashamed when it becomes past.

Our motto is "For Home and Country". During the war years we felt very much the impact of Country. We knit and sewed for the Red Cross, we held blood donor clinics, we sent packages overseas to our boys in the services. We donated money for "Jam for Britain" and similar projects. We rode on a high wave of patriotism. It was easy to accomplish these things with the impetus of war and its supercharged atmosphere.

Now we also think of home and the community in which we live. Home to many means the house in which they live, the small world encompassed within its walls. This is a definition of home, but it has a narrow meaning in these days.

Someone has rightly said "Home is where the heart is". In these days following the war years, these days of cold war and indifferent peace, many have no such shelter to call home. Their home must be built on the spirit of love even in the midst of ruin.

The good Institute member must come from a home of love, where she is a homemaker in the true sense of love and interest in her family. Then she broadens out to the community interest, which she finds in this organization. We help the worthy causes of our own community. We try to cooperate with other service groups and church groups for the betterment of the town.

Now, with world travel so prevalent and so speedy, the community has become the world community. In this sphere we send boxes of food and clothing overseas. We have contacted members of societies outside Canada. By correspondence between individuals we hope to build a bond of friendship with other Women's Institutes in countries outside Canada.

What does the future hold in store for us? If we could look in a crystal ball and see, perhaps we should want to withdraw from life. On the other hand, we might be encouraged to continue. As it is, we cannot foretell the future. We must act in the way which seems best to us.

What can we do?

We can foster a sense of unity within the whole movement of the Women's Institute. This may be done by interchange of visits between branches, by attendance at conventions, where we feel the companionship with others of like interests and the stimulation of others' thoughts and ideas.

We can broaden our outlook by continued exchange of correspondence with groups and individual members outside our own province and country.

We can help bring about world peace by our study of citizenship, by our behaviour towards others of different racial origin. Our Institute is non-denominational. This is a fine step towards tolerance.

We can make our programmes more interesting by working harder. Time spent in making a programme inter-

esting and informative is well spent. We must remember that we are trying to learn something. The social hour is important too, for recreation and good fellowship, but we must not neglect the educational side.

We can advertise our Institute by personal contact, through the press and by talking. Men say that women do a great deal of talking. Well, why not talk of something worthwhile—the Institute? Let others know what we are doing and how interested we are.

We can try to become better homemakers by practicing what we learn at the Institute. Try out the new method of cooking demonstrated or the new hint on housekeeping. Give our husbands and children the benefit of what we have learned at the meeting.

By our actions and our way of life show to those who meet us that the women of the Institute are a fine example of womanhood.

We are now on the second half-century. This past year we have read much about the New Look. For our Women's Institute let the New Look be the Forward Look.

(Submitted by
Mrs. Berton Axford, Delhi).

Second Award

"Our Women's Institute Takes a Forward Look"

The triumph and glory of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the inception of our Women's Institute has already died away and now we stand on the threshold of a new Era fraught with inestimable possibilities.

Before "Looking Forward" let us for one moment reverently and tenderly turn back some pages from the dim past.

We see the age-old picture—a home, a mother, little children. Adelaide Hoodless, through the soul-anguish of the loss of a little child, gave birth to an institution, which in the course of fifty years embraces the needs of all peoples over the face of the earth.

We, the women of nineteen forty-nine, pause to pay tribute to the noble pioneers of the Past and gladly resolve to take up the torch and go forward.

As we step courageously out on the "Untrodden Ways" we are determined to make past failures stepping stones and past successes an incentive to greater effort, in bringing about the realization of the highest ideals of these great women of the Past.

It is rather singular to note that the agenda of the original W.I. consisted of six divisions corresponding almost identically with our standing committees of the present. As we look forward, we are content to live by the same creed, stand on the same platform and continue to strive to make Home, a place where children's carefree laughter rings forth; and Country a place of which we may proudly boast "This is My Own My Native Land."

To bring this about, we women of the Present must determine, above all else that we will toil unceasingly to rekindle the flickering flame of the lamp of Faith which, if allowed to die, will bring to naught the glorious achievements of those who have blazed the trail for us.

Oh, Mothers are your children young tonight?

Are their eyes starry with life's wonderment?

Gather them close within the circling light of fire and lamp,—

Tell them of Jesus sent to lie upon a stable's fragrant hay.

A little Babe, the earth's own Saviour, King.

Tell them the story, give them this gift I pray,

For now, and for their future comforting.

No greater gift can any Mother give to any child

Than this glorious truth.

Foundation upon which lives may build and live,

O lay the rock of faith, while there is



40th ANNIVERSARY, GALT.

Celebrating 40th Anniversary of Central Dumfries Women's Institute were, left to right, Mrs. Laura Rose Stephen, Ottawa, guest speaker and Institute lecturer for 54 years; Miss Hannah Slater, first secretary; Mrs. Wm. Elliott, charter member; Mrs. J. S. Knapp, president; Mrs. N. H. Gillespie, charter member; Mrs. Ford Sudden, convener of the Anniversary Committee and Mrs. E. J. Martin, former president who baked and decorated the festive cake.



St. Paul's Women's Institute Exhibit at Stratford Fair. Mrs. T. C. Ballantyne, convener of St. Paul's W.I., exhibit and president of the South Perth Women's Institute is shown here arranging the exhibit at the Fair.

So swift the years will carry them away
Beyond your reaching hands, your voices call.

Give them the things they cannot lose today.

Give them the Christ, the greatest gift of all."

The Country is just an expansion of the Home. In other words what the individual is, the nation is. Thus a tremendous responsibility is ours—to make home such a place that boys and girls will go from it with heads held high with fearlessness and courage; with eyes from which gleam the light of faith in God, in themselves, and their fellowmen; with a smile that inspires the down-hearted to take fresh courage; and hands and hearts, reaching out in love, to help mankind, and make the world a better place in which to live.

To fulfill this noble purpose, Love—"the more excellent way"—must be the ruling factor in the home. Through example we must teach our children to love God and his neighbor as himself; to respect the rights of others, while still maintaining his own individuality; and that a good name is better than great riches.

A Mother's prayer is,—
"Father in Heaven make me wise,
So that my gaze may never meet
A question in my children's eyes.
God give me always kind and sweet
And patient too, before their need;
Let each vexation know its place,
Let gentleness be all my creed,
Let laughter live upon my face!"

One has said, "No home can rise above the level of the homemaker". So we shall make every effort to keep abreast of the times so that we may be sufficiently well-informed to cope with the problems of the coming generation. Good books, literature, history, drama, art, poetry, music and, above all, the Book of books shall

literally breathe their atmosphere into our home lives. The howl of the raging storm will be lulled by the quiet voice of one reading Whittier's immortal "Snow Bound"; on a gentle summer evening, the tender pathos of the words of Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard will stir the heart of the youngest in the circle.

We shall cultivate in our children an appreciation of all that is beautiful, and a keen enjoyment of the simple things in life; the glory of the sunset, the first evening star, the little crescent moon, to which they will later give expression in music, poetry or art.

Finally looking forward, we, as individual members of the W.I. shall faithfully endeavour to carry out from our "Home Community" into that larger "Canadian Community" and ultimately into that "World Community" those principles which will hasten the fulfillment of the Prophecy of Isaiah 2:4 "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

(Submitted by
Mrs. W. H. McCreary,
Carleton Place).

Maple Grove, Durham West: A local dentist gave an address on "Child Dentistry" and from it young mothers received a wealth of information and advice.

Pine Grove, Stormont South: An interesting discussion followed the presenting of the paper "How Can Women Meet the Challenge of These Times".

Nipissing Junction, Parry Sound North: The Township Council attended the Institute meeting and participated in a discussion of district problems.