

Making the Institute Interesting



Blue Lake and Auburn Women's Institute float in Dumfries Township Centennial celebration. The float was decorated in the Institute colours, blue and gold, with a large Institute crest across the front. There was another crest at the back above an atlas of the world with the inscription "World Wide". As the float moved in the procession a group of women, one of them impersonating Adelaide Hoodless, staged an Institute meeting of the Victorian era and sang the Institute Ode. Because this Institute makes a special effort to encourage young mothers to come to meetings and bring their children, a few children were included in the group.

FROM REPORTS reaching the Institutes Branch we find that a great many officers and members are looking for ways of making their Institute "more interesting." Perhaps a few ideas gathered from "Reports of Meetings" might offer suggestions.

Answering the question "What was your most outstanding programme?" the most common reply was, "The Christmas programme at the December meeting," and the reasons given were the inspirational message always given at this meeting and the social good time, exchanging gifts, singing carols together, the general spirit of good will. Would this suggest that while we don't want to make a party of every meeting it might be a good idea to have more singing together and to plan so that every meeting has a friendly, sociable atmosphere—even without serving tea if it has been decided that this is too time-consuming for regular meetings.

Several Institutes find the programme put on by their homemaking club girls each year one of their most interesting, the girls giving demonstrations along the line of whatever club work they are doing through the year. At **Teeswater** the juniors always entertain their mothers at a meeting close to Mother's Day—a suggestion for other Junior Institutes.

Belgrave reports that their meeting for mothers and children had the largest attendance and the "best time" of any meeting of the year.

Health topics seem to be especially popular, **Wallbridge's** comment on its most interesting programme was, "A local registered nurse gave a talk on Cancer in terms everyone could understand." **Moscow** rated first a doctor's talk on "The Detection of Cancer"; **Thornton** a talk on Mental Health by a psychiatrist from a provincial hospital.

Several Institutes reported that they had their most interesting programme when they had New Canadian women taking part. **Lynne Valley** had a Doukhobor woman speak on the customs of her people. Several branches reported talks by women from other countries on the customs of their homelands, their favorite foods and how they prepared them, exhibits of their native handicrafts.

It was noticeable that some of the most interesting topics were related to the home, and that they were especially popular when the members had an opportunity to take part in the discussion. **Branchton's** most interesting programme of the year had the topic "Accidents in the Home," **Adamsville's** was "Stepping Stones of a Great Country—dealing with homes both from the material and ethical point of view"; **Kent Bridge** put first a panel discussion on "Which is most responsible for the bringing up of a child—the home, the school or the church?"

Citizenship topics—fairly weighty ones too—are popular in many branches. **Erindale** reports that its most interesting programme was "a talk on the Declaration of Human Rights, followed by a good discussion." **Utoka** placed first an address on the Juvenile Court by a probation officer; **Coldstream**, an address on the Hope Commission Report; **Ilderton**, a talk by a barrister on "Laws Pertaining to Women and Wills"; **Komoka**, a programme of two talks by the senior and junior school teachers on Citizenship and Education.

Of course some of the most interesting programme features came from guest speakers. **Blythe** put first Mrs. Arthur Hamilton's talk on the A.C.W.W. conference and the Canadians' trip through Europe. **Gormley** said its most interesting meeting was when Miss Lewis showed her historical pictures. But "local talent" is appreciated too. **Zion Amabel** reported that its most outstanding programme was developed by members, from literature borrowed from the Loan Library of the Institute Branch. **Tiverton Juniors** find their study kits from the Department very helpful.