



West Victoria Institute at its fiftieth anniversary.

## Auxiliary Classes For Rural Schools

With the Women's Institutes of Ontario now making it one of their major projects to have auxiliary teachers for rural schools where they are needed, it is interesting to know that the Institutes were pioneers in the movement to have auxiliary classes established forty years ago. We have this information from an old Report Book.

At the convention of 1914, Dr. Helen McMurchy referred to some of the things which had been accomplished through the efforts of the Women's Institutes, stating that without their assistance it would probably have been impossible to have the Auxiliary Classes Act passed in 1914, relating to the education of defective children. The following extract from the Act shows the scope of these classes.

"Section 3—The pupils of Auxiliary Classes are to be those who from any physical or mental cause are unable to take advantage of the ordinary public or separate school courses; children who are of low grade or mental defectiveness and cannot be taught in such classes are not eligible for admission.

"Children who cannot see or hear well enough to learn in the ordinary classes, especially the deaf or semi-deaf, and the blind or semi-blind, as well as those whose general health is so poor that they need open-air

classes, and those who have difficulties in learning of a less evident, definite or well-ascertained character are all entitled, under the Act, to the advantage of instruction which will give them the education that other children get in ordinary classes."

This great achievement, the result of years of effort and agitation by the Women's Institute, stands out as a beacon light on the path of its progress. Through it, health standards have been improved immeasurably in the rural sections, and the things for which they fought, in the way of medical, dental and nursing services for the rural school children of Ontario, are today so commonplace and are taken so much for granted as an integral part of the system of education that one is inclined to wonder why the initial battle for them was so long and hard.

This story has been told in some detail to indicate the perseverance and skill with which the Women's Institute sought its objective and finally attained it. Miss E. L. Moore, Director of Ontario's Public Health Nursing Service, has said, "The Women's Institutes have been largely responsible for the establishment of the Public Health Nursing Division of the Department of Health".