

# A Career In Home Economics Extension

**L**AST AUGUST Miss Lilly Petty, District Home Economist for North and South Cochrane, Muskoka, Parry Sound and Nipissing, retired after thirty-five years with the Women's Institute Branch and the Home Economics Extension Service of the Ontario Department of Agriculture.

Miss Petty joined the staff in 1921. Before this time she had had considerable experience in commercial designing and pattern making for women's and children's clothes and had taken a good deal of Clothing work at the Technical School, so her first work with the Women's Institute Branch was giving courses in Sewing or Dressmaking. Her first course was at Wingham. That winter, in the Huron County Three Months' Short Course (A three months' period was called a **short** course then) she taught both Sewing and Millinery. In the winters of the next few years Miss Petty worked in Three Months' Courses in the counties of Huron, Wentworth, York, Peel and Bruce. During the rest of the year she gave courses to Women's Institute groups. She also did the "summer series" of lecture tours to Women's Institutes over the province, assisted Agricultural Representatives with school fairs in several counties and districts, supervised girls' club exhibits at the Lakehead exhibition and chaperoned up to one hundred and seventy-five club girls day and night.

Wanting to continue her education, Miss Petty took two years "out" to attend Macdonald Institute. She graduated in 1928. After this, for five winters she had charge of Three Months' Schools in Lincoln and York counties, taught both Foods and Clothing to Women's Institute classes and gave one-month courses, mostly to girls, in several counties and districts in the North. She even gave a course in Parliamentary Procedure to an Institute in Rainy River.

It was in the summer of 1922 that Miss Petty did her first work in Northern Ontario, on Manitoulin Island and in Algoma. In November of that year, following the big Haileybury fire Miss Petty was sent to give a course at Swastika. Here she taught a sewing class in the daytime and at night worked with the Institute women making clothes for fire relief.

Among the forerunners of our present 4-H Homemaking Clubs were Girls' Garment Making Clubs and Home Judging Competitions. Miss Petty supervised some of the Garment Making Clubs and coached girls in a number of counties for Judging Competitions.

Altogether Miss Petty has done work in forty-five counties and districts of the province. For the last twenty years most of her time has been spent in the North—in Mus-



Miss Lilly Petty.  
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koka, Parry Sound, Nipissing, Timiskaming, Cochrane, Sudbury, Algoma, Manitoulin, Thunder Bay, Rainy River and Kenora. It takes no great imagination to get some idea of the travelling involved in such a territory. Miss Petty estimates that one year her course covered 3300 miles, by train, bus, boat, automobile, mail-truck, snowmobile, snowplane and mail stage drawn by horses across the ice from Spanish to Gore Bay. For some years Miss Petty served as District Home Economist for all this area. In 1945 Miss Jean Stewart was appointed her assistant, and after Miss Stewart's marriage Miss Anne Kernaleguen was appointed assistant to take the work in Kenora, Thunder Bay and Rainy River. Three years ago the remaining territory was divided between Miss Petty and Miss Laura Phippen, Miss Petty taking the districts of Muskoka, Parry Sound, Nipissing and North and South Cochrane.

Miss Petty's love for the North country and its people has offset to a great degree the hardships of long distance travelling and the long hours involved, especially in her earlier years in the area. She has excelled in adjusting to all sorts of work and to pioneer conditions when she found them. In the early days when itinerant extension workers were usually lodged and fed in private homes, Miss Petty had a way of "making herself at home" wherever she might be; and she says that from her experiences she feels she has learned more than the women and girls she was sent to teach. She still keeps in touch with many women who were her former club members and club leaders. One of her "good girls" and later a club leader, is Mrs. D. J. Goddard of Port Arthur, recently a member of the F.W.I.O. Board.

A few weeks before Miss Petty's retirement she was honoured at a luncheon given by the North Bay Rotary Club and attended by nearly two hundred persons including some ninety farm boys and girls of the district. Following the luncheon Miss Petty was presented with a cheque for \$650 from girls who had been her club members and Women's Institutes over the whole North territory