

living in remote parts of the town, stopping in to rest before the long walk home, have dropped donations into the collection box as have rural people also. With a growing population and a touring public the new attractive Rest Room will be a real asset of which all concerned can be proud.

The new Rest Room was opened formally on Tuesday, February 12. Mrs. C. H. Helsdon, President of the Women's Institute, cut the ribbon at the door and the place was declared officially open by Reeve Howard McCombs. Reeve McCombs, Councillors Wm. Smith and L. E. Force, members of the Norwich-Otterville Lion's Club and the Women's Institute, with a few spectators, attended the official ceremony.

After Mrs. Helsdon had cut the ribbon, Reeve McCombs presided at a brief program, thanking all who had helped for their co-operation and expressing the Council's satisfaction in the building. Mrs. Helsdon then invited Mrs. Donald Moore, a Past President, to give a brief history of the Institute's connection with the Rest Room. She then thanked the Council and the Lion's Club for their contributions, and Lion President, William Butler, congratulated the Women's Institute on their achievement and expressed his Club's appreciation of being able to help in making such an attractive and useful building available.

Editor's Note: It seems to us that the fine community co-operation in this enterprise is as noteworthy as the Rest Room itself.



Dr. Mary Rutnam

—Photo courtesy Toronto Telegram

Dr Mary Rutnam

WITH the Associated Country Women of the World meeting in Ceylon this year, Canadians may be rather proud of the fact that it was a Canadian woman, Dr. Mary Rutnam, who was responsible for the organization of Women's Institutes in that country.

Dr. Rutnam, who was Mary Irwin before she was married, is a native of Clinton, Ontario. After graduating from high school in Clinton she attended Toronto University where she met her future husband, a native of Ceylon. It was in 1896 that Dr. Rutnam went to Ceylon as a medical missionary. Two of her sons are also medical doctors.

Dr. Rutnam learned about Women's Institutes when she was back in Ontario on furlough in the year 1908. At this time she did some lecture work for the Women's Institute Branch, speaking at the Summer Series of Meetings on such subjects as Sanitation and Health, The Law and the Gospel on Heredity, Temperance Considered Scientifically. She made a further study of the Institutes when she came back to Ontario in 1920.

When Dr. Rutnam returned to Ceylon she was anxious to get the Institute movement started there. As the result of an address she gave at an All-Ceylon Conference of Social Workers held in Colombo in 1929, the Associated Board of Charities was organized and a Homecraft sub-committee prepared and submitted a scheme for establishing Women's Institutes in Ceylon. The first Institute or Lanka Mahila Samiti was organized at Pannipitiya in August, 1931, with 41 members. By April of the following year 12 branches had been organized. There are now over 720 branches with a membership of 35,000.

Naturally Dr. Rutnam stressed health education. At the A.C.W.W. Conference in Toronto, Mrs. de Mel, President of the Lanka Mahila Samiti of Ceylon, said that the introduction of five simple health rules that can be followed in even the poorest home had resulted in an almost complete eradication of diseases such as hook-worm and malaria. The decline in child mortality is also worthy of record. In addition to these achievements the Samiti are active in raising vegetables and so improving the diet of the people, in handicraft, nursery education, cultural education and social activities.

Dr. Mary Rutnam, a diminutive, vivacious, keen-minded woman of eighty-five, has a warm place in the hearts of the women of Ceylon. Her trip to the A.C.W.W. Conference in her native Canada was the gift of grateful women of Ceylon's Lanka Mahila Samiti.