

Institutes and Baby Clinics

WE ARE very proud of our cover picture, and partly because we believe the promotion of Child Health Clinics is one of the finest pieces of work the Institutes are doing. Happily this work is going on in a great many counties. Elora, the Institute represented on the cover, is in Wellington county and here is what the Health Educator of the county health unit, Mr. D. A. Geekie, has to say about the Women's Institutes' part in the project:

"We feel that the Institutes sponsoring the Child Health Centres are an integral part of the Child Health Centre team. They're providing the physical facilities for conducting the clinic, which while important, are perhaps only secondary to their actual services within the clinic itself. They act as a very effective liaison group between the Health Unit staff and the people within the community. They live in the community and know the people who have need of the services and are in a very good position to interpret the services that are offered, where, when, how and so on. The ladies who act as volunteers in the clinic are called upon to do several jobs, perhaps the most important of which is to greet the mothers with their babies when they arrive at the clinic. There is nothing which helps more to set a mother at ease and to accept the teaching and services offered in the light in which they are offered than being greeted by someone from their own community and one they know. The volunteers are responsible for the weighing of the infants and pre-schoolers, recording the weight change on the child's chart, helping the mother with clothing and several other jobs. I mention this job of helping the mothers with children's clothing specifically because of the fact that mothers in this area often come to the clinic with two or three pre-schoolers and perhaps an infant as well. The volunteers also act as a guide in the Child Health Centre, conducting the mother from public health nurse to the dentist, to the physician and so on.

"In addition to helping us at the Child Health Centres a good many of these organizations also provided the very necessary volunteers in the past three years for our special polio vaccinating clinics."

There are thirteen Child Health Centres in Wellington county, assisted by various organizations, but nine of the thirteen are spon-



At the monthly baby clinic sponsored by Tara Women's Institute, Dr. Reginald Allan, of Bruce County Health Unit gives Salk polio shots to a brother and sister with their mother close by. Standing is Mrs. Harry McDougald, a volunteer worker at the clinic since it was started under her presidency of the Institute six years ago.

—Photo courtesy Owen Sound Sun-Times

sored by Women's Institutes: Clifford, Mount Forest, Palmerston, Harriston, Moorefield, Drayton, Arthur, Fergus, Elora, Guelph, Rockwood, Erin and Puslinch. The Institute provides a place for the clinic, usually in the town hall or a Sunday School Hall; in many cases they provide such equipment as weighing scales and tables; and of course they provide the necessary—or at least very helpful—volunteer workers. Something of the scope of the whole service is evident in the record that last year the attendance at all the centres in the county was 6087, an increase of 87 per cent over the 1956 attendance. From the attendance for the first few months of 1958 it appears that there will be a further increase this year.

Six years ago, Tara Women's Institute, under the leadership of the President, Mrs. Harry McDougald and the Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs. Chester Merrian started a local baby clinic in co-operation with Bruce County Health Unit. Ever since, this clinic has been a special interest of Mrs. McDougald, and every month she and two other Institute members are on hand to welcome the mothers, keep the children happy, attend to weighing the babies, checking the cards and assisting the doctor and the nurse in various ways. Mrs. McDougald reports that the clinic is very well attended. One morning they had 35 babies just for inoculations against the childhood diseases. Around 180 children went through the polio clinic.