

What a happy experience it was to work with Miss McKercher on Conference and Holiday plans and later as an instructor with the Home Economics Branch.

I well remember our first meeting and how quickly I felt her relaxed friendliness—and who would not respond to that infectious smile?

It was a new experience for both of us for Miss McKercher was the newly appointed Director of the Home Economics Branch and I was the newly elected Conference and Holiday secretary. The Officers' Conference programme was important, so were the programmes for the popular Women's Institute Holiday Week at Guelph and Kemptville. I wish it were possible to tell every member of the W.I. what we owe to Miss McKercher. Only the people who have worked with her, can know of the countless things she "made possible" for us.

Problems which materialized were quickly dissipated after talking things over with her. Her advice was invaluable. In presenting a new idea for a programme, one could be sure of a positive response from her, never a negative one. Her willingness to "let you have your head" with an idea, was a great incentive to really make it work.

Miss McKercher's happy ability to get along with people of all types and temperaments made her a most valuable asset to F.W.I.O. in her role of Honorary President.

In Home Economics her interest is not confined to Canada, but is international. Some years ago she arranged to bring to my farm home, a busload of French Home Economists who were visiting the O.A.C. What a happy afternoon we had and what nice things were said about our Miss McKercher. It was a good demonstration of the happy relationship between Home Economics and the W.I. She is known to countless numbers of members throughout Ontario, through her attendance at the Officers' Conference and at Area Conventions. A great many 4H Homemaking Club girls have enjoyed meeting her at the Girls' Conferences and her forward-looking programmes and intense interest in 4H club members have contributed very much to her success and popularity, and have been of inestimable value to the thousands of girls who have taken the well planned 4H clubs.

Her firm belief in the Women's Institute as an excellent medium for adult education and the way in which she has kept the courses offered, up to date, follows the thinking of Adelaide Hoodless, those many years ago.

Helen's upbringing on a farm in Huron county—where I have enjoyed Sunday dinners—gave her the knowledge and understanding of rural families and their problems, which was helpful when arranging programmes designed for small towns or rural areas.

In her comfortable home in Stratford, with her treasured antiques, we wish her many years of happy retirement, with time for further travel and leisure to do those things for which, in her busy life there was not always time. Helen McKercher will be remembered with affection by many, many people.

Madge Thompson

It is with mixed feelings that we, as Women's Institute members, approach the month of October this year. On the one hand, we rejoice with Miss McKercher that she is about to join the ranks of those who have earned the freedom to follow whatever paths they may choose. On the other hand, we suddenly face the realization that we are not ready to picture what our activities will be without the firm hand, the ready advice and the genial presence of our retiring director.

As one of those who have enjoyed the experience of work and travel with Miss McKercher during her Directorship, I should like to pay tribute to her very real gift for friendship. Her warm personal interest in our family, her gracious hospitality, and the spice of her personality have combined to make these unforgettable years.

We have all heard her say, at conferences and conventions, that the real purpose of the Women's Institute is to develop people, and to this end she directed every effort. In every area, as we travelled, Miss McKercher knew by name the women, who brought some particular talent to the organization: some dish that was her specialty, some ability for art, sewing, craft or research. These women would be sought out and brought to the attention of the visiting officers and guests, in such a way that we can be sure it "Made the day" for the person so recognized.

In the same way, the Home Economists, who, while they understood that excellence was expected in every duty they carried out, were encouraged and rewarded by her warmth of interest and appreciation of their efforts.

Every area can recall, no doubt, an instance when her quick wit, and the ability to see the humour in a situation, have turned tense moments to happy ones, and made presiding officers breathe freely once more.

In addition to the purpose of developing each member, was a very real desire to develop a strong organization. What could have been weary miles and hours of the travel required to reach all the conventions, were spent in discussion of ways and means to improve—the conventions, the constitution, the branch programmes, the 4-H and leadership courses, the provincial board, the national organization. There was never a dull moment, and when the brainstorming was at its peak the miles flew by, and no part of Women's Institute work escaped the honest search for methods to keep in step with the times.

As she retires, we are confident that this interest will continue, just as we shall continue to appreciate the example of warmth and kindness she has given to us.

Our wish for you, at the end of work well done, is that you will say, in the words from King Henry V.
"My crown is in my heart, not on my head:
Not decked with diamonds and Indian stones,
Nor to be seen; my crown is called content;
A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy".

"Long may you thrive!"

Mary E. Trivers