

7TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
FEDERATED WOMEN'S INSTITUTE
OF CANADA
UNIVERSITY OF
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
CHARLOTTETOWN

June 20-25/76

Information supplied by FWIO's official voting delegates. Mrs. H. Maluske President, Mrs. Earl Mornden Secretary Treasurer, Mrs. Myrtle Reid, Mrs. Ralph MacNally, Mrs. Orval Jordan, Mrs. Melville Wiseman, Mrs. Jack Sparling, Mrs. Keith Hiepleh, Mrs. Donald Jacobs, Mrs. Peggy Hampel. (Mrs. R. Papple was unable to attend because of the air strike.)

"Anyone with soil on their shoes will return to the Island" is a Prince Edward Island saying which is symbolic of an unspoken promise.

Bouquets to the PEI Convention Committee and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry. All Committees planned well, and worked long hours to provide excellent accommodation and fine facilities for the delegates. There wasn't a delegate present who wasn't appreciative of their efforts and left with the hope to return. A job well done!

The FWIC Executive and Board members planned a Convention to meet the needs of the membership. Well balanced meetings, providing speakers with ideas to help all better understand the work of FWIC, Nutrition, Canadian Culture and the ACWW.

Perhaps as important were the sessions where all might participate, FWIC members looked at the last triennial activities through Focus on the Provinces, The House of Nutrition and the workshops.

A special word of thanks to the Prince Edward Island Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the Director of Women's Work Mrs. Elizabeth Grimmett, their efforts were appreciated by all who attended the Convention.

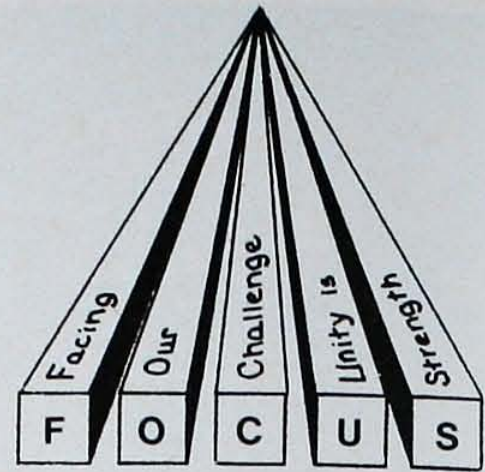
The delegates were thrilled to attend an official opening in the Confederation Centre of the Arts and the theme FOCUS was exemplified through the feeling of warmth and sense of pride generated during the evening. A National organization certainly does have great potential, and in the days ahead delegates worked together to plan directions for the next triennium.

FACING OUR CHALLENGE

Mrs. Olive Farquharson, OBE, President of the ACWW spoke at the official opening of the FWIC Convention in Confederation Centre to a capacity crowd. (a copy of her speech is available from the Loan Library) Excerpts from speech.

"It seems most appropriate, therefore, that you have chosen FOCUS as your 'theme' for this Convention, for while I know you have cleverly made this word from the single initial letters of 'Facing Our Challenges—Unity is Strength' and will, in the days to come, be discussing the ways in which you can interpret these challenges in the context of your own communities, your Institutes, your Federations and your Country, I hope you will allow me to set a first challenge from the international angle.

Could it be that some of this help has stemmed



from the 7th Triennial Conference held in Toronto in 1953, when the chosen theme was "How can the countrywoman, as an individual and through her society, take a more active part in international work?" We are certainly grateful to you—our Canadian members—for all that you have done to fulfil this objective.

In the family of ACWW, as far back as the 18th century, Finland had an organized group of country women who played their part in the agricultural life of their country, probably the first rural women's group. In the middle of the 19th century women in the United States of America were admitted on an equal footing with men into a farmers' union group but it was the founding of your own first Women's Institute in 1897 in Stoney Creek that set "spark to tinder" or should I say sowed the seed that has blossomed in so many parts of the world, for each of societies of rural women and homemakers, while differing in their own particular way of life, have felt the same stimulus—the need to improve condition of life for themselves, for their families and for the communities in which they live.

In war and in peace, in abundance and in scarcity, these rural women have stood their ground with vision and courage. Today they are ever conscious of the social and economic evolution which is taking place and I am sure you will find this is one of the challenges you must face.

We are living in a world of rapid change—new ideas, new standards of living, so often creating new problems and some of them do not please us. But problems are a challenge and we must be ready to tackle them if we are to continue to carry out the ideals which were accepted when ACWW came into being based on the inspired leadership of many fine women.

For centuries women everywhere have been an underprivileged section of the community, but this has been doubly true of the women in the developing countries, those poorer countries where 70% of the world's people are living on the land. Added to the natural difficulties of their lives through poverty, they have been crippled by illiteracy, confined by tribal, religious and social customs and worn out by excessive child bearing, work on the land and household burdens. It is not easy for women to throw away their age-old roles and we must never forget that the freedom we are seeking includes "freedom of choice" so that no woman should feel forced to change her way of life completely, or in part, if she does not wish to do so.