

# Early Years of FWIC

By 1913, Women's Institute members in all the Provinces in the Dominion felt the need to federate and have some type of continuity, including better communication within the nine Provinces. (Since that time, Newfoundland and Labrador have become the 10th Province.)

In the beginning, Saskatchewan's organization was known as "Homemakers" and Newfoundland were "Jubilee Guilds". However, by 1970 all organizations became known as Women's Institutes.

It has been recorded that Miss Mary MacIsaac, Superintendent, of the Women's Institutes in Alberta, was a prime mover in promoting federation of the provincial units.

During the war years, all the WI's worked with enthusiasm for a common purpose and it became evident that such an energetic body should direct those energies into co-ordinating their efforts throughout the Dominion.

Leaders in every Province felt an urge to work as a single federation, and yet hold onto their own provincial identity.

Here in Ontario, Mr. George Putnam, Women's Institutes' Superintendent, told the delegates at the Central Convention for Ontario that "a meeting of representatives of Women's Institutes and similar organizations throughout the Dominion has been called for Winnipeg in mid-February, with a view to formulating plans for closer co-operation among all, and it is expected that the basis of a permanent national organization will be decided upon at that meeting."

On February 13, 1919, thirteen women and one man, Mr. Putnam, met in Winnipeg. Miss MacIsaac was appointed chairman, and the following resolution was presented. "That the delegates, here assembled, from the Homemakers' Clubs, The Home Economics Societies, and the Women's Institutes, do federate themselves into a national organization. The name to be decided upon, after hearing the report of the committee on Constitution." Later, the announcement was made by Mr. Putnam, stating the or-

ganization would be known as the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada.

At this meeting, Judge Emily Murphy was elected President, Mrs. Wm. Todd, first Vice-President and Miss Eliza Campbell, Treasurer.

The first official FWIC meeting was held February 15, 1919, with the elected officers in charge and one of the items on the agenda was to set up the following Convener-ships: Public Health and Child Welfare; Household Economics; Education and Better Schools; Immigration; Publicity and Legislation.

The original objectives decided on in 1919 were:

1. To co-ordinate the provincial units through a system of conveners, national, provincial and local.
2. To raise the standard of homemaking.
3. To act as a clearing house for the activities of provincial units.
4. To develop agriculture to meet the food needs of the race.
5. To promote educational, moral, social and economic measures in accordance with the objects of the Federation.
6. To encourage co-operation in community efforts.
7. To initiate nationwide campaigns in accordance with the objects of the Federation.

*It is of interest to compare to-day's Purposes and Objectives that form part of the present-day format.*

1. To co-ordinate programs of the Units.
2. To provide a medium of intercommunication among the Units.
3. To promote an appreciation of rural living.
4. To develop better informed, more responsible citizens, through the study of issues of National and International importance.
5. To initiate nation-wide programs in accordance with the objects of the Federation.



Miss May Blair, both a Life and Charter Member of LORNE SUTHERLAND WI, CARLETON WEST DISTRICT is seen unveiling a plaque at the Grove Nursing Home. L-r, Also at the official opening is Paul Yakubuski, MPP and the Hon. Dennis R. Timbrell, Minister of Health. (Since this event took place the Hon. Dennis Timbrell has been appointed Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Food.)

**INGLESIDE WI, STORMONT DISTRICT** members toured the Invararden Regency Cottage Museum.

The meeting was held in the kitchen, beside a blazing fire in the fireplace.

Invararden was built in 1816 for retiring North West Company fur-trader John McDonald, pursuing the life of a country squire. He became a magistrate and a force in politics.

In 1823 he sold his property to John Duncan Campbell, his son-in-law, and it remained in the family until 1965.

The house was restored by Parks Canada, opened as a Museum in 1975 and is now operated by the United Counties Historical Society for the City of Cornwall.

**FINCH WI, STORMONT DISTRICT** members, donated a quilt to a local family who lost their home in a fire.

**RAVENSWOOD WI, LAMBTON NORTH DISTRICT**, will sponsor a week-long Quilt Show, July 3-11, 1982 at the Lambton Heritage Museum, Grand Bend.

Some of the feature events will be a tea-room, sale of handicrafts, both a display of old quilts and a quilt competition.

Group tours are encouraged on July 6-9. A lecturer and slide presentation on Heritage Quilts from the Royal Ontario Museum will interest quilt lovers.