

Renfrew South — on the Ottawa River

The Women's Institutes of Renfrew South are located within the Ottawa Valley — beside the Trans-Canada Highway 417 on its 50 mile stretch via Arnprior to Ottawa, our national capital. Algonquin Park lies 80 miles west through Eganville and Barry's Bay — while Highways 132 and 41 lead south to Kaladar and via 401 to Toronto. Lying adjacent to the mighty Ottawa River of earliest exploration and the giant logging and lumbering industry, Renfrew folks can behold their Quebec neighbors and visit them by bridge or by water.

Renfrew South Women's Institutes pay grateful tribute to our first branch at Burnstown — a village with its special bridge across the Madawaska River — as our first recruits of that 1897 origin of womenfolk at Stoney Creek. Here the beginnings of Renfrew South District met in 1914 for the first annual meeting with Mrs. J. F. Blane and Miss Agnes McLachlan as leaders with *The Maple Leaf Forever* as opening song. The second district annual was in Goshen Hall with an attendance of 55, from nine branches. Following Burnstown and Goshen, came: Castleford, Horton South, Pine Grove, Bonnechere

Valley, Horton North, White Lake, Clay Bank, Braeside, Arnprior, Calabogie, Combermere, Lochwinnoch, Dewars, Rosebank, Glasgow Balsam Hill, and Stewartville — 19 branches.

Renfrew South belongs to Subdivision 3 in Ottawa and Eastern Ontario Convention Area. The average attendance at the district annual is 130 out of 331 members. White Lake, Calabogie, Glasgow and Balsam Hill have halls.

Branches contribute to hospitals in Renfrew and Arnprior: to Renfrew's Bonnechere Manor with teas and volunteer service and contributing an electric organ in 1957; to nursing homes with teas and donations. A child is sponsored in the Dominican Republic. Homemaking and craft classes are events each year.

Renfrew South Women's Institutes grew apace, showing much latent talent. In 1948 Mrs. Margaret Hamilton — a wielder of ideas by the pen trail — won a Provincial Essay Contest, *A Countrywoman's Day*, while our poet laureate Mrs. Doris Humphries had an honourable mention. Combermere's Mrs. Harry Stevenson won oil painting awards. Bonnechere Valley had prizes in hooked rugs. Mrs. T. H. Jones of White Lake and Mrs. Eileen Brydges of Burnstown won poem prizes at the area. Rosebank excelled in Tweedsmuir History work. Also Mrs. Dorothy Crozier of Rosebank W.I. won first prize on a pencil sketch of the Douglas Mill at the Area Convention. All branches keep records of their history.

In 1963, Renfrew South celebrated



Renfrew South is located in the Ottawa Valley, close to the Quebec border.



In 1973, the district erected a plaque at Burnstown Church to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Renfrew South. Pictured are president Mrs. T. H. Jones and secretary-treasurer Mrs. E. Majaury.