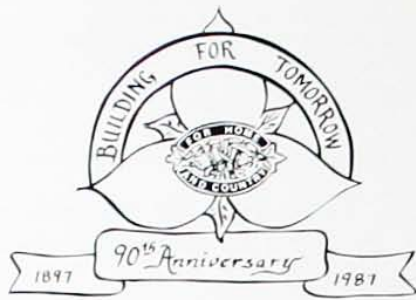


Happy 90th birthday,



A whole room of exhibits was open to convention goers and lots of information was available (right). Below, FWIO President Margaret Munro (right) presents FWIC President Bea Reeves (left) and ACWW President Ellen McLean with gifts at the closing banquet. At the bottom of the page, you can see there was no shortage of music at the convention!



Katharine Garwood



On Monday, July 6, women from all over Ontario headed to the 90th Anniversary Convention of Women's Institutes in North Bay.

Building for Tomorrow was the theme. It is difficult not to keep looking back at past achievements of the Women's Institute with great pride. However, the over 1,000 members celebrating in North Bay were constantly encouraged over the four days to look ahead to the great challenges facing the Institute in the future.

R. Alex Sim of Guelph, sociologist and rural specialist on the "new rural community", addressed the convention and brought to their attention the death of many rural communities across Canada. Local schools are being closed and children bussed further away; local churches are reporting dwindling congregations; local roads are being widened and straightened; local farm land is being divided up at an accelerating and frightening rate for multiple housing. Mr. Sim felt it not too strong to say that "the rural community is a raft being swept down the river of change." He pointed out the importance of the family and the community to a healthy existence. Without these he feared a break down of the very fiber of society. Mr. Sim appealed to the many branches of the Women's Institute to become the strong voice actively resisting the erosion of their individual communities.

A very special guest, delighting the women, was Libbylu Allen of Jamaica. Libbylu had received a scholarship from the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario to complete an education in early childhood training. The FWIO now pays her salary in Jamaica to work together with the Jamaican Federation of Women toward the improvement of rural pre-schools in Jamaica. Libbylu gave a very eye-opening report on the poor rural condition, the unsanitary facilities, and the lack of teaching aids. The reported the

