

## MARCH BOARD REPORT, 1996

By Mary Janes

By the time this report is published in the *Home & Country* newsletter, the fact that we were snowed in at Crieff Hills or that we exercised by pushing vehicles out of a very icy parking lot will have been forgotten. What will not be forgotten is the good news that we heard at the March Board meeting.

"Stand Proud Canada" is the name of the newly painted tour coach that Travel Ventures of Kitchener has recently introduced to its fleet of buses. The portrait of Adelaide Hoodless has been airbrushed beside other famous Canadian achievers and achievements, including Pierre Berton, Alexander Graham Bell, Karen Kain, zippers, IMAX theatres and the first oil well. This is the second coach painted by Cambridge artist Dave Sopha to help promote a sense of pride in Canada.

Kmart Canada Limited recognized the community work of the Women's Institutes as the result of the caring thoughtfulness and hard work of Vi Belrose, by presenting her with a grant. Vi is an employee in the Orangeville Kmart store and a member of Hockley Valley WI in Dufferin South.

Several books will be available through the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO). *FOR HOME AND COUNTRY - The Centennial History of the Women's Institutes of Ontario* by Linda Ambrose will be launched in the fall at the University of Guelph Archives. The compilation of short stories written by Women's Institute members is much closer to print and will be available in the near future. *Environmentally Friendly Hints* continues to be popular. The latest edition includes updated introductory pages. There are new bookmarks available from the FWIO office to publicize this book.

Other promotional items now available from the Provincial Office include dark blue decks of cards with the WI logo on them and gold coloured buttons with the lettering "Women's Institutes: Working for Safe & Healthy Communities." The fourth in the series of Christmas ornaments - 'Four Calling Birds' - is available for gift giving to friends, neighbours and relatives while supporting the Headquarters Fund.

All Branches have been sent a copy of a suggested program for our anniversary - February 19, 1997 - by the Eastern Area. WI members in Ontario are asked to join together in unity and spirit to honour this special day by remembering our history and creating enthusiasm for the future. The videos, *Let There*

*be Light* (featuring the fiftieth anniversary in June, 1947) or *Challenges of a Changing World* (featuring Peggy Knapp, ACWW Area President for Canada) could be included in this special program.

Women's Institute members have been very busy knitting. Past President Donna Russett reported that 6,988 squares have been sent to Zambia to be made into blankets. Branches that have not yet reported the results of their efforts should do so; FWIO needs a record of how much aid was sent.

Women's Institute members have also been actively supporting other causes. The Donations Report summarizing the expenditures of the Branches indicated that a total of \$664,392.54 was given to a variety of projects by 13 Areas (one Area did not send a report). Twenty-five percent of this amount went to WI projects and education, fifty percent went to local community projects, 6.4 percent was donated to other charitable organizations, and the remainder went to WI organizational expenses, such as local, national and international conventions, annual meetings and guest speakers.

During provincial Board meetings committee reports are always presented and discussed. Among those received were the Agriculture Advisory Committee Report, the Health Report, the Ontario Rural Child Care Report and the Scholarship Report.

Audrey Ricker, chair of the Agriculture Committee, attended Table Talk, where the priorities of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs were discussed. Agriculture and Food areas need to place high priority on research and marketing because both are essential businesses. Rural Affairs priorities need to be government advocacy, rural development, building rural leaders and organizations, technology transfer infrastructure and land-use planning.

Farm Women and the Law, a program that is part of a Canada-wide initiative by the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada is recommended to Education Committees. There are many laws to protect farm women, but women are not aware of many of them.

Health Committee Chair Mary Lou Norton presented a brief on behalf of FWIO in response to Bill 26. The brief focused on hospital closures, the shortage of doctors in some areas, changes in fees to doctors, changes in pharmacy regulations and the empowerment of the government and the Ministry of Health.



Vi Belrose (right) presented a \$1,000 donation from Kmart Canada Ltd. to Marg Harris (left), FWIO President.

Rural Child Care continues to be a major concern. Corinne Croxall submitted her summary of discussions which have taken place recently between those concerned with child care needs and those implementing child care options. Greater flexibility is needed in the licensing and funding of rural child care programs while maintaining safety and quality. Rural child care requirements are unique; solutions suitable in urban areas do not address the needs of rural areas. A great deal of research has been done; now, there is a need to develop practical policies and programs.

Margaret Armstrong, Chair of the Scholarship Committee, brought forth several recommendations. These included raising the value of the 4-H Regional Scholarships - the Sixtieth Anniversary (Eastern), the Hoodless-Lee (Western), the Dorothy Fitcher (Southern), and the Florence P. Eadie (Northern) - to \$350 in 1997. The theme of the 1997 essay will be "The WI and Me - How It Has Made a Difference." She also reported that former International Scholarship winner Gloria Herrera Mendoza is buying sewing machines for a cottage industry for the women in her community in Mexico.

As always, FWIO Board Directors left the March Board meeting with a great deal of information about the work of the organization at provincial, national and international levels, many new ideas shared by other Board Directors and renewed enthusiasm about the need for our organization in today's world. They returned to their Subdivisions to share their enthusiasm and information with members at District Annual Meetings and at WI Month activities around the province.

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