

Women's Institute
 Grey-Bruce Convention
 held in Durham
 November 7 - 8, 1977.



Sun Times photo by Doug Camp

WI REGISTRATION — The registration desk at 19th annual Women's Institute convention at Knox United Church in Durham was busy Monday. Left to right are: Mrs. Carl Klages, registration, Desboro;

Mrs. E. G. Urstadt, Owen Sound; Mrs. H. McArthur, Dobbinton; Mrs. Ken Spence, Leith; and Mrs. Francis Gemmell, president, Ripley.

Have pride, WIs told

By ANN KELLY
 Family Living Editor
 DURHAM — "We can look back with pride on the achievements of the Women's Institute. Some said it would never last, but it has. No other group has such far reaching association around the world," Mrs. Francis Gemmell, president, told 380 delegates and visitors to the 19th annual Grey-Bruce Area Women's Institute convention.

The two day convention, held in Knox United Church, Durham opened Monday morning. "The Women's Institute was founded in 1897, as an educational organization, by Adelaide Hoodless and Erland Lee because Adelaide Hoodless had a dream. That dream she had we're living in the

reality of," said Mrs. Gemmell.

Reflecting on the successes of the Women's Institute Mrs. Gemmell said, "These didn't happen by chance. Women of great talent and vision had dreams that there were places for women in the scheme of things."

She challenged members, in 1977, to take a stand on issues including strengthening the family unit and pornography.

Mrs. Gemmell touched on the past, present and future of Women's Institute. "Our future depends on new ideas and dreams," she said. In conclusion she quoted the words of the late John F. Kennedy, "Some men see things as they are and say why, I dream things that never were and say why

not?"

The theme of the two day convention was, "Our dreams take on a softer glow as the years roll back to long ago." This year marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Women's Institute.

The past, present and future, with costumes for each era, were reviewed by Mrs. June Sparling, Mrs. Graham Chambers and Mrs. William Middleton, Federated Women's Institute of Ontario board directors.

Songs of a bygone era were led by Mrs. Clarence Coxon with Mrs. George Maluske the pianist.

The welcome, in poem form, was presented by Mrs. Carman Hamill, chairman of the Grey County rally. Rev. Kenneth Tanner, minister of the

host church, brought greetings.

The morning session was conducted by Mrs. Francis Gemmell with Mrs. Kenneth Spence, first vice-president, conducting the afternoon session. Guests were welcomed from Guelph and Simcoe districts.

Mrs. Percy Radbourne presented the Tweedsmuir curator's report. The junior institute report was given by Linda Tottenham, North Grey Junior Women's Institute. The organization was chartered in Nov. 1974 with 10 members and now has a membership of 31.

Diane McCormick took the delegates on an arm-chair trip to Ottawa and the Canadian Council on 4-H. A member of the Teeswater Club, Diane was an Ontario delegate to Ottawa.

Next Home Economics Director

When Mollie McGhee speaks at 14 area conventions of Women's Institutes throughout Ontario this fall, her main theme will be "build up your membership."

As the new director of the home economics branch of the Ontario ministry of agriculture and food, which provides many programs and services for the WIs, she is concerned with declining membership — averaging 2,000 a year — and the fact that there are few members under the age of 45.

"The young women are not interested in the WI format. My impression from talking to people is that the need for social contact in a rural community is gone and unless practical programs are offered, they're not interested. They don't want mottos, skits and roll calls — they want to get down to discussing things of vital concern to themselves — single-parent families, insurance for working women, genetic diseases . . ."



MOLLIE MCGHEE studies WI format

HER MAIN CONCERN SINCE becoming director this spring after spending 10 years as associated principal of Centralia College of Agricultural Technology, is to gear the extension program to the rapidly changing times.

"It's up to the institutes to recruit their members. At officers' conference, they said 'We'll leave that to the county home economist' . . . but she can't do it."

Miss McGhee spoke to 500 WI delegates at the officers' conference in Waterloo in May and she will be meeting and talking with hundreds more at the area conventions in this 80th anniversary year of the WI.

"It was always felt that the director should meet as many of the women as she could, but it is unlikely that this extensive travelling and time away from the office will be continued after this year."

CHANGES IN THE EXTENSION program in recent years, which have taken the home economics specialists away from head office on Bay Street, Toronto, for shorter periods (concentrating on training local leaders rather than conducting courses for individual branches, for example) will continue.

"The amount of consumer information which is coming across the specialists' desks is horrendous," the director said. "There is so much to consider . . . to make value decisions whether it is a new discovery or just a fad . . . it takes tremendous research."

"If the specialist is always in the field giving lectures, she is having difficulty keeping abreast in her specialty."

THE NEW DIRECTOR, who holds degrees in dietetics (Edinburgh), nutrition (Ottawa), general psychology (McGill), master in psychology (Carleton) and taught psychology and personnel management at Centralia, will evaluate old programs and devise new methods of delivery.

"We may have to offer programs to separate interest groups — for the older women who want to meet in the afternoon and young women (60 per cent of whom work) who are more selective in what they want and have less time to spend."

"We are thinking of some exciting new programs to attract young women in the 25-40 age. Men are just as interested in consumer issues as women, so we may consider joint meetings."

"WE SHOULD BE LOOKING at energy conservation programs," she said.

"There may be a new demand for some of the old wartime courses like remaking clothes. We call it recycling now. It is a worry to me that technology is coming at us so quickly that sorting out information for our programs is a real task."

The changes won't come overnight — "we're probably talking 18 months." Her ability to produce the best in programming was demonstrated at Centralia where she organized the first food-service management program to be accredited by the Canadian Dietetic Association. The program now has the top rating in Eastern Canada.