

Miss Collins' Forty Years

THE only thing we can see for it is that Miss Collins is going to have to write a book. Forty-odd years of work with the Women's Institute Branch have provided her with a fund of hilarious experiences that are just too good to be missed. And now that Miss Collins has retired . . . well, how about a volume of memoirs?

It all began when Miss Edith Collins attended a clothing short course given by the Women's Institute in 1912. She made a dotted Swiss muslin dress, so pretty that the instructor chose her as an



MISS EDITH COLLINS

Miss Collins, who recently retired after 41 years' service in the Women's Institute Branch, wears the cameo pin which was presented to her by the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario. The Department of Agriculture chose a handsome Baum-marten fur scarf for her, and from the staff of the Women's Institutes Branch came a beautiful amethyst ring. Affectionate messages arrived from Institutes all the way from Ottawa to Rainy River.

assistant. That was the beginning of an intensive training in drafting and tailoring, and she joined the staff of the Women's Institute in 1913. Her first assignment was a ten weeks' course in Temiskaming.

"Commercial patterns were not in general use at that time, and we had to measure each member of the class and draft an individual pattern for all types of shapes and sizes, and supervise the construction of the garment.

"Travel was by train whenever possible," continues Miss Collins' note-book, "but we frequently had to engage a horse and sleigh from the livery stable to make our appointments. Frozen ears, cheeks, and fingers were part of the job hazards. I learned to use snowshoes, and often on moonlight nights, they were my means of transportation. . . . I've driven in every type of car from an old jalopy to a Rolls Royce and

my temple. It was not painful, but a persistent pulsation which seemed to come actually from outside my head. I turned on the light and shook the pillow . . . and a little mouse fell out and scurried under the door!"

Miss Collins found that her duties were apt to include not only sewing instruction, but advice to the love-lorn, acting as a fashion model to women who had no other style news but Eaton's catalogue, as well as filling in as organist and/or soloist in remote districts. One of the organs she tackled was the home of a nest of very active mice, but she stayed with it, her composure the admiration of her audience.

In addition to sewing, Miss Collins also gave courses in cultural activities and assisted in compiling the Women's Institute history, "Fifty Years of Achievement." Her last work before retirement was the preparation of a Tweedsmuir History of the F.W.I.O.

"In looking back over the years," she said at the spring conference of the Institute officers at Guelph, "we can evaluate the Women's Institute and the place it has had in promoting better home - making. I noticed at the conference how practically every woman in the discussion group had something to say . . . it wasn't like that fifty years ago, when so many women seemed shy and unsure of themselves. The work is opening up in many fields, and there is still a great job to be done.

"Many of the happiest memories are associated with the winter short courses, and the promising young people from the counties who attended them. Now many of them are filling prominent places in the country, and their homes give strength and character to the community because they know that they have a life to live, and a life to give."

Martintown Woman Heads WI Institutes

Mrs. L. Clark of the Martintown Women's Institute, Glengarry county, was elected chairman of the Eastern Ontario Women's Institutes this week during the second day of their two-day convention at the Chateau Laurier.

Elected with Mrs. Clark were:

Mrs. C. Dewar, Braeside WI, South Renfrew county, first vice-president; Miss J. Dillon, Morrisburg WI, Dundas, second vice-president; Mrs. C. D. Gray, Ramsayville, East Carleton, secretary-treasurer.

Auditors, Mrs. R. Lillico, Hurdman's Bridge, East Carleton, and Mrs. R. Blair, Cyrville, East Carleton.

Conveners: Agriculture and Canadian industry, Mrs. B. Connell, Prescott, South Grenville; citizenship and education, Mrs. A. Buttle, Cobden, North Renfrew; historical research and current events, Mrs. J. Pritchard, Manotick, West Carleton.

Community activities and public relations, Mrs. R. Stewart, Pendleton, Prescott; home economics and health, Mrs. E. L. Blair, Moose Creek, Stormont.

Resolutions, Mrs. G. Young, South Lanark.

The nearly 450 members this morning studied resolutions drawn up at yesterday's session.

With Mrs. G. MacPhatter, provincial president, of Owen Sound in the chair, they vetoed a resolution calling for an earlier public school closing. Members felt for educational reasons, the schools should remain open until June 29.

They passed almost unanimously the resolution that because "the price of soap is too high and soap coupons are not distributed evenly enough for all to benefit, the coupons should be discontinued and the price of soap lowered".

They also voted to urge fabric manufacturers to label clearly the fibre content of fabrics and instructions for washing and cleaning.

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