

# It's the golden jubilee for Women's Institutes

LONDON (CP) — More than 500,000 women are celebrating the golden jubilee in Britain of the Women's Institute, a society for rural friendship and education that originated in Canada.

The National Federation of Women's Institutes here began its birthday party when the Duchess of Gloucester, the Queen's aunt, opened an exhibition in London on "the country-woman today."

Queen Mother Elizabeth, like the other female members of the royal family a WI member attended the first day of the British Federation's annual meeting at Royal Albert Hall here.

Celebrations reach a climax next Monday when representatives of each of the 8,717 British Institutes will attend a garden party given by the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

The first Women's Insti-

tute was founded in 1897 at Stoney Creek, Ont., by Adelaide Hoodless, who conceived the idea of a society for mutual help and instruction among isolated farm wives.

The chairman of the British WI Federation is Gabrielle Pike, a magistrate who lives in the Berkshire hamlet of Cothill, where her husband, George, is headmaster of a boys' school.

Mrs. Pike, a great-great-granddaughter of the Quaker prison reformer, Eliza-

beth Fry, is intent on some reforms herself, particularly in co-ordinating and steamlining some WI work, such as working with mentally-ill patients and providing meals for spastic children.

## SHARPEN REPORTS

One reform just adopted was the appointment of a full time publicity officer, one of whose tasks will be a campaign to get WI correspondents to sharpen up re-

ports that appear regularly in scores of rural British weeklies.

One such report, published during World War II, is still remembered. It be-

gan by naming who presided and who read the minutes, ran on with who gave the "interesting talk" and who poured tea. It concluded with the paragraph:

"Unfortunately the meeting had to end early because a German fighter sprayed bullets through the roof of the village hall, killing the president."

## Serpent Mounds Is Historic Site

The Serpent Mound, 200 feet in length and shaped like a serpent, was built as a burial place by the pre-historic Point Peninsula Indians. Archaeological investigation has revealed that over a long period, centred about 100-200 A.D., some 1200 years before Columbus reached America, these early people were attracted to this ceremonial site. It was abandoned before 1000 A.D. but occasional, small groups visited here and some buried their dead in pits near the Mounds.

Camping and picnicking, therefore, without such present day refinements as windowed tents, air-filled mattresses and barbecues, was a way of life in this area many years before Columbus discovered America.

On summer evenings, when the many families encamped here gathered round their campfires, their voices conjoined in the singing of old favorite songs, perhaps the fireside voices from those days gone by mingled with the echoes from the surrounding hills.

The current excavation by Royal Ontario Museum archaeo-

logists has revealed that peoples of the pre-historic Point Peninsula culture lived here leaving traces of their occupation in the form of distinctive artifacts — such as stone and bone tools, ornaments and pottery.

The Point Peninsula culture is found widely over Southern Ontario and New York. Although the nature of the initial formation of the Point Peninsula culture is not yet fully understood, it is thought to have been derived about 1000 B.C. from earlier Archaic traditions and Woodland cultures in New York State that had been influenced by groups in the Ohio Valley. During the 2000 year span of the Point Peninsula way of life until about 1000 A.D. it underwent gradual changes and in its later development seems to foreshadow, and therefore be ancestral to, subsequent cultures in this area — the last of which was the Iroquois.

Point Peninsula Indians occupied this site, building the mounds and heaping up the shell midden, for a period centering around approximately 100 A.D.

The nearly 200 foot long Serpent Mound was built by the prehistoric Point Peninsula Indians as a burial place. Since 1956 Royal Ontario Museum archaeologists have excavated about half of the mound and discovered more than fifty burials in it. In addition, twenty-eight burials were found in one of the small conical mounds near the east end of the Ser-

pent Mound.

Burials are found in the mound itself and in shallow pits dug in the original ground surface before the mound was built. Most burials are in a flexed position rather than extended as in our own culture. Some interments are bundle burials, that is, burial in a parcel of only some of the bones of an individual after the flesh was gone. Cremations are sometimes found also.

It was found by the radiocarbon dating method that the Serpent Mound was built approximately in the year 128 A.D.— more than 1800 years ago.

This date was determined by measuring the minute radioactivity of the charcoal remains of a log found with a cremated burial in the mound. All plants and animals maintain a very slight but constant quantity of radio-active carbon in their tissues during life. Beginning at death, this unstable radioactive element breaks down and dissipates at a known rate so that the amount of radio-active carbon remaining in any dead organic material is a measure of the elapsed time since its death.

Wood charcoal associated with a cremation in the Serpent Mound was found to be more than 1800 years old.

The important shell midden excavation, near the shore of the lake below the mounds, is productive of pottery, stone and bone tools and animal and fish bones. The accumulation of mussel shells themselves, like the other finds, testifies to the fact that the prehistoric Indians lived for periods near the shore and gathered the mussels from the lake shallows for food. Hunting and fishing, and probably agriculture, were other sources of food.