

History of Glasgow Women's Institute

Tonight we are celebrating the 26th. anniversary of the present Glasgow Women's Institute. But as many of us know, the actual records of Glasgow Women's Institute go back a great deal farther than 26 years. The first Glasgow branch was one of the first in Renfrew South, organized in 1913 in the old Davis Hall, Glasgow Station. Mrs. J. F. Blane of Burnstown, the first district president of Renfrew South, assisted with the organization, and the first officers were: President, Mrs. John Affleck; secretary-treasurer, Miss Jessie C. Murphy; district director, Mrs. John Carswell. From 1916 to 1918, Mrs. Affleck served as vice-president of the district.

The homes of the members were quite a distance apart, and as it was in the "horse-and-buggy" days, the women either had to walk or hitch up the old grey mare to attend the meetings, which were generally held in the afternoons. This was a very energetic branch, doing much war work during these dark days of World War I, as well as purchasing items needed for the newly built community hall. A vast amount of knitting was done for overseas, and quilts made for distribution through the Red Cross and Red Shield.

Following the war years, a new farmers' organization gained considerable strength in Renfrew County, the United Farmers of Ontario, and an active club was formed in the Glasgow ~~xxxxxxx~~ - Stewartville area. This organization had a women's section, and since the community was mainly composed of farm people, the Women's Institute branch was disbanded to make way for a UFWO club.

This club functioned actively for some 15 years, doing excellent work, particularly along educational lines and in the interests of farming. But time marches on, and the old order changeth, yielding place to new. In 1943 the United Farmers organization amalgamated with a new and larger body, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and the small local clubs ceased to function. It was then that the Glasgow women, not wishing to discontinue their active group work, decided, after much consideration, to organize once more as a Women's Institute.

On March 21, 1945, Mrs. John E. Miller, then president of the district, was invited to the home of Mrs. John W. Hamilton, for the purpose of assisting with the organization of a second Glasgow Women's Institute. The following officers were elected: President, Mrs. Kenneth Gillan; vice-president, Mrs. M. Barr; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. George McNab; district director, Mrs. W. H. Hamilton. Fourteen members joined at this ~~xxxxxxxx~~ charter meeting, and at this point I think it would be interesting to read their names:

Mrs. A. Carswell; Mrs. Stuart Anderson; Mrs. George Eady; Mrs. P. J. Russett; Mrs. Kenneth Gillan; Mrs. M. Barr; Mrs. Henry Simpson; Mrs. James Cherry; Mrs. J. Scobie; Mrs. W. H. Hamilton; Mrs. John W. Hamilton; Mrs. C. Hamilton; Miss Edna McMillan; Mrs. George McNab; ~~Mrs. x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x~~

In later months of the same year, seven more members joined the Glasgow Institute. These were Mrs. Milton Stewart, Mrs. R. A. Stewart, Mrs. Taylor Carswell, Mrs. John Wright, Mrs. John Watt, Mrs. John Mitchell, and Mrs. Andrew Hamilton.

These names, I am sure, will bring back memories to many of you here tonight. In the passing of the years some members dropped out of Institute work, others moved away, or joined other branches. Others have been called