

Increase membership, WI told

By ANN KELLY
Family Living Editor

"Rural life is no longer considered a bastion of strong family ties. Because of the myriad of problems facing us today it's urgent that you increase your membership," Molly McGhee, director of the home economics branch, ministry of agriculture and food told delegates Tuesday at the 19th annual Women's Institute convention held in Knox United Church, Durham.

Miss McGhee, who was paying her first visit to Grey-Bruce as director of the home economics branch, told her audience that when she did war service in Edinburgh during the last war, and slept on cots under quilts made by Women's Institutes, she didn't think that 32 years later she would be director of the home economics branch.

The speaker paid tribute to the organization. From its beginnings in 1897 to the present, the Women's Institute has 8 million members in the Associated Country Women of the World. Miss McGhee said that she was overawed by the fact that since 1915 sewing clubs for rural girls, volunteer leaders have been found for 4-H and senior clubs.

"I'm impressed by past achievements. I don't think your dreams grow softer but stronger. I urge you to take a more excellent role in disseminating knowledge. You can, and indeed must, make greater contributions to family and community life in these trying times. In the past change occurred slowly and the family had time to adjust. The speed is accelerating and this is no longer possible. The family is changing drastically. There are communal families, divorced, separated and single parents. The divorce rate is one in three and just over one in two marriages with teenagers. California leads with more than one out of two marriages ending in divorces."

Miss McGhee urged institute members to assert their influence on today's planners as they deliberate matters concerning the family and community. Revamp programs to discuss vitally important and meaningful issues and don't be afraid of controversial issues, was her advice.

Charles Jamieson, a special projects officer with the ministry of consumer and commercial relations, spoke