

THE F.W.I.O.—HOW IT BEGAN

The rapid development of Institute work rendered it advisable to hold three conventions in the fall of 1914 at London, Toronto and Ottawa. This introduced a new feature as up to this date only one annual (Provincial) convention had been held.

It had been the policy of the Department to consult with leading officers to decide upon policy. In 1914 delegates in convention were asked to appoint representatives to act upon an advisory committee. The Department looked to this committee as well as to the Women's Institute staff for advice and suggestions. In 1916 a Provincial Advisory Committee was elected with 17 divisions represented. This plan was followed each year until in 1918-19 the permanent provincial organization was set up.

We quote from the Superintendent speaking in convention February 2, 1919: "In consultation with the Provincial committee and its executive to be elected in convention it is the desire of the Department to assist in formulating plans for a permanent provincial organization upon a definite basis. It is the intention of the Department to assist the people of the Institutes in formulating plans for organization which will meet their needs and which may be co-ordinated with the efforts of the Department.

"A meeting of representatives of the Women's Institutes and other similar organizations throughout the Dominion, has been called for Winnipeg about mid February with a view to formulating plans for closer co-operation among these organizations and it is expected that a basis of permanent National organization will be decided upon.

"I hope this organization will be

entirely of the people and that a separate committee or council will be formed among those directly connected with the Department of Provincial Governments offering assistance to the societies. Thus when matters of mutual interest are under consideration, the executive of the peoples' organization and the committee of Government officials can confer and work together".

On February 4, 1919, the resolutions committee under the convener-ship of Mrs. Wm. Todd brought in a resolution to set up a permanent board. Thus our F.W.I.O. Board had its beginning. From this board Mrs. Wm. Todd and Mrs. James Patterson were named representatives to the National Organization meeting held later in that month in Winnipeg. At this Winnipeg meeting the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada came into being with Mrs. Emily Murphy (Janey Canuck) as first national president.

Throughout the years the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario have been ably presided over by 10 provincial presidents: Mrs. Wm. Todd, 1919-1920; Mrs. Geo. Edwards, 1920-1924; Mrs. Field Robertson, 1924-1927; Mrs. J. W. Stone, 1927-1929; Mrs. A. E. Walker, 1929-1932; Mrs. R. B. Colton, 1932-1935; Mrs. T. J. McDowell, 1935-1939; Mrs. Ernest A. Duke, 1939-1942; Mrs. Clarence Holmes, 1942-1944; Mrs. Hugh Summers, 1944-1947. From these Ontario presidents we have had two Dominion presidents, Mrs. Wm. Todd and Mrs. A. E. Walker of whom we are justly proud. To all these women we pay high tribute and extend our grateful thanks. Their vision and foresight, their capable leadership and untiring efforts have been of inestimable value in our progress towards maintaining our high standard—the best FOR HOME AND COUNTRY.

Editor's note: We regret that we have no photos of Mrs. Edwards or Mrs. Stone for publication.