

for women similar to the Farmers' Institutes. On Friday, February 19, 1897, at Squire's Hall, Stoney Creek, 101 women and one man attended a meeting which organized the first Women's Institutes. The second was started at Whitby in June, and then the ball had really begun to roll.

It is apparent that education of women to do their best for their own homes and families, which meant for the nation, was the fundamental reason for this movement. Where the Institutes have held fast to their purpose, education has always been the chief interest and purpose of their meetings. They became a sort of ward of the Provincial Government, and in Canada they are still attached to the government in all provinces save Alberta, and the reason was that they provided a channel for the spread of education on those matters which affect the health and well-being of the people. Attachment of the W. I. to the Department of Agriculture, with grants and

furnishing. Other provinces have similar departments or the W. I. work is under the special care of a woman in the extension service. Thousands and thousands of women have acquired an education in the things that matter most to them. It will never be possible to know how many babies have lived, how many children have reached maximum health, how many lives have been made better and happier, because one little son died and in dying wakened his mother to a new realization of the duty of all mothers to know the perils that lay in unclean milk, in unchecked epidemics, in faults of feeding and care.

Naturally interest in the individual home and family soon widens to interest in the community, for so many matters of health and welfare can be handled only by the group. Public health services, nursing care, short courses in domestic science applied to the home, rural beautification, all these have been headlines on the programme of study. Over and above all the practical work there has been a spiritual value not so easy to measure.

One sees it more plainly in the new districts but it is true everywhere that the breaking of barriers, the coming together in friendship, the social relaxation of meeting and talking, has been a lifesaver to countless women.

The Women's Institutes, with their world-wide affiliations, are not the only memorial to Adelaide Hoodless. She became later the head of the Macdonald Institute at Guelph, and a leader in the new idea which gave to girls a special training in domestic science or household economy.

The Institutes began in a world which was reaching out towards new ideals of peace and friendship and it played a major part in the practical application of these ideals. In the 1890's security was taken for granted and everyone believed we were well set on the path towards enduring peace. If the world has since been plunged into two terrible wars perhaps it simply means that the powers which hate freedom saw that their day was waning and they are struggling fiercely to draw humanity back into a dark age, when light will be the privilege of the few. We believe they will fail and that their defeat will be the result of that strength of free men uniting freely in defence of their right to work for better things. It is the same spirit which gave motive force to the movement we have known for forty-five years as the Women's

Institutes, united for Home and Country, refusing to let narrow vision shut out the hope of life and health and friendliness for all the people.



*Adelaide Hoodless, the Great Leader of a Great Cause.*

speakers and constant service, was a recognition of the first principle stated by Mrs. Hoodless—that the people were more important than live stock and that the health of the people, and the saving of the children, must be the first concern of any nation which hoped to live and prosper.

Forty-five years later we find a great association and a complex programme in which education in first principles of homemaking is still the motivating force. In Ontario the Institutes Branch, under Miss Mary A. Clarke, has a staff of experts in nutrition, clothing, house