

# Plantagenet, Alexandria, Embrun

## OMAFRA offices closing

Dec. 1995

by Richard Mahoney

**PLANTAGENET** — Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food field offices in Plantagenet, Alexandria

and Embrun will be closed under austerity programs that will cut overall ministry expenditures by \$13 million. Between now and May

31, the three field offices will be amalgamated in a central office that will be located at the Alfred College.

In a press release, OMAFRA said 37 field office positions and eight positions in the Agriculture Division's field offices will be affected.

The move, which is expected to save \$2 million, is seen as a positive decision for the Alfred College, said area Ontario Federation of Agriculture representative Roch Lalonde. "This assures its survival," he said.

Prescott-Russell M.-P.P. Jean-Marc Lalonde related at a press conference in St-Isidore that agriculture minister Noble Villeneuve had confirmed that "the college is there to stay, with the same budget, the same goal."

Yet the amalgamation is a blow to the village of Plantagenet, Reeve Alain Lalonde said. "We lose jobs," he said. And the recently renovated ministry office will be empty, he added.

The OFA is concerned how the centralization will affect services available to Glengarry and Russell County farmers. Local OFA branches are to discuss those concerns with Villeneuve December 9.

Pommainville and Sabourin noted that county boundaries have effectively been erased. "In the last few years, we have lifted the municipal boundaries. For example, farmers from Plantagenet, Vankleek Hill or Curran could be served by an office outside their county," Sabourin said. "The three offices have been serving larger areas beyond their counties."

The ministry says that the amalgamation of co-locations "will bring staff together in one office to provide more efficient and effective service to clients. The ministry will continue to provide quality service in a time of reduced government resources."

### Board Honors Employees

The Laurentian School Board recently honored several long-time employees at a reception. Gold pins for 25 years of service were awarded to Jacques Champagne, George Costin, Kevin Boyd, Lise Devey, Anthony Hungerbuhler, Diane Vixon, Louise Robb and Catherine Robinson. Silver 15-year service pins were presented to Robert Cyrenne, Jean-Guy Desforges, Judy Evans, Claude Harvey, Verden McCutcheon and Linda Rochon. Director General Dominic Martini, speaking on behalf of the board, expressed the board's appreciation for their dedication and commitment to students. Stating that the board's personnel was its most important resource in the delivery of its educational mission, he commented that each one, by accomplishing his or her daily tasks, had contributed to the success of the students and had earned the respect of the community. The awarding of pins is an annual event which the board established last year as a means of according public recognition to its employees. In welcoming new employees to the board, Martini invited them to build on the accomplishments of those who had just been honored for their years of service. He acknowledged that the wisdom and experience which came with practice and time needed to be shared with those who had recently chosen to put their talents and enthusiasm at the service of students.

All eight Plantagenet office staff will be transferred to Alfred, says Prescott County agricultural representative André Pommainville. Glengarry agricultural representative Paul Sabourin has accepted a new position at the Alfred office as a farm management specialist.

The future is less clear for the three other Alexandria staff. Embrun office staff will be reassigned to other positions, Pommainville said Friday, however few details are available about the transfers.

"Certainly, there is not enough place for everyone" in the re-organized office, Sabourin said.

### • The Tweedsmuir History

## Past and future of the Women's Institute

by Rita Constantineau

**VANKLEEK HILL** — It is less than two years until the 100th anniversary of the Women's Institute (WI) in Canada. Since the founding of the WI in 1897 by Adelaide Hoodless and Erland Lee, the WI has grown into a worldwide organization. It started with the first WI being organized in 1897 in Stoney Creek, Ontario near Hamilton, by Mrs. Hoodless, the second one was established in Whitby, Ontario and from there the Women's Institute grew rapidly.

Erland Lee helped draw up a constitution for the Women's Institute and within 10 years 500 branches were organized and by 1915 every Canadian province had a Women's Institute.

Mrs. Hoodless was instrumental in the establishment of MacDonald Institute in Guelph, Ontario and another college in Quebec to train women to teach domestic science. The Women's Institute gained a federal charter in 1919 and Canadian organizers helped start branches in the United States and Great Britain. They were credited with saving England from starvation as they set about teaching women about food conservation during World War One.

One of the people who congratulated the WI on this achievement was John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir, Governor General of Canada). The Tweedsmuir history books were named in honour of his wife, Lady Tweedsmuir. The Tweedsmuir history books kept by each branch of the WI are ongoing documents which have recorded the events of not only the WI locally, but of the community and the world at large.

Jean Morrison is the Hillview Curator and District Curator of the Tweedsmuir History. She and the curators of each Women's Institute branch are charged with the important task of keeping up the continuity of the history of their branch and the community. "It is a very important part of the Women's Institute," she said. "Collecting the Tweedsmuir history."

There are even provincial, national and international events of importance such as when the Pope came to Canada, added to the history, said Micheline McRae.

Begun in 1945, as the result of urging by Lady Tweedsmuir who "stressed the need for preserving the history of our Canadian people, customs and activities of our developing land," said Marcie Britton, President of the Britton WI.

"There is never a break in the history. There is always someone to take over the job," Mrs. McRae will be taking over the stewardship of the local Tweedsmuir history from Mrs. Morrison.

This very important history of a nation's women is kept in a vault in the local library with a copy in the library available for research.

### For Home and Country

The object of the first WI was "to promote that knowledge of Household Science which shall lead to improvement in household architecture with special attention to home sanitation, to a better understanding of the economic and the hygienic value of foods and fuel, and to a more scientific care of children with a view of raising the general standard of the health of our people." Today, the Women's Institute is an organization for personal growth and community action. It offers women the vehicle and the environment to broaden their knowledge and abilities.

Not only do they seek self-improvement but are encouraged to expand their outlook and to extend their influence as a motivating force in today's world. Today, they are part of a global network connecting WI branches to district, area, provincial, national and international organizations.