

Women's Institutes on the move across province

Over 900 women have participated in the Farm and Home Landscaping courses run by Wellington and Halton County women's Institutes. For many years OMAF (Ontario ministry of agriculture and food) had provided adult courses on a variety of subjects. With their restructuring these courses are no longer available through OMAF. So the Women's Institutes in Wellington and Halton counties, hired a consultant, wrote the course and conducted the course. All this without government assistance.

This puts into practice some of Women's Institutes objectives, namely promoting good family skills, identifying and resolving needs in the community and promoting leadership. The Women's Institutes in Grey and Bruce counties are developing a similar course on Cooking for One.

The Federated Women's In-

stitutes of Ontario President, Margaret Munro is currently on the "Farm Women's Study Tour of Nicaragua. When she returns she will be participating in the Women and Development Conference (Parallel Issues and Solutions for Rural Women in Ontario and the Third World) to be held at Ridgeway College April 21 and 22.

Although not a money raising organization as such, last year the Women's Institutes donated over \$800,000. One of the ways they raise money is shown by West Oxford Women's Institute's 21st Annual Maple Syrup Festival April 1 and 2 at the Jakeman Family Farm, Sweaburg. This festival was started in 1967 as a Centennial project and has been going ever since. Visitors to the festival will not only sample maple syrup, have a conducted tour of the maple syrup operation, but also have a chance to purchase

local crafts. In this way Women's Institutes improves agricultural knowledge, helps the local economy and also raises funds.

Last year yearly 1,000 women joined Women's Institutes, the largest rural women's organization in Ontario. Through belonging, they now join a network in Ontario of over 1,000 branches, and a network that spreads throughout all the provinces in Canada. As well they belong to the International network of farm and rural women called Associated Country Women of the World. Dr. Ellen McLean, a Women's Institute member, is serving her second term as President of ACWW. The ACWW will be having its 19th Triennial Conference in Kansas City, Missouri

Sept. 22 - Oct. 1, with a theme "Partners in Progress." Many Women's Institute members are planning to attend. This will give the members an opportunity to have contact with farm and rural women throughout the world.

"Waste-Management-Recycling," the Women's Institute theme for 1988-89 has provided the opportunity for Women's Institute members to participate in displays, prepare briefs for councils and to speak to other groups, such as Hilde Morden, FWIO's program co-ordinator speaking on this topic at the farm show in London. The theme for 1989-90 will be "Women and the Environment,"

a theme that will apply to all who live in the rural community, whether actively involved in farming or not.

Pat Salter, a very active Women's Institute member from the Guelph area, became Reeve of Peel Township in last municipal elections.

Many women have expressed an interest in learning more about Women's Institute but are not sure who to contact or where their nearest branch is? Phone your nearest OMAF (Ontario ministry of agriculture and food) office and they will give you the branch nearest to you and a contact person.