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WI's Urged To Look To Future Not To Rest On Their Laurels

Winding up the first day of the 41st annual Hamilton Area convention for Women's Institutes at the Park Hotel, Niagara Falls, Ont., the evening banquet last night saw the women delegates wearing Centennial costumes for perhaps the last time this year. It was all the more important when one realizes the WI's in Ontario and Canada, were in the forefront of many Centennial projects and leading the enthusiasm for celebrating Canada's 100th birthday.

Theme for the conference was apt too in the closing months of the Centennial year "Reflections of the Past — Visions of the Future".

ELECT OFFICERS

Committee reports, resolutions and election of new officers highlighted this first day's sessions. Mrs. Victor Beachin of Welland was elected president; Mrs. Norman David and Mrs. Lloyd Ryan, vice - presidents; Mrs. E. J. Wilson, RR2, Welland, secretary - treasurer; Mrs. V. B. Dutkoski of Caistorville, public relations and Mrs. E. E. Thompson of Niagara Falls and Mrs. Charles Ort of Welland as auditors.

Standing committee conveners named were: resolutions, Mrs. R. Yungblut of Welland; Tweedsmuir histories, Mrs. R. C. Walker, St. George; public relations, Mrs. L. Eller, Welland; In Memoriam, Mrs. N. Davis, Mount Pleasant; citizenship and education, Mrs. H. Lockman; Home Economics and Health, Mrs. Yates Eaker, Vanessa; and historical research and current events, Mrs. Roy Summers, Fonthill. Mrs. Alan Stewart was named convener for agriculture and Canadian industries and Mrs. Neil Hopkins, Junior activities.

Federated Womens Institutes of Ontario board members named saw Division 17 delegates re-elected; subdivision 18 members elected, Mrs. Lowell Eller and Mrs. V. Beachin and no change in subdivision 19 delegates.

In greetings brought by J. Krauter, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Mr. Krauter spoke of the work of the WI's and stated "People who have things happen to them should be involved in what's happening", urging the members to be alert to what is going on in the world around them.

CHALLENGE GIVEN

This theme pervailed throughout the day's speakers and commentators. Mrs. E. S. Small, FWIO president who was a guest for the convention told the delegates and members "The work begun by our ancestors has provided the development of our country today. It is up to us to keep the challenge bright. She asked the members to query themselves as to whether there is a better way of carrying on their work and to seek it — to use each day to the fullest and be satisfied only when they have done something for someone else.

She called to their attention the motto of the Women's Institutes "to make home and country a better place to live in." Mrs. Small also urged branches to increase their membership and suggested branches should be interested in studying the material available on air and water pollution; dangerous misuse of insecticides; and urged support for the Vanier Institute of the Family.

At the banquet held at 6:30 p.m. Mrs. Russel Yungblut, in her toast to the theme of the conference stated this year had been a happy and busy one with the celebration of Canada's birthday and the 70th anniversary of the founding of the WI's. "Our pioneers saw a vision and a need and laid the foundations and offered the inspiration for our organization. We cannot ride along and coast on the past — we must find

our work in the future". She stated the WI's must take a wider view of their work especially the affiliation with the Associated Country Women of the World; Canada's northland and the whole new era of art, literature and music as they head into a time of more leisure.

Mrs. C. Beamer in replying to the toast suggested that communication was perhaps the biggest stumbling block in the world today. "We must understand other peoples to be able to communicate with our ethnic groups, our first Canadians, the Indians and Eskimos and those ethnic peoples who came to populate our land."

"Many former rural people are leaving the land and we are receiving city people in subdivisions—must offer an interesting program to these women and learn from them also," she stated. "Our vision for the future must be the simple act of neighborliness and kindness to set up lines of communication to these people and the world. Let this be our challenge" she said.

QUERY WI'S FUTURE

Guest speaker, Mrs. Maryn Purdy, editor of "Home and Country", the WI magazine titled her speech "A Hint of Eternity," taken from an early WI editorial by Dr. Ethel Chamman. "We must ask ourselves if the plans made by those who formed Women's Institutes are outdated, or eternal. For in them the organizations growth is laid. Other groups formed at the same time have folded, but we are growing. Is there a hint of eternity in our organization?"

She outlined life in the early 1800's when WI's were first formed and detailed the drudgery and roughness, limited by the lack of education for women.

"Aelaide Hunter Hoodless had perhaps less than a Grade 8 education; she may have attended a ladies college," said Mrs. Purdy. Yet she became an influential lecturer and became aware of the need for household science and health for women of her day. Perhaps she was also influenced by the agitation beginning at that time for equal opportunities, pay, and the right to vote for women. She saw the need for organizing rural women and the teaching they needed. Perhaps she reasoned their lives would never be the same again.

"We as a group have never really recorded what effect our organization has had on individual woman," stated Mrs. Purdy. Yet today we are called to many problems which face people and the confusion which exists.

CONFUSION TODAY

Educators are confused, said the speaker. The old ways of teaching children are not good enough today. Religious leaders are confused as what we know today doesn't relate to the old beliefs; parents are confused as the old discipline within the family is disappearing for children will not accept parental discipline as we did.

Yet the family should be the stabilizing influence in these

times, stated Mrs. Purdy. "Every child should have the right to a healthy home atmosphere". She commented that too many parents will not or do not realize their responsibilities to their children. A woman may or may not choose to have children, but if she does, she should take up her responsibilities to bring them up right.

Women don't have enough knowledge about the new machines in their homes or the products they are using; many are talked into buying foods because their children want it; money management is woefully lacking — women should know more about credit buying and the Women's Institutes should be studying and informing their members on these problems.

WI'S POWERFUL VOICE

The Women's Institute is a powerful voice in the community today, concluded Mrs. Purdy. We have gone beyond Canada's borders and through the ACWW we must look to the world. Many people live and die in this world today without ever having enough to eat and unless this problem is solved in a few years, experts warn us we will face unrest as those without seek to get from those who have, out of sheer frustration. Introduced by Mrs. Beachin, she was thanked by Mrs. J. S. Holden.

During the evening the delegates were entertained by the DeFranco quintet from Port Colborne who delighted and entranced the audience with a fine display of musical selections. The group ranged in age from eight to 13 and had a high quality of showmanship.