



their rural skills to good use, turning out an astronomical number of tins of fruit, jars of jam and tons of vegetables, and distributing to their neighbours the meat pies—a welcome substitute for the frozen cod of the earlier war—which made Pie Day an event in a strictly rationed week. This time, they opened their homes to thousands of evacuated town-dwellers and learnt, often with horror, the very different standards of hygiene, diet and behaviour prevalent in many city homes. An interesting report was compiled by W.I. members all over Britain on the wholesome results of food, fresh air and soap on their young guests, which was widely circulated and used by several societies working on child welfare.

It was not only in cities that living conditions were below standard. Looking around them, Institutes found that in their own villages housing was in short supply and in primitive condition. In hundreds of districts a good water supply was unknown and electricity and drainage despised of. The village bus, on which visits to Market day, relatives, or to the doctor depended, ran but seldom and at erratic times. The Post Office Authorities seemed reluctant to erect telephones in rural areas, but eager to close down the village Post Offices, making the buying of a stamp or the drawing of a pension into an Odyssey.

Into the battle went the Women's Institutes, armed with the accurate first-hand knowledge of rural conditions denied to, or ignored by, those in

