

Erland Lee, a prominent, broad-minded and public-spirited young farmer had been secretary and later president.

In the autumn of 1896, Mr. Lee attended a meeting of the Experimental Union, held at the Ontario Agricultural College, and while there, he heard a stirring address by Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless of Hamilton, on the value and need of having domestic science and sewing taught in the public schools.

In January of 1897, Mr. Lee, in planning the programme for the Farmers' Institute meeting, invited Mrs. Hoodless to address an evening meeting when the women would be present. During this meeting it was suggested that the women form an organization similar to the Farmers' Institute. A second meeting was held in Squires' Hall, attended by one hundred and one women and one man, (Mr. Erland Lee), when an organization was formed known as the Women's Department of the Farmers' Institute of South Wentworth, later called the Stoney Creek Women's Institute.

The real purpose or object of this first Institute was to raise the standard of homemaking. This is shown conclusively in the following statement recorded in the early minutes: "A nation cannot rise above the level of its homes, therefore, we women must work and study together to raise our homes to the highest possible level". There, in a nutshell, is the real purpose or object for which the Women's Institute was organized.

These pioneer leaders were sincere in their efforts, and practical in their ideas. Referring again to the first minute book of the Mother Institute, this statement is found:

"In order that we may carry out to better advantage the objects for which the Institute was organized, we shall divide them into six divisions as follows:—

"(1) Domestic Economy, (2) Architecture, with special reference to heat, light, sanitation and ventilation, (3) Health, embracing physiology, hygiene, calisthenics and medicine. (4) Floriculture and horticulture. (5) Music and Art. (6) Literature, education, sociology and legislation."

It is highly significant to note how closely these six divisions correspond to the standing committees

of the Women's Institutes of to-day. Does that not prove how sound and enduring our pioneers built the foundation of this mighty organization?

The first officers elected by the "Mother Institute" were as follows:—

President—Mrs. E. D. Smith, Winona.

Secretary—Miss Maggie Nash, Stoney Creek.

Treasurer—Mrs. J. H. McNeilly, Stoney Creek.

Directors—Mrs. F. M. Carpenter, Fruitland; Mrs. Erland Lee, Stoney Creek.

Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless was chosen honorary president, and while her memory is honoured as the founder of the Women's Institute movement, the conditions bringing about the founding of the organization were made possible through the efforts and influence of Mr. Erland Lee, ably assisted by his wife. Other women continued active in Institute until the time of their death.

Mr. Lee rendered further valuable assistance. With Senator E. D. Smith, then a member of the Federal Government, and Major F. M. Carpenter, a former member, they assisted the women in drafting the constitution and by-laws, and the fact that this broad and elastic constitution provided for the development of this little society into an organization of almost world-wide proportions reflects the ability, wisdom, vision and foresight of the men and women responsible for its framing.

On Mrs. Erland Lee's suggestion, the fee was fixed at twenty-five cents, so that membership would be within the means of all who wished to join. Recognizing the importance of spiritual values in the organization she suggested that the regular Institute meetings be opened by repeating the Lord's Prayer in unison.

In 1899, the first government speaker and organizer came to Stoney Creek Women's Institute in the person of Miss Laura Rose who, at that time was instructor in dairying at the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, Ontario.

For thirty-five years, through the Institute, she worked in the interests of rural women. She lectured at the summer series of meetings in Ontario, organized Women's Institutes in several provinces, was a con-