

## Thoughts by the Way

HAVING attended the second conference of the Canadian National Women's Organizations in Toronto, at which findings of the first conference were made known, and ideas and resolutions presented for the drawing up of a charter of women's rights, this writer questions seriously the usefulness of the organization in its present set-up.

At the first conference last February some 52 women's national organizations were represented. At the second meeting there were approximately 18! There was no rural representative at this second conference. Unless there is a great deal more intelligent interest and discussion when the delegates circulate in their own home communities it would seem doubtful as to how a charter can be drawn up and completed at the fall conference. It is expected that next year an international conference will be held in Canada.

To this writer the lack of really healthy and thorough discussion of topics which the delegates should have come entirely prepared for, the lack of a definite policy for implementing the resolutions — putting teeth into them, are a drawback.

It is not enough for women to go on record as "standing" for "equal pay for the job," appointment of women to Civil Service Commissions, greater activity in public life and exercise of citizenship, better rural housing, rural electrification and improved community and educational facilities, the development of better understanding between rural and urban women. But more important and more pertinent is the question "What action will be taken?" Unless a resolution has teeth in it and back of it the right minded woman, it invariably gathers dust on some cabinet minister's desk. There are already too many women's organizations in Canada whose resolutions never get beyond that stage.

One does not get rid of war by hating war and loving peace, as I have said before in this column. One does not get rid of the inequalities of woman's status and social wrongs by forming a charter of the "right" things women should stand for. You can stand until kingdom come and grow old and weary and dull of spirit in the standing.

As to the possibility of an international conference of the heads of women's national organizations, I would be the first to admit the benefits to be derived from the exchange of woman ideas from the various other countries. The Associated Countrywomen of the World Conference in Ottawa called by Mrs. Alfred Watt, M.B.E., is proof of that.

Before such a conference is even suggested for Canada, it would seem very necessary that the present set-up be on a firmer basis.

*Elizabeth Hammond*

Women's Editor.



Exhibit of handcraft work sent by British Institutes to Canadian Institutes. In front row are to be seen at left, and centre beautifully bound leather gift books sent by Scottish Women's Institutes and British Institutes in gratitude for sympathy and practical help extended by the Canadian organization over almost six years of war. The handcraft exhibit includes, exquisitely smocked child's print frock, leather handbag, men's and women's leather gloves, handwoven bags, handwoven linen file and drawn work, ingenious handmade buttons. In front row at extreme right is to be seen Cicily McCall's book, "Women's Institutes—The British People in Pictures."

## British Institutes Send "Thank You" Gifts to Canadian Organization

By Elizabeth Hammond

SELDOM has Britain sent to Canada a better ambassador of goodwill than Elizabeth Christmas, general organizer of the Federated Women's Institutes of England and Wales. Certainly those who chose her for the Canadian assignment are to be complimented for their discernment.

This writer frankly acknowledges that rarely has she seen a more sincere and moving demonstration of affection for a stranger than that expressed at the dozens of visits begun on the Pacific Coast and terminating in Halifax on May 24th. She will then have completed her tour of the nine provinces.

Miss Christmas, as has been reported before in this section of the Family Herald, came to Canada through the British Ministry of Information in collaboration with War Information Board, Ottawa.

It is said that in the beginning when plans for the tour were being discussed, someone in the Canadian Institutes, requested, to give the British interpretation, "A plain body without an Oxford accent." Which serves to point up the difference in British and Canadian terms. For, I can well imagine that in blunt Canadianese, what the Canadian Institute member meant was "someone who would not be the 'ja-de-dah' type. Certainly Elizabeth Christmas is not "plain" as we understand "plain." She is a slender, graceful young woman with a charming, expressive face, an abundance of poise and vitality—and a thoroughly nice person. She has that rare gift for adapting herself immediately to whatever group in which she finds herself. She has told Britain's wartime story as lived in the rural areas so simply and so

well that one is torn between laughter and tears—tears quickly dispelled by laughter. And she has strengthened the already strong bond between her Canadian and British sisters.

Perhaps the highest compliment of all was paid her when a quiet country woman turned to me and said with great sincerity, "She is one of us." So quickly was she

### W. I. Highlights

First Women's Institute in the world organized at Stoney Creek, Ontario in 1897.

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At the request of Queen Mary, Women's Institutes were introduced in England by Mrs. Alfred Watt, M.B.E., in 1915. British Institutes branches now total a paid membership of 600,000. There are 5,870 branches in England and Wales, 900 in Scotland, a goodly number in Northern Ireland.

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Newest Women's Institute in the world organized recently at Trinidad, Malta now making inquiries.

accepted by women wherever she went.

Having spent some time with Institutes in each of the western provinces, as well as speaking to urban women's organizations on occasion, Miss Christmas visited Stoney Creek Institute in Ontario, birthplace of the first Women's Institute in the world.

Highlight of the Quebec visit was the presentation of a large, beautifully bound reddish brown

leather gift book to the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada from the Federated Women's Institutes of England and Wales, at a meeting called by Sherbrooke County Institutes in Sherbrooke. In the absence of Mrs. Cameron Dow, Federated President, Miss Christmas presented the book, along with one from the Scottish Women's Institutes, also beautifully bound in cream colored leather, and giving details of their work during the war, and a very fine collection of British handcraft work, to Mrs. G. F. W. Kuhring, Federated Corresponding Secretary. Owing to illness in her family Mrs. Dow could not be present. This will form a travelling exhibit which will pass from Institute to Institute across Canada. The presentation was made in gratitude for the sympathy and practical help given to British Institutes during the war.

Hand-bound, in fine red-brown leather, and its pages hand-made, the gift book was written out in script by Frances Nuttall, member of Budleigh Salterton Institute, County of Devon, and was bound by Katherine R. Drummond, National Federation Women's Institutes' leathercraft judge. It contains beautifully illustrated pages of specimens of Institute work purchased by the British Council to include in the Exhibition of Craft Work to tour the Dominions, pictures showing the packing of children's clothes knitted by Northumberland Institutes; Knitting for Liberated Europe; Her Majesty the Queen, listening to an address by the Minister of Agriculture; W. I. members learning to line coats for Mrs. Churchill's Aid to Russia Scheme; Making baskets at Worthing, West Sussex; Southbourne W.I., East Sussex Market Stall; Carrying Home produce from Porlock W.I. Market, Somerset. There are clever and amusing color

sketches too, among them one expressing "thanks for the hair pins and bobby pins . . . we can now face the members with confidence . . . the fruit cakes were lovely and helped many a W.I. Christmas party."

The book opens with the inscription: "To the Women's Institutes of Canada from the Women's Institutes of Britain in gratitude and friendship," and beneath it in color the Institute crests of England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and Canada.

There is a message from Lady Denman D.B.E.:

"We ask the Canadian Women's Institutes to accept this book in appreciation of all the sympathy and kindness which they have shown to us during the years of war."

"To Canada we owe our origin. From Canada has come lately such warmth of friendship, such a profusion of gifts that our debt grows greater every day."

"As chairman of the National Federation of Women's Institutes in Britain, I take this opportunity of sending to the Canadian Institute members our thanks for their

generosity and our very best wishes for happiness and still greater opportunities for friendship in the years ahead."

Greetings from Wales: "From the Mountains and Valleys of Wales we send you greetings. From every country house in this war-scarred land there comes to you loving thanks for all your goodness to us, for opening your hearts and homes to our boys, for giving us food and for making our gardens grow."

"When the W.I. movement came from Canada it first took root in Wales in the village of Llanfair P.C. Now Welsh Institutes number 450 and they all send greeting."

Greetings from Northern Ireland: "Members of the Women's Institutes of Northern Ireland join with England and Wales in sending greetings to Women's Institute members in Canada and in particular to the Kazabazua Women's Institute who so kindly sent us a most welcome gift of vegetable seeds."

"Our members have greatly admired the lovely patchwork quilts which were sent from Canada.

(Turn to Page 44, Please)