



Wentworth County.....Some 13 years before we had a Women's Institute there was organized in the county, mainly through the efforts and influence of Public School Inspector Joseph H. S. Smith, the Farmers' Institute. Mr. Smith had as right hand man Mr. Erland Lee, a clever, broad-minded young farmer of Saltfleet township....To Mr. Lee we are indebted for the Women's Institute for, while we recognize Mrs. Hoodless as our founder, yet it was Mr. Lee who made conditions possible."

In the autumn of 1896, Erland Lee (who had been a student at the Ontario Agricultural College) attended the annual meeting of the Experimental Union in Guelph. There he heard the address of Mrs. John Hoodless of Hamilton on the need of instruction in sewing and domestic science in the schools. The zealous lady avowed that training boys and girls alike was wrong. Girls ought of right to be educated and made fit for that sphere of life for which they were destined—home-making. So impressed was Mr. Lee by the speaker's viewpoint that he and Major F. M. Carpenter made bold to invite Mrs. Hoodless to speak along the same lines at the Farmers' Institute open meeting to be held at Stoney Creek in January following. So well did the speaker make her points that even the hard-boiled men were convinced. Encouraged by her reception, Adelaide Hoodless made bold to suggest an organization of women similar to that instituted for men by Inspector Smith. The chairman recommended calling a meeting of farmers' wives and daughters for the following week. Thirty-five then and there promised to attend.

Erland Lee Was Only Man
 When the protagonist of a fair deal for feminine farmfolk appeared at Squire's Hall, Stoney Creek, on the night of February 19, 1897, she was greeted by 101 women and one man—Erland Lee, who was to take the chair. The able and eloquent speaker (who had been born on a farm near St. George) drew attention to the fact that if the men, in their institute, profited by consultation and study, learned how to care for and raise better stock, why couldn't their women help in the work for betterment of farm and home by aiding homecraft and mothercraft. Sensing their responsibility and opportunity as homemakers, the 101 women decided to make a beginning by forming "The Women's Department in Domestic Economy in affiliation with the Farmers' Institute of South Wentworth" (a cumbrous if meaningful title). At the very next meeting the name was changed to the "Women's Institute of Saltfleet," and later, when other women's units were founded, the body became the "Stoney Creek Women's Institute." The broadening-out process took on promotion of improved conditions of the home and farmstead, including the physical, intellectual,