

History of The Women's Institute

On February 12th, 1908, a meeting of ladies of the community was held in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall and was addressed by Miss Campbell of Brampton. At the close of her address Miss Campbell organized a Women's Institute with 21 members.

The following officers were elected: President, Mrs. W. Little; Vice Pres., Mrs. (Dr.) Stewart; Sec.-Treas., Miss Margaret McKague. Directors were appointed to help arrange the programs for the different meetings and were as follows—Misses Lottie McMillan, Mary Roane, Kate McDonald, Josephine Reid, Margaret Hutton, Emma Wallace, Alice Little and Annie Arkell.

The meeting closed with the singing of "God Save the King". The records show that by the end of the year the membership had increased to 60.

Meetings were sometimes held in Mr. W. Little's hall and the Town Hall. In later years meetings were held in the homes of the members, but throughout the years the Council Chamber has been the most popular place and the Council has been very considerate and allow the use of the hall for \$1 per meeting.

The membership varies from time to time, sometimes we have a large membership and again we are few in numbers. During the war years when women were busy in Red Cross work it was hard to carry on in the Institute but we didn't disband, and now that the Red Cross has disbanded more women are free to help make our Institute a real live organization working for the betterment of our homes and our community.

Through the years good programs are planned for our meetings and the many topics, Health, Social Welfare, Publicity, Horticulture, Citizenship, Home Economics, Canadian Industries and Historical Research supply a wide field for papers and talks.

Sometimes demonstrators were sent by companies to advertise their goods: one flour company sent a lady to demonstrate bread and bun making, and at one time the Ogilvie Oats had one to teach us how to make porridge.

Demonstrations in many different arts have always been interesting and educational. These are put on at times by local women or girls and include cake-making, salads, short-bread, candy-making and cookies, also sewing, rug-making, ironing, polishing brass and many others. Short Courses which were held very frequently a few years ago, were very educational and included home nursing, sewing, working with wool, cooking and home-planning, money management.

The Institute has always stood ready to help with any improvements they felt needed doing. I think the first of these improvements was to have a well drilled in the park and a pump put in. This was a beginning of park improvement; then the bank was terraced and trees planted and then the largest undertaking was the building of the Park Entrance. These all helped to make our park one of the finest in Ontario.

In the Town Hall the Institute felt it would be a splendid gesture to fix up a kitchen; this was done; dishes, cooking utensils, cutlery and a stove, also linen towels were purchased and for a time were very carefully looked after, but it is in need of many new additions at the present time. Another matter that needed attention was a curtain for the stage; this the Women's Institute bought and it adds a great deal to the appearance of our auditorium.

To show our patriotism we felt the need of a flag; this the Institute also bought and after many years of faithful service it was declared unfit for use, so a lovely new one was bought by the same Women's Institute, and with care it will fly for years to come.

At the close of the First World War when everyone was interested in erecting a suitable memorial to those who so gallantly gave their all, the Women's Institute started, and with the help of willing citizens in town and country, soon our monument of

which we are proud, was erected and the names of the heroes and heroine inscribed on it. Since the close of the Second World War the names of those who did not return have also been inscribed.

To help beautify our town and as a memorial, 100 trees were planted in certain places.

Our Institute has helped to organize a Junior Institute, I think twice—but the members of Junior Institutes soon grow into Senior members, so the Junior Institutes are no more. Another organization that had the seeds for its growth planted in our Sr Institute was the Horticultural Society, an organization that did much to beautify our village, and some farm homes, too. Every available corner that had for years grown weeds and such, was turned into a bed of flowers or shrubs, but after a number of years its work seemed to be accomplished and it disbanded. It seems to me that it might be well to have a new Horticultural Society—we are beginning to see the need for one.

The Horticultural Society after the First World War had about 100 trees planted as a memorial. Many of these are beautiful monuments around our village.

Now, we say, what is our present Institute active in? There is an arena wanted and wanted badly, so true to the traditions of the past, the Institute is willing to shoulder a share and so far have raised over \$900 and their objective is \$1,000.

Briefly now, the names of Presidents and Secretaries of our Branch since 1908, (President first, followed by dates of office, and secretaries).

Mrs. Wm. Little, 1908-1909, Miss M. McKague.

Mrs. (Dr.) Stewart, 1909-1912, Miss K. Clark.

Mrs. J. Good, 1912-1914, Miss A. Jarvis.

Mrs. W. Little, 1914-1915, Miss E. Wallace.

Mrs. S. R. Brill, 1915-1917, Mrs. Brill.

Mrs. J. Linkater, 1917-1920, Mrs. Gillies.

Mrs. Guthrie Reid, 1920-1922, Miss P. Jarvis.

Mrs. Adam Little, 1922-1924, Mrs. Raymond.

Mrs. Kenneth McKenzie, 1924-1926, Mrs. W. Little.

Mrs. Chas. Thompson, 1926-1928, Mrs. Jackson.

Mrs. Raymond, 1928-1931, Mrs. Clark.

Mrs. John S. Armstrong, 1931-1932, Mrs. Raymond.

Mrs. Dever, 1932-1936, Mrs.

B. A. Hiscox.

Mrs. R. D. Brown, 1936-1937, Mrs. Wm. Ballagh.

Mrs. Raymond, 1937-1938, Mrs. Clark.

Mrs. T. Leigh, 1938-1940, Mrs. O'Mara.

Mrs. James M. Reid, 1940-1944, Mrs. Geo. K. Armstrong.

Mrs. M. Donahue, 1944-1947, Mrs. McLennan, Mrs. J. S. Armstrong, Mrs. H. Colvin, Mrs. M. Rome, Mrs. Thornton, Mrs. Roy Thompson, Mrs. G. Symons.

Four of our Presidents have been District Presidents—Mrs. Brill, Mrs. Linklater, Mrs. Geo. K. Armstrong and Mrs. Jas. M. Reid.

