

Report of the Superintendent

of

Farmer's Institutes

of the

Province of Ontario

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Part II Women's Institutes

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Women's Institutes

Development of Women's Institutes in Ontario

The Farmer's Institute system in the Province of Ontario has grown from year to year until now there is scarcely a school house or cross road that has not had a meeting of some kind. Our membership has grown to exceed 20,000 and last winter there were in actual attendance at our meetings 131,653 persons. Notwithstanding this splendid growth it was found by a consultation with the delegates and institute officers after the last series of meetings in February, that the evening meetings in many localities had not been satisfactory. In order to reach all of the people for whom the institute was established, it was found desirable to add to the programme at the evening meetings, music, recitations and short addresses from persons not necessarily identified with farm work. This worked all right when not carried to excess, but here and there an institute would make the mistake of providing an evening programme for entertainment and amusement only, losing sight entirely of the practical and instructive features.

Many of our best delegates feel quite out of place when called upon in a mixed programme to deliver an address of an amusing character. They have always worked hard at their callings, and have been chosen as delegates to Farmer's Institute meetings solely because of their thoroughly practical experience and their ability to tell it to others. Such men feel at sea when wedged in between a comic reciter and a village choir, and asked to talk on such a subject as "Corn and Ensilage". It was, therefore, partly with the idea of improving the evening meetings of the Farmer's Institute that we last summer addressed a letter to the women of Ontario, and asked their co-operation in establishing Women's Institutes.

A Woman's reply to our Circular Letter. In reply to my letter a number of ladies answered intimating their willingness to assist in the work, and one in particular wrote as follows:

"Are they needed? Yes, much more so than the men's are. They deal with farms, crops and stock, but women have to do with that which is of far more importance, the home and they that dwell therein. The benefits arising from better methods in agriculture are very desirable in many ways,