

Women's Institutes of Ontario 1923

To the Honourable Minister of Agriculture:

I have the honour to present herewith the Annual Report of the Women's Institutes Branch for the year 1923.

The activities of the Institutes as presented at the annual conventions and reported upon direct to the Department throughout the year have been grouped under the following headings:

1. General Programmes.
2. Community Halls.
3. School Inspection and Child Welfare.
4. Libraries.
5. Cemeteries.
6. Girls' Institutes.
7. Northern Relief Work.
8. Programmes of Provincial Standing Committees.

Some of the papers and addresses given at the annual conventions in addition to special contributions are included herein.

The reports presented at the conventions, the deep interest shown in the work being done, and the possibilities for the future, give much promise for continued effective effort on the part of the members in a wide variety of activities affecting the well-being of the whole people. Clothing, housing, foods, health, wholesome amusements and entertainment, educational problems, laws and methods of administration, and a wide variety of community effort, characterize the work of this organization which has come to be such a vital factor in rural life and development throughout the Province.

Through the efforts of the members of the Institutes, in co-operation with official bodies and local organizations, much is being done in improving schools, establishing libraries, providing rest-rooms, assisting in health campaigns, providing and directing social activities, charitable and philanthropic undertakings in which the whole community is concerned.

Some attention is also given to the lighter forms of agriculture, by which women and girls are adding materially to the farm income, a very important matter in a period of deflation in values of farm products.

Nearly one thousand Women's Institutes have been active throughout the Province during the past year, and while all devote much of their attention to women's work and responsibility in general, no two organizations follow the same programme. The work of each branch is voluntary, and quite independent of control outside the membership. This independence of action has resulted in a development of local talent and the utilization of the same, together with other local resources, to a marked degree.

The aim of the Department during the past twenty years has been to encourage and direct the Institutes in initiating and carrying on activities among their own members and other residents of the community, with a view to benefiting and developing the members and bringing advantages to the community. Assistance by way of lecturers and demonstrators has been conditional upon the degree to which the members as a whole put forth an effort to help themselves.