

Blackstock May 1st, 1935

REPORT OF THE INSTITUTE

On May 11th, 1915, the Victorian Womens Institute was organized at the home of Mrs. Frank Stinson, our 1st President being Mrs. James Henry Freeborn. Since then we have had 9 Presidents. As the time of our organization was about the beginning of the World War, we immediately entered into Patriotic Work and a Patriotic Committee was appointed. The first work was not recorded but in 1916 there is a record of a Contribution of Clothing and Quilts to the Belgium Relief, also a bale of Clothing, weight 560 lbs. valued at \$208.50 to the Northern Ontario Fire Sufferers. We also sent 102 qts of Fruit Jelly, Syrup and Pickles to the Soldiers' Hospital Overseas. We bought flannel and distributed it among the members to be made into shirts, also yarn for socks, at the January Meeting 1917. The month's work was 75 pairs of socks and 12 shirts, and on Jan. 31st a Knitting Contest was arranged to cover two months, during which time 900 pairs of Socks, 15 flannel shirts and 18 cheese cloth shirts were made. Miss Collins, the Departmental Speaker said that she never before met such enthusiasm in soldiers knitting. We regularly sent Boxes to the Boys Overseas and on one occasion the Committee reported sending 38 Boxes costing \$69.99; we also had a Prisoner of War who was remembered, his box was sent through the British Red Cross. I notice that in May 1917 the Patriotic Committee reported Receipts \$648.81 Expenditure \$648.73 I believe the Receipts were, Grant from Municipal Council Donations and Social Functions sponsored by the Institute (why we went into the junk business). A Jew agreed to pay \$300.00 for the privilege of collecting in the Township. Also a Girls Basket Ball Game between Blackstock and Nestleton realized a net profit of \$37.00 to send Fruit overseas. We also sent Bibles, Newspapers and Scrap Books. We continued actively engaged in this work until the War was over. During this time we also took advantage of several Short Courses in the Community Hall which were sponsored by the Institute. We remembered the sick and shut-ins with fruit and flowers in our Community, Spoons to the Brides and Bank Books or Baby Spoons to new Babies. We also send Bales to Northern Ontario and the draught areas in Western Canada, and help the needy in our own Community. After the War was over and Peace declared we still remained very much interested and contributed, I believe, \$300.00 to the erection of a Memorial to the Memory of the Boys who died in Flanders Field. We also assisted in buying the Tablet erected in honour of the soldiers who returned, and since then have taken care of the Memorial Park, paying the Caretaker, paying the Hydro for the Light and buying flowers for the Flower-Beds. We assisted in the erection of the Grand-Stand, in buying the Piano and the Curtains for the Hall, also the Rug for the Stage and the chairs. Now there are a great many things we have been interested in that I have not mentioned, but I sincerely hope that the Victorian Womens Institute may long continue to serve Our Home and Country.

By Mrs. W. A. Van Camp

Items of interest 1915 - 1920.

- 1916 - Lunch committees were ^{made} for meetings. Delegates were sent to the Prov. Board Convention in Toronto.
- 1917 - Several members subscribed for a magazine recognized by the W.I. and called the Home Journal. An autograph quilt was made. Miss Ethel Chapman was a guest speaker at a meeting.
- 1918 - The first District meeting was held in Blackstock.
- 1919 - The first Fair Exhibit was made, consisting of ; 1 light cake 1 dark cake, light biscuits, 2 pies. Prizes were \$3 and \$2.