

## SANFORD WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

On August 10th, 1903, the Sanford Women's Institute was organized by Mrs. W. E. Sanford, of Hamilton, at her summer home, "San Souci," Lake Rosseau. Mrs. Willoughby Cummings, secretary of the National Council of Women, was present, also Miss Hunter, of the Household Science Branch, Department of Agriculture. Miss Hunter spoke on the organization of the first W.I. just six years earlier, February 19th, 1897. She also told the interested group of women that the W.I.'s motto is "For Home and Country," and that neither religion nor politics must be discussed at the meetings.

Mrs. Sanford presided for the election of officers, which were: president, Mrs. William Trouten; secretary, Miss Edith Edwards. Sixteen members joined, they were: Mrs. William Trouten, Mrs. Alex. Fraser, Mrs. Edwards, Miss Minnie Edwards, Miss Edith Edwards, Mrs. Killen, Mrs. John Davidson, Miss May Davidson, Mrs. Bellingham, Miss Hazel Bellingham, Mrs. William Foulks, Miss Bessie Knight, Mrs. Boyce, Miss Evans, Mrs. Cummings and Mrs. Sanford. A Miss Bain and Mrs. John Fraser joined at the next meeting. With the exception of the guests, the members were all from Brackenrig. At this time the organization was called the "Brackenrig Women's Institute."

For six years the meetings were held in Brackenrig. Mrs. Sanford, the Honorary President, wishing to extend the work, arranged for a meeting of the women at Port Carling, with a view to organizing and joining with Brackenrig. This plan was adopted and in September, 1909, a meeting was held, and the name

was changed to the "Sanford Women's Institute." The members from Windermere who had belonged to the Brackenrig W.I. organized a branch of their own. It was agreed that one meeting a year was to be held in Brackenrig. The officers elected were: president, Mrs. Killen; secretary, Miss Edith Edwards, and treasurer, Mrs. William Hanna. Then, as now, money had to be raised to carry on work beneficial to the home and community. Box socials proved to be one of the most popular means of raising funds in those days.

When the war broke out in 1914, this branch of the W.I. carried on Red Cross work entirely, and all who could spare the time met in the Victoria Hall to sew, knit, make surgical supplies, and pack boxes. In December of 1916 the regular meetings were resumed.

In 1919 Reeve John Cope asked the W.I. to co-operate with the council in making flower beds at the locks. This they did until it was taken over by the Horticultural Society in 1934. The W.I. was instrumental in having medical inspection for the school children; helping to beautify the cemetery; donating special prizes, both to the school and Agricultural Society; advocated garbage collection which resulted in the splendid system we have today.

Always there was money to be raised for repairs to the Town Hall, until it became futile to expend more money on it, so a separate fund was started. Ten shares in the Skating Rink were purchased, and the W.I. sponsored a carnival every winter, the proceeds which of late years have been given to the rink committee.

In 1939 the Second World War started and the W.I. once again did war work. At this time Mrs. E. G. Rankin was president and Mrs. Louis Edwards secretary. Salvage campaigns were started to aid the war effort. Gifts were sent to the boys in the service, ditty bags packed for those on corvettes. Layettes were made and sent overseas. Members were asked to bring a tea bag to pack in boxes for overseas. In 1943 one roll call was answered by taking an article of clothing for the Russians. Tom Temple and Lance Buttler were prisoners of war and special boxes were sent to them. A blood donors' clinic was organized. Fats and grease were collected and sold for the War Charities Fund.

In November, 1945, Blue Cross was first discussed and many members had joined by June of the next year. In November of 1945 the W.I. catered for the first Lions Banquet and cleared \$35.88.

In February of 1946 it was decided that the money in the War Charities Fund be turned in to the Town Hall Memorial Fund. In 1950 a Memorial Hall Board was organized and it was agreed that the dishes be turned over to them, with the reservation that the W.I. have use of them, free of charge, as long as the organization exists.

In 1946 Mr. George Blair, who was reeve at that time, suggested that the Town Hall be enlarged and remodelled as a Memorial to the boys who gave their lives in the war, and in September of 1952 his ambitions were realized.

During these years the members of the W.I. worked hard to equip the kitchen, with the result that today there is china, linen, cutlery, cooking utensils, in fact everything needed to serve a banquet to one hundred and fifty people.

The most memorable banquet was that which was given to celebrate the W.I. Golden Anniversary on November 20th, 1953. It was a Mother and Daughter banquet, and two of the charter members, the Misses Minnie and Edith Edwards, were guests of honor. Two other charter members, Miss May Davidson (Mrs. C. H. McCulley) and Miss Bessie Knight, are still living. Also seated at the head table were the officers of 1953, president, Mrs. Ed. Wilson; vice-president, Mrs. George Harris and Mrs. Dudley Penney; secretary, Mrs. Claude Duke; district director, Mrs. Gordon Fraser; local branch directors, Mrs. Lionel Cope and Mrs. Roy Brown, and the guest speaker, Past Provincial President Mrs. E. A. Duke.

In 1952 the Tweedsmuir History Book was started, and to date it contains the history of the W.I., the three churches, the business places, the organizations, the library, the boats, and most of the pioneer families.

The W.I. still caters for the Lions Club dinners, and in the past few years it has catered for several wedding receptions. In fact, the W.I. still lives up to its reputation, of working for everything beneficial to the community.



Mrs. W. E. Sanford