

District History 1897 - 1917Mrs. C. McTaggart

I think it worth while to note here that the<sup>1</sup>Hon. John Dryden represented South Ontario for over a quarter of a century. He was the second Minister of Agriculture in the Province, the office being held for a short time by the Hon. Mr. Drury.  
<sup>2</sup>"The proud and useful position which the department holds to-day is almost entirely due to his practical knowledge of agriculture, the wants of the farm and his broad and comprehensive views as to making such a department of use to the Canadian farmer".

There are two other sources of information which I would like to quote here. Miss Viola Powell in Forty Years Agrowing, states: "The second Institute to be organized was at Whitby, Ontario, on June 29, 1897, just four months after the first at Stoney Creek".

Mrs. R. R. Mowbray, of Kinsale, wife of a former Reeve of Pickering Township in her History of Kinsale, written August, 1931 states: "Over thirty years ago in 1897 a young woman married a farmer at Stoney Creek, and being entirely ignorant of the requirements of a farmer's wife conceived the idea of starting a society to help those in a similar situation. It was duly organized and named the Women's Institute. Kinsale was the next one organized the same year".

Whether or not there was an Institute in existence here before 1899 I shall leave you to be the judge, but one thing seems to be sure, that the women of South Ontario were very much in evidence in the Sixth Annual Report of the Farmers' Institute for the year 1899-1900. This report by Mr. G. C. Creelman, Superintendent of the Farmers' Institutes, is the earliest and most authentic we have found, I shall quote extensively from it. The following is an excerpt from this Report.

"The Formation of Women's Institutes Report 1899-1900"

"At the beginning of this year two thriving Institutes, organized and conducted by women were found to be in a thriving and prosperous condition. I refer to the Women's Institute of Saltfleet in South Wentworth and the Women's Institute of South Ontario."

During the year Mr. Creelman sent out a circular to answer the many inquiries about Women's Institute work, in which he explained, "What Farmer's Institutes have done for the farmers and farms, Women's Institutes can do for the homes through the instrumentality of the wives and daughters."

1 The farm 'Maple Shade' north of Brooklin was, until recently still owned by the Drydens

2 J.E. Farewell, County Clerk, in a book entitled 'Ontario County' written in 1907