Women's Institutes see the value of recycling

Not in my back yard. The women of rural Ontario would like the rest of Ontario to do what they intend to do. That is recycle as much of their own garbage as possible, re-use packaging and other articles when possible, reduce the need for landfill sites and the expense of waste disposal and to recover energy by processing solid waste.

Over 400 women participated in the Educate-Initiate Conference sponsored by the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO), held recently at Queen's University, Kingston. The theme of the FWIO for 1988-89 is Waste Management-Recycling. As a result of the 1988 Conference the FWIO would like to see, 100 new recycling projects started throughout Ontario, by 1990.

The constant use of throw-away products was aptly demonstrated when it was discovered that the panel members, on the Friday night, were using plastic throw-away water glasses and a plastic jug. After this was commented on reusable glasses were on hand. Even the bows on the speaker's gifts were recycled.

Practical applications were given to the women on how they could influence their communities. Maybe the women could raise the money to buy their community centre a dishwasher instead of using styrofoam cups and paper plates suggested Pat Slater, Deputy Reeve of Peel Township in Wellington County.

John Hanson, Executive Director of the Recycling Council of Ontario told the women, that if they were told there was no funding to set up a depot for the collection for recyclable materials, that this was misinformation. There is funding but some municipalities just seem to discourage recycling. When one Women's Institute Branch presented a brief to their township asking for something to be done about recycling they were told nothing could be done unless their taxes were increased drastically.

The Ontario Minister of the Environment, the Hon. Jim Bradley told the participants that the Ontario government enthusiastically promoted municipal waste management that included reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery as the primary alternative waste management tools. Over 70 municipalities have made use of provincial start-up funding to establish curbside multi-material recycling projects.

The over 7,000,000 tons of garbage that Ontario creates each year should be processed in the municipality that creates the garbage. The women of rural Ontario do not want the garbage of the urban centers dumped in the rural areas. They were pleased to find out that Guelph has set aside a park of 40 acres to commemorate all the trees they saved in the first year of operation of their recycling project.

To help get the message of the Conference across to all parts of the province, the conference participants took part in a series of workshops that included fundraising, speaking with confidence, programme planning, public relations and volunteer management. As well they saw displays on recycled articles and pictures of what can happen to the environment when garbage is not controlled.

If you would like to find out more about what the Women's Institute are doing about waste management or further information about the Women's Institutes, the largest and oldest rural women's organization please contact your local OMAF office.

Geraldine Campbell,
FWIO Public Relations Officer.

1988