

ONTARIO WOMEN'S INSTITUTES HANDBOOK

Prepared through the co-operation of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario and the Ontario Department of Agriculture, and published by the latter.

This booklet is presented to the women of rural Ontario as a guide in organizing Women's Institutes, and carrying on their work in a businesslike effective manner. The directions given, the suggestions offered and the information contained herein are based upon an experience of thirty-three years on the part of the Women's Institutes of the province.

ORIGIN

The first Women's Institute was organized in Saltfleet Township, Wentworth County, on the 19th of February, 1897, with a view to meeting the expressed desire to acquire information which would insure greater efficiency on the part of the women of the rural sections in those varied responsibilities resting upon them in the home and as citizens. The branch is now known as the Stoney Creek Institute. Fuller particulars regarding the origin and development of the Institutes will be sent to those writing for the same.

AIMS AND OBJECTS

The aims and objects of the Institutes are most commendable and comprehensive, and will be found on page 9.

The Women of the Institute have greatly enlarged their vision and field of activity since the Institutes were first established, and it is recognized that the greatest and most important developments are an ever increasing desire for knowledge which will better equip girls and women for the responsibilities of mature womanhood, a spirit of service among the members, and the ability to plan and carry on community work most effectively. The readiness and clearness with which the members express themselves in discussions, addresses and papers at their regular meetings and annual conventions is noteworthy.

The Women's Institute is looked upon not only as an important educational undertaking but an effective channel through which various forms of activity in the best interests of the whole people can be carried on in the rural districts. Health education and service, child welfare, school improvement, libraries, community centres, and many other undertakings are made effective through the co-operation of the various Departments of Government and the local Institutes.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The growth of the Women's Institutes and the development of their work has been gradual and healthful. Representatives of the Institutes and Departmental officials have not unduly urged the extension of the work to new centres, but have stood ready to give full information and set forth the advantages and possibilities in the