

## THE BALA WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

The Federated Women's Institute of Ontario has a flourishing branch in Bala. The objective of the organization is in part "to develop better, happier and more useful citizens" and the motto is "For Home and Country".

The Bala W.I. was organized in 1915, it was war time and all the work for the Red Cross was carried on through the Institute. Mrs. Thos. Burgess was the first president, and the meetings were held in her home 'Roselawn'. At that time there were only two organizations in Bala - one church group and the W.I., so what was pleasure and interest for one was for all. There the group met often - sewing, knitting, rolling bandages and packing boxes for the boys who had gone overseas from the community. 1918- at last the war and the war work was over. Two of the boys sleep "In Flanders Field", but the rest of the soldiers were returning, and the ladies helped plan and provide a banquet for them and their friends.

In 1919 a hall was given over to the town dedicated as a memorial and named 'Victory Hall' and the W. I. turned their attention to it and for six years helped provide the fund with money for the many repairs, the lining of the building, putting in a stage, adding a kitchen and equipping it with stove, cupboards, dishes, etc. The ladies were glad to have a place for community activities in which they played a large part. Aside from money making projects, one might mention the parties for the children, movies, sewing classes for the girls and the New Year parties to which everyone came.

The town also had a very good library at that time, in the house where the Gowlands' now reside, and later in the rooms over the Royal Bank, which is now the Post Office, and money from the Institute treasury found good use in providing new books.

Now for some years a skating rink owned and operated by the late Walter Langdon stood where the Open House restaurant, barber shop and the Balacade now stand. Many were the good times had in the old rink - faces of friends long gone rise before one in remembering. The rink fell into disrepair and was finally torn down and an open air skating rink was built between the road and where Lloyd Weismiller's home now stands. The Institute helped to finance this but all were more or less dissatisfied with the rink, useable for such a short time each year, and in 1930 sums of money were raised by subscription and with most everyone working with a right good will the present skating rink was built. At last there was a safe and happy place of recreation for the young and not so young. The Women's Institute were able over a period of ten