

On 65th Anniversary

Home Still First Concern Of Women's Institute

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Spectator Staff



At the recent 60th anniversary celebration of the Selkirk WI, Mrs. W. B. Otterman (left) models a 100-year-old deep blue wedding dress, and Mrs. G. A. Laidlaw wears a brown going-away costume. Both women are former presidents of the Selkirk branch. The party was held at the home of Mrs. R. O. Hurst of Selkirk.

It was started in the homes of 101 women in the district around Stoney Creek.

Today, 65 years later, the Women's Institute has become a part of life in the homes of over 6,500,000 women throughout the world.

The institute's anniversary will be held on Monday, at the Queen Elizabeth Building in the Exhibition Grounds in Toronto. Over 1,200 guests are expected to attend.

"A nation cannot rise above the level of its homes," the Stoney Creek institute's early minutes said, "therefore, we women must work and study together to raise our homes to the highest possible level." Its goal has not changed.

The Stoney Creek "mother" institute has continued to be active in the work of the enormous organization which it fostered.

It is taking part in the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario project to sponsor a needy child in another country, through the Canadian Save the Children Fund. It has already joined with the four other Saltfleet WI's in adopting one child, and is waiting for information about a child of its own which it will be sponsoring.

It was on February 19, 1897, that Adelaide Hunter Hoodless came to Stoney Creek, at the invitation of Mr. Erland Lee, to urge on an audience of 101 women, the importance of progressive knowledge in home making.

THE WOMEN, under the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Lee, and of Senator and Mrs. E. D. Smith of Winona, organized the women's department of the Farmers' Institute of South Wentworth.

At the next meeting they changed the name to the Women's Institute of Saltfleet Township. Soon after, when

other institutes were organized in the township, the mother group became the Stoney Creek Women's Institute.

Mrs. Smith was the WI's first president. Mrs. Lee was one of its directors, and Adelaide Hunter Hoodless was named its honorary president.

There are three charter members of the original group, Mrs. G. A. Glidden of Stoney Creek, Mrs. H. P. Van Wagner of Burlington, and Mrs. J. McKinley Morden. Mrs. Glidden said that she became a charter member as a stand-in for her mother. Her mother was expecting a child at the time that the institute was formed and would not, in the fashion of 1897, go out in public.

From the beginning, the institute grew rapidly. By 1900 there were 33 in Ontario. In 1919, the FWIO was formed. Now there are 38,000 mem-

bers in Ontario, in 1,450 branches.

A NATIONAL Canadian group was formed in 1919. In 1915 the movement was started in Great Britain. In 1933 the Associated Country Women of the World was formed, in Stockholm, Sweden. There are branches in 26 countries.

The concern of the international organization is still centered on the welfare of the individual home. It is reflected in the co-operation of the mother institute with the sponsor-a-child project.

It is reflected in one of the 65th anniversary projects of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario. The provincial organization has set up a fund to send a trained economist into one of the newly emerging countries. She will help train leaders among its women to raise the standard of living in their country's homes.



Miss Muriel Bostwick treasures her family portrait of her grandmother, Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, a founder and first honorary president of the Women's Institute.



Mrs. Glidden



Mrs. Morden



Mrs. Van Wagner