



60th anniversary 1977

By Sam McLeod of The Free Press

Sara and Everett Fitzgerald were caught in happy reflection Sunday as they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary at the home of their daughter, Mrs. Lloyd (Selena) Flannigan on Dalkeith Avenue, London. They were married at the East Nissouri Township home of the bride's parents and farmed in West Nissouri Township until they retired and moved to Huron Street, London. They have four grandchildren.

1977



By Ed Heal of The Free Press

More than 340 members of the Women's Institute, representing 131 branches in the London area, attended the opening day of a two-day convention at Vanastra on Wednesday. Mrs. Wallace Laidlaw, left, of RR 7, London, talks with the Ontario president of the WI, Mrs. Herb Maluske of Chesley.

Recruitment campaign urged for WI

By MARY NESBITT
of The Free Press

VANASTRA — Women's Institute branches should mount an "active recruitment" campaign to bolster their dwindling numbers, a ministry of agriculture and food official told the annual convention of the London Area Women's Institute here Wednesday.

Molly McGhee, director of the ministry's home economics branch, told about 340 delegates that, ironically, membership is declining at a time when the WI's services are needed more than ever.

Branches are disbanding for lack of support and a 2,000-member decrease across Ontario is projected for 1978. Fewer young women are joining, she said, and many rural residents know nothing about the organization or its goals.

The need to disseminate information about all aspects of home management and family life is becoming increasingly acute, Miss McGhee said.

As examples of contemporary problems that directly affect the family, she cited diminishing energy and food resources, increasing alcoholism and drug addiction among young people, and the "bom-

bardment of information and misinformation through the media" about nutrition.

The objectives of the organization haven't really changed since its founding 80 years ago but have become more complex, Miss McGhee said.

Then, the WI was concerned with house architecture, household economy, nutrition and hygiene, child-rearing and public health standards.

Raising the health standards of the community is still a priority, if only to reduce the

spiralling costs of medical care, she said.

Modern changes that affect family life — such as the increasing number of single parents, communal families and working mothers — are the organization's concern, Miss McGhee said.

Those changes and the problems they produce aren't confined to urban areas, she said. Farming has become "big business" and more people are living in the country but working in the city, with the result

that there isn't much difference between urban and rural lifestyles.

"Rural Ontario isn't the bastion of strong family ties any more," Miss McGhee said.

She termed the WI a "unique" organization because of its widespread use of volunteers to distribute information through 4-H courses and seminars for members.

She said the institute, through its local branches and the larger parent organizations — the Federated Wom-

en's Institutes of Ontario, the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, and the Associated Country Women of the World — can have an influence on decision-making in the community and the world.

The convention concludes today with the election of officers and consideration of resolutions.

Representatives from 131 branches in Middlesex, Elgin, Oxford, and parts of Huron and Perth counties are attending the two-day convention.