

2.

THE FIRST WOMEN'S INSTITUTE  
-----

Adelaide Hoodless, a young mother of Wentworth county, having lost her first -born child at the age of 18 months, and whose death was attributed to lack of knowledge of infant feeding, had a great longing to save others from the heart ache she had suffered. This was her incentive to try and bring within the reach of all the necessary knowledge to prevent other such tragedies. To further her desire, she approached the department of Education with the suggestion that the rudiments of home making and child care be taught in the public schools, but she received no encouragement from this quarter.

Not to be discouraged by the department of Education, and realizing she could expect no help from that direction, Mrs. Hoodless determined to carry on the fight for what she deemed necessary by taking the subject direct to the people. She did this by addressing meetings in her own locality using "The Value and Need of Domestic Science and Sewing in our Public Schools" as the topic of her address. Mr. Erland Lee, a public spirited young farmer from Saltfleet township in Wentworth County, attended one of these meetings and was so impressed with Mrs. Hoodless's address that he requested Mrs. Hoodless to address a meeting of the women of Stoney Creek. Mrs. Hoodless promised to do this.

The following February, 1897, the Farmer's Institute of Stoney Creek were holding their regular meeting. It was an evening meeting and the women of the district were invited to attend. Mr Lee arranged to have Mrs. Hoodless address this gathering. At this meeting Mrs. Hoodless put forth the suggestion that the women form an organization similar in nature to the then existing Farmer's Institute, and having for it's object the furtherance of ~~most~~ important work of ministering to the health, comfort, and general welfare of families residing in rural homes. Such an organization would also work in conjunction with the Farmer's Institute and assist in their work. Those present at this meeting decided to call another meeting for the express purpose of considering the formation of just such an organization.

The meeting held for this purpose was called for Feb. 19 1897. Mrs. Hoodless was again asked to be present at this gathering. When Mrs. Hoodless arrived she found about 100 women present, and one man, Mr. Lee. This meeting formed the organization known as the "Women's Department of Domestic Economy in Affiliation with the Farmer's Institute of Wentworth County". As this name was so unwieldy, at the next meeting of