

Institute members asked to practise human rights

By BERYL VOLLMER
of The Free Press

GUELPH — A plea to "stimulate people to use the existing machinery to remedy violations of human rights" was made to more than 500 members of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario yesterday.

The women, delegates to the 20th annual officers' conference, were addressed by Ranjit S. Hall, regional liaison of-

ficer of the government citizenship branch.

Speaking on "Human rights — hope or hypocrisy", Mr. Hall said "We in Canada often give the impression we don't believe in human rights.

"There seems to be so much inequality around, but if we really believe in human rights for all, we will vigorously press with all our concentration to bring hope to those people who do not have equal rights. Failure to do this at this time, particularly failure by default, will make us liable to a charge of hypocrisy."

Mr. Hall urged WI members to "make this year meaningful as it has been designated by the United Nations as the year for human rights."

All Canadians should dramatize universal respect for people of all creeds, races and colors, he added.

Mr. Hall outlined the events leading up to the founding of the universal charter of human rights based on "our extreme revulsion with the atrocities of Second World War and the fact that all human beings are born equal."

Mr. Hall said "We live in a

global village. We must build a society of free and equal human beings. Rights and responsibility are indivisible."

He pointed out that even in Canada, the Indians were given the right to vote only in the last few years.

"Enshrinement of the bill of human rights in the British North America Act would make it more meaningful," he said.

"Even migratory birds take precedence over the Indian population. It is necessary for us as Canadians to enshrine our rights in the constitution."

"Rights in Canada are more secure in tradition than in law," he said. "Those in power use them as they see fit, but under stress they soon break down.

"There are illustrations in our history that make me entitle my talk 'human rights — hope or hypocrisy'," he added.

"Some people find it difficult to know what discrimination and prejudice are all about. We need to move, work and enjoy life equal with our peers."

Outlining the break-down of Canadian citizens into ethnic

groups, Mr. Hall said 25 per cent of the population is composed of 25 different ethnic minorities. The remainder is chiefly composed of people of English and French extraction.

"We can build one of the richest cultures in the world. The decision in the last analysis has to be made by the people. Integration does not mean a loss of cultural identity but rather unity and diversity. People have the right to be different as long as it does not cause friction," he said.

"The Iroquois thought of the idea of federation of tribes, making them one nation. There is a cultural clime for people to live, worship and play according to their own inclinations."

He urged the women "We have to go back to our com-

munities and really feel we want to do something about human rights at your level, my level and the community level to fill the gap of what needs to be done. Prejudice must be combatted and discrimination eliminated. We must create an awareness of rights.

"A native Indian has human rights, but if he does not know what they are or how to exercise them, they are no good to him. They engender a feeling of being less than a human being. It takes a lot for that person to raise his head high again.

"We must assist in the evaluation of people in the democratic society and the worth of that person in our society. We must encourage communities to gather data on evaluation of

social problem. The moment these people can walk with their heads up, in equality, half of the problem will be solved."

Answering a question on looting and rioting in the United States, Mr. Hall said "They were the frantic, frustrated attempts of people trying to be people. They were a measure of last resort. All other means seemed to have failed. People have to fight for what they want in society. They have to organize and use methods of protest."

The convention, which concluded yesterday, was held at the University of Guelph. Sessions yesterday morning dealt with internal business and the running of citizenship and education groups.

Mrs. Everett Small, president FWIO presided.

human rights and injustice. We must assist our own organizations in efforts to take action."

He said the WI could play a major role in participating in the conference of human rights, to be held in Ottawa Dec. 1 and 2, and also in the implementation of the findings of the commission on the status of women.

"There is a need to review and ratify and bring our concerns forward."

In a questions and answers period, most of the questions dealt with the Indian population. Mr. Hall said to help build up the Canadian Indian, as much and as many resources as are needed must be used, not what can be afforded. "There should be something like the Marshall plan," he said. "It is basically first a