FEDERATED WOMEN'S INSTITUTES OF ONTARIO.

In this time of crisis in the rural community, a crisis that affects the whole of Canada, it is comforting to know that in the midst of this there is an oasis. For over 90 years the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) have been active in all aspects of their communities.

Over the past year the importance of FWIO has been ably demonstrated. The results of some of these activities were reported to the annual meeting of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) held recently in Guelph. Although not all branches reported their figures, over 60,000 hours were given to 4H and the schools. This does not include the work involved with the numerous WI scholarships that give students at all levels an opportunity to further their education. Among the guests at the Annual Dinner was Melinda McCoy, a post graduate student at the University of Guelph who is the Helen McKercher scholarship winner. Her thesis on looking at how the rural community is coping with the crisis will be of benefit to all who work in agriculture.

Women's Institute has a long tradition of being concerned with the teaching of agriculture in the classroom, and in many counties you will find the WI helping in various ways, and now FWIO is a charter member of Ontario Agri-Food Inc. All the schools in Ontario have received a copy of the Ross Butler Farm Animal paintings thanks to the Oxford North and South Women's Institutes.

Women and the Environment is the theme for Women's Institutes for the decade. During the year FWIO was honoured as the Outstanding Organization in Ontario for its work with the Environment. This Year the WI branches were asked to plant trees between April 91 and April 92. According to the Ministry of Natural Resources that would be enough for a potential forest. Halfway through the project, and not everyone reporting yet, 49,000 trees have been planted and still counting. FWIO is the organization to get the job done.

Mabel Dougherty, Reeve of Onondga Township, Brant, who is also the Resolutions Convenor for the Onondga Branch, put forward a Resolution asking that people who misuse the "Slow Moving Vehicle" signs be fined. A collection of photographs showing various misuses of the signs included being decorated for Christmas. FWIO believes that if you can be fined for not using the signs surely you should be fined for misuse.

A container with "Best Before" labels collected from local stores which demonstrated the need for the "Best Before" labels to be in larger print and in a more prominent place. Often they are impossible to read, or half wiped off and in some cases without a date. FWIO is an organization that was founded on food safety (pasturization of milk) and even today they are concerned with food safety. Hence their resolution asking for the "Best Before" labels to be in larger print and in a more prominent place.

Ever driven on a snowy day, and found the directional signs on the road were covered with snow, or the traffic was too heavy to see them. WI members have and as a result passed a resolution asking for all directional signs to be placed overhead and not on the road as some are. In all 12 resolutions were passed by the FWIO Annual meeting. With over half a million volunteer hours to the rural communities, over 49,000 trees planted and still counting, educational projects to benefit all and resolutions that affect all of Ontario, rural or urban the WI members in Ontario are living up to their motto of "For Home and Country".