

Alberta Women's Institute

Large Gathering at Edmonton Discusses Many Important Problems

Edmonton, Alta., March 2, 1916.—Two hundred and fifty intelligent, earnest women, delegates from 107 branches of the Alberta Women's Institute, gathered in Edmonton Wednesday and Thursday, March 1 and 2, on the occasion of the second annual convention of that organization which promises to be an influential factor in the upbuilding of the province. "For Home and Country" is the motto of the Women's Institute and listening to the reports from the branches, it can readily be seen that the W.I. is living up to the spirit of its motto in the fullest sense of the word. Never in the history of Alberta has a finer class of women gathered for convention purposes than the representatives of the rural communities. Never in the history of Edmonton has a more interesting convention been carried out; never anywhere has a convention been carried out in a more business-like way.

Miss Isabel Nobel, Daysland, conducted the meeting, assisted by Miss Mary McIsaac, superintendent of Women's Institutes for the province. The convention was held in the Macdonald Hotel. The session Wednesday morning was devoted to the formal opening ceremonies.

The Premier's Welcome

Hon. A. L. Sifton, premier of Alberta, welcomed the delegates to the capital. In his address he referred to the Equal Franchise Bill which that afternoon received its second reading, stating that the women of Alberta had always measured up to their opportunities and in receiving the franchise were only receiving their dues.

Mrs. A. H. Rogers, of Fort Saskatchewan, responded to the address of welcome.

The Hon. Lieut.-Governor Brett gave an address in which he expressed his pleasure in speaking before an audience which represented the real foundation of the province, the farming community. The women were urged to use their influence to keep the men on the farm, especially the young men.

Hon. Duncan Marshall, minister of agriculture, complimented the Women's Institute on its steady progress. "I do not think there is any organization in connection with the department of agriculture," he said, "that will have so important an influence on the agricultural life of the province in the next ten years as departments organized by women." He claimed that conditions in the home and on the farm for which women were responsible had more to do with keeping boys and girls on the farm than any others, and appealed to the women to dignify farm life in the eyes of their children rather than to disparage it.

Fraternal Greetings

Mrs. H. M. Tory presented greetings from the Women's Canadian Club. Mrs. H. H. Knight presented the greetings of the Edmonton Local Council of Women. Mrs. Paribby, president of the U.F.A. Women's Auxiliary, presented the greetings of that organization. "This is going to be a women's century," she said, "and the women on the farm are wakening to the wonderful opportunities which they have before them in the future." Mrs. Paribby pointed out that as a result of the war women were coming out of their quiet homes and peaceful lives and doing deeds of heroism trying to save something out of the wreckage for the generations yet to be born. She stated that the world has never been very much changed by wars, unless geographically. One great advantage of this war, however, is going to be that women are sitting up and taking notice and thinking things out for themselves. The afternoon session was postponed until evening, in order to permit the convention to attend the legislative and hear the debate on the second reading of the Equal Franchise Bill.

Nurses for Country Districts

A paper on home nursing, given by Miss Gilmour, superintendent of the Edmonton hospitals, brought up an interesting discussion at the evening session and new interest was created by the announcement made by Miss Mary McIsaac to the effect that the government of Alberta has a plan under consideration

whereby trained nurses may be sent to remote country districts where required.

At the Thursday morning session the convention expressed its approval of this proposition and the willingness of the W.I. to co-operate in the work by the following resolution:—"Resolved, that for the conservation of life in the rural districts the government of Alberta be asked to assist the Women's Institute in establishing district nurses in the more remote country districts."

Miss Gilmour in her address dealt particularly with the care of babies and stated that it was the duty of all to fight to lessen the high percentage of infant mortality which in the large majority of cases is due to lack of proper feeding. The deplorable feature of this high rate of mortality is that it need not be if there were enlightened care of these children. Miss Gilmour urged the necessity for having emergency remedies on hand and for the inauguration of courses in first aid wherever possible. In the discussion which followed, Mrs. Paribby spoke of the high death rate amongst infants of Alberta, which is something like 35 per cent, she stated, that it was time the women of the province took steps to remedy this. The resolution passed by the convention Thursday morning was the first step.

Miss Isabel Nobel gave an address on the organization of clubs throughout the country for the purpose of interesting the girls and women in the products of the farm and to reduce the high cost of living. She spoke particularly of canning clubs which have been successful in the States and outlined a scheme whereby similar clubs might be organized in Alberta, with a country agent to teach the best methods of growing, harvesting, canning and marketing the produce.

S. R. Hosford, of the department of extension, University of Alberta, outlined the work of that department and what they were prepared to offer to communities, clubs or individuals in the country.

The Year's Work

The report of the work of the year presented by Miss McIsaac showed that the institutes have contributed \$5,859 to various war funds and hundreds of packages of clothing and Red Cross supplies. Much local relief work has also been done, one branch alone contributing over \$600 and others supplying food, fuel and clothing. The institutes are rapidly changing conditions in rural communities and effecting many social and moral reforms.

In the last year branch institutes have increased from 42 with a membership of 1,400 to 107 with a membership of 3,000. Institute lecturers have travelled thru the province giving lectures and conducting short courses in different branches of domestic science, and home nursing.

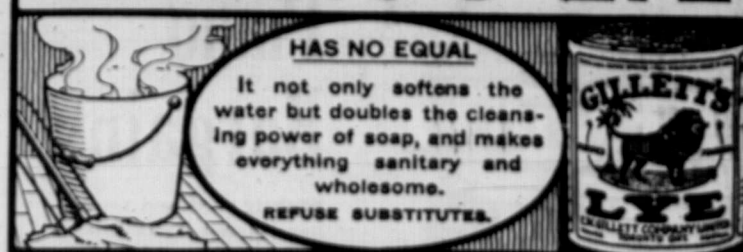
The election of officers occupied a portion of the Thursday morning session, resulting as follows: President, Miss Isabel Nobel, Daysland; 1st vice-president, Mrs. Flemming, Myrna; 2nd vice-president, Mrs. Mackenzie, Nightingale; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Muldrew, Red Deer; directors, northern district, Mrs. Rogers, Fort Saskatchewan; central, Mrs. Montgomery, Wetsakwin; southern, Mrs. Warren, Milk River.

The convention placed itself on record as expressing its appreciation of the Alberta government in its action with respect to the Equal Franchise Act, and also passed a motion to the effect that steps be taken to secure a federation in the four Western provinces of small clubs of a like order for the purpose of securing strength to carry out the work planned and to secure ideas.

Conservation in the Home

Mrs. Muldrew, principal of the Red Deer Ladies' College, gave a splendid address on conservation of women's resources. She pointed out that Canada's greatest wealth is in her men and women and that there is an economic loss not only in the death of the people, but in people working on half strength. She claimed that women in the homes do not exercise good judgment and common sense in the conservation of their resources, of time, physical and nervous forces. They lose time thru working without high ideals and Mrs. Muldrew advised them

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