



### The Woman's Institute Convention.

It seems scarcely possible that ten years have passed since the first little Convention of the Women's Institute for Ontario was held in Massey Hall, of the Agricultural College at Guelph, and yet the programmes for 1911 show upon their initial page that the series of meetings concluded last week in Toronto was nothing less than the "Tenth" Annual Convention of this great organization.

We use the word "great" advisedly, for the growth of the Women's Institute during that time has been truly remarkable. Within three years after its inception the Guelph hall was overflowing with delegates—to use the Conventions as an indication of progress—until the overflow lodged even on the window-seats, as many will remember. Two years ago it was decided to seek more adequate accommodation, and the vote was unanimous to make Toronto, with its multitude of assembly halls of all shapes and sizes, the seat of future annual meetings of the organization. This year the Convention, which met in the Young Women's Guild Hall, on McGill Street, represented a total membership of 20,000 members in all parts of Ontario. We did not ascertain the exact number of delegates present. Suffice it to say that the spacious assembly hall was filled to the doors during every session of the Convention, a few seats in the gallery alone remaining vacant, as an invitation to future delegates from future Branch Institutes.

This fact of numbers alone indicates clearly enough the progress the organization has been making along other lines. It shows that vital things have been touched upon in the little meetings going on here and there throughout our big Province. Without the touch upon vital things, interest cannot live for two years, or five years, or ten years; and without interest no organization can do other than die. What these living subjects have been was indicated in the annual report of the Superintendent, which we hope to publish in full at a later date.

And this reminds us: Do you not think that our worthy Superintendent has also been developing? Time was, as some of us can remember, when he looked a little shy over the fact of being the only man in so vast a hive of women—a little perturbed at times, a little at a loss to know what to say at unlooked-for climaxes, defying the understanding of one mere man. To-day he is never ruffled, never stuck for the timely word no matter what complication may present itself—never shy. He manages with the skill of an adept in woman-nature, he smiles, his tact never fails. The only fear is that he may soon be qualified to be Ambassador to Germany—mayhap to Yankeeland—and then what will the Women's Institute do?

In the report that follows mention will not be made of all the casual speakers. Space considerations forbid many allusions that we should like to make. We trust, however, that those who find their names omitted will understand the reason why, and recognize that in this general report, only the outstanding points must be touched upon. Right here, however, we should like to say that the manner in which the women who took part in the meetings of 1911 acquitted themselves was a credit to them. A business-like despatch was observed, the speakers from the platform were as eloquent as only people in earnest can be, and the questions and remarks from the audience were to the point, notably devoid of frivolity—in short, men could not have done better, and men have been at the business for several hundred years. We

in no vein of flattery. In future, too, may it be noted

that "The Farmer's Advocate" will be much pleased to receive copies of any of the addresses given for full insertion when the necessary space can be obtained.

The first item on the programme (Wednesday, Nov. 15th) was a discussion of "Business Methods in the Institute," in the course of which mistakes and successful methods were duly noted. The necessity of "working" committees was pointed out, also the danger of permitting one or two women to "run the whole thing" from year to year. Some of the speakers considered the serving of refreshments as a mistake; some favored a preponderance of practical subjects; "sleeping" officers were deplored; and various schemes of increasing membership and overcoming shyness in new members were advanced. It was pointed out that the meetings should be made so interesting that people would want to join, also that every member should be enlisted in actual work. A regular roll-call, to which members responded by giving some idea or recipes, was quoted as an effective method of drawing out the shy members.

#### DEMONSTRATION LECTURE COURSE

Miss Watson, of the Macdonald Institute at Guelph, in her usual concise and logical way, gave an outline of the Demonstration Lecture Course scheme which is now being tested, and thus far with very gratifying results. This scheme looks to having thoroughly trained teachers in domestic economy sent to all parts of the Province, to give courses of lessons, with demonstration on cooking, or whatever the course might be. So convinced was the Department of the feasibility of this project that it undertook the responsibility of carrying out the first test, Haldimand being the county chosen. The following conditions were drawn up: (1) The Department agreed to provide portable articles, cost of board, transportation, etc., of the teacher, who was to give during a certain time, at the six points chosen, fifteen lectures in cookery. (2) The six districts were to provide the room, materials for work, and an assistant; also to guarantee to sell 25 course tickets at \$1.00 each; to pay to the Department \$25, and half of any receipts above \$25. Single lecture tickets to be sold at 10 cents each.

The success of this initial trial has been such that a vast extension of the work is expected, and we heartily recommend the Branches in all parts of Ontario to give the scheme the encouragement of a trial. This is an age of scientific training. No one can know so much as to require no more information; indeed, it is a very conspicuous fact that those people who know most are invariably the ones most anxious to know more. Talk the matter over at least, and apply to Mr. Geo. A. Putnam, Superintendent, Toronto, for all the information which so condensed an account as this must necessarily omit.

#### THE FIRST DEMONSTRATOR.

Mrs. Burns, the first teacher, was then called upon, and gave a most interesting and inspiring talk on her experience in Haldimand County. She had given eight lessons a week, some of these being evening classes, and had been struck everywhere by the enthusiasm shown. The supplies had cost, on an average, about 60 cents per lesson.

Mrs. Olds, of Caledonia, and others in the districts visited, followed with words of hearty appreciation. Mrs. Thompson declared that a lamb-chop which she had cooked according to Mrs. Burns' directions, had inspired her husband to say that it alone was worth more than the dollar charged for the whole series of lessons.

Modifications and changes in terms may, of course, be a development of the early future, but all information necessary can be obtained from the Superintendent.

#### PROGRAMMES AND LITERATURE.

After an address by President Creelman, of the O. A. C., in his usual happy manner, the subject of "Programmes and Literature" brought out many suggestions. Miss Reynolds (East York) dwelt upon the necessity for constant improvement in the papers read at the meetings, and pointed out the necessity for much reading and thinking in order that this might be attained. She advised the Branches to spend part of their funds in the purchase of an encyclopedia.

Among other items for the programme mentioned by the above and other ladies, were the exchange of programmes (ladies and all) with other branches; lectures given by nurses, doctors, dentists, bankers, lawyers, etc.; a movement for medical inspection of schools; visits to schools with the giving of prizes for school gardens; schoolhouse fall fairs; fancywork afternoons; discussions on child-training, and many other subjects. It was advised that committees be formed early in the year, with definite work to do; also that some definite special object be chosen each year. Among the latter were mentioned, contributions to a Tuberculosis Hospital, or for a Reference Library; the placing of a public combination drinking fountain, as has been done in Kingsville; institution of a rest- and reading-room; an occasional "treat," such as an oyster supper, to which the men may be invited, a fine way to enlist their very helpful sympathy.

Miss Robson, Ilderton, touched a fine point in recommending that women should be interested in the big, as well as the little things of life. "Do, do, do," is not enough; we must "Be, be, be." . . . Mrs. Hobbes, Welland, recommended the holding of demonstrations by local members.

#### WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON.

The formal opening (Nov. 15th) was held in the afternoon, with an opening address by Mrs. Endacott, Orangeville, who presided, in which many helpful suggestions were given. She also recommended a definite object, e. g., prizes for gardens, and the holding of a Fall Fair.

Mrs. James L. Hughes, in her address of welcome to the city of Toronto, took as her key-note the premise that all civilization has come through organization. For this reason she was heartily in sympathy with this great organization, the Women's Institute. "When you organize as women," she said, "you are uplifting the universe." The Institute is leading women out of the old ruts and prejudices towards better methods, and is supplying topics of conversation infinitely better than mere gossip.

Mrs. White, East Elgin, replied in a happily humorous vein, that more than once "brought the house down" with laughter. There had been a "gap in the firing line" (Mrs. Burns was not able to attend), and so, with a parody on The Charge of the Light Brigade, Mrs. White had come to the rescue. The serious note in her address revolved about the deliverance, afforded by the Women's Institute, from the narrowness that comes of living too much to one's self. "The Institute life," she said, "is pre-eminently a life of mental development and of high ideals, to take effect in home and state."

#### REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT.

Mr. Putnam's report was as optimistic and illuminating as ever in regard to the work done during the year and planned

for the future. He noted especially the ever-broadening circle of subjects dealt with, which now includes such deviations from the original "cookery" as Betterment of Morals, Education, Hygiene, Water Supply, Civic Improvement, and many others. Women of all denominations and different social standing, have been brought together, to the benefit of all, but care should be taken to reach out the helping hand to those who need it most. The Women's Institute everywhere stands for service, for high ideals, for help to the lonely and isolated. . . . It is not necessary to quote further, as this paper will be given in full in these pages in an early issue.

The afternoon concluded with an illustrated lecture on "Social Service," by Dr. Helen MacMurchy, the pictures shown giving some idea of Canada's foreign population, and of the slums in which so much work remains to be done.

#### THE EVENING MEETING.

The first speaker in the evening meeting, held in Convocation Hall, of Toronto University, and presided over by Mrs. E. G. Graham, of Brampton, was Mrs. Dawson, of Parkhill, who dwelt on "special feature" work. The special feature in Parkhill had been the metamorphosis of six lots from a state of neglect into a beautiful park, where women have weeded, and planted, and "spudded" until results are most gratifying. This Branch has had a vacuum cleaner for two years, rented around as needed.

Mrs. Dorrington, Alton, reported from an energetic Branch which had successfully instituted an open-air rink for the young people, and had bought grounds for a park.

#### ELECTRICITY ON THE FARM.

An outline of the development of "Niagara power," by Hon. Adam Beck, the "father of the hydro-electric," was much appreciated, but still more was the dazzling vision of the good things that Niagara power may yet accomplish for even the remotest farms of Ontario. By a series of lantern views of the various purposes that electricity is now serving in Germany and other parts of Europe, Mr. Beck conclusively impressed upon his audience the fact that, although Ontario has led the world in long-distance transmission of power, she has as yet not dreamed of the possibilities to which such power may be put, and has been put, through electricity, in other lands.

Power in Ontario can, in fact, whether generated by Niagara or other waterfalls, be induced to do, at moderate cost, such work as chopping, milking, cooking, running a vacuum cleaner, operating portable and other motors for use on the farm or in machine-shops—these, and many other things, in addition to lighting, heating, and cooking. There should be an electric light at every farmer's gate in the country, Mr. Beck declared, and that at a cost of not more than a dollar a year. In fact, the whole hydro-electric scheme is not just a money-making one; it aims at service for this Province. But while serving, it must also create wealth. It will provide the power by which manufactories may be established in any inland district; thus towns must grow or be created, and these towns must be a source of revenue to the surrounding agricultural districts.

#### YOUNG WOMEN AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

The evening was concluded by an address on the above subject, by Miss Guest, of Belleville. To be later we shall try to reproduce in these pages long in these pages.

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