

## 85th Anniversary Luncheon

## "From a Flicker to a Flame"

In honour of the founding of the first Women's Institute in Ontario on February 19th, 1897, at Stoney Creek, over 1800 members and guests celebrated at the Constellation Hotel in Rexdale on August 12th.

Tribute must be paid to the 85th Anniversary Committee, chaired by the Provincial President, Mrs. Keith Hiepleh. It was a real achievement to make plans so that the largest number of W.I. members to attend an Ontario celebration could park, register, visit with old friends, have a delicious meal, take part in the celebration and depart from the hotel in record time. The hotel management is also to be congratulated on a job well-done.

The luncheon opened with the singing of the Institute Ode and the recitation of the Mary Stewart Collect. What a wonderful occasion it was to hear so many voices raised in unison. The President warmly welcomed everyone to the celebrations.

A very special guest, Miss Helen McKercher, a former director of the Home Economics Branch, and a wonderful friend and mentor of the Women's Institutes received a standing ovation as she was introduced. Members were delighted that Miss McKercher, in spite of ill-health, was able to be present.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II sent a letter of congratulation and wished the Women's Institutes a very successful anniversary. On behalf of the people of Ontario, the Premier, The Honourable William G. Davis, also sent congratulations. He praised members for their educational and humanitarian endeavours undertaken for 85 years across the province. Ontario's twin province at F.W.I.C., Manitoba, the Women's Institutes of Northern Ireland, and the A.C.W.W. National office, all sent greetings. Congratulatory letters were received from two F.W.I.O. past presidents, Mrs. Dorothy Fitcher and Mrs. Edith Purcell.

The Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Trudeau, was represented by Mrs. Ursula Appoloni, M.P. for York South-Weston, an enthusiastic champion of women's causes. Mrs. Appoloni brought greetings and congratulations to the Women's Institutes, and a special welcome to Mrs. Ziny Westebring-Muller of the Netherlands, World President of Associated Country Women of the World. The Women's Institutes, Mrs. Appoloni said, were well-known as volunteer workers for their dedicated efforts and services to communities. She recognized that rural women faced similar problems to those of urban women, but these tended to be exacerbated in the former because geography often made them more isolated.

Senator Martha Bielish, the area vice-president of A.C.W.W., brought greetings from the Senate of Canada, the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition in the House of Commons, Joe Clark, and the other thirteen Canadian constituent societies of A.C.W.W. Senator Bielish presented a statement from the Senate to commemorate the occasion.



### Speakers Compare Notes

Mrs. Westebring-Muller chats with the Honourable Dennis Timbrell, Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Food. Both honoured guests addressed the 85th Anniversary audience.



The President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, Mrs. Bernice Noblitt, extended greetings from the national organization. Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless had certainly ignited a flicker when she conceived the idea of a Women's Institute. Over the years a flame has been developed as many thousands of dedicated women, during the past 85 years, have worked hard to provide leadership and inspiration across the world. Mrs. Noblitt urged all present to accept the challenge of current issues, especially those relating to women. She hoped that by the 100th anniversary, the Women's Institutes would be a larger, stronger organization than it is even today.

The Minister of Agriculture and Food, the Honourable Dennis R. Timbrell spoke at what was his first official meeting with members. His links with the Women's Institutes reach back to his grandmother and great-grandmother's days in Frontenac County. He congratulated members on being the guardians of history in their communities through the Tweedsmuir histories, for their relevant resolutions for their work with the 4-H clubs, and their fine record of community service and interest in the family. Members saw the need for commitment, growth and change.

Today, said Mr. Timbrell, life is changing so rapidly that no one can afford to fall behind by standing still.

Members must remain involved in community-related activities and ensure that interesting programs are drawn up in order to attract younger members to the Women's Institutes, thus guaranteeing a sufficient number of volunteer workers in the local communities in the years ahead. He concluded by assuring members that the ministry's home economists would

"continue to prepare and deliver programs of benefit to all residents of rural communities."

Keynote speaker at the luncheon was Mrs. Ziny Westebring-Muller, World President of A.C.W.W. who offered special greetings from the four Dutch societies. She reminded her audience that a nation cannot rise above the level of its homes. Consequently, the work of the co-founders of the first Women's Institute, Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless and Mr. Erland Lee, had a profound effect on family, community and national life in over sixty countries throughout the world. Mrs. Alfred Watt had carried the torch to England and through her tenacious efforts for twenty years, had helped form the world wide movement, A.C.W.W., in Stockholm in 1933.

Today, family life, education for rural women and strong local communities in every corner of the world are of prime importance. They form the foundation upon which all countries can develop their agriculture and food industries, vital for the survival of mankind. Although total world food production increased by 29% during the years 1970-79, world hunger remains a grave problem as world population outstrips food production.

A.C.W.W. must work relentlessly in support of the United Nations International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, 1981-1990. Half of the world's population, three-fifths of this number living in the developing countries, is still denied access to a safe and adequate supply of drinking water. The World Health Organization estimates that 80% of disease in the world today is associated with infected water and a lack of proper sanitation. Women and children are deprived of valuable time to pursue family life and educational projects when they must fetch water many miles from their homes.



Mrs. Westebring-Muller challenged all members present to support the U.N.'s goal of fresh water for all by 1990. The A.C.W.W. Council has just endorsed a new project under UNESCO's co-operative Action Program in support of the Clean Water for all by 1990. Unless an adequate supply of safe water is provided so that a sufficient food supply is available throughout the world, world peace may be threatened.

The World President concluded: "Thank God for these 85 years. What has been possible in 85 years in Canada, must be possible to accomplish in the whole world. The world is in danger. Let us pull together, so that the world may say after so many years: there has risen a mighty force whose influence knows no bounds!"

Mrs. Hiepleh presented Mrs. Westebring-Muller with a book depicting pictorially a cross-section of Ontario life.

A symbolic cake, made by Mrs. Jean Gingerich, a member from Baden, was the centre of a candle lighting ceremony. Candles were lit by a long-standing member of the charter branch at Stoney Creek, Mrs. Nita Roderick, and the Provincial, National and World Presidents.

A skit, organized by two immediate past presidents, Mrs. Clarence Diamond and Mrs. Herbert Maluske, highlighting the history of the Women's Institutes, ended the luncheon celebrations. □



### Gift Presentation

Mrs. Ziny Westebring-Muller, left, receives a gift presented by Mrs. Janet Hiepleh, anniversary celebration chairman, on behalf of the 1800 members and guests in attendance.