

Ontario Women's Institutes



GEORGE A. PUTNAM
SUPERINTENDENT
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, TORONTO



The Annual Convention

SUCCESS appears to be the happy lot of the Women's Institutes, and especially is their good fortune manifest on the occasion of an annual convention. It was feared when the place of meeting was changed from Guelph to Toronto last year that the interest of the delegates might relax, as the Royal City had for so long been associated with large and enthusiastic gatherings. But 1910 saw goodly crowds of Institute delegates in Toronto, and this year has seen the most enthusiastic meetings ever held—a circumstance which must be most comforting to the superintendent, Mr. G. A. Putnam. The Guild Hall was the scene of meeting for morning and afternoon sessions on November 15th and 16th, and the University Convocation Hall held the audiences at the evening meetings.

The song "O Canada" appears to be firmly established in the affection of the Institutes, and formed the opening number on the programme. Mr. Putnam presided at the session the first morning, when the business methods in the Institute were dealt with. He gave a long report of the work that had been done by the Institute in the past year, and outlined a programme for the fu-

an experiment, and would soon be extended to other institutes.

Miss M. U. Watson of the Macdonald Institute, Guelph, outlined the Demonstration Lecture Course of six weeks which has been tried with success in certain Institute districts. Five Institutes in a group will be able to do the most effective work, and it is well for each Institute to have one lesson a week. In places where it is difficult for the women and girls to come to afternoon meetings, it may be possible to arrange for evening sessions. A course of practical instruction costs each Institute about thirty-three dollars, and, where materials are supplied, the cost is reduced to twenty-five dollars. So far, cooking only has been tried, but such courses in nursing, dressmaking, etc., are likely to follow. This experiment has been so successful so far, that a memorial was drafted asking for an additional Government appropriation for the work.

At the afternoon session, Mrs. H. Endacott, of Orangeville, made an efficient presiding officer, referring to the broad scope of Institute aims, and emphasizing the necessity for sentiment and work going together. Mrs. James L. Hughes, of Toronto, whose platform ability is well known, gave an enthusi-

astic address of welcome, to which Mrs. D. O. White, of Kingsville, replied. Dr. Helen MacMurchy, of Toronto, gave an address on "Social Service," which was in her usual happy and practical vein. In the course of her remarks, Dr. MacMurchy said:

"Do you take as much interest in the election of your school trustees as you should, or do you even prevent your own husband from running for office by saying: 'No, not with that bunch?' 'If you do, you are really committing a grave crime. Social service consists in looking ahead as well as in setting things right, and when so many immigrants are coming to our country there is no doubt but that they need you and me to look ahead for them.' The speaker said that the greatest social question of all was the housing problem, and to emphasize this point she showed several lantern slides of shacks outside the corporation limits of some cities. "Do you think," she asked, "that a plan is more necessary for a house or farm than for a city? Should squatters be allowed to erect any kind of buildings outside of the city limits, which when taken into the corporation are bound to make no-

thing but a slum area? At the next session of the Legislature we are going to draft a bill permitting us to buy land outside of the corporation where decent dwellings may be built, and when that bill comes before the House I ask you to give it your support."

Dr. MacMurchy said that the Church should be socialized if it were not so already. The public schools could be used far more than they have been. In the winter fires were often kept up all night, but the buildings remained dark, haunted, as it were, whereas if girls got together, debates and other meetings could be held in the schools. "Maybe you think this is not your business to get them together, but it is," said she.

The evening meeting in Guild Hall was presided over by Mrs. E. G. Graham, of Brampton, whose pleasant smile and manner would be worth a thousand a year to a political magnate. Miss Guest, of Belleville, gave an earnest address on "The Woman of the Twentieth Century," contrasting the position of the woman of to-day with the woman of a generation or two back. Many women now went out into the world and earned their own living. There are 7,500 women teachers in Ontario, besides many thousands more in office, store and factory, and still others in

ian of everything that affected her home. The full control which she had over her children ceased only when they began to go to school. This made women earnestly interested in the management of the schools, because it affected the health and welfare in every way of her children. Consequently she believed women should be on the school boards.

In the same way women were interested in temperance work, in whatever will make for the safety of young women who go to towns and cities, in an equal moral standard for both sexes, and finally in the granting of the franchise to women as a means of wielding the influence which they claim a just right to, in regard to the many subjects in which women are vitally interested both on their own account and for the sake of their homes.

Hon. Adam Beck, Minister without portfolio in the Whitney Government, gave an up-to-date and illuminating address, "Electricity on the Farm and In the Home."

"Within a year the Hydro-Electric installation will mean for the principal cities a saving of \$2,000,000. Within five years Ontario will have saved enough to pay for the whole project," said the speaker.

In a brief outline of the history of the project, Mr. Beck proceeded to show a great saving as its striking feature. Electric energy now produced at \$9 per horse-power in exactly one-fifth of the cost of steam-generated power. Moreover the "white coal" now utilized does not fluctuate in price, because of strikes and strike-breakers, or because of import duties which vary at the whim of a United States trust.

There is no governmental revenue in this connection, nor does the policy favor sectional advantages, but a universal provincial system of lighting. The wholesale criticism which greeted the inception of the scheme demanded caution on the part of the promoters. That was the reason of the Niagara district municipalities: being first supplied. But now that success was assured, and public confidence invested, all Ontario shall benefit, and that, too, at a rate between Government and people, the cheapest in the world.

Never a complaint had appeared since the beginning, never a suggestion of change in the principle of the scheme.

A surplus of \$85,000 out of the estimated cost remained after all construction had been completed, and all obligations disposed of. Furthermore, of tangible results, Ottawa shows prices simply cut in two, London, which had been charged 9 cents per kilowatt hour, now pays 4½, even Hamilton, the "power city," benefits to a marvelous degree, and every one of these cities, regardless of the slashing in price, enjoys an annual surplus of \$250,000, \$150,000 and \$250,000 respectively.

"The Hydro-Electric policy is going to be of great consequence to the farmers of Ontario," declared Mr. Beck. "The great question to-day is: 'How can we keep our boys and girls on the farm?'"

"They must be encouraged to stay there," agreed the speaker, "for agriculture takes the first place in enriching the province."

The crying need is for more comfort, more attraction on the farm, and less drudgery. The farmer's children in seeking the comforts of the city have made labor scarce and costly. Now is the agriculturists' opportunity to remedy the exodus. The Government is installing the transportation lines and a uniform apparatus; the only duty of the townships is to connect it with the homes.

"In two ways," continued the speaker, "will the system aid the farmer. Firstly, by a marked stimulation in his neighboring markets, and secondly by modern improvements and comforts installed in his own homestead."

By means of the lantern, Mr. Beck illustrated farm life in Germany, where



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ture. Three thousand members have been added, and now there were in all 654 branches and 19,091 members, with a total attendance in the year of 150,000. The institute was democratic, and women of all denominations and social standing came together and united in their work. In the past year many branches, such as Whitby, Lindsay and Hespeler, had provided permanent quarters where meetings were held, and young girls of the town came together every Monday evening for the purpose of interchanging suggestions on branches of domestic work. An interesting feature of the work of the Institute was the programme successfully presented last year, containing addresses by doctors, lawyers, dentists, bankers, butchers, grocers, etc., on topics relative to their profession or business. An endeavor should be made to accomplish something definite, and with this purpose in view the subjects chosen should be correlated. Mr. Putnam said that the programme for systematic instruction for a group of six institutes in Haldimand and Norfolk, which was proposed at the last convention, was being carried out successfully. It was intended only as

astastic address of welcome, to which Mrs. D. O. White, of Kingsville, replied. Dr. Helen MacMurchy, of Toronto, gave an address on "Social Service," which was in her usual happy and practical vein. In the course of her remarks, Dr. MacMurchy said:

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the nursing, medical and other professions.

The result, said the speaker, was that women not only became more independent, but they gained a wider outlook and a knowledge of the world—including the dangers and handicaps under which women have always lived. This knowledge and the wider outlook on life gained by the women who went out into the world was gradually disseminated among their sister women throughout the country.

Woman's greater independence today also made it unnecessary to marry for a living. She was more particular about the matter, and considered her own welfare more than she was able to do under former conditions.

The motherly instinct of the young woman of to-day, however, was as strong as before, and she was able to take her place in the home just as well and more intelligently than a generation or two ago. She had become more of a thinking woman, and she carried into the home some of the business ideas and initiative and independence which she had learned while in business life. She was a jealous guard-