

THE STORY OF THE
WOMEN'S INSTITUTE
M O V E M E N T

IN

ENGLAND & WALES
& SCOTLAND

BY

J. W. ROBERTSON SCOTT

Without detail sufficient to make its scenes dramatic, and give us a lively sympathy with the actors, a narrative history can have little value and still less charm . . . In history there is nothing isolated : *The Holy Roman Empire*

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MCMXXV

TO
THE YOUNGEST MEMBERS
OF THE MOVEMENT
AND THE
MEMORY OF MRS. HOODLESS



THE LATE MRS. HOODLESS
an address by whom led to the
formation of the first Women's
Institute in the world. Photo-
graph specially taken for this
book from the portrait in Ontario
Agricultural College by the court-
esy of President Reynolds

BETWEEN THE AUTHOR AND HIS READERS

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

WHAT is this Women's Institute movement, which has the 'warm sympathy' of Her Majesty the Queen, herself an active member of it, which the State has subsidized to the tune of £50,000, which 'it is the hope of the Government will spread throughout the whole country,' which the highest authority on our rural history considers to be 'the most important body formed during the century,' which the head of the Scottish Board of Agriculture calls 'the most important movement in social and agricultural history for a hundred years'?

Four thousand Institutes in England and Wales and Scotland prove that this ten-year-old movement - it is in its twenties in Canada - has met a need. A quarter of a million country-women, by reason of geography and tradition the most difficult of all our people to organize, are in membership. The rural parishes of Great Britain are many of them very small, but in a fifth of the parishes in England and Wales, and in every other parish in Scotland a Women's Institute flourishes.

WHAT IS A WOMEN'S INSTITUTE?

A WOMEN'S Institute is the village unit of a very human, democratic, non-party, non-sectarian organization, which prides itself, among other things, on the fact that every member, from the cottage to the Throne, pays a fee of two shillings a year, no more and no less.

In England and Wales, the movement functions not only in the monthly meeting in the village, but in an imposing array of Groups, Centres, County Federations, Consultative Councils, a National Federation, and a legislative two days' Annual Meeting in London. In Scotland they do things more simply, but the object of the Scottish movement, though differently defined, is the same.

THE OBJECT

IN the South the object of Women's Institutes is officially described as 'to improve the conditions of rural life and to provide opportunities for mutual help and intercourse.'

BETWEEN THE AUTHOR

The Scottish movement, after the Scottish manner, puts education in the forefront. Women's Rural Institutes – that is the name by which they are known in Scotland – are 'companies of women who join together for education, recreation and social intercourse.'

Their aim, it goes on to specify, with the Northern liking for definition, is –

- '1. To develop initiative and latent talent,
- '2. To bring experts to lecture and demonstrate (with the intention of making some of the educational advantages of the town available for countrywomen),
- '3. To promote social intercourse and recreation among women of all classes in country communities, and to circulate information.'

The interesting way in which these objects and aims are attained is explained as you go from page to page of this book.

WHY THE STORY IS OF GENERAL INTEREST

FOR two reasons a truthful narrative of the experiences of this remarkable women's movement is of social and political value.

1. It shows how countrywomen are now, like townswomen, working out their own salvation technically, socially, and, in the best sense of the word, politically.

2. It makes plain some of the more hopeful methods of rural advance, for men as well as women, if we are going to have any worthy agricultural life at all.

Incidentally, because the Women's Institute movement was brought into contact with them all, this book lights up now and then the careers of the deceased Agricultural Organization Society and Village Clubs Association – which had, between them, £221,000 of public money – and tells something of those noteworthy experiments in women's work – the story of which ought to have been chronicled long ago – the Landswomen and the Women's Branch of the Board of Agriculture.

THE BOOK THAT WAS NOT WRITTEN

THIS *first history of the Women's Institute movement* is of value to the membership because to know the story of the

AND HIS READERS

movement is to know whether it is made of stuff that will endure. I lay stress on this because I have had to find out for myself the importance of the movement's history. In the first plan for my book I proposed to keep the history part quite short. I would tell, within a Chapter, or two Chapters at most, how a movement which, started under the ægis of Agricultural Co-operation, passed under Governmental control and out again, and, in its last stage, has been an officially subsidized organization, due at an early date to begin an independent career.

To this history I planned to add, at some length, the results of personal investigation of the Work of the Movement in different parts of England and Wales and Scotland, and also the pith and marrow of a mass of information for which I am indebted to the kindnesses of workers all over the country.

Then there should be some account of the special developments of the movement in Handicrafts, in Education generally, in Folk-dancing, in Music and the Drama.

There should also be a certain chronicling of the Humours of an organization which is 'not too rare and good for human nature's daily food.'

This should all be followed by the most valuable thing of all, Thoughts on the Future, in which the best minds of the movement should be laid under contribution for their fears and questionings, as well as their reasoned hopes.

But when I had given a few weeks to my task I saw that it would be utterly impossible to produce, within a single volume, a book of so wide a range.

THE UNKNOWN A.B.C.

THE more I explored the history of the movement the more I saw that the movement was its history, that a knowledge of its history was vital to an understanding of it, that members who were not grounded in that history were taking the Senior Reader before they had learnt their A.B.C., and that the first thing I had to do, if I would serve the movement, was to tell its story as clearly and convincingly as I could.

B E T W E E N T H E A U T H O R

How little some of the history I have rescued from oblivion is known even to women who have become prominent in the movement, is illustrated by the fact that one member of the Executive of the National Federation asked me who Mrs. Hoodless was! When I told an even more conspicuous member of that august body that we were met on an auspicious day she learnt from me, with surprise, that it was the anniversary of the introduction of the movement into this country!

TWO MORE BOOKS!

HAPPILY I found that the history of the movement at which I was labouring was very interesting history indeed.

If I am sufficiently encouraged by the circulation of the present volume, I hope to follow it, as soon as possible, with an already quarter-written book of inquiries, of criticism and of constructive ideas. It will be, in sum, I believe, a book of encouragement and inspiration. It will be the sequel to the present History, that is to say it will be a record of or report on **THE MOVEMENT AT WORK AND PLAY**. It will bring to every separate Institute the stimulus of a picture of the movement as a whole, in all its varied activities, in all its strivings and hopings for the future. It will assemble from England and Wales and Scotland the wisdom of the best minds of the movement. It will present all the plannings for and speculations about that future, in which the movement is to be, we trust, a much greater thing than it is to-day.

Before long, I hope, this second volume may be followed by yet another book, from someone else's pen if not from mine, a practical publication on the large, engrossing and important subject of Handicrafts.

WAS THIS A BOOK FOR A MAN TO WRITE?

SHOULD a man have written this History of a women's movement? The way in which I have come to write it is this. When, after years of acquaintance with village life, in our own country and abroad, I returned home after the War, no advance which had taken place in my absence gave me more pleasure than the setting going of the Women's Institute

movement. The scrap-books of its headquarters show that in the daily Press and in periodicals I have written more about it than anyone else! I have also had the privilege, for four years, of helping a little, with technical experience, on one of the London committees.

More than once during the last few years I stressed the importance of some woman preparing an account of the movement. But no one came forward. Then I found, with pleasure, that a man, an old friend of mine and a delightful writer, Mr. Eric Parker, had such a book in contemplation. Eventually, however, he had to give up the enterprise, and urged me to undertake the task.

Before I finally decided to set to work myself I straitly questioned Lady Denman. Had not she or some other woman who had had a part in the making of the movement's history contemplated such a volume? I was assured that none of them had done so. So, as Pepys says, 'No one beginning, I did.'

PUDDING VERSUS *INGREDIENTS*

BUT I have been gradually led to the conclusion that Fate, in laying hold of me for this piece of spade work, knew quite well what it was about! Months with the material of this book have taught me something. I see now that there are advantages in the History of the Women's Institute movement being written by a sympathetic and dispassionate outsider – although by this time of day I find it very difficult to think of myself as an outsider! An outsider is able, as he watches the progress of events, to view, in a detached way, both the achievement and the dramatis personæ of the achievement.

I came to my materials with an open mind. I should see in them what I should see. Having spent months of labour, read through masses of correspondence, documents, and printed papers lent by scores of people inside and outside the movement, and by Government departments, having cross-examined many, many members of the movement, having been to many Institutes and several Annual Meetings, I have written my chronicle and my impressions, with no person or persons in

BETWEEN THE AUTHOR

my mind to laud above all others. I introduce no *deus nor dea ex machina*, working miracles. As I have played no part in the movement, as I have done nothing for it but admire it, I have not had to write about myself, although you will see from this Preface that writing about oneself comes easily. Having engaged in no frays I have no scars. Having had no ambitions, no plans, I have no memories of discomfiture. All my concern has been to get at the facts, to set them forth as clearly as a craftsman of writing, as a writing man acquainted with the bane and the blessing of the printed word, may do.

The persons of the drama, I trust, occur in my narrative, as in life, here and there and everywhere, naturally, many good currants and a few fine raisins in a pudding. It is neither the currants nor the raisins, it is not the cook's bit of flour and suet and salt that the diners care about; they care only about the pudding. The movement is more than its workers. Many snares beset the feet of the autobiographer. Luckily for me, this is biography, and a training in Fleet Street and authorship has given me some experience of psychology, human nature, and the value of evidence.

THE 'TRIVIAL AND PERSONAL'

IN the pursuit of accuracy I have written *more than fifteen hundred letters!* As I have tried to follow the old counsel to 'enliven the truth with the smile,' the narrative will be found, I think, to be not only informed but readable. It might have been better informed and more readable if I could have got some good women to see a month or two earlier that a book must be more than a list of dates, a chunk of reports, and a string of statistics. I have toiled to get life and colour to make the chief actors and actions real to the reader. But there will always be people, I find, who think Alfred's burnt cakes, Henry's gorging of lampreys, Cromwell's wart, and Queen Anne's sixteen dead babies 'trivial and personal.'

THE SMOOTHING IRON

It is obvious that the remarkable movement whose story

I have attempted to tell could only have been the work of flesh and blood women (and men), personages of power and personality, with, sometimes, like the rest of us, the defects of their qualities. I have been writing the biography of a movement, and one of our most sagacious writers has well said that biographers are never more futile than in 'toning down, glossing over or altogether ignoring those weaknesses, defects and failures which are the very hall-mark of genius.' I may not have been dealing with many geniuses, but I have been writing about human beings, and as it is possible for human beings to make mistakes, there are mistakes as well as successes to record.

I suppose I had better say one thing explicitly, that a conspicuous worker entreats me 'very kindly' to state, that 'not even the most indiscreet of us is responsible for your comments, only for your facts?' By the same post an equally conspicuous worker begs that 'you will, as a free agent, criticize very much more.' A damsel of ten years is surely the better of criticism, or all the rules for the rearing of the young to a serviceable maturity are wrong.

THE YOUNGER GENERATION

THIS book records, happily, not only the growth of the Women's Institute movement, but the growth of women. It is because the best of them have got out of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that they can hand over to the younger generation, which has some command of its emotions, a movement worthy of its acceptance and development.

This book pays tribute to the pioneers. But it is a poor bit of writing if it is not conceived in a spirit which enables it to claim the attentive perusal of the young women in whose hands lies the movement's future.

AND THE ELDER

ON the personal question I have only one more word, a word of regret, that opportunity has not served in my narrative to speak of many women who have played an essential part in the

BETWEEN THE AUTHOR

movement. Further, as there must be some limitation to the size of a book like this, I have had reluctantly to cast out of this Introduction, at the last moment, a list of names of men and women who have been my kind helpers, a list which, even at two pages of print, was probably incomplete. Most of these names will be found in the text or the Appendix. It is a matter of concern to me that though, as the Index will show, the names of a large number of women and men are thus mentioned, many others are omitted who have probably rendered as good service to the movement. The names of not a few of these will necessarily appear in the book in which an account is given of **THE MOVEMENT AT WORK AND PLAY.**

THE READER'S PART

IN that book, also, there will appear, I hope, more of the excellent photographs with which I have been favoured. Many have been crowded out of the present volume by the demands of illustrations, which being, in the main, of an historical character, seemed more suitable.

In a book which covers as much ground as this one does, which has involved so much gathering of data from many sources, which has been so much of it copied, and re-copied, typed and re-typed, it is impossible that there should not be errors.

I shall value very much every correction with which I am favoured, every interesting amplification of my narrative, every contribution of new material, for publication or for my information, which readers are kind enough to write down for me.

I trust that members will also continue to send me *interesting photographs.*

A VILLAGE PUBLISHING OFFICE

THIS book has been written in the heart of the country, as it is meet it should be, and it comes to its readers from a little publishing office which I have set up in a hamlet for the benefit not only of this volume, but, it may be, of other rural publications, by myself and other writers, which it is desired should be 'truly rural.'

AND HIS READERS

THE QUESTION OF PRICE

BUT the most important reason why I publish this book myself is to keep down the cost. What is the use of trying to serve the Institute movement by writing its History if its members cannot afford to buy it?

The market value of this book, sold through the booksellers who have to cover the risks of their extremely risky trade, is quite 15s. I am trying to make its ends meet at 6s. 6d., post free, in a carton. Having regard to the number of words and illustrations and the quality of paper and binding, the book is probably *the cheapest volume published this year!*

Few authors are keen on having advertisements in their books. The enterprise of the reputable firms whose announcements appear in my back pages is one of the things which helps the reader to a copy of this book at so low a price.

THE NEW SPIRIT

AMONG all the letters I received from helpers none pleased me more than a note from a worker in the movement whom I have still to have the pleasure of meeting. The letter gives a delightful notion of the new atmosphere of friendliness, frankness, courage, self-respect and independence in which the younger generation, into whose hands the direction of the movement is passing, are determined to live. It does more. It leads one on to think of the outlook on life and the world which is being given to the younger generation's own daughters, who, in turn, are to shape for the movement such a development as we can but dimly foresee. On this letter I should like to close: 'Thank you very much for your letter. I am having a baby this week, but I shall be delighted to comply with your request when I am up and well again.'

J. W. R. S.

IDBURY MANOR,

KINGHAM, OXON.

November 20, 1925.

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

In Preparation

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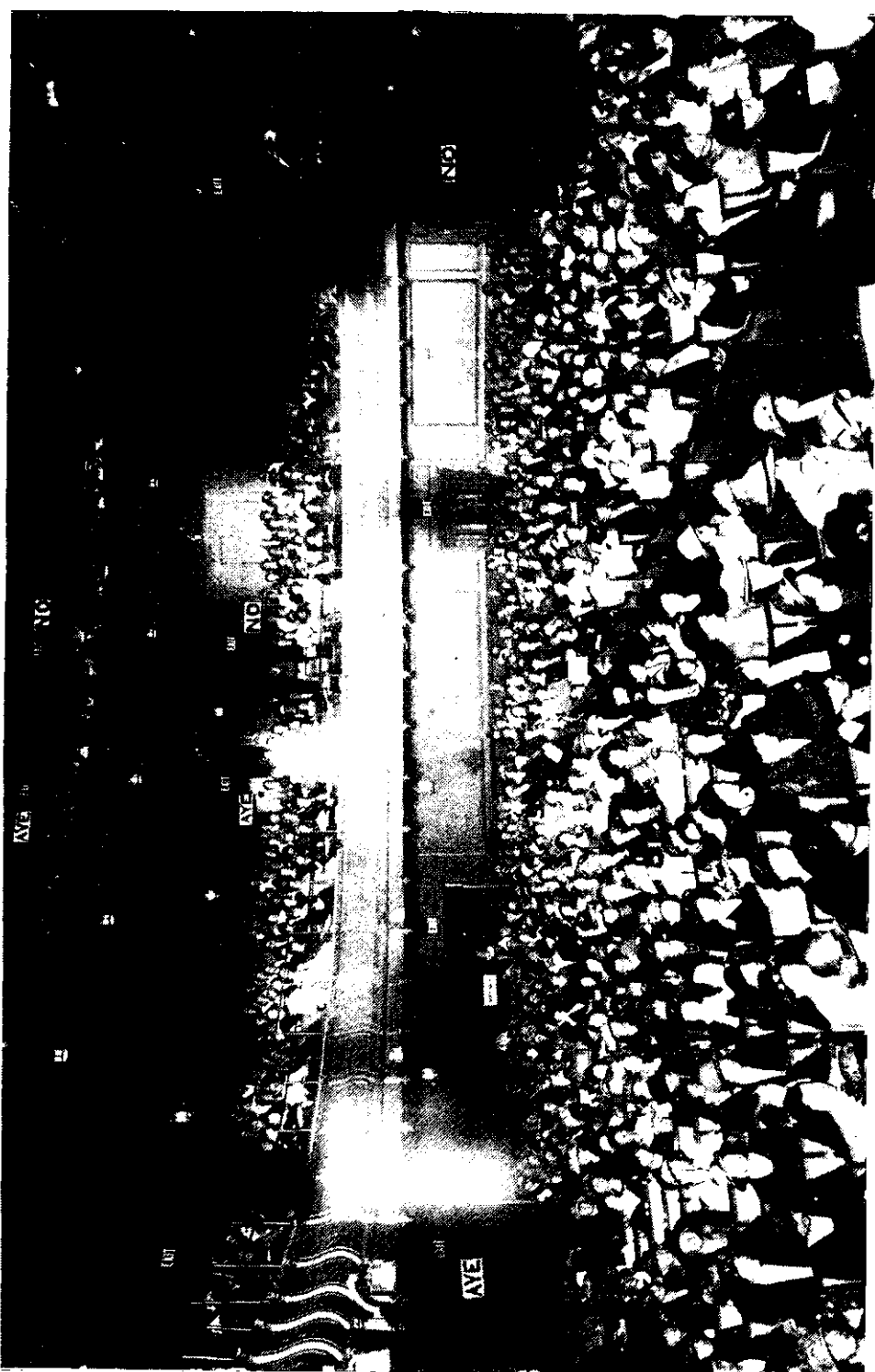
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ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION IN LONDON, THIS PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING ONLY ABOUT HALF OF THE DELEGATES WHO ARE OCCUPYING FLOOR SEATS

PROLOGUE

THE DAYS WHICH WENT BEFORE

I. - THE PIT FROM WHICH WE WERE DIGGED

WHEN people first leave London, and go to live in the country, they dig and they plant, and they build, and they build and they plant and they dig. They get up in the morning earlier than they ever did before, and they go to bed with a most pleasant tiredness. They draw in chestfuls of air that they only have breathed, they see all sorts of things a-growing and a-blowing, and they savour tender scents. They feel well. Every day the world seems more interesting. They find life worth living.

And afterwards ?

If our country-side means more to them than what they can get out of it for themselves, they come face to face with that condition-of-the-people-of-Britain question from which there is no escape on any acre of our rural or urban land.

Sooner than they had ever dreamt was possible, they find themselves joining, because they are asked, the local association of the party they have been accustomed to side with. They may or may not attend meetings. But they subscribe, and, in due course, they vote. Being Britons, they cannot help it.

Like every one of us, they have called party government ill-names. Like every one of us, they have also listened to the still small voice of commonsense, which is the political instinct which lighteth every Briton.

That political instinct reminds them that men and women are of two sorts only, the hopeful and the less hopeful, the non-content and the content, the inquiring and the easier-going, those who ordinarily look forward and those who ordinarily look back, those who rest their faith on the future and those whose faith abides in the past.

So our townfolk turned countryfolk do their duty. Henceforward they are of one of the local party flocks.

When, years before the War, I made my flight from Fleet Street into the country, very few months passed by before I found

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myself a local member of the party I had been in the habit of voting with.

It was in membership with my local market town party that one of the interesting things in my rural life happened. Proposals from other parts of the country-side to stand for Parliament were nothing like so interesting. At a meeting of the organization it was moved, seconded, and carried, by at least an effective majority, that 'Mr. Robertson Scott be *not* elected' president or vice-president – I forget which it was !

I cannot recall what I had done. I suppose several things. I know that I wanted something done.

As far as I could make out, certain sections of the population of our parts, when they were old enough, joined the Conservative Association if their parents were Conservative, the Liberal Association if their parents were Liberal, and the Other Party if their parents were Otherwise.

Very much in the same way, they went to Church or to Chapel, or Nowhere. They even bought their tea and sugar, their boots and shoes, their drapery and their ironmongery at Conservative-Church shops or at Liberal-Chapel shops, or at the 'Co-op.'

When, by some chance, there was a town gathering which had not been got up under Conservative-Church or Liberal-Chapel auspices or Otherwise, the Conservative-Church people mostly sat in one part of the building, the Liberal-Chapel people in another part, and the Other people in a corner.

And during the rest of their lives these party denominationalists seemed to make a habit, if not a virtue, of keeping as much out of one another's way as they could. With the exception of backsliders from Liberalism and Chapeldom to Conservatism and Churchmanship, or to Otherism, they seldom or never intermarried.

To say the least of it, this was dull. And dullness is the enemy to be fought in the country if people are to be got to stay in it.

One of the devastating ideas I allowed to leak out among my fellow-partisans was that we might perhaps be a bit more go ahead.

Were there not some things, for the benefit of the people of

the town and neighbourhood, that could be helped forward by co-operation with the political enemies, who, after all, numbered some good fellows of both sexes?

Might we not make it livelier for the young people, and do something practical to develop intelligence and arrest migration? It might be meritorious to hang up portraits of our Great, Wise, and Eminent, and it might be pardonable to solicit cheers by bringing their names into our speeches ; but, after all, some of these right honourable personages had been dead a good while. What about the future?

What was the good of three sides going on, year after year, subscribing money to hold party meetings to be attended by their own party men and women? We got no forrarder.

I was rather for the chairmen of the three parties trying the experiment of arranging to hold all three annual meetings on the same evening, and then, in a friendly and secret way, convoying to the wrong hall the distinguished orators of the three parties who came down to stir up our little town : Conservative, Liberal and Other party speakers would all, therefore, address opposition meetings, and there would be some chance of some of us making converts !

There could be one end only to such ribaldry. I was cast forth into the wilderness.

II. - THE PROCLAIMING OF THE NAKEDNESS

IN utter ignorance and innocence I formed a 'Progressive Club,' I who had been neither a politician nor a clubman.

The people who joined it had to sign an undertaking that they were in favour of doing something progressive, it did not matter much what.

We made a point of being blind to brands of politics and religion. For the first time there were joined together representatives of all the local denominations and sub-denominations.

A few literary men, a few Socialistic artists and parsons sat down with a certain number of enterprising Conservatives and Liberals of all qualities from J.P.'s to the bumbailiff, from a future Viceroy's wife to a butcher and a vegetarian policeman.

PROLOGUE

There were among us Jews, agnostics, and 'atheists.'

I had not been prepared to expect as many Conservatives as Liberals and Socialists. As I said, the Club was started in the days of my innocence. But they came. And then, I am sorry to say, some Liberals and Socialists left. A few came back.

Of course we did unheard-of things – unheard-of in those days; how old-fashioned they seem now!

We thought we were bold innovators in giving plays in a place in which there had never been even a travelling cinema. We had folk-dancing, the Puritan feeling against which is not quite dead. With the notion of shaking up our primitive ideas a bit, a clever American woman recited the whole of *Candida*. In order to get us into the way of saying what we thought, an acknowledged poet read *The Everlasting Mercy*. Billiards, hitherto associated with taverns, were played by guileless youth. Gymnastic exercise was encouraged. Some of us stripped ourselves of books for a library. We gave our public the chance of hearing the best 'cello playing in England. We had first-class lecturing. In our barn theatre, lent by a kind Countess who saw stuff in us, we took £50 in three nights with Barrie and Synge, and as much with a play in the local dialect. One day in 1913 *The Times* had a leader about it all.

There seemed to be no limit to what we could have done, had just one of us had nothing else to do. I dreamt, as I still dream, of something like a Danish Rural High School, a country college for country people which should introduce them to all sorts of good things having nothing to do with making a living, but everything to do with fronting life with a richer, fuller, freer, more self-respecting and more honourable personality.*

A devoted master of a village Church school and I used to get soaked through, cycling on wet nights to our tasks in connection with the club.

We had not a few eager helpers. But not enough.

And funds were always short. The work of committees had

* The dream is coming true. Read *The Village College*, by the Secretary of Education for Cambridgeshire, Mr. Henry Morris. (Cambridge University Press.)

W A L L E D - I N L I V E S

a way of getting done, when it was done, by secretaries only. Gallant and true service was rendered by many men and women, but we needed more of them.

The number of our associates who had a vision of what rural England might be, who were soundly saved by the community spirit, who were touched by the heartache, the longing and the walled-in lives of their humble neighbours, who were willing to give enjoyment and enlightenment as well as receive it, who were ready to pay a dividend in service on the good things they had fallen heir to or laid hold of, who were conscious of the urgent claim of girls and women to some of the things that came the way of youths and men only, was not sufficient.

Some of us had much more work than we could shoulder. It was impossible to keep going until such time as our ideals could win a more general acceptance and devotion. As fast as we propped up one part of the organization and hurried to yet another creaking place, further trouble proclaimed itself.

Above all, we suffered, as so many rural places suffered, and still suffer, from lack of suitable rooms. We were hampered by having to carry on as best we could in three separate buildings. There was no convenient public hall.

In our little movement we were on almost exactly the right lines. But with the resources we had, in hours to spare and in suitable equipment and experience, we were crippled.

Every month or two we got a useful helper, but without the aid of a county or national society which could furnish expert aid, stimulus and methods, without a paper to proclaim and enforce our ideas, the work was beyond a very small group which had its daily work to attend to.

Our population had had too narrow an education. It had not been trained to work together, there were barriers of Heaven knows how many classes and sections which would be broken down one day, but could not be broken down in one day.

The work we were doing was the work of a few whose eyes had been opened or whose consciences had been pricked; not, as it should have been, the co-operative work of all.

We were working for others instead of with others. Until the

P R O L O G U E

need which we had tried to meet was more generally perceived, we could do little.

When, by the deliberate act of the pioneers, the end came, our notion was that even when our work ceased, temporarily or for good and all, our testimony might not be without efficacy. In some sort, we had blazed the way. We had rattled the dry bones. We had proclaimed the nakedness. There were those who would come after us.

And then the War broke out.

The heart of the community was wrung as it had never been wrung before. Its mind was stirred as it had never been stirred before. Its intelligence was aroused and forced into action.

It became a new community. Reality had burst upon it. Willy-nilly, it had to take a stand. There was no gainsaying the nightly Zeppelins and bombing-planes sailing overhead from oversea, the anti-aircraft guns, the road barricades, the reverberations from Flanders, the coercive call of the Army and Navy, the daily tale of dead. Party politics, sects, distinctions of class seemed smaller things. It seemed inconceivable, a dim memory, that Nonconformists had stayed from undenominational meetings in the Church school, that Church people had held aloof from concerts in the Chapel school, that Socialists had declined to be friendly with either.

A lesson in working together was learnt, a lesson of charity and sacrifice, of the common good, of common goodness. Men saw new merits in other men, women discerned new merits in other women, and men and women beheld new merits in each other. Women, whose enfranchisement had justly come, but before the nation was wholly in favour of it, had their great chance of showing their quality and proving their right. Politics which had been sloth and selfishness, or illiberalism and ignorance, or noise and bitterness, patriotism that had been a prating, religion that had been irreligious : all were stripped bare.

And now in the main street stands the column in memoriam. Among the dead whose names are cut on it are lads of promise for whom the club tried to do a little, whose sweethearts live on.

THE YOUNGER GENERATION

The column is a thing of beauty where beauty had seldom come, a thing of awe where too often the trivial and accustomed ruled, a message of selflessness, of faith, of reconciliation, of hope, charity and peace, a landmark dividing the ways, the place of separation marking off the ideas, the sanctions and the methods that were accepted before the War from quite other ideas, sanctions and methods by which men and women are now to be governed.

★

Can War alone lead us to work together in the country-side with common sense, enlightenment and good feeling ?

★

It is because, up and down our country-side, in England and Wales and Scotland, under the banners of the remarkable movement I am about to describe, Peace has had her victories no less renowned than War, that it has seemed worth while to intrude a personal experience of the days that went before the War, dimly lit for the younger members of that movement. My Prologue shall serve to remind them, for their constant encouragement, of the former nakedness of our land, of the grievous dark pit from which we have digged ourselves.

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IT is not the fact that Stoney Creek is in the Ontario fruit belt, and was a battlefield in the war of 1812-14, that interests me or the readers of this book.

What does interest me and a quarter of a million members of the Women's Institute movement is that it was at Stoney Creek that the first Women's Institute in the world was formed.

THE BEGINNING.—I am happily able to supplement the brief official story of its foundation.

The official story, of half a dozen sentences, first dwells on the significance of the first Women's Institute having been set going in the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (1897). It is significant, we are tactfully and persuasively assured, because though Institutes 'really belong to the twentieth century,' they 'pride themselves on preserving all that is best in the ideals of Victorian days.'

Then there is the fitness of the name of Stoney Creek as a birthplace of the movement. 'It was because the farmers' wives of *Stoney Creek* became acutely aware of the *hardness* and *narrowness* of their lives that they determined to band together and sow the unlovely soil with the seeds of fellowship.'

But this is not the end of the felicitous nomenclature at the starting of the Women's Institute movement. 'For their first president,' the story goes on prettily, the members 'chose Mrs. Hoodless, whose name quaintly suggests that she had "come out of her shell," and the first lecturer to counsel them in their task of making the wilderness to blossom was Miss Laura Rose.'

That is all.

Fortunately the facts fit this ingenious tale with a degree of accuracy uncommon in official narratives.

By the kindness of Mrs. Hugh Bertram, the president to-day of the Stoney Creek Women's Institute, and of Mrs. A. E. Walker, one of its members, I am able to give the story some touches of verisimilitude.

First, if you should want to go to Stoney Creek, this is what

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you do. Having arrived in the Province of Ontario, you make for Wentworth county, and then for the township of Saltfleet. Seven miles west of Hamilton you find Stoney Creek, a small place of 800 people.

A few determined persons write 'Stony without the 'e,' but the man after whom the place was named was called Stoney. As we shall find there is often a man in the history of the Women's Institute movement! And this Stoney we must assume to have been a worthy man, for if he had been stony-broke how could he have founded a village?

HOW THE THING HAPPENED.—Now much more than a quarter of a century ago there was in the Hamilton Saltfleet district one of those Farmers' Institutes which have done so much good work in Canada and the United States. A 'prominent and enthusiastic worker' in that Institute was one Mr. Erland Lee (*see* our commemorative photograph). This Mr. Lee (to-day clerk and treasurer of the township of Saltfleet) had attended the Ontario Agricultural College. There he was evidently taught that there is more in rural life than agriculture. For, in 1896, we find him at an 'experimental Union' at Guelph, which is the capital of Ontario, listening to the Mrs. Hoodless, of whom we have heard, to Mrs. Hoodless speaking on 'domestic science and sewing.'

Mr. Lee thought that Mrs. Hoodless knew what she was talking about, and that it would be a good thing if she spoke to the women of Stoney Creek. So he arranged matters at his Farmers' Institute, and there, the next year, Mrs. Hoodless spoke at a meeting of men and women.

Mrs. Hoodless, now, alas, the late Mrs. Hoodless, was a woman of ideas. She 'suggested that an Institute for women, similar to the Farmers' Institute for men, be formed, pointing out its many benefits and advantages.' The chairman asked how many women would attend if Mrs. Hoodless would come again. Thirty-five hands went up.

On Friday, 19th February, 1897, Mrs. Hoodless had her second meeting — in Squire's hall (not, you will note, the Lady of the Manor's hall!) The audience assembled to hear her consisted of

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just one hundred women and one man – Mr. Lee of course. The young movement's squire, he agreed to take the chair.

Mrs. Hoodless was accompanied by 'the famous Mrs. Rorer.' I know nothing of Mrs. Rorer's merits – she appears to have been famous as a cook – and it does not appear what part she took in the meeting. But there was 'much argument and discussion.' Eventually, it was decided to organize 'a Women's Department of Domestic Economy in affiliation with the Farmers' Institute.' The name was to be 'The Women's Department of the Farmers' Institute of South Wentworth.' The names of the first officers equally deserve immortality. They were : Honorary presidents, Mrs. John Hoodless and Mrs. E. D. Smith ; first and second vice-presidents, Mrs. Melson and Mrs. J. G. Dean ; secretary, Miss M. Nash ; and treasurer, Mrs. McNeilly. I have the good fortune to be able to reproduce the photographs of the two honorary presidents and the treasurer.

THE FIRST INSTITUTE.—The first regular meeting on Thursday, February 25, was marked by a change in the name of the society. It now became 'The Women's Institute of Saltfleet,' and later of 'Stoney Creek.'

What were its objects? They were admirably Hoodlessian : 'The object of this Institute shall be to promote that knowledge of household science which shall lead to improvement in household architecture, with special attention to home sanitation ; to a better understanding of the economic and hygienic value of foods and fuels ; to a more scientific care of children, with a view to raising the general standard of the health of our people.'

Or, as a Canadian paper says, the first Women's Institute was organized 'as a sister society to the Farmers' Institute, with the purpose of giving similar care, study and service to the home and the family as was given, through the men's organizations, to the farm, the stock and the crops.' At first, 'the Women's Institute was purely a home maker's organization, but it was not long before the women of vision and earnestness saw that they had a community responsibility and opportunity,



THE FIRST OFFICIALS OF THE MOVEMENT

Mrs. Laura Rose Stephen, first lecturer at Stoney Creek (second from left); on her right, Mrs. McNeilly, first Treasurer; on her left, Miss A. Nash, first Secretary; Mrs. E. D. Smith, first President, and an early member, Mrs. Felker



FOUNDATION MEMBERS OF THE FIRST INSTITUTE IN THE WORLD PHOTOGRAPHED ON THE OCCASION OF STONEY CREEK'S SILVER ANNIVERSARY

In the background: Mr. Erland Lee, who arranged for the first meeting, and (right) Mr. G. P. Putnam, Superintendent of Women's Institutes for Ontario

T H E C U R M U D G E O N S

and so the movement has been a veritable good angel to the rural community.'

WHAT THE INSTITUTE DID.—I may now note in the history of the pioneer Institute what are usually called landmarks.

At the very beginning it was resolved to open all meetings with the Lord's Prayer, but 'it was not until June 3 that the members decided to stand while repeating it.' It was at the second meeting that the rule, which has been maintained, of closing the gatherings with the national anthem was made. From the first meeting until now there has been a 'roll call.' The meetings at first took place fortnightly. They are now held monthly (on the second Thursday) and they are discontinued during the summer months of pressure on the farms. The by-laws have hardly been altered from the start.

'Our Children,' 'The Child in Health and Disease,' 'Child Culture,' 'Fresh Air,' 'Sunshine,' 'House keeping and Home making,' 'A Talk to Young Girls'—such are the titles of some early addresses. And instruction was given by Mrs. Rorer in vegetable cooking and coffee making.

A notable step was taken when it was decided to hold a separate monthly meeting for a reading course in 'the Chataqua books on domestic science.'

So, as I am reminded, 'the women in the early days were blazing the trail along the health and child welfare lines that we are following to-day; only, whereas they confined their efforts to the home, we to-day are reaching out into the schools and the community.' Instead of the Institute being, as there were Victorian curmudgeons base enough to say, 'a gathering of gossiping women, meeting to exchange news and recipes,' it was 'a band of intelligent women living up to very worthy objects.' The membership attained during the first twelve months was 75, and the membership to-day, curiously enough, is 75 too.

Within a year there were other Institutes for Institute No. 1 to visit. Saltfleet was certainly vigorous. It held concerts. It offered prizes for wholemeal bread at the county fair. It

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discussed affiliation with the National Council of Women. At the opening of the Boer War year, it was sending members to read papers at a Farmers' Institute. It appointed members to write articles in the general press and in well-known agricultural papers such as the *Rural New Yorker*.

MISS ROSE AND MRS. HOODLESS.—It seems that Miss Laura Rose, whose name is so picturesquely used in the official narrative, appeared on the scene (as a Government lecturer with a discourse on bread and butter making) in the second year of the Institute's life. Four or five years later she returned, but — how could she? — as Mrs. Stephen.

It is a far cry back to 1900, when we find the Institute unanimously deciding to sign a petition from the W.C.T.U. to prohibit the manufacture of cigarettes. How many thousand tons of cigarettes have women smoked since?

The next year, in which, one notes, the Institute had 'first aid,' it joined its Farmers' Institute patron in a day's outing, the annual meeting being held the same day. In a later year the arrangement was repeated. By this time Mr. Lee was president of the Board of Agriculture, and still a very good friend of the Institute. 'We can never repay him,' I read, 'for what he has done for Women's Institutes.'

It is in 1902 that a committee, convened by Mrs. Hoodless to select a motto for the Institute, chose on her suggestion the excellent 'For Home and Country.' Later on a special Institute pin was adopted. When Mrs. Hoodless died the Stoney Creek Institute moved in the matter of having a portrait painted of her. The picture now hangs, an excellent likeness, I understand, in Macdonald Hall, Ontario Agricultural College. Principal J. B. Reynolds has been so very kind as to have a special photograph of it made for this book.

During the War the Institute raised considerable sums of money and subscribed liberally to almost every fund. It also made hundreds of shirts, pneumonia jackets and pyjamas, and knitted thousands of pairs of socks.

Since the War what has the Institute not done? 'We have been much interested in community work,' writes Mrs. Bertram.

INSTITUTES AND CHURCHES

We were helpful in preventing a pool room from being established in our village, and we have rendered service to our Library Board. We visit families in distress and report their needs to the County Council. We have had medical inspection in our schools, with the result that we have now a permanent nurse in Stoney Creek school. For several years we have given prizes at the school fair. We have helped the teachers to provide hot lunches and "showers of eats." We educated an Indian girl in medicine. We have assisted in raising money for the Institute for the Blind in Toronto by selling its brooms and baskets. We give a medal each year to the pupil from Stoney Creek district making the most marks in the entrance examination for High School. This year we furnished a small reading room in connection with our public library, painted it, covered the floor and did everything else.'

But what activity is comparable with an entertainment called 'Countries of the World'? 'The homes participating,' Mrs. Bertram explains, 'each choose a country and decorate accordingly, have a suitable programme and some refreshment peculiar to that country. Tickets to the different countries are 50 cents for the round which can be made in one evening.'

THE INSTITUTE AND RELIGION.—On graver lines, 'the friendly spirit existing among the members of the three churches in our village, which enables them to hold annually a union prayer meeting and a union missionary meeting, alternating from church to church, is attributed to the spirit engendered by the Women's Institute. A prominent church official is quoted as saying: "If the Institute has done nothing else but bring about the kindly feeling now existing among our different church members, it has done a work worth while."'

On the educational side, Stoney Creek has found it to be true what someone said at a Canadian Women's Institute Convention some years ago, that 'the Women's Institutes is the only organization that has touched the heart of the country people and created in them a desire to learn.'

The Silver anniversary of Stoney Creek was celebrated by a big picnic on the old battlefield.

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'THE RADIANT LIGHT.'—What of the Institutes round about that Stoney Creek has seen grow up? Glanford, with assistance from the Girls' Club, has bought fifteen acres of land for a community playground, and has established a public library. Bartonville is beautifying its cemetery. Binbrook has helped to furnish its community hall. West Hamilton has placed a library and drinking fountain in its school. Fairfield is buying a gramophone for its school. Mount Hamilton is educating an Indian girl in medicine and is working for the sanatorium and hospital. Upper Hamilton is providing needy children with clothing so that they can attend school.

One Institute formed in the district has paid honour to the name of Adelaide Hoodless by calling itself after her.

I have before me the latest programme of the 'Stoney Creek Branch of Women's Institutes of South Wentworth.' It is reproduced in the Appendix. Here I may merely note the different office bearers, in addition to honorary president, president, first and second vice-presidents and secretary treasurer: they are directors, district director, press representative, flower committee, reception committee and refreshments committee.

The motto on Stoney Creek programme is hearty, 'Come, and Bring Another with You.' And this is its sound 'Opening Ode':

A goodly thing it is to meet
In friendship's circle bright,
Where nothing stains the pleasure sweet
Nor dims the radiant light.
No unkind word on lips shall pass,
No envy sour the mind;
But each shall seek the common weal—
The good of all mankind.

THE MOVEMENT IN CANADA.—Before considering how the movement got on in Europe we may just note how it fares to-day in Canada, away from the Stoney Creek area. Ontario, where the mother institute was formed, must have a thousand institutes, with an average membership of over thirty. The different provinces of the Dominion have Governmental

THE EUROPEAN PIONEERS

departments specially to care for the Institute movement. All sorts of help is given. Take, for example, Ontario. 'The government staff of lecturers set apart for the Institutes number thirty-five, and teachers and demonstrators on various subjects are available. Organizers to form Institutes are supplied by the Government. University courses of three months and special one month courses in domestic subjects, farm work, literature, history and science are arranged, and there is provision for students returning home for the week ends, a boon for the enterprising student housewife. The Department of Agriculture not only provides the tuition free but gives grants towards the maintenance of students.'

As recently as 1919 the Institutes in the different provinces of Canada formed themselves into federations, which have united in the Dominion Federation of Women's Institutes.

In Canada, in addition to the Women's Institutes, there are the Home Makers Organisation, and the Women's Branch of the United Grain Growers' Association, both aided by the Provincial Governments. But *see* Chapter 21.

EUROPE.—We cannot vaunt ourselves that English, Welsh and Scots were the Europeans whose thoughts first travelled on the same lines as the Canadian pioneers. A year after the starting of Women's Institute No. 1 at Stoney Creek, Norway saw the foundation of the House-mothers' Association, 1898. The Norwegians are understood to have known nothing of what was being done in Canada. The Norwegian movement spread to Sweden, Denmark and Finland, and the last named country now appears to have the largest membership of the three countries. A correspondent puts the total for Scandinavia at 70,000.

Then, again, before anything had been done in this country, the United Irishwomen got to work under the influence of Sir Horace Plunkett (1910), who always knew what was happening across the Atlantic.

It was in the year 1906 that the Circles of Farmers' Wives (Cercles des Fermières) began in Belgium as the result of a visit paid to Canada by Mr. de Vuyst, Director of Agriculture. In

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the year in which the first Institute was started in Britain these Belgian Circles were reported to be 'increasing very rapidly.' The membership is now about 67,000. There are also Cercles des Fermières in France.

In Poland, Miss Mavis D. Hay lately found 900 Country-women's Circles, the first being contemporaneous with Stoney Creek. Holland, Germany, Austria and Russia developed at various dates organizations for rural women.

LONDON INSTITUTES.—Before the first Women's Institute was started in this country there were already in England certain urban Women's Institutes. The Women's Institute in Victoria Street, London, was first established in 1879 'to symbolize, centralize and represent' women's work in 'a worthy and central place,' and came, on its present lines, to Victoria Street in 1900.

Then, in 1913, the London County Council opened Women's Evening Institutes. There are now thirty-seven of these useful Institutes in the metropolis. Nearly 30,000 students passed through them in 1924-5. All sorts of home crafts, physiology, art, elocution, folk-dancing and music, and the ordinary evening school subjects are taught. Canteens are provided and there are social activities. To the students' welfare meetings of the Shoreditch Institute there are invited, I see, members of a neighbouring club for men and boys. That these meetings are 'a great boon to the girls,' not to speak of the boys, hardly needs telling.

THE STRUGGLE NAUGHT AVAILETH

THE bitter sorrows and moral splendours of the Great War raised, for those who have survived, or have come to adult estate since, a barrier of reality through which nobody whose mind is set on the future will think of peering for trivial things.

It were unprofitable indeed, as matters are now with us in the world, to spend time unnecessarily on labouring to apportion nicely the particular shares which, in the second year of the fighting, various men and women were privileged to have in making, in this country, a national movement of Women's Institutes.

But there are points in the history of the movement on which it is well worth while to be accurately informed.

We naturally desire to know something of the fashion in which a notable movement began among us, at the instance of a Canadian, under the ægis of the now defunct Agricultural Organization Society.*

We desire to honour the men and women who played a praiseworthy part in modelling the features of a movement which has made a mark on British rural life, and has before it, as some of us believe, great, it may be, not entirely realized possibilities.

We wish to learn something of the way by which the movement was led when it found itself, in two of the most remarkable years of British history, within the leading strings of the State.

We are keenly interested in following the history of the movement when, after semi-official experiences so unusual, in our ways of doing things, it passed on to a prosperous career of conditional independence.

We are still more interested in it in the period in which it has

* A combination of Mr. W. L. Charleton's British Agricultural Society and Lord Winchelsea's National Agricultural Union, of which Mr. Yerburch was head, founded 1901. It had grants from the Development Fund yearly, 1912 to 1923. Work for farmers transferred to National Farmers' Union, 1924, for small-holders to Allotments and Small Holdings Society, 1925.

been arriving within sight of freedom to pay all its pipers and call every one of its tunes.

The history of the movement tells us where its workers turned aside with advantage and disadvantage from planned routes. It lays bare the sources of the movement's strength and the bases of hope for its future.

It also enlightens us concerning the conditions of social progress in rural Britain.

Further, it lights up for us one of the most interesting phases in the development of the powers of British women outside their own homes.

SIR ROBERT GREIG. — Once, at the Board of Agriculture, at a time of great floods, when a newspaper had a contents bill, 'ENGLAND UNDER WATER,' I dared to suggest that the Board should seize the favourable opportunity to make a distribution of its tracts on drainage. But that is not the way in which Government offices do their work. If, however, the Board of Education had sought a wider circulation for its Educational Pamphlet, No. 25, published in November, 1912, the Board might, perhaps, have had the credit of setting going the Institute movement in this country, and, that, in view of the close way in which the educational authorities were afterwards to be identified with the movement would have been a pleasant thing.

This Pamphlet No. 25, on the sphere of agricultural education, was written by a Mr. R. B. Greig, formerly a staff-inspector under the Board, and now Sir Robert Greig, Chairman of the Scottish Board of Agriculture. He had been in half a dozen agricultural countries, and in this publication of his he has a page about Women's Institutes in Poland, Belgium and across the Atlantic, and their work for 'the social and moral improvement of country-life.'

A Women's Institute, he explains, is 'an association of farmers' wives, daughters and sisters, who meet periodically to hear lectures, read papers, and study books on dairying, poultry-keeping, gardening, and all the minor rural industries; on cooking, laundry work, and dressmaking; on household

sanitation, home hygiene and ambulance methods ; on the choice and care of furniture and pictures ; on the rearing and education of children, and on any other means for the improvement of country-life.' The Institutes 'have also a recreative side, and attention is given to music and literary subjects.'

Sir Robert, in this well written paper of his, comes to a clear conclusion. 'Perhaps the most profitable outlet for the expenditure of energy and public money in the improvement of agriculture will be found,' he says, 'in widening the mental horizon of the farmer's wife and especially the wife of the labourer, small-holder, and working farmer.'

He remarks very sensibly that if these women believed in agricultural education, agricultural schools would be full. Yet the farmer's wife 'is a partner in his business ; on her management of the dairy, poultry yard and piggery much of his profit depends.'

Here, therefore, Mr. Greig declared, is 'an opportunity for women to organize Institutes,' for the improvement not only of agricultural life, 'but of the comfort and prosperity of the home.'

The pamphleteer stressed the fact that 'the women of other countries have risen to the occasion, and the Governments have assisted them liberally with grants.' And he wound up with a plea for 'energy, enthusiasm and bold optimism.'

Unfortunately Mr. Greig did not go a-gosspelling with his pamphlet. Nothing was done to forward this plea for Women's Institutes, the case for which has seldom been more effectively stated. What Mr. Greig did do, as we shall learn, was to make a second plea.

A BELGIAN APOSTLE.—It is an interesting coincidence that the man whom Mr. Greig was one day to succeed as Chairman of the Scottish Board of Agriculture, Sir Patrick Wright, appeared the very next year as the writer of an introduction to the translation (by Mrs. Nora Hunter) of a Belgian book which was largely devoted to Women's Institutes.

The author of this six years old book, *Women's Place in Rural Economy* (*Le Rôle Social de la Fermière*, Blackie) was Monsieur P. de Vuyst, who, as an official of the Belgian Department of

other plans for her life on this side, the hope of gaining the opportunity of starting, and, perhaps, of leading an Institute movement here.

But her efforts, during 1913 and 1914, to interest Government departments, women's organizations, and, in different parts of the country, private persons, led to nothing. Nor, after the War broke out, did the publication of a little pamphlet about Women's Institutes prove more fruitful.

The Canadian experience of Institutes, on which Mrs. Watt dwelt so much, went for little with many of the people to whom she spoke. Further, she was unacquainted with our village life, and often visualized rural progress here as if England were Canada. As a stranger, she was not always in tune with our temperament, and sometimes, perhaps, she may have ruffled Mrs. and Miss Bull a bit with the tale of all that their Canadian connections were able to manage.

Mrs. Watt almost gave up hope of being the protagonist of Institutes in this country.* As so often happens, however, to the man or woman with an idea, for which he or she is persistently seeking support, help appeared at what seemed the last moment.

MR. NUGENT HARRIS.—There was held on February 11, 1915, in London, at the One and All Club, a conference on a large subject, the reconciliation of industrial and agricultural co-operation. The conference was called under the auspices of a rural organization, the late Mr. E. O. Greening's Agricultural and Horticultural Union, now, like the Agricultural Organization Society (A.O.S. for short), a thing of the past. An ex-Canadian Governor-General, Lord Grey, took the chair, and the discussion was opened by Mr. J. Nugent Harris, general secretary of the A.O.S.

* It is one of the little ironies that I, who had been so eager to help forward, in 1913-4, social organization in the country-side, somewhat on the lines of Women's Institutes, and had openings in the Press for getting a sympathetic hearing for Mrs. Watt, never heard of her endeavours. I never had the opportunity of reading either Mr. Grieg or M. de Vuyst, and I sailed for Japan two months before the formation of the first Institute, an event which would have interested me greatly.

Mrs. Watt went to this meeting and, Mr. Harris tells me, sat and knitted in the first row. Mr. Harris says that, after he had spoken, Mrs. Watt introduced herself to him. She told him she wanted to talk to him about Women's Institutes. His reply was, 'But what are Women's Institutes?'

If Mr. Harris knew nothing of Institutes, he was interested enough in what Mrs. Watt told him about them to ask her to his office. He was accustomed to the ardours of transatlantic visitors, and, a man of fervour himself, his second talk with a woman who had the propagandist's way with her increased his interest.

'For many years, when Secretary to the A.O.S.,' Mr. Harris has written, 'I tried to get the farmer members of the co-operative agricultural societies I was organizing to allow women to become members, but failed. Then I got two or three to yield. Several women joined, but we could never get them to say a word at the general meeting.'

'After the meetings were over the women would come to me and criticize the decisions or some of the items on the agenda in which they were interested. I asked them why they did not say their say at the meeting. They replied: "We dare not because our husbands and sons would make fun of us."

'I would not rest until I could establish some movement that would give the women-folk a chance to express themselves free from the fear of being ridiculed by the men. By the merest chance, I met Mrs. Watt. I felt I had come in touch with the very movement I wanted.'

MRS. WATT'S NARRATIVE.—So far Mr. Harris. His narrative appeared in print, in outline, some years ago. Not a few of my readers have been puzzled, no doubt, by the fact that Mrs. Watt has given an account of the beginnings of the movement which conflicts in some particulars with his story. On page 26 of her *First Women's Institutes' School*, published in 1918, Mrs. Watt writes:

'I spoke at a *Co-operative Congress*, Lord Grey spoke of my work in Canada, and considered it should be part of co-operation here, and Mr. Nugent Harris, hearing me speak, decided that he

would try and get the movement introduced through the Agricultural Organization Society if possible.'

When I questioned Mr. Harris he was sure that he had heard no speech by Mrs. Watt or Lord Grey about Institutes. Nor was Mr. Greening's little One and All Club meeting that hardy annual, the Co-operative Congress. Could there have been a Co-operative Congress at which Lord Grey and Mrs. Watt spoke? Lord Grey is dead, but there are the ample records of the co-operative movement. I found, on investigation, that Lord Grey and Mrs. Watt did not speak at any of the Co-operative Congresses, at any Congress of the Southern Section of the movement, or at any gathering of the Co-operative Women's Guild.

I felt rather at a loss. At last I remembered that Mr. Greening used to send me a little monthly of his called the *Agricultural Economist*. Perhaps a report of the One and All Club meeting could be found in it. No doubt there was a file of the *Agricultural Economist* in the British Museum's mortuary of the Press at Hendon. There indeed the paper disclosed itself. In it was a report of the One and All Club gathering.

Lord Grey is shown to have been the fourth speaker after Mr. Harris. But, as Mr. Harris had stated, he did not make any allusion to Women's Institutes. After three other speakers had addressed the meeting, however, 'Mrs. Waters of the Department of Agriculture, British Columbia' - Mrs. Watt clearly - is reported to have spoken. She contributed 'an interesting account of agricultural work in Canada, especially among women; there seemed nothing to correspond to the work in England, and she would be glad to give details to any body of agriculturists or co-operators.'

And the *Agricultural Economist* goes on to state that, after two more speeches, Lord Grey, rising a second time, in order to acknowledge a vote of thanks, 'referred to the interesting work in Canada which Mrs. Waters had briefly described; he expressed his appreciation of her remarks.'

When I communicated my find to Mr. Harris he was utterly at a loss to understand how his memory could be so clear

about Mrs. Watt not having spoken and Lord Grey having made no reference to Institutes. The explanation was disclosed when Mr. Harris happened to mention that he left the meeting before it was over. It was clear, therefore, that he had heard Lord Grey make his first speech only, not his second, and had not heard Mrs. Watt speak at all. Mrs. Watt's remarks were made towards the end of the proceedings, just before the votes of thanks, and Lord Grey's reference to Mrs. Watt's occurred, as we have seen, in a reply to a vote of thanks. Obviously, Mr. Harris would not have said to Mrs. Watt, 'But what are Women's Institutes?' if he had heard her speak about them.

This small matter seems worth getting right, for the apparently irreconcilable versions of the pioneer statement of the claims of Women's Institutes before a co-operative audience are current, and, as I have said, must have puzzled many persons interested in the movement.

MRS. WILKINS.—It would have been a pity if, before Institutes were organized here, no woman had done anything at all to get a hearing for the evangel of Mrs. Watt.

Mrs. Watt speaks of a meeting at Lady Louise Loder's in Brighton in 1913—Lady Louise tells me she remembers the practical talk about fruit bottling—and, also, during the next year, a month before the outbreak of the War, in the same county of Sussex, at Mrs. Godman's, where Mrs. Watt seems to have made her home for a time. There was also a meeting in February, 1915, at the original Women's Institute in Victoria Street, to which reference is made in the previous Chapter. But none of these gatherings had any immediate result.

Once, when I had the opportunity of meeting, on some question or other, 'governors,' executive or sub-committee of the A.O.S.—I forget which—no personality at the table interested me as much as that of Mrs. Roland Wilkins. Behind her name was hidden that of Louisa Jebb, whom I used to link, in some degree, with Mary Kingsley of West Africa. Like Miss Kingsley, Miss Jebb came of a distinguished family and was full of gaiety, which she took with her on her travels. Her *By Desert Ways to Baghdad* marked a stage in women's travel

literature beyond *A Girl in the Karpathians*. But Miss Jebb, like Æ – in whom subsists mystic, painter, journalist and creamery expert – was more than one person. The witty traveller was also the assiduous, precise and intelligent author of one of the best books we have on small holdings. She was also one of the 'governors' of the A.O.S.

More than this, Mrs. Wilkins (as the representative of her Women's Agricultural and Horticultural International Union) was a member of the Board of Agriculture's Conference on Agricultural Education, which issued a Blue book on Agricultural Education for Women (July, 1915). She is suspected indeed of having written, along with Miss Macqueen, this Blue book.

A colleague of Mrs. Wilkins at the Conference was Miss T. R. Wilkinson (then Principal of the Swanley Horticultural College for Women, and now an active Institute member in East Suffolk). She had been at a Congress of the Belgian Women's Institutes, and had come home very full of the 'Cercles des Fermières,' and loaded with printed matter, some of which she gave to Mrs. Wilkins. Miss Wilkinson no doubt drew the attention of her colleagues to the importance of the Institutes. At any rate, by the second meeting of the Conference (February 11, 1915), Mr. H. L. French, its secretary, had arranged for evidence about them by a representative of the Belgian Department of Agriculture. At the fourth meeting, Mr. Christopher Turnor, in the course of evidence he gave, also referred to the Institutes. A fortnight later, or a month after her meeting with Mr. Nugent Harris, Mrs. Watt (described as Secretary of the Advisory Board of Women to the Department of Agriculture, British Columbia), spoke at some length on the same subject.

THE CASE FOR INSTITUTES AGAIN STATED. – What M. Wauters and Mrs. Watt said in evidence may be read in the Blue book in several foolscap pages. Both witnesses had unimpeachable data about a movement which was new to us. What both of these speakers naturally lacked was a grasp of our rural mentality. But what matters much more than the evidence they gave is what the Conference reported.

The Conference – largely by, as I judge, the pen of Mrs. Wilkins – ‘sees an opening in the creation of Women’s Institutes.’

‘If Women’s Clubs could be formed’ – and it was surprising that no one seized on the old English word, ‘Club,’ with the Johnsonian adjective ‘clubbable,’ instead of the hard-featured ‘Institute’ – ‘if Women’s Clubs could be formed, an impetus would be given to the work of instruction. Each Club would be anxious to have its turn with the “County organisers’ classes,” a Club “would arrange small competitions and stimulate individual effort,” “social life would be given to the district.” “The Club should be formed by local people; it should be assisted by local educational authorities.”’

Finally, ‘we hope that an attempt will be made to start two or three such Associations as an experiment; the Board of Agriculture should encourage them in every way possible.’

I quote these conclusions, not only because we have now a Board of Agriculture publication as well as a Board of Education pamphlet backing the Women’s Institute idea, but because, in the foregoing conclusions, there is foreshadowed much of the work of the Women’s Institutes which were about to be established, and, later on, the attitude of the State towards them.

What an advance this Report was, in recognition of the part women play in rural life, is shown by the fact that, in the Report of a departmental committee appointed by the Board of Agriculture seven years before, to inquire into agricultural education, the word woman occurs twice only, and there is no mention of the home, or of the farmer’s wife and daughter! In a Report from Ireland, however, that old campaigner, Professor Campbell, does speak of certain sums spent there on institutions of rural domestic economy for women.

WOMEN’S FARM AND GARDEN UNION. – I have only to add, before going back to the early efforts of Mr. Nugent Harris for the movement, that Mrs. Wilkins, in addition to being a ‘governor’ of the A.O.S., had been chiefly instrumental in reconstituting her resounding Women’s Agricultural and Horticultural International Union (May, 1915), as the Women’s

Farm and Garden Union, which was at least nearer rural English. This reformed Union (organizing secretary, Miss Macqueen), the members of which were chiefly landowners' and professional men's daughters, was lent, for training purposes - it was the second year of the War - two farms by that large hearted worker for agricultural progress, and skilled farmer, the Hon. Edward Strutt.

MR. BOSTOCK AND MR. YERBURGH.-Mr. Harris's first task was to talk with Mr. Samuel Bostock, his chairman of committee, and with the late Mr. Yerburgh, his president.

Mr. Bostock, of whom we shall hear more, I remember as a Hampshire squire of high ideals, active for the advancement of village life, and, in all his efforts, without self-seeking. Mr. Bostock tells me that he thought that 'some organization for village women on the lines of social co-operation seemed to fit in with the work of the A.O.S. and to be likely to assist the formation of co-operative ideals, especially among small-holders and allotment holders.'

The late Mr. Yerburgh I recall as a charming, cultivated and modest man, a self-sacrificing friend of rural progress, and a deliverer of sound agricultural speeches in the House of Commons. He was the sort of man the facts of whose worthy life are seldom set forth. He was agreeably known to his intimates as 'Bob.' Mr. Yerburgh thought a good deal of Mr. Harris's co-operative efforts, and he did not need much persuading about the advantages of Institutes and about what the A.O.S. could do for them. Mr. Yerburgh was commended, later on, for generously putting Institutes in the way of getting canning outfits from the United States.

Eventually, Mrs. Watt was asked to make a speech or read a paper at the annual meeting of the A.O.S.

A RESOLUTION COMEDY.-Mr. Harris had shepherded a number of prominent women War workers to this meeting (June 23, 1915). In the absence of Mr. Yerburgh, Mr Bostock took the chair.

Mrs. Watt began her paper. Unluckily, Mr. Harris had not secured a mover and a seconder for the resolution which was to

give body to Mrs. Watt's ideas. Mr. Harris wanted a woman to move the resolution. He spoke to several women. None would consent. Mrs. Watt was reaching the end of the paper, and, he says, his 'hopes were at zero.' 'My chairman,' he says, 'urged me to drop the matter, as it was evident the women present did not want Institutes; I thought it a pity to do so, and got his permission to try to get a man to move the resolution.'

Mr. Harris saw in the audience, which had now dwindled, an old friend, the then secretary of the Navy League, Mr. P. J. Hannon, M.P. (Mr. Yerburch was president of the Navy League as well as of the A.O.S.). Mr. Hannon had been an early organizer of the Irish agricultural co-operative movement. It is on him that a moral tale is fathered. Someone, the tale goes, was rhapsodizing about the starting of the first Irish Agricultural Organization Society branches. Whereupon Mr. Hannon, in his rich brogue, is fabled to have broken in with an ejaculation which would appeal, if not to Sir Horace Plunkett the evangelist, then to Sir Horace the humorist, 'The Lord love ye, they were started on porter and gas.'

To the experienced and human Mr. Hannon, Mr. Harris now appealed. Mr. Hannon's reply was racy, but in effect, 'I know nothing about Institutes except what I have heard from the speaker, and I am not much interested; but, if you think they are good things I will do it.' 'I urged him,' Mr. Harris writes, 'to keep talking' - such we know, is some oratory - 'until I got a seconder; when I had I would give him a signal.'

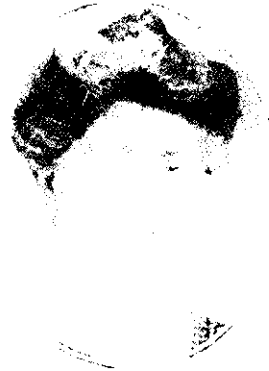
Mr. Hannon got his signal, and sat down, the eighth man - Mr. Greig, Sir Patrick Wright, Mr. Harris, Mr. Bostock, Mr. Yerburch, M. Wauters, and Mr. Turnor having been first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh - to help the Women's Institute movement into being.

The seconder Mr. Harris had secured - 'after meeting with several refusals' - was Lady Meyer, who passes into history as the first woman of whom we have any record as standing up in London to say a word for Women's Institutes in support of Mrs. Watt's plea.

ALMOST A FROST.-The resolution which Lady Meyer



MR. J. NUGENT HARRIS



Miss ALICE WILLIAMS



MR. R. A. YERBURGH



MRS. WORTHINGTON



MRS. F. LEVESON-GOWER



MRS. HUGH BERTRAM

Mr. Nugent Harris, Secretary, and Mr. R. A. Yerburch, President of the Agricultural Organisation Society, when it launched the Women's Institute movement; Miss Alice Williams, first Hon. Secretary of the National Federation, and first editor of *Home and Country*; Mrs. Hugh Bertram, present President of Stoney Creek, the first Institute of all; Mrs. Leveson-Gower and Mrs. Worthington, first President and Secretary of Singleton Institute, which claims to be the first formed in England.

seconded contained three propositions. It declared, in the first place, that the movement, 'which is filling so important a part in the rural life of Canada' – it is called in the resolution, it is worth noting, 'the Women's Co-operative Institute movement' – 'could be adapted and made equally suitable to English rural conditions.' Then the resolution affirmed that 'the body to organize it in this country' was the A.O.S. Finally, it was to be a 'recommendation' from the meeting to the 'governors' of the A.O.S. 'that they should become responsible for the work.'

Unhappily, Mrs. Watt had read her paper (on 'The Place to be filled by Farmers' Wives in the Agricultural Co-operative Movement'). She would have done better to have made a speech. The paper had had a chilly reception in a thinned meeting. The chancy way in which the resolution, in support of the proposal which had been made in the paper, had been moved and seconded, had not helped matters. Mr. Bostock thinks the resolution was carried 'almost unanimously.' 'With little enthusiasm,' is what Mr. Harris says.

But Mr. Harris had got that perilous thing, all he eagerly sought. He saw before him the opportunity of launching Women's Institutes in this country. That was all he saw. He did not know what was to follow from the resolution. A step had been taken which opened to Women's Institutes the doors of the A.O.S., and would one day close them on Mr. Harris!

CO-OPERATION OR INSTITUTES? – Mrs. Watt had shown no end of perseverance, and she is entitled to the greatest possible credit for pressing the advantages of the Canadian Institutes on our stay-at-homes. But she can hardly have considered that the Institute movement had had an exhilarating send-off in this country.

Truth to tell, Mrs. Watt, new to England, seemed sometimes, acute and assiduous as she was, to be moving in rural worlds not realized. In an early twenty-page memorandum of hers to the A.O.S., she urges that that body is the right organization to start the movement, because it could go straight to 'the wives and daughters of co-operators.' Mrs. Watt seems to have had in her mind, at this stage, 'women's co-operative societies.'

But, she goes on, 'the foundation of women's rural societies, no matter what specific activity they are attached to, should be household efficiency.' She concludes with a plea for 'rural centres of women's activities, a great field for lectures and demonstrators, for women lecturers on home topics,' and 'a connection with official bodies and societies working towards social development.'

It is not clear from this whether Mrs. Watt is urging Women's Institutes, or co-operative societies, or both. She was uncertain - justifiably uncertain, as we shall very soon see - of the attitude of the A.O.S. 'governors,' to whom, indeed, she does not seem to have had direct access.

Three years later, Mrs. Watt, when the ground was firmer beneath her feet, wrote that 'co-operation is a beautiful thing and the right thing, but we cannot start an Institute on it alone.' But in 1915 she was naturally vaguer on the conditions and requirements of the provincial Britain she did not know than on the rural Canada she did know.

I doubt whether it was the light and leading which the 'governors' received from Mrs. Watt's paper which induced them, on July 14, 1915, to act upon the recommendation which their annual meeting had so tepidly made to them. They went down before cumulative influence. They were persuaded by the eagerness and conviction of Mr. Harris, the unquestionable data, earnestness, and insistence of Mrs. Watt, the gentle humanity of Mr. Bostock, a certain bigness in Mr. Yerburch, and the assent of an active woman 'governor,' Mrs. Wilkins, who, never a feminist, no doubt saw some advantages in men co-operating in a woman's movement, to the direction of which she tells me, she was 'aghast' to find the A.O.S. committed.

The doubts of the 'governors' came later.

A.O.S. WOMEN'S INSTITUTES COMMITTEE.- Mr. Harris was authorized to engage Mrs. Watt temporarily as an organizer. (On November 15 her services were retained 'for a further period.')

A small Women's Institute Sub-Committee, composed of Mrs. Wilkins (who became chairman), Mr. Samuel Bostock

(Chairman of the A.O.S.), and the late Mr. McInnes, a Co-operative Union 'governor' of the A.O.S., was appointed.

Now it should be clearly understood that, while Mrs. Wilkins took over the chairmanship of this Committee, she did so provisionally, and because she felt that there was some obligation on her as a woman 'governor' to do so. As we have seen, by her Women's Agricultural Education Report, she liked the idea of Women's Institutes very well. But she was not keen on the A.O.S. taking them up. She held that the A.O.S. had obtained its grants on the basis of not making new commitments – it had certainly overgrown its strength – and that Institutes were obviously a new commitment. To branch off into Institutes was to undertake work in the face of what amounted to a legal disability. Then Mrs. Wilkins also disapproved of the way in which the 'governors' had been 'rushed.' Nowadays, I think, Mr. Nugent Harris would not quarrel with the word.

I have heard it alleged that, at this time, Mrs. Wilkins really wanted the Institutes for her own Farm and Garden Union. This suggestion is met by the remark of Mr. Bostock to her, when they were walking together in his garden, 'Well, if your Union won't undertake Institutes, the A.O.S. should.'

'The direction of the organizing work for Women's Institutes,' Mr. Harris tells me, 'was left entirely in my hands as Mrs. Watt was new to English rural conditions.' Mr. Harris certainly did his part. As we shall see, there was soon a feeling among his employers that Institutes were taking up too much of his time and thought, and benefiting, beyond their due, from the labours of the A.O.S. staff, outdoors and indoors.

There were persons who knew nothing of Canadian Institute-dom to whom some of Mrs. Watt's early work did not seem to be leading anywhere in particular. One woman, whose name does not appear in my narrative, was plain-spoken. 'Mrs. Watt's so-called work,' she wrote acridly, 'I consider absolute waste of money. If the movement is going to be of any value at all it will not become so by taking it up as a scheme for improving village people.'

O, that brightening of the village!

INSTITUTES AT WORK

THE impatient remark, recorded at the end of the last Chapter, was made on September 2. Before the month was out, the first Women's Institute in Britain was opened—in the island of Anglesey, of all places.

HOW THE FIRST INSTITUTE BEGAN.—This pioneer Institute was the result of a conference at Bangor, at which Mrs. Watt, Mr. Harris, the University authorities, Colonel the Hon. R. Stapleton-Cotton, of Llanfairpwll, and his wife—two fine spirits and two of the best of the Institute movement's early friends—and Sir Harry Reichel, Principal of the University, were present. Mrs. Watt spoke well, and Sir Harry declared that a new note had been struck in rural economics.

Colonel and Mrs. Stapleton-Cotton seem to have been so much impressed by what they heard that they called a meeting, for a few days later, in their own Llanfairpwllgwyllgogerychwyndrobwll-llantsysiliogogoch—for once (not counting the later Welsh Chapter) the name shall be given in full.

The opening meeting was on September 11, when Mrs. Cotton was elected president. Mrs. W. E. Jones, who was to be heard of in the movement, was chosen as vice-president and treasurer, and Mrs. Wilson was made secretary. A committee of six was formed. On September 15 there was a meeting attended by Mrs. Watt. The committee had its first meeting on the 21st. Finally, 'the first regular meeting to launch the Institute' took place on the 25th. If this date, September 25th, be accepted as the day of the formation of the first Institute in Britain, then it was established on the same day of the month as the first Institute in the world was set going at Stoney Creek, in Canada, eighteen years before.

THE FIRST INSTITUTE IN ENGLAND.—If anyone should suppose it to be a thing of no particular difficulty to write a reasonably accurate history of a movement, which, in Britain, is only ten years old, I may mention that the question, Which was the first Institute to be formed in England? is not



THE LATE HON.
MRS. STAPLETON-COTTON
President of the First Institute in
Great Britain



SQUIRE'S HALL, STONEY CREEK, ONTARIO, CANADA
where the first Institute in the World was started

yet settled to the satisfaction of everybody. The subject is discussed at length in the Appendix. Here it is only necessary to say that the honour of precedence is disputed by Wallisdown, in Dorset, and Singleton, in Sussex, and that official publications give the palm to Wallisdown. The formation of the Dorset Institute was due to Lady Wimborne, who had ever the courage of her opinions, and the first president was her daughter, Lady Chelmsford. Both Wallisdown and Singleton were started, of course, by Mrs. Watt. It is no surprise to find Dorset taking a lead in the new movement. The Hammonds have told us how the rural folk of Dorset made their mark on history before 1915.

THE OBJECTORS.—The first Institute in Britain (Llanfairpwll) had been formed, as we have seen, thirteen months after the outbreak of the War. It was not a propitious time in which to start a new movement. Although Mrs. Watt had talked about food production at several meetings before the establishment of the first Institute, and household economies were a favourite item in the early programmes of the Institutes, I do not find that, at the beginning, the Institute movement was advocated, as it was soon to be advocated, as a means of increasing food production. The Institutes were to ‘fill a permanent need in the rural life of the nation.’ Up and down the country, ‘business as usual’ was still the cry. There were military experts, it will be remembered, who maintained that the War would be over in half a year. But people were increasingly preoccupied by the War, and were slowly wakening to the changes that were likely to be forced on the nation.

It should not escape chronicling, for our instruction, that the appeal to give Institutes a trial was resisted by some women who are now keen workers in the movement. They suggested a more convenient season for the start, or failed to grasp the possibilities of the movement. Or they wished to see how the first Institute would turn out. Many a time the remark was made that Institutes might suit Canada but would not suit England. At village meetings the plea occasionally was – as it still is – that ‘an Institute would do very well in such and

such a place—the very thing for it—but our village is different.’

THE HANDICAP OF A NAME.—Mr. Harris confesses that the name Institute was a ‘stumbling block.’ ‘People thought it was a building’—naturally.

The trouble is to think of a better name. Mr. Harris tells me that he suggested Women’s Rural Institute—the name the Scottish Institute movement was to adopt—and also Women’s Rural Guilds and Women’s Rural Associations. It may be that the word ‘Countrywomen’s’ would have been better than the words ‘Women’s Rural.’ I don’t know. None of these names is irresistible. But I should have voted for either of the first two against ‘Women’s Institute.’ If the first of Mr. Harris’s names had been adopted the appellation would no doubt have been shortened to ‘Rurals’—the usual name of Institutes in Scotland. For most English countrywomen the Women’s Institute is ‘the Institute’ or the ‘W.I.’ The abandonment of the phrase of the A.O.S. resolution of June 23, 1915, ‘Women’s Co-operative Institute Movement’—possibly in deference to the susceptibilities of the industrial co-operative movement—saved the Institutes from being called ‘Co-ops.’ Mrs. Watt seems to have been adamant for ‘Women’s Institute.’ With so many Institutes in existence in Canada, it was a pardonable foible. And, after all, the name matters little—so excellent is the thing.

FOES OF THE HOUSEHOLD.—‘Steadily we plodded on,’ Mr. Harris relates, in telling his story of those days; ‘but up against opposition at almost every step, and worse, unreasoning prejudice, which, I regret to say came mainly from women. There were difficulties also from headquarters.’

Mrs. Wilkins was not the only ‘governor’ who felt that the A.O.S. had been jockeyed into adopting the movement. I do not think that Mr. Harris would to-day deny that he forced it upon the A.O.S.

With regard to ‘unreasoning prejudice,’ I recall one of the early leaders of the Institute cause describing to me how, at a meeting called to establish an Institute, some well-to-do

women flounced from the room with contemptuous asides. The talk about the democratic character of the movement was too much for them.

At one of his Institute gatherings Mr. Harris made a little joke. 'The Institute,' he explained, 'is not the wife of the landlord or the farmer or the labourer.' It was one of his brighter days. What he wrote to me once, in a more gloomy deanery manner, was that 'Apathy, and what was much worse, active opposition, dogged us every step of the way during the two years, 1915-7.' What one of his 'governors' said was, 'The A.O.S. is being turned into a mothers' meeting.'

THE FIRST LITERATURE.—But we are a long way from 1917 yet. The typed draft of two Institute leaflets, to be issued by the A.O.S., which are dated a fortnight before the formation of the first Institute, is before me. Two points attract notice. In neither leaflet is there any mention at all of the War or of the idea of the Institutes being of value in increasing food production. And it is proposed that the Institutes shall be 'placed on a firm legal footing by being registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act.' In later years Mr. Harris has repeatedly pressed the advantages of registration on Institutes. But these early drafts were amended, and only Institutes which proposed to trade were given the 'firm legal footing.'

WALES STILL LEADING.—The rules regarding the relationship of the A.O.S. with the Institutes do not appear to have been completed when a report by Mrs. Watt, on some of her recent work, was received (October, 1915). It runs to several pages of closely printed foolscap, and chronicles the circumstances of the founding, and preserves early programmes of the Llanfairpwll, Criccieth, Trefnant and Cefn Institutes, all started — let it be set down to Wales's credit — before there was a single Institute in England.

THE A.O.S.'S PART.—We have to bear in mind, if we are to understand all that followed, what was made clear in the previous Chapter, that Mrs. Wilkins, chairman of the A.O.S. Institutes Sub-Committee, had from the very beginning —

before an Institute was started, before indeed Mrs. Watt addressed the A.O.S. general meeting – taken a stand against the A.O.S. sponsoring this new women’s movement. She believed, as she had vigorously written in the Rural Education Report, that the Institutes were a good thing. But she and other ‘governors’ were against the new departure, not only on the score of prudence, but on the grounds that the A.O.S., in making this new departure, was breaking its pledge to the Development Commissioners.

The view of Mr. Bostock, the chairman, and of Mr. Harris, the secretary, was that the A.O.S. was the right organization for the job because ‘it could deal with both sexes.’ It was not the happiest of phrases to use at the culmination of the suffrage movement. Women were increasingly resistant to being dealt with. They wanted to deal with themselves. As we shall see when we come to later Chapters, Mr. Harris was to find that out.

A male subscriber to the A.O.S., who got up an Institute propagandist meeting, between the formation of the first Institute in Wales and the first Institute in England, expressed the opinion, I see, that, ‘if only these Women’s Institutes can be got to go they should help the A.O.S.’ So there was that view.

The Institutes Sub-Committee seems to have made more imposing reports than attendances. The reports are foolscap sheets printed on both sides; the attendances on several occasions consisted of Mrs. Wilkins and Mr. Bostock, with Mr. Harris always present, of course, as secretary.

On December 2, 1915, the Institute movement’s little government was informed that, in addition to the four Institutes in Wales already mentioned – three were described as ‘strong’-two had been formed in Kent and three in Dorset, and that there was to be a meeting on December 9 to form one at Singleton in Sussex. This list, with Kent at the head, is curious, for the Institutes in Dorset and Sussex contend for the honour of having been the first Institute in England.

At the committee meeting referred to it was resolved to

recommend that 'as far as possible, some form of co-operative effort, suitable to the district, should be put before each Institute from the outset.'

AN ELOQUENT PLEA.—The kind of man the already-mentioned friend of the movement, Colonel Stapleton-Cotton was, the kind of work some of the Welsh Institutes were doing, and the kind of inspiration Mrs. Watt had given them, come out in a remarkable letter from Colonel Stapleton-Cotton to Mrs. Watt, written in February, 1916. The Institutes, he declared, 'can fulfil a task near the heart of every good citizen.' 'They can bring together all classes'—he underlined the 'all.' 'We have been too selfish,' he said, 'to realize how we have drifted apart.' 'Women have the chance of their lives through these Institutes.'

'For all such movements,' the Colonel went on, 'a very high ideal is needed. In the Institutes you have absolute unselfishness as your ideal. Every member joining must ask herself, not what "I, the individual, am going to get out of this if I join"? but "If I join how can I help to better the lot of the whole community?"' The result so far is to show us men what splendid material there is to work upon, a material which has never been drawn upon. The way women come out is nothing less than startling.'

'Before the War,' and Colonel Cotton proceeded to a confession of faith, 'I was one of many who doubted the capacity of women to conduct even their ordinary business with success. During the last eighteen months I have learned more about women than I have learnt in forty years. I see and believe that women can and will bring all classes, all denominations, all interests, all schools of the best thought together in that common brotherhood of love and tolerance which every man and every woman longs for in his or her innermost heart. It will be a reality in the not distant future, and it will be brought about by these Institutes.'

'Want of thought, want of understanding, neglect of kindness, these have been our stumbling-blocks. We want to think more, we want to understand one another, we want to think kindly

of one another. We are none of us altogether bad sorts. We want to know and understand one another to find out. The War has broken down so many class prejudices, will break down so many injustices, thereby naturally bringing us into close touch with one another, and I can conceive nobody better calculated to make us shake hands all round than woman and her work in these Institutes. Women have the opportunity, the capacity and the will to accomplish that which, judging by results, has been beyond the wit of man.'

Some Institutes, in later days, have asked for non-denominational prayers to be read at the opening or closing of their meetings. Could they do much better than sometimes read, in whole or in part, this declaration of faith in Institutes, not from a woman but from a man, who, from what he saw from outside only, is able to speak so movingly of what Institutes have it in them to do? Is it unworthy of remembrance in the British movement to-day that, though a woman brought it to us from afar, and an early friend was a woman, it was men who gave her her chance? And this may be added of Mrs. Watt, that letters like this are not received by women who have been unworthy of them.

'OFFICIAL RECOGNITION'

PRAISED by Lord Milner's Committee on Food Production, for its practical character, Mrs. Wilkins's Women's Farm and Garden Union had started a War branch, the Women's National Land Service Corps (secretary, Miss Franklin, now of the Overseas Settlement Department). It was to be 'a mobile force of educated women to help in recruiting and organizing the work of women on the land.' It received (January, 1916) a grant of £500 from Lord Selborne, then Minister of Agriculture. The Corps was backed by, among others, Mr. Prothero (now Lord Ernle) and Mr. Walter Long, and had farms lent to it for training.

THE WAR JOB.—In March, 1916, six months after the opening of the first Institute, there is news of definite Institute work for the War. From this time onwards we receive a deepening impression of the value of the movement in food production and food economies.

The movement largely recommended itself for its War-time worth. Miss Hadow once said to me: 'I remember being snubbed severely for proposing at some Institute a lecture or lectures on literature. Did I know a War was on? The call to increase the food supplies and to economize food appealed to countrywomen. "Here is something that all of us can do while we live at home." I remember saying from a platform, on which I was surrounded by bread and cakes, made in an economical way, and with piles of home-grown food, that I felt like a dog "on trust." The War also gave handicrafts their chance. It was by degrees that humane subjects came in.'

THE SUFFRAGE.—The Institute movement is wide enough to include women who fought passionately for the suffrage, women who loyally accepted votes when women's suffrage became the law of the land, and women who are still opposed to the participation of women in politics. But this difference of opinion does not preclude a general acceptance of the view that not only the War-time mission of the movement but the suffragists' work helped it. The Institute came at the culmina-

tion of the agitation for the suffrage, that is at a time when a great deal had been done in educating women for working together. This educational training helped the Institutes to get started, and, when started, to function successfully. Many women were chafing for a wider field of usefulness. 'The suffragists made the pot to boil,' Mr. Harris said to me; 'the Institute movement showed how some things could be got out of the pot.'

THE BOARDS AND THE A.O.S.—It is in the spring of 1916 that we hear of communications between Whitehall and the Institute movement which were to lead far. (The reader may be reminded that the A.O.S. received most of its revenue from the Development Fund, on the recommendation of the Board [now Ministry] of Agriculture. A list of the grants appears in the Appendix.) There is an informal conference between the Board of Trade, represented by three women and one man, and the chairman and the secretary of the A.O.S. (The Board of Trade, not the Board of Agriculture, because the Board of Trade, as controller of the Labour Exchanges, had charge of the Land Army until January, 1917, when it was taken over by the Board of Agriculture.)

'It was pointed out,' runs an A.O.S. memorandum, 'that the primary purpose of Institutes was to mobilize the social and economic efforts of women of all classes in the villages, and on a permanent basis.' Nevertheless if 'the War mobilization of women's labour on the land were accepted as a useful function of the A.O.S.'—here evidently was an attempt to regularize the A.O.S. position in relation to its Development Fund grant, or to pave the way for an application for a separate grant for Institutes—the A.O.S. would be willing to form Institutes with the special War objects in view. It was agreed that the Board of Trade organizers and the Board of Agriculture should be in close touch with the Institute movement in the different districts, and that there should be informal conferences of the two Boards with the A.O.S., and with Mrs. Wilkins's Union also. It was further resolved that the Board of Trade organizers should urge the value of forming Institutes.

MRS. NUGENT HARRIS. — It was at the April meeting of the Sub-Committee that it was announced that Mrs. Nugent Harris, whose work and spirit were to be invaluable to the movement, was coming into the office. Mrs. Harris had done excellent service with the Boys' Country Work Society, and Mr. Harris has put it on record that his office troubles 'rapidly disappeared after I had persuaded my wife to join the A.O.S. staff.' Mrs. Harris was reluctant. It will interest, alike those who have themselves no experience of speaking and those who have heard Mrs. Harris speak so well in the service of the Institutes, and understand how much the movement owes to her sincere and persuasive advocacy, to learn that her objection to taking on some of the work of organizing the movement was that she could not speak, and 'would not if I could.'

It was in 1916 that Mrs. Harris began her work for the Institutes. Up to the time of her advent her post in the office has been filled by Miss R. E. Green, who was now busy out-of-doors organizing.

One who called on Mrs. Harris, while the welfare of the young Institute movement was so much in her hands, writes to me that 'people were knee-deep to see her; her room was the busiest in the A.O.S. office.' And I find Mrs. Watt noting in *The First Women's Institute School*: 'She encouraged visits from Institute officers and members, and kept in personal touch with all Institutes formed, so that by the end of this year, owing to Mrs. Harris's kindly sympathy and close personal attention to details and needs, we were a small body still, but very closely united in feeling and work.'

BADGES AND MEMBERS.—There were now fourteen Institutes. It would have been interesting at this period to cross-examine Mr. and Mrs. Harris, Mrs. Watt, Mrs. Wilkins and Mr. Bostock on their notions of the ultimate total. I note that, at this April Committee, on the question of having a badge for members, it was decided that no order should be given unless there was 'a minimum demand for 100 badges!' During the present year Mr. Bostock has owned to me that the way in which the movement has spread 'has astonished all those

who helped to introduce it.' But in 1916 it was touch and go whether the movement would succeed or not. 'The atmosphere at headquarters,' I note in a letter written to me, was certainly 'not good.'

OFFICIAL INSPECTION, AND A POSSIBILITY.—At the April Committee there was a report that Miss (now Dame Meriel) Talbot, of the Board of Agriculture, of whom we now hear by name for the first time in relation to the movement — she had been appointed, in January, Woman Inspector to assist in the organization of the Board's Women's Farm Labour Committee — had been asked to suggest names of people whom it might be useful to co-opt to the tiny A.O.S. Institutes Committee. 'But so far, owing to stress of work, Miss Talbot had not been able to do so.' Mrs. Wilkins undertook to propose names.

In July, Miss Talbot is writing from the Board, after seeing some of Mrs. Watt's reports, that 'the Institute movement seems likely to make a real difference in rural life.' 'I see, therefore,' she says, 'a large field for Institutes.' 'This,' she adds wisely, if they are organized 'on broad and careful lines.' Miss Talbot asks for further reports.

In September there are more missives from Whitehall. Miss Bertha La Mothe wants a conference of the two Boards and the A.O.S. (on the 19th) 'to discuss the best way to carry on the autumn and winter work in connection with the Institutes.'

At that conference a step, which Mrs. Harris described in writing at the time as 'very important,' was taken. It was decided that Miss Talbot and Miss La Mothe, the head-women of the Boards of Agriculture and Trade, 'should visit a selected number of Institutes, and report their impressions.'

'If they decide that the movement is sound, and likely to be of lasting benefit, it will mean that the Institute movement will be recognized officially, and that the various Agricultural War Committees will be instructed to support it as far as possible.'

Miss Talbot and Miss La Mothe were to be on Tour from September 25 to October 4, and planned to visit Criccieth,

Llanfairpwll, Hamworthy (Dorset), Upton (Dorset) or Downton (Hants), Salisbury (Wilts.), Cirencester (Glos.), Kelmscott (Oxon) and Wivelsfield (Sussex). The names of the places in the proposed itinerary give some indication of where the movement was putting its best foot foremost. It was naturally desired to make the best impression. The Wivelsfield Institute's meetings became specially interesting because Mrs. Watt, who lived at Wivelsfield, tried all sorts of experiments at her own Institute before advocating them elsewhere. But these youthful advantages did not suffice to keep the Institute in existence on orthodox lines. In 1921 it became a mixed Club, that is an organization for both men and women. I lately inquired after its welfare, but got no reply.

BEGINNINGS OF A NATIONAL COMMITTEE.—When the Committee met on October 3 a total of two dozen Institutes was reported. The beginnings of a larger governing body for the movement were to be seen. The 'Women's Institute Sub-Committee of the Agricultural Organization Society, North Wales Branch' (Mrs. R. Stapleton-Cotton, Mrs. Drage, Mrs. W. E. Jones, Mrs. Antonia Williams and Miss Williams-Wynn) had nominated, as their representatives on the headquarters committee, Mrs. Drage, who was to be in the counsels of the movement until this day, and Mrs. W. E. Jones, in whose garden room the first Institute was formed. These two ladies were to be among the pioneer organizers. The 'Women's Institutes Sub-Committee of the Agricultural Organization Society, Southern Branch,' was asked to nominate two members also.

CHOOSING A CHAIRMAN.—The active investigation of the Board of Trade and Agriculture into the working of the Institute movement promised developments.

But the action which the Institute Committee, composed of Mrs. Wilkins (in the chair) and Mr. Bostock, took, as reflected in a resolution of theirs, about a chairman for a more representative Committee which was being formed for the direction of the movement — Mrs. Wilkins did not desire to continue to be chairman — was also of importance.

There is no need to print the rather naive resolution. When the filling of any chairmanship is under discussion it naturally happens that several names are considered. The names of several women were certainly talked over for what proved to be the future leadership of the Institute movement. Mrs. Wilkins had her candidate. Mr. Bostock had three names.

Two of Mr. Bostock's candidates, high in the peerage – they are both of them to-day valued chairmen of County Federations – could not see their way. Mrs. Wilkins pressed the merits of her candidate against the qualifications of Mr. Bostock's number three, this time a commoner, a close connection of a greatly respected agricultural politician. Mrs. Wilkins got her way.

IF. – It is impossible not to speculate on the way the movement might have gone under the leadership of either of the two good friends of the movement who were unwilling at this time to take the chief office in it. One might as profitably consider what shape rural progress among British countrywomen would have taken if Mrs. Watt had stayed in Canada. Or, if after coming to England, she had never met Mr. Nugent Harris, or had never given evidence at the Rural Women's Education Conference. Or, for the matter of that, if there had been no Agricultural Organization Society, and no War, and none of the tremendous backing that the movement was to get from the State. Or, if there had been no Mrs. Harris – and no Lady Denman. For it was Lady Denman who was Mrs. Wilkins's candidate.

LADY DENMAN. – Someone, one day, may perhaps go as far as to suggest, rightly or wrongly, that the selection of Lady Denman was one of the steps which the movement more or less consciously took to make itself safe for democracy. However that may be, someone did put into writing about this time a statement of a certain point of view on the chairmanship of the movement. There does not seem to be any good reason why some of this frank statement should not have a place in our history. A chairman was wanted, it was pleaded, who 'would be a real assistance to us in drawing to the work

L A D Y I N C O G N I T A

the older established families in the counties.' 'I can see,' the note goes on, 'that if rightly worked, we are going to get the pick of the county ladies in support of our movement. You know I am naturally democratic, but so much depends on getting the ear of the ladies in the counties that I feel-' And so on more deeply into indiscretion!

Lady Denman was a woman of marked character, thirty-two years old, the daughter of a rich man, the wife of the ex-Governor-General of Australia, and the mother of two children. She had unusual business capacity, and kept herself in good physical condition with games. Mrs. Wilkins valued not only her judgment and her grasp, but her modesty and her lack of sentimentality. Like Mrs. Harris, with whom she was to work so closely, Lady Denman had to be persuaded to come forward.

What no doubt carried weight with Mrs. Wilkins, when she pressed Lady Denman's qualifications for the chairmanship, was the way in which Lady Denman had drunk in the pure milk of the word of Mrs. Wilkins's gospel. Mrs. Wilkins was for a truly rural Institute movement. Woolly dogs, by all means; but as a means to an end. The movement must be agricultural and must be the cottage woman's movement as much or more than the countess's, or it was nothing.

Lady Denman might or might not have vision. She might or might not have range and courage. But she had other qualifications for leadership. She looked like a leader, she was sound on the movement being a women's movement, and she believed, with Mrs. Wilkins, that the movement must be of the soil. I rather fancy that it was an interest which Lady Denman took in small holdings, on which Mrs. Wilkins was an acknowledged authority, which brought her into the A.O.S as a 'governor.' Unless I am mistaken, it was at one time proposed to cut up some of the Denman estate for small holdings. Lady Denman had not only her rural bias. She was assiduous. She might or might not have the endowment which would have led her to invent Institutes if they had not been invented in Canada. When they were invented there, she might or might not have been their sponsor in this country, if Mrs. Watt had

never come over. She may have seemed to some to lack glow. But iron is not worked with glow alone. It needs the hammer.

Lady Denman had the invaluable faculty of devotion, and, what is much needed along with devotion, humour and a sense of perspective, but these are not two things but one. She had the faculty of order, the knack of detaching herself, and she was fair. She had the leader's ability to hit hard or to tap gently until the nail was driven home. At this time, and no doubt for some years, Lady Denman probably hid, under a composed demeanour, a certain shyness. She had, too, I rather think, a distrust of her powers alongside women from other spheres of action than her own. Whether Lady Denman was at this time deeply persuaded of a great future for the movement does not appear.

MISS HADOW.—In December, Mr. Harris, in reporting on some meetings in which he had taken part at Cirencester, speaks with appreciation of the woman who was to serve the movement in an official position second only to Lady Denman's. Miss Hadow, who was president of her Institute, and was keen to organize further Institutes in the district, was 'a remarkable woman, beloved by all.' Years after a woman well qualified to judge said, in reference to Miss Hadow, that she 'had never known a clearer mind.'

Miss Hadow had been among those who brought brains to the suffrage movement. She was a well-trained, well-read, alert, kindly woman, with a gift of clear exposition which was to make her invaluable to the movement, and she had a deep sense of public service. She had not only intelligence and friendliness but fibre — I have heard that all her aeroplaning has been done in the open air alongside the pilot. It is told of Miss Hadow that when her services were later on accepted at the Ministry of Munitions, her chief said to somebody, 'Well, she won't cry!'

In December, 1917, Miss Hadow, ever eager about the cause of education, had her Institute wanting its County Council to provide lectures. She had come into the movement through hearing Mrs. Watt speak. 'Women said at one of Mrs. Watt's



THE LADY DENMAN
Chairman of the National Federation



and in uniform of the Womens'
Branch of the Board of
Agriculture



MISS HADOW,
Vice-Chairman

meetings, after hearing an account of what Canadian Institutes were doing, "This is perhaps what we might do." A Cotswolds woman, Miss Hadow, fired by Mrs. Watt, called a meeting for her at Cirencester, and the irrefragable Canadian data made their impression once more. The wife of the caretaker of the hall was so much impressed that she asked why Institutes should be formed in villages only. So the Cirencester Institute was started. As the movement developed, it was found inexpedient, as we shall learn, to have Institutes in towns, and Cirencester later became a Centre.

OFFICIAL MISSIVES

AT the end of 1916 there were forty Institutes. The feature of Mrs. Watt's report for the year – beyond the fact that the organizing secretary of the National Union of Women Workers is advising its branches to start Institutes – is the extent to which the work of food production has been promoted by the Institutes in association with County Agricultural Committees.

A PLEA FOR GOVERNMENT AID.—Mrs. Watt thinks 'Government support would aid greatly the value of the Institutes and make the initial work easier.' After mentioning that she has been speaking twice a day for a week on increasing food production, on which the Institutes were concentrating 'in response to Miss Talbot's request,' she says: 'We could do far more if Government encouragement and assistance were forthcoming.' The Board of Agriculture no doubt had before it the report of Miss Talbot and Miss La Mothe, but 'a more effective presentment of our work could be made by one of ourselves.'

Mrs. Watt can hardly have failed to notice, at an early stage of her association with the A.O.S., the feeling of some of its 'governors' against the Institute connection. There can be little doubt that she was desirous of seeing the movement more closely associated with Whitehall. The propaganda and care of the Canadian Institutes are still in the hands of the Government, or rather of the Provincial Departments of Agriculture.

'FOR HOME AND COUNTRY.'—Mrs. Watt speaks, in the report from which I have quoted, of the fashion in which Institutes were smoothing away hostile feeling to women land-workers, and becoming centres in which all patriotic women could unite. She has, in inverted commas, the phrase, to be so much used by the movement, 'Home and Country,' which came from Canada.

One gets the impression of a movement which, within limits, was vigorous. Its power of lasting was another matter. Many of the items now so familiar in Institute programmes – the

first printed programme seems to have been issued by the Hurst Institute – appear in Mrs. Watt's extracts :

Little economies	Harmful weeds
Stocking winter gardens	Home-made soap
Household sanitation	Harmful patent remedies
Meals for school children	Increasing food supply
How to get more eggs	Care of the sick-room
Home-made toys	Inexpensive Christmas gifts
Blouse cutting	Samples of flours
Handling of hens	Home-made labour-saving devices
Meatless dishes	Hay-box cooking
Making men's shirts	Infant hygiene

'WOMANLY, KINDLY, HOMELY.'—Among various reports from Institutes one reads, from Kelmscott : 'We had a delightful meeting ; four of the village women were hostesses.' Some achievements of Institutes recorded are : Nearly 2,000 lbs. of herb leaves gathered, Cheese classes, Sale of 1,000 eggs a week. 'Briefly,' says Mrs. Watt, 'a great movement has been set going. The results are out of all proportion to the energy expended. I feel quite uplifted. Rural womanhood, touched by the magic wand of opportunity, has blossomed as we knew it would. It has all been womanly, kindly and homely.'

TO AVOID FRICTION.—The subscription fee at this time was 2s., as at present, and Institutes, 'non-sectarian and non-political,' might, the rules said, discuss no subject 'which might cause friction or lead to serious differences.' Trading Institutes were supposed to pay to the A.O.S. a registration fee of £1 - there were pounds then.

OBJECTS OF THE INSTITUTES.—In January, 1917, Mrs. Watt sends out a special circular to Institutes on 'the serious shortage in our food supply' and what must be done about it. On the other hand, as late as the spring of 1919, I find the objects of Women's Institutes set forth in an A.O.S. document without any reference to the War. They are stated to be:

- (1) Studying home economies.
- (2) Providing centres for educational and social intercourse and for all local activities.

- (3) Encouraging home and local industries.
- (4) Developing co-operative enterprises.
- (5) Stimulating interest in the agricultural industry.

THE ENLARGED COMMITTEE.—Lady Denman presided for the first time on January 9 at the Women's Institutes Committee, the members of which were now increased as follows:

Mr. S. Bostock, chairman A.O.S.	}	Governors A.O.S.
Mrs. Roland Wilkins		
Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck		
Lord Richard Cavendish		
Mr. Geoffrey Hooper		
Mr. D. McInnes		
Col. the Hon. R. Stapleton-Cotton	}	Southern branch
Lady Radnor		
Lady Hylton	}	North Wales branch
The Hon. Mrs. R. Stapleton-Cotton		
Mrs. Drage	}	National Union of Women Workers
The Hon. Mrs. Handford		
Miss Janes		
Miss Wilkinson, late Principal, Swanley College		
Miss Williams, Principal, Southlands Training College for Elementary Teachers.		

Later, Miss Morrison was appointed as representative of the Association of Head Mistresses. Miss Williams (who is not to be taken for Miss Alice Williams, of whom more later) was at home on the Committee, for she had a real understanding of some village needs and was always glad to hear of her teachers accepting rural schools.

A FATEFUL RESOLUTION.—But only Mrs. Wilkins, Miss Wilkinson, of whom we have heard in Chapter 1, Lord Richard Cavendish, Mr. Bostock and Mr. Hooper were at this meeting.

On the basis of Miss Talbot's communication to County War Agricultural Village Registrars, advising the starting of Institutes, and of Mrs. Watt's report which I have summarized, it was agreed to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Prothero (afterwards Lord Ernle) to 'commend the furtherance of

Institutes to the Women's County War Agricultural Committees.'

That did not seem to be anything out of the way. But a resolution, asking for 'a special grant,' was surely fateful.

'For the successful organization of Institutes' it was 'necessary that the A.O.S. should have representatives in areas and be able to meet voluntary organizers' expenses, the salaries of paid workers, and the increased head office expenditure.'

The question also of asking the Carnegie Trust for a grant was discussed.

W.N.L.S.C., WOMEN'S BRANCH, AND FOOD PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT.—Meantime there had been considerable developments in Mrs. Wilkins's work. In December, 1916, 'in view of the serious situation caused by the announcement of National Conscription' and the impending calling up of agricultural labourers, the Women's National Land Service Corps had proposed 'a Government Land Army on semi-military lines' or, alternatively, a 'continuance of the W.N.L.S.C. on voluntary lines on a larger basis.'

The principle of this Land Army scheme was approved by the Cabinet. The W.N.L.S.C. then sent to the Government (January 2, 1917) a proposal for a Women's Branch at the Board of Agriculture, with a woman at its head. Mr. Prothero, in an interview (January 3), promised Mrs. Wilkins and Miss Gladys Pott favourable consideration of this scheme. On the 15th the Women's Branch was set up, with Miss Talbot as Director. The W.N.L.S.C., 'as originators of the scheme,' asked for direct representation on the Women's Branch, and Miss Franklin was released to join it. In February the Corps, (Miss Benson, secretary), became the Board of Agriculture's agent for seasonal work.

The same month, the Food Production Department was called into existence under Sir Arthur (now Lord) Lee.

It was also in February that the Women's Farm and Garden Union undertook, at the request of the Board, to train London recruits for the Land Army (started March, 1917). The Union had soon thirteen training centres. The W.N.L.S.C. supplied

close on a hundred officers for the Land Army. 'Mrs. Wilkins's trained women were invaluable,' Lord Ernle tells me.

The Land Army was not, however, the Land Army of Mrs. Wilkins's plan. The women workers of the Government Land Army were put into uniform and sent to the farmers, but the women were under no discipline and were free to leave. The opinion has been expressed that it was by 'sheer charm and plodding' that Dame Meriel made this Army work as well as it did. Under Mrs. Wilkins's scheme 'framed in close co-operation with a military man and with wide knowledge of rural conditions,' a friend writes, 'the members of the Women's Army were to be in camps under military discipline. The scheme would have avoided many of the difficulties due to some of the gallant Landswomen's insufficient training and housing.' A spirited epigram by Mrs. Wilkins, in the manner of the Roman - or Spartan? - matron, made, apparently, when her scheme was turned down, is treasured by her friends.

Among the services rendered by the W.N.L.S.C. was the provision of several thousand flax pullers. At the end of the War Mrs. Wilkins received the thanks of Lord Ernle, Lord Lee and Miss Talbot, and the O.B.E.

TROUBLE AT THE A.O.S. - Getting back to the A.O.S., Mr. Harris, who had been on a tour in Wales reported in March, among other things, that 'through the Institutes, the A.O.S. is becoming known in quarters that would not otherwise have heard of us for many years.'

It was natural that Mr. Harris should make the most to the A.O.S. of any advantages which might accrue to it from its connection with the Institute movement. His relations with those who directed A.O.S. policy were increasingly difficult. After eight years at his post, he had to deal with chiefs who knew not Joseph.

Three months before (December, 1916) after a trying internment in Germany, Mr. Yerburch, who had been so much to the A.O.S. and Mr. Harris had died. Lord Selborne had become President in his stead. (January, 1917, when Mrs. Yerburch was appointed a 'governor') Mr. Bostock, who

had been so sympathetic to the Institute activities of the A.O.S., and had recognized Mr. Harris's strong points, had relinquished the chairmanship to Mr. (now Sir) Leslie Scott, K.C., M.P.

With Mr. Scott's arrival at the A.O.S. there were rapid developments. Because, for an understanding of the position in which the young Institute movement found itself, it is necessary to grasp what happened at the A.O.S. in 1917, I shall try to state the facts as clearly and briefly as possible.

Mr. Leslie Scott, whom I remember meeting before the War, at, I think, a little round table gathering of men of various political relationships, who wondered whether something could not be done for rural progress on non-party lines, had become public-spiritedly interested in agricultural co-operation, as he became interested in humane killing, the treatment of mental defectives, and other good causes. He was tender-hearted, somewhat impatient, lawyerly direct and firm, and, as K.C.'s often are, very, very busy. When he came to the A.O.S. he wanted to see something done and done quickly. He was for the movement adopting 'more practical business methods.' Among his fellow 'governors' he spoke to willing ears. Institutes were not 'business,' and co-operation, some 'governors,' at any rate, had come to believe, was business or it was nothing.

There were not a few 'governors' and adherents of the A.O.S., and undoubtedly outsiders, who were disposed to think that the Society, for all the money it spent - in the first year of the War it had received £10,000, and in 1916 it had had £11,000 from the Government* - fell short in its achievement. Mr. Harris, the general secretary, knew all the outs and ins of the co-operative movement. He was enthusiastic, helpful to everybody, a skilful organizer, and red-hot gossiper. But such men have, naturally, the defects of their qualities. Some of the squires he had painstakingly and ingeniously collected for his Board, and carefully tended, were depressed by the memoranda

* As against, in 1917, fees from affiliated societies, £275. In 1918 fees rose to £1,002 and subscriptions were £1,333, while Government grants came to £17,350. For complete figures see Appendix.

they were expected to be actively interested in. The 'agenda' of the first meeting of 'governors' in 1912, when the A.O.S., was reconstructed, is a document of 188 printed foolscap pages of the same type as this book. It is no doubt a valuable piece of stock-taking, a favourite word of Mr. Harris's. But how many 'governors' read it through to the end, felt themselves sufficient for such things? Being an A.O.S. 'governor' became, as the village idiot, who had been seduced into potato bagging by being told it was a new kind of game, soon found, 'perilous like work.' Business men who came to be associated with the squire 'governors,' and had, in War time, fewer minutes to waste than usual, snorted at some of the proceedings of this big organization which so little resembled any organization they had had to do with. Even a true blue pioneer of agricultural co-operation, who had had for years a fair proportion of blue books, reports, and agenda in his daily diet, is found writing: 'Much as I respect the A.O.S., I always feel that it is too fond of extending when consolidation is needed.'

A man of attainments and great rural experience who was a 'governor' said to me lately: 'It was a period for big conceptions, and the A.O.S. failed somehow to rise to them; some of its moderate-sized geese were swans, and its stationery bills were awful.' The A.O.S. 'did not, by its general method of work, impress farmers as much as was necessary. It did not gain their ear, though now I doubt if anybody or anything could have done so, except the archangel Gabriel. Too much time and thought of office and staff were annoyingly given to the details of Women's Institute campaigning.'

Another ex-'governor' writes to me: 'The Institutes were undoubtedly well run by Mr. and Mrs. Nugent Harris, but the Institutes were a side-show for us; and our work and organization were not at a stage at which we could afford to treat ourselves to side-shows. I was not alone in thinking that the A.O.S. should devote itself to co-operation, as we were after all under an obligation to do under the terms of the grant.'

On the surface, the struggle between Mr. Leslie Scott and Mr. Harris - as often as not, evidently, between Mr. Harris

and Mr. Scott - was between large scale agricultural co-operation and small scale. Mr. Scott was for big business, for commercial co-operation, for 'a movement voicing its needs and aspirations in the business world and the Councils of the State.' Particularly was he strong on 'the formation of a strong Agricultural Wholesale Society.' The phrases are from the 1918 report, signed by Mr. Leslie Scott, as chairman and Lord Selborne as president, and may be fairly held to represent what was in the minds of the new regime.

Mr. Harris seems to have been rather for the small man, to have been for working from the bottom up. He made much of the fact that the big farmers' societies, with turnovers averaging a quarter of a million apiece, were increasingly managed by men who had either not been brought up in the co-operative faith or had not been regular attendants at the means of grace. Mr. Harris, with his eyes on Scandinavian agricultural co-operative ways, desired to see farmers regular at their co-operative experience meetings. His opponents saw themselves as realists in a sphere of theory and talk. The society 'had been bureaucratic.' They were for 'a more democratic basis' - the very thing Mr. Harris said he was also for.

I myself got the impression at the A.O.S., long before the coming of Mr. Scott, that there were in its office two contending forces. As I find someone writing, 'Mr. Harris was most anxious that the idealistic side of the movement should be kept in the foreground, but he at the same time displayed much business ability. Mr. Graff' - shown on the A.O.S. letter-paper as assistant secretary, and to-day in charge of the co-operative work of the National Farmers' Union - 'has been consistent in pressing the material side.'

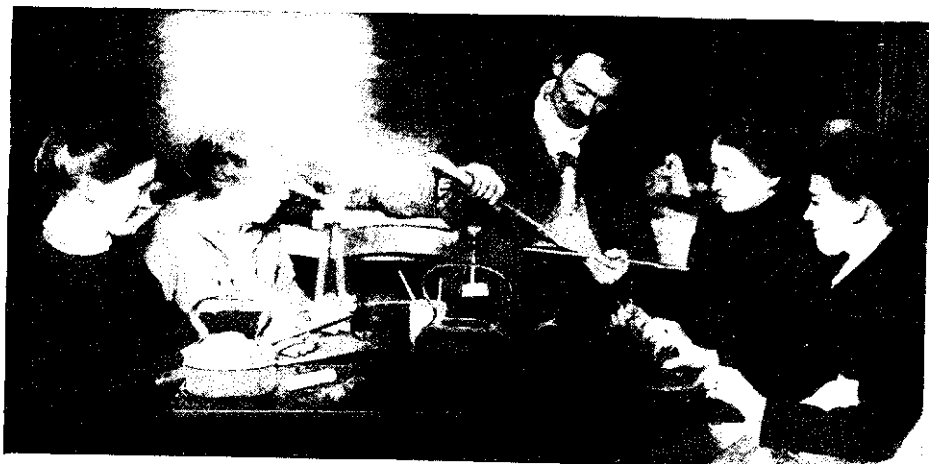
Here Mr. Bostock, now no longer chairman, shared Mr. Harris's views. 'It is of vital importance to the future of the A.O.S.,' he once said, 'that the maintenance of the ideals of co-operation and the organization of co-operation for monetary gains should be rightly balanced. Both sides are important, but the real driving force in co-operation lies in the movement's non-material side, with its motto "All for each and each for all."'

'It is this non-material side,' Mr. Bostock argued, 'that has drawn out the enthusiasm and prompted the work of a large number of people, who would not have given their time to a movement which was solely materialistic. They have seen that co-operation in agriculture may be a unifying force for both the social and the economic welfare of the nation.'

'Some attacks have been made on the A.O.S.,' Mr. Bostock went on, 'on account of the development of the non-material side, to the apparent disregard of the commercial side. The movement would be in far greater danger if the material side were over-developed. If there is neglect of the non-material side, agricultural co-operation will simply become an addition to the trusts.'

If you have skipped this last paragraph because it seems to be getting far away from Women's Institutes, I venture to suggest that you have made a mistake. The passage is well worth reading. The tendencies which hinder agricultural co-operation may equally hinder Women's Institutes. There have been Institutes which, in the material or recreative benefits they secured, almost obscured the deeper objects of the movement. And no housewife who has suffered under the limitations of organized farmers and milk sellers, who took themselves for co-operators, can be in much doubt of the small value to the community of a co-operation entered into for selfish objects only.

If Mr. Harris stood out, perhaps not always too intelligibly at times, but basically right, for 'imagination' and the co-operative gospel, if he was a bit intimidating in his vehemence, if he pontificated a little, as we all do now and then, Mr. Leslie Scott could soar a little too. 'He was always,' one of his colleagues complained to me, 'two fences in front of his field.' It is hard, no doubt, for a leader to be criticized for leading, but there it is. Like so many leaders of organizations in War-time, Mr. Scott was no doubt inclined to put things through somewhat hurriedly for a class of the community about which little is truly known except that it will not be hurried. His plans for a commercially-profitable co-operative millenium were, he



A TINKERING CLASS



A SHOE MENDING CLASS
Both at the Scaynes Hill (Sussex) Institute

would now perhaps agree, rather a superimposition than an evolution. But during the War who, that got the chance, or was exposed to the temptation, was not superimposing from the best of motives?

There were 'governors' who complained that, what between the clever chairman and the energetic secretary, everything was in fact settled beforehand. They were not the first committeemen in the world who have made that complaint. What came of the plans of the chairman of the A.O.S. and of the resistance of its secretary we shall see.

Meanwhile it is enough for us to realize under what a lowering sky the Institute movement, with which we are primarily concerned, was working at headquarters in the spring of 1917.

Everybody was more or less the victim of the stress and nerviness of War-time. Most of the A.O.S. 'governors' and executive, and, I imagine, most of the staff, rued the day that Mrs. Watt had gained the suffrages of Mr. Harris and Mr. Bostock. When Mr. Bostock gave up the chairmanship of the A.O.S. to Mr. Scott, there were those, no doubt, who thought, that, with all his patience, he had had enough of the murmurings of his colleagues and of the stress of interpreting Mr. Harris to them. Mr. Bostock must have felt fatigue. He gently composed so many differences and so often put the best face on things. But had he thought that it was necessary that he should retain the chairmanship he would have kept it. Mr. Bostock, with whom I had once some close talk before the War, has been accurately described to me as 'a real Christian and a gentleman.' He was the kind of man who would put up with a great deal if a good end was to be served. He had made, and was to continue to make, sacrifices for the Institute movement. It owes him a debt.

Mr. Harris, exuberant, warm-hearted, indignant, I picture at this time, and I think he would now sardonically picture himself, as continually giving fresh handles to his critics, and going about his work with his Celtic temperament jarred, his scheme of life for the A.O.S. upset, and his conception of the agricultural co-operative faith outraged.

Mrs. Harris, assiduous, motherly, sagacious, pondered all in her heart, and resisted the temptation to keep a diary.

HOW THE INSTITUTES WERE GETTING ON.—As the 'governor' I have quoted wrote, 'the Institutes were well run by Mr. and Mrs. Harris.' Mr. and Mrs. Harris had the satisfaction of feeling that the Institute work in which they delighted was good work.

To what level Mrs. Watt, out in the field (but sometimes in the office with *her* woes — and thoughts of the fair haven of Governmental support after the Canadian fashion) had brought individual Institutes we have evidence in a programme, in blue and green, of the year 1917 for her own Institute at Wivelsfield. The honorary president is the Princess Kropotkin, who delivers an address on 'Women on the Land.' Mrs. Godman, Mrs. Watts's Canadian hostess in Sussex, is president, and Mrs. Clowes (who had a farmer's daughter's acquaintance with rural problems, and did the movement great service), vice-president of this Institute.

Among items for talks, discussions, demonstrations or recreation, new to us so far, are: Bread making, What to do in the Garden, Home-made Toys and Games, Co-operation, Pruning, Flies, Renovating Children's Clothes, Inexpensive Suet and other Puddings, Exchange of Recipes, Co-operative Seed and Plant Buying, Potato Disease, Salad Making, Bee-keeping, Buttonholes, Home Canning, a Play, Jumble Sale, Best Ways of using Apples, Children's Rights, First Aid, Stencilling, Basketry and Bead Work, Soup Making, Rainy Day Amusements, Land Settlement Schemes, and Village Industries.

At the end of each month's programme there is a 'practical hint' of which the following are samples: Always sleep with your window open top and bottom, Candles and Soap improve with keeping, The fireless cooker is like some people, the better we know them the more we love them. At the top of the programme there is, 'For Home and Country,' and 'Affiliated to the Agricultural Organization Society.'

Miss Hadow's Institute at this period is cultivating the garden of an unlet house.

A 'STRONG RECOMMENDATION.'—When the A.O.S. Women's Institute Committee met in April, Lady Denman urged the need of more organizers, pressed on her by Mrs. Watt. It was resolved to make 'a strong recommendation' to the A.O.S. 'governors' that, in drawing up their budget for submission to the Treasury for their Development Fund grant (that they had been having since before the starting of Women's Institutes), 'the immediate necessity for four additional Institute organizers be urged.'

'If further steps be necessary,' the record goes on, 'Lady Denman offered to arrange a deputation in conjunction with the Women's Farm and Garden Union'—Mrs. Wilkins's society—'to press upon the Government the need of financial help to further the work of both bodies in their efforts regarding increased food production, its distribution and conservation.'

MRS. WILKINS AND LORD SELBORNE.—At this stage an interesting thing happened.

Lord Selborne, President of the A.O.S., was the head of the well-known Selborne Committee on increasing home-grown food supplies after the War. (He had been President of the Board of Agriculture during the early days of the Institute movement, 1915-6.) The first part of the emphatic report of his Committee had just been published. In May he was seeking information to help its further deliberations. He wanted, among other things, some notes on Women's Institutes. In a scribble passed to Mrs. Wilkins at a meeting of the A.O.S. 'governors' he asked her to write these notes for him. The memorandum Mrs. Wilkins prepared is a well-informed, well-considered and well-knit document 'on the place of women in agricultural reconstruction.'

Half-way through Mrs. Wilkins gets to Institutes. She sees the village girls leaving school at fourteen and unable to enter a farm school until sixteen. Institutes 'supply the organization for the effective development of educational policy.' Their merit, in contrast with other educational machinery, is that they 'spring from the people and are not superimposed by the State.' The Institutes provide organization for instruction

which can be turned to account not only by the Board of Agriculture, but by the Local Government Board (now Ministry of Health), the Treasury and the County Councils. 'The keynote of the Institute is the home, the unit on which the economic development and stability of the country is built.' Educational work of any sort done by working through the Institutes 'does not necessitate the women leaving their homes; on the contrary, it automatically results in the improvement of the home.' By means of the Institutes 'quite a new interest has been aroused among all classes of rural women in matters both of local and of national concern.'

A 'VILLAGE SOCIETY.'—Mrs. Wilkins went on to say that the obvious alternative to a Women's Institute was a 'Village Society,' including men as well as women. It was certainly a pleasant name. 'But,' Mrs. Wilkins added wisely, 'a stronger appeal is made to women by an association which takes as the unit of its work the home rather than the village.'

ALTERNATIVES TO THE A.O.S.—The writer concluded by urging the Government to 'make up its mind as to the method to be adopted for encouraging the Institutes.'

Should the responsibility for developing the movement be left with the A.O.S.? Mrs. Wilkins pointed out that women were organized in the Institutes 'as home-makers, not as producers,' and that 'though, even as home-makers, they are not without an interest in co-operative methods,' they were not primarily or essentially co-operators. Therefore the control of the A.O.S. was not a natural relationship, for its interests were in the furtherance of co-operation.

Putting aside association with the A.O.S., the choice lay between (a) combination with the Women's Farm and Garden Union, and (b) 'reversing the present policy, and placing the movement on an independent basis, that is in the hands of a "Central Committee of Women's Institutes."'

Whichever of these courses were adopted, further financial assistance would be needed.

Mrs. Wilkins inclined to her Union, and said that she had

reason to think that her view would be supported by that arch co-operator, Sir Horace Plunkett.

Mrs. Wilkins had, of course, sent a copy of her memorandum to the chairman of the A.O.S. Mr. Harris had soon (June 14) a statement ready exhibiting the case against withdrawing the Institutes from the care of his organization. There were 115 Institutes, 'a movement of this character and virility cannot be handed over *en bloc*,' and so on. He had a view of the A.O.S. widening its scope and becoming 'more linked up with the educational side.' At which, no doubt, some A.O.S. 'governors' groaned.

About this time the National Farmers' Union, which was organizing farmers on less idealistic lines than those the A.O.S. had followed, was getting into its stride.

THE INSTITUTES' FAREWELL

MR. HENRY FORD is of opinion that history is 'bunk.' It is if it is written from documents only, in disregard alike of psychology and times and seasons.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTES NOT CO-OPERATION.—Let me set down in successive paragraphs what my documents seem to relate of the history of the Institute movement at this stage.

1.—Early in July the A.O.S. executive decides to send a deputation, consisting of Lady Denman, Mrs. Wilkins and Mrs. Watt to the Board of Agriculture and the Development Commissioners, to support an application for a special grant for the promotion of Institutes.

This is certainly queer. Mrs. Wilkins on such a deputation! No, here is a letter to the office from her. She writes, naturally enough, that, while she believes that Institutes represent an extremely valuable movement, deserving of a Government subsidy, she does not feel that the A.O.S. is the organization to receive the money and control the movement.

But how comes it that the A.O.S., some at least of the 'governors' of which look on the Institute offspring with disfavour, is sending a deputation to ask for a grant for it?

2.—At the beginning of September there is a rumour—it is before me in writing—that something is afoot in Government offices about Institutes. The story is that Miss Talbot is 'including Institutes in a scheme for winter work for food production.'

3.—Under date September 4 we have the decision of the Board of Agriculture that the A.O.S., which, as we know, was in receipt of subsidies from the Government for the promotion of co-operation, could no longer be allowed to finance the Institute movement. The following letter—and two other letters which I shall reproduce shortly—are published for the first time:

'I am directed by the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries,' says this letter to Mr. Leslie Scott, 'to advert

to your letter of the 17th ult., relative to expenditure incurred by the Agricultural Organization Society in connection with Women's Institutes, and I am to say that the Board regret that they are unable to recognize Women's Institutes as being a branch of Agricultural Co-operation to which the funds of the Society may be devoted.

'I am to add that the Board hope that the Society will find some means of discharging their expenditure under this head from other sources.'

So far this three-fold tale of documents, a tale of alleged A.O.S. executive solicitude for Institutes, of a supposititious scheme of Miss Talbot's, and of a supposedly surprising communication from the Board of Agriculture.

THE FOUNDLING.—The truth, I understand, is this.

The Government letter was written on September 4. But Mr. Scott had been for some time at one with Mrs. Wilkins about the unwisdom and legal impropriety of using for the promotion of Women's Institutes any of the subsidy given to the A.O.S. for the advancement of co-operation. Four months before the receipt of the Whitehall letter, Mr. Scott had insisted, and his action was significant, that the budget which the A.O.S. had to submit to the Development Commissioners should be drawn up 'under two distinct heads, (1) A.O.S., (2) W.I.' Lady Denman certainly knew in August that the Development Commissioners were averse to giving the A.O.S. a special grant for Institute work, and that there was every chance of the movement being orphaned.

Was there any real risk of a movement, disliked or objected to by its guardians, and refused sustenance, fading from the scene? I do not think so. Someone connected with the Institutes at this period said to me: 'The Institutes were too useful for what they were doing in helping food production. Women workers could readily command sympathy. Women had the time of their lives during the War, as far as public consideration was concerned.'

There had been conversations. There always are before Ministers get to the letter-writing stage.

It is profitless to press for an answer to the question, Who first hit on the notion of declaring the Institutes to be no part of co-operative work? We know how things were at the A.O.S. between its 'governors' and executive, on the one hand, and Mr. Harris, on the other. We know that Mrs. Wilkins had stood out from the first against the Institute connection and that Mr. Scott felt a lawyer's scruples. That some reflection of the feelings of the controllers of the A.O.S. had not communicated itself to the authorities who had the responsibility for granting a large yearly sum to the A.O.S. is hardly to be believed.

THE WOMEN'S BRANCH OPENS ITS ARMS.—But let us look at a second letter from Whitehall. Two days after Mr. Scott had received the official missive which I have already reproduced, he had the following letter (dated September 6) from Miss Talbot, Director of the Women's Branch of the Food Production Department of the Board of Agriculture :

'I am desired to inform you that the subject of the future management of Women's Institutes, following upon the Board's action indicated in the Secretary's letter of September 4, was discussed at a meeting this morning under the chairmanship of the President, Mr. Prothero. A strong feeling was expressed that it will probably be to the advantage of the movement if in the future the Institutes should be managed and financed from this Department.

'The method of carrying this out, and of representation of the Agricultural Organization Society upon a Committee of Management, would be the subject for future discussions.'

This letter, unlike letter No. 1, was a surprise.

When Lady Denman arrived at the A.O.S. office on September 8, she understood from Mr. Scott that 'nobody had any idea that this was going to be done.'

In what manner would the Institutes, to quote the letter from Whitehall, be 'managed from this Department'? Some thought there was a chance that the Institutes might go to Mrs. Wilkins's Farm and Garden Union. But Mrs. Wilkins was on holiday. I may say that whether Mrs. Wilkins had been in town or not

there was no chance of the Institutes being transferred to her Union. Such a solution had never entered the mind of Mr. Prothero. Even if he had entertained such an idea, steps had been taken which had prepared another destiny for the movement.

A NEW STORY.—The following story will be new to some of the best informed members of the movement, and certainly to Mr. Leslie Scott.

When the A.O.S. received official letter No. 1, stopping the grant, Mrs. Harris was quick-witted enough to suggest to her husband that she should telephone to Miss Talbot and ask for the opportunity of a chat. Miss Talbot, as Director of the Women's Branch, was specially concerned with the welfare of women workers for food production and food economy, and she was an admirer of the Institutes. As the office in which Miss Talbot was established in Palace Street, Victoria Street, was some distance from Whitehall Place, the Board of Agriculture's headquarters, it was just possible, Government Department's methods being a bit jog-trot, that Whitehall's decision about the grant had not yet reached her. Mrs. Harris, on the suggestion of her husband, asked that he might come along with her to see Miss Talbot.

It was as Mr. and Mrs. Nugent Harris had guessed. Miss Talbot, in the company of the Hon. Mrs. Lyttelton, Assistant Director of the Women's Branch, now heard for the first time of the stopping of the grant.

One can imagine — I have no information — how Mrs. Harris saw the Government lighthouse sending its cheering beams across her stormy seas. And we may suppose that Mr. Harris dwelt on the prospect of Governmental unification of country-women for food production and War economies.

MISS TALBOT AND MR. PROTHERO.—Miss Talbot at once saw the chance for her Women's Branch being even more rurally womanly, and made a telephone appointment with Mr. Prothero.

Dame Meriel informs me that when she saw the Minister she told him that the Institutes were 'the right sort of job for the

Women's Branch,' and that in ten minutes he had entirely agreed with her.

Lord Selborne, Mr. Prothero's predecessor, had been on the friendliest terms with Mrs. Wilkins, and it is possible that, had he been in office, he might have thought of placing the Institutes under the Women's Farm and Garden Union. But it was Mr. Prothero, not Lord Selborne, who was in office. Although, as we have seen, Mr. Prothero thought the services of Mrs. Wilkins's 'trained women' invaluable, and had the greatest respect for Mrs. Wilkins herself, he had confidence in Dame Meriel's judgment. Lord Ernle once told me, in speaking of Dame Meriel's services - Dame Meriel reported to him privately twice a week, in addition to reporting at the weekly Food Production Department committee meeting at which the President took the chair - that 'no praise can be too high for her work.'

I have heard it suggested that Mr. Prothero, in the tremendous pressure in which he lived in the third year of the War, had forgotten the existence of his new Women's Branch. What Lord Ernle said to me, when I asked him about this, was: 'I at no time forgot the Women's Branch. I had created it, and was deeply interested in the success of my experiment of a Branch exclusively staffed and officered by women. I had two reasons in my mind for accepting responsibility for the Institutes. One was the practical object of increasing the food supplies, the other was the ideal or the dream of what the Institutes might become in our villages.'

No doubt the President of the Board of Agriculture had his critics. It ought to have been plain, however, that for the Board, which was to provide money for Institute propaganda, to put the movement, taken from the A.O.S. back again under another Society, was, in War-time conditions, a less common-sense plan than for the Board to conduct the propaganda itself. But it called for a Minister of courage and conviction to take the step which Lord Ernle decided on. His action did not in the least surprise those who knew him. Did not one of his best friends call the rural views of this distinguished countryman 'frankly revolutionary'?

One thing may be stated with certainty that it was not Miss Talbot who initiated the plan for withdrawing the Institutes from the A.O.S.

Nor does the phrase I have quoted at the beginning of this Chapter, to the effect that Miss Talbot was 'including the Institutes in a scheme for winter work for Food Production,' mean that she had had any notion of bringing the Institutes under the Women's Branch.

THE BOGEY.—But when one refers again to the letter containing the allusion to Miss Talbot and reads the context, when one notes that some persons are 'urging her on,' and that 'there is a good deal in the argument that there is an organization ready to push on Institutes,' a historian compelled to rely on papers only, might well be deceived. The explanation is to be found in the simple fact that the plan which was being urged was to place the Institutes *under the Women's County War Agricultural Committees*.

This would have been a fatal plan. The members of some Committees were appreciative of Institutes and their possibilities. But other Committees knew little of the work, or turned a chilly face to it.

When Lady Denman learnt that the Ministry was to take over the Institutes she feared that they might be given into the hands of the Committees. She went off at once to Mrs. Lyttelton and Miss Talbot. She first saw Deputy-Director Lyttelton. Mrs. Lyttelton was sympathetic—'I realized at once,' Mrs. Lyttelton writes to me, 'the importance of keeping the Institute movement alive during the War'—and quickly took her to see Miss Talbot.

A COURAGEOUS VIEW.—Lady Denman notes down that day her relief when she found that 'they wish us to carry on for the present,' that 'very little about future organization has been decided, and that, in any case, there seems to be no idea of handing the control of the Institutes to the Committees.'

'On the whole, I think,' she added, as courageously as presciently, 'this should help the Institutes, and be the best thing for the movement, if it be run, as Miss Talbot hopes it will

be, by a Committee chosen from the present one, with a few members nominated by the Board.'

On September 22, Mr. Prothero himself communicates to 'Dear Scott,' the chairman of the A.O.S., the decision to place the Institutes under the Women's Branch :

'I have heard from the Food Production Department, Women's Branch, that they are willing to undertake the administration of the Women's Institutes, which the Agricultural Organization Society has hitherto administered. We have made arrangements for the necessary funds, and I should be glad to hear whether this proposal will be acceptable to your Society.'

Two days earlier Mrs. Watt had had a ten-page memorandum ready, 'WOMEN'S INSTITUTES AND BOARDS OF AGRICULTURE - JUSTIFICATION FOR THE EXPENDITURE OF PUBLIC MONIES - APPRECIATION OF MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS - SOME EXCERPTS AND COMMENTS.'

THE PLEA FOR 'DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES.' - Mrs. Wilkins was unable to return to town in time for the next A.O.S. Institutes Committee. But, in a letter to Lady Denman she put her acute mind into the question of the future of the movement. She stressed the point that 'the essence of the whole movement is democratic.'

'It must be chiefly self-governed,' she said. 'If the movement is not built up from the bottom on democratic principles, it will never have solid growth or the influence in agricultural reconstruction we have hoped for.'

Lady Denman, each time she saw Miss Talbot or Mrs. Lyttelton, emphasized the importance of the Institutes being self-governing, and both these ladies agreed that this was essential. But what of the high powers male in Whitehall, with whom ultimate decisions lay?

It seemed a good sign when Miss Talbot spoke of the Central Committee being elected by the Institutes. But what means would the Board, which was to supply money for Institute propaganda - there was urgent need, for one thing, of more organizers - devise to keep a check on the Committee?

THE A.O.S. LOOSING AND BINDING. - The necessary

arrangements with the Board of Agriculture were ordered by the A.O.S. Institute Committee to be carried out by 'Lady Denman and Mr. Bostock, with Mrs. Watt and Mrs. Harris in an advisory capacity.'

On October 1 the A.O.S. had sent a roneoed letter to every Institute, explaining, in terms which had been carefully considered, what had happened, regretting that the work 'would be no longer under its *direct* control'—I underline 'direct' as one of the indications that Mr. Harris cherished the hope of maintaining close contact with the movement—and enclosing a ticket for a Conference of delegates of the Women's Institutes, to be held at the Central Hall, Westminster, on the afternoon of October 16.

In preparation for this meeting of Institute delegates—an account of which is given in the next Chapter—the A.O.S. Institute Committee, following upon negotiations with the Board of Agriculture, drew up, for submission at the Conference, a list of ten people, for election to the new Committee of Management or Central Committee, on which there was also to be a nominated element.

Further, a draft of rules for the proposed Federation of Women's Institutes was made. One rule provided that the Federation should 'become a member of the A.O.S. on terms to be agreed upon.' The Federation was to 'work in the closest co-operation with the A.O.S. and recognize it as the expert body for England and Wales in all matters affecting the furtherance of the agricultural co-operative movement.'

This set of rules seems to be the set which was adopted at the Conference. But, after the Conference—although this is anticipating a good deal—the Federation Committee immediately set to work on a study of the constitution, and the second annual meeting—as will be seen still farther on—carried out a considerable revision in which the above rule does not appear.

ATTITUDE OF A.O.S. 'GOVERNORS.'—Under the aegis of the A.O.S., the movement had grown to 137 Institutes. It had done this although—I have seen it in the writing of

a man who was in a position to speak with authority – ‘not 5 per cent. of the “governors” were in sympathy.’ We know that, when the break came, the ‘governors’ at once identified themselves with the standpoint of the Development Commissioners and the Ministry of Agriculture, that the Institute work should not be financed by the A.O.S.

WAS THE INSTITUTES’ DEPARTURE A GOOD THING? – At this point the opinion may be expressed that, for many reasons, it was an excellent thing for the movement to get away from the A.O.S.

It was not only the matter of the Governmental withdrawal of the money by which Institute propaganda and administration were maintained, as we have seen, with steadily narrowing means. The movement must have been gravely hindered by the dissatisfaction of the ‘governors’ with their association with it.

The dissension between the rules of the A.O.S. and Mr. Harris could come to an end in one way only.

Even the sympathetic Mr. Bostock, who had resigned his chairmanship to Mr. Leslie Scott and had accepted the deputy chairmanship, had now withdrawn from that office.

Mrs. Watt naturally looked with longing eyes towards official countenance for the movement, on Dominion lines.

As for Mrs. Harris, she has not written her memoirs. She must have been glad in her heart that the propaganda had been undertaken by the Government. The movement had been well begun but it was not established.

If Mr. Harris had known all that was in store for the movement under the official wing he might have been glad too.

When the Institutes had to leave the A.O.S. they were, as we shall find, full of protestations of regard. They had never valued the A.O.S. as much as when they were taken from it. But even if the ‘governors’ had been reconciled to their female charge, and had had plenty of money to fill up its feeding bottle, even if differences about methods of co-operative progress and about the deference due to a man of co-operative pedigree, had not developed between Mr. Harris and his masters, might not a crisis have still arrived? How about the relations

of the Institutes themselves with the A.O.S.? Could the Institutes have worked out under the A.O.S. the democratic development which, as we shall discover in the next Chapter, their own National Federation was to give them?

A NEW A.O.S. COMMITTEE.—But all was not over and done with between the A.O.S. and the Institute movement. When the new 'Central Committee of Management of Women's Institutes' assembled in October, it met at the parental A.O.S. offices. And on November 11 it was announced from the A.O.S. office by Mr. Harris that, in order 'to assist Mr. Harris in the promotion of the co-operative side of Women's Institute work,' the executive had decided, on the motion of Mr. Bostock, now an ordinary member of the executive, to 'form a special A.O.S. Women's Institutes' Sub-Committee' consisting of Mr. Bostock, Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, Mrs. Wilkins, Miss Alice Williams, for whom high responsibility in the movement was waiting, Miss Laming, her friend, and Mr. Geoffrey Hooper, with Mr. Harris as secretary.

On December 10, at a time when the clouds were growing darker and darker over Mr. Harris's head, this Sub-Committee considered the draft of a circular to Institutes. 'While the duty of forming Institutes has passed out of the hands of the A.O.S.' it said, 'there is much that the Society can do to assist the progress of the Institutes through the promotion of co-operation.' The Institutes — 180 or more now — were asked to say whether the members were buying their requirements co-operatively, and if so, whether they would care to consult the A.O.S. on the matter?

The Sub-Committee recommended to the A.O.S. executive that it should 'provide without delay the necessary assistance that the importance of the work demands, the demands to be determined' by the replies to the circulars. Apart from this, 'an understudy' was requested for Mr. Harris as soon as possible. One can imagine, in view of what is told in a page or two, with what grim looks this recommendation was received by the executive.

It seems that there were 70 replies to Mr. Harris's 200

circulars, and that 98 per cent. of the 70 were willing to accept A.O.S. assistance. So, to the extent indicated by these replies, the Institutes were, as Mr. Harris had maintained and still maintains, agents of co-operation.

SUB-SECTION DIRECTOR HADOW.—The A.O.S. Committee met a second time on January 23, 1918. There had also come into existence at this time a special committee of the newly-formed Federation, and it had produced a long report on 'the organization of supplies of produce and their transportation to conserving centres.' The report is less interesting now than the fact that it gives us another glimpse of a committee member who was to be well-known in the movement. Miss Hadow, who was at this time Sub-section Director of the Welfare Department in the Ministry of Munitions, had been having informal conferences, it seems, with — how far off it all sounds now! — the Ministry of Food, the Liquor Control Board, and the Transport Section of the Ministry of Agriculture. There is a story of Miss Hadow coming from official deliberations on the rationing of the different classes of the community, and realizing, when it was well on in the afternoon and she had had no lunch, that, after all, the calories properly due to her were limited, for did she not come under the heading of 'Sedentary women, light'?

AT THE FOOD PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT.—On the same day, January 23, that the A.O.S. Institute Committee met, the Central Committee of the Federation — that we are to hear all about in the next Chapter, when we get to it — had a meeting, the assembling place now being away from Father A.O.S., in Lady Denman's room at the Food Production Department, 72, Victoria Street, where the leader of the movement and Mrs. Harris were now established.

This Committee passed a resolution drawing the attention of the A.O.S. it had left, to 'the urgent need' for the development of co-operative effort, and for help and advice for Institutes, and hoping the A.O.S. would be able to provide organizers. Need I say that Mr. Harris was at this time on the Federation's Central Committee?

END OF THE A.O.S. CONNECTION.—A week later, on January 31, the A.O.S. relationship with Women’s Institutes came to an end for good. ‘It was thought best,’ an ex-‘governor’ writes succinctly, in a letter to me, ‘to devote our energies to the business side rather than the idealist and social side of co-operation.’ Or, as the document before me puts it, ‘the executive has decided to do away with the Women’s Institutes’ Committee and form a Fruit and Garden Produce Committee!’

RETIREMENT OF MR. HARRIS.—But what had happened to Mr. Harris? A great deal, and as the movement has not forgotten what it owes to Mr. Harris, we want to hear all there is to tell.

First, in July, 1917, after one of the rumpuses that seem to have made the A.O.S. office, in its later days, such a model of co-operative effort, Mr. F. S. Graff had been made ‘superintendent of organizers, not organization as was first agreed upon,’ his work ‘to lie mainly in the country.’ In the mass of papers which, in one way and another, have reached me, I come on the typed text of a treaty between ‘Mr. Leslie Scott, Mr. Graff and the General Secretary.’

The General Secretary is to be ‘responsible for head office work and administration.’ For Mr. Graff there is prescribed—such is ‘organization’—‘a careful and minute system of reporting.’ As for the matter of the general correspondence of the office, on which there have evidently been *pourparlers*, it is agreed by the high contracting parties that ‘it is too voluminous, and might with considerable advantage be curtailed.’ The document ends with an obeisance to the principle of ‘the closest possible co-operation between all members of the staff so as to secure harmonious working,’ followed by a declaration by Mr. Chairman Scott, in which he is asserted to have said, somewhat cryptically, that ‘while he was of opinion that the ideals of the movement were kept too much to the front, he wished it to be understood that the ideal was a blend of the practical and ideal, a very difficult combination to secure.’ *Selah!*

After these enjoyable exercises, Mr. and Mrs. Nugent Harris

appear, very sensibly, to have taken a month's holiday, for it was August.

In Mr. Harris's absence things were happening at the A.O.S. office. On the 19th, Mr. J. S. Corbett, a new 'governor,' a man, it would appear from his correspondence, of a somewhat Harmsworthian turn, becomes 'General Director,' at a 'General Director's' salary. The General Secretaryship of Mr. Harris is abolished, and he is appointed 'A.O.S. Commissioner.' He ceases to be responsible for the administrative work, to which only a month before he had been relegated. His charge, under 'the new devolution policy and new constitution,' is provincial activities, narrowed, presumably, by Mr. Graff's appointment – but what does it matter now? – and of course his beloved Women's Institutes.

The change is made with civil expressions of 'gratitude' for 'skill and ability,' and for 'whole-hearted zeal and devotion.' But Mr. Harris is naturally loath to yield up headquarters control of an organization which he had built up from the days when it lived from hand to mouth, from the days when he had £200 a year and no office boy, and some of those who are now his masters had still to be brought into the fold.

The hearts of the 'governors' are now far indeed from Mr. Harris. Three months later (in November) he delivers his soul to them in a speech of upbraiding and warning – I fish the verbatim from my clothes-basketsfuls of papers – which he could hardly have made had he believed that his stay at the A.O.S. would be for long.

It was not to be for long.

The impossible situation is decently bridged by his being 'loaned' to the Board of Agriculture, on its request – there is a letter from Sir Daniel Hall towards the end of January, 1918 – to act as secretary of an agricultural propaganda committee. The Board was to pay his salary, but was to 'liberate him at such time as may be convenient to maintain some continuity of work' in the Department to which he had been diminished at the A.O.S. He was to be 'temporarily released' in this way for a year.

Mr. Harris's official style was Secretary of the Joint Committee of the Board of Agriculture and the Ministry of Food Production (director, Professor T. B. Wood), and he had an office, which he made the scene of various activities, in Dean's Yard, close to the Development Commissioners who had been the undoing or nominally the undoing of the A.O.S. - Women's Institute relationship. Up to the last, Mr. Harris takes every opportunity he can to help the Women's Institutes which entreat him to visit them.

Finally, on New Year's Day, 1919, the connection of Mr. Harris with the A.O.S. is severed. Mr. Leslie Scott writes to him privately: 'I am glad the Women's Institutes are doing well. It is a great feather in your cap to have had so large a share in starting them.'

When Mr. Scott says he is glad Institutes are doing well, I have no doubt whatever that he means it. Mr. Harris is, naturally, not so sure about Mr. Scott's devotion to Institutes. But the A.O.S. decision, taken as late as two months before the Government's divorcing of the Institutes from the A.O.S., to send a deputation to the Development Commissioners, to ask for a grant for the Institute work, may be held to show that Mr. Scott, for all the troubles Institutes had brought on himself and his colleagues, was no more antagonistic to Institutes than Mrs. Wilkins was. It was what the Institutes stood for in work and worry at the A.O.S. office, for the way they ate up the time of Mr. Harris and the A.O.S. organizers, for the legal indefensibility of the A.O.S.-Institutes relationship, that Institutes were anathema. Not a month before the announcement of the Government decision not to have Institutes started and directed out of co-operation money, Lady Denman seems to have been working out for Mr. Scott a scheme for nucleus county representation of Institutes to the A.O.S.

Mr. Scott came to the A.O.S. chairmanship with a mission. He saw great possibilities for the A.O.S. Mr. Harris's excellencies were not hidden from him - there is evidence of this - but the temperament of a resolute missionary who was a K.C. and the temperament of a confidant enthusiast who was many

things that a K.C. must not be were wide asunder. Mr. Harris stood for no end of things that Mr. Scott, with his new policy and his desire to tidy up the A.O.S., could not abide. Very soon after the arrival of Mr. Scott at the A.O.S. it must have dawned on him that before long he would be saying to Mr. Harris, as the Quaker on the ship boarded by a privateer, said to the pirate, whom he pushed back through a porthole into the sea, 'Friend, thou art not wanted here.'

I once heard it said of Mr. Scott that he could be 'ruthless when right,' which is no doubt what a lawyer is meant to be. The A.O.S. was definitely on a new course, to which Mr. Harris, rightly or wrongly, was opposed. There could be one end only to such a situation.

The new men at the A.O.S. were living in a time when less was known of the realities of co-operation than we know now. These new men were to learn from the slings and arrows of fortune, as Mr. Harris was doing. I hope I have been fair to Mr. Harris, undoubtedly a man of outstanding organizing talent. I hope I have managed to convey no unfair impression of Mr. Scott's policy and practice. It is impossible to go into more details. The outstanding fact is that Mr. Scott was public-spirited and energetic, that he worked sincerely for co-operative ends as he saw them, and that, in the pursuit of those ends, he made sacrifices of money and time which are endearing in a busy lawyer and a rising politician. 'The legal mind,' says Mr. H. G. Wells, 'is dilatory, has no sense of coming things, does not create, is the type of mind least able to organize great businesses, plan campaigns to adventure or achieve.' That is not just what one would write about Mr. Leslie Scott.

WHITEHALL'S WELCOME

AND now let us get back to 1917, to that October 16 on which the representatives of 60 of the 137 Institutes, along with perhaps 150 other members of the movement, met at the Central Hall, Westminster, to approve of the severance of the Institutes from the A.O.S. and to accept the guardianship of the Board of Agriculture.

The Institutes were to be regarded as 'self-governing and self-supporting bodies.' They were to be affiliated to a National Federation of Women's Institutes. This Federation was to work through County Federations. The National Federation would be directed by an elected Central Committee.

For the work of forming new Institutes, however, the Women's Branch of the Food Production Department of the Board of Agriculture would be responsible.* The Women's Branch would have the advantage of working in the counties through the Women's War Agricultural Committees, 'who may form special propaganda sub-committees for spreading the movement.'

PARTING OFFER OF THE A.O.S.—The bereaved Agricultural Organization Society, by the mouth of Mr. Acland, said, at the opening of the October 16 meeting, a kind word to the departing Institutes. It would be 'prepared to help Institutes to form co-operative societies.' Criccieth, where Mrs. Drage and the Prime Minister's sister-in-law were active workers, had, within a twelvemonth, a Women's Institute Co-operative Society with a turnover of £6,000. I have been told that one of the members who brought acumen to bear in the formation of this society was a woman farmer of 70 who walked four miles to the preliminary meetings and four miles back.

THE WELCOME.—Miss Talbot, Director of the Women's Branch, skilfully welcomed the movement to the official fold,

* I note with interest in the minutes of evidence taken before the Development Commissioners in 1911, in regard to the A.O.S., that one Commissioner, Sir W. S. Haldane, raised the point for discussion whether the A.O.S. might not one day be constituted a branch of the Board of Agriculture.

and made everybody happy. She praised 'the vision, energy, good sense and organizing ability' of the A.O.S. She saw in the movement 'an almost limitless possibility for the future betterment of our country life.' The Institutes' own Central Committee would have 'the oversight and mothering' of the movement. With regard to the Women's Branch, which was to have charge of the movement's extension, Lady Denman, 'your own chairman,' would be Assistant Director of the Women's Institute Section. Mrs. Nugent Harris, 'to whose energy and imagination so much of this work is due,' would be the Chief of the Section. Mrs. Watt, 'Imperial pioneer in this great movement,' had been appointed 'Chief Outside Organizer.' 'Therefore you have, and we have at the outset, the original workers of the movement.'

No money would be spent on the upkeep of an Institute, but 'a very great deal of help can be given in the way of wise distribution of suitable literature, the provision of speakers, the help of paid organizers and all the ways in which the propaganda of a movement can be extended.' For the 'Women's Institute Section of the Women's Branch' there was 'adequate financial support.' 'We are going to put our whole hearts into building up a widely-spread organization throughout our country.'

With regard to the details of the relationship between the Women's Branch and the movement, matters of organization and development would be referred in the first instance to Mrs. Lyttelton, Deputy Director of the Women's Branch.

WHAT THE DELEGATES SAID.—The delegates thought it their first duty to voice the movement's thanks for past work to the A.O.S. and to Mrs. Nugent Harris. Miss Alice Williams spoke of what Mr. Nugent Harris had done. A resolution of appreciation, moved by Mrs. Godman (Wivelsfield, Sussex), and seconded by Mrs. Thompson (Lamberhurst, Sussex) — the names of speakers are interesting to us now — was 'carried with acclamation.' Miss Hadow (Cirencester), followed with a resolution hailing the decision of the Board with satisfaction. She took care, in her prudent, experienced way, to pin the

authorities to the arrangement that the movement should be directed by the Committee. This resolution, seconded by Mrs. Drage (Criccieth), was 'carried unanimously.'

A resolution, 'carried with enthusiasm,' and spoken to by (the late) Mrs. Messel (Danehill, Sussex), Lady Petre, - Lady Margaret Boscawen's daughter, now Lady Rasch - (Thornden, Essex), and Mrs. H. S. Stobart (Witton-le-Wear, Durham), expressed obligations to Mrs. Watt. Mrs. Godman and Mrs. Stobart were, like Mrs. Watt, Canadians. Mrs. Stobart, Lady Denman was to describe many years later, as 'one of the most successful workers for the movement since the beginning.'

THE NEW NATIONAL FEDERATION. - The adoption of the rules which had been submitted to the delegates was moved from the chair by Lady Denman. Unanimously adopted, these rules constituted the Central Committee of Management, to be called more conveniently later on, the Executive Committee. This Executive was composed of ten members elected by the delegates from the Institutes, four representing the A.O.S., two the Board of Agriculture, one the Board of Education (which thus touched once more the movement to which it had called attention in its pamphlet of 1912), and one from the National Union of Women Workers (which was significant in its way also). The names of this first Executive Committee - for lists of all Executive Committees down to this year, *see* Appendix - were Lady Denman, Miss Hadow, Miss Alice Williams, Mrs. Drage, Mrs. Godman, Miss Kekewich, Lady Isabel Margesson, Lady Petre, and Mrs. Stobart, with Miss Talbot and Mrs. Lyttelton (Board of Agriculture), Mr. Bostock, Mr. Nugent Harris, Mr. Hooper, and Mrs. Wilkins (A.O.S.), and the Hon. Mrs. Handford (N.U.W.W.).

FEELING OF THE MOVEMENT. - There can be no question that up to this meeting of delegates at which the National Federation was formed there were leading workers who had no notion how it would grow. But there was promise in this first assemblage in London. It was a fine meeting. It showed how many real supporters the cause had. It gave a

sense of possibilities. The sixty delegates, and other provincials who attended, insisted over and over again on the value of the movement.

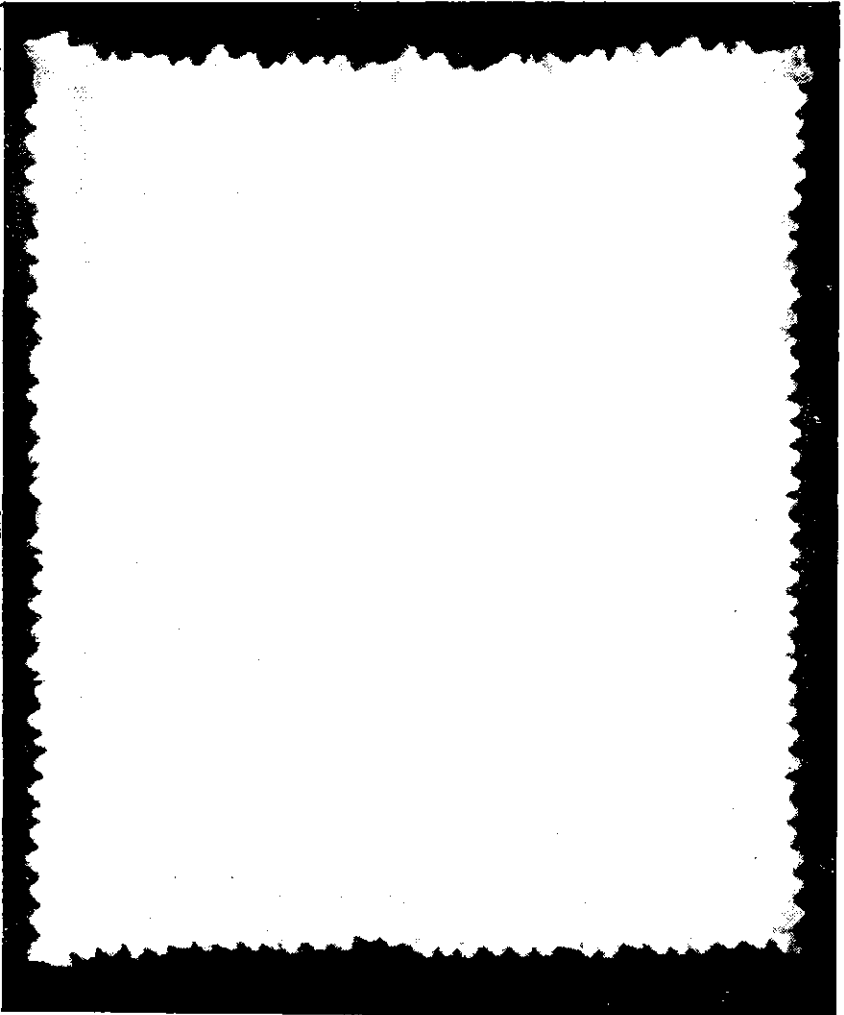
And they were encouragingly insistent on its democratic basis. They pointed to the summons to them as evidence of the democratic basis. It was unquestionably democratic sentiment which was largely responsible for the welcome given to the new National Federation. Remarkable though the Government's undertaking was to conduct the propaganda of the movement, it can hardly be said to have been received with elation.

OFFICERS AND AN ORGAN.—Next day the first Executive Committee of the movement met, and made Lady Denman chairman and Miss Williams secretary and treasurer, Miss Hadow becoming vice-chairman later (in February, 1918). Mrs. Wilkins served this first year on the Executive, but later, to the regret of Lady Denman, had to abandon public work for a time. There were smaller minds who did not realize the value to the movement of Mrs. Wilkins's ability and shrewdness, or the honesty of purpose with which she had taken her stand against the connection with the A.O.S. Mrs. Wilkins is still a warm admirer of the movement.

At the Executive meeting a suggestion of Mrs. Lyttelton that part of the *Landswoman*, to be started in January, 1918, should be devoted to Institute news, led to the decision there and then that this paper should be the official organ.

Among the new Institutes, recorded in its first number as having been formed (1916), is the Institute at Balcombe, Lady Denman's village. In 1916 when Lady Denman became chairman of the A.O.S. Institutes Committee, she was not herself a member of an Institute. She joined that year.

MISS WILLIAMS.—The chairman of the new Federation Executive celebrated the movement's coming to Whitehall—or what, under the system of boarding-out Government Departments, stood for Whitehall—by getting typhoid. Miss Williams, the secretary and treasurer, was a painter as well as a Welsh bard, Alis Meirion; but, as she told me, 'knew nothing about dictating letters,' and, if she had, 'there was nobody to dictate



BEDSPREAD WORKED CO-OPERATIVELY BY IDEN INSTITUTE

the Horticultural Hall, in May, 1920, the exhibitors had £2,000 instead of £1,000, and there was also £600 for the Federation. Princess Beatrice visited this Exhibition, and Princess Marie Louise presented banners on the last day it was open.

It was for the first Exhibition, I think, that the Board of Agriculture proposed rabbits for the schedule of entries. The rabbits brought to the show, unaware of this august intervention, broke from their quarters and had to be chased about the hall. As for the last Exhibition, 'it nearly killed me,' Miss Williams says, 'and I retired from the Executive into private life.'

The point about these early Exhibitions, which pioneered the way for the more technical London Exhibitions which the movement has had in recent years, was that they were frankly jolly, and for advertising purposes. The system of selecting entries was not austere. The exhibits were for sale and must stand on their own feet. As a friend who was there says, 'The bazaar element was rife and enthusiasm unbridled.' Everybody voted Miss Williams a trump, and lots of English people saw Welsh bards in a new light.

THE HIDDEN FUTURE.—A coloured picture adorns the cover of the National Federation's first printed report to December 31, 1917. (It is dated January, 1918, and is called the first Annual Report; but it has properly a history of only three months to relate.) Above the coloured picture are the words, 'For Home and Country.' But no home is discernible. There is only a dank, unproductive country, much in need of drainage. In order to accommodate the water-colour, the page is twice the width of this book. This praiseworthy attempt to hit upon something original in Reports was no doubt designed to suggest that here was a movement on new lines. But the size of the page is so awkward, that, in all probability, many people, into whose hands the Report fell, quietly dropped it into the waste-paper basket. It did not cross their minds that the day might come when this unprepossessing brochure would be neither to buy nor to borrow. They did

not see in it the beginnings of a movement, the records of a year's work of which would, within seven years, call for an Annual Report containing thrice the contents of this pioneer chronicle.

THE PROBLEM OF FUNDS.—There is no balance-sheet in this first Report, for the simple reason that the whole income of the Federation, beyond the Institutes' affiliation fees, consisted of the profits on a patriotic play by Miss Williams. It was announced that 'the Committee now ask for subscriptions.' This was because 'the grant given by the Treasury to the Women's Branch for Institute work for one year from October, 1917'—it was to be given for ten years more—was 'intended for propaganda purposes' exclusively. Office accommodation and clerical and messenger help were all that was provided for the Federation. But the Federation 'should be in a position to meet its own organization and office expenses,' should the grant 'not be renewed in the future.' Funds would also be useful for 'assisting the experimental organization of village industries, etc.'

No one was a bit certain how things were going to shape—no one knew how the War was going to shape—but the first Federation Committee had a clear enough view of the lines on which the movement ought to proceed.

At this time, however, its financial resources were so limited that in, I think, Mrs. Harris's words, it 'could only write letters of advice.' The Federation had, as we have seen, lodging with the Women's Branch, but no board. It could rejoice, however, that more and more Institutes were being formed without cost to itself, and that it had the mothering of them.

No outside organization can ever have been adopted by a Government Department on more liberal terms. On this point Mrs. Watt was satisfied at last. She wrote: 'It was often said to me, when I stated that the Department of Agriculture of Canada had given Institutes the maximum of help with a minimum of interference, "Oh, well, your Government in Canada is different; you will never get that in England." But we have got it—just that exactly.' There was a War on, however, and

War-time is the only time in which the true-born Englishman can bring himself to turn a blind eye on precedents.

BY AUTHORITY.—It is of historical interest to note that the publications of the Federation bore the legend: 'Published in conjunction with the Women's Branch of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries,' or 'Established in conjunction,' etc. This latter legend appears on the publications of the movement to this day.

Three-quarters of the first leaflet issued under the official ægis is about the ways in which members 'can help their country during the War.' An Institute is defined as a group of women banded together 'to help their country *and themselves.*' Was there ever such frankness?

HUMOURS OF THE TRANSITION.—Something should be said of the humours of the period during which the movement passed from the A.O.S. offices into Government quarters. In a mass of documents which I have accumulated from many correspondents I come on letters in which the humorist of the movement, Mrs. Harris, writes, 'yours sincerely, for Director, Women's Branch,' to 'Dear Mr. Harris' asking for information for Lady Denman, Assistant Director, or asking that such and such shall be done or noted.

The transition from the A.O.S. to a Government office was not easy. There were bound to be comical incidents when enthusiastic amateurs were brought into relations with highly trained civil servants. But, as Dame Meriel tells me, 'War-time made unconventionality possible, even in a Government office.' She did all she could, she says, 'to alleviate control.' What I am regretting all the time, as I throw my mind back into that period, is that nobody seems to have kept a diary.

Life was at too high pressure. More and more ships were being sunk. 'Is it possible for 15,000 more women to be got to work in the next six weeks?' was the kind of problem in Dame Meriel's mind.

'The Institutes arrived at the Food Production Department, Ministry of Agriculture, with an imposing array of files,' one who was of the pilgrim band writes to me, 'but it was nothing

to the multitude of files that represented the movement a month later, a multitude that increased almost daily in bulk and in numbers.

‘And there were pitfalls in the new life. The chief of the Institute Secretarial Section was presented with a book of telegraph forms and was told that her signature would pass any message. Later she was told that the signature had not been officially forwarded to the P.M.G. and that therefore telegrams sent over the signature were out of order. As the telegrams had been dispatched and delivered the delinquent was not unduly depressed.

‘Troubles that arose through ignorance of the intricacies of Government departments found a sympathetic solver in Miss Talbot, a broadminded and human Government official that only the upheaval of a Great War could produce.’

But I heard of another ‘sympathetic solver,’ ‘kind Ada.’ She was a messenger, and was invaluable in teaching the newcomers how to dispose of the files she brought them. Some of the old hands of the Board of Agriculture must have felt that those same files were taking on a new character when there might be found in them an Institute’s hints on making down father’s trousers to little Willy.

THE KIND OF WORK DONE.—One of the earliest decisions of the National Federation was to advocate and assist in the formation of County Federations. Only six County Federations and a North Wales Union – the president of which was the wife of the Prime Minister – are shown in the 1917 Report to be in existence. (For list of County Federation officers to date *see* Appendix). Lists of all the 137 Institutes (32 in Wales) and their officers, and of the achievements of these Institutes are given in the Report, and there is a page of Welsh, and – on the back cover – the admirable ‘Scaynes Hill Programme: Winner of First Prize in Lady Denman’s Programme Competition.’

In regard to this programme, one looks with curiosity to see the kind of work that was being done by the Institutes of 1917. There is, of course, constantly recurring, fruit and vegetable

bottling, canning and comforts for the Army and Navy, sugar distributing, herb, thistle-down, acorn, chestnut, and sphagnum moss collecting and swab making, giving of dinners to children, potato spraying, starting of savings associations, holding of baby shows and co-operative food buying.

Beyond this, one notes Girls' group making dolls stuffed with dry fern, 3 tons of potatoes produced, collection and sale of waste paper, small herd of goats kept, 5 acres cultivated, communal kitchen, bee-keeping increased, washing-machine bought, acre of potatoes planted, earthed and lifted, and coal, pig and poultry clubs started.

PIONEERS.—Among the women 'to whom the movement owes much,' as was chronicled by the National Federation in its first printed matter, were Mrs. Drage (the character of whose services is indicated in the Chapter on Wales), Mrs. Godman (who did a lot of speaking, and has been described, with Lady Isabel Margesson and Mrs. Watt, as 'the impassioned apostles of the movement'), Lady Isabel herself (a delightful conversationalist and worker for the women's movement in the arduous days, whom Edward Carpenter, in one of his books, is proud to own as his friend), Mrs. Philip Martineau (a great authority on gardening), and Mrs. H. G. Stobart (a gallant worker in the North).

LADY DENMAN.—Of Lady Denman someone was to write, after working with her for many years, 'Her realization that good business must be the solid foundation on which to build ideals, and that practical doing must be coupled with enthusiasm, and her quickness and keen sense of humour have made her an invaluable leader.'

In the first years of the Federation one finds Lady Denman recommending the Institutes for their work in developing among countrywomen a sense of responsibility. 'From responsibility,' as she wrote, 'comes fairness of judgment, constructive criticism, appreciation of difficulties and sane optimism as opposed to the unpractical volubility and the virulence against failure of the arm-chair critic.'

But in the early years of the Federation, Lady Denman, like

the movement, had her way to make. When one looks at Lady Denman in a portrait in some illustrated paper of the time in which she came into the movement, and then looks at the Lady Denman one sees to-day at an annual meeting, it is plain what the inspiration of a great movement, constant thought for it, and the responsibility of leading it have done for its chief. Lady Denman's praises, as the manager of an Annual Meeting, are in every delegate's mouth, but, it is just as well to make clear, for the benefit of women on whom an Institute presidency or other public duties are thrust for the first time, that the chairman of the N.F.W.I. had to learn, like everybody else, how to conduct a meeting really well. Leading workers were soon to realize, as one of them said to me, that 'we couldn't have had a better chairman for the growing stage of the movement.'

One tribute to the chairman's character which I had from a member of the Executive was that 'from the beginning of the movement I have never found Lady Denman trying to cover things up, and she is always fair-minded.' That it was possible, with a large Executive, often to get unanimous decisions, no one can believe; but the chairman usually managed to draw forth the best opinion. An old Executive member writes to me that 'the Cabinet meetings of the movement are the frankest and most amusing committees I attend; discussion is so frank and free that one member once offered to provide hockey pads.'

MRS. WATT.—Something may fittingly be said here of an outstanding personality of the movement. There is before me a verbatim report of a speech delivered by Mrs. Watt in November of this year in advocacy of Institutes. This full report shows unmistakably the reasons for Mrs. Watt's effectiveness as an apostle to countrywomen. She is at once informal and authoritative. She is always personal, intimate and shrewd. Here, her villagers must think, is a woman of common-sense, a woman of motherly feeling, of ability, and of experience of the world, even the great world. Mrs. Watt's occasional quaintness of phrase takes her audiences' fancy. And she touches the emotions. There is always a sense of 'uplift' at

Mrs. Watt's gatherings. It was felt at the two 'Schools' she was to hold, later on, in Sussex and Essex. Mrs. Watt can unquestionably move an audience.

But what of the future, the future in which the movement is going to be shaped by a younger generation of women, who, as a worker of that generation said to me, 'won't stand "uplift"; would as soon have thieving.' ?



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JOHN O' GROATS MEMBERS



LACE MAKERS. Gamblingay Institute

THE V. C. A. 'S W O O I N G

ON the cover of the 1918 Report there is an emblem in which, in honour of the first Institute, perhaps, the Welsh dragon is four times the size of the rose and the oak-leaf. This Report is also noteworthy, like the next year's Report, as giving particulars of every Institute and its year's work, information for which later Reports have no room. As the 1918 and 1919 Reports are in bigger type than their successors, although the same size of page, their 144 and 264 pages respectively are hardly comparable for bulk with the contents of the Reports of succeeding years. It may be just worth noting, however, that the 1920-4 Reports are 74, 94, 129, 143 and 159 pages respectively.

THE GAINS OF A YEAR.—In the 1918 Report the officials, beyond the Executive are, the late Mrs. N. Kilroy Kenyon, the first salaried general secretary, an ardent suffragist and leader of W.A.A.C.'s, who began the work of office organization; Miss Margesson, trades organizer, Lady Isabel's daughter, whom I once heard make an effective intervention at a London Annual Meeting; and Miss Watkins, known all over the country as the Federation lecturer. Mrs. Clowes, an enthusiastic worker in close touch with rural life; Miss Guest, yet another Canadian, who after acceptable work in the North, was to return to Institute work in Ontario; Mrs. Warner, a vicar's wife, at one time county secretary for Berkshire; Miss Kekewich, a widely-popular worker, daughter of the Judge; and the late Miss Bulkeley Williams, a fine Welshwoman, were full time organizers. Mrs. Godman and Mrs. Nevinson (another vicar's wife) were half-time organizers.

The year's harvest was 574 Institutes, making a total of 760 to October, or to December 773, thanks not only to the activities of the organizers but to the 'loyal help' of the Women's War Agricultural Committees — they had learnt a thing or two about the Institutes' capabilities — and their 36 propaganda sub-committees.

THE FIRST V.C.O.'S AND THE FIRST SCHOOL.—

The year was noteworthy for the first appointment of Voluntary County Organizers and for the holding, by Mrs. Watt, of the first Women's Institutes' School. A small book was written about it by Mrs. Watt - from now on, until she left for Canada, called Chief Technical Adviser - and Miss Nest Lloyd. The School to which further allusion is made in Chapter 14, broke fresh ground. It was also memorable for a reprimand administered by the Executive for resolutions passed at the School and reproduced in full in the *First Women's Institute School*, 'protesting against' and 'strongly deprecating' one thing and another. 'Such Schools shall be used only for instruction,' ran the Executive's resolution, 'and no discussion shall be allowed on questions of policy or administration.'

MR. NUGENT HARRIS.-Mr. Nugent Harris had been an active member of the Executive from the period of the transference from A.O.S. control, as one of the four representatives of the A.O.S., and often made useful suggestions. At a Committee on February 13, 1918, he was reported to be, in circumstances with which we have made ourselves familiar in a previous Chapter, 'no longer one of the A.O.S. representatives.' He was therefore co-opted to the Committee on his own merits to fill a vacancy caused by the death of the Hon. Mrs. Henry Guest. Half-way through the year, when the number of Institutes was at 550, Mr. Harris writes, 'I have every reason to be proud of my child.'

THE MOVEMENT AND THE EDUCATION AUTHORITIES.-At a Committee meeting in March a proposal of Mrs. Robert Hobbs (May Elliot) was approved. Mrs. Hobbs, the daughter of a well-known Border farmer, married to a well-known English agriculturist, was a travelling inspector of the Womens' Branch, and is described in a document in my collection as, 'an enthusiastic W.I. supporter.' The Institute in her own village of Kelmscott, where Miss May Morris played a part in the early movement, had been started as far back as May, 1916. A woman of many interests - she had had a first-rate musical training - Mrs. Hobbs gave constant practical support to the movement on many sides, and has the honour

of being among the women who have been co-opted to the Executive. Her proposal was that the Federation should write to the County Education Committees, asking them to provide lectures for Institutes. Following upon this, Sir Daniel Hall, in writing to the Committees on behalf of the President of the Board of Agriculture, said that, 'few of the many new enterprises in rural development which the War has stimulated are, in Mr. Prothero's opinion, so full of promise for the future.'

INSTITUTES IN TOWNS.—This year the Federation Committee, in its advisory relation to the Women's Branch, got it to issue a circular-letter to organizers and others against the formation of Institutes in towns. Women's Institute Centres, of which an account is given later on, might be formed. Undoubtedly in the early days, Institutes were often formed precipitately. But, as a table in the Appendix shows, the number which failed was not so very large.

MR. PROTHERO'S £2,000.—As the result of a deputation to Mr. Prothero, a grant of two thousand pounds, beyond the money which was being spent on the Women's Institute Section of the Women's Branch, was promised the Federation.

By the kindness of Lord Ernle, I have had the opportunity of looking through an official report.

Mrs. Lyttelton began by mentioning that during the period in which the movement had been under the direction of the Board the number of Institutes had risen from 130 to 550, with a membership of 35,000. A subsidy, similar to that formerly granted to the A.O.S., was needed, in the interests of food production, for lecturers and business advice, 'because the Institutes took up all sorts of enterprises.'

Miss Hadow told how a 'very poor' village she knew was 'awakened, amused, stimulated, and educated' by its Institute—an excellent summary of the work the movement does. Miss Hadow went to the root of the matter about lectures. Lectures on pig-keeping, cheese-making and so forth were of small value 'unless the ground had been prepared beforehand.' For this work the Institutes were 'invaluable.' But whole-time

workers were needed to organize, and also 'to talk to the better educated women in order to lead them to influence others.'

Lady Denman said the local education authorities would sometimes arrange for classes, but they would not provide the valuable preparatory single lectures. As for the work at headquarters, 'though Miss Williams and herself gave all their time, it was felt that if any accident happened to either, the work of the Federation would collapse.'

As one of the members of the deputation told me, 'it seemed a sheer waste of time to have said anything about the movement; Mr. Prothero knew all about it and he really cared about the country.' Mr. Prothero said his 'own experience' was that Institutes were 'a most valuable adjunct in village life.' The Institute 'brought together women who had never been brought together before.' 'The fact that they, in a great measure, think things out for themselves makes them very keen about carrying them out.'

The Institute in his own village had thought out two plans. One was rush plaiting. The other involved the taking of a cottage in which the women could do their washing. 'A woman in the parish, a former laundry-maid at my house, is going to teach them.' Mr. Prothero said he was keen on the work the Institutes were doing in preparing the ground for the County Education authorities. And, finally, he promised a grant.

'SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS.'—A jest of Mrs. Lyttelton about the movement at this time was that if Mrs. Watt and Lady Denman were its mother, the Board of Agriculture had provided the patent food. With regard to Lady Denman's work, not as chairman of the Federation but as Assistant Director of the Women's Institute Section of the Board, Mrs. Lyttelton declared that she had shown 'judgment, impartiality and essential idealism.'

In the pages of the admirable *Landswoman* one finds a message from Lady Denman which makes plain how largely the movement had concentrated on food production and economy. She urges that every member should be an 'energetic and thinking participant in her Institute,' 'and through the Institute, in

the life of the village.' She begs for 'suggestions and ideas' for the movement from any member.

In the same paper Lady Petre, a famous demonstrator in cobbling, writes on cobbling as 'one of the greatest economies a woman can practise.' It seems that rush-lights and tapers were being made in many places. One Institute was contriving soles for men's boots out of old motor-tyres. A certain communal kitchen was no longer thought of as a soup-kitchen when the bank manager's wife took her dinner there. Members are asked to make a 'serious campaign' against flies.

FISH AND THE CONSTITUTION.—Returning to the Report, we find a new item in the War-time history of the movement. It is recorded that, at the request of the Ministry of Food, the Federation had recommended to its Institutes the Canadian frozen fish imported by that Department, 'having heard from several people of the high quality of the fish.' But it sometimes went bad. And now and then parcels of highly odorous fish were indignantly sent to the Women's Branch.

The Federation had 'decided to affiliate with the National Union of Women Workers' in order to obtain the services of lecturers.'

The second Annual Meeting, held on October, 1918, was attended by 500 delegates and visitors — it is a pity that the attendances at the annual meeting are not always stated after this year. The gathering was described by Lady Denman as probably the largest meeting of rural women ever held in London. A revised constitution was adopted 'to meet any possible contingency.'

MEN AND WOMEN.—As the result of a talk at the Agricultural Club there was started, in June, 1918, at the instance of that distinguished agricultural statistician, Sir Henry Rew, an organization which was to have almost as close a relationship with the Institute movement as the A.O.S. It was called the Village Clubs Association. It came upon the territory of the Women's Institutes by proposing, at discretion, to include women as well as men in its clubs. The new body soon managed to excite suspicions in the Institute movement. At the annual

Amusing posters, Fruit-stones for gas-masks, and nut-shells and sheep's-wool collected, Labour-saving devices, Improvement of a very bad road at Institute's request, $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons of blackberries gathered, Collection of 2 tons of tin and iron, Sale of 75 pairs of second-hand Army boots, Remnants bought and then sold to members cheaply, 6d. Christmas presents, $16\frac{1}{2}$ dozen bottles collected and sold; Tin of blackberries, canned by Institute, bought by the Queen; Starch from diseased potatoes, Apparatus for making briquettes bought, Sale slate, Recipe-book started, 1 cwt. of Hawthorn berries collected and sold, Sun-bonnets made, Bread-making studied, Cheese-press bought, Pair of Institute socks bought by the Queen, and Prize for best garden tended by a woman.

EARLY COMMITTEES.—In the 1919 Report the officials of the Federation, beyond the Executive, are Miss Inez Ferguson, general secretary; Mrs. Nugent Harris, chief organizer; Miss Dora Parr, who had been much liked under the Board and was later to be County Federation Secretary in Sussex, organizing secretary; Miss Preece, an able advisory director of Handicrafts, who had been an inspector under the Board of Education; and Miss Watkins, lecturer. There are committees including Office and Finance, Literature and Publicity, Industries and Organization and Girl Guides. There is also a joint sub-committee for Soldiers' Clubs and a joint committee of the National Federation and the V.C.A.

TREASURER AND SECRETARY.—Two members of the organization at headquarters to whom the movement is under obligation are Mrs. Auerbach, the treasurer, and Miss Ferguson, the secretary. Mrs. Auerbach was a great asset. She had been treasurer of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, and brought to the National Federation an unusual grasp of finance. She had also a close acquaintance with rural life. Miss Ferguson, who had distinguished herself at St. Hilda's Hall, and came to the Federation after some years with the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, developed the office organization. If the movement is to-day, as I have heard it described, 'beautifully organized,' this is due not a

little to the clear head of one who, when she came to her post, was thought by some to be too young for it. Miss Ferguson recently became Mrs. Jenkins, but has not altered her office signature.

A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE!—In addition to the committees which have been enumerated, there is this year, what attracts notice in connection with a non-party organization—although it was by no means the only non-party organization to indulge in such a thing—a Parliamentary Sub-Committee. This Committee recommended the appointment of ‘a Parliamentary Secretary, who should watch Bills and report on any affecting rural women and the interests of Institute members.’ Regret has been expressed by one of the elders of the movement that this committee was not kept in being, for a few years at any rate. The argument for closing down was that the work to be done was covered by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.

HALL-LESS VILLAGES.—The Joint Committee of the Federation and of the Village Clubs Association has an interesting piece of village statistic, based on a *questionnaire*. In 156 villages, out of 229 which supplied information, the Women’s Institute is ‘the only agency in the village doing social work.’ In 47 villages there is ‘no organized work of any sort outside Institutes.’ The most numerous organizations are cricket clubs 75, horticultural societies 53, labourers’ unions 54, pig clubs 39. Some 151 of the 229 villages have some kind of village hall, but only 64 of these halls are adequate.

JOINT INSTITUTES.—The Committee feels that there are sufficient signs of the need of Men’s Institutes to justify the formulation of a plan for them, but that ‘there is no call to speak of for Joint Institutes.’ As to the labourers’ unions, they are ‘likely to play a great part in the future of village life.’

OUT IN THE WORLD

THE fighting ceased in November, 1918. The Institutes had concentrated so much on food production and food economies that there were many women who thought of the movement 'as a kind of War measure.' They now imagined, 'seeing the War is over,' that the Institutes would come to an end. The truth is that the movement never did better than in 1919.

A NEW STAGE IN THE MOVEMENT.—Although, however, the work of the year was notable in amount and in quality, it was, from the spring onwards, of a transitional sort. It was on November 21, 1918, ten days after the cessation of hostilities, that a letter was received from the General Secretary of the Food Production Department of the Board of Agriculture, announcing 'the intention of the Board to hand over to the National Federation, when firmly established, the propaganda work undertaken by the Women's Branch.'

To the policy of independence a majority of the Executive gave 'a warm support.' But nine or ten County Federations opposed severance from the Board.

CANADIAN AND BRITISH EXPERIENCE.—It is probable that they were largely influenced to do so by the attitude of Mrs. Watt. She saw the movement in a safe haven. She was swayed by her experience in Canada where Governmental direction has been usual. She did not realize how exceptional, according to our notions, the position of the British Institutes had been under the Board during the War, and that when the War was over the situation was bound to be reviewed. Britons do not take kindly to the idea of semi-official organizations.

Even in Canada, as we have seen, a movement began a few years ago to federate outside Governmental control, and a Dominion Federation of Women's Institutes, on somewhat the same lines as the N.F.W.I., has been in existence for about six years. The State Departments of Agriculture, as has been mentioned, do all the propaganda work, start new Institutes, have a staff of paid organizers, provide lectures and so forth.

I have heard – I do not know whether accurately or not – that some Institutes do not see what they have to gain from a central Federation, and look only to the Government. Consequently the Federation, which receives no grant from the State, has a financial problem.

PROTESTATIONS AT PARTING.—On June 17, Lord Ernle himself received a dissenting deputation, which Lady Denman, although opposed to its views, introduced. I have again the advantage of having the Board's official report before me.

The Hon. Mrs. Dalgety (Hants), who is known as having a wide knowledge of the literature of rural progress, and of late years has given special attention to the training of Voluntary Organizers, and is a member of the 1925 Executive, pleaded that only a Government Department could keep the movement 'from being exploited or becoming sectarian or political.' Only a Government Department could maintain a 'standard of efficiency and preserve stability,' give 'necessary prestige and security,' and 'keep us agricultural.' The Board should maintain 'an Institute Department composed of a technical staff, with experienced Institute workers who are salaried officials.' 'We want the Board to appoint the trained Institute workers, and to give (or withdraw) certificates to trained workers, and to give (or withdraw) charters to Institutes.' (Charters were certainly a Canadian notion.) 'We want to decentralize on the county basis, to get away from any great central machinery, with allocations of Government grants as directly as possible.'

Mrs. Godman, a Canadian and a worker with Mrs. Watt, thought the organizers would 'do better and more stable work with Government authority.' As salaried officials of the Board their standard of work had been high.

Miss Christy, so great a power in Essex, held that foreign experience of work for rural women was that 'Government direction is needed to keep a large movement non-sectarian and non-political.' Mrs. Burton-Fanning, an assiduous worker in Norfolk from the beginning, and Mrs. Price White, active in many causes in Wales, also deprecated the proposed severance of the movement from the Board.

LORD ERNLE ON THE BOARD'S DECISION AND THE FUTURE.—Lord Ernle began by testifying to 'the great success' of the Women's Branch. 'I was the first head of any Government Department,' he said, 'to start a Branch wholly staffed and administered by women.'

As to the Institutes, he was 'a strong believer in their advantages and future.' One thing the Board had done was to keep the young movement—'like a child, most impressionable'—from being identified with any political party or any religious body.

As to the proposed separation, its extent ought not to be exaggerated. The schools for organizers would 'still be conducted by the Board, the organizers would be trained, examined and certified by the Board, the Board would continue to be represented on the Executive, and it would be through the Board that the Development Fund grant would be given.

From the outset, Lord Ernle said, the Board had held the view that the best missioner for a movement of this kind was a self-governing organization with the strongest backing of the Government behind it; 'We encouraged the formation of a National Federation and an Executive.' During the 'emergency period of the War, when food production was so vital that rapidity of action was essential,' the Women's Branch supplied funds, built up the organization, and furnished skilled organizers. But 'we had throughout in our minds that the bodies which were ultimately to organize and govern the movement were the County Federations and the National Federation.'

The success of the movement now depended 'very largely on its freedom, its independence, its elasticity, its originality, its enterprise, and its facilities for trying experiments.' Dual control in peace time would not favour 'those somewhat easy-going methods which we have been able to adopt during the War, and have given you the freedom you have enjoyed.' If the movement were to be a branch of the Government in peace time there would be control and restrictions which might in the end produce friction. Every penny of the movement's

expenditure, and every one of its publications would have to be carefully supervised. 'Every new venture we should have to scrutinize meticulously in order to see that it did not trespass upon the domain of some jealous Department, possibly the Board of Education, though there are others which will occur to you.' Sturdy growth would be impossible. Uniformity and routine would be fatal.

As to the grant, the Board thought it would be better that the money should be paid over to the National Federation rather than to counties. With regard to fears of political and religious influence, as the movement was forewarned of the danger of drifting towards politics and sectarianism, it was forearmed. To 'relapse into agencies for this or that party or religious body' would be a 'great disaster.' With regard to Miss Christy's point about foreign experience, the Minister said drily that 'of course the tendency in this country has always been to self-government.'

There is one more quotable passage in Lord Ernle's speech: 'Women,' he said, 'have been the principal opponents of the more intelligent of their sons working on the land. We are familiar with many of the reasons why that should be so. But if we could show the women that the interests of rural life can be deepened and strengthened, and that they are the people to do it, the future of rural life would be far brighter and more hopeful.'

LORD ERNLE'S ACHIEVEMENT.—So far Lord Ernle. It was one of the many good strokes of fortune that the movement has had that, at a period of its history when it was tested by the unexampled calamity of the Great War, there was at the Board of Agriculture a Minister possessed not only of the profound acquaintance with our rural life and industry for which the author of *English Farming Past and Present* is famous, but with so sympathetic an understanding of the part which women have to play in the development of the country-side.

Lord Ernle has spoken to me of his recognition of the movement as 'an invaluable agent in revitalizing the villages, if it could be kept clear of political and religious parties.' 'A

Coalition Government like that of 1916-18,' he went on to say to me, 'could support the movement without giving it any political tinge ; but I felt that, as soon as political life resumed its ordinary form, the movement must be freed from all Departmental control.'

Few friends of the movement can now doubt that the friendly Minister was right. With regard to the protesting County Federations, I remember hearing a wise saying from Lady Denman, on quite another matter, at the 1925 annual meeting of the National Federation : 'When we are beaten we have the added interest of seeing how other people's ideas work out in practice ; speaking for myself, I am invariably surprised by the fact that they always work out far more successfully than I expected.'

LORD ERNLE'S 'VISION.'—Here I am going to insert a few statesmanlike sentences from what Lord Ernle said to me not long ago in speaking of his official connection with the movement : 'The blight on village life is its narrow outlook. To lay on water and artificial light would make the lives of village women less hard. But the cost is prohibitive. Yet the narrowness and hardship of rural life make women pine for the towns. What they want are more casements in their minds through which may pour the warmth and colour of life, and through which they can widen their horizons. But all that was being done was done, not for women generally, but for those who belonged to some religious or political party. I came to the conclusion that women must combine as women irrespective of religion, politics or class, on the broad basis of womanhood. When I heard of Women's Institutes, I had a vision of their potentialities in providing the link which I had been searching for. It was this vision which made me jump at Miss Talbot's suggestion that the Board of Agriculture should take up the movement.'

ADVANTAGES OF THE SEVERANCE.—Lady Denman and most of the Executive were in no doubt, as has been noted, that the Board of Agriculture's abandonment of Institute propaganda and the release of the movement from official leading strings

were advantageous. The division of control between the Women's Branch Institute Section and the National Federation had obvious drawbacks. There was overlapping, for one thing. Unification of the work was needed. Then, what with the public purse at hand and what with Government office methods of putting a job through, the movement was getting into somewhat expensive ways. This naturally occasioned house-wifely distress. As separation from the Government was inevitable some day, it was as well that it should take place before the movement grew any older. It was years indeed before Federation headquarters quite got rid of some legacies of official management. Lady Denman was always urging the reduction of the number of files and the destruction of unnecessary papers.

The separation from the Government was the easier to urge because it was clear that the movement retained official sympathy, and that the Ministry desired to go on doing the best it could for it. The warm feeling of Whitehall for the movement has continued to this day, and in the very week in which I am writing Lord Ernle tells me he is speaking at an Institute meeting.

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT SPENT.—Many people have wondered just how much the Government laid out on the Women's Institute movement during the period in which the State availed itself of the Institutes' usefulness in helping forward food production. One who was in the Institute Section at the time the Board was undertaking Institute propaganda told me that the expenditure was 'lavish; we were able to spend what we liked.' By the kindness of Mr. Dobson, Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, I learn that the outlay of the Government in giving hospitality to the Institute Section for a short year and a half was £13,513. To this sum should be added, I imagine, a fair sum representing franked letters and telegrams, and clerical and messenger assistance.

VALUE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S BACKING.—It is unnecessary to point out, in considering the history of the movement, how much its early rooting owed to this liberal

outlay of money, and also to the impression the Institute propagandists made in the counties with the authority of the Government behind them. Mrs. Hobbs, who started as many Institutes as any Board of Agriculture official, writes to me: 'You can judge what a tremendous lift it gave the movement, having all the machinery of the Food Production Department behind it. In 1916, before the Board took over, I had meetings of all my War Agricultural Committees to consider the question of starting Institutes in their counties, but very little happened. When the Government got behind us people took notice.'

¶ In spite of all the Government did, there were plenty of women, some of them now within the movement, who, for a long time, failed to grasp the possibilities of the Institutes. The omission of these women to co-operate was due to nothing more than that lack of imagination which it is so necessary continually to stimulate.

¶ In a batch of semi-official papers dealing with the period 1917-9, which I have been allowed to examine, I discover that there were, in May, 1919, under the Board - in addition to Lady Denman and Mrs. Nugent Harris and three clerks - seven outside organizers and 68 voluntary organizers, who were qualified for their work by attendance at an Institute school held under the direction of the Board. Schools at Oxford and Cambridge, a farewell gift from the Board, were of a more advanced type than anything the movement has had since.

AGRICULTURE AND HANDICRAFTS.-The school conducted at Lichfield in 1925 - if for a moment we may look so far ahead - by that energetic countrywoman, Miss Simpson, was an indication to many people that the movement is determined to give close attention to rural agricultural instruction. Agricultural instruction is of course on a different basis altogether from instruction in handicrafts. The County Councils have agricultural instruction well organized. The movement has had to train its own teachers of handicrafts.

The rural character of the movement is emphasized, not only



A MEETING OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION EXECUTIVE PHOTOGRAPHED FOR THIS BOOK

Left to right : Mrs. Trevelyan, Lady Dorothy Meynell, Lady Margaret Boscawen (sitting back), Lady Boyne, Mr. Dallinger, Miss Hadow, Miss Hay (Assistant Secretary), Lady Denman Mr. Bostock, Mrs. Simm, Miss Gildea, Mrs. Watt, Mrs. Holland-Martin, Mrs. Drage and Miss Bouverie



NATIONAL FEDERATION STAFF SENDING OUT AGENDAS

Miss Ferguson, the Secretary, fastening up envelopes enthusiastically and unhygienically



FIRST INSTITUTE IN EUROPE, ALVERINGHEM, BELGIUM, 1906.

by the annual appointment since 1921 of an Agricultural and Horticultural Sub-Committee of the National Federation, but, as early as 1919, in a well-written document on 'Women's Institute Schools,' drawn up at the time of parting from the Board. Attention was drawn to the technical acquirements of the organizers of the Belgian Women's Farmers' Circles. It was recognized that it was impossible to insist upon a technical agricultural education for voluntary organizers, 'but each organizer should be encouraged to study seriously a special branch of agriculture.'

EFFICIENCY AND DEMOCRACY.—'The great success of the movement,' we read, 'has been, in a large part due to the recognition of a standard, and its enforcement through the regulation that an Institute can only be started by a duly accredited organizer, who has attended a course of instruction under the direction of the Board.'

Then, in connection with the sixteen schools organized by the Board, 'the necessity of plain teaching in the meaning of democratic government has been clearly demonstrated.'

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT GOT FOR ITS MONEY.—When the Government gave the movement its freedom, Institutes were being started at the rate of about a dozen a week. The number of organized countrywomen in the movement was 64,000, the average number of members in an Institute being 60. 'Village women themselves have decided that the Institutes are what they want,' I read in one memorandum; 'a message from a neighbouring village to Platt Institute, Kent, said, "We do not know what you've got, but we want exactly the same."' The following figures may be put on record :

In October, 1917 (when the Board took over)	137 Institutes
By the end of 1917 there were	.. .. 200 Institutes
By the end of 1918 there were	.. .. 773 Institutes
On May 14, 1919, there are	.. .. 1,059 Institutes

IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT DECLARATION.—The movement had now to start on a new career. Miss Talbot had been the faithful friend of the movement, and, at parting from

Whitehall the Federation was indebted to her for a memorable declaration. After saying that it was not the desire of the Board to relieve itself of responsibility, but rather 'to strengthen the whole movement,' she added, '*It is the hope of the Government that the movement will spread throughout the whole country.*'

THE £10,000 GRANT.—But it was impossible for the movement to do this without money. There were negotiations on the financial relations of the Federation with the Board. It is no surprise to find, in the Report for 1919, our examination of which has been interrupted by the account of the deputation to Lord Ernle, 'special thanks to Miss Talbot, C.B.E., and the Hon. Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, D.B.E.,' for their 'untiring efforts to secure a full hearing for the needs of the Federation.'

The Federation application was that it should receive for twelve months £12,227. £10,000 was given.

END OF THE WOMEN'S BRANCH.—The closing of the Institute Section of the Women's Branch is a fitting occasion to mention that the Women's Branch which was established in 1917 ended early in 1920. It is to be gratefully remembered, not only for its work's sake in connection with the movement but for its legacy of organizers and other workers. Some of the women who have been among the most serviceable leaders of the movement were formerly travelling inspectors, or secretaries of Women's War Agricultural Committees. I may note among others, Miss Burgess, Mrs. Hobbs, Mrs. Kellett, Miss Lumley, Mrs. Molesworth, Miss Nightingale, Miss Parr, Miss Peers, Miss Hirst Simpson, Miss Sutherland, Miss M. M. Williams and Dame Meriel herself, whose administrative experience and statesmanlike cast of mind were so often of service. Many voluntary workers and leaders in the counties were chairmen or were otherwise officially connected with the W.W.A.C.

It was not at first intended to close down the Women's Branch. but to retain, under Dame Meriel, a nucleus staff of half a dozen women for half a dozen departments dealing with the interests of countrywomen. Second thoughts, under the increasing

post-War economic pressure, were that three women would do, the three being Miss Simpson – a competent judge once said that ‘no women talk in a more convincing way on rural things than Mrs. Wilkins and Miss Simpson’ – Mrs. Harris and Miss Pott. But there were third as well as second thoughts, and the third thoughts were that Miss Simpson alone should be retained. Soon Dame Meriel and Miss Simpson retired in their turn. Dame Meriel, Miss Pott and Miss Franklin of the Women’s Branch are now engaged in the work of women’s oversea settlement.

There is, however, at the Ministry, Miss Pratt, who has to do among other things with Young Farmers’ Clubs, in which the Institutes are increasingly interesting themselves.

Mrs. Harris accepted the post of Chief Organizer of the National Federation, Mrs. Watt having returned to Canada.

LADY DENMAN AND MISS HADOW.—When Miss Hadow was suggested as the right woman for the secretaryship of the Federation, Lady Denman said, and the story is indicative of the cordial feeling that has always characterized the relations of the chairman and the vice-chairman, ‘If she will accept, I will scrub her office floor for her!’ Miss Hadow did not come to London, but Lady Denman has nevertheless been discovered taking an active part in such housewifely economies at Eccleston Street as colour-washing.

‘The point that always impresses me about Lady Denman and Miss Hadow,’ I find a prominent leader saying in a letter to me, ‘is that each gains so immensely from having the other in harness with her. One is so extraordinarily the complement of the other. One can’t say too much or expatiate too long on the extraordinary fortune which put the movement in their hands. The very contrast in manner and style and dress, as one observes them side by side on the platform at the Annual Meeting, illustrates the widely divergent gifts and qualities they bring to the movement, and the importance of both.’

I am not sure whether it was at this stage of the movement’s history that the name of Miss Douglas-Pennant was mentioned in connection with the Movement in Wales.

Home and Country.—During 1918, and the early part of 1919, the National Federation had such hospitality for its news as the *Landswoman* could spare it, the editors of the Institute matter being Miss Helpman and Mrs. Blair Staples. But in March, 1919, the movement was able to start a paper of its own. The little monthly consisted of eight pages of the present size of *Home and Country*. Faint hearts in journalistic enterprise will note that the founding of the paper was regarded as 'a grave financial undertaking.' The capital, I think Lady Denman once told me, was £10! Miss Williams edited *Home and Country* with the assistance of Mrs. Harris, and Miss Laming, an excellent business woman, was commercial manager. A clerk was the only paid worker. But, under the Ministry, postage and office accommodation were free, a substantial help to a new paper. There were 860 Institutes to be catered for. The periodical was a poor enough thing typographically — paper was dear then — but the little monthly had spirit and promise, and the mass of reports on the progress of the movement crammed into the eight pages was arresting. When courage was taken to make the eight pages twelve the bold decision got five lines in the Annual Report. In 1920, Mrs. Harris took on the editing as a half-time job. It is now a three-quarter time task for her. For the other quarter she is the Chief Organizer of the movement. Run at a modest outlay, the journal has been successful from the first. The original eight pages are now forty-two, and no fewer than thirteen counties arrange for special supplements. The paper is full of pictures, and has a circulation of 40,000, increasing monthly. This, although three County Federations have periodicals of their own.

There can be no question that the Federation's monthly organ has had a large share in the advance of the movement. Mrs. Harris has worked as hard for the paper as she has worked as Chief Organizer. It is not without significance that her own Institute (Tysoe, the first Institute she started) is largely composed of working-women. Other editors have her industry and a few her humour, but none are more kindly and more unruffled. *Home and Country* is remarkable not only in its editor, but in

SUB - EDITING AS FUN [1919

its sub-editor, Miss Lunniss, who chooses to work for nothing at the most wearing of all departments of Press work, and does it well. The amateur Press correspondents who provide the county news are assiduous, and have developed a high degree of skill. Further details about the paper will be found in the Appendix.

CONDITIONAL INDEPENDENCE

THE £10,000 grant for 1919 was accompanied by an intimation that the Development Commissioners would recommend a smaller grant for the next year, 'with a view to the cessation of the grant after March 31, 1922.' As everybody knows, a yearly grant steadily decreasing in amount, has continued until now. (The figures for each year will be found in the Appendix.)

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES.—The view of the Executive was that the movement could not be 'entirely self-supporting without surrendering its present freedom and democratic principles.' It was a novel way of putting it to say that freedom and democratic principles were incompatible with self-support. But the Executive's meaning was clear. It would be a danger to the movement were it to accept large gifts, that is, if they were from outsiders. Yet the Development Commissioners, or the taxpayers they represented, were outsiders. But they were impersonal outsiders. They stood for the nation, and might, therefore, help a national work without compromising its independence.

COMMISSIONERS, CLUBS AND FEDERATION.—The Development Commissioners, before recommending the £10,000 grant, requested that some agreement might be come to between the National Federation and the Village Clubs Association, 'the latter being a new association, applying for a grant from the Commissioners for work which they consider so analogous to that of the Institute movement that some form of co-operation between the respective movements was, in the opinion of the Commissioners, desirable.'

The Report records laconically that 'it was found impossible to meet the desires of the Commissioners.'

It appeared to the Federation that 'the co-operation required was such as to risk an infringement of the mandate received at the Annual Meeting of 1918, in the resolution proposed by Lady Petre.' Accordingly, delegates were appointed to wait on the Commissioners; and, in order to deal with the situation

promptly, a special meeting of the Executive was convened to receive the report of the delegates. Schemes of co-operation were submitted and revised not only by an emergency sub-committee, but by two Executive committees. Finally, it having been found difficult to frame an agreement satisfactory to both organizations - 'they say,' writes an Institute leader to me, 'that we had a difficulty in understanding one another, but we understood *them!*' - the following recommendation was received from the Commissioners and was 'unanimously adopted by the Executive :

'A joint standing committee, consisting of an equal number of representatives of each organization, shall be set up and shall meet at frequent intervals, with a view to the adoption of such steps as may be practicable and expedient for ensuring co-operation between the two organizations, such co-operation to include the utilization so far as practicable, of the staffs of the two organizations for common purposes, the avoidance of overlapping, and interchange of views and experience.

'The two organizations further agree to establish their headquarters under the same roof as soon as suitable accommodation can be found.'

The Federation actually continued to use the old Government office at the Food Production Department until December, 1919, 'owing to the difficulty in finding other offices'; but at that date it moved to Idlesleigh House, where the Village Clubs Association was established.

THE FEDERATION ON ITS OWN FEET. - On October 15, 1919, a Special General Meeting was held, and the next day the third Annual General Meeting. It was agreed that the original constitution of the Executive should be modified as follows : seventeen members elected at the annual meeting, three nominated by the Board of Agriculture, one nominated by the Board of Education, one by the A.O.S., one by the Ministry of Health, with three co-opted experts. The Ministry of Health did not appoint a representative, and at the 1920 meeting a representative of the National Association of Landswomen was appointed instead.

LADY DENMAN AND THE TREASURY ON 'SUBSCRIPTIONS.'—Lady Denman, in speaking about the Government grant, made a considered statement. She said that, 'while all forms of entertainment and sales' were legitimate ways of raising money, 'large subscriptions could not be accepted without injuring the tone of the movement.'

It appeared from a statement by Mrs. Auerbach, that the Treasury, in assenting to the decision of the Development Commissioners and the Board of Agriculture to make the £10,000 grant, had set up a condition. Not only should 'immediate steps be taken to increase the amount of the affiliation fees' but 'every effort should be made to secure subscriptions.' The payment of the final £2,500 of the £10,000 depended on the Treasury being assured that arrangements were being made 'for placing the Federation on a self-supporting basis at the earliest possible date.'

The grant was in any case to be used for propaganda and organization purposes only.

The reply of the Executive was that it would recommend to the Annual Meeting an increase in affiliation fees from 2*d.* to 9*d.*, to be divided between County Federations and headquarters, but that efforts to obtain subscriptions would 'fundamentally alter the democratic character of the movement.'

The change was duly agreed to by the Annual Meeting, although it came at a time when the post-War pinch was felt by everybody.

THE ENDOWMENT FUND.—What the Executive was doing, by way of leading the movement to be self-supporting, was to encourage Institutes and County Federations to raise money 'by efforts in which all members could unite,' and 'it was hoped to extend this policy to include the raising of funds for central needs.' Here is the germ of the Endowment Fund, the figures for which, from year to year, will be found in the Appendix.

In correspondence, and in other ways, I have come on pleasing indications of right feeling on the part of the Institutes towards

the Government grant. ‘It has never been,’ as someone writes, ‘that “It is a shame to have to do without the grant,” but “Can’t we do without it?”’ There have been representations from several Institutes to the Executive on the impolicy of taking a Government grant. As housewives, the members realize the need of national economy.’

IS THE MOVEMENT ‘NON-RELIGIOUS’?—In the course of the proceedings at the Annual Meeting Lady Denman spoke plainly about an allegation that the movement was ‘non-religious’ or ‘anti-religious.’ It seemed obvious, she thought, that the foundations of the movement were religious. She said, in her pithy way, that she knew of no religion which did not include the command to love your neighbour as yourself. Nor could any movement, with the watchword, comradeship and co-operation, be either anti-religious or non-religious.

CONSULTATIVE COUNCILS.—A development of the organization of the movement was set about by the adoption of a motion on behalf of the Executive to form a Consultative Council. This Council was to be composed of a representative from each County Federation Executive, and was to meet not less than thrice a year, not necessarily in London, to confer with the National Federation Executive. It was to be, as Miss Margesson, who was once called ‘the phrase-maker of the movement,’ said, a pulse on which the Executive might place its finger in any moment of doubt or difficulty. It was to be an advisory body, not a body the powers of which would conflict with the powers of the Executive of the Federation. Lady Denman took the opportunity of emphasizing the democratic character of the movement. The Executive was the servant of the Annual Meeting, and every Institute had the power to send a delegate and air its views there.

After half the delegates had voted for an amendment from Northumberland — urging the formation, not of a Consultative Council, but of a Central Council, elected by the County Federations — and as many as 105 out of 195 had approved of an Essex amendment — in favour of a Council with adminis-

trative powers, and powers to devolve to an executive and sub-committee—the resolution was carried by 242 votes out of 320.

A proposal made by Lady Denman for territorial representation on the National Executive, by means of election through a group system—five for England and two for Wales—was voted down.

The question which chiefly exercised the delegates—it is further discussed in Chapter 14—is how to secure the democratic representation of the Institutes at the Annual Meeting when there are so many Institutes, and when the number of persons who can usefully take part in a discussion is limited.

It was urged that, owing to the difficulty that counties, distant from London, had in meeting the travelling expenses of their delegates, Institutes in those counties were not fairly represented. (Statistics of attendances do not reinforce this argument as much as might be expected, for the distant counties are often more enterprising in sending delegates than counties nearer London.) On this contention was based the plea for a Council which should be elected by the County Federation executives, and that from and by this Council the National Executive should be chosen.

This scheme was opposed as undemocratic and cumbersome, and likely to lead eventually to lack of contact between the Institutes and the National Executive. The responsibility for electing the National Executive would be taken from the Institutes.

The scheme was defeated, and it is noteworthy, as an old adherent of the movement writes to me, 'that lately, when a society which also has national ramifications was considering this type of organization, the fact that the indirect method of election from the branches had been rejected as unsound by the Women's Institutes' National Federation proved a strong argument against its adoption.'

In the same way, the Consultative Council compromise adopted by the Federation—it is a plan which has proved of

great value in sifting ideas and testing the strength of opinion – was adopted by another association in order to give a better chance to branches to air their views and discuss their special local problems and so enable the Executive to keep its finger on the pulse of the movement.

One benefit of the Council has been to show County Federations what motions are likely to command backing at the Annual Meeting in London. One of the two Councils now held every year, takes place in London with a view to giving its wisdom on the framing of agendas.

‘BRINGING MEN IN.’—At this 1919 Annual Meeting there was, among other resolutions a defeated one in favour of ‘bringing men into the movement’ by means of mixed membership Institutes, ‘managed by a committee of men and women and having separate and mixed meetings monthly.’

BOYS’ AND GIRLS’ INSTITUTES.—Later on, in the course of this Annual Meeting, a speaker referred to the work of ‘Boys’ and Girls’ Institutes’ at Anstye and Bevern Bridge. An equal number of boys and girls sat on the committee, and the offices were held jointly by a boy and a girl. A joint meeting with a Women’s Institute was held from time to time. ‘Although the children managed their own affairs, there was a grown-up interest in the background.’

During the next few years, pleas were frequently made for Junior Groups, as a means of providing for girls not old enough for the Institutes. Although headquarters has devised ‘Suggested Rules for Junior Groups,’ the number of groups formed has been small. Essex has some good ones.

I may state that the last published Report on Institutes in Ontario notes that the proportion of girls’ or junior Institutes in that province is forty-nine to about a thousand Institutes.

At one time English and Welsh Institutes were allowed to form companies of Girl Guides, and then to hand them over to the District Commissioners of Girl Guides. But as the Institutes had no control over these Institute Guides, the arrangement was unsatisfactory and was brought to an end.





Alleged Types
at an
Annual Meeting
(Anyhow the sketches
appeared in
'Home and Country')



In a number of villages the Institutes and Girl Guides worked closely together, but on a basis of independence. The admirable Girl Guide system rests, of course, on a basis of obedience. The Institute movement is democratic.

AN ARMY 'INSTITUTE.'—Reference to such experiments as Girl Guides and their quasi-military organization is a reminder that an organization, something after the pattern of a Women's Institute, has been started in the Army, in which so many temperance and other organizations have branches. The following interesting account has reached me :

'In August, 1920, Colonel Macpherson was appointed to command the Cameron depôt at Inverness. Mrs. Macpherson conceived the idea of trying to start on Institute lines an organization for the women of the barracks. She called a meeting at her house, a committee was formed, and a monthly programme, to end up usually with tea and a dance, was arranged. Working parties were held, Colonel Macpherson was very good about advancing money to buy materials, and a sale was held to raise funds. In the summer, tennis and picnics were arranged. The following year a baby clinic was started with one of the Queen's nurses in attendance. A savings-bank was also begun and is most successful.

'At the end of three years Colonel McCall was appointed to the depôt. Mrs. McCall, Mrs. Macpherson's sister, is carrying on the work prosperously. The club now pays its share of a nurse, and she attends every day at the barracks. Mrs. McCall and her committee have had a hut built and equipped, and all the meetings are held in it. Jumble sales take place in the autumn, and an egg and daffodil sale in the spring.

'When Colonel Macpherson joined the second battalion in Cologne, meetings were started there. Now he has command of the first battalion and a women's club exists in connection with it, and there have been excellent concerts, talks and dances. The women say that they now have something to look forward to and that their whole outlook is changed.'

So many changes have taken place in the Army, in the direction of more enlightened treatment of the men, and of

wiser relations between different ranks, that the day may come when the wives of labourers and of officers, who, were they outside the Army, would meet on easy enough terms in an Institute, may be found in membership in an Army Institute.

If Institutes got a footing, in the right conditions in the Army, they would spread all over the Empire. Already an Institute member who went out to South Africa has started an Institute there, while in Australia there are said to be forty Institutes.

It should be clearly understood, of course, that the organizations in the Army which a kind correspondent has described came into existence owing to Mrs. Macpherson having been an Institute member, but that such organizations are not affiliated in any way to the Institute movement. An actual Institute was once started at one regimental headquarters, but, after flourishing for a time, it came to an end.

VOTES FOR THE EXECUTIVE.—Among the interesting features of the 1919 report is the printing of the number of votes secured by each member of the Executive at her election, a usage which was maintained for two or three years only. In the Appendix the figures, when available, are attached to the names of the different members of the Executives.

PROPAGANDA COMMITTEES.—The Report also contains a list of 'propaganda sub-committees where no County Federation exists.' There are at this time a dozen of them in England and Wales.

ORGANIZERS AND STAFF.—Mrs. Kellett, a lecturer at London University and an ex-travelling inspector of the Women's Branch; Miss Lumley, a Welsh-speaking organizing secretary of the same; and Mrs. Mayo, a real countrywoman from Dorset, are new names among the National Federation organizers.

It appears that the full number of the staff, employed solely on Institute work by the Board of Agriculture and the National Federation together, had been 13. The National Federation working alone required from 16 to 19, because, under the old

dual control system, considerable help had been given by persons and departments not exclusively in the service of the movement.

A NOTEWORTHY RECORD.—As, 'owing to the increased cost of printing,' this is the last Annual Report which finds space for a record of the activities of each Institute, a few items may be culled from programmes by way of supplementing the items collected from previous Reports. Weekly supply of fish, Petition for a second parish pump, All outstanding public questions discussed, Infant welfare consultations, Bookbinding classes, Rambling club, Questions of local interest discussed, Spanish class, Class in pen-painting, Trees and logan-berries bought co-operatively, Members appointed to local profiteering committees, Twelve acres of flax pulled, Sweep's outfit bought, Interest shown in parish council election, Sale to raise funds for training a cripple girl in the village, Fishmonger persuaded to visit village weekly, Peace mugs given to school children, Parish recreation ground obtained, Education Bill discussed, Linen guild, French class, Happy afternoons with small children, Chocolate making and child welfare, Root show and a sacred play, Extra meeting for a lecture on simple chemistry, Re-bristling brushes, Met the District Council regarding housing, 'Members show great interest,' Institute has been the means of the men forming a club, Cheeses are made and a Pierrot troupe club has been started, Valentine tea, Second annual baby show, 'Dress making and dancing classes—Youths attend the latter,' All fruit canned sold, and unlimited orders received from local grocer, Put forward successfully woman municipal candidate, Memorial avenue of trees, Materials for baking-powder bought co-operatively, Medical depôt started, Exhibition of local talent, Standard dress demonstration, and 'Meetings have been held fortnightly.'

Among the County reports was one about the starting of an advisory committee for the 'after care' of the Institutes of the County, the expenses of an organizer or chosen speaker being paid 'to speak on aims and objects once a year in each Institute in order to keep up the high aims of the movement.'

A COMMUNAL KITCHEN [1919

A LONDON CLUB.—Mention should not be omitted of the starting this year by Lady Isabel Margesson of a peripatetic London Women's Institute Club. It eventually developed into a Women's Institute section at the Forum Club (founded by Miss Williams), where there is a monthly meeting. This section has been hospitable to delegates to the annual meeting, and it was at the Forum Club that the dinner given to Lady Denman in 1922 was held.

RATIONING.—After club life, rationing. One of the War services rendered by the movement was to circularize its Institutes to find out the exact quantities of butter, meat, flour and sugar consumed by different kinds of households. The information proved of substantial value to the authorities, and cost only the postage.

Cullompton (Devon) Institute ran a communal kitchen during the War. It was described by a Government official as 'one of the best organized efforts of the kind in the country.'

A UNIFORM.—Another bit of work the Federation did seems a long way removed from its present preoccupations. It was to plan, for that period of uniforms, 'a uniform which may be worn by regular and voluntary organizers, headquarters officials, and officers of the County Federation.' The uniform consisted of 'a brown corduroy coat and skirt with a white or brown silk shirt, a plain brown hat and a brown tie.' It was supplied by one of the stores for 68s. There was also a 'loose-belted overcoat in corduroy,' and 'a uniform hat in nigger straw.' The uniform worn by Mrs. Watt, in a well-known portrait, is not the Institute uniform, but the khaki uniform worn during the War by officials of the Board of Agriculture. When the Institutes were under the Board, all its officials were entitled to wear the Land Army uniform.

Institute and Board uniforms alike have now disappeared. One of the best workers in the movement writes to me: 'With the passing away of the War fever, the desire to wear uniform at any price has given way to the desire to look as nice as possible. Uniforms were greatly resented in my part of the world. Officialdom, especially if it happened to come from

that south country place, London, was never popular, and a uniform suggested officialdom.'

Speaking of uniforms, a friend tells me of a village where an energetic Land Army V.C.O., much to her surprise, entirely failed to start an Institute. The fact was that women in breeches had not been seen before in those parts, and the village dames connected an Institute with breeches, and thought they would have to wear them !

SPREADING WINGS

THE first year of the movement, under full responsibility for its own management, showed that 1,405 Institutes had become 1,914. The Report for 1920 quoted appreciatively a compliment from the Development Commission. There had been an 'extraordinary outburst of energy, resourcefulness and skill among women in the Institutes.' Speaking for itself, headquarters found it 'almost impossible to keep track of the different stages of Institute activity, so great is their variety, so steady and widespread their development.'

DEPARTMENTS OF WORK.—The Report declares that 'agriculture, horticulture and handicraft work — basket making, brush work, glove making and fur craft being perhaps the most popular — occupy important positions in Institute life,' and 'folk-dancing, singing and dramatic art are taken up.' (Someone writes to me that 'it is easy to start an Institute where there has been folk-dancing, for the people are alive.') 'Lectures on citizenship are in constant demand, as also are lectures on home dressmaking, millinery, dyeing, soldering, cobbling, upholstery and fruit bottling.' Interest in local history and folk-lore is greatly increasing.

The Report may well say that 'more and more the work of the Institutes goes to show that Institutes are themselves the movement's best propaganda.'

THE COUNTY FEDERATIONS.—Every English county but one and every Welsh county but four had now a County Federation. The work of the National Federation had been marked by increased efforts to co-operate with county, agricultural, educational and public health authorities. The Institutes had benefited and the authorities had secured interested audiences. County Federations had been invited to nominate representatives to county, agricultural, and educational committees and to associations for the care of deficient. In some counties the Federations had been the movers in attempts to 'co-ordinate the work of organization aiming at the educational, social and recreational betterment of village life.'

They had also played their part in getting the Library Acts adopted. 'I think it was a result of our suggestion that the County Education Committee's Library contained a mass of rubbish,' writes a County Federation Secretary to me, 'that the Committee appointed a sub-committee to read through all the books we have, and weed out the rubbish!'

With regard to the work the Institutes do in 'securing interested audiences,' the principal of an agricultural school was once abused by his committee for wasting his time by going all over the county to speak at Institute meetings. His reply was that an Institute lecture was worth more than any other lecture, for the women went home and bullied their husbands until they came out to listen. Consequently the attendance at agricultural and horticultural lectures had gone up immensely.

THE GROUP SYSTEM.—As for the Institutes themselves, they were profiting by their new and stimulating group system. It varies a good deal from county to county, but the general purpose is to bring about an informal association of Institutes, not only for general stimulation and encouragement and the exchange of information, but to promote a better and more economical use of speakers and lecturers. Obviously, such a group system might easily develop in directions inimical to the strength and authority of County Federations. In a later year, the possibilities of danger were met and avoided by a clear-headed resolution of a Consultative Council. The Council at Cambridge, 1923, was definitely opposed to groups becoming part of the Women's Institute constitution. In its opinion groups should hold no funds. The Council objected to the formation of standing group committees with executive power and thought group conveners should be appointed annually by the Executive committee of the County Federation. Further, twelve should be the maximum number of Institutes combined in any one group.

ENDOWMENT FUND AND INDEPENDENCE.—The Executive, which, in spite of all its sub-committees, had now sometimes to sit two days a month, was gratified by the renewal of the Treasury grant of £10,000. With regard to the proviso

about the movement working towards the self-supporting stage, it is pointed out that the County Federations had raised for their own expenses during the year 'several thousand pounds.' Headquarters expenses and salaries ran to about £4,000; activities in the counties had cost not far short of twice that.

A practical beginning with an Endowment Fund was made with an anonymous offer of £5,000 – afterwards known to have come from Lady Denman – if another £5,000 could be raised by the National Federation before the end of 1920. The County Federations were told of the challenge, and an enthusiastic effort was made, with the notable result that a sum of £6,631 was raised to set beside the chairman's £5,000.

This amount had been collected while the Institutes were also meeting, not only their own local needs, but about half the amount required for the maintenance of the County Federations. At this time two counties had raised enough money to enable their Federations to be 'independent of financial assistance from headquarters, except for the provision of the area organizer.' In the Annual Report will be found a table of grants to County Federations and of their donations to the National Federation to the latest available date.

The Endowment Fund meant that 'the Institutes are inspired by a determination to make the National Federation, at the earliest possible moment, independent of all financial assistance outside the boundaries of their own movement.'

THE ORGANIZERS.—The Voluntary Organizers, trained in preliminary courses of instruction had increased from 64 to 146. The regular Federation Organizers had now become five full-timers and four half-timers. Among the new names are Miss Simpson, to whom reference has already been made; Miss Bernard, who had worked with the Board of Agriculture and was secretary of her County Federation in Suffolk; Miss Peers, another Board worker, who specialized in market gardening; and Miss Anson (now Mrs. Graham), who put her mark on the development in Cumberland, and was one of the first of the young Oxford students who, in consultation with Miss Hadow, I imagine, saw a field of work in the movement.

THE MATERIAL SIDE.—The Annual Meeting was held, not in March, as provided at the Annual Meeting of the previous year, but in May, in order to avoid Lent, and this action was regularized by a resolution. May has been the month of the Annual Meeting ever since. After 1920 the Annual Meeting was a two-days affair. A proposal to hold the Annual Meeting and exhibition in other places than London was lost.

An interesting resolution, 'carried by a large majority,' was that 'Institutes must guard against the danger of concentrating too much on the material side of their work.'

CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL AND SUBSCRIPTIONS.—The first meeting of the new Consultative Council held at Leicester, carried a resolution endorsed by the Executive, which went a little beyond previous statements with regard to the limits within which the movement might judiciously raise money. 'Private individuals, who are likely to be sufficiently interested in the movement' were to be approached to support the Endowment Fund. It was felt to be in a different category from the ordinary funds of the movement, and subscribers would have no authority.

A DECISION ABOUT MEN AND WOMEN.—It is noted in the Annual Report that, in six counties, joint action between the Institute movement and village clubs had been approved. The question of the relation of the Institutes to the organization of men in villages came up at the York Consultative Council. A plump and plain resolution, 'endorsed by the Executive, without prejudice to the existing relationship between the N.F.W.I. and the V.C.A.,' was carried to the effect that 'closer co-operation would be achieved if the V.C.A. organized the men while the N.F.W.I. organized the women, and a joint committee or village social council were formed to carry out joint purposes.'

VARIED ACTIVITIES.—The news of progress in the counties is now summarized in the Report in from about half a page to a page from each County Federation. The following items attract one's notice: Successful fish-shop, Debate at each meeting, Soap making demonstrated, Kettles and saucepans

bought co-operatively, Public bakehouse, Institute published a cookery book and sold 800 copies, Infant welfare centre, Sweep's outfit lent to members at 1s. a time, County Architect attended a meeting of the Institute as the result of a resolution to the housing committee and discussed members' suggestions, Institute bought 2 cwt. of soap, 300 yds. of calico and 6 tons of potatoes, Classes for boys who are unemployed owing to a slump in the tin trade, Glove making 'taken up by nearly every Institute on account of its economy and convenience,' Flower show at which one child showed and named 100 wild flowers.

Alconbury, Weston, Godmanchester and Sawtry have bought pianos. Catworth has its own W.I. song, Llanfair P.G. has collected over £3,200 for national savings, Brasted makes whip-cord, and one Institute has bought a boot-mending set and another, tinkering tools.

A Medical Officer of Health allows his Health Visitor to give a lecture at every Institute in his area every year, Army kilts and jerseys are bought co-operatively, many Institutes have good libraries, practical instruction in skin-curing is given by Lady Pollock, a school water supply has been altered, stool ball clubs have been founded, there has been a garden lovers' plant auction and pullet show, and a District Council has invited an Institute to inspect and criticize plans for proposed new cottages.

FROM CHILDHOOD TO YOUTH.—'The difficult stage of a movement is not its childhood but its youth' is the opening sentence of the 1921 Report. But, 'on the whole, the National Federation is growing up easily.' As many as 455 Institutes had been formed in the year and six County Federations, so that no English county was now without one. Only 144 Institutes had lapsed since the movement began, and 'many of these have been revived and others are likely to be.'

THOROUGHNESS.—It is noted, as a point of merit, that Institutes which come to the point of asking themselves, What shall we do next? nearly all find the answer, not in a continued search for something new, but in specialization and concentration. In a word, the Institutes 'are becoming much

more thorough.' There is an increasing number of classes, not only in crafts but in agricultural education, dressmaking, cooking, laundry, hygiene 'and other branches of education'; a growing interest in study circles and in discussing some objects more adequately is reported. It was in 1921 that the Education Committee was formed, in response, I have heard, to a request from the West of England.

More than one critic has been quoted as saying that reading some Institute programmes provoked mental indigestion. In 1921 a reaction from what is called by some the scrappy programme is noticeable. But there is another side to that question.

ECONOMY AND FINANCIAL POLICY.—In 1921 everybody in England felt the need of economy. Economies had been made by the National Federation to the tune of £2,000, in part by reducing its staff. The Government grant this year was £6,522, of which £2,686 was allocated to the County Federations. Fourteen County Federations were reported to be self-supporting. At a rough estimate, they had raised £6,000 in the twelvemonth. It had been decided, at a meeting of representatives of forty-two counties, 'as a permanent financial policy, that every effort should be made to make an annual effort or contribution for the joint benefit of County and National funds, that the proceeds in each county should be forwarded to the County Federation, and that the County Federation should in turn forward to headquarters such proportions of the sum as could be spared.'

The presentation of 'Endowment Fund banners' was a feature of the Annual Meeting.

PARTY POLITICS AND INSTITUTE LIBERTY.—Evidence of the fact that the movement was gaining in experience is to be found in a resolution to make honorary life-membership more unusual. In a later year it was abolished.

A more striking incident at the Annual Meeting was the fate of a resolution endorsing Executive rulings which forbade M.P.'s, Parliamentary candidates and party agents to speak on any subject at Institutes in their constituencies and prohibited the announcement of political meetings or the distribution of

'literature published by a political party.' The resolution, which seemed to show that some Institutes had been led into transgressing the non-party spirit of the movement, was carried; but, on an Executive proposal being made to 'reaffirm the rulings for the future' there was 'a long and keen discussion' and the motion was lost.

What was carried was a resolution deprecating 'any action which curtails the liberty enjoyed by members as being contrary to the principles of Institutes and likely to endanger the existence of the whole movement.' It was 'therefore left to each Institute,' says the official report, 'to use its own discretion in preserving its non-party character.'

This seemed to mark an advance in the self-governing powers of Institutes and to be a recognition of the fact that the movement had now had long enough experience to enable it to keep clear of party snares. But the attempts of partisans of one party or another to get in a phrase, an illustration or a bit of colour, reflecting a party-prejudice or predisposition, have still to be guarded against. I have known of a speaker who managed to give a party tinge to a discourse on gardening. And there was an M.P. who got to know most of the women in his constituency by means of a talk on butterflies!

MEN AND WOMEN AGAIN.—The question of the organization of men and women in the same societies still bobs up. At a Consultative Council at Abergavenny, for example, 'it was generally agreed that, though co-operation between the sexes is very desirable, the formation of a mixed club in a village does not meet the needs of women, and unless a Women's Institute is also formed, may tend to cripple their activities.'

INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES.—In looking through the County Federation reports one gets the impression of more work of an educational kind having been done. Among general items there are: Starting of an association of friends of Women's Institutes, Production of a pantomime, Establishment of a scavenger's cart in one village and of a sanitary and dust-cart in another, Organization of a supply of 29 speakers on the '5s.

a speaker plan,' Raising an Institute of four gangs of six members each to make the concrete blocks for a hall, Net-ball, tennis and hockey, Provision of delicacies for sick members from a sick fund, Making things formerly bought ready made, Nearly all Institutes of a county collecting eggs for hospitals, The Queen's acceptance of a quilt made by a member.

THE BRICKS AND THE STRAW.—If any reader should feel that the general history of the movement is lacking at times in interest about this period, attention may well be turned to what is happening in individual Institutes, as illustrated by the foregoing and similar lists. When a stubborn woman was told that the facts were against her she said, 'So much the worse for the facts.' If my faithful chronicle of what happened from year to year within the movement be accounted at some periods less 'readable' than at other times, I can only reply that the things I have set down are the most interesting yielded at that particular stage of development by the records and the recollections I have managed to gather. But it is not always when there seems most to tell that a movement is soundest. Has not the greatest of English historians spoken of 'the rare advantage of furnishing very few materials for history'?

THE REJECTED WOOPER

ON the 1922 Report there is the now familiar green, red and black badge, in which the strolling Welsh dragon is painted black and made to lie down.

The news the Report brings is that the Institutes have increased by 343, and are, in all, 2,580.

We come on the first recognition of the fact by the movement that 'it is not to be expected that the annual increase in the number of Institutes will continue to be as rapid as hitherto.' The 'possible villages' of some counties' lists are becoming one and the same with 'difficult villages.'

The National Executive wisely takes the opportunity of urging the importance of 'stability,' of not forming Institutes 'where there is no real demand' and members would not be prepared to 'work actively.' Some County Federations had definitely ceased active propaganda in order to make a useful consolidation of county machinery.

THINKING NATIONALLY.—A feature of the year had not only been this strengthening of the County Federations but the development of the group system. A 'pressing problem,' which illustrates the value of the Annual Meeting in London, was 'to help the Institutes to understand the magnitude of the movement and its complex organization.' The Executive writes sagaciously that 'the Institute itself, based as it is on village life and its needs, must be allowed to preserve the simplicity and informality which endears it to all countrywomen.' But there is a gap to be bridged between 'the simplicity of the Institutes and the complexity of the County and National Federations.' The members must learn, in fact, to think nationally and in terms of their county.

HOW TO END THE GOVERNMENT GRANT.—At headquarters a further reduction in staff had been made. The Government grant is now £3,941. The Executive suggests that County Federations should make it their ultimate aim to send to headquarters 25s. per Institute. 'This would provide the National Federation with an income sufficient to dispense

decisions taken at the Annual Meeting were the refusal to carry out the plan which had been framed by representatives of the National Federation and the National Association of Landswomen for the amalgamation of the two organizations, and a last word on the question of the relationship of the National Federation with the Village Clubs Association.

As to the Landswomen, the impression one who knew nothing about the subject received was that the question might have been more fully and sympathetically discussed. The nation owed a great deal to the countrywomen of the Land Army, and the rejection of the proposals for amalgamation with the Landswomen seemed summary. But members were determined not to be imprudent. Whether this was the occasion or not to be imprudent I don't know. But if the present historian may be perfectly frank, the movement would appeal to his heart even more deeply than it does had he to forgive it just one little imprudence in its life!

There had been a time in the development of the Landswomen when Landswomen Clubs might have overlapped and conflicted with the work of the Institutes. But this snag was avoided. Rightly or wrongly, I drew the conclusion that there was a section of the Annual Meeting which was not in the closest touch with the work of the land. This is not perhaps the place to mention the matter, but the remark ought to be made somewhere in this book that a danger to which the movement is continually exposed is the influence of Outer Suburban and non-rural, even town-conceived ideas.

With regard to the Landswomen, unless I am much mistaken, they had had their chance of joining hands with the movement in the days of their strength, and had not availed themselves of this chance. They now wanted to come in in a group, an exceedingly awkward thing to arrange, and most difficult to justify. The Institute movement had in 1922 little to gain from the adhesion of the Landswomen, and, in fact, very soon after the meeting, they closed down. There was also a troublesome question of stores.

The most interesting feature of the discussion was the fact

that the meeting went against the Executive – a half-hearted Executive, I imagine. This was, I fancy, the first time an Annual Meeting had ever so unmistakably thought for itself, and the course it took was, therefore, in its way, a wholesome sign.

To sum up, the meeting, if a little rough-spoken, seems on this occasion to have been right and the Executive wrong. The Executive was no doubt glad to be beaten. Their sense of deep obligation to Dame Meriel Talbot probably ranged them on her side against their judgment. Lady Denman and other leaders certainly thought the amalgamation scheme untidy. I happened to be watching Dame Meriel when the result of the voting was announced, and greatly admired the fine spirit in which she accepted a decision which she had not expected.

GOOD-BYE TO THE V.C.A. – With regard to the proposals for ‘amalgamation’ with the V.C.A., the meeting endorsed the view, expressed at two Consultative Councils, that ‘closer co-operation would be achieved if the V.C.A. organized the men, while the N.F.W.I. organized the women, with a joint committee or village social council to carry out any joint purpose.’

The rejected wooers, Sir Henry Rew and Mr. Nugent Harris, were present at this meeting. After the vote, Mr. Harris, in conversation with me, took a grave view of the decision which had been arrived at, and Sir Henry Rew, in an account of the meeting in an agricultural paper, dwelt on what he called the feminist atmosphere of the movement.

THE V.C.A. PLAN FOR AMALGAMATION. – There can be no doubt that, in definitely rejecting the overtures of the V.C.A., the movement avoided an association which might have been perilous.

The proposals in the spring of 1919 for ‘a working agreement’ became at the end of 1921 ‘a question of amalgamation.’ I have before me a draft of December of ‘A Suggested Scheme for Amalgamation of the N.F.W.I. and V.C.A.’ It is unofficial, but it is signed by Mr. Harris. The new movement was to be the ‘N.F.W.I. and V.C.A. Union’ or the ‘National Federation of

Rural Communities, with which is incorporated the N.F.W.I. and V.C.A.' or the 'N.F.W.I. and V.C.A.' or the 'Rural Community Federation.' The annual meetings were to consist of a women's-meeting and a men's-meeting sitting concurrently, followed by a general session of both in which alterations in the constitution would be considered. There was to be a man-president and a woman-president, a man-vice-president and a woman-vice-president, a man-treasurer and a woman-treasurer. County organization was, to a large extent, to duplicate that of headquarters. All monies, from whatever source, were to be pooled. The organization was to be run by a general secretary, two organizing secretaries (man and woman), and an organizing secretary for publicity, all to be 'in closest possible touch.' It is understood that Mr. Harris offered to serve as an organizing secretary under Miss Ferguson as general secretary.

It is very difficult indeed to see how the Institute movement could have had freedom to develop naturally had it been corralled in such a joint organization as is shadowed forth in this memorandum. But further consideration of the relations of the N.F.W.I. and the V.C.A. must be deferred to Chapter 15.

THE STORY OF A NEW OFFICE.—I may just mention, however, that the Development Commissioners had ceased to press on the Federation the condition about working with the V.C.A. 'under the same roof.' It was early in 1921 that the National Federation, which had outgrown its accommodation, took itself off from Iddesleigh House, where the V.C.A. had its office, to 26, Eccleston Street. Lady Denman had no difficulty in showing the Development Commissioners that the Federation would save money by moving into these new quarters. Lady Denman had the best reason for knowing that it would. Had she not astutely bought the house? Needless to say the Executive paid an economic rent.

This house has now become small for the business which has to be done in it, and a larger home will probably be entered in the New Year.

The well rounded stairs and floors at 26, Eccleston Street are a sign of the good order which reigns at the headquarters of

one of the most efficiently managed of women's organizations. The open windows, the blue overalls of the staff, and the elders' insistence on a ration of eggs and milk for the juniors, will be set by the just against the cigarettes, which, by a voluntary ordinance, are barred until four o'clock.

FAREWELL TO THE V.C.A.—After the rebuff of 1922 — and it seems a little hard-hearted to break off into talk about ronuked stairs — the V.C.A. never offered hand or heart again.

If a man who is privileged to be the historian of the Women's Institute movement may express his opinion, it is that the Federation leaders acted with wisdom. The Institute movement could not have had the same development if it had been partly under the direction of men.

The money which was expended in its service by the Government during the War would have achieved little that was likely to be lasting had it not been for the Women's Branch of the Board of Agriculture in London and for the work of the women representatives of the Board in the counties. If the Federation leaders, in their relations with the V.C.A., were feminist, they were loyal to the countrywomen whose needs can only be met, for the present, by a women's organization.

THE FIRST DECADE

IN the period during which the constitution was being forged and the movement was rapidly extending its borders, it was natural that there should be animated discussions at the annual meetings. Accounts of the pioneer days under the A.O.S. and of the passages of arms with the V.C.A. are also interesting to read about. If, at the later annual meetings, some of the resolutions seemed to be of minor consequence, and there were quiet spells, they reflected, as I have suggested, the stable condition which the movement had attained. These gatherings were at any rate doing excellent work in bringing home to the mass of the delegates the extent of the movement and its possibilities of usefulness in the national life.

CAUTIONS.—After last year's expression of opinion by the Executive, that the number of eligible villages for Institutes was rapidly decreasing, it is somewhat surprising, as the 1923 report says, to find 352 more Institutes started, bringing the total up to 2,932.

The occasion is improved by giving a page to warnings against precipitate starting of Institutes. There are three 'stumbling blocks': replacing officers who leave the district, the existence of 'local opposition to the Institute,' and finding a suitable meeting place — not very formidable to an Institute of the proper metal, but frequently too much for a weakling.

A warning is set down against employing imperfectly trained organizers or officers. 'The work of an unskilled organizer will handicap a county indefinitely.' A Federation 'will find that to recommend an inexperienced worker for appointment as a V.C.O. is a costly means of "bringing her on."'

Now that there are nearly 3,000 Institutes the National Federation has to recognize that more and more must be left to the counties.

DECENTRALIZATION.—There is apparent a growing tendency towards decentralization. The County Federations are rightly jealous of interference with their Institutes. The National Federation is increasingly reserved for matters

affecting the movement as a whole, and for relations with Government Departments. Mrs. Burton-Fanning once said, speaking of the National Federation: 'Being at the heart of things in London, it has the power to keep life-blood flowing through the main arteries - the County Federations - to the Institutes.' But few metaphors are quite accurate. There are many members who would say that it is the Institutes which, from the heart of things in the country, keep the life-blood flowing through the County Federations to the National Federation.

INSTITUTES, LIBRARIES AND COUNTY COUNCILS.- In previous years there was continual evidence of the demand for libraries in villages. As the County Councils adopted the Public Libraries Act and started Carnegie rural library schemes the Institutes are found to be among the most regular applicants for books and often act as distributing agents. On this the Executive remarks that, while 'in many counties the County Federation ranks the County Council among its best friends and receives an immense amount of help from it, the County Councils recognize the assistance they obtain from a movement which provides them with a ready-made educational organization in over one-fifth of the English and Welsh villages.'

END OF THE GRANT IN SIGHT?-The Treasury grant is this year reduced to £2,150. In correspondence with the Treasury on the question of the Federation's progress towards financial independence, the Executive had intimated that it would be content with £2,000 for the next year, and afterwards with an annual reduction of £500. The organization thus looked forward to being completely self-supporting in five years, that is in 1929. It had undoubtedly been an excellent discipline and business training for the movement to be under the sharp eye of the Treasury from the moment of its starting life on its own account. Its finance had to be unquestionable.

MEN IN THE MOVEMENT.-The explicit resolution passed at the annual meeting that membership of an Institute 'shall be open to women only' excluded a few men like myself, who, because of their appreciation of the movement, had been

glad - without entire approval of the arrangement - to pay their florin annually to an Institute, to which they had sometimes the privilege of admission, without, of course, the right of speaking or voting. The resolution was carried, and, I think, rightly, but it was not carried unanimously. I may note here that Mr. Nugent Harris and Colonel Stapleton-Cotton were the earliest honorary members (of Llanfairpwll). But it is no longer possible for Institutes to make honorary members, nor can anyone who was formerly an honorary member now properly describe himself as such.

Here it is appropriate to record the fact that a man once played an important part in the development of the movement in Cheshire. This was the Rev. Eustace G. Auden, who, in response to my inquiry, is kind enough to write to me as follows :

'My connection with the Women's Institute movement began on January 2, 1919, when I was asked by the Cheshire Committee for the Employment of Women in Agriculture during the War to be a member of the Women's Institute propaganda sub-committee. The first meeting of this committee was held on January 18, when I suggested that it would be far better if a woman could be found to do the work. I was asked if I would act as honorary secretary for the time being and consented to do so. I thought that my duties as secretary would not last for more than a month or two, but the movement was very slow in taking root in Cheshire, and it was very difficult to arouse any enthusiasm. The attendance at the meetings of the committee was not good and those who did attend gave me the impression that they considered the whole thing as rather hopeless. However by slow degrees the number of Institutes increased until it reached fourteen.

'I then asked for a County Federation to be formed, as I considered that this would solve many difficulties. The County Federation was formed on November 17, 1920, and then a new era began. The meetings were well attended and enthusiasm took the place of indifference. I acted as honorary secretary to the County Federation for the first year and was

glad to be able to hand over to my successor a vigorous and growing concern.

'My belief in the movement as a means of bringing different classes together and smoothing over social differences and difficulties,' Mr. Auden adds, 'led me to give my help to the work, though in the early days it was an uphill job. The movement will continue to grow and prosper as long as the educational side is kept to the fore and members feel that they have something to give as well as to receive.'

'SERIOUS CONTROVERSY OR FRICTION.'—At this annual meeting the attitude of the movement to denominations and parties was once more defined. It was decided that 'no sectarian or party political matter, nor' — the phrase was to be often quoted — 'any subject likely to lead to serious controversy or friction, should be brought forward for discussion at an Institute meeting.'

A proposal which was adopted at this annual meeting indicated the kind of opening there is for the movement to make its influence felt in political as contrasted with party matters. The resolution was in favour of the voting in parish councils being taken by ballot. The movement has always made a distinction between local governmental affairs and party matters. It was one of the best and earliest workers who said to me: 'An educated woman who is above taking an interest in local government or at any rate does not take an interest in it makes me mad. Everything depends on women making their influence felt in local government.'

WHAT IS A VILLAGE?—It was as late as 1923 that a 4,000 population — unless of 'a mining village of rural character' — was fixed as the maximum population for a place in which an Institute might be formed.

INSTITUTES' DOINGS.—Turning to County Federation reports on Institutes' activities, the following items stand out as new or uncommon: Improvement in parcel post, Special columns of Institute news in local Press, Weight guessing, Carols in aid of village nurse, Providing half the cost of a new system of lighting, Christmas shops, Representations regarding

road mending and branches at cross-roads, Best scare-crows, Ten minutes with a piece of tin, and Articles made from a wooden box.

These samples, like the samples collected in other years, stress, perhaps, the more entertaining or more unusual features of the Institutes' work. But one is conscious, in looking through the records of the last year or two, of a marked increase in the devotion to health subjects, to instruction on milk, poultry and other rural matters, and to music and folk-dancing.

THE FIRST DECADE.—From the start the Executive had been elected by the annual meeting, but from 1923 it was chosen, on a proposal of Miss Hadow's, by postal vote (an idea taken, I think, from the Co-operative Union). The movement, as it entered 1924, had the satisfaction of congratulating itself on reaching its tenth year with 'more solid organization, more thorough work, more business-like methods, and a richer sphere of activity.' There was also a gain of 291 Institutes (or 3,223 in all), which was pleasing in view of the way in which the Executive had been 'for two years anticipating the drop in the rate of formation which was bound to occur.' The social side and libraries are outstanding in the Institutes' progress, the Executive thinks.

HALLS AND THE COST OF INSTITUTES.—The Executive has a careful word on halls. Institutes would do wisely to build, co-operatively, Village halls not Institute halls, and there is the Federation's model land conveyance and trust deed to help them.

An interesting estimate by the Executive is the cost to County Federations of organizing Institutes. It seems to vary between £11 and £2 per Institute. Some Federations are thought to be spending too much and some too little.

INSTITUTE AND COUNTIES.—The gratitude expressed to County Councils for the help given to Institutes and the request to Councils to make full use of the educational facilities of the movement, mark the increasing cordiality of the relations of the county governments and organized rural womanhood.

FOR AND AGAINST THE ENDOWMENT FUND.—Along with the Treasury grant reduction to £1,195 is to be noted an

increase of the memberships' subscriptions to the Endowment Fund. £1,000 has been promised anonymously – as this was the way in which Lady Denman's donation of £5,000 had been given, the chairman was suspected to have made this further gift, but the donor was another generous friend of the movement – on the understanding that £500 was raised, and the amount had been exceeded. The Endowment Fund now stands at £16,507. A November Consultative Council resolved that it 'should be closed at a sum to be decided after consideration, but that the time has not yet come to consider the closing of the funds.'

Even when Lady Denman's £5,000 is deducted from the £16,000 of the Endowment Fund, the total is noteworthy for a sum gathered entirely inside the movement. But there are those who feel uneasy about the Endowment Fund. They do not like the notion of the movement becoming anything after the pattern of an endowed church. They think the membership should year by year shoulder the financial burden of the year, that the present members should not be called upon to make sacrifices for posterity, and that there is a danger of headquarters becoming too powerful.

CAN THE GRANT BE DISPENSED WITH?—What an eminent member of the movement once described to me as 'very surprising courage,' and of course very creditable courage, has been shown in facing the prospect of doing without the Government grant. Some responsible members do not at all like the notion of relinquishing it. They say that Institutes – obviously 'entertainments' are more remunerative in some districts than in others – have as much as they can do to make ends meet and find the contribution required for county and national funds; and that, without the grant, the movement may have difficult emergencies to meet. The County Federations now find opportunities of using every penny they can lay hands on. They are increasingly feeling the need of rented offices and of paid officers. (And are incidentally opening another career to women.)

Is it unreasonable to expect from the State a contribution

to the cost of running V.C.O. schools? After all, they are a kind of voluntary continuation-school system. They are as much education as the village classes in first aid and carpentry and what not, for which the County Councils so gladly pay about two-thirds of the cost. The Danish National Health Society has shown how a Government subsidy may be accepted without a forfeiture of independence of action.

But the subject is not easy. There are members to whom the idea of absolute independence is most attractive. They think that if the movement dips into national funds it is difficult to offer good reasons for keeping other hands out of the national pocket. They believe that as long as the movement is in any degree responsible to the authorities its development cannot be as free as it would otherwise be. On the other hand, in view of the heavy debt that the nation has incurred to the country-side by years of neglect and by selfish industrialism, is it reasonable to be squeamish over the reception of a certain amount of national money by an organization which has turned it to such nationally profitable account?

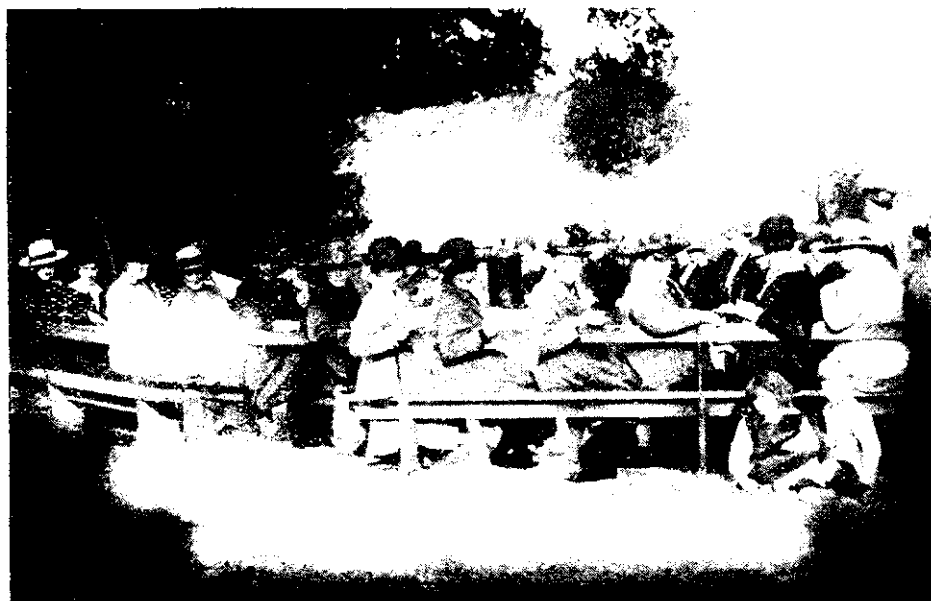
This is one of the large questions which can only be adequately discussed in another volume.

'GENERAL OBJECT' OF INSTITUTES.—What is the 'general object' of Institutes? was the question that had to be considered when a ruling was asked for about the propriety of Institutes subscribing to 'outside objects.' The wisdom of the Federation's finance committee was that 'donations should only be given to outside objects from the Institute funds in cases where the Institute members receive direct benefit.'

Such a view would bring many needs of the village, such as a clinic, within the scope of the allowable. The scholarship which the Burford Institute provides is also, no doubt, a thing from which the members may be considered to receive a benefit. There is a disposition to interpret the Finance Committee's view widely. On the other hand, there is a tendency to use some Institutes as the best money-raising agencies in their villages, a little too freely, to the extent, perhaps, of wearing out their members.



MEMBERS OF THE FIRST ENGLISH INSTITUTE, WALLISDOWN
Half have been members from the start



MEMBERS OF THE FIRST SCOTTISH INSTITUTE, LONGNIDDRY
In the President's Garden

As long as the movement is in receipt of public money, it is obviously inadmissible that it should subscribe to outside objects. Its first duty is to pay its way.

It may be noted that some guileless Institutes have suffered by being made the victims of circulars from persons who had axes to grind which could in no possible way serve the movement.

AFFILIATION.—In regard to this difficult question, it may be recorded that there are no fewer than eleven organizations with which Institutes and County Federations are allowed to be affiliated, and two of which the Institutes may become associates. The former are the Victoria League, National Poultry Council, National Utility Poultry Society, British Drama League, Arts League of Service, Village Drama Society, Royal Horticultural Society, National Council of Women (local branches), Workers' Education Association, English Folk-dance Society (county branches), and British Federation of Musical Competition Festivals. Institutes may also become corporate associates of the League of Nations Union and associates of the Women's Auxiliary Service (Women Police). The National Federation Executive is represented on the National Council of Social Service, the Consultative Committee of Women's Organizations, the Women's Advisory Council of the League of Nations Union, the National Poultry Council and parliament, the National Baby Week Council, and the Library and Advisory Committees of the Challenge Book and Picture Store which manages the Women Workers' Library. The Executive was represented at the International Housing Congress and at the Imperial Co-operative Congress.

THE AGRICULTURAL SIDE.—Evidence of the bias of the movement towards the agricultural side of education is to be seen in the technical courses arranged for members at two agricultural institutions, at the Dairy Show in the provision of free classes open to Institute members only, and in a special course in rural social history.

RULES RE-DRAFTED AND APPEALS MADE.—At the annual meeting there was a unanimous adoption of a complete

re-draft of the National Federation, County Federation and Institute rules. This was done on legal advice with a view to the movement avoiding the income tax which an educational body might legitimately hope to escape. The Institutes' objection to the entertainment tax does not appear to have been entirely an objection to the loss of the coppers in which they were mulcted. What stung some Institutes was the suggestion that they were recreative organizations!

There was also a recommendation to Institutes of the work of the League of Nations. Widows' pensions were approved, instruction in plain cooking for all girls of 12 and upwards was asked for, Institutes were invited to press the housing shortage on their local authorities, the presence of a woman police official in all police stations and of a woman-magistrate or some other responsible woman in all courts when women, girls or boys are appearing as principals or witnesses, was requested, and a demand was made for more women-police. The discussion of these questions was aided by speeches by experts.

PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES.—It was decided that the Parliamentary candidature of salaried officials of the movement is not permissible. The official whose services had been sought for as a candidate was Miss Anson (now Mrs. Graham), whose work for the movement has been warmly recognized.

WHAT INSTITUTES ARE DOING.—From the reports of County Federations of Institute doings the following here and there snippets may be made : Nourishment Fund for sick poor of village, Outfit for a girl of 15, Sealing-wax lacquer, History of the Bible, Bulb shows, Bee-keeping, The Pudding Lady, Operatic society, Procession of women of all nations, Policeman's round secured, Member trained as midwife, Best crop from six seed potatoes, Fêtes in aid of restoration of churches, Three new halls opened in the county in the year, Medicine chests, Party to old age pensioners, Bus service obtained, Cat show, Endowment of a girl's scholarship, Weekly happy evening for girls over 13, Monthly mending of hospital linen, Petrol lamps to light village streets, Help to a member whose house is flooded, Public lavatory secured, 'Golden

'Thread' programmes, 'Beautiful things in life,' 'Insect pests,' 'What I don't like in the W.I.,' Seat for the aged, Weekly whist drive, Subscriptions to church bells and church windows, Old *v.* new ways of saving time, East End parish adopted, and Knitting sticks.

AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—At the end of the year Miss Mavis D. Hay became Assistant Secretary to the National Federation, with an experience indicative of the outlook of the younger women who are coming into the movement. An M.A. of Oxford, she had had training with the Central Bureau for Women's Employment, had worked on the land for eight months, had served under the National Health Insurance Commission, had been some years on a Quaker Mission in Poland, and had helped with a survey for the Oxford Agricultural Economics Institute.

THE MOVEMENT AND HANDICRAFTS.—My account of the first ten years of the movement has been necessarily a record, in no small part, of the organization of efficient machinery. How the character and scope of the movement have gradually been developed and fixed has also been told. Beyond this, my concern has been chiefly with the story of the social or socio-political side of the Institutes' work.

But such a record leaves out of account a department of effort which has particularly marked the movement. If many members value their Institutes as friendly gatherings and for their educational value to themselves and the community, there are also many members who look to the movement with pleasure and gratitude for its work in teaching home crafts. A great work has been done, with the prospect of still more honourable accomplishment in the future, in this department of technical education. It has been done not only under the stress of War-time necessity and Peace-time economy, but under the urge of an awakened artistic feeling and ability. Thousands of women have found new delight in the work of their hands. Thousands have put joyously-earned money in their pockets. Obviously, much of the work in county exhibitions falls short. One has only to look at other work at these exhibitions and at the London

exhibitions to delight in high accomplishment in the village for which, ten years ago, it would have seemed courageous indeed to hope. Happily, every year the proportion of faulty and inadequate stuff to better stuff seems to be smaller.

THE DIFFICULTIES.—The handicrafts side of the movement suffers, as was to be expected, in three ways. It suffers from the feeble pretentiousness of undisciplined women. It suffers from the preciosity of women who have profited neither by George Bourne's *Wheelwright's Shop* nor Professor Lethaby's *Home and Country Arts* (which the movement has done well to publish), to learn that art was first of all concerned with the common things of daily life. It suffers from the eager inexperience of mothers of families who delight, in varying degrees, in the new world their craft-work has opened to them, but have, naturally, a dozen and one interests and duties, of the clamant demands of which better-off women will never have more than a hazy notion. Many of these new craftswomen in the cottages have neither experience of study, nor aptitude for it. But so long as the teaching which is given is sound and sympathetic — what is it in handicrafts, as in music, the purposes of which are to soften, to stir, to console, to educate, to make beauty manifest, which so often provokes acerbity, which so often seeks beauty without loving kindness? — so long as what may be called the humane side of the gospel of handicrafts is not forgotten in esoteric artistic aspiration without roots to speak of in experience or feeling, the foundations must be laid on lines which must yield to the movement, year by year, a richer and richer mental, moral, physical and financial reward.

The whole subject is of the greatest interest and importance, and calls for adequate treatment with adequate illustrations in another book. In the present volume it is only possible to note the increasing purpose of the movement 'to regain the practice of home handicrafts with a view to restoring the best traditions of English workmanship' — I am quoting from the 'Aims' of the Guild of Learners — and 'to assist in bringing the best instruction in handicrafts within the reach of the villages.' Several pages month by month in *Home and Country*,

since ever it began, considerable sections of successive Annual Reports of the National Federation, the London exhibitions and the numerous county exhibitions, no less than the activities of the Handicrafts Sub-Committee and its staff, mark not only the extent of the devotion to home crafts, but steady progress towards better work by means of improved facilities for learning from skilful teachers, many of whom the movement has had the prescience to train for itself. There is certainly no more interesting nor more devoted class in the membership than these teachers.

Throughout the year the National Federation has classes in



GUSHING OLD LADY VISITOR TO STALL: 'And are all these beautiful things really made by Women Inebriates?'

different handicrafts in London and occasionally in a provincial centre. Each class lasts a fortnight and students are required to attend six hours a day. The object of these classes is to provide County Federations with skilled teachers. Proficiency tests in different grades are also arranged in London. For these tests and for the classes the Federation has now a permanent classroom, which is in use almost continuously throughout the year. At classes held in the provinces within a five-year period 466 students have been trained. The county exhibitions have become so popular that they are frequently spread out over two or three days in order that the crowds examining the

exhibits may be diminished. Some counties have started depots for the sale of their members' work.

The membership of the Guild of Learners is distributed among the following crafts: Glove makers, Embroiderers, Upholsterers, Leather workers, Basket makers, Raffia workers, Needle workers, Chair caners, Household jobbers, Furcraft workers, Toymakers, Dressmakers, Knitters, Rush workers, Lace makers, Rug makers, Weavers, Spinners, Cobblers, Smockers, Slipper makers, Milliners, Dyers, Designers, Carpenters, Crochet workers, Bookbinders, Potters, Papier mâché makers, Brush bristlers, Banner makers, Artificial flower makers, Tinkers, Umbrella coverers, Eider-down quilt makers, Mat makers and Slipper coverers.

At the Handicrafts Exhibition of 1924, 50 out of 56 County Federations sent exhibits, 756 out of 1,037 received being shown. These figures do not include Guild of Learners' exhibits, of which 147 were accepted out of 247 received. A satisfactory feature of this exhibition was 'the high average of work exhibited.' Another London Exhibition for 1927 has been announced and is being looked forward to with the greatest interest for its quality and variety.

At the very beginning of the movement £1,000 was received from the Carnegie Trust. In 1922, £600 received from the Development Fund was ear-marked for Handicrafts. This amount has been increased yearly until, in 1924-5, it was £1,058. For 1925-6, the application was for £1,850.

Among the women who have deserved well of the movement on the handicrafts side I can mention in this book three only. First of all, there is Miss Preece, whose ideals and outlook as reflected in her writing in *Home and Country* struck me as excellent. Then comes Miss Somerville, the mainstay of the Sub-Committee from 1918. For years she gave time and strength and tact to the Schools and the tests and the office work, and did more than anyone else to popularize the educational policy. Finally, there is Mrs. Heron Maxwell, who has been Chairman of the Sub-Committee from the beginning, seven years ago. She is, of course, keen on a sane balance

between the handicrafts and the social and literary sides of the movement. As she said to me once in her downright way, 'The last thing I want to do is to force handicrafts down the throats of people who don't want them.'

RURAL INDUSTRIES.—To some persons home crafts spell rural industries, a subject on which, of recent years, a great deal of nonsense has been printed and a great deal of money and patience has been wasted. The subject, which comprehends activities outside the movement, is not for this volume, but the following extract from a letter before me, written by a worker in the movement as far back as the spring of 1919, has still interest: 'The whole question of industries on a commercial basis has been very difficult. War conditions created a condition of things in which Institutes were trying to run before they had learnt to walk; they thought they could compete with the big firms. I hope we shall be able to show the Institutes how important it is to keep up the standard of their work and to keep their early efforts for their own use instead of rushing into the market with indifferent articles and without any business training. Our aim should be to help to bring out the best in every individual woman in our Institutes, rather than to boom any particular industry. We want to encourage all women to be self-contained and to be able to mend and make for their own homes.'

It would be pleasant to break off here into an account of such successful Institute industries as glove-making at Dunchurch, but in these pages I must refrain.

TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

THE Annual Report for 1925 is not published in time for examination in this book. But the pages of *Home and Country*, the proceedings at the annual meeting, and personal inquiries, supply most of the information we need concerning the village, county and national progress of the movement during the year. 'Rather fewer new Institutes,' Lady Denman noted in January, 'had been formed than has been the case formerly,' but 'the texture of the movement is becoming closer; more members seem really to appreciate the fact that they are also members of the County and of the National Federation.'

TWENTIES AND THIRTIES.—The chairman went on to declare, in a New Year message, that the Institutes had, generally speaking, learnt what co-operation means: they were beginning to work with one mind. 'But, mercifully, the individuality of each Institute remains as marked as it has ever been.' In the heart-searching which should be done by the movement in its tenth year, no question was more important, Lady Denman thought, than, Why are there too few members between 20 and 30?

A FIGHTING FIELD?—A year or two before I had ventured myself to raise this matter of the proportion of middle-aged folk in the movement, and had stressed the special value of the Institutes to them, irrespective of what the Institutes did for the young. It is a question of many aspects which must be discussed in another volume. Meantime I copy out an arresting point of view from a letter from a correspondent who has started many Institutes:

'The real truth is that the movement has failed and does fail to attract youth, and the reason is that the fighting element that binds is lacking.'

But an equally experienced worker writes: 'Your correspondent has the remedy in her own hands, for how could one have a better field for organizing the fighting powers of women on all the big issues that really matter in the world to-day?'

'No better field,' I agree, but as long as many vital questions are regarded as 'controversial,' as long as the League of Nations, for example, provokes members to wrath, as long as the agenda of the annual meeting is only in limited touch with what a clever worker calls 'thought of the day,' it would seem that the movement has a good deal of 'organizing' to do.

THE LOAD OF THE ELDERLY.—My second correspondent goes on to make a good reply when she says: 'It is true that the proportion of young women is relatively small, but that is, I think, largely accounted for by the fact that those are the women who have young children at home, and cannot, therefore, come out at night. In our county we have, on the whole, a fair proportion of young married women, and, provided meetings were held at night, a very good number of young unmarried ones.'

A PLEA FOR YOUTH.—If the proportion of this particular county be better than the proportion of some other counties, my correspondent accounts for it by two facts:

'1. All our organizers and speakers always made a very strong point of the "service" side of Institutes. We tried to make them start from the very beginning thinking that they existed for the community, and only for their own benefit in so far as improving themselves meant improving the village.

'2. We made a great point of getting young people into office. Even the important office of secretary is very frequently held by a farmer's young daughter or a young elementary school teacher. Looking through the list of secretaries for 1925, nearly half must be well under 30; in a good many, under 25. Two excellent group conveners are under 25 or 26.'

A CRITICISM OF COUNTY FEDERATIONS.—One very bad mistake of all County Federations is that they are not quick enough to give young people responsible posts, *i.e.*, as members of the Executive and as organizers. 'We are overweighted with the old and middle-aged. I have known a Federation where all the chief officials were septuagenarian or sexagenarian, and the executive was almost wholly over 50. There is too much fear of entrusting the young with anything really big, and failure to

realize that the only way to get future leaders is to let them come in and make their mistakes and learn by them.' It is unnecessary to say that the experience and counsel of the elderly is valuable and indispensable. But the movement will never move with the times if its leadership throughout the country is mainly grey-headed. Even the elderly may have forward-looking ideas, but it is the young who have most of the visions.

This subject is one, however, on which there is still more to be said.

For one thing, that the movement would still be doing good work in the villages if it *were* a movement of the middle-aged only!

J. P.'s.—After all my correspondent and I have written, this seems hardly the suitable place in which to chronicle with satisfaction, as one does, the fact that in Devon the movement has made such a claim on public consideration that on its Federation executive there are no fewer than half a dozen J. P.'s! Norfolk can boast seven.

BOOKS FOR EVERYBODY.—As to the activities of the Institutes at the opening of 1925, we find Lady Denman setting particular store on the way in which the Institutes, through the adoption of the Libraries Act by so many Councils, have been able 'to put every man and woman, boy and girl in the villages of those County Councils in the way of getting a book to read.'

I believe that it is not overstating the fact to say that in some ten counties the adoption of the Libraries Act was the work of the Institutes, and that in ten or fifteen other counties the Act was adopted largely through Institute exertions. The Institutes did not gain their successes merely by passing resolutions. Many of them wrote to County Councillors and canvassed them. When no reply was received, or the reply was unfavourable, County Councillors were invited to address Institute meetings. There is a story of one badgered County Councillor rushing into a County Federation office and asking 'in God's name for a sight of that Libraries Act!'

THE TIME TO CELEBRATE.—During the Spring, Mrs. Watt, who set the first seven Institutes going, and, in 1916, the second year of the movement, started 150, expressed sympathy with the view, as did Miss Williams, the first secretary of the Federation, that there should be some celebration of the tenth anniversary of the movement. The Executive came to the conclusion, however, that this was 'too early an anniversary to celebrate.' It was advisable that celebration should be deferred 'until the movement is on a sound financial basis and independent of Government assistance.'

THE AMPLIFIER STAGE.—What would the women present at the starting of the first Institutes have thought of talk of a Women's Institutes' gathering so large that amplifiers—but they would not have understood what amplifiers were—would have to be requisitioned to carry the speeches all over the hall? The amplifiers were certainly a feature of the 1925 Queen's Hall meeting (attendance about 2,500).

The amplifiers were more than a feature. They were a suggestion that the difficulty of reconciling democratic representation from every Institute with the restrictions on debate in a meeting of two-and-a-half thousand persons had been almost solved. The custom at the annual meeting of causing speakers to address the delegates from the platform brought orators at the 1925 meeting within reach of the microphone, and the amplifiers took their voices to the farthest corners of the hall. The movement is to be congratulated on not having allowed itself to be stampeded into a summary and imperfect solution of a difficulty for which science had in store what is almost an adequate remedy. There are worse minor mottoes for a movement than, Never meet trouble half-way.

But there is a certain aloofness of the annual meeting which even amplifiers will not remedy. More on this, however, in another volume.

MR. DOBSON AND MR. DALLINGER.—This 1925 meeting was noteworthy for more than the amplifiers. While, at previous years' meetings, a Minister of Agriculture had spoken, at the 1925 meeting there were speeches from a Minister of

Agriculture, two members of his staff (and of the National Federation Executive), Mr. Dobson and Mr. Dallinger, and a Development Commissioner, Lord Shaftesbury.

A word may well be said here of the services of Mr. Dobson (who is an Assistant Secretary of the Ministry) and of Mr. Dallinger (who is Chief Education Inspector), during the long period in which they have represented the Ministry on the Executive. Mr. Dobson, who is a son of the poet, has been a thorough believer in the movement, and it has often been indebted to his friendly shrewdness. One of Mr. Dobson's women colleagues on the Executive writes to me: 'There is no man to whom we owe more than Mr. Dobson. He has sat with us as the Government Inspector, but it has never occurred to us to regard him in this light. Of course he realizes how much the movement can do to help forward the things that the Ministry wants doing.' Mr. Dallinger has been as markedly helpful. 'He has always had time to spare for us,' the same correspondent says.

MIND AND MANNERS.—But even an amplified N.F.W.I. Annual Meeting is not the easiest of audiences. *Home and Country* has upbraided the members for the 'bad manners' with which, at more than one meeting, they have cried 'Time' to invited orators. Prolixity, in whichever sex, is to be reprobated, and it is piquant to find the sex which so long kept the platform, as it still keeps the pulpit, for itself, being brought to book by a women's gathering. Is it possible that the interrupters instinctively felt that the whole women's movement has made such a world-advance that there can be few subjects vital to the Institute cause on which able and responsible women speakers could not be found to address it?

What many friends of the movement will look forward to at the 1926 meeting, is the amplifiers—with which the delegates were unfamiliar in 1925—not only extending debate, but increasing its effectiveness and value. The loud-speakers ought to reveal what has been scantily revealed in annual meeting speeches and in *Home and Country* correspondence, the mind of the movement. Happily the movement is being slowly educated to suffer opposition.

FREEDOM FOR 'HOME AND COUNTRY'!—May I express the hope that *Home and Country's* plain speaking marks the beginning of a more independent attitude on the part of a paper which has steadily improved in quality? It would be a great help to the movement, in my opinion, if, while a certain section of the paper remained official, there were a considerable part in which so deeply experienced and kindly a pioneer as the Editor had some liberty of prophesying, some right to look ahead, some freedom to say what she thought. I say this on the basis of my experience as the student-historian of the movement, as a some years-old member of the *Home and Country* Committee, and as its only member who is a professional journalist.

THE THINGS THAT REALLY MATTER.—Lady Denman, in her opening speech, had said that members had to 'get some idea of the relative importance of the thoughts and actions of our time.' Members had to realize the importance of their opinions. 'It is essential to the value of our movement that we should study the important questions of the day.' Lady Denman mentioned illustratively such a question as the reasons we have a C3 population or whether our trade can, in the best of circumstances, be enough to support our population?

The movement had been conceived under the influence of high patriotic feeling in the stress of war, the chairman went on: 'it will not be possible to keep alive the spirit which, above all others, actuated this country during those years unless we unite in a common purpose.' 'Let us study the things that really matter,' the chairman concluded. 'If we realize the goal towards which we are working we shall keep that enthusiasm which has been, and, I hope, will continue to be our inspiration.'

TEMPER OF THE MOVEMENT.—The limits within which topics of the day might be considered in a non-party organization were indicated by Lady Denman's ruling that neither Bolshevism nor the work and objects of the Fascisti might be discussed in Institutes. The subjects which the annual meeting, by its resolutions, urged its members to study

were Maternal mortality, Mental deficiency, the Poor Law, Young Farmers' clubs, and the Clearing away of litter from villages. The League of Nations had been mentioned the previous year.

Lady Denman might well dwell with satisfaction on the fact that, under the resolution of a year before, no rule once made may be discussed at two succeeding annual meetings unless the proposed alteration has considerable support behind it. Early annual meetings were naturally much occupied by rule-making and unmaking, by amendments and by amendments to the amendments, the force of which was grasped, no doubt, by only a small proportion of the gathering. There will now be a chance of the movement giving less time to holding its pulse and more to considering questions of the day. It was a wholesome sign in its way that the 1925 meeting was so impatient of amendments. One after the other was firmly voted down.

MORE ITEMS FROM INSTITUTE AND COUNTY RECORDS.—Here I may interject some items taken from Institute programmes during the year, which illustrate present activities of the movement: Food exhibition, Whistling competition, Paper-hanging school, Lessons in book-keeping, Travelling gift collection of handicrafts, Weight guessing competition, in which a basket of pears, a box of eggs, a cockerel, and a pot-plant were entered, Article made from a flour-bag, Lessons in household renovations, Police work, Smelling competition, Exhibition of old shawls and parasols, Dickens class, New office and shop, Feather-mount industry, Potato growing competition, Institute choir asked to sing in a cathedral during choristers' holiday, First aid cupboard, Compulsory concert, Three days' course in bacon curing and sauce and pickle making, Hospital cots for malnutrition babies, Slippers made for school-children out of old felt-hats, Competition in brass cleaning, Blind girl adopted, Value of birds to farmers and gardeners, Nose competition, When our grandmothers went to school, Scouts take round notices, Exhibition of objects from other countries, Adequate water supply for

village after three years' efforts, Committee to welcome and encourage newcomers to the village, Best newspaper-cutting, Wooden coal-box making, Mince-pie competition, How they dressed when I was young, Exhibition of cream jugs, Best three penn'orth of cooked food, Flower-garden competition, Should children leave school at fourteen, Roll-call on things you most dislike to do in a house, Buy-a-brick scheme for hall fund, Best results from setting one potato, Identifying members from photographs of them taken when children, Mannikin parade, Institute marketed 9,000 eggs in three months, Competition for something new out of something old, Curtains from old blankets and a girl's dress from a window-blind.

County Federations note a Scheme for improved village housing conditions, Competition for re-footing cashmere stockings, Village lane made passable, Weekly market on the village green, Stepping stones for crossing brook, Bath-chair for village bought, Seed potatoes grown for county hospital, Mock-trial in order to teach law court procedure, Fund to send sick members to convalescent homes, Competition for the best use of a yard of Government linen and for the equipment of a kitchen.

FEDERATION ORGANIZERS.—Obviously the qualifications of a Federation organizer should continually rise. In 1925 the qualifications such a woman should possess were thus stated by the Executive: 'Knowledge of country life and conditions, experience in speaking and of committee work, and good educational qualifications, including, if possible, some knowledge of rural history and economics.' Miss Leigh, who became an organizer in 1924, had the advantage of having graduated from the London School of Economics; Miss Dunch, who was appointed in 1925, to take the post vacant during Miss Nightingale's absence in America, is a Newnham girl. Miss Simpson, whose service is, as will have been seen, of some duration, has a practical acquaintance with every phase of rural life and an abounding humanity and humour that give her marked qualifications for her work. She specializes on the agricultural and horticultural side. From the time of the

departure of Mrs. Watt to Canada in 1919, the post of chief organizer has been continuously filled by Mrs. Nugent Harris, whose charitable judgment and sense of fun, joined to unrivalled experience of the movement, are known in every county.

If the increasing demands of *Home and Country* should ever be held to compel the surrender by Mrs. Harris of her post as chief organizer, there is no one to fill her place with just the same vocation and prolonged experience.

V.C.O.'s.—The increased number of Voluntary County Organizers, in whose hands most of the propaganda work is now placed, and the improved organization of County Federations have lessened the need for National Federation organizers. These Federation organizers do not now, unless in exceptional circumstances, do any propaganda work, but attend group conferences, help to conduct schools for officers, and aid County Federations. At the end of 1924 the V.C.O.'s numbered as many as 333. Another 22 were added to the list in the spring of this year.

The methods of selecting and training grow more rigorous. The procedure nowadays is that candidates, nominated by the County Federation, with particulars of their qualifications, go to one of the four or five schools which are held each year in convenient parts of the country. The schools last three days. Mrs. Harris is in charge assisted by a Federation organizer, and by a member of the Executive or by some other well-known member of the movement. Sometimes there is a professional teacher of speaking, and there is always a class in simple account keeping. After the school each candidate writes a paper which is marked by an official who has not attended the school. On the marks given, and on Mrs. Harris's report on the students' work and ability, the would-be V.C.O.'s fate is decided by the National Federation Executive. But appointments are made for a year only.

At the end of every year the County Federations send to the National Federation their recommendations for the reappointment of their V.C.O.'s. Accompanying the recommendations

are reports on the different V.C.O.'s' work. On these documents the National Federation acts.

It is clear that it will not be for lack of care if the constituted apostles of the movement are ill-chosen. In addition to the V.C.O. training-schools it should be mentioned that special schools for supplementary training have been held from time to time. There are also inter-county conferences for V.C.O.'s, which members of executives of local federations may attend.

There is, further, an annual conference in London, generally at the time of the two days' annual meeting. V.C.O.'s have the right of admission, without voting power, to Consultative Councils as well as the annual meeting.

What is so interesting and encouraging about the V.C.O.'s is that more than 300 women should have been willing to submit to tests in order to be allowed to do hard unpaid work.

An illustration of the keenness of some would-be V.C.O.'s occurred at one school. Two candidates had learnt everything that was to be got out of the pamphlets which candidates are supposed to study, but seldom completely understand. When the subject of procedure appeared on the programme, they were eager to disconcert the unwary Organizer who gave the lecture, and, in the course of their heckling, actually succeeded in doing so, much to her and everybody else's amusement.

ISLE OF MAN AND CHANNEL ISLANDS.—It must seem to many a curious fact that though the movement was born in an island (Anglesea) and there are enough Institutes in the Isle of Wight for them to have had for some time a County Federation, there is no Institute in the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands. There have been inquiries about starting Institutes in both these places, but the Development Fund is available for the United Kingdom only. Work in the Isle of Man and Channel Islands could only be carried on by funds specially raised for this purpose.

DEFINITIONS.—In the autumn the National Federation Executive put a notice in *Home and Country* to the effect that

'the main purpose' of the N.F.W.I. 'is to provide an organization with the object of enabling women to take an effective part in rural life and development.' The standing notice in the official organ with regard to the Institutes themselves states that their main purpose is 'to improve and develop conditions of rural life by providing centres for educational activities and social intercourse.'

THE AGRICULTURAL SIDE.—*Home and Country* speaks in October of the Executive having 'awakened to the fact' that 'practical interest in agriculture has not been characteristic of the activities of every Institute.' 'One official' is quoted as saying, 'Our members are not really interested in agriculture.' 'An organized plan to further teaching in agricultural pursuits is being considered by the Executive.'

HEADQUARTERS IN THE FUTURE.—'In many districts,' I have a note of someone saying to me, 'the Counties are practically grown up. Many Institute members are grown up, too. Not the least useful thing that some counties have done is to get together delegates to the annual meeting and help them not only to understand the subjects that are coming up, for discussion but the play of resolutions, amendments and the previous question on a larger stage than that of their own Institutes.' It has been brought home to many women in this way (and by means of Miss Macnamara's playlet, which I have already mentioned) that correct procedure is common sense, that rules are a device of the experienced to cope with real difficulties.

There are many directions in which the activities of the National Federation do not lessen. The Music Committee and the Drama Committee are recent departures, and the Education, Literature and Publicity Committee is inclined to do more—but music, the drama and literature are, like many another topic, for another book. 'The thing that pleases me as much as anything in the movement,' a leader said to me, 'is the pressure gradually coming towards an artistic and intellectual development—literature, music, drama. It is in embryo, but it is there, and it is the natural complement of handicrafts.'

The National directorate in the future must be, for one thing, a storehouse of accessible information. As to personnel, in certain departments of work some counties are probably as well provided for as headquarters. The movement is well served by its head-office staff, but if the National Federation is to be more than clearing-house machinery and an arranger of gatherings, if it is to be of the utmost help to the movement, there is nothing that the membership has to offer in the way of personnel which should be beyond its pocket.

LEADERS AND LED.—There is here, however, a danger. As an equally clear-sighted county official writes, ‘there is a great danger of the whole thing getting in front of country minds. London is a long way farther than it thinks it is from the hamlet, the hamlet that you and I know. Real country life is still extraordinarily primitive. How few speakers can speak intelligibly all the time to real country people! In many of the Institutes we must use almost kindergarten methods. I am sure that the organizers who go about among the Institutes realize this. But other well-intentioned people don’t!’

FINANCIAL POSITION OF FEDERATIONS.—In order to make the matter clear, the fact may be recalled that, of the 6*d.* per member which County Federations receive from the Institutes, 3*d.* per member is forwarded to the National Federation. This is a definite rule, and the National Federation calculates the membership of the movement on the amount received each year in affiliation fees. In addition to affiliation fees, the County Federations are asked to contribute towards the support of the National Federation. The amount which they are asked to give is calculated according to the financial needs of the National Federation. Recently they have been asked to contribute at the rate of £1 per Institute in their areas. (It was formerly 25*s.*) These are the donations which are given in the list on pages 51 and 52 of the 8th Annual Report. In the financial statement on pages 40 and 41 are donations and affiliation fees entered as two separate items. This financial statement is accompanied by a table of days of organizers’ work given by the National Federation to each county.

'COMPLETE FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE.'—In November the Executive noted the fact that only 18 out of the 56 County Federations are able to pay their own expenses and to contribute at the suggested rate of £1 for each Institute, *i.e.*, to bear their full share of the running costs of the movement; 32 Federations contributed at a lower rate, and 6 did not contribute at all. 'If every Federation is able this year to bear its full share of the national expenditure,' the Executive stated, it would 'not need to ask for donations at a higher rate than 15s. per Institute in order to attain complete financial independence from Government aid.'

AN INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION?—With regard to the proposals for an International Federation between the English-speaking Institute movement and kindred organizations abroad, the N.F.W.I. and the Scottish and Canadian Federations reached an agreement on principles. The wise attitude towards an International Federation seems to be that, in view of different methods and of religious difficulties, it cannot be much more than a conference, and that the less constitution it has the better.

At a conference at Brussels this summer, under the auspices of the Belgian movement, provisional rules were drawn up for a 'Commission Internationale des Cercles de Fermières et institutions similaires,' vice-presidents for which were provisionally appointed from Brazil, France, England (Mrs. Watt), Poland, Czechoslovakia, Finland and Hungary, with a Belgian president. Vacant places are kept for the United States and Canada.

In 1919, to go back a few years, the Board of Agriculture sent Miss Talbot, Mrs. Lyttelton, Mrs. Watt and Mrs. Harris across to Belgium to look into the organization of rural women in that country. Mrs. Lyttelton's impression was that the Cercles were ahead of our Institutes in respect of the peripatetic teaching of dairying and other agricultural subjects. A ludicrous incident of the tour had the advantage of removing a Belgian impression that 'les dames Anglaises' were 'tres sérieuses.' They were found to be 'tres gaies.' It is indicative of the wide

interest that the Women's Institute movement has excited that a friend lately overheard a discussion on Institutes proceeding on an Atlantic liner, while someone tells me of the same subject being threshed out at a dinner-table in Palestine.

THE WIDENING HORIZON.—Mrs. Heron Maxwell, a mountain climber and former All-England hockey player, suggested and lent a hand in the guidance of the first Swiss tour (1924). The tours to Switzerland and Belgium are to be annual affairs, and are in their way an indication of the widening horizon.

Then there was the enrolling of 128 Institutes as corporate associates of the League of Nations Union — the annual meeting, in the face of opposition, had ruled that the League of Nations was a non-party question.

Another significant thing was the holding by a Norfolk Institute of a service in which six denominations took part and a Salvation Army band supplied the music. But too much may not be made of this, for when the news was published there were some protests !

In the fourth place, there was the dispatch, by means of a Fellowship of the Rockefeller International Education Board, I understand, of a Federation organizer, Miss Nightingale, to the United States to make a study of the American country-woman's methods of social advance. In Staffordshire, where the relationship of the County Council and the movement is closer than in any other counties, Miss Nightingale had done excellent work both for the movement and for the County Council.

THE BIGGEST INSTITUTE MEETING.—In noting the events of 1925 I cannot forbear to chronicle that during the year I had the pleasure of addressing the largest Women's Institute meeting ever held in Great Britain! I had the opportunity of speaking on the movement from the studio of the British Broadcasting Company. Whatever deductions may be made in calculating the size of the audience, from the total of receiving sets in the country, 2,000,000, there can be little doubt that a very large audience heard, most of them for the

first time, the Institute gospel preached to them. In this connection mention may be made of the efforts of the B.B.C. to provide lectures suitable for Institutes. There can be no question that the introduction of wireless is going to have a far-reaching effect not only on village gatherings but on the whole village.

TOPICS OF THE DAY.—Lady Denman's reference to topics of the day, followed by the conflict of opinion about the League of Nations, must have set forward-looking attendants at the annual meeting wondering about the future. As a prominent member of the movement said to me: 'I am all for fights. Unless we have more contentious subjects we shall go to sleep. There are plenty of contentious subjects which are non-party.' There are. It is indicative of the precise stage at which the movement has arrived that when I proposed to mention one or two to which the speaker had alluded, another conspicuous member said, 'Better not. Might cause trouble.'

THE MOVEMENT AND LABOUR.—'And there is another direction in which we have to make an advance,' this experienced worker went on. 'It said a great deal for the wisdom of the early leaders that they got a representative of organized working-women on the Executive. I should say that Mrs. Simm has been most useful to us. The truth is that, though we have a Labour element in the membership, as we have also a Conservative and Liberal element, and the Executive has the advantage of Mrs. Simm's colleagueship, some of the County Federations are too largely made up of adherents of the older parties. We have not only to be fair in this matter, but to have the appearance of being fair. The Institutes are all right. Every party and view is represented on the committees of the Institutes. But there are not enough Labour people on some of the County Executives to give Labour-folk who do not know us very well all the confidence that, by reason of our broad-mindedness, we really deserve.'

A BLESSING TO COUNTY FAMILIES.—In the course of a discussion on this question of adequate Labour representation on the County Executives, a peeress spoke to me as

follows: 'Whatever the movement may or may not have succeeded in doing for working-people, it has done a very great deal for the county families. I sometimes think it has done more for them than for any other class of members. Many of these county women now understand about such things as the minimum wage and the sin of working at an industry for pin-money in rivalry with people who have to get their living by it. They have also learnt something about the implications of democracy, and that Socialists have the good of the country as much at heart as Conservatives.'

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE.—Among the members who, since 1917, have served on the National Executive, and are not mentioned elsewhere in my narrative, are: Mrs. Hardcastle, who has been useful on the rural side, and gave evidence on behalf of the movement before the Departmental Committee on Food Production and Prices. The Hon. Mrs. Grant was an able and popular travelling inspector under the Board in Dorset and Hants, two counties in which the movement has always been active. Mrs. Huddart is one of the most respected members in East Sussex, and, as chairman of the County Federation, is Lady Denman's chief. (Lady Denman is a member of her county executive, but not an office-bearer.) Miss Kingsmill is as good a speaker as the cause boasts, and possesses that sense of humour of which the movement cannot have too much. Benita Lady Lees, has been, from the starting of her County Federation, its devoted and skilful secretary, and is known to have been a charming student of methods of organization at the National Federation office for a month. Miss Gildea is recognized not only as a fine speaker but as one of the movement's thinkers. She was the first president of Dorset. Lady Grey, who has the statesmanlike qualities of her family, has been one of the movement's wisest counsellors. Lady Boyne, who has the knack of neat speech-making and the courteous riposte, has been markedly helpful to the movement on the musical side. Miss Bouverie, a capable manager of her own estate, has brought high financial talent to the cause. Lady Listowel is known as an excellent chairman of her County

Federation and of committees, and does a great deal of work. Mrs. Harcourt Williams, who is particularly interested in the agricultural sides of the movement, is also one of its amusing speakers. The Hon. Mrs. Colvin is, like her sister, the Hon. Mrs. Dalgety, keenly interested in the educational work of the Institutes. Lady Margaret Boscawen has done valuable service not only on the Executive but in Middlesex, which she has helped to remind the membership has not all been swallowed up by London, and is for carrying out the ideas of the movement 'on democratic, self-governing, self-supporting lines.' Lady Dorothy Meynell, an accession to the existing Executive, has been described as 'brimful of common sense.' Miss Calmady-Hamlyn, who is distinguished as a pony breeder, and was one of Dame Meriel's first inspectors, is unfortunately no longer connected with the movement, in which she was a democratic force. Mrs. Coote has the sound qualities of her native Aberdeen, and has done admirable service in Huntingdonshire. Mrs. Greenall has also put through a lot of work in her own county. The Hon. Mrs. Handford was one of the most zealous of the movement's early friends. Mrs. Wintringham was a pioneer in Lincolnshire. Countrywomen who did not know her personally used to call her out at the House as 'our Institute M.P.' Mrs. Foster brings to the energetic direction of the movement in Hereford the wide outlook of an American. Mrs. Trevelyan comes from Cambo, which has produced such a fine Institute book. Miss Ruth Anderson is an experienced Suffolk worker.

It is worth noting that well-developed counties like Hants have made a large contribution to the Executive membership. The representation of the different counties on the Executive may be ascertained from the list in the Appendix of members who have served since 1917 on that body.

The following members had the distinction of being co-opted to the Executive: Mrs. Seymour Allen, Mrs. Brackenbury, Mrs. Dugdale, Mrs. Donaldson Hudson, Mrs. Holland Martin, Mrs. Morgan, Mrs. Perkins, Mrs. Ramsay, Mrs. Seddon, Miss Thomas, and, as already stated, Mrs. Hobbs.

Lady Radnor has not been a member of the Executive, but was a member of the original A.O.S. Institutes' Sub-Committee, and is to-day a keen chairman of her County Federation. In looking back on the work of the movement she expressed the view to me that 'the children of Institute members are finding the advantage of the wider horizon and understanding sympathy which has come into their mothers' lives.'

THE CHANGES WHICH MUST SURELY COME.—The extent to which changes are taking place in the direction of the movement is shown by the gradual reconstitution of the Executive. At the annual meeting four members of the Executive did not stand for re-election and one other member failed to gain a seat. A tribute may well be paid to the public spirit of members who felt that they ought to stand aside for other workers.

LADY DENMAN.—It is not easy to think of the Women's Institute movement without Lady Denman at its head. But there has been a persistent rumour that she might wish someone else to take the stroke-oar for a time. Year after year she has been enthusiastically re-elected to the Chairmanship. If, to the profound regret, even the dismay, of the Institutes, Lady Denman, so lucid, so forceful, so practised and so incisive in counsel, should insist on temporarily retiring from a position to which she has given the whole of her leisure, the membership would be faced with as critical a situation as when, in 1916 (*see* Chapter 4), the decision was taken to appoint her to the chairmanship of the pioneer A.O.S. Institutes Sub-Committee. There is, of course, no necessary woman in any movement which is alive. If the Institutes movement were deprived of the leader who has served it so long and so ably it would lack vigour indeed if it could not produce one member whose outstanding character, wisdom, kindliness, experience, single-mindedness, knowledge of rural affairs, and full salvation to the women's movement, marked her out for the supreme direction.

MRS. WATT.—Among the new members on the 1925 Executive is Mrs. Watt. She had been present *ex officio* at

the meetings of the first two Executives, and in 1923, on her return from Canada, had been co-opted to the Organization Sub-committee. Mrs. Watt has, as we have seen, an unrivalled knowledge of the movement, and has rendered, as this history has shown, great services to it. She was at the foundation of the first two County Federations. Mrs. Tyrrell Godman and Lady Isabel Margesson, the first two voluntary organizers, and Mrs. Clowes, the first staff organizer – who formed no fewer than 500 Institutes – owe their training to her. She conducted the first Schools for training organizers. She has, herself, visited a large proportion of the Institutes and she still lectures. As a tribute to the founder of the first Institute in this country, *Home and Country* loyally keeps her name ‘standing’ in every issue, alongside the name of Miss Alice Williams, its first editor. Mrs. Watt has been interested of late years, in no small measure, in the development of the international relations of the countrywomen’s movement, and looks forward to an International Federation, for which proposals came from Canada. The founder of our first Institute – who has not now, I understand, any official connection with the Canadian movement – has written and said very little in which she has not taken the opportunity of stating that she is a Canadian. She must be conscious of the fact that the British movement has grown into something as different from the Canadian movement as our rural life, with all its grades, is different from Canadian rural life. If the movement was originally Canadian, it is now Anglicised, Welshified and Scotified. Once more the genius of the British people, the great adapters, has triumphed.

AFTER TEN YEARS. – Writing in the *Queen*, on the completion of the first ten years of the movement, Mrs. Watt said justly, ‘So many of our results are intangible, so many are indirect, can never be measured.’ But one result is certain: ‘the Women’s Institute has brought us all together, a happy working union of women of all sects, of all ages, of all grades of society, of varying capacity, at all stages of education and mental growth, of all politics, each with her own viewpoint,

and each with a personality which she is encouraged to develop. Somehow, by the grace of self-control and tolerance, we have got a large measure of unity, mutual help and co-operation.’

That is well said. And it is equally accurate to say, ‘We have noticeably increased the amenities of rural life.’ Think of all the Institute pageants, fêtes, plays, flower-shows, outings, exhibitions, folk-dancing and singing. ‘Institute handicrafts are found at all large shows. At an Institute fête held recently 10,000 people passed through the gates. In another county 600 took part in folk-dancing. Every year there are over 40,000 regular Institute monthly meetings.’

Then ‘through the teaching of handicrafts by our Guild of Learners and the organization of exhibitions, dépôts and Institute centres in towns, we have made it possible for many women to add to their incomes without leaving their homes.’

‘Further, we have broken down many barriers, not the least of which was the isolation of one village from the other, passing away through the happy exchange of Institute visits.’ Beyond all this, ‘we have become better citizens.’ Members use their vote and ‘are taking an interest in bigger affairs. But we are so very jumpy about politics, so fearful of introducing party that we are wrestling daily with the problem of how to deal with public questions without party bias. All three parties accuse us of leaning to each other party. So we are still safe.’

There is another side, of course, to this pleasing, stirring picture. But there can be no doubt that the picture is in the main true, and a record of which to be proud, a record by which to be encouraged greatly.

A point which Mrs. Watt does not stress is the part that good organization has played in providing the movement with the elements of strength and permanency. Organization, as I suggest elsewhere, can be overdone, but the movement could not have been where it is to-day had nothing but ‘uplift’ been given it. It is easy to undervalue ‘uplift,’ and if ‘uplift’ be the expression of faith, hope and zeal, to minimize its worth would be folly. A movement must be evangelistic or it is not

a movement. But if a movement is to last there must be skilful and unselfish-team work, routine, the committee spirit, super-secretarying, wise, patient, single-minded leadership. Of these valuable things the Institute movement has become increasingly appreciative.

'Rightly or wrongly,' a member of some prominence said to me, 'Mrs. Watt has been regarded as being somewhat indifferent to organization outside the organization of the individual Institute. I fear that if Mrs. Watt had had her way the movement would have been much more loosely knit than it is, and we should have had many awkward situations to deal with. It cannot be sufficiently emphasized in a movement like ours that rules are made not to lessen the liberty of the members but to preserve it.'

With regard to Mrs. Watt's Schools for V.C.O.'s, a leader of the cause owned to me that when the first Schools were proposed, she had contended, in opposition to Mrs. Watt, that such elaboration was out of place in War-time, and that any woman of education and experience could fit herself for starting Institutes. 'But,' she said, 'I was evidently wrong. Our Schools have been curiously successful and are undoubtedly one of the movement's strong points.'

Mrs. Watt has also been great on good programmes, and is particularly keen on the unhappily-named 'Golden Thread' plan of 'Continuous Programmes,' again not, perhaps, just the best possible name.

In visualizing, in the *Queen* article, the stage into which the movement is now passing, Mrs. Watt, is no more definite than that, under 'the stern realities of present uneconomic conditions, the village woman will take her education seriously, and will qualify herself to deal, through her Institute, with problems of citizenship and national health, morale and prosperity.' This does not go farther than Lady Denman's presidential address.

But what Mrs. Watt goes on to say is well worth saying. 'None of us,' she writes, 'has worn the martyr's crown. No member has had to break with her family because she joined us. The progress has been easy, even placid. Is it good for us? I wonder.'

Is Mrs. Watt satisfied? 'No,' she writes - 'who would be?' Her thanksgiving is, it seems, 'not unmixed with apprehension.' 'Apprehension' is certainly a strongish word - I am afraid quite the wrong word. A mother may recognize the possibility of a child making mistakes, but if she believes in its faith and character she has no apprehensions.

'Each fresh adherent is a fresh uncertainty,' Mrs. Watt says. Either we may say, in the classic phrase, 'the bearings of this observation lays in the application on it,' or we may say, in downright fashion, what we surely believe, that each fresh adherent to the Institute movement is new blood, new ideas, and youth, and, therefore, hope. Mrs. Bobbed Hair and Miss Shingle, in their short frocks, are less emotional - or have their emotions under firmer control - are better instructed, fitter in body and mind, and just a little wiser than the generation they have succeeded. The last thought one could think of having of them is apprehension. And the future of the Institute movement is increasingly in their hands.

MORALIZINGS ALL ROUND

IT is a little dramatic, and, in the interests of the Women's Institute movement, well worth thinking over, that as this book, chronicling the Women's Institutes' ten years of steady progress, is being written, there should be passing from the scene the two national, men-managed rural organizations with which the women's movement was so closely associated, the Agricultural Organization Society and the Village Clubs Association.

The V.C.A. had £20,000 and the A.O.S. about £200,000 from the Treasury. Why did the A.O.S. and V.C.A. fail and the women's organization succeed?

I was struck by the kindly suggestion of a woman prominent in the Institute movement that even to discuss the collapse of the A.O.S. and V.C.A., in a book primarily about the Institute cause, might look like 'triumphing over or showing discourtesy to a fallen ancestor or foe.' I cannot believe that a careful reader of *all* the references in this book to the A.O.S. and the V.C.A., Mr. Nugent Harris and Sir Henry Rew, will find ground for such apprehensions.

Now let us try to ascertain, in a scientific spirit, just what some outstanding facts in the history of the A.O.S. and the V.C.A., and incidentally of the N.F.U. (National Farmers' Union), have to teach the conductors and members of a national rural movement like that of the Institutes.

CLOSELY-DEFINED AIMS.—The prosperous survival of the National Farmers' Union and the decease of the A.O.S. (at a time when the co-operative movement in the United States — to omit, for once, the Danish comparison — is doing business to the tune of £450,000,000 a year) would seem to mark, for one thing, the success in the struggle for existence of the organization which had the more closely-defined aims. The A.O.S. — how little is known about it is shown by the fact that, as I write, the *Nineteenth Century* states that it 'was created by the Government'! — did much excellent pioneer, largely exploratory, work. There can be no question about that.

It lived through the trying period in which authorities on agricultural co-operation were being slowly winnowed from sentimentalists, energetic people with views and co-operators of the chair. Although the A.O.S. is dead there are in this country to-day 60,000 farmers in 193 co-operative societies which have a turnover of about eight millions in a twelvemonth. There has been held at Wembley this year a four-days' Imperial Conference on Agricultural Co-operation, and for the spreading of the faith the Horace Plunkett Foundation has just opened an office in London. The N.F.U. has also been holding a two-days' Co-operative Conference.

A.O.S., N.F.U., AND MRS. WATT.—The field open to the A.O.S. was wide. The A.O.S. made the easy mistake of pegging out claims to too much of it. Like many a back-to-the-lander it made itself a larger garden than it could cultivate thoroughly. It suffered from its ranging view and its incurable benevolence. There was no nonsense of public spirit about the National Farmers' Union. It won through by giving the platform, the magazines and the reviews the go-by. It rested its hopes on buttonholing farmers and on putting up a good thing to them. It was a trade union.

The A.O.S. has gone under and the N.F.U. dwells in stability and merited success next door to an ex-Premier. It has never had a subsidy, but it has had the support which comes from appealing directly to the pockets of its subscribers. It promised them and has given them results, without 'uplift' or too much trouble to themselves. It is a business organization, composed of farmers, working for farmers. The A.O.S. was not largely composed of farmers. The A.O.S. was philanthropy, education, investigation, co-operation, at a time when few of our country people knew what co-operation meant.

Even the N.F.U. has only succeeded after seventeen years' struggle. Before the War it had a stiffish time of it. During the War, farmers could hardly plead that they had not the price of an N.F.U. subscription in their pockets. Is it possible that if the A.O.S. had never listened to Mrs. Watt, if it had stuck closer and ever closer to its farmers, had got a strong repre-

sentation of them on its directorate, it might have shared the agricultural field with the N.F.U. to this day? If it be so, the Institutes may decorously raise a black-bordered handkerchief to their eyes for the A.O.S. It is a pleasant thing that Mr. Samuel Bostock, who did so much for the Institute movement in its early days, survives on the N.F.W.I. Executive as a link between the A.O.S. and the Institutes.

For a penetrating account, from a strictly business point of view, with no pretence of philanthropy about it, of the difficulties encountered and to be encountered in promoting agricultural co-operation in England, the interested reader may turn to an article by Mr. Graff on 'Farmers and Co-operation,' in the Year-book of the N.F.U. for 1925. The history of the N.F.U. itself is to be found in the Year-book for 1922.

WAS THE V.C.A. ILL-USED?—As for the Village Clubs Association, its disappearance, in view of the Reconstruction Committee's send-off, and the praiseworthy intentions of its founders, and after all the good work put into it, was greatly to be regretted. The V.C.A. came to an end for many reasons. The principal reason was lack of money. After the liberal way in which the Institute movement had been aided out of Government funds, the financial treatment of the V.C.A. may have seemed illiberal. But the V.C.A. did receive, in all, £21,000, which is not a trifle. The V.C.A. may have deserved more. One wonders what it would have achieved had it had more. Two persons closely connected with it were surprised when I told them that it had had only £164 short of £22,000.

It was during the exceptional and free-handed War-time period that the Institute movement had the good fortune to ground its claim to the public money it was to receive. The V.C.A. started into life about the time that the Treasury desired to see a term put to the help to be given to the Institute movement. In limiting the grants made to the V.C.A., the authorities may have doubted whether, in a famous Foreign Office phrase, it possessed elements of permanency. The V.C.A. did not entirely escape some of the faults of the old



THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE UNIFORM

The wearers on [the (reader's) right and left, are Miss Parr and Miss Longcroft. Third from Miss Longcroft, is Miss Kekewich. Seated, Dame Meriel Talbot. On her left, Miss Lumley. Behind her, in black, Mrs. Warner



THE ROAD TO THE 'RURAL'

Track by which a member in the Highlands walks 7 miles to the meetings

A.O.S. The truth is, no doubt, that if the V.C.A. had shown greater signs of making good it would have got more money. It is only fair to say, however, that it was faced with a very difficult proposition. Some of the begging done on the V.C.A.'s behalf was rather on the lines of 'See what the women have had!' than of 'See what the men in the villages are asking for.' Nobody was moved by a V.C.A. plea that the Institutes had got going when the men were away at the War and had no say in the treatment accorded to the movement.

ORGANIZATION *v.* DEMOCRACY.—The longer we live the more the saner of us come to see that the knocks we have had were mainly our own fault. In earlier Chapters some speculations have been offered for what they are worth on the degree of wisdom, or—shall we say?—worldly wisdom, with which the A.O.S. seems sometimes to have been guided. It is easy to be oracular after the event. If the A.O.S. perished, like the V.C.A., through cutting garments too big for its cloth, it had some men at its head who had money to spend and a sincere belief in co-operation. Did not one of them gallantly drop £15,000 or more in his generous devotion to the cause?

With regard to the V.C.A., one of the reasons why it came to grief was that it was not so well organized as the Institute movement. How many of the 450 clubs affiliated with it had it itself started? Certainly not more than 200. The V.C.A. came into existence not so much on the basis of an idea, as on the basis—to a large extent at any rate—of existing clubs. The men's movement had not the homogeneousness of the women's. Clubs were included which had not the inherently democratic character which was born with every Institute.

No doubt the V.C.A. applied some sort of test to the Clubs it took over. It did not let in that club, for example, the first rule of which ran that 'the rector shall be chairman of all committees and shall have a veto on all decisions of committees.' But it cannot be pretended that there were not clubs affiliated to the V.C.A. whose democratic salvation was more apparent than real. The V.C.A. appears to have proposed 'model' rules, but not to have insisted on them.

The V.C.A. obtained adherents, for men are clubbable ; but, only occasionally enthusiasts.

The fact that the V.C.A. had nothing in the shape of a journal until nearly the end of its existence illustrated its lack of cohesion and oneness. The A.O.S. had never much of a paper, either.

V.C.A. AND N.F.W.I.—The clubs had not the support and stimulus which the Institutes gained, not only from their close association in groups, in counties, in the National Federation, and in their *Home and Country*, but from a common idea. The V.C.A.'s objects did not seem as definite and pressing as the aims of the Institute movement. The men's movement lacked the spontaneity and devotion of the women's movement.

The members' of the women's movement were fresh to their opportunity and privileges. They sought lots of things. They found that their movement could give them these things, and most of them were appreciative and willing to work. The men, generally speaking, were not so conscious of urgent needs. Few V.C.A. clubs had anything comparable, educationally or socially, with the monthly meetings of most Institutes.

As for the V.C.A. supposing that it could be of substantial service to the Institute movement, it was imagining a vain thing. The Institute movement was no sooner going well than its leaders knew, or thought they knew, most of their own business better than any men could teach them. They had thoughts that they did not ordinarily share with men-folk. They were increasingly inclined to discard the crutches of the founders. If there were things that men knew that the women leaders did not know, they had — this being the twentieth century — the gumption to find out.

If the approaches of the V.C.A. had had less of the appearance of a middle-aged young man with an uncertain future sidling up to a prosperous young woman with a big establishment and an assured future, the wooers might have received a more cordial reception than was vouchsafed them.

I once said jocularly to Sir Henry Rew and Mr. Nugent Harris that if, before the War, they had happened to have been conspicuous workers for the suffrage, their overtures might

have evoked a more hopeful response, in a section at any rate, of the Institute movement. If Sir Henry and Mr. Harris had been in the suffrage movement they would at least have learnt something of organized women's point of view. To ex-suffragists some of the pleas made in the voted-down annual meeting resolutions in favour of men and women 'working together' smacked of the old opposition to women being allowed to manage their own business as they had a mind.

However this may be, Sir Henry Rew's accusation of feminism and Mr. Nugent Harris's belief that the Institutes' rejection of the V.C.A. marked a serious situation in the Institute movement surely showed a certain lack of alertness in these devoted, skilful and experienced workers for the country-side. Women had lately come into their rights as citizens. The country-women among them had built up, by their own enthusiasm and wits – and liberal State help – a large and cleverly-planned organization. It might not always function just as well as it looked like functioning, but they were naturally proud of it, as the product of women's heads and hearts. They knew pretty well where they were steering, for the present at any rate. Could there be any reasonable doubt how the women would feel about proposals from men to come on the poop and take the wheel sometimes?

THE LIMITS OF ORGANIZATION. – The V.C.A. leaders also failed to understand, I think, or had, anyhow, the appearance of failing to understand, which, most of us have found out, comes to the same thing in this world, how little of the strength and vitality of the Institute movement lies, after all, in the management, in which they naturally saw themselves giving some assistance.

But there are women in the Institute movement who are themselves prone at times to set a trifle too much store by its management, who are anxious overmuch about the machine, 'saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these' (Jeremiah vii, 4), and correspondingly, a little less concerned than they might be with the generating of the steam which drives the machine : who are

just a little obsessed – as it is natural enough to be at an earlyish stage of the women’s movement – by the achievement of men-folk by means of schooling, training, cleverness, organization.

Method, direction and astuteness have their part, no doubt, in every successful movement and business. But it is one of the sure things in our social history that a movement which aims at appealing not only to the pocket but to the heart, must be a movement primarily from the heart. It must have warm blood and a glowing countenance as well as cool brains and girded loins. Hope and faith, and the charity, which the later Revisers translate love, persuade and lead as all the boasted contrivance and experience of the children of this world never succeed in doing.

It is not by organization alone that even the triumphs of big business are secured. There is always behind its spectacular successes a man out of a big mould, always the ardour, the devotion and the selflessness, of a sort, of somebody.

SIR HENRY REW’S VIEW. – The A.O.S. and the V.C.A. were too closely related to the Women’s Institute movement for a Chapter on the circumstances of their decease to be omitted from this book. Possibly the subject might be investigated still further with profit. I should be sorry indeed if what I have written did the least injustice to the feelings or the motives of Sir Henry Rew and Mr. Nugent Harris, the sincerity, self-sacrifice and success of whose labours in the cause of the rural districts, are widely recognized. It was not at all easy for Sir Henry and Mr. Harris to grasp why their proffered help should be rejected. For, as Mrs. Watt has, herself, written, ‘there is the sobering fact that, in its beginnings, the movement was backed entirely by men; it was men who fought for it and financed it.’ It is even a man who is now writing its history!

I want to do justice to Sir Henry Rew’s point of view. It was, as I recall it, that village women should not be segregated – I think that was his word – should not be specially provided for in a village organization. They should be members and have

their share in the management of a village club of men and women. A woman might even be chairman of it—some day.

What Sir Henry seems to have ignored is that at the present stage of rural civilization, women would not get their fair chance in a mixed organization, where the best room would be seized on for billiards, and the reek of tobacco would be everywhere, and wives and mothers would not have the change of getting away from their men-folk, where, owing to women's lack of public experience and their consequent shyness in public gatherings, they would have a very limited share in the management of the club and small chance of getting provision made for things in which they were specially interested. I myself found, in the pioneering experiment, to which allusion is made in the Prologue, that it was almost impossible to get equal treatment for women. The men steadily got more than their share and kept it.

Sir Henry admitted that, for the present, many women would demand Women's Institutes rather than mixed clubs. He also agreed that the Institutes were doing admirable work. But he argued that the foundation of a movement for women only, during the War, when the men were absent, was of the nineteenth rather than the twentieth century. Which only shows how a good man may be deceived!

As one leader of the movement said to me in her direct way: 'It was difficult to be both tactful and truthful in our joint committees of the N.F.W.I. and the V.C.A. Some of us must have sometimes wondered whether the men could not or would not see our point of view. Think of the folly of a club organization for the village for *every* purpose—everything going on to be sub-sections of it.'

POSITION AND RECORD OF MR. NUGENT HARRIS.—The situation was particularly difficult for Mr. Nugent Harris. If he may not be called the co-founder of the Institute movement, it is difficult to know what name to give him. Without his zeal Mrs. Watt could not have succeeded in starting the Institutes during the War. If she had had the patience to wait until after the War, the movement must have begun work in

a very small way indeed. The Institutes are under obligations to Mr. Harris (and also, of course, to Mr. Bostock and Mr. Yerburch) for opening the doors of the A.O.S. to them and for having been the unconscious means of bringing the movement under the generous care of the Ministry of Agriculture. Mrs. Watt says the movement has had no martyrs. No, there do not seem to have been any women martyrs for it. But Mrs. Watt ought to be satisfied with the slain A.O.S. and the corse of its general secretary picturesquely disposed on top.

Mr. Harris had not only suffered for the movement. He had given valuable service on the National Federation Executive in the early difficult years. Again and again I find him making, with unending trouble, proposals of a practical sort. These proposals of a business mind were not always fully appreciated, perhaps, by some women who were still learning procedure. Sometimes the proposals may not have been timely or well urged. But of the wide experience on which the suggestions were based, and of the kindness and goodwill with which they were made there can be no doubt. It may be that, like most of us men, Mr. Harris was unduly avuncular or paternal at times. He was hortatory and insistent when the women with full responsibility for the movement thought they knew a thing or two. But he was unquestionably of service as a make-weight against another dominating personality on the first two Executives who, but for him, might have got, with the best of motives, more of her own way than was good for the movement. It was just as well that Mr. Harris ceased to be a member of the Executive and that Mrs. Watt went to British Columbia. The government of the movement found its feet all the sooner without its tutors. It was grown up enough to leave school - it had even been in Government service - and notions of forcing it back to school are vain.

None of us like to let go our work. In every sphere, from commerce to kingship and the mission field, heroes and heroines alike lag reluctant on the scene. Without the interest they feel in their work, that makes them wish to keep on at it, they would never have served the cause as they did. It is not only

the achievement but the human nature of leadership that makes it enduring and endearing.

There are many women in the movement who have to get a realizing sense of the fact that, if it is not only to last but to develop, much of its strength and direction must be drawn from the young; that to every generation comes new conceptions of life and of methods of progress.

MEN ON THE EXECUTIVE.—It is indicative of the hold that Mr. Harris had on the regard of the movement that in 1918 he was nominated to the Executive by an Institute as if he were a member. As his wife was an official of the movement, he was indisposed to stand for election, but it was pointed out to him by Lady Denman that there was nothing in the constitution barring him, as a man, from the Executive. And because of the very valuable help you have given during the, last twelve months,' she wrote, 'you have far more right to be on the Committee than anyone else.' Mr. Harris gave way, and was for two years elected to the Executive by ballot at the annual meeting in the ordinary way. In 1923, at the time the tussle with the V.C.A. was hottest, he was once more nominated. But by this time, as Lady Denman again wrote, 'resolutions had been passed at annual meetings which took for granted, without actually saying so, that men might not be members of Institutes. The movement had also repeatedly told the V.C.A. that while it organized the women, the V.C.A. should organize the men.' Clearly the Executive would have to decide that Mr. Harris was not eligible for nomination to its ranks. Mr. Harris gracefully withdrew his name. He was the last man who served on the N.F.W.I. Executive other than as a representative of the A.O.S. or of the Board of Agriculture. Mr. Bostock survives although the A.O.S. is dead, and men specialists are still co-opted, as I am, to sub-committees. But the day must soon come when the movement will be able to do without us. (On which a leader of the movement notes on my proof, 'It could now, but would very much rather not. I hope we shall always have some men on the Executive.')

MEN'S INSTITUTES?—Unless before that, the movement

should take a new departure, and decide to be a men's as well as a women's movement !

That, after all that has been said and written about V.C.A. overtures, may seem surprising. But think of Men's Institutes, not on the narrow lines of so many rural men's clubs, but on the sound threefold basis of education, co-operation, and recreation, which marks the work of Women's Institutes. That is something the villages are without. Such Men's Institutes may be conceived of as something as evolutionary, as democratic and as closely organized as the Women's Institutes. Only if they could be all this are they worth thinking about. If such a new departure were practicable, if the need for this new departure were fully recognized, if the ability to forward it on absolutely right lines were available, we might yet have a great non-bureaucratic movement for countrymen as well as country-women.

MAY THE MOVEMENT BE URBAN?—There are those who will be disposed to think a carefully thought-out work for countrymen more profitable than any efforts to develop a town Women's Institute movement through Women's Institute Centres. The standing objection to Town Centres is that they are not socially representative of all classes in the town. Towns are too large and sectional for such general representation to be easily practicable. And the towns are well provided, in many ways, with the means of education, literary and technical, and have plenty of opportunities of recreation. All the same, it is easy to understand the feeling of a leader in the movement who said to me : 'I am unhappy that we cannot devise something for the towns. All over the world women are combining for the same sort of objects. These movements are springing up spontaneously and independently of one another. The Institute ideal is a high one. We have something to give. Must we pass the towns by?'

One reply must surely be : Remember the A.O.S. which wanted the earth.

Another reply must be : Is the Institute movement a rural movement or is it not? As long as so many villages in England

and Wales and so many districts in Scotland are without Institutes, need the movement sigh for fresh worlds?

But the subject is one for fuller discussion than it can be given now.

MEN AND WOMEN.—It may be that something of the V.C.A. itself may survive in or out of its old county associations. It may be that, just as a bush, of unlucky habit or unpromising growth, begins a more useful life when it is cut down to the ground, some new and more fortunate men's movement may spring from the villages, and one day reach the stage of national organization, with or without the Women's Institute movement.

Proposals for a men's rural movement which are based on the experience of the women's rural movement cannot be carried too far. Countrywomen, in their Institutes, are making their first efforts towards organization and public self-expression. Men have had a longer political and social experience. They have had more chances than women every way. And the village man's needs are different from the village woman's needs. In some essentials of civilization, countrywomen are far ahead of countrymen. But in some public manifestations of civilization, women have experience to gain, leeway to make up. In village gatherings of men and women they have commonly sat mum. Only in meetings of women could they successfully practice public speaking and the conducting of meetings. But Mr. Harris has, himself, made the fullest admission on this point. I record him in Chapter 2 as saying, in regard to agricultural co-operative meetings for men and women: 'We could never get them to say a word at the meetings. They replied "We dare not because our husbands and sons would make fun of us."'

FAITH AND GLOW.—One thing is true, the life and death of two national organizations like the A.O.S. and V.C.A., both at one time house-mates of the Institute movement, and an examination of the causes of their disappearance, exhibit to the Institute movement some of the perils by which it is, itself, beset.

But for favouring financial and political circumstances—a

little galling, no doubt, to the V.C.A. people – the movement could not possibly have been where it is to-day. That some such movement, under another name than Women's Institutes, would have been launched sooner or later is fairly certain. Awakened womanhood would have insisted on it. Had such a movement had to make a more difficult way than the Institute movement – like, for example, the Methodist or the rural trade union movement – it would have been much slower in reaching its quarter of a million members. But it might have thrown up among its leaders more gospeller-organizers than organizer-gospellers. It might have displayed less caution and astuteness, less correctness and propriety, but more fervour. It might have manifested less technical ability, but might have made, conceivably, a deeper-rooted appeal. It might have been, in part, the movement of a class, and have lost as well as gained something in the process. It might have been poor in funds but rich in unction and abundant in vision. It might have seen, a little more clearly than the existing movement seems sometimes to do, where it was going and who were going along with it.

Perhaps, in the foregoing paragraph, I may seem to take insufficient account of the real faith and glow which are to be found in the Institute movement I do not do so. I have marked that faith and glow again and again and again, not only at Institute gatherings but in publications and documents of the movement, and in many, many letters and conversations. In that faith and glow the movement lives even more than in that remarkable organization which is so pleasantly and effectively reflected in Miss Margaret Macnamara's playlet, 'Enjoying the Business.'

Organization! What is organization, with all its advantages, compared with the feeling and purpose reflected in a letter before me from which I can quote one sentence only: 'This was the first real meeting I have taken as vice-president, and I am not ashamed to say that I prepared for it, many days beforehand, on my knees?'

There are in the movement very many women who are in

membership, not for what they can get – though they do get a great deal – but for what they can give. They are educated women, women in the circumstances of life they desire, and they have come into the movement, and work hard in it, because they ardently believe in it, As a leader said to me, 'I have never been in any movement, except the suffrage, to compare with it for the return it gives.'

And this same leader, on another occasion, once wrote to me: '“By their fruits ye shall know them” seems to me the only motto for any organization, and our years have been too few for more than the blade to grow. I believe in the spirit which leads an Institute to say, when it hears a member is ill, “We'll take care of her.” I believe in an idealism which is based on the common things of daily life, which does not ignore faults and mistakes and human weaknesses, but realizes that obstacles exist to show how quickly and skilfully one can get over them.' There, right enough, are faith and glow.

'SEX ANTAGONISM.' – The Institute movement and the V.C.A. leaders could not see eye to eye about the right form of organization for men and women. I have discussed the matter with Sir Henry Rew and Mr. Nugent Harris, have heard the subject argued at annual meetings of the Federation, have read through a mass of documents and print, and have visited some village clubs. There can be no doubt that Federation and Consultative Council alike were right in their reiterated view that, for the present, the best way is for women to be organized in women's organizations, and for men also to be separately organized, the two societies joining together in common action or proceedings by means of a joint committee.

To suggest that for women to have a monthly meeting, wholly to themselves, is a feminist proceeding, is to promote sex antagonism, is to hinder or hamper the natural working together of the sexes, is too absurd for argument. Such a monthly meeting, for countrywomen only, has everything to recommend it. Only in such a meeting can they work out their own development. Mewed up, for the most part in small cottages, with the constant care and company of their menfolk,

the monthly escape from male companionship into an atmosphere in which women are doing their own thinking is a common sense proceeding, which must have, and is known to have, the best results.

COUNTRYMEN AND COUNTRYWOMEN.—It is much to be hoped that countrymen may be able to contrive for themselves monthly gatherings of the same quality that countrywomen have secured for themselves. But if they never manage to do this, in the 4,000 villages in which women have set them so noteworthy an example, the circumstances of their lives will not leave them so bereft as their wives and daughters would be without their Institutes. The men have their Unions, as their masters have their N.F.U. The men's days are spent in the open, their work varies from day to day, and they have no end of satisfaction in seeing it grow under their hands on their masters' land and in their own gardens. They have many opportunities of talk with their fellow-workers, and, when agriculture and its kindred interests are under discussion, an easy relationship with their 'betters.' They are masters of handicrafts, and they have their rabbitings, their smokes and their politics.

Their wives are shut up with a round of work which is the same day after day. While the men have the use of more and more up-to-date machinery in their work, and are the masters of that machinery — unlike factory workers, who are the creatures of their machinery — the women have the burden of wearing work for which they have neither convenience nor the right apparatus. They are frequently burdened with unwanted children, and are often crawling about the daily task when they ought to be resting or recreating. Their jobs are never finished and are always interrupted. To these women the Institute brings blessings of communion and refreshment, of new interests and new prospects, of simple fun of which it is not easy for men to count the full value.

RESPONSIBILITY TO THE VILLAGE.—That because women have the comfort and the stimulus of these Institutes there will not be forthcoming in the villages adequate opportunities

for social enjoyment and social progress in which village men may have their due share, I do not believe. Not a few Institutes but many have been as hearty and liberal as enterprising in providing gatherings to which men were welcome and glad to come.

From the beginning of the movement the responsibility of the Institutes to their villages has been impressed upon them. In the Roll-calls, are there more frequent questions than, What is the Institute doing for the village? or What is the Institute doing for men? My picture of the movement has fallen sadly short if I have conveyed the impression that the Institutes wish to keep women 'segregated.' Are not the women the victims of segregation? Is it not burnt into women's minds that they have been segregated long enough?

An Institute comes into village life as an organized body for the benefit of the village. The strong stand which, as has been seen, the movement has taken for Village halls, as contrasted with Institute halls, is an undeniable illustration of this.

THE FUTURE.—What form the organization of village men and women together on equal terms will yet take remains to be seen. Because the Institutes have made an end of the notion that women must be restricted to the role of bazaar arrangers and tea-meeting washers-up, and because there has never been a time when more thought was being given to the problems of the village nor a time when those problems were better understood, the right thing will come with the pressing need.

It is not a matter for greybeards like me to worry about. Had the V.C.A. had more young fellows on its Executive it might have lived longer. The young women of the Institutes, some of whom occasionally, it is said, give the impression of not pulling their full weight—I doubt very much whether the impression be accurate—have their own notion of how they can best work with men's organizations or with groups of men. (At the time of writing I am endeavouring to arrange a carpentry class of men and women together.) Why should young women be supposed to have less vision than their

elders? It may be that they see farther and more clearly. They have been less cumbered.

Progress is already being made on various lines. A Women's Institute and Men's Society joint committee is one plan. A joint committee of a group of Women's Institutes and a group of Men's Societies is another. A Village Social Council is yet another way. In larger areas than the village or the district, the Rural Community Council, in spite of its somewhat deterring name, is steadily finding its tasks and the best way of tackling them.

A YOUNG WORKER'S VIEW.—'To the majority of us younger members,' writes one of the ablest of the women who from their early twenties have made their influence felt in the movement, 'there is no notion of having an aggressively women's movement. In fact, I think most of us look forward to the day when every village will have its Council to unite the women's organizations with the men's.' This correspondent thinks, and she is right in so thinking, that the history of the turning down of the V.C.A. in her county has lessons for any future attempt to organize men.

'There were in our county,' she writes, 'no V.C.A. branches. We had then about 40 Institutes. A representative of the V.C.A. arrived among us, and a meeting of selected men and women was summoned. All the women who attended were our members. We attended the first committees genuinely anxious to help to get the V.C.A. going. But we found ourselves compelled to disapprove of each step. They seemed to want to build out from a central organization, instead of getting units going in the villages and then starting their central organization. They began by appealing for donations, but the advantages which the V.C.A. had to offer our county were practically nil. Their speakers lived too far away, and they did not propose to have any voluntary organizers. Their idea of a democratic organization was to take any number of variously constituted clubs and superimpose on them a central organization which would give them a superficial appearance of unity. There was no guarantee that the movement would really be a movement, and certainly

no guarantee that it would move in the same direction. We retired in a body, and were told that having got well into the villages we wanted to keep everybody else out.

'That was not our view at all. We recognized that it would be a great help to our movement to have a strong men's movement alongside. How much better would our choral and dramatic societies be if they were not a mixture of a well-organized body of women and a rabble of men.

'But an association of county gentlemen who thought that clubs would be good for the village was no use to us.'

'FOR WOMEN ONLY.'—Whether by way of Men's Institutes or joint committees, the right handling of the problem will yet be evolved. But it cannot be too definitely stated that any plan which proposes for Women's Institutes anything else than women's work—the extent of which ever increases—which takes from the Institutes' meeting-places the notice 'For Women Only,' shows a lack of comprehension of countrywomen's needs at the present stage of our development. It also shows a want of understanding of what the village and the nation have to gain by those needs being fully satisfied, morally, mentally and, in the widest sense of the word, politically.

AS OTHERS SEE US.—In the prolonged discussions with the V.C.A., my sympathies were, as have been seen, entirely with the women. The result of those discussions was, as I have written, the right result. But, if I am to say all I feel, I do not think that the fact that those discussions closed with unofficial reproaches and some feeling of exasperation on the V.C.A. side—not against the particular women the V.C.A. had been negotiating with, but against the movement generally—was wholly the V.C.A. people's fault.

The truth is—and a book in whole-hearted appreciation of a women's movement, by one who has been an ardent worker for women's movements for 40 years—is the place to say it in quite frankly—that wonderful, admirable, cheering, sound, victorious though the women's movement is to-day, there are women who have come into it easily. They have endured

little or nothing of the bracing hard usage the pioneers endured. They do not even know of them. I have recently met two educated women who knew nothing of the service rendered by W. T. Stead. His name was unknown to them.

For all the confidence that such women have in themselves, as exponents of the women's cause, they have not travelled as far as they think they have. They are not as yet far enough developed civically to realize all the obligations of equal citizenship. In emergencies, or in what they think are emergencies, they still fall back on privilege. Such women do not completely understand how much they have still to learn, not only of the ways of getting business done - that is but experience and knack - but of other modes of thought and spheres of action than their own. To know all this calls for imagination, the humble mind, and the kind heart. The women of whom I speak are at times incompetent, dead certain, intolerant, discourteous, and inconsiderate when they think they are being modern, pithy, decided, and clever.

The V.C.A. people were no doubt a bit old-fashioned and magisterial, and got very much what they deserved, but, well -

Possibly I may be making too much of this fly in a precious ointment. It may be also that I have had other occasions in mind on which the movement had men to deal with, and some of its representatives were less enlightened and gracious than they might have been, or, to say it plainly, less intelligent and less 'decent' than men would have been! Undoubtedly it was worth while trying to say something of what I know to be true, and every wise and kind woman in public life knows to be true. In an old letter to me from one of the most devoted of the women's leaders the thing is put so much better:

'We are not angels or geniuses; we are women. We are sometimes ignorant, sometimes selfish, sometimes snobbish, sometimes childish, sometimes mistaken: but I think we have got hold of a living principle, and as long as we neither think we have reached the millenium, nor despair because we haven't, we can safely leave a live principle to grow.'

That, at any rate, is well said.

‘We are accused sometimes of taking ourselves too seriously,’ says my correspondent. ‘Women sometimes sadly need humour,’ she says. But the women’s movement has shown what the deep-lying seriousness of women, irradiated by wit, has to give the world. Two-thirds of the movement is training in citizenship. When that training is more advanced – and at what a rate is it not proceeding? – what shall women, what shall the country-side and the nation not have gained?

THE QUEEN AT HER INSTITUTE

WHAT does the first woman in the land think of Women's Institutes?

Her Majesty the Queen, with the late Queen Mother, has been a member of the Sandringham Institute since it was founded in 1920. Her Majesty is its president, and pays her two shillings every year like any other member.

But Queen Mary knew about the movement long before she joined it.

'SPLENDID WORK.'—Before there had been Institutes in this country two years we find Her Majesty sending a telegram on the occasion of the opening of the first Institute Hall. In this considered 78-word message the Queen said that she was 'much interested in the objects for which this hall is built,' and added: 'I wish every success to all who have associated themselves with this movement.'

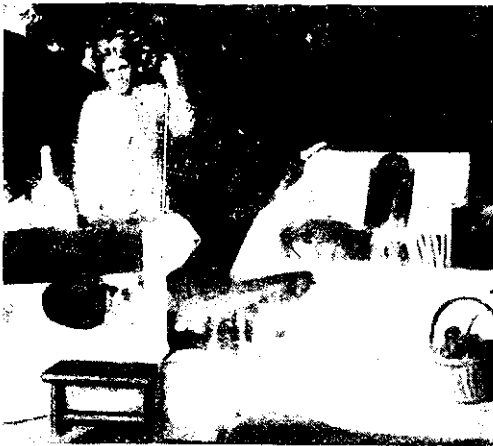
In pre-National Federation days, at the National Welfare and Food Economy Exhibition in the new London County Council Hall there was a stall devoted to a miscellaneous collection of articles made by Institute members, which was described by an Inspector of the Board of Education as 'an epitome of what a country girl's education should be.' Here the Queen received the first of the many presents she has had from adherents of the movement (a mat made from ropes belonging to a German prize-ship), and was heard to say, 'This is a wonderful movement; I am so interested.'

What Mrs. Whitaker, who, with Mrs. Nugent Harris, showed the articles on the Institute stall to Her Majesty, wrote at the time was: 'The Queen continually expressed herself pleased at the satisfactory efforts which had been made by the various Institutes to encourage economy and prevent waste in any form. When we drew her attention to the articles of clothing made of "cast-offs," she told us how much the idea appealed to her. The child's dress made from old stockings and the home-made mackintosh were other exhibits commented on by Her Majesty, who also asked many questions about the bottled



HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN AT HER LOCAL CENTRE (NORWICH)

Left to Right: Lady Suffield, President of the Norfolk Federation, The Queen, the Hon. Lettice Harbord, the Hon. Doris Harbord, Mrs. Burton-Fanning, J.P., the Duchess of York, Miss Burgess, Secretary Norfolk Federation. Her Majesty is holding the pair of gloves, the ordinary work of a member of the Cawston Institute, presented by the Executive.



Mrs. BLAIR

Who introduced the Movement into Scotland
(With her 'Home Arts'.)



Mrs. NUGENT HARRIS

Editor of *Home and Country*

HER MAJESTY'S MEETING

fruit. The Queen spoke of the "splendid work" being done by the Institutes.'

In October of the next year, 1918, the Queen and Princess Mary visited the first Institute Exhibition (Caxton Hall). Her Majesty bought dried flowers, canned fruit, bottled gooseberries, potato starch, dried vegetables, Cuthberts, a doll, toy ducks and kittens, rabbit-skin mitts, a basket, a rug, a kettle holder, and a pen-wiper made from a merrythought.

HER MAJESTY'S MEETING.—In 1919 Her Majesty became herself a missioner of the movement by requesting Dame Meriel Talbot to send an exponent of Institute work and ideals to speak at a village meeting at Sandringham. Mrs. Watt was deputed to attend this meeting, and has recorded 'how exactly like any other village meeting the gathering was.' She states that she spoke of the 'simplicity, democracy and friendliness' of the movement. A lusty baby objected to her speech, but nobody minded except the mother. Mrs. Watt read parts of the programmes of seven Institutes and extracts of reports of three others in this country and two in Canada.

Mrs. Burton-Fanning, who has done such gallant service in Norfolk for the movement, happened to be at the bottom of the hall, and Her Majesty sought her out and engaged her in conversation about the local work. The Queen also chatted with the merry, energetic secretary of the Norfolk Federation, Miss Burgess. Her Majesty assured both these representatives of the Norfolk Federation that she would rely upon them to help at Sandringham.

Mrs. Watt says that the frequent questions of the Queen and the Princess and the unconstrained character of the gathering as Her Majesty moved about and chatted enabled her 'to make points I thought would particularly appeal.' The last point, with which the Queen 'seemed greatly impressed, was that to have Her Majesty as an Institute member in an Institute in her own village would strike the imagination of the membership. It was thus that not only Queen Mary but Queen Alexandra joined the Sandringham Institute when it was started.'

On the occasion of this visit the Queen told Mrs. Watt that

THE QUEEN AT HER INSTITUTE

she had 'read through' her book about the first Women's Institute School, and had 'liked the spirit of it all.'

THE QUEEN AS MEMBER.—Her Majesty watched the progress of the Sandringham Institute, and, after a time, as is well known to many in the movement, sent for Miss Burgess to Sandringham and honoured her with a long private interview.

It is permissible to say that the Queen left no doubt whatever of her deep appreciation of the movement, and of her determination to be of all the service she could to it. Nor will anyone acquainted with Her Majesty's kindness and wide sympathies, and her shrewd and frank recognition of the changes brought about in our national life and outlook, not only by the War but by the general progress of education and democratic ideas, be surprised to learn that Her Majesty readily understood the conditions in which Institutes can and cannot function successfully, and was plain in the expression of her sentiments, not only on this matter, but on the spirit in which the problems of the time should be confronted.

Her Majesty has since taken the most practical means of informing herself with regard to the working of her own Institute and the movement in the county, and was prompt to help, in true Institute spirit, in a matter which, of small importance in itself, was capable of occasioning misunderstanding if not handled in a simple, direct and common-sense way.

It is no wonder that when Miss Burgess goes the round of the Institutes she is constantly asked to 'tell us about the Queen.' When she gives assurances of the reality of the first lady in the land's belief in the Institute cause, and of the breadth of the Queen's sympathies, her testimony is made on a basis of knowledge.

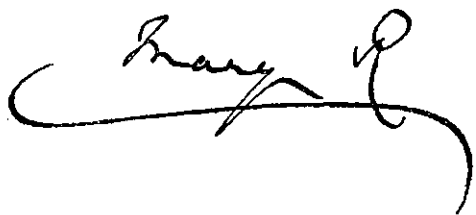
Miss Burgess is able to speak also on a matter which comes home to the hearts of the women in the Institutes, that is the unaffectedness and kindness of the Queen. It did not escape notice at Sandringham that when Miss Burgess departed, Her Majesty came to the door with her and 'saw her off' as any other fellow Institute member would do.

'COLONEL'S LADY AND JUDY O'GRADY'

'NO PATRONAGE.'—It is not only, of course, through this conversation with Miss Burgess and through the Queen's visits to her own Institute that Her Majesty has her finger on the pulse of the movement. Through Lady Suffield, who has rendered an unremitting service of the highest value to the Institute cause for a long time, the Queen has had frequent opportunities of learning how things are going on. Several of Her Majesty's Ladies-in-Waiting are also prominent workers in the movement. And it is known that the chairman of the National Federation, Lady Denman, has had several opportunities of talking with Her Majesty.

As early as 1920 half a dozen leaders of the Institute movement received Buckingham Palace Garden Party commands.

In 1922, Her Majesty, on the occasion of a complimentary



Buckingham

Her Majesty's signature in the Visitors' Book at the Institute Centre in Norwich.

dinner to Lady Denman, wrote of 'a cause which has Her Majesty's warm sympathy.' The Queen also alluded to 'her keen interest in all that affects the welfare of the National Federation.'

A year later, at Cirencester, Her Majesty spoke to the Principal of the Royal Agricultural College of the work being done by her own Institute in Norfolk, and 'strongly urged that in Institutes there should be no patronage, and that the squire's wife and the working-woman should meet on the same footing.'

AN AMUSING INCIDENT.—The Queen had graciously promised Miss Burgess that when she was next in Norwich she would come to see the excellent Institute Centre in that city. In 1924, when Her Majesty was in Norwich, she managed to make time to pay the Centre a visit, and is reported in the

THE QUEEN AT HER INSTITUTE

local paper as showing 'the greatest interest in the pretty rest-room.' A pleasant photograph of Her Majesty at this Centre accompanied by the Duchess of York, Lady Suffield, Mrs. Burton-Fanning and Miss Burgess, is reproduced. The Queen, who made several purchases at the Centre, is represented wearing a pair of fur gloves made by a member of the Cawston Institute.

There was a little comedy on the occasion of this Royal visit. A representative of that excellent journal, the *Eastern Daily Press*, had seen fit, for the more convenient performance of his professional task, to seat himself behind a screen. But it happened that the Queen made an exhaustive examination not only of the handicrafts shown, but of the general arrangements of the room. The Secretary, unconscious of the 'hidden treasure,' proceeded to show Her Majesty the little canteen behind the screen and disclosed the journalist. Somewhat confused, she explained that this was the reporter. The Queen, laughing heartily, said, 'Oh, you are the reporter are you? Mind you report it well. It is worth doing.'

The Press-man did his best in his account of the Royal visit, as commanded, but did not feel at liberty to make 'copy' of his personal adventure, which is now related in print for the first time.

One incident of the visit was equally enjoyable to the spectators. Opposite the Centre is a bakery, and there were crowds of girls and men on the roof, and leaning out of the windows, eager for a sight of the Queen. So Her Majesty put her head out of the window and waved to them.

AT THE SANDRINGHAM INSTITUTE.—When the Queen is at Sandringham she always attends the meetings of her Institute, 'and takes an active part.'

Following the best Institute usage, tea is served, at Her Majesty's suggestion, on small tables. Members of other Institutes, who think they arrange their teas nicely, may be interested to know that the china is blue and white on blue and white table-cloths. The Queen long ago made the point that Institute tea should be nicely served. There was to be no

extravagance in viands, but as much trouble was to be taken with the serving of tea as would be taken at home.

At each meeting three members are presented to the Queen, who asks them to take tea at her table. The tables accommodate four. No one knows at which table Her Majesty will sit down nor which members will take tea with her.

Her Majesty joins in the games, such as musical chairs, and helps to judge the competitions, two recent competitions having been a rug competition and a costume procession.

During an address delivered by Miss Burgess, at the Sandringham Institute, on programme making, the Queen was noticed to be appreciative of three of the movement's most famous anecdotes. They illustrate how easy it is for the nature of an advertised topic to be misunderstood. A talk on current events was taken, in a fruit-growing district, for an address about currant growing. A discourse on skin-curing was thought by one member to promise a remedy for spots. Life in the Middle Ages was looked forward to as counsels on personal hygiene in middle-life.

THE QUEEN'S PART IN THE HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT.—As the history of the movement, recited in this book shows, many women have deserved well of the cause. But it would have been as unjust as ungenerous not to have taken an opportunity of showing that no one makes a more creditable figure in that history than Her Majesty the Queen. Lord Ernle, who is specially qualified to pass a judgment on the Women's Institute movement, and always measures his words, declared, during the month in which I am writing, that the Women's Institutes were the most important social body formed during the present century. It would have been regrettable if the Queen had been without opportunities of understanding the movement, and had had no part in the success of such a noteworthy women's cause. What the historian of the movement has to record is that Queen Mary early saw its possibilities, decided to give it all the countenance she could, and Royally made good her resolve.

I may, myself, gratefully record the fact that Her Majesty has

THE QUEEN AT HER INSTITUTE

allowed nothing to stand in the way of my satisfying myself of the cordiality with which she has helped the movement and of the sincerity with which she desires its success.

When, to the regret of those most immediately concerned, we may be sure, so much is written on Royal good works in a tone which is forced and unreal, it is a satisfaction to be in a position to discharge in a plain way the duty laid upon me of recording the precise share which the Queen has had in the progress of the movement of which she is a loyal member.

Her Majesty might well declare, on one occasion, that it was 'high time' that something was done for countrywomen - 'so much has been done for men.' It is immensely to the credit of the movement that it should have that in it that should attract the interest and maintain the confidence of a woman so much occupied and so widely experienced as the Queen. Unquestionably the adherents of the Institute cause, who know how heartily it has been supported by Her Majesty, have been encouraged by the Royal backing and the Royal perception of the things that matter in the life of the country-side.

Beyond the interest which the Queen shows in the movement, a chronicler of its history must not fail to mention that His Majesty the King has made Lady Denman a C.B.E., and Mrs. Watt, Mrs. Nugent Harris, Mrs. Heron Maxwell and Mrs. Kilroy Kenyon, M.B.E.'s.

HER MAJESTY AND THE SCOTTISH INSTITUTES. - Up at Balmoral the local Crathie Institute meets, by the King's kindness, in the Curling Club-house. The room is small and plain. There is a wooden table down the middle, and wooden benches at the sides and a small stove. So keen are the members of the Highland 'Rurals' that, whatever the weather, the 75 members of this Institute make a good attendance in the best of spirits, determined to enjoy what is put before them by way either of instruction or of entertainment.

But more interesting than the meeting-place of this Crathie Institute is the fact that it was thanks to the Queen herself that Lady Ramsay, the wife of the King's Commissioner, made the admirable decision to start it. Lady Ramsay was expressly

'HOW INTERESTED HER MAJESTY IS'

encouraged by Her Majesty to take the action she did. When the Institute got going the Queen showed the kindest interest in it, and on her arrival at Balmoral never fails to ask after its welfare.

When the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes Conference met this year the following Royal message was received by Mrs. Anstruther Gray: 'The Queen will be glad if you would take the opportunity in the Music Hall, Edinburgh, in June, of saying how interested Her Majesty is to learn that the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes are holding a National Conference and Exhibition, and if you would also convey to the delegates the Queen's best wishes for the success of their efforts in the important work in which they are engaged.'

But even more worthy to be remembered than this cordial message was the greeting which Her Majesty sent to the Scottish movement in December, 1917. There were not then more than half-a-dozen 'Rurals.' But the Queen from her knowledge of the movement in England and Wales, realized what its possibilities were in the North, and hastened to encourage the new attempt.

I have only to add that when Princess Mary, who is a member of the Sandringham Institute, and is interested in the movement, went, on her marriage, to live at Goldsborough, she stated that she would very much like to have an Institute there.

WALES: THE FIRST INSTITUTE

THE name of Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllantysiliogogoch has endeared itself to the movement.

It is not to be expected that many members should speak its praises. As it is away in the island of Anglesea it is not to be expected that many members should visit it.

But they naturally want to know about Llanfairpwll for short. There, ten years ago, in June, 1915, as has been stated, 'No. 1 Llanfairpwll Women's Institute, Isle of Anglesea,' was formed.

THE FIRST PROGRAMME.—One looks with curiosity at its first programme. It is lying before me in pencil in Mrs. Watt's handwriting. (It has been lent me by Mr. Nugent Harris.) The interesting thing is how completely this pioneer programme includes what were to be the usual items of an Institute gathering :

REGULAR MEETING, Sept. 25, 1915

PROGRAMME

Business :

Address	..	Fruit and Vegetable Bottling	..	Mrs. Watt
Exhibit	..	Bottled Fruit and Vegetables	..	by Members
Discussion				
Recitation	..	..	..	Miss Jones, Llwynon Farm
Selection Harp	..	..	..	Miss Thomas
Tea	..	..	..	By Mrs. Cotton and Mrs. Jones

Land of My Fathers

God Save the King

No. 1 is still alive and doing well. Appreciative of its place in the history of the movement, it has been, in many ways, a model Institute. For this there have been three reasons.

The A.O.S. was frankly desirous that its first Institute should be a success, and asked Mrs. Watt to 'spare no pains' in helping it in its early days. Mrs. Watt was at meeting after meeting, and the Secretary of the A.O.S. was repeatedly a visitor. It is a token of the interest taken in the Institute at headquarters that when it was little more than a year old it received a present of a clock from the Chairman of the A.O.S., Mr. Bostock.



FIRST INSTITUTE HALL,
DEUDRAETH

Opened by Mrs. Lloyd George. The Queen
sent a congratulatory telegram



WHERE THE FIRST INSTITUTE
IN GREAT BRITAIN FIRST MET
Room in Mrs. W. E. Jones' garden,
Llanfairpwll



BASKETRY STALL AT LANCASHIRE FEDERATION EXHIBITION

IN A GARDEN ROOM

In the second place, the Institute had exceptional advantages in the active, enlightened sympathy of Colonel the Hon. R. Stapleton-Cotton and his wife. Colonel Cotton, who was the chairman of the A.O.S.'s rural co-operative branch in Wales, had to go about in a bath-chair, but he had a buoyant, helpful spirit and stands out among the men who saw the possibilities of the movement and gave it all the help they could. He was fond of saying, 'Look up, not down; look out, not in; and lend a hand.' The Llanfairpwll Institute was also under no small obligations to Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Jones, of Graig.

Further, the members showed no ordinary grit and intelligence.

SPIRIT AND WORK OF THE FIRST INSTITUTE.—By the kindness of Mr. Harris, I have had access to a number of extracts from the minutes of this first Institute, and also a chance of looking at some snapshots, not only of Mrs. Jones's garden-room, in which the first meetings were held — it was a truly rustic beginning for a rural movement, for the garden-room was smothered to the chimney-pots in creepers — but of the old toll-house in which, later on, the Institutes' clinic was to be started.

The Institute began work in a non-parochial spirit. A decision taken before its first meeting was that the food supply of the country should be a special subject for discussion.

The Institute's determination was shown by the wording of the resolution about meeting in a garden-room. The meetings were to be held there 'until such time as the Institute shall have its own building.'

The Institute had also a wide outlook on the field for its efforts. Within three months of starting, husbands were invited to the social meeting.

The ideals of the Institute were high. Speakers laid stress on unselfishness, on mutual help, on being undenominational and non-party. There was a cordial feeling at the meetings. New members, the minutes record, 'were warmly welcomed.'

A pleasing thing, also, is the assistance given to the local Red Cross committee 'to pay two bills which had been overlooked.' Further, the Institute was always showing kindness

FIRST INSTITUTE IN BRITAIN

to soldiers who had returned home wounded. The Institute was not only high-spirited and warm-hearted, it was business-like. Early in its history it decided to elect officers by ballot, its committees were well looked after, and the minutes were well kept.

A WIDE OUTLOOK.—When the Institute was about fifteen months old it was thinking nationally about a badge for the movement. The recommendation was that the badge for England and Wales should be the same as the Canadian badge but that for Wales there should be an embodying of the Welsh dragon or the leek, and that there should be an inscription in Welsh. The work was to be put into the hands of a ‘woman designer.’ Later on, it was found difficult, owing to War-time labour conditions, to get the badge made. So it was decided not to proceed with the matter, ‘as the needs of our beloved country should come first.’

The meetings were of course musical. They were also practical. Demonstrations of fireless-cooking, of killing and dressing a fowl and of bread making were given. We read of a ‘good display of economical cookery,’ and that ‘recipes were gladly exchanged.’ In 1916 there was a lecture on the conserving and bottling of fruit by Mrs. Robert Hobbs, from as far away as Kelmescott. She is thanked at a later date for ‘a friendly talk on drying fruits and vegetables.’

In the Institute’s first year there was a meeting entirely taken up with the War Loan. The now well-known Institute ceremony of the roll-call was adopted in Llanfairpwll’s second year. In the third year a girls’ club was established, a nurse was engaged, and there were joint meetings with the Men’s Institute. Deputations were received from that body.

As has been stated, the pioneer Institute looked beyond its own parish. We find it not only co-operating with the other Institutes which came to be started, but passing a resolution to ‘congratulate the mothers of Jerusalem on coming under the British flag’—a draft, ‘in English and Welsh,’ of the message to be submitted to a later meeting. Consideration is given to a proposal to hold a sale for the benefit of Britons in Turkey,

‘ A N A B S O L U T E N E C E S S I T Y ’

and attention is bestowed on a Board of Agriculture poultry scheme. It was decided also to encourage the reading of letters from the Front.

When more than one member of a family joined the Institute it was resolved to admit at a shilling instead of the usual florin fee. There was an agreement that there should be regular meetings for needlework. The Institute played a leading part in the arrangements for a first Institute school of instruction held at the University at Bangor.

COLONEL AND MRS. STAPLETON-COTTON.—In 1918 we find the Institute’s good genius, Colonel Stapleton-Cotton, showing his conception of the practical needs of Institutes by proposing some arrangement, for what, he says, was wanted in Wales, ‘instruction and education for Institute secretaries.’ ‘They are the real managers of the Institutes,’ he writes to Mrs. Watt, ‘and if you could gather them together, and tell them what is expected of them, and what their duties are, it would be of great value. A week’s course would be quite sufficient.’

He adds some notes on national characteristics: ‘We Welsh are rather slow to move, being of a very cautious disposition; we cannot be driven but are very easily led.’

He is optimistic, as ever, about the movement: ‘These Institutes are certain to come, all through Wales; but you must not expect us to hurry up too much.’

The Institute suffered a great loss in the death of Mrs. Stapleton-Cotton – ‘she just lived in the Institute,’ I have a note of someone saying – and when Colonel Cotton went to live in the West Indies, where he now resides, it felt itself bereaved indeed. Llanfairpwll’s membership is now about seventy. For the last few years it has issued no programme.

THE FIRST HALLS.—An attempt to get the first of the now numerous Institute halls built was made a year after the founding of the first Institute. Colonel Cotton suggested to No. 1 Institute that it was ‘an absolute necessity’ for it to have a hall. Because it was the first Institute in Great Britain, ‘it is up to you,’ he wrote to it, ‘to be a model for others.’ He had been left, he said, a small sum of money to devote to a good

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cause, and, as he could 'conceive no movement more worthy' than that of the Institutes, or with 'such capacity and will to uplift the village and rural life.' he offered Llanfairpwll Institute £150.

But Llanfairpwll allowed Penrhyndeudraeth to get in front of it

There lived at Deudraeth a woman artist and 'bard' who was to be a vivid personality in the Institute movement. When Miss Alice Williams first understood about Institutes, she said, 'Here is the movement to transform the country-side.' And she determined to have her part in the good work. I have heard her describe the first meeting in her locality. She was 'wildly excited,' she said. There was a considerable audience, but it was unresponsive to the first speaker, and her heart sank. The situation was saved by the glowing enthusiasm of Mr. Harris.

A year after the Institute was started Miss Williams left Wales to take up her work as honorary secretary of the National Federation. She kept in touch with her Institute by the admirable plan of writing a monthly letter to it. Deudraeth prospered under the devoted leadership of Mrs. Hugh Hughes.

When Miss Williams departed, her Institute had a roof over its head. She presented the ground upon which the ruins of a grey stone cow-house were to form the walls of the first Institute hall. The funds for the rest of the structure were provided by a fancy-fair and the proceeds of Miss Williams' pageant, 'Britannia,' which was played many times in English and Welsh.

On August 24, 1917, the Prime Minister's wife, Mrs. Lloyd George, opened, in English and Welsh, and with a glinting silver key, the first Institute hall. The telegram from the Queen, quoted in another Chapter, was read, and the president of Deudraeth, Miss Williams, was given an oak chair and a charming address.

WELSH IN THE INSTITUTES

BUT Deudraeth was not the second Welsh Institute after Llanfairpwll. Cefn and Trefnant broke ground in Denbigh, Four Crosses and Criccieth (famous for its co-operative market, for its technical classes and for a gift of shrubs to a public garden) in Carnarvon.

SOME PIONEERS.—The names of the officers of these early Institutes are given in the Appendix. Among them are the names of Miss H. Williams-Wynn, Mrs. William George, sister-in-law of the then Premier, and Mrs. Godfrey Drage, who, as organizer, member of the national Executive and handicrafts-woman, was to deserve so well of the cause. To Mrs. Drage I am indebted for many details of the early days of the Welsh movement. Penrhyndeudraeth in Merioneth brought in Miss Williams. Through her Wales gained not only the honour of having the first Women's Institute hall, but the distinction of furnishing the first editor of *Home and Country* and the first honorary secretary of the National Federation. In Mrs. Drage, Wales has the credit of having on the national Executive a member who has been there from 1917 until this day.

The first Institute in Montgomery (Carno) was established by Mrs. Watt, who had formed the earlier Institutes. Other formations followed soon, particularly in Merioneth, Montgomery and Carnarvon. Then Monmouth, Cardigan and Pembroke took up the running.

In order to co-ordinate the work of the scattered early Institutes, a committee was formed under the auspices of the A.O.S. Almost entirely representative of North Wales, it met at Chester every three months or so from the early autumn of 1916 till November, 1917. In October, 1917, the National Federation had had its first annual meeting. County Federations were being started in England, but it was felt that the Welsh Institutes were so few and scattered that a Federation for North Wales would be more useful for the time being. Hence arose the North Wales Union. Its

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Council, consisting of one delegate from each Institute, met quarterly.

THE FIRST ORGANIZERS.—The first Welsh organizer appointed under the Ministry of Agriculture was Mrs. Jones, of No. 1 Institute, who did much excellent work. After her resignation, the Institutes had the good fortune to secure the valuable services of the late Miss Lucy Bulkeley Williams. Her successor was Miss Lumley, who gave years of faithful and energetic service, and only resigned this spring when the National Federation decided that it was no longer possible to have a special organizer for Wales.

Along with the enthusiasm of Miss Williams and Mrs. George, there should be noted the time and energy devoted to the movement by Miss Williams-Wynn and the substantial service of Mrs. Griffith, of Trefnant. Mention must be made of an outstanding personality, Mrs. Morgan of Barmouth, the Welsh representative on the national Executive, whom Lady Denman described as 'a great asset.' Miss Edith Thomas has been one of the hardest workers. Miss Edith Jackson, of Monmouth, has continued the labours of her sister, the late Miss Gertrude Jackson, to whose skill and vision the movement was much indebted. To Mrs. Dugdale, the Montgomery Institutes owe a great deal. She was for a time on the National Federation Executive. Nor should the services of Mrs. Price White, the able treasurer of the pioneer North Wales Union, be overlooked.

Welsh V.C.O.'s have done much to help the regular organizers to form Institutes. The first School in Wales for V.C.O.'s was held by Mrs. Watt at Bangor, in the College. Pupils came from all parts of Wales and some from England. It was urged at this School that the movement should be developed along lines suited to Wales and that stress should be laid, among other things, on the educational possibilities of the Institutes. The second School for V.C.O.'s took place at Aberystwyth in 1921 under the guidance of Dame Meriel Talbot. The teaching given by professors of the University was appreciated. There have been two other Schools for

V.C.O.’s held by Mrs. Harris. A handicraft school, directed by Miss Somerville, was held at Bangor in 1922. Many of the workers there have become excellent teachers.

THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE.—The formation of the Consultative Council, which provided for the attendance of one delegate from every county of England and Wales, brought the Welsh counties into closer touch with the movement in England. The two Welsh conferences, held yearly, have done much to introduce the Welsh workers to one another. Lady Denman has attended or presided at many of the conferences held in or near Wales.

In many districts Welsh Institute meetings are conducted either wholly or partly in Welsh. Most of the members are bi-lingual in the sense that they understand conversational English. Many villages, as far as speaking in public goes, use Welsh entirely. Language is a real problem in some places. Some of the best workers who could express themselves fluently in Welsh find a difficulty in delivering an address in English. As Mrs. Morgan writes to me, ‘In a small Institute of about fifty members there may be two or three English speakers, and everything may sometimes be carried on in English. The consequence is that the Welsh-speaking women do not enjoy the proceedings half as well as if it were in their own dear language.’ Miss Lumley makes the same point. ‘Because meetings have to be conducted in English for the benefit of one or two English members we lose the help of some of our best speakers. We certainly lose what we call the “hwyl.”’ On the other hand, a correspondent tells me of Institutes where English members sit through Welsh speeches which they cannot understand. The use of an interpreter is usual when an official comes from England. ‘Translating is done on such an occasion in order that everything may be quite clear to everybody. It is often pleasanter for a Welsh audience, though seldom strictly necessary.’

As everybody is aware, music is appreciated all over Wales, choral singing being particularly popular. Beyond music, a feature of Welsh Institute meetings is the number of lectures

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on literary and scientific subjects. Lectures on such topics as the League of Nations and local government are also appreciated. The Welsh, it is well known, have a special gift of expression. Therefore, many speakers are able to address an audience in both English and Welsh, passing fluently from one tongue to the other. The extension classes, many of them held under the auspices of the County Councils, are welcomed in the dull winter season. Care is taken to engage, when possible, speakers who can use both English and Welsh.

LIFE OF A WELSH VILLAGE.—With reference to the craft classes—without doubt an important part of the movement's work—it was said by an experienced judge this year that the improved standard of craft work at the National Eisteddfod was largely due to the influence of the Institutes. The handicrafts most practised are rug making, embroidery, fur craft and upholstery. Basket making and leather-work are done in some places. 'A feature,' Miss Lumley says, 'is the way the women take to handicrafts, not for profit's sake but to beautify or help their homes.'

Here is a picture from a correspondent of a Welsh village of less than a thousand people: 'Welsh only spoken in the village. All life seems to centre round the places of worship. Bethel folk, that is the Congregational Chapel, are most energetic. They have their Eisteddfod about Christmas. Then the Baptists have their Eisteddfod on Good Friday, the Methodists sometime during the winter. So every evening there is either a singing practice, or a debating society, or a prayer meeting or a seiat or something. The Institute had difficulty in getting a free evening a week. However the monthly meeting, being social as well as educational, is well attended. All meet on common ground. Then the various handicraft classes meet weekly. The women always want to learn; they take life seriously.'

ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MOVEMENT.—In considering the general results obtained by the Welsh movement we may reckon the greatest to be that the Institutes have provided a common ground on which women of all classes, opinions and

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beliefs could enjoy friendly intercourse. This good work has not been done so well by any other organization in Wales. Other results are a good understanding with the Universities, which value the efforts made to forward education; good working arrangements between Institutes and County Councils for extension classes, an improvement in poultry and dairy work, a revival and bettering of handicraft work, and an increased provision of the music and lectures and discussions so much appreciated by the Welsh people.

As the Welsh are well acquainted with the principles of democratic government and will not tolerate high-handed treatment, they are a democratic force in the movement. Some of their ways are no doubt difficult of comprehension to their more formal non-Celtic friends, and, first and last, the development of the movement in Wales has no doubt cost a large amount of money. But to go into Wales from some English rural area, which is educationally backward and has never had the grit to make any stand for political or religious belief, is a refreshing experience.

THE FUTURE.—In speaking of the steady increase in the number of Institutes in Wales, Mrs. Morgan tells me that there is now, she believes, ‘one member for every thousand of the population, as against England’s one for every ten thousand.’ She adds: ‘What you say of the first Institute is the history of the others, only we must remember that ours is a forward movement. Not only have the Institutes become expert in all the work you mention, but they have been auxiliaries to raise the standard of life through their maternity, baby welfare, mental deficiency, clean milk and housing work. The prizes and certificates won at agricultural shows and Eisteddfodau in Wales are very numerous. We are on the way to make an AI people.’ The Institutes must become a great power for good, morally and physically. I cannot express to you the vision I have of the possibilities of the Institutes for home and country.

ABATING PARTY AND DENOMINATIONAL FEELING.—Miss Williams-Wynn testifies to the achievement of the move-

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ment, within her own small parish, 'in bringing classes and creeds together.' Our memories may easily grow dim with regard to the special service rendered by the movement in War-time. The Institutes were 'most useful as a means of showing how to make the most of garden produce and how to cook nourishing and appetizing dishes without meat, how to prevent waste of food, how to make all sorts of things at home.'

'In a short time,' Miss Williams-Wynn says, 'the women began to enjoy the meetings and now they say they could not do without their Institute. It has brought interest and entertainment into the lives of hard-working farm and cottage women, many of whom hardly knew people in the same parish who lived a mile or two away.'

'We have all heard how, at Llanfair P.G., Church and Chapel, Conservative and Radical feeling was bitter, and people of different views would not speak to each other, but that, after a few months of the Institute, Colonel Cotton was delighted to see a leading Churchwoman and a leading Nonconformist walking arm in arm along the village street.'

I remember Mr. Nugent Harris once saying to me that one of the reasons why the A.O.S. made its attack on Wales, when it was endeavouring to launch the movement, was that he felt that if the Institutes could break sectarian and political feeling in Wales they would succeed anywhere!

At Trefnant, the third place at which an Institute was started, the president, Mrs. Griffith, lately stated that there seemed to be a 'much more friendly, confidential and helpful feeling in the village,' chiefly due to the Institute meetings. About 1920, attendances at the Trefnant Institute fell off, and it became a question whether the Institute should be given up or not, but the members who did attend said they wished to go on, and since then the Institute has thriven.

PLAYS AND NEIGHBOURLINESS.—For the last two years the movement has spread steadily in Miss Williams-Wynn's county, and a satisfactory thing is that some new Institutes have started 'on their own initiative.' This has happened through people moving from a parish with an Institute to one

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without, and describing the advantage of having an Institute.

The president of one Welsh Institute writes to me that the movement is of great assistance not only in bringing the women together but in making them think, making them express their views, and giving them the opportunity of doing things and considering questions which take the place of the petty worries and friction of village life.

'The drama is an excellent means of opening women's minds, helping them to speak well and giving them an interest for spare moments. It has been very encouraging to find that two women who were on the worst of terms are now speaking to one another and going into each other's houses for rehearsals.' Some Carnarvon Institutes seem particularly fond of 'Current Events,' ten minutes talks on social, economic and international problems.

THE 'ROOM.'—Finally, I may quote from an interesting letter from Miss Berrington, who has done work of such excellent quality as a V.C.O. of the Monmouth Federation. She is often inclined to place in the forefront of Institute activities, she says, 'the building of parish halls by members, who, assisted by the men, have raised money in a variety of ways.' 'If nothing else had been accomplished, this building of a "room" the centre of all local activities is memorable in remote rural parishes.'

'Wales (and Monmouth) has few large villages. In the valleys there is usually a farm; round the corner half a mile away there is a church. A tiny cottage is found five minutes up the lane, and in the other direction another farm, some way off. The school has a few cottages round it. The squire's house is often empty and forlorn or in the possession of newcomers. In many places the leadership of Institutes is in the hands of those who work on farms or teach in schools. According to their capacity and leisure is the result.'

There is as yet no Welsh supplement of *Home and Country*. But three of the Federation leaflets are translated into Welsh. *Jerusalem* has been translated by Dr. Miall-Edwards and will shortly be printed.

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IN considering the future of the Institute movement there are, as we have seen, many grounds for hope.

But there is none more promising than this: that by reason of the movement having been successful alike in England, Wales and Scotland, the best brains of the women of the three countries, so different, in many ways, in tradition, training, experience, and outlook, will be available for the planning, the guidance, and the forwarding of the work in Great Britain.

The story of the Scottish movement is extremely interesting not only to the Scottish membership, but to the English and Welsh. The Scottish movement has a paper called *Home and Country*, as the English movement has. It has a Miss Ferguson for Secretary, as the N.F.W.I. has — she is no relation. The proceedings at a Scottish Institute are not unlike the proceedings at an English or Welsh Institute. But here the resemblance ceases. The whole organization of the Scottish movement is different from the organization of the southern movement. (Some of the Scottish membership think it is better, some think it is worse!)

THE TWO SCHOOLS TO THE PARISH.—But most important of all, and this is why the Scottish movement may be expected to make its influence felt in the evolution of the Institute cause in Britain, it has the advantage of proceeding among a people who for three centuries have had a school as well as a church in every parish, and have had, for a long period, two or more schools in every parish. The Institute cause, whether in Canada or in Great Britain or on the Continent, is an educational cause or it is nothing. The high standard of education in Scotland and Wales gives a special value to the Scottish and Welsh factor in the movement.

THE LONG WALKS.—But it is not only what the Scotsfolk have made of themselves by education and by much mental gymnastic in political and religious discussion which matters. What also matters is that they have the grit natural to a people who, in a country much of which is cold and bare, would, if



EXHIBITION OF SHAWLS, ROFFEY INSTITUTE



INSTITUTE MEMBER'S CROFT IN OUTER HEBRIDES

they were not alert, starve ! Many daughters of the southern movement have done virtuously, but the northern membership excelleth them all in its readiness to walk long distances to Institute meetings ! There are plenty of cottars who think nothing of walking half a dozen miles or more to their 'Rurals,' as the Institutes are familiarly called in Scotland. And when all is said and done, the distance a member is prepared to walk to her Institute, along a roughish road - see a photograph - is no bad indication of the reality of her belief in the movement.

THE LIFE OF A DAIRY-MAID.-I have related in Chapter 2 how, before there were Institutes in any part of Britain, the Chairman of the Scottish Board of Agriculture preached Institutes in print in 1912-3. A Scots farmer's wife, Mrs. Blair, of Hoprigmains, Gladsmuir, in East Lothian, preached Institutes by word of mouth in Scotland in 1916. It was a moving plea she made one December day before the Glasgow and West of Scotland Discussion Society when she told her dairy-maid's story. Mrs. Blair said: 'This good mother of a large family had gone off unexpectedly for the week-end. I asked how she had enjoyed herself. She said, "I just took a sudden thocht and gaed awa'. I hadna been like mase! for a while back, I was that crabbit. I was aye flytin' on the weans when they didna need it." Then the tears came into her eyes, and she said, "Men ken naethin' aboot it. They dinna understand. They are aye meetin' their neebors in the stable, and passin' the time o' day wi' the maister, or they're up at the station speaking tae somebody ; but for the like o' me there's never a body to speak tae. Men dinna understand."'

'A BETTER SOCIAL ORDER.' - Mrs. Blair went on to tell with vigour and feeling - her paper occupies four-and-a-half columns in the *Scottish Farmer* - all the wonderful things that Institutes could do for the country-side. I need not, after our nineteen Chapters on the work of the movement, quote her on these points. She seems to have made most of them. And she said that it appeared to her that the Institutes were 'the only feasible and practical means of establishing a better social order.' They had 'the additional advantage of giving a

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stimulus to agricultural interests.' She insisted that 'there never was a time more propitious' for the formation of Institutes, and she wound up what was characterized as a 'most eloquent paper,' with a passage of plain speaking: 'We are told that woman's place is the home. So it is. But it is man's place also. And, just as his business necessitates his frequent absence from home, so, to keep herself up-to-date in her business, necessitates a woman's occasional absence, when the husband can act as her substitute.'

THE FARMERS AND GOVERNMENT MOVE.—The next year, in February, Mrs. Blair, at a suffrage meeting, pressed the case for Institutes on an Edinburgh audience. Two months later, on April 5, she got the Scottish Council of Agriculture to pass a resolution. 'Realizing the importance of social life in the development of agriculture and the importance of home life in rural economy,' the Council advised the Board of Agriculture to 'support the establishment of Women's Institutes throughout Scotland.'

Mrs. Blair kept the subject going not only in the rural Press but in the daily papers, and, later in the month, the Secretary for Scotland was moved to testify to the 'priceless value' of Institutes. Mrs. Blair's next task was to lead a deputation consisting of Lady Carlaw Martin, Mrs. Forbes, Mrs. Hamilton, Miss Anderson, and Miss Jobson, of the Farm Servants' Union, to Mr. Secretary Munro (May 28). 'After reflection and consultation with his advisers' (Sir Robert Wright and Dr. Greig), the Minister suggested that he should 'authorize the appointment of an organizer and a clerk by the Board of Agriculture for, say, two years, until a sufficient number of Institutes were in being to form a central control body, which would take over the organizer and might be of weight and standing enough to receive grants.'

THE FIRST 'RURAL' STARTED.—Then, on June 27, 1917, there was a conference in Edinburgh, organized, like the deputation, by Mrs. Blair, at which all the agricultural societies and other organizations working in rural districts were represented.

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Sir Robert Wright made the pleasing announcement that the Board of Agriculture would finance the movement through its early stages, and a provisional committee, empowered to add to its numbers, was appointed, consisting of the Duchess of Atholl, Mrs. Blair, Mrs. Forbes, Mrs. Gooch, Miss Jobson, Mrs. (now Lady) Leslie Mackenzie, 'Margaret' of the *Scottish Farmer*, and Lady Alice Shaw-Stewart.

Mrs. Watt, who had come down from London, spoke and declared that Institutes were the biggest thing for rural betterment 'the world has ever seen.'

In Mrs. Blair's own village of Longniddry the previous day, Mrs. Watt had addressed the inaugural meeting of the first Institute in Scotland. Thirty-seven women gave in their names, Lady Wemyss - with 'heartfelt sympathy' and 'most happy to fall in with its projects in every way' - became honorary president, and a committee 'representing landowners, landholders and workers' was formed. The first monthly meeting was held on July 25 - it is a curious fact that the first Institute in the world, in Canada, the first Institute in Great Britain, in Wales, and the first Institute in Scotland, should all have been formed on the 25th of the month - when Mrs. Blair, as president, introduced her mother, who gave an address on fruit bottling, and Miss Lumsden, LL.D., who spoke on greater matters. Tea was drunk from cups which had been provided, one by each member, in a 'china shower.'

MRS. GOOCH.- But another woman, now prominent in the movement, had her part in the early work. Mrs. Gooch, of Torcastle, Inverness-shire, who had moved the resolution at the Edinburgh meeting, had in February, 1917, been staying at Cirencester, in Gloucestershire. While there she became interested in Institutes, and thought, she tells me, 'they would be so good in our Western Highlands, where the women have very little to brighten their lives, very few opportunities of meeting their neighbours or of learning to do fresh things.' So, knowing the interest of Dr. Greig, as he was then, in the subject, she wrote to the Board of Agriculture (April 10). She was prevented by illness from joining Mrs. Blair's deputation

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to Mr. Munro, but, on June 28, the day after Mrs. Blair's Edinburgh conference, Mrs. Watt spoke at a meeting arranged by Mrs. Gooch at Fort William, and the first Institute in the Highlands was started during the winter. (For dates of formation of the first Institutes in the South and North of Scotland, *see* the Appendix)

I should mention that, in my English documents, I find a letter from Mr. Nugent Harris about having received in May a request from the Scottish Board of Agriculture for all the A.O.S. leaflets and all that could be told about Institutes, so, what between the A.O.S. leaflets and the influence of Cirencester and the loan of Chief Organizer Watt, England had a considerable share in the Scottish start.

'A SAIR FECHT.'—A special emergency committee (consisting of Mrs. Blair, Miss Jobson, Mrs. (now Lady) Leslie Mackenzie, Miss Hilda Newbigin, and Miss Younger, with Dr. Greig in the chair) met on July 30 and decided to appoint Miss Agnes Campbell, B.A., as organizer. But Miss Campbell could not take up her duties until the autumn. Meantime Mrs. Blair continued to carry on the work ardently as president of a Voluntary Funds Committee, and in August was joined by Miss Nannie Brown, a connection of the author of *Rab and his Friends*—'a fine Scottish character,' says Mrs. Blair, 'who has done more for the Scottish movement than any other woman.' Mrs. Blair writes to me: 'It was a sair fecht to get going and keep going on the right lines. I once wrote to a well-known agriculturist asking for the names of likely women. He replied that all the women in his part were too busy with farm work to be able to attend meetings. I replied that I had never known men so busy on the farms that they could not attend meetings, and that as the men had always regarded themselves as the lords of creation, I thought they might manage to milk the cows and look after the bairns for one afternoon or evening once a month when the Institutes met.

'Sometimes we were met with, "I keep myself to myself." Once I was told, "I've never been out of ma ain hoose for sixteen years." Once we had the door shut in our faces, while

‘WHAT’S AN INSTITUTE FOR?’

a gently smiling lady said, “Oh no, I couldn’t go, I am on the Lord’s side.”’

Before the end of 1917 there were eleven Institutes.

CONFLICTING VIEWS.—Sir Robert Greig last year humorously recalled the struggle that went on between friends of the movement who wanted ‘Government assistance and were willing to put up with departmental control, those who wanted the money without the control, and those who wanted neither the money nor the control.’ The countenance and resources of the Board, with convinced believers like Sir Robert Wright and Dr. Greig at its head, and the Board’s distribution of literature, and its organization work were undoubtedly of great help to the movement. There was, at first, as in England, an inhibition of ‘political’ subjects, when ‘party,’ not ‘political’ was the word to have used. As a leading member protested stoutly, the Institutes ‘would deal with every political subject under the sun.’ The object of the Institutes, as she said, was ‘the evolution of a worthy and progressive community life in the rural areas.’

When, in the summer of 1918 (June 28), the first Conference of the Scottish Women’s Rural Institutes—S.W.R.I. is the abbreviation—was held in Edinburgh, Dr. Greig presiding, it was reported that, up to the previous September, 35 Institutes had been started. Encouraging reports were presented by each Institute in turn, a practice followed at the later conferences.

Perhaps the best story told was that of a member asking, ‘What’s an Institute for if it’s no’ to teach you to work wi’ those ye dinna like?’ Another was about an Institute which was asked if it would like to abandon one monthly meeting as a holiday, when a member said, ‘The Institute is oor holiday.’

METHODS OF ORGANIZATION.—The constitution presented by the Board provided for a conference, a financial committee, and an advisory committee. This advisory committee was composed of two representatives apiece from a north-western, a north-eastern, a central, and a southern ‘Area,’ a representative from three agricultural colleges, six

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co-opted members, and a representative of the Government; but the Board's organizer had, of course, full power. The following amendment to the official constitution scheme was rejected by 32 to 9: 'That the Institutes in each area form a Federation or District Council, which shall appoint members to the Central Committee; that each Institute shall affiliate to the Federation or Central Committee at the rate of 2*d.* per member per annum; that the Central Committee shall have executive power, and power to co-opt others in an advisory capacity.'

Although this amendment was not carried, the Board seems to have encouraged the formation of Federations where there was a sufficient number of Institutes which had been at work for a year, and were self-sustaining.

It is impossible to leave out of sight the controversy between those who accepted the Area system and a certain relationship with the Board, and those who took the view that the English contributory County or District Federation and National Federation system was the best model for the movement to follow. As a leading English rural reformer told me the other day that he had never been in Scotland, it may be explained for the benefit of any English reader 'who only England knows' that the educational and social status of farmers' wives and daughters in Scotland is commonly higher than that of their sisters in many English shires. Not a few of these Scotswomen on the farms, and many of the intelligent women-folk of the cottages of the south and east of Scotland, who are given to reading and to thinking for themselves, and believe that most of the strength of Scotland is nowadays in their part of the country, no doubt felt, in some degree, as a Scotswoman resident in England writes to me, that 'they were renewing the old struggle with "the Highland line," with those who are bound up with the remnants of feudalism in the Highlands.' The objectors to the Board's constitution saw themselves, in fact, as democrats. It is a large question to which a sentence or two cannot do justice. Briefly, the leaders of the north-west felt on their side that in the Highlands, geography was against

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the English system, and that the Board and Miss Campbell were working on the right lines. When the Central Council was set up later on, as will be noted, its headquarters were fixed, not in Edinburgh, but in Perth.

An honest history of the movement must tell what happened to it. Only by so doing can the movement profit by the lessons of the way by which it has been led. It is quite impossible, therefore, to ignore the differences of opinion which occurred. But, for four reasons, too much should not be made of them. First, up to a point, the contending parties saw different sides of the same shield. In the second place, there are now a score of the County Federations for which a demand was made. In the third place, not a little of the controversy was due, to be plain, to the clash of two vigorous and completely antagonistic personalities, Mrs. Blair and Miss Campbell. Miss Campbell, as will be seen later, no longer holds a position of responsibility in the movement. Mrs. Blair has no desire to dwell on the earlier frays. Her wish indeed is that the record should be left in the old newspapers in which I read about them. If, in the face of her expressed wish, I tell all there is to tell, it is because there is nothing which in the best interests of the movement need be hidden. And, after all, the controversy was a sign of vigour. Who could take seriously a Scottish movement in which the national talent for discussion was not exercised? When the time comes to mark the weak places of the movement in England and Wales and in Scotland, one of them must surely be that the letters to the editor in its two monthlies are usually less animated than they might be, that there is not too much controversy in the movement, but less than it would be good for its health to have!

PROGRESS OF THE 'RURALS.' - Seventy-one 'Rurals,' from Caithness to the Border, from Arisaig to Buchan, were represented at the second Conference (1919) at which Sir Robert Greig took the chair. Sir Robert Wright, who was also present, mentioned that the membership had trebled (3,305). Miss Nannie Brown had been appointed assistant organizer. Mrs. McIver was another organizer who got to

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work this year. Miss Guest, the English or Canadian organizer also rendered service.

When the third Conference (1920) assembled, Sir Robert Greig (who had now succeeded to the Chairmanship of the Scottish Board), presiding, the number of delegates was 200. By the end of the year there were 150 Institutes, with a doubled membership (8,831). For the first time there were representatives from the Islands - Arran and Iona. A new constitution provided for the existing Area Committees, for Area Conferences, and, for the first time, a Central Council. Government funds would, however, be given direct to the Area Committees as before.

During 1921 the appointment of Miss Vince as organizer brought the number of organizers under Miss Campbell to four. By December there were 209 Institutes with an approximate membership of 13,000. By the end of April, 1922, the number of Institutes had risen to 231, which, Miss Bruce notes in her useful summary of the history of the Scottish movement which appeared in *Scottish Home and Country*, was, relatively to the population, 'a number not much smaller than in England.'

THE GRANTS.-At this stage (October, 1922), four years after the close of the War, the Board of Agriculture decided that it was in the interest of the Institutes that the official connection should come to an end. Of course the movement could be no more self-supporting, at the time of leaving the Board, than the English movement was able to be when it passed from under the care of Whitehall. The Scottish movement was to be financed from funds provided by the ear-marking of 10 per cent. of the £150,000 granted to Scottish Agriculture at the repeal of the Corn Production Act. This would yield £3,000 for five years, by the end of which time, it was hoped, the movement would be on its feet.

It was in November, 1922, when there were 244 Institutes, that the movement, under a new Central Council and five Area Committees, took over from the Board. Miss Campbell had resigned the preceding August. The first organizers under the new system were Miss Howard and Miss Brown, who were

AREA SYSTEM : A REPLY

afterwards joined by Miss J. H. Bonar and Miss M. L. Adams. In the north Miss MacPhail, Miss Laurie, and Miss Nicol have served as organizers.

From the 244 Institutes of November, 1922, the number rose in a year to 304, then in another year to 386. In October, 1925, there were 460 Institutes with a membership of 27,500, extending to the Orkneys, Shetlands and the Outer Hebrides. Mrs. Anstruther-Gray, Chairman of the Central Council, anticipates that within two years there will be 600 Institutes in Scotland, the population of which is, of course, two millions less than that of Greater London.

I find by the newspapers, daily and agricultural, that Mrs. Blair protested vigorously against the continuation of the old Area system. Under this system, each 'separate entity of an Area, with its own organization, office and staff,' was under the control of small groups. There was 'no national movement.'

A leading member of the movement writes to me : 'No doubt some of our members who did not agree with Mrs. Blair were reluctant to take part in a Press controversy. In regard to our Area system I believe it to be fundamentally democratic. Let me explain. Scotland is divided into five Areas, and the Government grant is allocated at the rate of £400 per annum to each of these Areas. Approximately £500 is spent on special grants for development in remote districts, another £500 being allowed for the expenses of the Central organization, etc. After an Institute is established, it is asked to join the County Federation (if a Federation is in existence in that County). For organization purposes, each of the five Areas is represented by a committee, elected at the biennial conferences in each Area by delegates from each Institute in the county. The number of nominations allowed from each county is taken *pro rata* to the number of Institutes in the county. Representatives to the Central Council are chosen from each Area committee. The members of our 'Rurals' have ideas and vote accordingly. Those who stand for the present constitution never cease to point out to members that they must think out the different questions for themselves.'

Mrs. Blair and those who took her view publicly objected, as

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the National Farmers' Union did, to the financing of the movement with part of the grant given as a solatium to the farmers on the repeal of the Corn Production Act. Why, it was asked, could not the Scottish movement, like the English movement, have its grant from the Development Commission?

FUTURE OF THE MOVEMENT.—A further objection was administrative. Year by year the number of voluntary helpers has increased, but it was suggested that there might be a more effective development of the English Voluntary County Organizer system which had so largely and so economically carried out the work of organization south of the Tweed.

'With regard to the Voluntary Organizer System,' writes a correspondent in a position of responsibility in the movement, 'this is being tried in some of the Areas and with success. The long, tiring journeys in the North-West Area, for example, have already resulted in breaking down three organizers. So it is not likely that voluntary organizers will undertake this Area where, although the hardships are not what they were when Dr. Johnson made his Tour, may still result in an organizer being storm-bound for days in some remote district of the Highlands or Islands. Voluntary organizers cannot give unlimited time to the work.'

The movement was much helped nationally by the starting (in February, 1924), of *Scottish Home and Country* under the energetic editorship of Miss Bruce. At first a quarterly, it has appeared this year every other month, and will no doubt soon be a monthly like its prototype, and become more and more of a gossamer for the movement.

During the period between the holding of the last of the Conferences under the Board in Edinburgh in 1921 and the two days' Conference and Exhibition — an excellent Exhibition — which took place in that city in June, 1925, each of the five Areas had had two biennial Area conferences and every one of them an exhibition.

It is worth while summarizing the discussion on future policy which took place at the Edinburgh gathering.

Mrs. Gooch, chairman of the North-western Area, declared



SCOTTISH CENTRAL COUNCIL

Back Row : Lady Haldane, Mrs. Stuart, Mrs. Whyte, Mrs. Douglas, Mrs. Duncan
Front Row : Mrs. Weir, Mrs. Anstruther-Gray (*Chairman*), Mrs. Moir-Byres, Mrs. Gooch



CONVENERS OF CONFERENCE SUB-COMMITTEES

Back row : Miss Montgomery, Mrs. Whyte, Miss Baxter, Mrs. Pollock, Miss Nannie Brown
Front row : Mrs. Mercer, Miss Geddes, Mrs. Stuart, Miss Bruce

MIND OF THE MOVEMENT

that the present policy could not be bettered, but money must be raised, and, in her opinion, the Western Highlands and isolated places could not carry on without the grant.

Mrs. Douglas, chairman of the South-western Area, was concerned about the lack of national feeling in the movement. Nothing could compensate for the lack of solidarity. In her Area the membership was not satisfied with the existing system. The units must be the County Federations and the Central Council.

Mrs. Stuart, chairman of the South-eastern Area, saw objections to the English system. The Area Committees and Central Council had simplified the work. But the headquarters should be not in Perth but in Edinburgh. The business should be conducted from one office and the movement should be under one head.

Miss Gardner (Perthshire), Mrs. Mackenzie (Aberdeenshire), Mrs. Murray (East Lothian), and Miss Bruce (Berwickshire), approved the present organization, as did Miss Marshal (Fife). They must look beyond their own garden gate, said Miss Marshal, and not forget the Highlands. Mrs. Murray said she was a convert to Miss Campbell's views after having been strongly opposed to them.

Mrs. Forbes thought application for a grant should be made to the Development Commission.

Mrs. Moir-Byres, chairman of the North-eastern Area, said that the outlying districts must have help.

Miss Montgomery (Kirkcudbrightshire) supported Mrs. Douglas. Members should do organizing work themselves. She did not see why the movement could not carry on without a grant.

As *Scottish Home and Country* says, it would have been 'a very decided advantage' if an agenda could have been circulated before the Conference. Being, by a wise nomenclature, 'the magazine,' not the official organ, 'of the S.W.R.I.,' it has evidently some freedom of utterance. May it retain it! The magazine said that the discussion on future policy carried the movement no farther than the talk at Area conferences, and

THE SCOTTISH MOVEMENT

that the suggestion of Mrs. Stuart that a special conference of delegates should be convened to consider this subject alone was wise. Miss Bruce says in her paper that the S.W.R.I. 'are now earnestly considering under what constitution the success of the movement may be best secured when it becomes dependent upon its internal resources for financial help.'

The comment on the conference made by Mrs. Blair, who was absent owing to illness, and was the recipient of a telegram of sympathy, was that 'not only was there no agenda, there was no voting, and there was a consequent lack of reality, of grasping the situation. But the inherent good in the movement has triumphed over structural weakness. We must just work on until we get a system more like the English - partly contributory. Then Scotswomen who have to contribute bawbees will want to direct the spending of them!'

In reply to this criticism, it is represented to me that 'it was because all Institutes could not be represented at the Conference, that the Central Council agreed to have no voting. At the previous Conferences, held by the Board, delegates' fares were paid. At the National Conference in 1925 there were no funds to enable us to do this, and, therefore, many of the small Institutes were unable to send representatives. It must be remembered that the journey from the far away Highlands and Islands to Edinburgh often costs more than from any part of England to London.

'Mrs. Blair is not alone in wanting the Institutes to have a partly contributory system. There are many members who go even further and think that the time has arrived when the Institutes can and will wholly finance themselves and show that the independence that has always characterized the Scottish people is still alive.'

CASE FOR THE AREA SYSTEM.—The case for the existing system is thus stated to me by Mrs. Gooch: 'The Board of Agriculture are most kind to us and give every assistance in their power, and they of course supervise our accounts and see how the money is spent. Our grant comes to an end in 1927, and we are trying to raise a sum of money which will

‘ EXCELLENT WORK ’

enable us to carry on as we do now. We think we have a better organization than in England – a Central Council allocating the money to the Area Committees, who, in their turn, distribute the money to the Federations and Institutes.’

Another member of Council says : ‘I am convinced that the S.W.B.I. have the organization that is best for them at this stage of their development and that they will, as they develop further, alter it to suit their requirements. All who know the different characteristics of the Scotch, English and Welsh, and the local conditions, will realize that what is good for one is not necessarily the best for all.

‘The office of the movement has been in Perth because it is most central, not because any members prefer it. The different Areas have their offices, with organizers, at the nearest centre to their work, in order to save travelling expenses. Everything has been done to minimize expenditure. A central office in Edinburgh would be more costly.’

Mrs. Anstruther-Gray, Chairman of the Central Council, who has given time and strength so ungrudgingly to the direction of the movement since Sir Robert Grieg retired, has acknowledged the just indebtedness of the movement to Mrs. Blair and other pioneers. But she has also expressed the view that the movement is undermarked obligations to the work of Miss Campbell as head organizer during the five years the movement was in the Board’s care, and ‘to our present constitution which has worked admirably and given us our great success.’ ‘The Institutes are so scattered and some districts so sparsely populated,’ Mrs. Anstruther-Gray continues, ‘that without the Areas which Scotland has been divided into, it would have been impossible to make headway. For instance, the Institutes in the Hebrides would have had no chance without the help of the Area committee of Fort William. There is very little criticism of the present organization among Institute members.’

But from a part of the country which is not the South-East I have the view: ‘In my opinion, our movement has succeeded in doing the excellent work it is doing in spite of a very cumbersome constitution, not because of it.’

THE SCOTTISH MOVEMENT

ACHIEVEMENT IN THE HIGHLANDS.—Mrs. Gooch's own area, the North-western, includes Orkney, Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, Inverness, Argyll and all the Islands, Skye, Mull, Iona, Uist, etc. There are 70 Institutes in this area, 12 being in Orkney alone.

'We have gone on the principle,' she writes to me, 'of never starting an Institute unless the people asked for one, so that in each case they have been really wanted, and certainly they are a great success in these isolated districts. The women love the meetings, and I know crofters' and shepherds' wives who will walk seven or eight miles and think nothing of it.

'The Institutes have done a great deal to break down class feeling in the Highlands. People meet who never had the opportunity of meeting before. Everyone is equal, and equal in the right way. The Institutes bring out kindness and helpfulness in everyone. The movement has also done a great deal in mixing up the different sects and breaking down the ridiculous feeling there used to be between the Roman Catholics and the Free Church and Established Church communities. They never before met on common ground, and now they all work most happily together, thinking only of the good of the Institutes. It is perfectly wonderful how the women have learnt to speak and to demonstrate in front of their neighbours, when a few years ago nothing would have induced them to do so. They have learned confidence and are willing to help each other by imparting any knowledge they may have.'

IN THE SOUTH-WEST AND NORTH-EAST.—The movement has made its most notable advance in the South-West Area, where the Institutes now number 143, with an approximate membership of 8,200. A large part of this area resembles the North-West in many ways, as it includes the 'Southern Highlands' of Scotland. In Bute, the Island of Arran and parts of Wigtownshire, Dumfriesshire, Kirkcudbrightshire and the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire, distances are as great and means of locomotion as scanty as anywhere in Scotland, except the Outer Hebrides. In view of these physical resemblances to the Highlands it is worthy of notice that Mrs. Douglas, who has

'WELL WORTH IT'

led the movement in this Area, has called attention to the fact that the South-West is not satisfied with the present constitutional system.

The North-Eastern Area, which has the next largest number of Institutes (96), is now extending its work to that remotest corner of Great Britain – the Shetland Islands. There is no part of the kingdom in greater need of the development of social and educational life which the Institutes will bring, and the progress of the work there will be followed with much sympathy and interest.

'WELL WORTH IT.' – Miss Nannie Brown once illustrated to me the great distinction between so many Scottish Institutes and most English ones: 'We have Institutes in very lonely places. Last week in the Isle of Mull I had to drive 35 miles to an afternoon meeting and then about 10 miles to an evening meeting. We have very many Institutes in solitary school-houses. The members must walk on dark muddy roads long distances. On a very wet night in one place two girls walked over a lonely hill road four-and-a-half miles to the meeting and had the same distance to walk after the meeting. They said it was "well worth it." One old body at another lonely place said, "I just live frae the ane Rural tae the ither!" The Institute has opened up a new life to many and many a woman living a solitary life in the Highlands and Islands.'

Miss Brown is entitled to be heard on the physical, no less than the social aspects, of the Scottish movement for, in addition to all her journeyings in Scotland, she has twice walked from Edinburgh to London!

Mrs. Anstruther-Gray speaks in a letter to me of the way in which the meetings of the Institutes 'are characterized by a most delightful atmosphere of comradeship.' She also notes, as Miss Brown does, an advance in handicrafts. Spinning and weaving have always been industries in the Highlands and Islands. The new industries to be introduced are filet lace, painted pottery, and, to some extent, fur-farming.

INSTITUTES AT WORK. – Some notion of the fare the

THE SCOTTISH MOVEMENT

Institutes provide for themselves may be obtained from the following table of lectures given during one of the earlier years of the movement:

Cleaning	25	Bee-keeping	20
Cookery	195	Dairying	26
Family Life	9	Gardening	43
Food Conservation ..	49	Goat-keeping	1
Household Contrivances	14	Poultry-keeping	62
Health and Housing ..	99	Pig-keeping	1
Laundry	19	Rural Handicrafts ..	144
Miscellaneous	67	Art, Literature, Music,	
Needlecraft	269	Science, Travel, etc. ..	316
Upholstery	25	Community work	92

The following, I read in the official handbook, is a 'typical Institute Committee, due regard being had to the representation of all churches, all political opinions, older and younger members, and different districts in the parish:' Proprietor's wife, 1; representatives from the households of the learned professions, ministers, doctors, teachers, 2; farmers' wives or daughters, 2; smallholders or crofters, 2; farm servants or cottars, 2; domestic servants, 1; younger girls, 1; trading interests, post office, etc., 1.

SONGS.—The Scottish movement has a song the chorus of which is

'The watchword's "Home and Country,"
The broader, fuller life,
That draws within its circle
The mother, maid, and wife.'

There is another which goes to 'Sound the Pibroch,' the chorus of which is in Gaelic:

'Tha tighin fodham, fodham, fodham,
Tha tighin fodham, fodham, eirigh,
Tha tighin fodham, fodham, fodham,
All "For Home and Country."'

A CLUB HOUSE

In places where Gaelic is not sung the chorus becomes

‘Ours fair fields and harvest weather,
Yours the land of mist and heather,
But we’ll rise and work together,
All “For Home and Country.”’

I am very sorry that I have not the opportunity of giving, what I hope I may be able to give one day, a vivid impression of the work in the different Areas and of the achievements of outstanding ‘Rurals.’ I should like to chronicle the experience and hopes of members and organizers in all parts of the country.

In a historical Chapter I have had to give space to history. But I should like to hear more of those who have carried on the work in recent years. The tale of the early struggles occupies too much of my picture. I must not be blamed beyond my deserts, for the kind request in *Scottish Home and Country* that I might be furnished with records of work in different districts and with workers’ reminiscences brought – just one response!

THE LARGEST INSTITUTE.—It was a note on the work of the largest Institute in Scotland. It is in accordance with the tenets of sound rural reformers that the largest ‘Rural’ should be found in a district which is agriculturally advanced, the ‘garden of Scotland.’ The East Lothian Federation includes among its 18 Institutes not only Longniddry, the first Scottish Institute, but Haddington, the largest – Haddington is a town of about 4,000 inhabitants. This Institute was started in January, 1919, with a membership of 50, which has now grown to nearly 400. When the Institute was six months old the president, Mrs. Baird, and the secretary, Mrs. Murray, came to the conclusion that it would be benefited by having a club. Such a club would provide comfortable accommodation for countrywomen who were in the town on market-days, and its rest-rooms would be similarly available for working-girls. A suitable three-storey building was available for £1,100, and the daughter of the president, Miss Molly Baird, generously offered the whole of the money at a small rate of interest, and

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the money for alterations as well, which turned out to be a little more than the cost of the building itself. To-day only £1,000 remains as a bond on the building, so that the members have raised about £1,300 in addition to furnishing the club. The rents more than meet the interest. A small billiard table is a gift from the men's recreation club. There is a well-stocked library, and there are two bath-rooms. A wall of prejudice against women finding time to spend in the club is being slowly broken down. The County Federation holds its meetings in the Club, and in it all the arrangements were made for the remarkable pageant of East Lothian history which was presented by the Institutes at Edinburgh.

'THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT.'—Two years hence, as Sir Robert Greig said a little sardonically in Edinburgh this year, in reference to the Scottish movement 'there will be no money, no red-tape and no control, and the Institutes will be free to develop as they please.'

With regard to the future, he found it difficult to place any bounds to their usefulness: 'Is there any phase of rural life which is not affected by the Women's Institute? Does it not bring education, music, art and handicrafts, co-operation, sociability, goodwill and laughter into the country. But does it not do far more? Is there any Institute in the country of which it cannot be said at the end of a year that some one in it has discovered a new faculty? Is it not probable that some one has found herself possessed of some dexterity of hand or eye of which she was unaware: or of some absorbing interest completely new, or of some intellectual vision that was never thought of? The cumulative effect of this unlocking, of this expansion of the mind cannot be measured.

'I regard the Women's Institutes as *the most important movement in the social and agricultural life of Scotland for a hundred years.*'

SCOTLAND, ENGLAND AND WALES.—The movement is still, of course, as I said at the beginning of this Chapter, in process of evolution. When the best brains and experience of the movement throughout the kingdom get together, it may

THE QUARTER MILLION

be found not to have been a disadvantage that the English and Welsh National Federation system and the Scottish Area system have been tried out alongside one another. The Scottish headquarters are necessarily without the organization which makes it possible for the English and Welsh movement's headquarters readily to supply information. For a national view of the northern cause one must depend upon *Scottish Home and Country*, which gets steadily more serviceable, and upon the interrogation of individuals. The Conference in Edinburgh is held only every other year, and it is not yet a legislative body like the two-days' Annual Meetings of the English and Welsh movement.

LEADING THE WORLD!—One must close on a note of great satisfaction that the Scottish movement and the English and Welsh movement together have reached a membership of about 250,000. This membership in good standing does not represent, of course, all those who have been brought under Institute influence.

The British joint movement now stands at the head of the World Institute movement, for, as will be seen in Chapter 21, the Canadian Minister of Agriculture does not put the 1923 Dominion figures for members of Institutes *and similar organizations* at more than 100,000.



The Scottish badge

STORIES BY PRESIDENT OF THE FIRST 'RURALS'

IN some places there are men who object to the women going out to the 'Rurals.' But when one of them wrote a short time since to the *Scottish Farm Servant* to say so, two farm workers' wives were down on him the next month.

BABIES, SMALL AND BIG.—At first we used to have some babies or little children at the meetings. Now we seldom have them. One day in the train I heard two Institute women discussing their meeting the night before. Mrs. . . . had had to leave the meeting because of her baby being so troublesome and noisy. 'Is it no' a shame o' . . . (mentioning the husband),' said one of the women, 'that he canna keep the bairns and let her oot tae her ain meetin?'

As I came away from one Institute Conference, a middle class, nice-looking girl, came up to me and said, 'Aren't you a farmer's wife?' When I said 'Yes' she asked how I could get away to attend meetings when I had so many other duties. I laughed and tried to explain that there were 'duties we owed the race, outside our dwelling-place,' and asked if she had young children whom she couldn't leave. No, she kept her brother's house. But the two maids were Institute members and she felt she had to let them go to the meetings — although she, herself, was a member of Committee! I said that the brother could make his own supper for once. How, I asked, did men do in Canada? I suggested that the house wouldn't run away in her absence, explained that I'd shut our house scores of times, though I had never in my life seen my father's or grandfather's farmhouse shut, and with some difficulty made her realize that the cows wouldn't die if they were milked an hour or two earlier on a 'Rural' night as they were often milked earlier, or later, on Sundays and show-days. She almost tearfully explained that no one spoke like that in their district and wished so much that someone would.

'I dinna like tae gang an' dae things after workin' a' day,' said one tired mother at an Institute. 'I like best to sit an' listen.'

‘ M A A I N F A U L T ’

‘ENJOYED THEM A’.- We tried holding meetings in the afternoon but gave it up as it ruled out the working-women. Our meetings are usually arranged according to the moonlight.

At a certain Institute one woman was always saying when asked to do anything, ‘I canna dae that ; I’ve ower muckle to dae at hame ; eleven of a family,’ and so on, till I said, ‘Well ! You are always telling us of what you have to do and you can just give us a ten minutes paper on ‘How I spend my time from Sunday morning till Saturday night.’ And she did. Very interesting it was, too.

I think on the whole our Scottish W.R.I. programmes compare favourably with any English Institute programmes I’ve seen, and I have spoken at Scottish Institutes from John o’ Groats to the Solway Firth. I really think we make more of a point of having a social side to the meeting than they do in England. Hereabouts our Institutes are mostly composed of working-women, 80 to 95 per cent. In Macmerry Institute, of which my daughter is president, there are only three women who are not cottage women. And that I believe is quite common in many parts.

On being asked one night to tell what they had learned at the Institute, one member, when it came to her turn, said, ‘I’ve never learned onything, but it’s ma ain fault, an’ I’ve enjoyed them a’!’ (meaning, I suppose, that she hadn’t learned any basketry and practical things).

It was difficult at first to get the members to become members of committee. We have on our committee a member from each farm or each bit of the village ; then, when any announcement has to be made in a hurry, each committee member is supposed to go round her members, and so save postage – being canny Scots ! On one occasion when a member was asked to give someone in her district a message, she said, ‘I canna dae that. I’m no speakin’ tae her the noo.’

Institutes have undoubtedly done much to improve social amenity. They have formed centres where for the first time women in the locality have met socially without any regard to class or sect, and have co-operated in various efforts. Burns’

STORIES OF THE FIRST 'RURALS'

nights with haggis-making, with the usual accompaniment of songs, were a feature of some of the January meetings. At one Institute shadowy figures were seen outside the window. 'It's the men. We should let them in,' said one member. 'Na, na,' replied another, 'they've had their Burns' nights for a hundred years and never asked us in.' So the men were kept out. However, they are not always excluded. We found it advisable to have a membership card whereby the members pledged themselves to attend the meetings regularly and to interest others in the aims and objects of the movement. Scotland has no membership card, so ours was a pioneer effort.

I found it rather refreshing once to hear a woman from the North-west - Arisaig way - tell how, there, the Institute had really altered their lives very much, how lots of women went out to tea at the 'Rural,' 'who had never been out to tea since they were married.'

Often women have told me it is the only time they have a cup of tea made and handed to them! Another body once said to me it was 'fine to hae something to gaur ye dress yersel.' This, too, was an unanswerable argument against afternoon meetings. Nobody wanted after the meeting to take off her 'dress' and start into work.

One night I knew of a Farm Servants' Union meeting being held in the village and was surprised to find the wives at their 'Rural' as usual, and said so. 'Oh, but this is my night out,' was the reply.

'I look forward to it for a whole month,' said another; and the others concurred.

At first we found ourselves very often up against the Kirk. So many of the women had only worked for the Kirk, and the parish priests didn't relish them diverting their energies. In one parish, the minister, his wife and a small coterie of dames have never been to an Institute function or meeting, though the Institute has had illustrious women speakers, scientists, travellers, educationists, and often men speakers well known in public life.

I have heard of other parishes where a similar attitude is

F I R S T S T E P S

adopted. On the other hand, I have had the greatest help often from very jolly parish ministers and their wives.

HOUSING REALITIES.—In the early days it was rather amusing visiting women who held aloof from the Institute. One said to me, 'I don't hold with the Institutes at all.' I was greatly interested, eager, in fact, to know what she could hold up against them. 'Well, for one thing, they are making the women discontented with their houses.' I was rather horrified — knowing the local housing conditions! — but said that we were not making them discontented. We were only helping to make them more articulate. And I added that I hoped we were making women like her and like myself discontented with the kind of houses other women had to live in; that to my mind to acquiesce in the present state of things was the negation of Christianity.

On one occasion we had got the women worked up to attend a prospective M.P.'s meeting and put questions. They were splendid. I heard one say, 'If you come tae ma hoose and lift the bit carpet ye'll see a hole ye could bury a cat in.' Another said, 'But dinna come at nicht for ye'll no get in. There's aye a pram and four bicycles round the table.'

The women are not usually 'blate' when housing is the topic. They don't need their questions written out for them, as the men usually do! But in an agricultural community with 'tied' houses, what can they do? And in some places I noticed that the majority of the Institute members were estate workers, servants of some kind, or people who held houses or farms under the laird, and would not, of course, risk offending the president, the laird's wife.

In the Highlands, especially, the feudal spirit survives, and unless the Institutes, through their Federations and National Conferences, through their magazine, or through such a book as this, get some enlightenment, we shall move but slowly. All this applies, of course, to lots of places in England as well as in Scotland. But that is only what one must expect with a new movement, with women just emerging for the first time from the home, and distrustful of their powers and rights.

STORIES OF THE FIRST 'RURALS'

'WHAT IS OF USE TO THEM?'—I find our members are keenest on the Institute because of what they learn that is of use to them. They are proud of it on that account. It thereby ranks higher than the Mothers' Union, Church Guild, etc.!

Some are very keen on cookery demonstrations. Others say, 'We can cook all we ever *have* to cook' (which I very much doubt!).

Locally we have done our best to have a lecture or demonstration—or both—once a year on poulticing and simple remedies, and to have competitions occasionally on 'The best Red Cross box,' a most useful article in a house far away from a doctor.

Once, when the English Institutes were starting toy-making, etc., a friend of mine urged on us the dangers of taking up industries—fear of sweating, difficulty of competing against factory-made articles, and so on, and said, 'Why don't you teach them to do their hair and take care of their hands?' So we did. We at once arranged for a demonstration on hair-dressing and a talk on 'The care of the hair and the hands'—a most popular and successful evening—a programme which was at once copied far and wide. Then we went on to the care of the feet!

But ultimately we did start craft-work. Scottish women have always been knitters, and many Institute members, especially in the North, do the fashionable 'Fair Isle' jerseys and so forth. Weaving has gone by the board except in the North-west and the Islands, and so far it has not been taken up as a leisure craft by Institute women. Hand-loom weaving, on modern lines, is purely for leisured women. Rug-making has always been a favourite craft in Scotland, and it is rare to find a cottage where a home-made rug (often with good original design) does not lie in front of the fire. The Institute has encouraged this craft and developed it.

But as regards the modern craft-work, we gave that its first push through our Lothians Federation. Oh, the long fight we had even to establish the principle of Federation. But we had collected our money, and on we went, getting keener the more opposition we got, no doubt like other dour Scots!

'T O G R E A T T H I N G S'

H A M E A R T S.—In the realm of actual handicrafts the Lothians Federation led off with a lecture by Miss Ann Macbeth on 'Arts and Crafts in Rural Development.' She brought so many lovely exhibits with her from the Glasgow School of Art, that she fired us. Everything she showed us was within reach of our members. We were, she assured us, potentially just as artistic as the Japanese. We only needed encouragement, and so on. So we started. We organized classes in all the usual crafts. Miss Lindsell came up from Dunchurch and went the round teaching glove-making. Lady Pollock put us on the road to fur craft. We had lessons at the Edinburgh School of Art in embroidery and design; from the Blind Asylum teachers in basketry, and so forth.

Always and in everything we endeavoured to keep to simple homely articles made of inexpensive materials — our idea being to beautify the common things of the home, rather than to fill it with the ornamental.

Along with our craft-work we kept on talking, just as hard as we could talk, about the absolute necessity of studying labour-saving methods, about retaining nothing in the home which was not either useful or beautiful. What we aim at then is making the useful and beautiful at the same time. And, without boasting, I think I can say to-day that in a measure we have succeeded. That is, we have made a successful beginning which ought to lead to great things.

Rugs I have mentioned. We do these on canvas in good colourings and designs. We do plaited-rush mats, and we have cured sheep-skins and deer-skins. We have carved tables and chairs and stools, some of which we have covered with tooled leather. We have also carved and painted the old ubiquitous 'Kists,' though it is a difficult job to get the average woman to let the family Kists be touched! We paint in gay colourings. On the top of the one not upholstered the following is written :

'What the loom and the needle and spindle have made
Herein you will find most carefully laid,
And if you would keep it like this to the end,
You sometimes must buy, and oft-times must mend.'

STORIES OF THE FIRST 'RURALS'

Twisted round the centre pole of our Highland show stand was a quilt made of sheep's-wool. This we introduced two years ago when we could buy wool of a good quality at 1s. 2d. per lb. washed and teased. Now it takes 17s. 6d. worth of wool in place of 5s. 3d. It was a most popular craft. 40 quilts were made in a small Institute near here the first winter. Now, of course, the price of wool practically rules these out. But in a sheep country wool can be gleaned from hedges and dykes and grass, then washed, teased and carded, and excellent warm and washable quilts made at little expense.

THE 'BRAW BUT AND BEN.'*—But the craft which has made our part famous (in the Institute world!) is the hand-painted pottery. The earthenware is made locally in the Lothians and in Fife, and it is painted by the people in the farmhouses and in the farm cottages. For the last five years we have had a stand at each Highland Show—Stirling, Dumfries, Inverness, Perth, Glasgow—and have sold from £100 to £150 of goods each year for our members. We have also taken orders, with the result that we have never known what it was to be out of work. Some of the Lothians Federation pottery was bought by the Queen. Some has gone out to China, South Africa and Canada.

We have during the last year done a good deal in the way of co-operative effort throughout Scotland, mostly doing bed-covers, store-cupboards and so forth. Here in Longniddry we have been working at a 'Braw But and Ben,' so many members working at a lace and linen bedspread, others quilting, some embroidering towels, so many working at a porridge set (each member doing a plate), others doing jugs and bowls, butter dishes, jam dishes, plates, mugs—everything in that line that is used in an ordinary cottage, and large handsome pieces as well, bulb bowls, flat rice dishes, etc.

ACHIEVEMENT AND HOPE.—If members of other Institutes could see those things and handle them, knowing

* 'Braw' is fine. 'But and ben'='but,' the room entered when the door is opened; and 'ben,' the farther room.

THE DORIC

they were the work of farm labourers' wives and daughters they would be enthused to do more – do more for themselves I mean – in the way of taking up creative work, which, to my mind, means the solution of many difficulties in the rural problem. While amusement palls, creative work of that kind interests and continues to interest.

Another thing I feel we want badly is to make the middle-class, aye, and the so-called upper-class, women realize that they need education just as much as the lower-class, so-called, in economics, procedure and what not.

MUSIC AND DANCING.—We got lots of help from England. Mrs. Hobbs came up and went round with her music, making everyone dance her folk-dances. Later on, the Scottish Folk-dance Society was formed and brought out excellent gramophone records for the old Scottish dances. These were a great boon, providing music whenever the Institutes wanted to dance – or more correctly arranged to dance, for I believe they would dance every night in the week, and so we encourage team-dancing.

In some places Institute choirs have been formed. We have had delightful song lectures on 'Burns and his Songs,' and 'Lady Nairn and her Songs.' Possessing as we do 'the most beautiful love-songs in the world,' and, with all the lovely Hebridean melodies that have been added to our Scottish collections by Mrs. Kennedy Fraser and Mr. MacLeod, we have no lack of interest in this subject, though we have a lot of shyness to contend with. We are looking forward to a collection of descants to favourite Scottish songs by Mr. W. H. Leslie, who has done so much for the English Institutes in this connection.

Acting has been taken up in the Institutes, and it is always easy to find members ready to take part, though not so easy to find them willing to go through the drudgery of learning a good piece! Some original sketches have been written in the Doric, but simply Institute efforts, and suitable only for Institutes. Still, it is a beginning.

I have great hopes if and when the Government grant is

STORIES OF THE FIRST 'RURALS'

withdrawn. Then I'm sure the Scottish membership will have to get its house in order. I feel that some change must come before reality comes into this movement, before it becomes a pulsating national movement. The Areas work like water-tight compartments. There is no feeling of wholeness.

POSTSCRIPT ON THE CANADIAN MOVEMENT

REGRET has been expressed by leaders of the movement in this country that fuller information has not been available about the work in Canada. Happily I am favoured with a memorandum on the Institutes of the Dominion by the Canadian Minister of Agriculture, and also with some interesting particulars from the president of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, Mrs. David Watt, of Manitoba.

ORGANIZATION.—Her Excellency Lady Byng is patroness of the Federation, and the wives of the Lieutenant-Governors of the different Provinces are honorary presidents. The officials of the Federation in addition to Mrs. David Watt, president, are two vice-presidents, and a corresponding, a recording and a publicity secretary, with a board of directors consisting of two representatives from each Province elected by the Annual Conventions of members. There are conveners of committees on Education and Better Schools, Legislation, Health and Child Welfare, Agriculture, National Events, Immigration, Home Economics and Canadian Industries. There are also on the board as ex-officio members, the Superintendents of Women's Institutes for each Province.

VARIETIES OF INSTITUTE.—The Minister speaks of 'Women's Institutes in the different Provinces of Canada under the names of Women's Institutes of Ontario, Home Makers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, Home Economics Societies of Manitoba, Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Alberta, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, and Home Makers' Clubs and Cercles de Fermières of Quebec.' He puts the 'paid membership' in 1923 at approximately 100,000.

WIDENED SCOPE.—Mr. Motherwell notes that while these various organizations were formed primarily to better home conditions in rural communities, and to bring to the farmer's wife all necessary information regarding her home, the scope of the Institutes has widened. It now includes such activities as 'providing scholarships in the agricultural colleges for boys and girls, formation of Boys' and Girls' Clubs to

POSTSCRIPT ON CANADIAN MOVEMENT

increase the liking of young people for rural life ; the study of laws protecting women and children ; conducting campaigns for child welfare, and better nursing facilities in isolated districts (particularly pre-natal and maternity work), the Canadianization of new citizens, the betterment of school and other community conditions ; the opening of rest-rooms with libraries in villages, towns and on fair-grounds for the use of farmers' wives and children, community singing and other social interests, using the rest-room as a community centre ; bringing to women in isolated districts wider vision by contact with other groups of women and linking up of the women of the country, villages, towns and cities, in any effort to better the community.'

THE WAR-TIME ACHIEVEMENT.—During the War, Red Cross activities in the rural districts in many Provinces were conducted wholly through Women's Institutes. In Ontario, alone, the Women's Institutes raised 4,000,000 dollars in money and goods for War-work. In several Provinces, the Women's Institutes helped greatly in the repatriation of soldiers' dependents, meeting them when they arrived in the villages and helping them to get settled. They are co-operating with the Women's Department of the Soldiers' Settlement Board, in assisting the wives of soldiers who have gone on the land. They have promised co-operation with the Canadian Council of Immigration of Women for Household Service, in assisting Old Country girls who may come to seek employment in farm homes.

GOVERNMENT HELP.—The work of the Women's Institutes in each Province is directed by a Superintendent who is an officer of the Provincial Department of Agriculture. Under this officer are usually a corps of women known as lecturers or demonstrators. The Provincial Women's Institutes are assisted by small grants from the Provincial Governments, and by the Provincial Departments of Agriculture under the provisions of the Dominion Agricultural Instruction Act.

In order that the splendid work of the Women's Institutes in the different Provinces should be co-ordinated, standardized and brought to its greatest usefulness a National Federation

B O U G H T T H E G A O L

was formed in Winnipeg, in 1919, when representatives of each Province were present. This organization provides a channel through which many plans for the development of agriculture by the Federal Department can immediately be made effective at little cost.

PROBLEMS OF CANADIAN MEMBERS.—The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada have a biennial convention, that of 1923 having been the third. Among the more important decisions taken was to inquire into the possibilities of a Dominion Institutes paper, to ask for women members on the Dominion Senate, to 'endorse particularly the Nursing Housekeepers of Saskatchewan and the Public Health and District Nursing Systems in all Provinces,' to ask for a representative on the Dominion Council of Health, to demand 'equal educational opportunities for all children, rural or urban, rich or poor, whatever their social standing or mental endowment,' and to approve consolidated against one-teacher schools, the inclusion of more women on school boards, the plea for 'the equal importance of the physical, mental, moral and spiritual in education,' and the belief that 'the school is the place to inculcate the spirit of universal goodwill necessary to world citizenship and world peace.' Finally it was resolved to urge that, as the Provinces had Government Departments for aiding the work of Women's Institutes, the Dominion Government, now that there was a Federated Women's Institute of Canada, should have a Women's Institute Division.

The income of the F.W.I.C. was about 5,000 dollars, of which 2,809 dollars was contributed by the Provinces. It was proposed that their contribution should be 4,700 dollars.

FROM GAOL TO INSTITUTE.—In Mrs. David Watt's own Province of Manitoba one Institute has members from so many European countries that 'it might be regarded as an international congress in miniature.' It is working to provide fire protection for its village. Winnipegosis Institute bought the gaol for its club-room. It is 'cosy and attractive' now 'the iron bars have been removed.' Ochre River Institute purchased for its room an old church.

POSTSCRIPT ON CANADIAN MOVEMENT

SAVED BY THE INSTITUTE.—A member of Avonlea Institute, which is far north, tells how when weather conditions suggested that her crop might soon be under snow, the situation was saved by her neighbours: 'One morning early, as she looked down the road, she saw a team coming round the corner. When she looked again there was another, and then another, and another, and another, till she stopped counting. The procession got to the field, loaded the sheaves and took them off seven miles to be threshed. How did this happen? The members of the Institute had heard of the circumstances. The committee met and the husbands were consulted, and decided to help.' The narrator ended: '*You will understand now what the Institute means to her*'

A P P E N D I X

PROGRAMME OF STONEY CREEK INSTITUTE

1924 : Oct. 9. - Paper, selected, Mrs. (Dr.) Green. Visit from District Officers. Roll-Call, a favourite quotation. Music in charge of Mesdames A. E. Coleman and E. Hind. A prize will be given for best bouquet of flowers from home gardens of members, by Mrs. H. Lee. Refreshments.

Nov. 13. - Pumpkin Pie Contest. Travelogue by Miss Wilson on 'A Trip Through Northern Ontario.' Music in charge of Mesdames E. Hopkins and I. Smuck. Meeting at 8 p.m. Gentlemen invited. Prizes given by Mesdames A. E. Walker and H. Bertram.

Dec. 11. - Display of Christmas gifts by members not to exceed 50 cents. Report of delegate to Provincial Convention. Roll Call, a Christmas suggestion. Music in charge of Mesdames F. Carpenter and G. Stewart.

1925 : Jan. 8. - Address (Mrs.) Nina Moore Jamieson on 'Unexplored Parts.' Paper, selected, Mrs. Aikenhead. Question Drawer. Music in charge of Misses Felker and Chittick. Refreshments.

Feb. 12. - Demonstration, 'Something New from Something Old.' Address, Rev. Mr. Stapleton. Roll Call, 'A Household Hint.' Music in charge of Mesdames O. Horning and L. Brandow.

Mar. 12. - Debate, 'Resolved that discontent does more harm than overwork,' by members. Music in charge of Mesdames J. Grainger and J. B. Smith.

April 9. - Mt. Hamilton Branch will visit Stoney Creek and furnish the programme. Refreshments by Stoney Creek Branch.

May 14. - Election of Officers. Paper, selected. Yearly business. Music in charge of Mesdames E. Freel and W. Boden.

The Laws of Ontario and Current Events to be taken at each Meeting

APPENDIX

GOVERNMENT GRANTS: A.O.S., N.F.W.I., V.C.A.

						V.C.A. £	N.F.W.I. £
1920	..	..	..	..	..	4,500	9,000
1921	..	..	..	..	..	5,000	10,000
1922	..	..	..	..	..	5,078	6,522
1923	..	..	..	..	..	2,400	4,606
1924	..	..	..	..	..	3,633	2,975
1925	..	..	..	..	..	1,225	2,253
Total						£21,836	£35,356

To the £35,356 granted from Development Fund to Women's Institute Movement should be added expenditure of Board of Agriculture during the period in which it conducted propoganda, £15,513, plus franked telegrams and postage, and clerical and messenger attendance, or perhaps £17,000 in all.

A.O.S.

		Grants to Society under Development and Road Improvement Funds Act, 1909. (General work of Society)	Promotion of Co-operation in connection with Cultivation of Small Holdings and Allotments Under Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1908	Special Parliamentary Grants	Work in connection with Agricultural Credit Societies under Agricultural Credits Act, 1923	TOTALS
		£	£	£	£	£
1911	..	—	1,119	—	—	1,119
1912	..	1,067	1,973	—	—	3,040
1913	..	7,159	1,342	—	—	8,501
1914	..	8,276	2,000	—	—	10,276
1915	..	4,000	1,500	—	—	5,500
1916	..	9,289	2,000	—	—	11,289
1917	..	6,925	1,988	—	—	8,913
1918	..	13,240	2,361	—	—	15,601
1919	..	15,174	4,000	8,683	—	27,857
1920	..	37,928	4,000	5,600	—	47,528
1921	..	28,000	4,000	—	—	32,000
1922	..	11,586	4,000	—	—	15,586
1923	..	4,556	—	—	—	4,556
1924	..	—	—	—	2,400	2,400
1925	..	—	—	—	3,043	3,043
Total	..	£147,201	£30,283	£14,283	£5,443	£197,210

All years and totals to March 31

THE FIRST FIFTY INSTITUTES

THE first card of the official card index yields the following list of the first fifteen Institutes, with their officers, and the dates of their first or formation meetings :

No.	Institute	Secretary	President	Meetings
1.	Llanfairpwll	Mrs. Wilson	Hon. Mrs. Stapleton-Cotton	Sept. 17, '15
2.	Cefn	Miss H. Williams-Wynn	Mrs. Williams-Wynn	Oct. 13, '15
3.	Trefnant	Mrs. Denton	Mrs. Griffith	Oct. 14, '15
4.	Criccieth	Mrs. William George	Miss Priestley	Jan. 17, '16
5.	Wallisdown	Mrs. Morgan	Lady Chelmsford	Nov. 19, '15
6.	Upton	Miss Brockleshurst	Mrs. Llewellyn	Feb. 1, '16
7.	Hamworthy	Miss B. Scott	Hon. Mrs. Henry Guest	Dec. —, '15
8.	Singleton	Mrs. Worthington	Mrs. W. Leveson-Gower	Dec. 1, '15
9.	Kemsing	Mrs. Kerr	Mrs. Stewart	Jan. 26, '16
10.	Holyhead	Miss A. E. C. Telfer	Miss Antonia Williams	Jan. 25, '16
11.	Sevenoaks	Miss Swanzy	Mrs. Percy Thompson	Feb. 9, '16
12.	Wivelsfield	Miss Greene	Mrs. Godman	Mar. 28, '16
13.	Witton-le-Wear	Mrs. Spoor	Mrs. H. G. Stobart	Mar. 14, '16
14.	Cotherstone	Miss A. R. Heming	Mrs. Bourne	Mar. 14, '16
15.	Hurst	Miss I. H. Roe	Mrs. Philip Martineau	April 1, '16

Among the vice-presidents are the names of the following who became well known in the movement : Mrs. Drage (Criccieth), Mrs. W. E. Jones (Llanfairpwll), Lady Lees, and Mrs. Clowes.

Wivelsfield lapsed November 15, 1921, and is now a mixed club.

The dates given above are presumably the dates of the formation meetings. The Institutes signed the rules subsequently.

In the following list of Institutes the dates are those on which the rules were signed. There are possibilities of error in this list, but the particulars are stated to be as correct as can now be obtained :

A P P E N D I X

	<i>Institute</i>		<i>County</i>		<i>Formed</i>
16.	Downton .. ..	.. ..	Wilts.	..	April 16, '16
17.	Kelmscott .. ..	.. ..	Oxford	..	June 1, '16
18.	Lampeter .. ..	.. ..	Cardigan	..	June 20, '16
19.	Neasham .. ..	.. ..	Durham	..	Aug. 8, '16
20.	Upton-on-Severn .. ..	.. ..	Worcester	..	Sept. 9, '16
21.	Brockham .. ..	.. ..	Surrey	..	Nov. 16, '16
22.	Deudraeth .. ..	.. ..	Merioneth	..	Dec. 16, '16
23.	Penllyn and Bala .. ..	.. ..	Merioneth	..	Dec. 17, '16
24.	Cirencester .. ..	.. ..	Gloucester	..	Dec. —, '16
25.	Arthog .. ..	.. ..	Merioneth	..	Jan. 18, '17
26.	Chobham .. ..	.. ..	Surrey	..	Jan. 29, '17
27.	Ashover .. ..	.. ..	Derbyshire	..	Feb. 1, '17
28.	Apsley End (L) .. ..	.. ..	Herts	..	Feb. 13, '17
29.	Portmadoc and District (S.R.)		—		Feb. 18, '17
30.	Aldsworth .. ..	.. ..	Gloucester	..	Feb. 21, '17
31.	Abersoch .. ..	.. ..	Carnarvon	..	Feb. 22, '17
32.	Carno .. ..	.. ..	Montgomery	..	Feb. 22, '17
33.	Chwilog and District (L)		Carnarvon	..	Feb. 23, '17
34.	Bromsgrove .. ..	.. ..	Worcester	..	Feb. 27, '17
35.	Tardebigge .. ..	.. ..	Worcester	..	Mar. 7, '17
36.	Bibury .. ..	.. ..	Gloucester	..	Mar. 13, '17
37.	Llandegfan .. ..	.. ..	Anglesea	..	Mar. 16, '17
38.	Hextable and Swanley .. ..	.. ..	Kent ..	..	Mar. 23, '17
39.	Tibberton (L) .. ..	.. ..	Worcester	..	Mar. 27, '17
40.	Penrhyn .. ..	.. ..	Carnarvon	..	Mar. 27, '17
41.	Hadzor and Oddingley .. ..	.. ..	Worcester	..	April 4, '17
42.	Elford (L) .. ..	.. ..	Staffs ..	..	April 11, '17
43.	Coates .. ..	.. ..	Gloucester	..	April 13, '17
44.	Dringhouses (L) .. ..	.. ..	Yorks	..	April 19, '17
45.	Cullompton .. ..	.. ..	Devon	..	April 28, '17
46.	Hanbury .. ..	.. ..	Worcester	..	May 5, '17
47.	Bruton .. ..	.. ..	Somerset	..	May 15, '17
48.	Windlesham .. ..	.. ..	Surrey	..	May 19, '17
49.	Hindlip and Martin Hussingtree (S.R.) .. ..	.. ..	Worcester	..	—
50.	Lamberhurst (S.R.) .. ..	.. ..	Kent ..	..	Nov. 9, '17

(L) stands for lapsed, (S) suspended, (R) for re-started. Hindlip and Martin Hussingtree was formed November 22 1916, was suspended, and then re-started in 1925.

WALLISDOWN AND SINGLETON

THE FIRST INSTITUTE IN ENGLAND

It is a matter of contention which was the first Institute to be formed in England.

Official publications have always given Wallisdown, in Dorset, as the first, and it is described as the first in the 1925 edition of the Handbook. Mr. Nugent Harris, who was responsible for the A.O.S. records at the time of the formation of the first Institutes, supports the view that it was the first. Further, the first card out of the original card index of the movement, which I have inspected, shows Wallisdown as No. 5 Institute in Britain - Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 being Welsh Institutes. Singleton, in Sussex, Wallisdown's rival for first place in Britain, appears on this list as No. 8, being preceded not only by Wallisdown, No. 5, but by two other Institutes in Dorset, Upton, No. 6, and Hamworthy, No. 7.

This accumulation of evidence seems convincing. Unfortunately for so easy a conclusion, Mrs. Watt, who started both Wallisdown and Singleton, has given her blessing to Singleton thrice over in her *First Women's Institute School* book. On the other hand, I have two notes from Wallisdown quoting Mrs. Watt's authority for Wallisdown being the first!

The present secretary of Wallisdown, Mrs. Morgan, and the first secretary of Singleton, Mrs. Worthington, were secretaries at the foundations of the Institutes, and I have received from them and also from National Federation Headquarters some account of the circumstances in which the two Institutes were started.

Headquarters records show Wallisdown meetings, etc., arranged by Lady Wimborne, to have been held between November 15 and November 20, 1915. According to Wallisdown records, there was a meeting on November 19. The date of the first actual Institute meeting is given as December 6. Lady Chelmsford was elected president in November, 1915. At the December 6 meeting there was an address by Lady Chelmsford, a poultry lecture, and demonstration, followed by a tea. In February, 1916, a membership of 50 was reported.

A P P E N D I X

Singleton had its first meeting on November 9, 'under the auspices of the Parish Council and the War Agricultural Committee,' when Mrs. Watt and Mr. Christie, an A.O.S. organizer, spoke, one on the improvement of the food supply and the other on the study of home economics. But Headquarters' records do not show that any definite resolution to form an Institute was passed. It is stated locally that the committee was elected on November 15 and the first regular meeting was held on December 9. There is a report at N.F.W.I. headquarters confirming this date. The programme consisted of an address by Mrs. Watt, a lecture on haybox cookery and 'a display of War trophies and exhibits of work connected with the War; also suitable gifts for our soldiers and sailors, and practical hints on how to pack them, followed by songs and tea.' But on Singleton's file at headquarters the date, filled in by a local hand, as the date of formation, is December merely, without a day being mentioned.

I reproduce on another page a list of the first 50 Institutes as supplied to me by the National Federation. Here Wallisdown is again shown ahead of Singleton. The dates of the formation of the two Institutes are given as Wallisdown, November, 1915; and Singleton, December, 1915. It may be mentioned here that I have found several errors in the list of early Institutes printed in the first Annual Report.

I believe that shortly after the arrival of Mrs. Harris at the A.O.S. office the question of the order in which the first Institutes were entitled to rank was gone into very carefully, and the Institute Sub-committee decided that all the evidence was in favour of Wallisdown. The main factor in favour of Wallisdown was that it signed the rules first.

This seems as far as I can carry the matter. As the repeated statement of the National Federation in its publications that Wallisdown was the first Institute is not accepted by Singleton, it would have done well to have submitted its books and oral evidence to headquarters and asked for the re-opening of the question. Singleton has still the opportunity of doing this.

Now for one or two points about the two Institutes themselves.

EARLY COUNTY FEDERATIONS

Wallisdown is so close to Bournemouth that Mrs. Watt's first impression on her arrival was that it was an unsuitable place for an Institute. Because of the nearness of Bournemouth, Wallisdown has certainly not needed to give much time to amusements. What the Institute has done is 'to bring a wider outlook and increased knowledge to our members, many of whom are busy working-women with but little leisure.' 'It helped us all to carry on during the War when we learnt much about food economy.' There have been classes on many subjects and a wide range of lectures and demonstrations. Garden produce, poultry, etc., are sold in Bournemouth. 'The classes and talks give our members new interests, and they look forward to the Institute afternoons to see and hear something fresh.'

While Wallisdown, which has, by the last reports, a membership of 41, meets in the odour of sanctity in the Church room, Singleton foregathers in an old-fashioned apartment formerly used for club dinners in the Fox Inn, Charlton. The Institute serves for two villages, Singleton and East Dean, 'the idea being,' Mrs. Worthington writes, 'to link up the villages and get the people friendly together.' She adds: 'This object has been achieved, and the Institute is most flourishing and all are happy together. We did good work during the War, and I know from my own experience what a solace the Institute was.'

Here it may be noted that, just as there is a difference of opinion on, Which was the first English Institute? so there is a dispute on the point, Which was the first County Federation? If you are in Essex, you hear that Essex was first; if in East Sussex, that East Sussex was ahead. According to my information, it was a neck and neck affair. Both County Federations may sink their amiable quarrel in their feelings of satisfaction at having been both at any rate in the field before there was a National Federation. When the National Federation of Women's Institutes came into existence in October, 1917, the County Federations of Essex and East Sussex were already at work. They were both started in September, 1917, the division of Sussex into East and West taking place in December, 1919.

A P P E N D I X

The two first County Federations drew up their own rules, but, later, accepted and signed the constitution and rules for County Federations drawn up by the National Federation.

NATIONAL FEDERATION EXECUTIVES

THE first list, for 1917-18, is not a Federation Executive, but the preliminary Central Committee of Management.

1917-18

The Lady Denman (*Chairman*); Miss Grace Hadow (*Vice-Chairman*); Miss Alice Williams (*Hon. Sec. and Treasurer, Merioneth*); Mrs. Godfrey Drage (*Carnarvon*); Mrs. Tyrell Godman (*Sussex, formerly Canada*); Miss Kekewich (*Kent*); Lady Isabel Margesson (*Worcs.*); Lady Petre (*Essex*); Mrs. H. G. Stobart (*Durham*).

Miss Talbot, O.B.E. (representing Board of Agriculture).

The Hon. Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, D.B.E. (representing Board of Agriculture).

The Hon. Mrs. Handford (representing National Union of Women Workers).

Mr. S. Bostock (representing Agricultural Organization Society).

Mr. J. Nugent Harris (representing Agricultural Organization Society).

Mr. Geoffrey F. Hooper (representing Agricultural Organization Society).

Mrs. Roland Wilkins, O.B.E. (representing Agricultural Organization Society).

Mrs. Henry Guest was an elected Committee member for the year 1917-18, but she died early in the year. Mr. Harris served for the remainder of the year.

1918-19

The Lady Denman (*Chairman*); Miss Grace Hadow (*Vice-Chairman*); Miss Alice Williams (*Hon. Treasurer, Merioneth*); Mrs. Lynn Allen (*Hunts*); Mrs. Godfrey Drage (*Carnarvon*); the Hon. Mrs. Grant (*Hants*); Mr. J. Nugent Harris (*A.O.S.*);

M R S . N U G E N T H A R R I S

Mrs. Huddart (E. Sussex); Miss Kingsmill (Hants); Benita, Lady Lees (Dorset); Lady Isabel Margesson (Worcs.); Mrs. P. Heron Maxwell, M.B.E. (W. Kent); Lady Petre (Essex); Mrs. H. G. Stobart (Durham).

REPRESENTATIVES :

Miss Talbot, C.B.E. (Board of Agriculture).

The Hon. Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, D.B.E. (Board of Agriculture).

Mr. S. Bostock (Agricultural Organization Society).

Mr. Geoffrey F. Hooper (Agricultural Organization Society).

Lady Cowan (National Council of Women Workers).

EX-OFFICIO :

Mrs. Brackenbury, M.B.E. (Lindsey, Lincs); the Countess Grey (Northumberland); Mrs. Nugent Harris, M.B.E.

OCTOBER, 1919 - MAY, 1921

The Lady Denman (*Chairman*), 307; Miss Grace Hadow (*Vice-Chairman*), 291; Mrs. Auerbach (Surrey), (*Hon. Treasurer*), 234; Miss Alice Williams (Merioneth), (*Hon. Exhibition Organizer and Editor of 'Home and Country'*), 282; Mrs. Clowes (Sussex), 106; Mrs. Howard Coote (Hunts), —; Mrs. Drage (Carnarvon), 168; Miss Gildea (Dorset), —; Mrs. Greenall (Kesteven, Lincs), 86; the Countess Grey (Northumberland), 182; Mrs. Hardcastle (Kesteven, Lincs), 141; Mr. J. Nugent Harris, 240; Mrs. Nugent Harris, 255; Mrs. Huddart (E. Sussex), 182; Miss Kingsmill (Hants), 162; Mrs. Heron Maxwell (W. Kent), 215; Lady Isabel Margesson (Worcs.), 235; Lady Petre (Essex), 185; Mrs. H. G. Stobart (Durham), 175.

The figures for Mrs. Coote and Miss Gildea are omitted from the Report.

Mrs. Nugent Harris was an elected member for the year October, 1919, to May, 1921, because she was given permission by the Board, whose servant she then was, to stand for election. Early in 1920, however, she left the services of the Board and became Chief Organizer of the National Federation and, therefore retired from the Committee.

A P P E N D I X

REPRESENTATIVE :

Miss Talbot, C.B.E. (Ministry of Agriculture).

The Hon. Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, D.B.E. (Ministry of Agriculture).

Mr. S. Bostock (Agricultural Organization Society).

CO-OPTED :

Mrs. Hobbs (Oxon.); Mrs. Donaldson Hudson (Salop);
Mrs. Perkins (Hants).

1921 - 2

The Lady Denman (*Chairman*), 560; Miss Grace Hadow (*Vice-Chairman*), 447; Mrs. Auerbach (Surrey), (*Hon. Treasurer*), 408; Lady Margaret Boscawen (Middlesex), 186; Mrs. Burton Fanning (Norfolk), 196; Miss Dora Christy (Essex), 227; Mrs. Clowes (Sussex), 177; Mrs. Howard Coote (Hunts), 305; Mrs. Drage (Carnarvon), 231; Miss Gildea (Dorset), 213; the Countess Grey (Northumberland), 272; Mrs. Hardcastle (Kesteven, Lincs), 185; Mr. Nugent Harris, 345; Miss Kingsmill (Hants), 195; Lady Isabel Margesson (Worcs.), 342; Mrs. Heron Maxwell (W. Kent), 292; Mrs. Stobart (Durham), 296.

[28 ballot papers were spoilt.]

REPRESENTATIVE :

Dame Meriel Talbot (Ministry of Agriculture).

The Hon. Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, D.B.E. (Ministry of Agriculture).

Mr. A. T. A. Dobson (Ministry of Agriculture).

Miss Purves (National Association of Landswomen).

Mr. S. Bostock (Agricultural Organization Society).

CO-OPTED :

Miss S. Calmady Hamlyn (Devon); Mrs. Dugdale (Montgomeryshire).

1922 - 3

The Lady Denman (*Chairman*), 1,035; Miss Grace Hadow (*Vice-Chairman*), 833; Mrs. Auerbach (Surrey), (*Hon. Treasurer*), 786; Lady Margaret Boscawen (Middlesex), 511;

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Viscountess Boyne (Salop), 319; Miss Calmady Hamlyn (Devon), 371; Miss Dora Christy (Essex), 472; Mrs. Clowes (E. Sussex), 325; Mrs. Howard Coote (Hunts), 322; Mrs. Drage (Carnarvon), 423; Viscountess Ennismore (now the Countess of Listowel), (Yorks), 496; Miss Gildea (Dorset), 544; the Countess Grey (Northumberland), 716; Lady Isabel Margesson (Worcs.), 474; Mrs. Heron Maxwell (W. Kent), 596; Mrs. H. G. Stobart (Durham), 422; Mrs. Wintringham, M.P. (Lindsey, Lincs), 603.

REPRESENTATIVE :

Dame Meriel Talbot (Ministry of Agriculture).

Mr. P. G. Dallinger " "

Mr. A. T. A. Dobson " "

Miss Purves (National Association of Landswomen).

Mr. S. Bostock (Agricultural Organization Society).

CO-OPTED :

Mrs. Seldon (Surrey); Mrs. Seymour Allen (Pembrokeshire); Mrs. Simm (National Federation of General Workers).

1923 - 4

The Lady Denman (*Chairman*), 1,129; Miss Grace Hadow (*Vice-Chairman*), 963; Mrs. Auerbach (Surrey), (*Hon. Treasurer*), 820; Miss Bouverie (Northants), 455; Lady Margaret Boscawen (Middlesex), 449; Viscountess Boyne (Salop), 600; Miss Dora Christy (Essex), 521; Mrs. Clowes (E. Sussex), 422; Mrs. Drage (Carnarvon), 497; Viscountess Ennismore (Yorks), 466; Mrs. Foster (Herefordshire), 334; Miss Gildea (Dorset), 595; the Countess Grey (Northumberland), 836; Mrs. Heron Maxwell (W. Kent), 609; Mrs. H. G. Stobart (Durham), 532; Mrs. Harcourt Williams (Cornwall), 483; Mrs. Wintringham, M.P. (Lindsey, Lincs), 772.

REPRESENTATIVE :

Dame Meriel Talbot (Ministry of Agriculture).

Mr. P. G. Dallinger " "

Mr. A. T. A. Dobson " "

Mr. S. Bostock (Agricultural Organization Society).

A P P E N D I X

CO-OPTED :

Mrs. Ramsey (Kesteven, Lincs), Miss Thomas (Carnarvon), Mrs. Simm (National Federation of General Workers).

This is the last year when the numbers polled were published. Next year the order in the ballot is given ; later, no details.

1924 - 5

The Lady Denman (*Chairman*), 1 ; Miss Grace Hadow (*Vice-Chairman*), 2 ; Mrs. Auerbach (Surrey), (*Hon. Treasurer*), 8 ; Miss Anderson (E. Suffolk), 17 ; Miss Bouverie (Northants.), 6 ; the Lady Margaret Boscawen (Middlesex), 7 ; the Viscountess Boyne (Salop), 9 ; Miss Dora Christy (Essex), 10 ; Mrs. Clowes (E. Sussex), 16 ; Mrs. Drage (Carnarvon), 15 ; Mrs. Foster (Herefordshire), 9 ; Miss Gildea (Dorset), 5 ; the Countess Grey (Northumberland), 3 ; the Countess of Listowel (now Lady Ennismore) (Yorks), 13 ; Mrs. Heron Maxwell (W. Kent), 4 ; Mrs. H. G. Stobart (Durham), 12 ; Mrs. Harcourt Williams (Cornwall), 14.

[Total number of voting papers, 2,493 (as against 1,405 in 1923), out of which 166 were spoilt.]

REPRESENTATIVE :

Mrs. C. P. Trevelyan (Ministry of Agriculture).

Mr. P. G. Dallinger " "

Mr. A. T. A. Dobson " "

Mr. S. Bostock (Agricultural Organization Society).

CO-OPTED :

The Hon. Mrs. Dalgety (Hants) ; Mrs. Morgan (Merioneth) ; Mrs. Simm.

1925 - 6

The Lady Denman (*Chairman*), Miss Grace Hadow (*Vice-Chairman*), Mrs. Auerbach (Surrey) (*Hon. Treasurer*), Miss Anderson (E. Suffolk), the Lady Margaret Boscawen (Middlesex), Miss Bouverie (Northants.), the Viscountess Boyne (Salop), Miss Dora Christy (Essex), the Hon. Mrs. Dalgety (Hants), Mrs. Drage (Carnarvon), Miss Gildea (Dorset), the Countess of Listowel (Yorks), Mrs. Heron Maxwell (W. Kent), the Lady Dorothy Meynell (Staffs), the Dowager Lady Suffield

OFFICES AND SECRETARIES

(Norfolk), Mrs. Alfred Watt (Middlesex), Mrs. Wintringham (Lindsey, Lincs).

During 1917-18 Mrs. Watt attended Committee meetings *ex officio*.

REPRESENTATIVE :

Mrs. C. P. Trevelyan (Ministry of Agriculture).

Mr. P. G. Dallinger " "

Mr. A. T. A. Dobson " "

Mr. S. Bostock (Agricultural Organization Society).

CO-OPTED :

Mrs. Morgan (Merioneth), Mrs. Simm.

OFFICES OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION

FROM December 2, 1915, until October, 1917, the Women's Institute Sub-Committee of the A.O.S. met at the A.O.S. offices, Queen Anne's Chambers, Tothill Street, Westminster. The Central Committee of Management of Women's Institutes also held its first meeting, on October 18, 1917, in the A.O.S. offices. The National Federation was then given office accommodation by the Food Production Department, at 72, Victoria Street. The Executive Committee sometimes met there and sometimes at 59, Palace Street or at 135, Victoria Street. In July, 1918, it was announced that when the National Federation received a Government Grant it could no longer be given office accommodation by the Food Production Department, but the Federation actually continued to use the office at 72, Victoria Street until December, 1919, owing to the difficulty in finding other offices. In December, 1919, the National Federation moved to 14, Iddesleigh House, and from that date the Executive Committee meetings were held there. Early in 1921 the National Federation moved to 26, Eccleston Street, Victoria, S.W. 1.

SECRETARIES OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION

ON October 18, 1917, at the first meeting of the Central Committee of Management of Women's Institutes, after they had come under the control of the Board of Agriculture,

APPENDIX

Miss Alice Williams was elected hon. secretary and hon. treasurer. In March, 1918, Lady Denman offered the services of her private secretary, Mrs. Hitchcock, to assist Miss Williams. In July, 1918, when the first grant of £2,000 was promised by the Government, the Committee decided to appoint a general secretary and also travelling officers. Mrs. Molesworth was appointed general secretary in September and began work on November 2, 1918. At the first meeting, on November 1, of the first Executive Committee (elected at the Annual Meeting on October 24), Miss Williams suggested that it was no longer necessary to continue the office of hon. secretary, and this was agreed to. In February, 1919, Mrs. Molesworth resigned, and Mrs. Kilroy Kenyon, appointed in her place, took up work on March 1, 1919. In October, 1919, Mrs. Kenyon resigned. Mrs. Hitchcock acted as temporary secretary in the emergency, until a new general secretary could be appointed. In November, 1919, Miss Inez Ferguson (now Mrs. Jenkins) was appointed general secretary. In October, 1919, Miss Dora Parr was appointed assistant secretary, but in November she became organizing secretary, which post she held until she resigned in December, 1924, to take up the post of secretary to the East Sussex County Federation. The post of organizing secretary has now been abolished. Miss Mavis D. Hay became assistant secretary 1923.

ANNUAL MEETINGS IN LONDON

1917	Oct. 16	..	..	..	Central Hall
1918	Oct. 24	..	..	..	Cathedral Hall
1919	Oct. 15	..	..	..	*Central Hall
„	Oct. 16	..	..	..	„ „
1920	May 14	..	..	..	Church House
1921	May 3-4	..	..	..	„ „
1922	May 23-4	..	..	..	Kingsway Hall
1923	May 15-16	..	..	..	Queen's Hall
1924	May 20-1	..	..	..	„ „
1925	May 19-20	..	..	..	„ „

* Special Meeting

WELSH AND OTHER ORGANIZERS

LIST OF ORGANIZERS

IN the period before the establishment of the National Federation the first organizers, after Mrs. Watt, were Mrs. Clowes (1916) and Miss Guest (1917).

Mrs. Draper was appointed by the A.O.S. in 1917 as organizer for Wales, her work to be particularly in connection with trading ventures. The Criccieth market was proving successful and Mrs. Draper had had business experience. When the Government took over the Institutes an agreement was made that the staff employed by the A.O.S. in connection with that branch of the work, should go to the Board. Wales demanded a Welsh organizer, and Mrs. Draper retired. Mrs. Jones and Miss Mary Jones were appointed for North and South Wales respectively. Later, Miss Bulkeley-Williams served as organizer under the Board from 1918 until September, 1919. Miss Lumley was appointed in October, 1919, and continued as an organizer until 1925, when, on her resignation, the Committee decided not to make any special appointment for Wales, the work there to be undertaken by organizers from headquarters.

In the account, in the second Annual Report (1918) of propaganda work under the Women's Section of the Board, organizers are stated to be Mrs. Clowes, Miss Guest, Mrs. Warner, Miss Kekewich, Miss Bulkeley-Williams, Mrs. Godman and Mrs. Nevinson. In the Federation's report for 1918 the additional names of Mrs. W. E. and Miss Mary Jones appear.

The organizers of the National Federation have been :

1919. - Mrs. Nugent Harris (*Chief Organizer*), Miss Parr (*Organizing Secretary*), Mrs. Clowes (resigned during 1920), Miss Kekewich, Mrs. Warner (resigned during 1920), Mrs. Kellett, Mrs. Mayo.

During 1920. - Mrs. Nugent Harris, Miss Parr, Miss Simpson, Miss Bernard, Miss Kekewich, Miss Peers (half-time), Miss Anson (half-time), Mrs. Mayo (half-time), Mrs. Kellett (half-time).

During 1921. - Mrs. Nugent Harris (half time), Miss Parr, (half-time), Miss Kekewich, Miss Lumley, Miss Anson (half-time), Miss Bernard (resigned during year), Miss Peers (half-

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time, resigned during year), Mrs. Mayo (half-time, resigned during year), Mrs. Kellett (half-time, resigned during year).

During 1922. – Mrs. Nugent Harris (half time), Miss Parr Miss Simpson, Miss Anson (half-time, resigned during year), Miss Lumley, Miss Kekewich (half-time, resigned during year).

During 1923. – Mrs. Harris (half-time), Miss Parr, Miss Lumley, Miss Simpson, Miss Nightingale.

During 1924. – Mrs. Harris (half-time), Miss Parr (resigned December 31, 1924), Miss Lumley, Miss Simpson, Miss Nightingale.

During 1925. – Mrs. Harris (one-third time), Miss Lumley (resigned 1925), Miss Simpson, Miss Nightingale, Miss Leigh, Miss Dunch.

As I go to press it is announced that Mrs. Harris is no longer able to undertake the general organizing work of the Movement, and a well-known Surrey worker, the Hon. Miss F. M. Farrer, has been appointed as headquarters organizer.

Miss Watkins was appointed official lecturer to the Federation during the early days of the movement. The post was abolished in 1921. Since then she has lectured a great deal on her own account.

Miss Armes has been recently appointed handicraft organizer in the provinces and supervisor of crafts classes and tests in London, with Miss Denison as assistant. Miss Barker looks after office work.

CONSULTATIVE COUNCILS

First..	..	..	Leicester ..	..	Mar. 4, 1920
Second	..	..	Bristol ..	..	June 24, „
Third	..	..	York ..	..	Nov. 18, „
Fourth	..	..	Abergavenny ..	..	Mar. 17, 1921
Fifth..	..	..	Hinchingbrook		
			Castle, Hunts.		July 19, „
Sixth	..	..	Exeter ..	..	Nov. 3, „
Seventh	..	..	Norwich ..	..	Mar. 22, 1922
Eight	..	..	Newcastle ..	..	June 29, „
Ninth	..	..	Hereford ..	..	Oct. 26, „

W O M E N ' S I N S T I T U T E C E N T R E S

First Special (to consider Agenda for Annual Meeting)	London	Feb. 16, 1923
Tenth	Derby	June 14, „
Eleventh	Cambridge	Oct. 10 & 11, 1923
Second Special (to consider the Agenda for Annual Meeting)	London	Feb. 15, 1924
Twelfth	Winchester	June 24, „
Thirteenth	Lincoln	Nov. 12 & 13, 1924
Fourteenth (to consider Agenda for Annual Meeting)	London	Feb. 11, 1925
Fifteenth	Darlington	Nov. 24 & 25, 1925

There must be at least two Consultative Councils each year. In 1925, for the first time, the Council held in London to consider the resolutions sent in for the agenda of the annual general meeting was considered to be one of the regular meetings of the Council, and only one other meeting was arranged for the year.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE CENTRES

WOMEN'S Institute Centres are formed in places which are too large to have ordinary Institutes, usually in small market towns which are centres for the surrounding agricultural districts.

A centre signs the W.I. Centre rules, which are on the same lines as W.I. rules, and its whole constitution and method of work are similar to those of a W.I.; but a Centre has as its main object, in addition to the objects of the ordinary W.I., that of serving as a link between town and country and giving help to the surrounding Institutes. Centres are still something of an experiment. Some have not, up to the present, achieved the main object of their existence, and are working merely as Town Institutes.

Town Associations, or Friends of the W.I. movement, like Centres, are formed to help the Institutes of the surrounding

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country-side, but are not within the constitution of the N.F.W.I. Town Associations are usually found in larger towns than Centres.

The Centres are as follows :—

<i>County</i>	<i>Federation</i>	<i>Centre</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Federation</i>	<i>Centre</i>
Hunts	Huntingdon			
Carnarvon	Carnarvon	Isle of Ely..	Ely	
Cornwall	Newquay		Wisbech	
		Truro		Whittlesea	
		Redruth	West Kent..	Maidstone	
		Bude	Lindsey ..	Market Rasen	
Devon	Exmouth	Kesteven ..	Sleaford	
Derby	Ripley	Oxford ..	Thame	
Dorset	Dorchester	Pembroke ..	Haverfordwest	
		Wimborne	Staffs ..	Lichfield	
Essex	Colchester		Uttoxeter	
		Brentwood	Worcester ..	Worcester	
Gloucester	Cirencester			

There are Town Associations at Cambridge, Leamington, Oxford, Shrewsbury and Stafford.

'HOME AND COUNTRY'

THE circulation figures, for the last months of each year, have been :—

1919 ..	9,000	1921 ..	18,887	1923 ..	28,896
1920 ..	15,092	1922 ..	23,877	1924 ..	34,851

The circulation for October, 1925, was 400,000. In 1923 a sum of £300 was handed over to the National Federation, and in 1924 £243 was transferred to the Endowment Fund. The business side of the paper is looked after by Miss Wright and Miss Baker.

EXAMINATIONS FOR V.C.O.'s

THE following examination papers illustrate the thoroughness of the preparation which V.C.O.'s undergo. The first paper is for the optional use of County Federations in selecting candidates:—

EXAMINATIONS FOR V.C.O.'s

1. How would you answer the question, 'What is a Women's Institute?'

2. Show how the self-governing principle is maintained in:—
(a) The Women's Institute, (b) The County Federation,
(c) The National Federation.

3. What are the powers of an Institute Committee and what are its responsibilities to the Institute?

The following paper has been set to candidates after attending a school (four questions only to be answered; either 4 or 5 must be answered) :—

1. What do you consider the essential of a self-governing organization? Illustrate your remarks by reference to the Women's Institute Movement.

2. What place can a Women's Institute take in Village life?

3. Give notes, under appropriate headings, for an address at a meeting at which it is hoped a Women's Institute will be formed.

4. Describe the preparations necessary for an Institute Annual Meeting and draw up a specimen Agenda.

5. Draft a resolution, suitable for a County Federation Council Meeting Agenda. The following subjects are suggested, but candidates may choose their own:—Alteration of Group System in County; Need of Club Room in County town; Desirability of holding the County Exhibition in a different centre each year; The necessity for the County Federation to support *Home and Country*. Put into proper form not less than two amendments to the resolution.

6. Explain the following terms:—Co-option, Nomination, Quorum, Agenda, Resolution, Amendment.

7. How can an Executive Committee decentralize its work? Explain the powers and duties of Sub-Committees. Draw up suggested Terms of Reference for a W.I. Entertainments Sub-committee.

N.W.F.I. SUB-COMMITTEES AND DATES OF REPORTS IN WHICH THEY APPEAR

Office and Finance : 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924.

Literature and Publicity : 1919, 1920, 1921.

APPENDIX

Industries: 1919.

Organization: 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924

Parliamentary: 1919.

Joint Sub-committee for Soldiers' Club: 1919.

Girl Guides: 1919.

Joint N.F.W.I. and V.C.A.: 1919, 1920, 1921.

Handicrafts: 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924.

Agriculture and Horticulture: 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924.

GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Year	Institutes Formed	Total of Institutes	*Lapsed or Suspended	County Federations	†Members	Affiliation Fee	V.C.O.'s	Guild of Learners
1915	12	12	—	—	—	—	—	—
1916	25	37	—	—	—	—	—	—
‡1917	150	187	—	6 and N. Wales Union	5,198	2d.	—	—
1918	586	773	—	19 and N. Wales Union	12,007	2d.	43	—
§ 1919	632	1,405	||47	26	55,015	½d.	72	—
1920	588	1,914	26	36	99,418	3d.	146	150
1921	455	2,237	¶71	42	109,200	3d.	210	300
1922	343	2,580	33	42 =	158,560	3d.	252	403
1923	352	2,932	28	54	174,929	3d.	318	663
1924	315	3,223	**24	54	200,560	3d.	333	830
1925	234	3,383	*38	*****54	204,460	3d.	337	968

* Suspended means an Institute has been closed owing to difficulties which, it is believed, will be temporary. Many of the suspended Institutes are afterwards re-opened. There are no figures of the number of lapsed or suspended Institutes which have been re-started. Lapsed means permanently closed. Sometimes the place, is considered to be inherently unsuitable.

† Number of members calculated on affiliation fees.

‡ Board of Agriculture took over propaganda work in October 1917.

§ Board of Agriculture handed over to N.F.W.I.

|| Some of these had closed in previous years.

¶ Some lapsed in previous years, but had not been reported.

= Approximate.

** 14 lapsed; 11 suspended.

*** As on September 30, 1925.

**** 25 lapsed; 6 suspended.

***** There are only two counties (in Wales) without County Federations.

NATIONAL FEDERATION FINANCE

	*Oct., 1917 to Mar., 1919 (N.B.—18 months)	April 1, 1919,— Mar. 31, 1920	April 1, 1920— Mar. 31, 1921	April 1, 1921— Mar. 31, 1922	April 1, 1922— Mar. 13, 1923	April 1, 1923— Mar. 31, 1924	April 1, 1924— Mar. 31, 1925	April 1, 1925—6
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Total Expenditure	1,209	7,492	11,485	9,206	7,722	6,431	5,813	6,140
Grant from Development Commission	1,900	9,000	10,000	5,922	3,941	2,150	1,195	950
Special Grant for Handicrafts	—	—	—	600	665	825	1,058	1,850
National Federation Grants to County Federations ..	397	2,428	3,984	2,533	1,967	925	265	—
National Federation Office Expenses (Office Rent and Up-keep, Salaries of Staff, Insurances, postage, sta- tionery, printing, etc. ; also travelling expenses of Com- mittee members)	727	2,740	4,173	3,803	3,682	3,722	3,591	—
National Federation Organiza- tion Expenses (N.F. Organi- zers, Training of V.C.O.'s, Annual Meeting, Consulta- tive Councils, etc.).. ..		1,403	3,013	2,344	1,932	1,994	1,941	—
Received as Donations ..	17	102	40	936	1,502	1,795	1,886	—
Received in Affiliation Fees ..	121	177	1,319	1,829	2,055	2,321	2,555	—
Endowment Fund (amount added each year)	—	—	11,818	1,241	1,324	507	1,895	£16,816

Total Oct., '25

FINANCE

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COUNTY FEDERATION PRESIDENTS, CHAIRMEN AND SECRETARIES, 1917-25

County	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20	1920-1
BEDS ..	— —	— —	C., Mrs. Whitbread S., Miss Foster	Mrs. Whitbread Miss Foster
BERKS ..	— —	— —	C., Mrs. S. H. Morrell S., Mrs. Norman May	Mrs. Morrell Mrs. Norman May
BUCKS ..	— —	— —	— —	C., Mrs. Wellesley Taylor H.S., Mrs. Wood- gate
CAM- BRIDGE	— —	— —	C., Mrs. Jenyns S., Miss E. Briscoe	Mrs. Jenyns Miss Briscoe
CHESHIRE	— —	— —	— —	C., Hon. Mrs. Marshallbrooks H.S., Rev. Eustace Auden
CORNWALL	— —	— —	C., Mrs. Harcourt Williams S., Mrs. E. Martin	Mrs. Harcourt Williams Mrs. E. Martin
CUMBER- LAND	— —	— —	C., Mrs. Selby Chance H.S., Mrs. Court Brown	C., Mrs. Selby Chance H.S., Mrs. Court Brown
DERBY ..	— —	C., Miss Jackson —	Mrs. Kenneth Wheatcroft S., Miss E. Jackson	P., Mrs. Kenneth Wheatcroft Miss E. Jackson

County	1921-2	1922-3	1923-4	1924-5
BEDS. ..	C., Mrs. Whitbread	C., Mrs. Whitbread	Mrs. Whitchurch	Mrs. Whitchurch
BERKS. ..	H.S., Miss Foster	H.S., Miss Foster	Miss Foster	Miss Foster
	C., Lady Rucker	Lady Rucker	Lady Rucker	Mrs. Victor Rhodes
	H.S., Mrs. Norman May	Mrs. Warner	Mrs. Warner	Mrs. Norman May
BUCKS. ..	C., Mrs. Wellesley Taylor	Lady Susan Trueman	Lady Susan Trueman	P., Lady Susan Trueman
	H.S., Mrs. Woodgate	Mrs. Woodgate	Mrs. Woodgate	C., Mrs. Coningsby Disraeli S., Mrs. Woodgate
CAM- BRIDGE CHESHIRE	C., Mrs. Jenyns	Mrs. Jenyns	Mrs. Jenyns	Mrs. Jenyns
	H.S., Miss Warrington	S., Miss Warrington	Miss Warrington	Miss Warrington
	P., Countess of Stamford	Countess of Stamford	Countess of Stamford	Countess of Stamford
	S., Mrs. Crowther	Mrs. Crowther	Mrs. Crowther	Mrs. Crowther
CORNWALL	C., Mrs. Harcourt Williams	Mrs. Harcourt Williams	Mrs. Harcourt Williams	P., Ingeborg Lady Molesworth St. Aubyn
	H.S., Mrs. Bickell	Mrs. Bickell	Mrs. Bickell	C., Mrs. Morris S., Mrs. Bickell
CUMBER- LAND	C., Mrs. Selby Chance	Mrs. Selby Chance	Mrs. Selby Chance	Mrs. Selby Chance
	H.S., Mrs. Court Brown	S., Miss Anson	Miss Anson	Miss Anson
DERBY ..	P., Mrs. Kenneth Wheatcroft	C., Lady Inglefield	P., Duchess of Devonshire	Duchess of Devonshire
	H.S., Mrs. E. J. Smith	Miss F. Simpson	C., Lady Inglefield S., Miss F. Simpson	Lady Inglefield Miss F. Simpson
DEVON ..	C., Miss Calmady Hamlyn	Miss Calmady Hamlyn	Lady Clinton	Lady Clinton
	H.S., Miss B. A. Fulford	Miss Fulford	Miss Fulford	Miss Fulford

County	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20	1920-1
DORSET ..	<i>P.</i> , The Viscountess Portman <i>H.S.</i> , Benita Lady Lees	<i>C.</i> , Mrs. Holden Benita Lady Lees	Mrs. Holden Benita Lady Lees	Mrs. Holden Benita Lady Lees
DURHAM ..	<i>C.</i> , Mrs. H. G. Stobart <i>H.S.</i> , Miss Beal	Mrs. H. G. Stobart Miss Beal	Mrs. H. G. Stobart <i>S.</i> , Mrs. Fraser	Mrs. H. G. Stobart Miss M. C. Pease
ESSEX ..	<i>P.</i> , The Lady Petre <i>H.S.</i> , Mrs. R. Christy	<i>C.</i> , The Lady Petre Mrs. R. Christy	The Lady Petre Mrs. R. Christy	The Lady Petre Mrs. Anderson
GLOUCESTER	—	—	<i>C.</i> , The Duchess of Beaufort <i>H.S.</i> , Mrs. A. Gipps	<i>P.</i> , The Duchess of Beaufort <i>H.S.</i> , Miss Miles
270 HANTS ..	— — —	<i>C.</i> , Mrs. Perkins <i>S.</i> , Mrs. Madocks	The Countess of Northbrook <i>S.</i> , Miss M. Cook	The Countess of Northbrook Lady Rosemary Portal
HEREFORD	— —	— —	<i>C.</i> , Mrs. A. W. Foster <i>H.S.</i> , Mrs. Kevill Davis	<i>C.</i> , Mrs. A. W. Foster <i>H.S.</i> , Miss Hake
HERTS ..	— —	— —	<i>C.</i> , Mrs. Vickers <i>H.S.</i> , The Hon. Mrs. Gibbs	<i>P.</i> , Marchioness of Salisbury <i>H.S.</i> , The Hon. Mrs. Gibbs
HUNTS ..	— —	<i>C.</i> , Mrs. Howard Coote <i>S.</i> , Mrs. Woolly	Mrs. Howard Coote Miss Fuller	Mrs. Howard Coote Miss Theakston

County	1921-2	1922-3	1923-4	1924-5
DORSET ..	C., Miss Gildea H.S., Benita Lady Lees	Miss Gildea Benita Lady Lees	Miss Gildea Benita Lady Lees	Miss Gildea Benita Lady Lees
DURHAM ..	C., Mrs. H. G. Stobart H.S., Mrs. Mouncey	P., Mrs. Lloyd Pease Miss Willans	Mrs. Lloyd Pease Miss Willans	Mrs. Lloyd Pease Miss Willans
ESSEX ..	P., Lady Rasch H.S., Mrs. Anderson	Lady Rasch Miss E. Walshe	Mrs. Gerald Buxton Miss C. F. Niven	Mrs. Gerald Buxton Miss Leake
GLOUCES- TER	P., Duchess of Beaufort H.S., Miss Miles	C., Mrs. F. Cripps Miss Miles	P., Duchess of Beaufort C., Mrs. Hiatt Baker S., Miss Chapman	Duchess of Beaufort Mrs. Dunstan Miss Chapman
271 HANTS	C., Mrs. Perkins H.S., Lady Rosemary Portal	Mrs. Perkins Lady Rosemary Portal	P., Countess of Northbrook C., Miss Hilda Chamberlain H.S., Lady Rosemary Portal	Countess of Northbrook Miss Hilda Chamberlain Lady Rosemary Portal
HEREFORD	C., Mrs. A. W. Foster H.S., Miss B. Lilley	Mrs. A. W. Foster Miss B. Lilley	Mrs. A. W. Foster Miss B. Lilley	Mrs. A. W. Foster Miss B. Lilley
HERTS	C., Mrs. Gilliat H.S., Hon. Mrs. Gibbs	P., The Marchioness of Salisbury Mrs. Gilliat Miss C. Beck	Marchioness of Salisbury Mrs. Gilliat Miss C. Beck	Marchioness of Salisbury Mrs. Gilliat Miss Farquharson
HUNTS ..	C., Mrs. Howard Coote H.S., Miss Theakston	Mrs. Howard Coote Miss Theakston	Mrs. Howard Coote Mrs. P. Thurston	Mrs. Howard Coote Mrs. P. Thurston

County	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20	1920-1
ELY ..	—	—	—	C., Mrs. Tansley Luddington
	—	—	—	H.S., Mrs. W. Luddington
KENT, E. . .	—	—	C., Mrs. Dunstan	C., Mrs. Dunstan
	—	—	H.S., Miss Watson	H.S., Miss Watson
KENT, W. . .	—	C., Mrs. Heron Maxwell	Mrs. Heron Maxwell	Mrs. Heron Maxwell
	—	S., Miss Adam	Miss Adam	Miss Adam
KESTEVEN	—	C., Mrs. C. Greenall	Mrs. Pym	Mrs. C. Greenall
	—	S., Miss Joan Welby	Mrs. C. Greenall	Miss Need
LANCS	—	—	—	C., Mrs. Assheton
	—	—	—	H.S., Miss Green- wood
LEICS. and RUTLAND	—	C., Mrs. C. H. Morris	Mrs. C. H. Morris	Mrs. C. H. Morris
	—	S., Miss Dorothy Nevinson	—	Miss Nugee
	—	—	—	—
LINDSEY ..	—	—	C., Mrs. Bracken- bury	Mrs. Quirk, J.P.
	—	S., Mrs. Knox	S., Mrs. Wintring- ham	Miss V. M. Bell- wood
MIDDLE- SEX	—	—	—	C., The Lady Margaret Boscawen
	—	—	—	H.S., Miss Graves

County	1921-2	1922-3	1923-4	1924-5
ELY ..	P., Mrs. Tansley Luddington H.S., Mrs. W. Luddington	Mrs. Tansley Luddington Mrs. W. Luddington	Mrs. Tansley Luddington Miss Sears	Mrs. Tansley Luddington Miss Sears
ISLE OF WIGHT	C., Laura Lady Simeon H.S., Miss Jannings	Laura Lady Simeon Miss Jannings	Laura Lady Simeon Miss Jannings	Laura Lady Simeon Miss Jannings
KENT, E. ..	C., Mrs. Dunstan H.S., Miss Watson	Mrs. Lochee Miss Watson	Mrs. Lochee Miss Watson	Mrs. Lochee Miss Watson
KENT, W. ..	C., Mrs. Deane Streatfeild H.S., Miss Adam	Mrs. Deane Streatfeild Miss Adam	Mrs. Stanley Johnson S., Miss M. Coombes	Mrs. Stanley Johnson Miss M. Coombes
KESTEVEN (Lincs)	C., Mrs. Cyril Greenall H.S., Miss Need	Mrs. Cyril Greenall S., Miss Need	Mrs. Cyril Greenall Miss Need	Mrs. Cyril Greenall Miss Need
273 LANCS ..	C., Mrs. Assheton H.S., Miss Greenwood	Mrs. Assheton Miss Greenwood	Mrs. Assheton Miss Greenwood	Mrs. Assheton Miss Greenwood
LEICS. and RUTLAND	C., Mrs. C. H. Morris S., Miss M. A. Geden	Mrs. C. H. Morris Miss A. K. Hamilton	Mrs. C. H. Morris Miss A. K. Hamilton	Mrs. Bernard Everard Miss A. K. Hamilton
LINDSEY (Lincs)	P., Mrs. Amcotts, H.S., Mrs. Wintringham	Mrs. Amcotts Mrs. Wintringham	Mrs. Amcotts S., Miss W. M. Hall	Mrs. Amcotts Miss W. M. Hall
1 MIDDLE- SEX	C., The Lady Margaret Boscawen S., Miss Parr	The Lady Margaret Boscawen Miss D. M. Hill	P., Countess of Strafford C., Mrs. Darlington Miss Kuhner	The Lady Margaret Boscawen Miss Belletti Miss Kuhner

County	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20	1920-1
MON- MOUTH	—	—	—	—
NORFOLK	—	C., The Lady Suffield	The Lady Suffield	The Lady Suffield
	—	S., Mrs. Burton- Fanning	Mrs. Burton- Fanning	Miss Burgess
NORTHUM- BERLAND	—	C., Lady Armstrong	Mrs. Middleton	Mrs. Middleton
	—	S., Miss Walker	Miss R. Leather	Miss R. Leather
NOTTS. ..	—	C., The Hon. Mrs. Handford	The Hon. Mrs. Handford	The Hon. Mrs. Handford
	—	S., Miss G. Fox	Miss G. Fox	Miss G. Fox
NORTH- ANTS.	—	C., Lady Knightly	Lady Knightly	P., Lady Knightly
	—	S., Mrs. Barker	Mrs. Barker	Miss Amy Dodson
OXON. ..	—	—	C., Mrs. Hobbs	C., Mrs. Hobbs
	—	—	H.S., Mrs. Radcliffe	H.S., Miss Deneke
SALOP ..	—	—	C., Mrs. Alcock	C., Mrs. Alcock
	—	—	H.S., Mrs. W. Jones	H.S., Miss Corbet
SOMERSET	—	S., Miss V. Blake	C., Mrs. Martin Gibbs	P., Mrs. Martin Gibbs
	—	—	H.S., Mrs. C. Hancock	Mrs. C. Hancock

County	1921-2	1922-3	1923-4	1924-5
MON- MOUTH	P., Sybil Viscountess Rhondda	C., Sybil Viscountess Rhondda	P., Sybil Viscountess Rhondda	The Lady Treowen
	H.S., Miss Pruton	Miss E. Jackson	C., Lady Mather-Jackson	Lady Mather-Jackson
NORFOLK	P., Lady Suffield	Lady Suffield	H.S., Miss E. Jackson Lady Suffield	Miss E. Jackson The Dowager Lady Suffield
	H.S., Miss Burgess	Miss Burgess	Miss Burgess	Miss Burgess
NORTHUM- BERLAND	C., Countess Grey	Countess Grey	P., Countess Grey	C., Countess Grey
	H.S., Miss R. Leather	S., Mrs. Collingwood Thorp	C., Mrs. Cresswell	S., Mrs. Collingwood Thorp
NOTTS. ..	C., Hon. Mrs. Handford	Hon. Mrs. Handford	Hon. Mrs. Handford	Hon. Mrs. Handford
	H.S., Miss Fox	S., Miss B. E. Marriott	Miss B. E. Marriott	Miss B. E. Marriott
NORTH- ANTS	P., Lady Knightly	Lady Knightly	Lady Knightly	P., Lady Knightly
	H.S., Miss A. H. Dodson	S., Mrs. Barker	Mrs. Barker	C., Miss Bouverie
OXON.	P., Mrs. Hobbs	Mrs. John Buchan	Mrs. John Buchan	S., Mrs. Barker Mrs. John Buchan
	C., Miss Hadow	Miss Hadow	Miss Hadow	Miss Ashhurst
SALOP ..	H.S., Miss Deneke	Miss Deneke	Miss Deneke	Miss Deneke
	C., Mrs. Alcock	Mrs. Alcock	Mrs. Price-Davies	Lady Berwick
SOMERSET	H.S., Miss Peers	Miss Peers	Miss Peers	Miss Walshe
	P., Miss Peck	Miss Peck	Mrs. Hancock	Mrs. Hancock
	H.S., Mrs. C. Hancock	Mrs. Hancock	Miss Vernon	Miss Vernon

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County	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20	1920-1
STAFFORD	—	—	C., Mrs. Stokes	C., Lady Dorothy Meynell
	—	—	H.S., Mrs. Hodgson	S., Miss Nightingale
SUFFOLK, E.	—	—		C., Lady Cranworth
	—	—	H.S., Miss I. Gedge	H.S., Miss I. Gedge
SUFFOLK, W.	—	—	—	C., Mrs. Majendie
	—	—	—	H.S., Mrs. Hitchcock
SURREY ..	C., Mrs. Dubuisson H.S., Miss E. Mott	Mrs. Dubuisson Miss Moberly	Mrs. Dubuisson Mrs. Trotter	Mrs. Auerbach Miss Sutherland
SUSSEX ..	C., Mrs. Tyrell Godman H.S., Miss Scovell	Mrs. Tyrell Godman Miss Margesson	— —	— —
SUSSEX, East	— —	— —	Mrs. Huddart Miss Margesson	Mrs. Huddart Miss Margesson
SUSSEX, W.	— —	— —	C., Hon. Mrs. Colvin H.S., Miss Hanna	C., Hon. Mrs. Colvin H.S., Miss Nash
WARWICK	— —	S., Miss Bryson —	C., Mrs. Bland S., Miss Bryson	Mrs. Blyth Miss Bryson
WESTMOR- LAND	— —	— —	C., Miss Cropper H.S. Miss Punchard	C., Miss Cropper H.S., Miss Punchard

County	1921-2	1922-3	1923-4	1924-5
STAFFORD	C., Lady Dorothy Meynell S., Miss Sowerby	Lady Dorothy Meynell Mrs. H. Cotterill Davies	Lady Dorothy Meynell Miss M. B. Strachan	P., Countess of Dartmouth C., Mrs. Rowland S., Miss M. B. Strachan
SUFFOLK, EAST	P., Lady Cranworth H.S., Miss Bernard	Lady Cranworth Miss Bernard	C., Lady Cranworth Miss L. Aldrich	Lady Cranworth Miss L. Aldrich
SUFFOLK, WEST	P., Miss Majendie H.S., Mrs. Wilkinson	P., Marchioness of Bristol C., Mrs. Martineau S., Mrs. Shann	Marchioness of Bristol Mrs. Martineau Mrs. Shann	Marchioness of Bristol Mrs. Martineau Mrs. Shann
277 SURREY ..	P., Mrs. Auerbach S., Miss Sutherland	P., Mrs. Auerbach C., Miss Moberly S., Miss Sutherland	Mrs. Auerbach Mrs. Scrutton Miss Sutherland	Mrs. Auerbach Mrs. Scudamore Miss Sutherland
SUSSEX, E.	C., Mrs. Huddart H.S., Miss M. Margesson	Mrs. Huddart Miss M. Margesson	Mrs. Huddart Miss M. Margesson	Mrs. Huddart S., Miss D. Parr
SUSSEX, W.	C., Hon. Mrs. Colvin S., Miss Nash	Hon. Mrs. Colvin Miss Nash	Hon. Mrs. Colvin Miss Nash	Hon. Mrs. Colvin Miss Nash
WARWICK	C., Mrs. Blyth S., Miss V. Lindsell —	P., Mrs. Bland C., Mrs. Blyth S., Miss Lindsell	Lady Ilkeston Mrs. Barnett Miss Lindsell	Lady Ilkeston Mrs. Barnett Miss Macausland
WESTMORLAND	C., Miss Cropper, J.P. H.S., Miss Punchard	Miss Cropper S., Miss Punchard	Miss Cropper Miss Punchard	Miss Cropper Miss Punchard

County	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20	1920-1
WORCS. ..	P., The Countess of Plymouth H.S., The Lady Isabel Margesson	C., The Countess of Plymouth The Lady Isabel Margesson	The Countess of Plymouth S., Miss Williams	P. The Countess of Plymouth Miss Williams
WILTS.	—	—	C., The Countess of Radnor H.S., Miss Robinson	P., The Countess of Radnor H.S., Miss Robinson
YORKS ..	—	—	—	C., Viscountess Ennismore H.S., Mrs. Kirk
WALES				
(Until 1921-2 Brecon Propaganda Committee).				
ANGLESEA	—	—	—	C., Miss Lampport H.S., Miss K. M. Lewis
BRECON & RADNOR PROPAGANDA COMMITTEE	—	—	—	C., Mrs. Money
CARDIGAN	—	—	—	—
CARMARTHENSHIRE PROPAGANDA COMMITTEE	—	—	—	—

County	1921-2	1922-3	1923-4	1924-5
WORCS. ..	C., Miss Hingley H.S., Miss Williams	C., Miss Hingley H.S., Miss Williams	P., Dowager Countess of Plymouth C., Miss M. L. Hingley S., Miss Williams	Dow. Countess of Plymouth Miss L. M. Hingley Mrs. Berry
WILTS. ..	— P., Countess of Radnor H.S., Miss Robinson	— Countess of Radnor Miss Impey	Countess of Radnor Miss Impey	Countess of Radnor Miss Impey
YORKS ..	C., Viscountess Ennismore H.S., Mrs. Dalton Kirk	C., Viscountess Ennismore H.S., Mrs. Dalton Kirk	Countess of Listowel Mrs. Dalton Kirk	Countess of Listowel Mrs. Dalton Kirk

WALES

County	1921-2	1922-3	1923-4	1924-5
ANGLESEA	C., Miss Lamport H.S., Mrs. K. M. Lewis	Miss Lamport Mrs. K. M. Lewis	Mrs. Prichard Mrs. K. M. Lewis	Mrs. Prichard Mrs. K. M. Lewis
BRECON & RADNOR	C., Mrs. Money	Mrs. Money	Miss Butler	Miss Butler
PROPAGANDA COMM.	H.S., Miss K. Jones (for Radnor) Mrs. Evan Thomas (for Brecon)	Miss K. Jones	Mrs. Berrington	Mrs. Berrington
CARDIGAN	P., Countess of Lisburn H.S., Miss Hartley	Countess of Lisburne Mrs. Stapledon	Countess of Lisburne Mrs. Stapledon	P., Countess of Lisburne C., Mrs. Basil Jones S., Mrs. Stapledon
CARMARTHENSHIRE PROPAGANDA COMM.	—	—	C., Mrs. Jones S., Miss Muriel Roderick	Mrs. Jones Miss M. Roderick

County	1917-8	1918-9	1919-20	1920-1
CARNAR- VON	— —	— —	C., Mrs. Drage S., Mrs. Draper	Mrs. Drage Miss Pughe Jones
FLINT & DENBIGH	— —	— —	— —	— —
GLAMOR- GAN	— —	— —	— —	— —
MERIONETH	— —	— —	C., Mrs. Morgan H.S., Miss Nesta Pritchard	Mrs. Morgan —
MONT- GOMERY	— —	— —	C., Mrs. L. M. Dugdale H.S., Mrs. Lloyd	— —
PEMBROKE	— —	— —	— —	— —
NORTH WALES UNION	— —	— —	— —	— —

County.	1921-2	1922-3	1923-4	1924-5
CARNAR- VON	C., Mrs. Drage H.S., Miss Pughe Jones	Mrs. Drage Miss Pughe Jones	Mrs. Drage S., Miss N. Lewis	Mrs. Drage Miss N. Parry
FLINT & DENBIGH	C., Mrs. Griffith H.S., Miss Williams Wynn	Mrs. Griffith Miss Williams Wynn	Mrs. Griffith Miss Williams Wynn	Mrs. Griffith Miss Williams Wynn
GLAMOR- GAN	P., Mrs. Turberville H.S., Miss Mordecai	Mrs. Turberville Miss Mordecai	Mrs. Turberville Miss Mordecai	Mrs. Turberville Miss Mordecai
MERIONETH	P., Mrs. Mary Morgan H.S., Mrs. D. L. Owen	Mrs. Mary Morgan Mrs. D. L. Owen	Mrs. Mary Morgan Mrs. D. L. Owen	Mrs. Mary Morgan Mrs. D. L. Owen
MONT- GOMERY	C., Mrs. Pryce H.S., Mrs. W. M. Dugdale	Mrs. Pryce Miss Riddell	Mrs. Pryce Miss Riddell	Mrs. Pryce. Miss Riddell
		P., Mrs. W. M. Dugdale	Mrs. W. M. Dugdale	Mrs. W. M. Dugdale
PEMBROKE	C., Mrs. Seymour Allen H.S., Mrs. Donal Morgan	Mrs. Seymour Allen Mrs. Donal Morgan	Mrs. Seymour Allen Mrs. Donal Morgan	Mrs. Seymour Allen Mrs. Donal Morgan
RADNOR	— — —	C., Mrs. Evan Thomas H.S., Mrs. Claud Lewis	P., Mrs. Coltman Rogers C., Mrs. Evan Thomas H.S., Mrs. Claud Lewis	Mrs. Coltman Rogers Mrs. Evan Thomas Mrs. Claud Lewis
NORTH WALES UNION	C., Mrs. Drage H.S., Mrs. Wm. George P., Mrs. Lloyd George	Mrs. Drage Mrs. Wm. George	Mrs. Drage Mrs. George	— — —

GROWTH OF INSTITUTES AND MEMBERS IN SCOTLAND SHOWING AREAS

Year				N.W.	N.E.	Cent.	S.E.	S.W.	Institutes	Members
June, 1918	..	..	..	7	9	9	10	—	35	1,666
July, 1919	..	..	..	19	17	17	13	6	72	3,305
Dec., 1920	..	..	..	25	32	33	24	38	152	8,831
282 Nov., 1921	..	..	..	30	45	36	24	44	207	12,289
Nov., 1922	..	..	..	40	58	47	30	69	244	—
Oct., 1923	..	..	..	46	72	54	39	93	304	—
Oct., 1924	..	..	..	61	83	72	49	121	386	24,351
Oct., 1925	..	..	..	71	96	85	65	143	460	27,500

COUNTY FEDERATION OFFICIALS

FIRST INSTITUTES IN ORDER OF FORMATION

1917

June - Longniddry, Rosehall.

Aug. - Milnathort.

Sept - Macmerry.

Oct. - Auchterarder, Balmerino, Gauldry, Kilmany.

Nov. - Balbeggie.

Dec. - Arisaig, Athelstandford, Fort William, Kilmallie, Rothiemay, Tranent.

1918

Jan. - Largo.

Feb. - Lesmahagow, Pathhead.

Mar. - Muir of Alford, Newton, Ormiston, Winchburgh.

April - Barry, Braco and Greenloaning, Ceres, Cousland, Glamis.

May. - Spean Bridge.

June. - Arradoul, Cornhill, Gordon, Longmanhill, Luthrie, Rathven, Tough.

July. - Ardgay, Keiss.

Nov. - Canisbay, Dunnet, Quothquan, Thankerton.

Dec. - Deer District, Dunlop, Fenwick, Kingsbarns, Lonmay, New Deer, Strathkinness.

MEMBERS OF EARLY ADVISORY COMMITTEES

1917-18

Miss C. E. Ainslie, B.A., Mrs. Blair, Mrs. Houison Craufurd, Mr. John Drysdale, Mrs. Forbes, Mrs. Gooch, Mrs. Andrew Hamilton, Mr. A. L. Hetherington, Miss Bella Jobson, Miss Agnes Kinross, Mrs. Leslie Mackenzie, Miss E. D. J. Macmichael, Miss H. F. Newbigin, Lady Carlaw Martin, Mr. James Scott, Miss Shanks, Lady Alice Shaw-Stewart, The Hon. Mrs. Stirling, Miss Mary Tocher, Miss Alice Younger.

1918-19

REPRESENTATIVES OF INSTITUTES. - North-western Area : Mrs. Gooch, Mrs. Ryan. North-eastern Area : Mrs. Forbes, Mrs. Whyte. Central Area : Mrs. Anstruther-Gray, Miss Haldane, LL.D. Southern Area : Mrs. Blair, Mrs. M'Dowall.

REPRESENTATIVES OF AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES. - East of Scotland : Miss Newbigin. West of Scotland : Miss Agnes Kinross. North of Scotland : Miss Mary Tocher.

CO-OPTED MEMBERS. - Miss C. E. Ainslie, B.A., Mr. John Drysdale, Mrs. Andrew Hamilton, Mrs. M'Intyre, Mrs. Müller, Mr. James Scott.

REPRESENTATIVE OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (in an advisory capacity). - Miss Alice Younger, O.B.E.

APPENDIX

SCOTTISH WOMEN'S INSTITUTES' STATE FUNDS.

Payments made by Board of Agriculture for Scotland in respect of the years 1917 to 1924 and estimated payments for the years 1925 to 1927.

		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.
1917	..	110	13	3	1924	..	2,720	0	0
1918	..	676	12	7	1925	..	3,347	0	0
1919	..	1,105	7	9	1926	..	3,348	0	0
1920	..	1,435	12	9	1927	..	2,790	0	0
1921	..	2,007	2	11					
1922	..	2,706	14	4			£22,442	3	7
1923	..	2,195	0	0			£22,442	3	7

The payments 1923-7 represent £3,000 per annum for 5 years, £15,000, granted out of £150,000, Corn Production Acts (Repeal) Act 1921 grant.

I am under obligations to the following for permission to use photographs: *The Times* (H.M. The Queen); Mr. G. P. Putnam and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture (Squire's Hall and Stoney Creek groups), the *Sketch* (Lady Denman), the *Preston Guardian* (Basketry stall); also to Mrs. Yerburgh, Mrs. Anstruther-Gray, Mrs. Blair, Mrs. Gooch, the President of John O' Groat's Institute, the Norfolk Federation, Miss Williams, Mr. Nugent Harris, Mrs. Morgan, Mrs. Worthington, Mrs. Hugh Bertram, and Miss Parr and the Scaynes Hill Institute for loan of photographs; also the *Queen* (Mrs. Watt); and to *Home and Country* and *Scottish Home and Country* for the loan of blocks.

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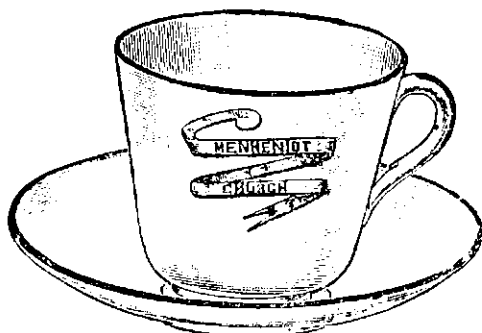
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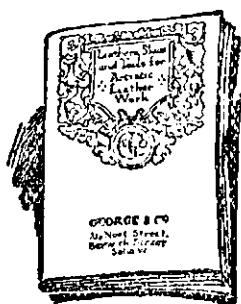
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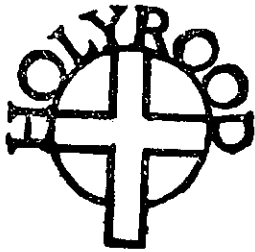
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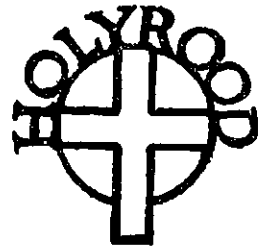
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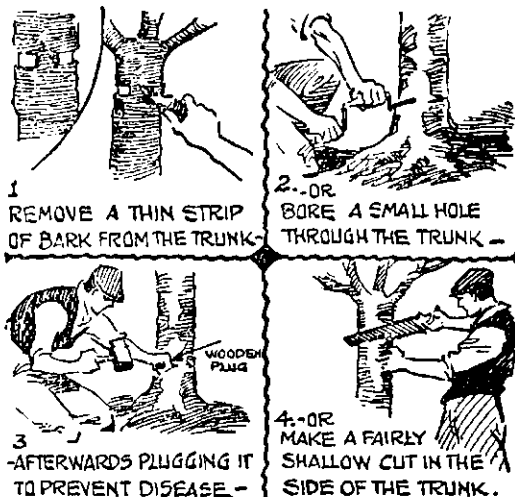
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