

Milestones Mark 50-Year Story

Milestones down the 50-year road of the Alberta Women's Institutes indicate the organization is on a broad highway after starting down a narrow path, from past presidents' reminiscences at the jubilee convention meeting in Convocation Hall Thursday evening. Projects have expanded, horizons broadened and the organization has repeatedly sent representatives to the conventions of the Associated Country Women of the World.

The story told Thursday evening by special speaker, Miss Isabel Noble of Wichita, Kansas, organizer of the WI in 1909 and president for the first eight years, was of a nebulous beginning.

WITHIN 50 YEARS

Fifty years later, Mrs. T. H. Howes, Millet, completing her term as president, attended the ACWW meeting in Ceylon and the immediate past president, Mrs. S. Lefsrud, Viking, who also attended an ACWW conference in Toronto, referred to a recent trip she made to Russia.

Between the beginning at home and the world viewpoint, the convention relived their activities in reports of presidents who served during war years and depression. The story took the audience on many adventures along Alberta's early highways as the presidents travelled to unite the scattered branches of the WI.

Speakers included Mrs. W. McFarlane who read a report from Mrs. A. G. McGorman, Penhold, president from 1949 to 1953, and Mrs. M. L. Thompson, Lethbridge, president from 1941 to 1945.

On behalf of Mrs. Susan D. Stewart of Peace River, president from 1937 to 1941, Mrs. A. H. Rogers was the speaker. Mrs. J. C. Ferguson, Trochu, president from 1933 to 1937 also addressed the meeting.

The past presidents paid tribute to the tremendous accomplishments of the late Mrs. E. E. Morton, Vegreville, president from 1945 to 1949. Mrs. M. G. Roberts of Hanna was chairman.

BORROWED CONSTITUTION

Telling of the organization days of the WI Miss Noble, the special speaker said, "I thought constitutions were for quarrelsome people," recalling how at first the WI worked on an adopted constitution from when she travelled south giving demonstrations on canning vegetables. In one district the women arrived, some two on a horse, some carrying shoes and stockings. This is a poor district, she thought, but went ahead with her talk to a most indifferent audience. Question time came and they asked why she spoke in that vein when they hadn't had a crop in seven years.

Nor had they the money to pool together to buy vegetables. Help? Send us a nurse they urged, and so rural organization was begun to supply district nurses.

Miss Noble's talk was a gay remembrance of anecdote in the early days. She also cited distress cases where the WI helped as neighbors.

WI CREED

She told of how the creed of the WI now repeated the world over, was given first to her by a neighbor in Daysland, her Alberta home, before she moved to Wichita. "I have heard that creed repeated in Britain and in Asia," she said.

During her term as president, 1933 to 1937 there were hard times and poverty, Mrs. J. C. Ferguson of Trochu reminded. She recalled how the WI helped supply layettes for mothers in need, and referred to a visit from Lady Tweedsmuir when a WI library for shipping packages of books to rural homes was inaugurated.

Mrs. Rogers' message from Mrs. Stewart of Peace River was a lively account of how the graduate of Glasgow University came as a bride to Peace River, and took up WI work. She served as AWI president from 1937 to 1941. Later her war effort was to work in Ottawa censoring German mail. Offered the presidency of the Federated WI of Canada she refused "because it was not Alberta's turn."

WAR SERVICE

Mrs. Thompson recalled the work of the WI during the war years; service for the Red Cross, making ditty bags for the merchant marine; how they cancelled a convention and

bought bonds with the money saved; how they saved a dollar each in Christmas money, and sent \$1,000 to sister WIs in bombed areas in Britain.

RUSSIA, PIONEERING

Mrs. Lefsrud's description of the ACWW meeting in Toronto turned then to her personal trip to Russia which she saw, she said, as a pioneer country with the people looking ahead. Moscow she said was a fascinating metropolis. She urged that the four freedoms in the covenant of the ACWW, freedom from want, freedom of thought, speech and expression be remembered in judging Russia.

Milestones in her presidency included taking up the cause of Alberta's Indians.

Speaking on behalf of Mrs. W. McGorman, Red Deer, Mrs. W. McFarlane referred to establishing a scholarship in music in memory of the late Mrs. H. J. Montgomery, president from 1929 to 1933, and of obtaining sponsors for handicrafts. Mrs. McGorman was a delegate to the ACWW conference in Copenhagen, Denmark during her presidency.

During the evening Miss Jeanette MacDonall, winner of the first Montgomery scholarship, sang several selections.

Gifts were presented by Mrs. Howes to Mrs. A. H. Rogers and to Miss MacDonall. Mrs. Howes also presented a life membership pin to Mrs. Ferguson, Trochu.

The meeting concluded with roll call of branches and a coffee party at which the AWI cut and served their anniversary cake.



NEW OFFICERS IN AWI — The concluding day, Friday, of the Alberta Women's Institutes' four-day convention brought elections at the morning sessions at Convocation Hall. Mrs. W. R. Ford, Coutts, Alberta, pic-

tured at centre, was elected president. M. G. Roberts, Drumheller, left, was vice-president and Mrs. John Rich, Deer, secretary. — Photo by Goe.