PHOEBE ANN DIES IN CANADA

MANY old friends will be sorry to learn of the sudden death of Mrs Phoebe Ann Ashworth (nee Clark) in hospital in Ottawa.

Phoebe Ann Clark was born at The Reddings, Woolaston, on May 2, 1901. She went to the village school at three years old, and was one of the earliest pupils to obtain a a scholarship to Lydney Secondary School (now Whitecross).

On leaving school she was apprenticed at Fishers (Glos.) and also worked for a short time at Herbert Lewis (Chepstow) before going to London, where she was employed as a nurse in a children's creche, and later in various private houses as a nursery governess Her final nursing experience in this country was at the Royal Hamadryad Hospital in Cardiff. Encouraged by a patient there, she emigrated to Canada in 1925, and was nursing in a hospital in Ottawa before becoming nursery governess to a little girl who later married Mr Malcolm Macdonald, son of Mr Ramsay Macdonald, former Prime Minister of England. In 1929 Phoebe Ann herself married Mr John Brian Ashworth, a cousin of her employer, and lived with and cared for his parents in Hull, Quebec.

ACTIVITIES

From then on she took a very active part in many welfare and cultural activities, including Quebec Women's Institutes, the Red Cross, St. John's Ambulance, Ottawa Weavers' Guild and the V.A.D., in most of which she held prominent positions.

In 1939 Mrs Ashworth returned for the first time to England, to represent the Province of Quebec Women's Institutes at the triennial conference of the Associated Countrywomen of the World in London. There she gave an address on Canadian handicrafts and exhibited craftwork of many kinds from all over the province, including work from Indian reservations which she had visited to give instruction in various domestic arts and crafts—even the making of soap!

WEAVING

Her greatest interest, however, was in spinning and weaving and she was recognised and honoured as "one of the finest handicraft experts, and Canada's best hand weaver of Anglo-Saxon extraction". She retained this interest to the end of her life despite ill health resulting from severe arthritis in her later years.

She was a convenor of the Committee on Immigration, Canadainisation and Natural Events, and in addition to her other welfare work helped with the reception and settlement of British children evtcuated to Canada during the war. Among her papers were found many letters from parents expressing their appreciation of her care and supervision of their children, as well as letters from people in the Woolaston area acknowledging parcels and gifts of seeds sent during the war and hospitality given to men in the services stationed in Canada.

VISIT TO WOOLASTON

Last year, in spite of ill health and severe pain, Mrs Ashworth made her second and last visit to England, and during her six weeks stay in Woolaston was able to see again all the members of her family and many old friends. She was also a guest at the Woolaston W.I. birthday dinner at the Piercefield Hotel, where she gave an interesting talk about the movement and its origins in Canada.

Members of her family were making plans to visit Phoebe Ann in September when news of her unexpected death was received, so her brother, Mr Harold Clark and his wife flew out immediately to assist in dealing with her affairs. Among papers connected with her attendance at the 1939 conference they found invitations to 10 Downing Street, to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries at Lancaster House, and to Lord and Lady Bledisloe at Lydney Park. Another invitation was to the White House, U.S.A. during the presidency of Mr Roosevelt.

During that three weeks' stay Mr and Mrs Clark met many of Mrs Ashworth's closest friends, from whom they learned how highly she had been regarded, how much her work in Canada had been appreciated, and how much she would be missed in their part of Quebec which had been her home for over 50 years.—L.J.D.