

HOME AND COUNTRY

Published Quarterly by
The Federated Women's Institutes
of Ontario

The Women's Institute Branch
Department of Agriculture
Ontario

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"HOME AND COUNTRY"

Women's Institute Branch
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Parliament Buildings, Toronto

This paper is distributed through the secretaries of Women's Institutes to Women's Institute Members.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE FORWARD LOOK

Spring is the time to look forward, to plan for the future. Live Women's Institutes throughout the province are looking forward and express great interest these days in post-war planning for rural communities. Their thoughts are centred on such things as improved homes, better educational facilities, public health, opportunities for youth, cultural and recreational programmes and various features of rural living.

A few Institutes question whether they have time for such studies. The answer is that, if they are to be worthy members of the Women's Institutes of Canada, they must find time to be interested in the well-being of home, community, and nation.

A recent letter from Mrs. Charles Russell, Letter Friend Secretary, N.F.W.I. of England tells how Institutes are meeting this responsibility in England. She says: "We have had a very busy winter in the Institutes, and they are getting so greatly interested in every side of reconstruction. The questionnaire on Education we circulated created tremendous excitement and interest, and produced valuable evidence, we are given to understand by the Board of Education.

Another questionnaire on Housing has gone around, and there is one on water-supply and sewage in rural areas which Institutes are dealing with at the present time.

Group Conferences this spring have many of them chosen to read 5-minute papers on Education, and I was present at one quite recently at Frinton-on-Sea which is, as the Chairman said, "right under Hitler's nose", where there were 100 members present from nearby Institutes, and four papers were read. It was my task to sum up, and I found it no light one, for they had brought up so many aspects of the subject, and discussed so widely every side of it.

We have many activities organized
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CITIZENSHIP CHALLENGES THOUGHT

"Think Nationally — Work Nationally" is the slogan Mrs. Cameron Dow, President of the F.W.I.C. has chosen for the 1943-45 biennial term. This slogan can be a binding influence in our work in Citizenship. I hope many have read the outline suggested by Mrs. Milton Wade, national convener of Citizenship in the Federated News, January, 1944. Perhaps some of our Institute members have clipped this outline from the "Family Herald and Weekly Star" of February 16th.

Study Naturalization Laws

Mrs. Wade has suggested among other topics a study of Immigration and Naturalization Laws. The splendid reports which I have received from our area conveners during the last two years, and the discussion which I have heard at W.I. meetings, lead me to doubt if any organization has done more than the W.I. to help New Canadians feel at home in Canada. While we study laws and policies, could we not start compiling information gleaned from our own practical experiences which would be of value to our government? Note Mrs. Wade's question—"Would it be helpful to the applicant for naturalization if the government published a simple textbook on the duty and responsibility of Canadian citizenship?" Do not forget to send on your findings. I was delighted last fall when the reports told of so many projects in Citizenship in which our members were participating, as well as reporting papers and discussions. Many thanks to all area, district and local conveners. The 1943 report is on file at the Loan Library, W.I. Branch.

Make Democracy Work

The more we study citizenship the more we realize that it is not enough to know how Fascism, Nazism and Communism differ from democracy; we need to know as well the difference between socialism, bureaucracy and responsible government. The more we study, the more we realize it is not sufficient to have our citizens see the need for improving conditions at home and abroad. This is vitally important, but it is also important that we understand something of the methods of bringing about desirable reforms without forfeiting our freedom or involving ourselves in financial chaos. It is the special responsibility of the standing committees on Citizenship to help our members understand the proper use of the tools of democratic government.

Many of us remember that in June, 1936, we had the opportunity of meeting at the O.A.C. Guelph, delegates from the German rural women's organization, who had come to the Third Triennial Conference of the A.C.W.W. at Washington. When one takes the proceedings of that conference, and rereads the splendid reports, telling how the German women were working "together for one great common goal", does not one still feel that those women sincerely believed they were contributing their share "toward real peace in the world"? Does one then ask herself, "Would I, too, have been satisfied because I was co-operating with others in a worthy cause; or would I have realized any sooner than they did, that there are certain times when there can be no compromise?" Katherine Thomas, an Englishwoman, who spent some time in Germany, has written the book, "Women in Nazi Germany". A review of this book states that the history of these women "Provides a telling example of good intentions paving a road to the proverbial destination."

Therefore when we are presenting under Citizenship topics relating to worthy schemes to improve our country, let us first of all endeavour to present more than one point of view on that topic. We should aim to help our members train themselves to weigh the subject matter which is presented to them.

Secondly, let us leave sufficient time for discussion. Probably the members

of one's Institute do not care for discussion. They feel they learn more from speakers; perhaps they feel time is wasted. This may be because we have not trained ourselves to lead discussions. Let us do so, for well-conducted discussions can build better citizens for a democracy than talks and papers, without discussions.

Mrs. Wade has given many helpful references. Some others are: "The Post War Woman," Hilda Ridley, Ryerson Press, 40c; "Women in Nazi Germany," Katherine Thomas, Ryerson Press, \$1.50; "Why Our Women Must Fight an All-Out War," Chate-laine, December, 1943; "Post War Immigration," O.A.C. Review, February, 1944.

The Post-War period will be one of the reformation periods in the history of the world. Reform means reform. Could we do better than review the women of the Bible, especially the women of the New Testament?

Use the Franchise

This winter, many organizations in various municipalities have tried to induce more citizens to use their franchise at the municipal elections. Do we know what matters come under the jurisdiction of the municipal officials? I was pleased to note one Institute had made a systematic study of this subject last year. There have been changes in the last few years, and we should keep ourselves well informed. Do we know what percentage of the voters in our own municipality use their franchise? Do we know how many of the Institute members use theirs?

In 1941, the Board of the F.W.I.O. passed a resolution forwarded by the Central Ontario Area urging every W. I. member to consider the matter of promoting an aggressive campaign to pledge all members to vote. (See *Home and Country*, Winter 1941-42.) After consultation with Mrs. Wade, National Convener, and the Area Conveners of Citizenship, it was felt it might be wise for the members to first make some study of Citizenship before deciding to issue pledge cards. Now that the members have shown interest in Citizenship, it might be well for every Institute to lead its members to take a personal interest in this matter, and discuss how they feel about pledge cards, and what they feel should be on a pledge card, if issued. If the Institutes do this, the District conveners, after studying the voting in their own municipality, might be able to lead a discussion at the District Annual to find out if the District could plan a project in Citizenship to stir up more interest in the use of the franchise.

I am confident the members of the Institutes will continue this year to make the best use of all the opportunities our society, the Women's Institute, offers us to be better citizens. As S. Smith says in the *International Women's News*, "constant vigilance is the price of freedom; and to vigilance must be added hard work and harder thought."

(Contributed by Mrs. T. D. Cowan, Provincial Convener.)

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for the spring and summer, but we realize that they may have to be abandoned at any moment should the Second Front open. In fact they have already placed travelling restrictions on the general public, and I am wondering whether I shall be able to carry out the many engagements I have undertaken to speak to Institutes.

Then she continues, "We have had a return of raids in London this last month, which have not been very pleasant. The noise of our barrage is terrific, but the raids are very short."

Ontario Institutes, so far from the Second Front and from bombing raids surely can look to England for inspiration and resolve to carry their weight in planning for the future.

PUBLICITY

During recent years advertising has assumed a major role in the business world and through its wide influence many companies have prospered beyond their greatest expectations. Publicity in our organization is comparable to advertising in business and, if used well, would add members to the Women's Institute and arouse greater interest in our present members.

Press Reports

The press have proved generous in allotting space to activities of the Women's Institutes. Since they have given fine co-operation it would be wise for publicity conveners to do likewise, preparing all material for publication with care and sending it in promptly. Reports should be such that the following queries could be answered in the affirmative: (1) If I knew nothing about the Women's Institute would this report arouse my interest in it? (2) Does it adequately describe the theme of the meeting, bringing out the important points developed by the speaker and making it appear worthwhile? I know that many advise that all names of those having even a small part in the meeting should be mentioned, but many times this results in a report that is a hodge-podge and reminds one of a small store window where the effort is made to display samples of everything in the store.

Know the W.I.

Also we should take the larger view than that which concerns only our local Institute and have an interest in our Provincial and National Federations. Right here is probably the place to urge that our Institute publication, *Home and Country*, be read more thoroughly. It is irking to hear members who consider themselves good Institute members say: "Oh I just don't have time to read it." Everyone needs short periods of relaxation each day and what better way to relax than to have your copy of *Home and Country* near your favorite chair and read as you rest.

It would be ideal if every member of the Women's Institute realized that publicity is her responsibility. Since the Women's Institute is such an outstanding organization it needs no bally-hoo, but it does need enthusiastic members who can tell its merits in an interesting way. In one of our Southern Ontario towns the Women's Association of one of the large churches asked an interested Women's Institute member to address their Association to tell about the Women's Institute—its origin, ideals, aims, activities and accomplishments. The interest aroused in these women may at some future time, when war activities are not so demanding, lead to the organizing of an Institute.

Adult Education

Sometimes I wonder if we put enough emphasis on the educational side of the Women's Institutes. Because often it is a surprise to those not members of our organization to know that the Women's Institutes pioneered in adult education. Although the term adult education has recently been coined nevertheless Women's Institutes have been giving leadership in this for forty-seven years and this part of our work is a fertile field for publicity.

Probably most of us were brought up on the theory that you only get out of anything what you put into it. However this is not true of the Women's Institute for no matter how much time and thought is given to this work one receives much more than is given when all the benefits and advantages of membership in this worthwhile organization are totalled. So let each and every member yield just homage to our fine organization not only by words but also by works.

(Contributed by Mrs. Hugh Summers, Provincial Convener.)