

HOME AND COUNTRY

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

EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTES OF TOMORROW

"Women's Institutes must clarify their ideas respecting the post-war period. Peace will bring its problems and frustrations just as war does. We look forward to it with expectation, but it will not be all smooth sailing. It will be a testing time for which we must prepare now."

These were the opening words of the provincial president, Mrs. Hugh Summers, at the meeting of the F.W. I.O. Board meeting, April 10th. They were followed by a plea for more study, increased membership, acceptance of responsibilities, and community activity.

If Institutes are to be prepared for this testing time they need good leaders. Do you as a member hesitate about assuming office, or accepting the chairmanship of a committee? Do you feel that responsibility would be too heavy and the time and effort required too great? If so, we urge that you ask yourself why you are a member of the Women's Institute. If you can answer this question by affirming your belief in the importance of the Institute motto "For Home and Country"; if you are convinced that the Women's Institute can really be an important factor in improving home and community life and national well-being; if you face this situation honestly,—then you will realize that service for the Institute is not only a duty but an opportunity for loyal members. Time spent in Institute work will repay you a hundred-fold.

If peace is to be a testing time the Women's Institutes must not be found wanting. It was John Milton who, in 1652, said:

"Peace hath her victories No less renowned than war".

Every member has the opportunity to participate in the securing of these victories.

HOME ECONOMICS FOR TOTAL VICTORY

Many Women's Institute members will have read and appreciated the message sent last Christmas by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, to members of the Women's Institute throughout the Empire. The message which was sent to Canadian Women's Institutes through Mrs. Alfred Watt, M.B.E., President of the A.C.W.W. and signed "Elizabeth R" reads in part "Let us now use that great organization of Women's Institutes in helping to build a happier world, by devoting our effort to recapture that home life on which we so much depend—the moral and spiritual training of the citizen of the future—realizing that "The Foundation of a Nation's Greatness is Built Upon the Homes of Her People". To this message our beloved Queen has added a post-script "We women as homemakers have a great part to play".

This message from Her Majesty, who is herself a member of the Women's Institute, our Motto "For Home and Country", and the encouraging news from our many battle fronts in Europe should prove a three-fold incentive to each of us to make a maximum effort to build the kind of homes and country that will be worthy of the sacrifices that have been made for the cause of freedom.

Homes and Democracy

Democracy is on trial as never before. This is a period of testing which is revealing the soft spots in our national life. There are many signs of moral breakdown. We are astounded by the spread of venereal disease (300,000 Canadians, 35,000 in the armed forces), of divorce and juvenile delinquency. Divorce, delinquency, disease, division and dissension in our home and political life are the fraction of the iceberg that shows above the surface.

We mothers have a very precious stake in the world—and grave responsibility. Homes are the front line of production and of reconstruction. Our children are the post-war world. In our homes we are training the leaders of tomorrow, as well as guiding the leaders of today. The home is the smallest unit of national life and the place where the cure must begin if it is to spread to the nation. We cannot have a better Canada until we have better Canadians.

Four Questions

I should like to propose for your thinking four simple but far-reaching questions. I wish I had space to discuss these four questions with you but I can touch on them only very briefly. I hope you will discuss them at your Institute meetings.

- 1. What are homes for and what kind of homes does the country need?
2. What is the true role of the woman in the home?
3. What should be our concern for the children of the nation?
4. What is the bearing of family relations on the state of the nation?

Home seems a dull place to many women. Ambition drives some of us into other work. High wages in industry beckon and consequently many women transfer their interest from home to "a job". Home life suffers if the woman who is the heart of its life transfers her heart elsewhere.

Housework need not be dull. There are no "common tasks". It is the attitude we bring to them that makes them interesting or dull. The profession of homemaker is the biggest and most important occupation there is. If we find it otherwise, it is because we lack knowledge. We need to know how to feed our family for health and economy, how to spend the family income, how to make the most of our clothing, how to make our homes attractive with articles of handcraft, how to plan our houses for comfort and efficiency—in short, how to build houses worthy of the part our

people have played in war and are going to play in peace. All this information and more is ours through the Co-operative Program if we avail ourselves of the opportunities.

But as we build our houses, we must also build the qualities that make a home. A blast of selfishness can destroy a home as thoroughly as bombs. It requires a spirit of giving, unity and honesty, and then we shall have what everybody wants—houses with homes inside of them.

Schools of Social Relations

We must see our homes as great schools of social relations. The ability to live and work together is the point at which civilization breaks down. We cannot expect agreement at the peace-table if we, in our homes, cannot get on around our own breakfast tables.

We must adopt simple uncompromising moral standards as the basis of home and public life. We must have a clear-cut distinction between right and wrong, instead of the prevailing greyness of compromise and expediency. The country is going to face difficult decisions in the post-war period. Where is the undergirding of moral strength coming from, on which the decisions of our leaders must depend? Where, but from the home?

In order, therefore, to make our Women's Institute homes centres of victory I suggest that we get clear in our own minds what kind of homes our country needs. Then let us change, in order to bring our home and our family relations up to the objective we have chosen.

The Homemaker's Resolution

In conclusion I would leave with you "The Homemaker's Resolution" which I feel carries a personal challenge to every one of us.

Whereas Home-making is the biggest basic industry in the country, employs the greatest number of men and women, handles the greatest amount of money and allows more working hours than any other industry, and

Whereas this industry is vital to the task of winning the war, securing the peace, and building a new world, and

Whereas this industry is in grave danger of being destroyed by the subversive forces of selfishness which are undermining family life and the youth of the nation, and thereby subtly co-operating with the enemy, and

Whereas sound homes are the bulwark against these subversive forces,

Be it therefore resolved: That we, the home-makers of Ontario do hereby organize ourselves to fight these enemies and to build sound homes everywhere, starting with our own, through:

- (1) Conversion of our homes to a non-stop assembly line of character, training our children to be true patriots, morally re-armed, fit to remake the world;
(2) Giving up our rights to nagging, pampering, self-pity or self-righteousness;
(3) No strikes, walk-outs or firing of husband or wife, with a consequent speed-up in the production of teamwork;
(4) Distribution of this commodity of teamwork to the largest possible market—from the breakfast table to the farm, the school, the community and the nation;
(5) Settlement of all disputes through the agency of honest apology, on the basis of "what's right," not "who's right".

"We women as homemakers have a great part to play".

(Contributed by Mrs. G. W. Keyes, Provincial Convener of Home Economics).

SOCIAL WELFARE ADVANCES

Social Welfare has had a very wide scope during the war years.

The members of the Women's Institute have sent overseas large quantities of food, clothing, money, seeds and other materials—as well as comforts and letters of cheer to the boys and girls in the Services. It is worthy of mention that, while the members recognize the need of the people at war, they have not forgotten their responsibility for maintaining established social services at home—sending fruit and flowers to the sick, remembering the shut-ins, helping support school nursing services and being a source of cultural uplift in the community.

During a war great advances are made in science and medicine, but advances are also made in thinking. More and more thought is being given to the essentials of living.

Better Living

Now that we can expect victory for the Allied nations in nineteen forty-five, and the sunrise that the world is looking for is just about to show itself over the horizon, this is a good time to consider better working conditions on the farms and in the farm homes.

Education that will free the rural people from drudgery and put dignity into their calling seems to me to be a necessity if we are to have the youth return to the farms.

The fact that the Governments have set up social welfare departments goes to show the very vital need for this kind of service. Already there has been some good social legislation placed on the statute books. The family allowance comes into effect in July nineteen forty-five. Cheaper electric power made available to the farmers is another—and with electrification will come other modern conveniences that will make rural life more attractive.

Control of Venereal Disease

Under the Provincial Department of Health, the Venereal Diseases Act, was about to be considered. By it expectant mothers would be given tests not later than the fifth month, thereby protecting the unborn child. That would be a move in the right direction to help stamp out this menace. Dr. Vivian, Minister of Health, has pointed out that the problem of venereal disease is not a simple one. The disease is more than a communicable one; it involves social and moral issues that must be taken into account when designing effective controls. A few of the objectives in stamping out the disease are adequate medical care for every sufferer of the disease, regardless of economic position, establishment of education on the subject of venereal disease, development of a trained field service to detect undiscovered cases, stimulation of the local community, and the protection of homes and family with emphasis on young people planning marriage. Perhaps I have dwelt on this subject a little more than was necessary, but I know from the social welfare reports received that the problem is causing a great deal of concern.

So by starting the unborn child off with a clean bill of health, by the trend in education to fit the child for his chosen career in life, with a fairer distribution of the national wealth, and with more thought being given to recreational and cultural pursuits—we can and should face the future with confidence.

(Contributed by Mrs. J. Reid, Provincial Convener of Social Welfare).

JAM FOR BRITAIN 1945

The Ontario objective is 250,000 pounds. Your help is needed.