

The Programme Is Your Business

By Zetta G. Hayes

It is never too soon to think about and plan for your next year's programme. In a larger sense, the planning of the branch programme is every member's business. If the individual member—meaning you—gave more intensive thought and more careful consideration over a longer period of time to the lining up of suitable material, much more effective programmes would be produced and the work of programme committees would be vastly simplified.

If the Institute is to measure up to the ideal set by the pioneer women of Stoney Creek, if it is to be, in truth, a "Homemaker's University," the programme should be a printed syllabus of educational features offered to your members. Viewed in this light how does your programme rate? Does it definitely supply in explicit, unmistakable terms a course of study that the women of your community are likely to find helpful, stimulating and worthy of their attention?

The planning of such a programme cannot be undertaken casually or achieved in haste. Time is essential for the assembling of items and time is essential for considered thought in the matter of their selection or rejection. And while the final responsibility for their welding together into a coherent whole rests with the programme committee, that committee acts—or should act—only to meet the needs and interests of the entire membership. There should, therefore, be some medium through which these needs and interests may be made known to the committee before they actually convene—perhaps a Roll Call, "What I would like to have on next year's programme." If the president asks each member to put her suggestions in writing, and turns the written slips over to the committee, there is then something tangible to work upon. It will be manifestly impossible to adopt all the suggestions offered, but some will be workable and the general trend of interest should be clearly established.

When the programme committee meets, invariably the conveners of standing committees should be on hand to work with them, and the place and scope of each standing committee in relation to the whole year's coverage should be outlined. While it is usually desirable to feature each standing committee at some time, this does not preclude the selection of some one standing committee for major attention during the year. Indeed such a selection helps to make definite any course

of study decided upon. For example there is in Waterloo County an Institute which this year is placing emphasis on Citizenship and Education, and which has chosen for its topic theme for the whole year, "The United Nations." Some of the sub-topics to be covered at the meetings are "FAO—its accomplishments and limitations," "WHO as a World Mother," "UNESCO," and a panel on "Current Events relating to United Nations." Still another Institute, working on Citizenship and Education from another angle, carries on its cover the announcement "This Year We Study Canada," and is taking up, at each meeting, a survey of one of our ten Canadian provinces. This following of one subject through, channels and makes definite the work of the whole year. Too many programmes appear merely as a hodge-podge of things to do and hear—mostly hear—without any thread of continuity on which the assorted items are strung. A well planned programme has a definite goal. It sets out to lead the members along a clear path to a known destination.

After the meeting of the programme committee, the general direction having been established and the design roughly etched in, the conveners of standing committees should be given a few days to plan the work assigned them and to decide in what manner their material is to be presented. When they have decided what is to be done, and how, they will advise the programme committee so that full information can be placed on the printed folder. This will eliminate the all-too-common type of printed programme that reads:

January

Hostess	Mrs. X.
Roll Call	Current Events
Topic	Agriculture, Canadian Industries
Convener	Mrs. Y.

—certainly a poor sort of syllabus for any educational venture.

While conceding that there is a limit to what may be printed on a branch programme, the folder should, as far as possible, give the complete picture of the branch activities for the current year. The members should find in the perusal of the programmes, information, satisfaction and a measure of inspiration. Also, since one of the main values of the printed programme is its value as a publicizing agent of Institute aims and activities, it is most important that the items listed should be interesting, varied, and with some appeal to the imagination.