

National President's Word to Ontario

Mr. J. W. Adams

LAST FALL there was ample demonstration to your sisters all over the world of just how big the Institute movement is felt to be in your province. When I read of the development of the Institute idea in Malaya, it fills me with pride and with a tremulous sense of responsibility as I realize that this great movement spreads to Malaya via our British sisters from Stoney Creek, in Ontario, in Canada.

It is easy to be big among big things but an Institute member must be big in little things, in little places. Many of the members among the local branches will never experience at first hand, association with the larger membership, and it is harder to keep one's thinking and one's doing BIG. We develop skills, we work to improve our homes, we study and consider the welfare of others, "without self-pity and without prejudice," not only for personal gain but because, as the Big sisters of the Institute family, we must set the standard in aims and achievement, for the activities of women. The accumulation of this effort all over the world will raise the standard of rural living and improve the stature of the world community.

Homes are the foundation upon which the community is built; branches are the foundation upon which we are building our national and international organization. No club will suffer the pangs of pettiness and personalities, nor suffer from lack of leadership, if each one of us looks far, thinks far, and works hard, always conscious of the goal to which we all are working together.

Editor's Note: We feel that Ontario Institute women would be interested in these personal notes about our national president. Mrs. J. W. Adams, better known to Institute women as "Nancy Adams," President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, was born in England, came with her parents to settle in Calgary and later moved to a small rural community in Saskatchewan. When the children were ready for high school they had to go to Prince Albert, but in spite of this inconvenience Nancy graduated at the age of fifteen, winning the Governor General's medal en route. The next few years were filled with teaching the small rural school in her home community—incidentally she met young J. W. Adams here—going to Normal School, teaching a city public school, leaving this for University and later teaching English and French in high schools. She was married in 1935, right in the worst of the drought and depression which had forced her husband to leave his well established farm and settle in the Carrot River Valley at Ethelton, Saskatchewan.



Mrs. J. W. Adams of Ethelton, Saskatchewan, President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada.

Here Nancy was introduced to farm living in an old log house which had been put up by the first homesteader, forty years before. She experienced all the homesteading woman's trials with cold, inconvenience and hard work, and she was lonesome for the stimulation and contacts of her professional life. In the summer of 1937 a small group of women in the small community organized a branch of the Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs, the Ethelton Club which has since won the Tweedsmuir cup for their community history, and first place in a kitchen remodelling competition—using the Adams kitchen in the home they bought when extending their farming.

Mrs. Adams has two fair-haired, blue-eyed daughters, eleven and seven years old. While their mother is busy with her work with the Women's Institutes and the Saskatchewan Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life, of which she is the only woman member, her family is cared for by a "borrowed grandmother," Mrs. Barbara Traill Morrow, a Saskatchewan pioneer in her own right, great niece of Susanna Moodie, the author of "Roughing It In the Bush," and great granddaughter of Catherine Parr Traill, known for her children's stories and her book on Canadian Wildflowers. So Mrs. Adams feels that her children are having the happy experience of "living with history."

In her Institute work Mrs. Adams served as president of her local club, and through district and provincial offices to President of Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs. Last year she was elected President of F.W.I.C. Though at one time very active in church, school and political groups, she has had to curtail these interests. In her own words, she "now devotes most of her spare time working 'for home and country' through the group which in its work knows no bounds of country, of race, creed or sect—the Federated Women's Institute of Canada."