

EDITORIAL

HUMAN RELATIONS:—In that unforgettable book "Wind, Sand and Stars," Antoine De Saint Exupery who knew all the gruelling hardships that go with long distance flying—being knocked about by winds and storms, forced down on the sea and the desert, crashing at the last, wrote: "For there is but one veritable problem—the problem of human relations."

Most of us know this to be true from our own observation and experience. A fine house doesn't make a happy family—happiness or unhappiness comes from the human relationships in the family. Even world movements toward war or peace, we are told, depend more on human relations than on the issues involved. And we see the principle working out in community groups such as our Women's Institutes.

"Our members are all active, helpful and co-operative. We believe part of the reason may be that social contact is a special feature at every meeting," one secretary writes. "We find our Institute has been of value to us in getting our women together, even getting whole families together in these days when people do not visit in each other's homes much," another reports. And it isn't hard to see the fine human relations back of this statement: "We feel that the new Canadian women are a great addition to our Institutes. They are receiving from us and we from them."

Women's Institutes do a great deal of welfare work and through this they build up good *public* relations, something that gives them a standing in the community. But in their more personal friendliness they create closer *human* relations. Imagine the good feeling kindled in individuals and in the Institute by such doings as these, reported in this year's work: sending a blanket to each baby born in the community, buying a hearing-aid for an old man and glasses for one recovering from an operation for cataracts, quietly getting a supply of groceries to a member whose husband was out of work, having a "shower" of baby clothes when twins were born in the neighbourhood. One Branch reported: "We helped a family who were all in plaster casts as the result of a car accident. We divided our members into groups of four and took 'baking' to this family every weekend." Another Branch hired help for a sick member. In one Institute "the women planted flowers in the cemetery on the graves of the dead who have no relatives left in the community" . . . What is perhaps even more important, several Branches report some study or exchange of ideas that has helped women *to create happier relationships within their own families.*

In its ultimate value doesn't such work stack up well with more spectacular projects? For if you think it through, in your own affairs or the affairs of the community at any level, isn't it true that "there is but one veritable problem—the problem of human relations?"

Ethel Chapman