

## LET OFFICERS CIRCULATE

**F**RUIT BASKET ALL change is a good rule for any organization whether it be the local branch of the Women's Institute or the government of the country. Too often the same executive is left to run our meetings year to year for the simple reason that the ladies at the head of things are willing to keep on.

But is this good? Often interest lags, the members get the feeling that it's the same old thing over again. Just the other day the president of a neighboring Women's Institute told me that the secretary had resigned and that "the members feel as though a chair had been taken out from under us."

Capable and worthy as Madam Secretary may have been, the branch had no one but itself to blame for that lost feeling. No one wanted to take over the job of recording the meetings, offering as excuse "but I wouldn't know what to do." That's where the first mistake was made: allowing the situation to arise where the members were too dependent on one.

The line of least resistance is not always the most practical one to take. How much wiser this branch would have been to have had a rule that a change of officers be obligatory every two years. I know of one Institute down around Kitchener that keeps every member on her toes because she knows that if she wants to continue in a good peppy "alive" group she must be willing to accept office.

Too many members attend Institute meetings for the social enjoyment; they are willing to bring a cake or sandwiches to the meeting, but will not bring any ideas or willingness to assume responsibility. After all, any group needs a life below the executive level. When a change of officers is the rule, the institute benefits by obtaining new viewpoints and livelier ideas.

Nominating committees are simply asking for headaches when they canvass the members for permission to put their names on the ballot. I've frequently heard the remark, "No use asking her, she won't do anything." The remedy for that is to forget about going around and asking members to take office; simply give it to them, and sit back and watch the results.

It's surprising the results that come from such action. I recall one member who remarked after six months of office holding, "Nobody is more surprised than myself that I have been able to hold office." That same lady brought a wealth of new ideas into the branch and from being purely a tea-drinker turned into a real worker.

Hurt feelings are a potential danger in any organization. Election time rolls around and Madam President has signified in unmistakable terms that she would like to continue being just that. So going on the line that "Minnie-May's feelings will be hurt if anyone

runs against her," Minnie-May goes in again as president and right there the group settles a little deeper in their same old rut. The annual meeting will see a nearly full membership in attendance but within a month or so the usual 15 or 20 members will make the regulars, where 35 should be coming out.

It would seem that I don't like Institutes but I do and Institute is the one meeting I look forward to each month. These criticisms are not all my own. I've gathered them up over a period of years by listening.

The retiring president can do a great deal to help her successor by really retiring and taking her place as an ordinary member. There is nothing more nerve-wracking to a newly-elected president, than to have the immediate past-president draw up as close to the table as possible with a pencil and paper in hand and make copious notes, nodding her head at each item of business or shaking it if there is any departure from the way of doing things established by herself. This is enough to make any new executor wonder why she ever took office! — Mrs. A. E. Lackie.

## "RURAL YOUTH AWAY FROM HOME

During National 4-H Club Week news-worthy happenings take place that are often not uncovered until after the delegates have returned home. This year for example, on learning that the train from Winnipeg would be late arriving in Toronto on Sunday morning, a committee of 4-H members organized an informal church service, with young people from every province represented taking part. The Service concluded with a collection, totaling \$18.51, which was forwarded to the Crippled Children's Hospital in Winnipeg.

## ANOTHER BETTER READING CAMPAIGN

**C**ASTLEMORE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE sponsored a "Better Reading Campaign" as a special project in 1955-56. The president, Mrs. W. Hunter, reports: We publicized our project through an exhibit of prize books and rules of the competition at two local fall fairs. Pupils from six district schools entered our competition which was divided into Junior and Senior classes. In September a letter was sent to each teacher, giving rules of the contest and book lists. Juniors were questioned on Nursery Rhymes, Fairy Tales such as Cinderella, Snow White, Bible Stories of Moses, David, Noah and others, Seniors on Tom Sawyer, Black Beauty, Treasure Island, Alice in Wonderland, Anne of Green Gables, etc. After the New Year a follow-up letter to each school gave the exact date of the Quiz and further explanation of our rules.

The Quiz was held in February at a Family Night social. Two Institute members who were former teachers acted as Quiz Masters