

# Roll Calls With Colour

By Margaret I. R. Lackie

Proof of a good press secretary is the ability to get her Women's Institute news out of the "neighbor notes" column and into a headline story either on the local page or on the first page of her community newspaper.

Editors get weary of the usual offering that begins "The Women's Institute of Horner's Corners met at the home of Mrs. Harry Homemaker with fourteen members present. The roll call was answered by each member giving her waistline measurement and paying a penny for each inch. Minutes of the last meeting were read and approved . . ." and so on down the usual dull routine listing of motions moved and passed.

In that roll call lies the kernel of the whole meeting and out of that came a little feature story that made members remember that Institute, gave a member who was sitting back and listening a chance to write a neat little idea that was picked up by a paper in a nearby town and appeared on the editorial page. Thus the local Institute was given a press report that really got around.

Here is the story that appeared in the local paper:

"Jarratt. A penny an inch for waistline measurements brought several dollars into the treasury of the Jarratt-Creighton Women's Institute when members answered the roll call at a recent meeting.

"Out came the tapeline and in went the tummies as each member tried to cut her money losses and when it was all over Madame Treasurer had quite a heap of pennies on the table."

This story was picked up by the Midland Free Press Herald and brought forth the following editorial:

"The waistline, seemingly a minor piece of data combined with those 38-25-38 figures coming out of Hollywood and Italy recently, came into its own when Jarratt Women's Institute met. Members were required to pay a penny for each inch of waistline. We know some men around Midland who would pay a pretty penny under such terms. Well, let's go girls! Up-one-two-three; down-one-two-three?"

Then in Letters to the Editor, the Herald ran this:

"Dear Editor — In reply to your editorial on the Jarratt-Creighton Women's Institute waistline,

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## A CREED

By Edwin Markham

There is a destiny that makes us brothers;  
None goes his way alone:  
All that we send into the lives of others  
Comes back into our own.

I care not what his temples or his creeds,  
One thing holds firm and fast—  
That into his fateful heap of days and deeds  
The soul of man is cast.

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## TO THE STRANGER IN CHURCH

In the vestibule of the Anglican Church of St. John the Evangelist in Edinburgh there is this hand-lettered, framed message to the stranger attending a service. Mrs. Penny of the Ontario delegation to the A.C.W.W. Conference saw it first and copied it for me.—Editor.

If after kirk ye bide a wee  
There's some may like to speak to ye;  
If after kirk ye rise and flee  
We'll all seem cauld and stiff to ye.

The one that's in the seat with ye  
Is stranger here than you, may be.  
Add you your soul to others' prayers  
An' be our angel unawares.

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may I say 'Hollywood, here we come'. When all the pennies were in, and the number divided by the number of members present, the result was an average waist of 26.7 inches. Does that figure not give the lie to the general belief that most farm women are, shall we say, 'rotund'? This should prove that almost nothing goes to waste, or waist, on the farm.

"So, here's to the busy farm wife and her ups and downs, not always of the up-one-two-three-down - two - three variety. Secretary - treasurer, Jarratt-Creighton Women's Institute."

See what I mean about an alert press reporter?

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Advantages of life in grandmother's day came in for a bit of a setback when Mrs. James Cook of Creighton, a member of forty-five years' standing in the Women's Institute, answered the roll call at the Jarratt-Creighton meeting.

Other members had given answers to the effect that grandmother had things pretty cozy, what with no rock-and-roll blaring forth from the radio, a slower pace, no automobiles tearing past school and home at breakneck speeds and raising a cloud of dust over everything, more visiting as a family unit, and so on.

"I think life today is pretty nice," spoke up Mrs. Cook, who admits to at least eighty years of age. "I thought it lovely today to be picked up in a comfortable car and driven to this meeting. My, it was a lot more comfortable than bouncing along in the heat and dust behind a yoke of oxen. I like the modern methods of heating and having water on tap, and I like the radio and television too."

Mrs. Cook finished up her roll call answer by adding that she hoped the next hundred years would see as many improvements as the last.

The final answer to the roll call came in a quiet voice from the corner, "There were no telephones in those days and gossip didn't travel quite so fast."