

EDITORIAL

LET'S GET ACQUAINTED WITH CANADA — In Home and Country's Winter 1959 issue there appeared a plea for letter friends. Miss Sybil Lessey, letter friend Secretary for the Associated Country Women of the World, wrote us that she had a long waiting list of A.C.W.W. members in England, Wales and the United States, all anxious to exchange letters with Women's Institute members in this country, and she asked if we could "launch a drive to encourage our members to write." We did this and the response was so overwhelming that Miss Lessey could not begin to supply a matching number of correspondents. To date we have had requests for letter friends from about 750 Ontario Institute women and they are still coming.

Evidently a lot of Ontario women would like to exchange letters with women in other countries. I've been wondering if anyone would like to write to women in other provinces of Canada. For though our ten provinces belong to one nation, sometimes we seem more remote from each other than we are from the British Isles or the farthest corner of America.

Our geography has something to do with this of course. When we look at a map of Canada we see the inhabited part stretched out like a ribbon along the southern boundary from coast to coast, with a tract of bushland separating Ontario and Manitoba, the Rocky Mountains cutting off British Columbia from the prairies, and in the far east, Newfoundland, half the time hidden in fog, out there by itself in the Atlantic Ocean. This is the Canada we love. And the more we see of the rest of the world the surer we are that no other country under the sun can compare with it.

But this "love of country" may be little more than an attachment to the spot where we live. How well do we know the whole of Canada: British Columbia with its busy ports, its giant trees, its valleys planted with orchards and cows on bits of green meadow; the Rocky Mountains white with the snows of centuries, jade green lakes and national parks and foothills stepping down to the prairies with their wheat and oil, their farms and ranches, their friendly, open-handed people. We have missed a colour not surpassed in Europe if we do not know the white farm houses of Quebec, the cities steeped in history, the villages with spires and ringing bells and carved wood and homespuns and the lilt of another language. Then, the Maritimes with their apple orchards and hospitable colonial houses, their fishing fleets and tight little settlements where people still play the pipes and speak the Gaelic, their many small universities that send graduates to posts of distinction all over the continent!

With all this to see in our own country, why do we always head south when we go on a motor trip?

And if we want "pen friends" why do we always look for them in a foreign country, when along with the interesting diversities of our provincial interests we have a common concern with other Canadian women to build a progressive, cohesive, God-fearing nation of our own? We should have much to write about.

The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada will hold their second national convention in June 1961 in Vancouver. May we hope that, in addition to the official delegates, many women from Ontario will attend as visitors, to get acquainted with women from other provinces and to see the West. In the meantime if we would like to cultivate friendships by way of letters, perhaps through our national office we could find someone to write to.

Ethel Chapman