

Information for Consumers

By Ruth Moyle

"STOCKTAKING" has, in many business houses, become a well established routine, post-New Year practice. So, borrowing a leaf from big business, let's "take stock" too, to sort out what we need, and what we don't need, in our kitchens. Let's look well and decide what changes are desirable — and possible — to increase the efficiency and to cut energy costs in our place of business.

And so, for the next few issues let's look at kitchens and kitchen equipment to see if by adding or subtracting, by lifting or by lowering or by-rearranging, we can discover inexpensive but effective solutions to some of our energy and time wasting problems.

I do hope no reader will feel that every idea suggested here can be duplicated exactly in every kitchen. Rather I hope *some* of the examples of good storage or organization of supplies and equipment, or for "sit down" work or rest areas, can be incorporated to some extent in many kitchens.

There is one point I would like to mention at the very outset. During a workshop on Home Management I attended this summer, I heard it referred to frequently. Even if it were possible to provide every one of us with a brand new "step saving" kitchen, it wouldn't solve every energy-saving problem for us. We still have to consider our work habits.

For example, in a well-planned kitchen, range and refrigerator may be ideally placed 5 or 6 feet apart. However, even when preparing the simplest of meals, this distance, short as it is, can quickly add up to 40 or 50 feet. Too often we forget that "our heads can save our heels" and instead of making one well organized trip to the refrigerator, we make eight or ten.

In other words sometimes, unfortunately, work habits lag behind our labor-saving equipment and arrangements. We continue to do some things the hard way because that's the way we've always done them. Which really isn't so surprising. Most homemaking tasks are repeated over and over again so frequently that we learn to do them without even thinking about them. Since changing to do things differently demands an expenditure of time and energy, we prefer the well known method. But often changing these well established ways is a necessary part of learning to cut down heavy or unnecessary energy expenditures.

So, as one expert in Home Management put it, "A well planned kitchen lay-out alone will never entirely insure the minimum of walking, standing, lifting and reaching and carrying; there is still the handicap of habit."

But now, back to some of the more common

kitchen problems: I've been taking a poll recently among homemakers to find out what each would like — if she could have it — in the way of a kitchen.

What I've learned won't surprise you. Some dream of a large kitchen with more space for family activities and storage. Others long for a small compact kitchen where just a few steps bring everything within reach.

But after the matter of size is considered, then they are all pretty much agreed on the same things. They want a kitchen that is attractive and bright to look at, but comfortable and convenient to work in. Unfortunately, the budget doesn't often allow us to scrap the old and build anew, and even remodelling can be far too expensive. Then is when we have to fall back on rearranging. It's quite surprising what a bit of shifting will do. And that is where we will start next time — the arranging or rearranging of kitchen equipment, to make the kitchen comfortable and convenient to work in, a time-saving, energy-saving, step-saving workroom.

B.C.'s Anniversary Book

LAST year the Women's Institutes of British Columbia celebrated their fiftieth anniversary, their oldest branch, Lake Hill having been organized on September 28, 1909 by our Ontario pioneer Institute worker Laura Rose, later Mrs. Laura Rose Stephen. The British Columbia Institutes' anniversary book "Modern Pioneers" carries an interesting study of Miss Rose's travels about the province that autumn organizing Institutes at places whose names are well known to us—Gordon Head, Chilliwack, Agassiz, Summerland, Salmon Arm, Nelson and many others. With notes and comments taken direct from Laura Rose's own diary, the report of this organization tour makes a "homey" sort of reading.

The number of branches has grown to 250—a good number in proportion to the rural and small town population of the province. The branches are organized in 17 Women's Institute districts and the anniversary book takes the province, district by district and outlines the history of each branch. There are sketches, too, of the Superintendents and the Provincial Presidents, four of whom were born in Ontario.

While "Modern Pioneers" is strictly a history, it has enough local colour to keep us reminded that we are reading about women in another province with a distinction all its own. And with our next national convention to be held in Vancouver in June 1961, we believe that Ontario Institute members, especially those planning to attend the convention would find "Modern Pioneers" very interesting reading. The price is \$1.25. Copies can be ordered from Mrs. E. Robinson, R.R. #2, Victoria, B.C.