

The President's Corner



Mrs. L. G. Lyburner
President F.W.I.O.

THESE are great days for women with challenges and responsibilities before them always. But we are not intending to concern ourselves at this moment with all women; we are, rather, going to consider the challenge which presents itself to members of this far-flung organization to which we belong.

Perhaps no other group of women have such far-reaching relationships as we enjoy today through our affiliations around the world and surely our opportunities are as great, if not more so, for doing great things than are those entertained by many women's groups. And this condition is not happenstance; it came about only because there were women of great vision and talent who believed that there was a place for women in the scheme of affairs around the world which, if used to the best advantage, could only be for the benefit of mankind everywhere.

Recently we listened with pride while the woman who first had this vision was eulogized by many persons when a plaque designating her as an historic person was unveiled at her girlhood home at St. George; and while we were filled with pride we were conscious too, that Adelaide Hoodless was a dedicated person who was not afraid to speak out for those things which she believed were right and to express criticism of those things she honestly felt must be changed, even enduring ridicule for her efforts. And we were certain too, that she did it not for personal honor or glory but because she was a woman dedicated to the performance of those things which she felt were needful and that in a day when women did not go about making public speeches. In her short life she left behind her so many fine things. We feel that our organization, the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario and all the affiliations of this first group, is one of the finest of those many things.

What, if anything, do we owe to this woman who in the sixty-fifth year of this organization has been thus publicly honored by the government of Canada and the many who attended the ceremony at St. George? We owe first of all appreciation that she had such a vision

and the determination to work for those things which she foresaw as being good and needful and if we are truly appreciative, then we too, owe a re-dedication at this time to the aims and objects of our organization so that those things for which we were organized truly become real and important to us — so much so, that they become of prime importance to us in our program of work to the exclusion of other activities which because of their very nature tend to minimize the support of our own work. We fear that somewhere along the way many of our branches have lost sight of the true purpose for which they became an organized group under the guidance of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario. We are fearful too, that many are more concerned with the business of others than the support and fruition of the work of their own organization and this is a matter for serious consideration.

Your organization never had so many opportunities for spreading around the world the gospel of peace and goodwill as it has today and that work is only hampered because our members apparently feel it more important to make other organizations well-known and beloved for their work rather than to use all the facilities their own organization has at hand for giving assistance to women in other lands around the world. What is it that we need to do, or have left undone, in order to persuade our members to take pride in the accomplishments of the Women's Institutes of Ontario? How can we persuade them that there are others who recognize the importance of this organization in the scheme of world affairs? How can we open the minds of our members to a realization that their work does not end with the things done in the branches and that every branch has a responsibility of prime necessity toward the work of the organization at other levels. How can we find words to emphasize that what is done at branch level is a reflection upon the entire organization whether it is for good or ill?

Early in September your President will be leaving Canada to go with the Canadian delegation of Women's Institute members to the Triennial Conference of the Associated Country Women of the World to be held in Melbourne, Australia. There, many large and important matters will be discussed and here again, the work to be done will come about only in so far as all of us have supported the international organization. Here, we shall have opportunity to speak of the things which your organization is doing in Ontario and we shall present your special gift to the Pennies For Friendship Fund. Here, we shall speak of the establishment of the 65th Anniversary Scholar-