

Special Programs and Projects

A Note to P.R.O.'s

The purpose of this Special Programs and Projects section is to give Public Relations Officers a spot in Home and Country where they can tell all the Institutes of the province about anything done in their own Institute which might offer a suggestion to other branches.

As we have explained in previous issues, we cannot give space to routine reports of meetings — unless the program is so original or outstanding as to give an idea to other Institutes. A particularly good subject for a topic, discussion, debate, motto or roll call would be welcome.

Some years ago it was decided that we could not report anniversary celebrations. These are of interest mainly in the local community where the participants are known and of course P.R.O.'s will see that they get into the local papers.

And please note that to produce an illustration we require a photograph, not the negative; and that we cannot make a cut from a colored picture or from a slide.

Perhaps the best way to see the sort of material we need for this section is to look at the topics in this and previous issues. Then, as P.R.O. for your branch or district or area, if you have a story that should be told, do, please, send it along.—Editor.

Community Christmas Carol Festival

By Edna M. Powell

IN FOREST in Lambton county, the Women's Institute is the oldest, independent ladies organization in the town and in 1959 the president at that time, Mrs. Harold Hall, suggested that the Institute sponsor a Christmas Carol Festival and if successful, continue it annually.

The Festival was based on the premise that it was to be a community endeavor regardless of race, creed or color. Every church in the town and surrounding district was contacted and its choir asked to sing two Christmas carols or hymns. One choir was asked to sing in Latin, another in Dutch and one rural school sang a French folk song. The Churches taking part were United, including a neighboring Ravenswood United, Presbyterian, Baptist, An-

glican, Roman Catholic, Baha'i World Faith, Gospel Hall, Christian Reformed Dutch, Pentecostal.

Each year the school kindergarten class is invited to open the Festival and they always perform in their appealing manner. Town and rural schools including the Kettle Point Indian Reserve, The Royal Canadian Legion choral group, the youth band, and every other musical group in the community has participated. This year something new was added: a choir composed of Institute members from the Ravenswood, Aberarder, Uttoxeter and Forest branches took part.

The District High School Board has always donated the use of the school auditorium and the teen-age young men in the district have acted as ushers as well as taking part in the program.

The Festival always has an elaborate closing number. The first year the High School Glee Club re-enacted the nativity scene in the stable—Mary, Joseph and the Christ Child with the shepherds, kings and wisemen laying their gifts at His manger while the Biblical story was read off-stage.

The second year the closing number was "Christmas 'Round the World." All new Canadians were asked to participate and each carried the flag of his homeland and spoke a few words in his native language. Some twenty-five large, colorful flags were brought to the manger and lowered before the Christ Child. The Royal Canadian Legion participated in carrying the flags from those countries that were not represented by a countryman.

The third year the nativity scene was shown and the teen-age boys and girls each carried a letter of the word "Christmas" that represented a gift to the Christ Child.

This year a dramatic "Story Cantata" was presented, entitled "The Sign of Peace." The opening scene showed the world being ruled by "Hatred and Strife" who were seated on the throne of power and assisted by four Imps—Greed, Prejudice, Selfishness and Injustice. Finally, Humanity, Truth, Christianity and World Brotherhood broke their chain of evil and set "Peace" on the world throne to rule.

A great deal of time and effort goes into the project each year as elaborate costumes, colorful lighting and stage decorations all add to the Christmas atmosphere. An effort is made to eliminate all commercial aspects of the season, such as the Christmas tree and Santa Claus, and there is no admission charge for the program. However, a collection is taken to defray expenses, and last year this collection was used by the Institute to adopt a little six-year-old Chinese girl from Hong Kong through the Save the Children plan. This year we hope to continue to help our adopted child.