

EDITORIAL

PROGRESS THROUGH PETITION AND PERSISTENCE: About ten years ago, a group of men and women in Toronto launched a crusade for the education of retarded children. They had retarded children of their own so no difficulty could discourage them. They got churches to loan classrooms. They enlisted the help of teachers — mostly well-trained, retired women, more interested in service than salary. And they kept education authorities reminded of the handicapped child's right to the education he needs and can take.

When the experiment began to prove that retarded children can be helped to develop through specialized teaching, the province gave some financial assistance. As the movement spread, Women's Institutes and other groups helped to support classes for the retarded children in their districts, but everyone knew that voluntary effort alone could never fully meet the need. So the organizations interested sent resolutions to the government asking for more support. Year after year the Department of Education received these appeals and from such varied groups that they could not be ignored. Probably the Department, already studying the problem, was only waiting for such a mandate from the people. Anyway, legislation was passed this year increasing the government grants for both building and operating schools for retarded children and for the transportation of the pupils. And it was announced that under a long-range plan already begun, the province will provide education for retarded children just as it does for other children.

For some years Women's Institutes have been asking for an amendment to the Succession Duties Act to allow a higher exemption on a man's estate willed to his widow. What gave special weight to this petition was that the same request came from about every women's organization in the country. This year legislation was introduced to raise the exemption on a man's estate going to his widow from \$50,000 to \$60,000.

The problem of hunters traipsing over farm property, letting down fences, leaving gates open, even shooting farm animals, has brought repeated protests from Women's Institutes, Federations of Agriculture and no doubt from other farm groups. In Ontario this year legislation was passed providing that a farmer can make a claim to the government for any animal shot presumably by hunters. The government will send an arbitrator to value the animal and if he is satisfied that the shooting was done by a hunter he will recommend reimbursement. The government will also try to track down the man who did the shooting.

Farm groups including the Women's Institute, have repeatedly appealed for government provision of loans to enable young farmers with industry, intelligence and character to get a start on a farm. Now they have their answer in the new Junior Farmer Establishment Act outlined in this issue.

Co-operating with the Consumers' Association of Canada our appeals to manufacturers have won several concessions, such as the sizing of children's clothing according to height and weight instead of age. In some other consumer problems we seem to be making headway.

So, "say not the struggle naught availeth." Through petition and persistence we do make progress. It means that we should not make resolutions lightly; we should be sure our premises are sound; we must keep away from the trivia that lower our prestige even when we have something to say worth saying. And we must be ready to join forces with others, recognizing that civic authorities have to do their best for all the people, not just for any pressure group.

Ethel Chapman