

The President's Corner

Mrs. Leonard Trivers,
President, F.W.I.O.



THE SPRING comes slowly up this way," wrote an English poet years ago. He might have been writing it for us this spring. Here in Northern Ontario we have had a cold and backward season, discouragingly so. Today being a holiday, the first long weekend of summer, I spent the afternoon in a long overdue digging of the flower beds. This occupation leaves plenty of time for the mind to go roving and, as I dug, I found myself thinking about the part that gardens have had in the lives of women down through the years.

Like most farm gardens, the flower beds here contain many of the old-fashioned, well-loved plants and each one has its history. Some have been brought for miles from an earlier home, some are gifts from neighbours here, some from friends afar, so that the sight of each one quickens thoughts of some pleasant time gone by.

My imagination carried me back to years before our time when settlers came here from lower Ontario, yes, even farther back, to the first pioneer women to come to our country. Far across the lonely miles of ocean they came, to set up homes in a land of freedom and opportunity. Or perhaps they came in covered wagons from the south, leaving their lovely homes there to start anew because of the ugly shadow of war. Well they knew the years of hardship that lay ahead, of hunger, cold and

loneliness before their lives would again be lived in comfort and prosperity.

Tucked away somewhere among their household treasures, these women brought the seeds, the slips or the roots of hardy, homey flowers and soon after their cabins rose in the wilderness you would find a lilac, a rose or a clump of Sweet William taking root along with the herbs they needed for medicine and for flavourings. Long before the day of psychiatrists these pioneer women recognized the fact that the hardest tasks are made lighter when we add a touch of beauty. These flowers added a note of cheer; they softened the raw contours of the frontiers of the forest and, best of all, they were a reminder of "home." As other women came to make their homes in the new lands, what a feeling of welcome and belonging it gave to be offered a root with which to start a garden of their own! As we drive past deserted farmsteads today we can still see the lilac and rose bushes standing, though the buildings may long since have fallen, brave beacons lighted by the pioneer mothers of years long past.

What do they say to us, these reminders of brave women long since gone? Do they not tell us that the things we prize so much today—comfort and security—were bought at a tremendous price of sacrifice and struggle and must not be lightly held or taken for granted? Do they not tell us that it is sacrifice and struggle, not comfort and security, that make a nation great? And do they not tell us, too, that we have a duty to share whatever we may have of courage and cheer with other wayfarers who need them, whether in our land or abroad?

We have truly a splendid heritage from our pioneer grandmothers. Let us always keep alive in our characters the flowers of courage, of adventure, and the zest for "new fields to conquer" which they cultivated in theirs.

Mary Trivers

Foods and Nutrition — Meat — cuts and how to cook them; Creative Cookery — making cooking an art as well as a skill; Catering for Crowds; Food Shopping; When Food Makes A Difference — a course on nutrition relating to family circumstances, age of members, etc.

Clothing and Textiles: Sew to Save Dollars and Make Sense; Focus on Finishes; More About Finishes; Belts and Buttonholes—clothing construction techniques and finishes that give clothes made at home a "custom-made" look; Choosing and Using Fabrics — wise selection of fabrics and clothing; Millinery choosing and making hats.

Home Furnishings: What's New in Home Furnishings; Window Treatment — making curtains and draperies; New Lamps for Old—a study of lighting and the designing and making of lamp shades and bases.

Home Management: A consumer workshop on saving time and energy in housework, the safe and efficient use of electricity in the home, the management of money.

Homecrafts: Rug-making, block printing, copper tooling, needlework, leathercraft, making gloves and moccasins.

Health Education: Home Care of the Sick, Hints for the Home Nurse, Safety Begins at Home.