

The President's Corner

Mrs. Leonard Trivers,
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WHEN THIS ISSUE reaches you we will be in the grip of winter. I hope that you will all have had a blessed Christmas season and that the New Year will bring you peace and satisfaction.

We are continually being reminded of the changing pattern of living in these fast-moving years. Nowhere is this change more apparent than in the life of a rural family. Not too many years ago the farm woman could expect to settle down after Christmas to a peaceful two-month period of knitting and quilting, with frequent pauses to feed the hungry wood stoves, while the storm winds howled about the house. Remember the frosted window panes, the cold trudge to school on stormy mornings, the sleigh-ride parties and the long-awaited visits from neighbors and relatives to break the monotony? Today the snowplows thunder past through the drifts by day and night so we may travel in heated comfort; the buses whisk our children off effortlessly to school; and every winter day is as busy as summer with its round of meetings, pleasure trips and curling. Those who have never lived in the days of fewer conveniences can but shudder to think of those primitive times; those of us who remember the more leisurely pace of living, and how much we appreciated the opportunity for a community gathering of congenial people, sometimes find ourselves wondering — is **all** change for the better?

I do not know what your opinions are. I am quite sure there is no cut and dried answer to a debate on the subject, though I am also sure that none of us would wish to bring back everything connected with life in the "good old days." I do think, however, that it is good for us to stop now and then to consider our present way of life, what we have gained, what, if anything, we have lost, and what we should attempt to change in the future. Leaders in adult education today have a name for such an activity. They call it "evaluation." If you attend a large conference or leadership

training school, shortly afterwards you will receive a questionnaire asking your opinions as to its success or failure, and for suggestions for improvement. From the replies, the people responsible for the program assess whether or not they have achieved their purpose, where in they have come short of their goals, and so they receive direction for further progress. I have seen these evaluation sheets used to good advantage at a few area conventions.

An "evaluation," then, is an examination of any undertaking. It begins with the foregone conclusion that such an undertaking must have a goal or purpose. It goes on to learn the opinions of those concerned as to how well we are achieving our goals. Finally, it provides a signpost to show where changes, if they are necessary, should be made. At the beginning of a new year, every one of us, if she is a thoughtful person should do an evaluation of her own life pattern. What are your goals? Should there be some changes made?

Our work as Women's Institute members may well be made the subject of evaluation. As a branch, or as a provincial organization, what are we trying to achieve? We have four main aims and objectives set out as our definite purpose in Women's Institute membership. How well are we fulfilling our purpose? In your opinion is your community a better, safer, friendlier, more tolerant place because there is a branch of the Women's Institute? Are you a better homemaker, a happier wife and mother, and a more useful citizen due to your membership in Women's Institute? Do other women in your locality want to become members through seeing the effects of membership in your life and that of your community? If we can give an affirmative answer to all of these questions we can honestly say that we are achieving our aims.

We might go on from here to an evaluation of our programs. An expression of candid opinion here may give us a glow of satisfaction, or it may point out the reason for failing attendance or dwindling membership. No business attempts to carry on without a regular stock-taking of its assets and liabilities. Let us, at the beginning of this year take time to take a look at ourselves, to give credit where credit is due and to redirect our efforts where we are missing the mark. We have accomplished much together since 1897, but in the words of one of our convention speakers, quoting from Robert Frost: "I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep, And miles to go before I sleep."

Mary Trivers.