

## EDITORIAL

**T**HE WIFE IN FARM FAMILY FINANCING: At the Nova Scotia Women's Institute convention this summer, I heard an exchange of views which left little room for doubt that the farmer's wife can have a significant role in the economics of the family farm. Evidently the Institute's director of home economics extension, Mrs. Florence M. Hilchey, has been carrying on quite a program on the management of household finances; and the Department of Agriculture's Extension Director, Mr. Walter G. Grant sees the importance of this in relation to the whole farm business.

After dealing with a woman's responsibility in the management of household expenditures, the conflict often arising where there is "a very uneven flow of income from the business to the home," and the importance of a farmer and his wife making joint decisions on the use of funds available, Mr. Grant turned to the question of family relationships where two or more members of a family share in the farm business. He said: "Each year we notice good young men, well trained, leaving our farms simply because they have not been able to discuss the business relationships with other members of the family." Mr. Grant suggested that farm women have a definite responsibility in this area.

Mrs. Keith Rand then gave us some idea of the part a woman can play in the smooth-running of a father-and-son farm partnership, when that woman is the father's wife and the son's mother. Mrs. Rand herself has a son just arriving at the stage for a father-and-son partnership; and as she spoke it seemed to us that the key person in the human relationships involved in such an enterprise is the woman who feels free to speak her mind to both men. Naturally the son's young wife does not want to make any pressing demands; but the boy's mother can be very definite about such things as private living quarters for each family, and a regular provision of funds for the running expenses of each separate household. She can look ahead, too, to plans for a place to live and an income when her husband comes to the age to retire from the partnership. Mr. Grant had already warned the women that they, with their husbands and families, should begin now to study how to plan an estate so that ample provision can be made for the future welfare of dependent members.

Mrs. Joan McLellan, on the subject of budgets and expense planning, touched on several methods of keeping accounts, and such practical measures as avoiding too many heavy outlays all at once — for instance, trying to see that children don't all need major clothing items in one year. Then she said: "Gone are the days when women never took any part in making the decisions about the farm or the small business. It is vitally important that you ask why, where, and how, from your husband. In today's world he needs to be able to talk over his business with you and you need to know what he is talking about."

Mrs. John F. Daniels spoke on the use of credit, its advantages and disadvantages; and what a bank manager means when he uses the three C's test — Character, Capacity and Capital, to determine whether a man or woman is a good or bad risk for a loan. Her talk would make a good beginning for a study of the actual costs in instalment buying; or the actual interest paid to a loan company; or, if you have a financial problem, why it is well to talk it over with your bank manager before you go to any other consultant.

These sketchy recollections give only the merest idea of a most awakening and entertaining half day's session of the convention. Some of the soundest ideas came out of the experience and the thinking of the women themselves; but of course they had been studying the economics of farm family living. We suggest that this would be a good study for Women's Institutes anywhere. Perhaps the local agricultural representative and the county or district home economist could give some help with it.

*Ethel Chapman*