

The President's Corner

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



OVERNIGHT, it seems, the leaves are turning colour on our northern hills, to spell the end of a "summer-that-was-not." We find ourselves caught up in the busy round of fall activities, and wonder how we can fit anything more into our crowded days. Wherever you go, you find that the Institute member is involved in almost every activity in her community — no wonder the days go by so quickly.

Autumn, this year, marks a very special experience for some of us, as we take part in the International Conference in Dublin. From the accounts in the newspapers of disturbances abroad, we know that many of the lands where we have sister members are going through periods of struggle and upheaval just as our own country is doing, though theirs are more violent. It will be interesting to meet with the women of these lands, to try to bridge the language barriers, and to learn something of their way of life, their "hopes and dreams the same as mine."

Autumn, this year, marks another turning point as the term of office of the president comes to an end. For the last time I shall have the pleasure of meeting with you at Area Conventions, and to those who may not be present, may I here express my appreciation for all of the support and cooperation you have given during these three years. Such a turning point reminds us once more of the saying that "Time and tide wait for no man." Looking back over the past three years, there is, I hope, room for satisfaction and a measure of pride in some of the things we have accomplished together. It is natural, too, to feel some pangs of regret for the things which might have been done. How often we can see, when we look backward, the things we might have thought of, or might have taken time to do, which would have been of great value. This looking backward brings to mind an article I once read about "Hindsight and Foresight," in which the writer talked of the futility of looking back to see where one had missed the mark, and the importance of trying to forecast the results of a course of action before beginning. It is said

that a genius is a person who can see the effects of a project at the start, while the ordinary person is concerned with the means of carrying it out. Just as an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, so an ounce of foresight is worth a pound of hindsight.

The use of hindsight, in the aritele, dealt with hindsight in the sense of looking back upon our errors, which can only be useful to help us avoid repeating them. It is a sobering thought, but we must all accept the truth of the quotation from Omar Khayyam "The moving finger writes, and having writ, moves on, and not our effort nor our tears can erase one jot or tittle of it."

We look back with pride on the splendid work of the Women's Institute since 1897. With foresight, they saw the needs of their time, and met them with results which we now enjoy in our homes, schools and communities. This kind of hindsight makes us very proud of our pioneer members. We cannot live, today, merely by hindsight of their accomplishments. We must catch a new vision of what the work of the Women's Institute can be in our present day, and use foresight in choosing new projects.

There is need for foresight in every phase of our Women's Institute effort. It is easy to become comfortable, doing the things we have always done, but there is a danger that we become a small group set apart from the community, becoming ingrown. When we plan our program, let us plan for activities to interest all of the women in the community, activities which will keep abreast of the trends in adult education and all the other exciting things which affect homemakers. Let us plan, too, to have a delegate at every district, area of provincial gathering, so that we may feel ourselves a part of the total organization, and gain a wider perspective of its aims. Let us use foresight in choosing the delegate who will bring the report back to the branch so that none of the inspiration may be lost.

As you elect your board directors at the Area Conventions this fall, I hope that you will use foresight in their choice. Remember that your board director will help to determine the direction of Women's Institute work during the coming years, and that she will be one of the persons from whom the future president will be elected. Choose thoughtfully.

While there are bodies to be nourished, minds and souls to be nurtured in our homes, careers to be chosen, and democracy to be preserved, there is a place for the concerted effort of women through our Women's Institute. Looking back, we ask ourselves, "Have we done all we could?" Looking forward, we ask, "Is there something further we can do?" "Without vision the people perish."

Mary Trivers