

# Editorial

When members of the Ontario Women's Institutes and others receive this issue of Home and Country we will be well into the year 1970 and the decade of the 70's. It is the inclination of most people when entering a new year or a new decade to reminisce a little.

Many things happened in the 60's. Two of the most outstanding and two that may have the most far-reaching effects are man reaching the moon, and the changing attitudes of young people. Both of these occurrences represent a crossing of horizons, a break-through.

The sight of a man putting his foot on the moon created in us a feeling of strange awe. It was as though a door never before opened was thrust back and we were given a glimpse of an exciting new future. The scientific implications of the moon landing are so incomprehensible that most of us let our thoughts linger thereon briefly or not at all. And yet we cannot but feel an excitement when we anticipate the next development in this "stranger than fiction" story.

The unrest or revolution among the younger generations is a development which came to a climax in the 60's. The trend in education is to encourage students to observe, to think for themselves, to ask questions, and to act independently. Parents, teachers, professors and departments of education have been promoting this new concept, and some of them are now squirming uneasily when the students turn the spotlight on the habits, thinking and values of their elders. In too many cases the values and the morals of the older generations have not measured up and young people are finding that, "The gods have feet of clay," and so are confused and rudderless in the process of growing up.

What of the Women's Institute in the 70's? The overall effect of this organization since its founding is hard to assess. The impact of the Branches in the communities has been recorded in yearly reports and visible changes in the communities; but this tells only part of the story. The intangible effects in the lives of the people, in their homes, and in the lives of children in those homes is quite impossible to measure or record.

The future? For an organization, age does not mean physical and (often) mental degeneration as it does for a human. It means either of two things—that the organization has outgrown its objectives and has passed its period of usefulness and should be allowed a dignified demise; or that the organization is firmly established with its objectives still meaningful and still fulfilling a need. The organization should now be mature in its thinking and program planning, and selective in choosing those projects which it supports.

Careful examination of the objectives points directly to the duties of the woman in the home—the mother, the homemaker. The old concept of the home where the father's word was law is changed. The role of the parents is more and more becoming a partnership, and ideally, with the children as junior partners.

Even so, the woman has a special role for which she needs preparation and assistance. Being a homemaker is not a simple occupation. It requires many special skills. The Women's Institute is the only organization with an objective to give assistance to women in this demanding role. It is the only organization with an objective to assist the woman in her personal development, in discovering her skills and talents for leadership.

Mothers in the home, the leaders of 4H Clubs, are developing citizens.

Entering the 70's it would appear that the Women's Institute should be entering its best years. We are now reaping some of the harvest of the hard work of members of earlier days who struggled to establish the organization in the communities. Our objectives are still up to date. It is reasonable to think that we are getting members now who are joining because they have decided that the Women's Institute is the organization to which they want to give their spare time.

What will happen in the 70's to us personally, to Canada, to the Women's Institute is not known. A commentator, reviewing the 60's, pointed out that concern for people had increased in those years. May we hope that that feeling of being responsible for our fellow men will increase and so we will increase our efforts to help.

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