



## The President's Corner

Mrs. Austin S. Zoeller, President, the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario.

Knowing what we want and having the ability to attain our goals is quite an accomplishment for Women's Institutes today.

As citizens we should be able to distinguish the proper dimensions and be able to ascertain the rights of individuals, government and industry.

When we think of all the requests made to school boards, both in the area of high costs and the mechanics of school room procedure, it appears that we are concerned. Where are our rights? Where are theirs? If we feel education costs are too high, we doubtless have a right to speak out. If we feel the teaching system is wrong, is this our right? Who are more qualified to know the best procedures than the educators of our day? Do we as parents really know? We rely on the realtor to assist us when buying property. We don't tell our dentist what is wrong with our teeth. Then is it right for us to tell the teacher how to teach?

We ask for more and stricter drug control. We send resolutions to the Government asking them to do a better job, to be the watch dog for our society, but when is the citizen responsible or is it the responsibility only of Government? Is it good enough in the Seventies to say we are concerned enough to propose a resolution and pass it on to the shoulder of Government? In today's world have we failed a little as citizens? Is the world moving so fast that we cannot comprehend this escalation? Are our citizens weak when they fail to take a stand, fail to guide the children in a better way of life?

Do we need a crutch — the generation gap — or some other excuse, or can it be we've lost the art of listening? This valuable communication must be with us every day of our lives and just not when we are in the mood.

When we were born, the nursery rhyme — the cow jumped over the moon was a fantasy but now in the Seventies we're not too sure.

The fact that we can now walk up to the counter of the airways office where they push a button and tell us there is room on a flight or it might seem unreal that we can push a button on the panel of our car and the trunk opens, and yet we accept it. Funny though, we still have the flies and mosquitoes and we worry about pollution and personally do very little about them. We leave it to the other fellow.

We have a house being built a short distance from us and we don't even know who is building it. Years ago we would have been down asking if there was something we could do.

The world seems so impersonal and yet, to travel to an Associated Country Women of the World conference and you'll meet ladies who will ask you to their home, extend hospitality and we'll enjoy every minute of being together.

Sometimes I wonder if we've lost the art of just being ourselves. Has it come to the point where we feel we must be bigger, better, more affluent, more sophisticated than we really are? We talk about the steaks we eat when perhaps the fare is more often weiners and eggs. We tell about the places we've seen far away and we've not seen the historical sites close to home.

If we're farmers, we're worried about the rain and that we'll not be able to harvest the beans, or that the fields are so wet for the corn. We're worried about the strikes in industry knowing that many people will be out of work. The computer will take more and more of the unskilled from the labour force.

It seems you have to be with a group of close friends before you can really be yourself and talk about the things that really matter. It's only natural that we want to talk about the successes, never the failures.

Don't we like just being ourselves any more or telling it the way it is?

Margaret Zoeller

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