

# *F.W.I.C. Citizenship Essay*

## *The Second Century Challenge To Women*

By Mrs. M. Luther  
Aylesbury, Saskatchewan

Ed. Note — *This essay was written for the Senator Cairine Wilson, F.W.I.C. Citizenship Competition. It won first place in the Saskatchewan Competitions and second place in the F.W.I.C. Competitions when the award winners were announced at the F.W.I.C. Convention in Winnipeg, August 1970.*

O Canada! Where pines and maples grow,  
Great prairies spread, and lordly rivers  
flow,  
How dear to us thy broad domain  
From East to Western Sea!  
Thou land of hope for all who toil!  
Thou True North, strong and free!

—R. Stanley Weir.

Because Canada has now embarked on its second century, this second verse of the well-known poem, "O Canada", truly describes this great country of ours. It is indeed a country to be proud of with its majestic mountains, its swift flowing rivers, its dense forests and its vast stretches of farm land.

True, it is, that for over a century the peoples of Canada have lived and worked together in peace. Crops have not been strafed by fire and bombs have not exploded our cities. Only by looking back over the past one hundred years do we realize the great progress that has been made. And it has been sturdy men — and women — who have over the years, laboured long and hard to accomplish all that we now have. Theirs was a time of challenge just as to-day, we too face challenges, perhaps of a different nature but challenges just the same.

On January 20th, 1961, the late president of the United States, John F. Kennedy in his Inaugural Address spoke these words. "Ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country." These unforgettable words can be applied to Canada as well, and they offer a challenge to everyone interested in the welfare of our country. There are so many things that we as women can do for our country. Lead honest, upright lives, obey the laws of our land, thus setting a good example for future generations. Let us take an interest in the affairs of our country, exercising our

right to vote and taking an active part in the political world, if possible. Far too few women become involved in the political sense, here in Canada. I believe there is no reason for this, for women are as brilliant and responsible as men in this field.

With Canada, referred to as "The Melting Pot of Nations" let us extend a feeling of friendship and brotherhood to members of different ethnic groups, remembering that we can learn from them as well as they from us.

I see a challenge to all women in the meaning and meditation of the prayer, "A Club Woman's Creed" written by Mary Stewart, a noted California educationalist and author. Not only is this a guide for women organized into clubs, but individuals in their day-to-day living will find it a challenge to live by in their actions and their deeds.

Another challenge to women in this Canada's second century is education. Never before has so much stress been placed on it. Our universities are overflowing with students, mothers and grandmothers are going back to school for upgrading or for further study. There seems to be a new standard of excellence in education. Mrs. Gates, national convener of Education for the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada states: "Do not condemn the changes in our educational systems, but learn about them. This will lead to understanding and acceptance." Because *our children are our most valuable resource*, we must encourage them at school, show we are interested in what they are learning and see that they are educated to the full extent of their talents. No country can move ahead unless its citizens are educated.

For education is like a road that never ends. How far down the road we go depends on us. This passage from Mrs. Ulrich's presidential address in Saskatoon in 1968 is indeed challenging. "To-day we must be educated, we must gear ourselves to the great strides civilization is taking. We must ever be learning — perhaps in our later years, not the formal kind, but learning just the same."

Then there is the challenge to women in the labor force. It is becoming more evident that

*Essay continued on page 40*