



The President's Corner

Mrs. Harvey Noblitt,
President the Federated
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Driving home along a provincial highway a few nights ago, I was struck with the parallel between our system of roadways and the communications in our Women's Institute organization.

In the case of rural people the most numerous roads are those about our homes — our lanes, the paths to the barns, the garden and the fields. To each of us these are the most important. They carry the traffic that plays a part in conducting the daily affairs of the home: the business of making a living, of nurturing and raising our children, of entertaining our friends, and of providing a beautiful setting for our daily lives. Here is the basis of society. Here the success of the home depends on the co-operation of each member with each shouldering his share of the responsibilities and each creating an image of that home.

These might be likened to the channels of communications of the Branch, the most important part of our organization where we work to carry out our aims and objectives as indicated in our Handbook. Here too, it takes the co-operation of each member to make a thriving, active Institute and each member reflects an image of her Branch.

When we have needs beyond the Branch we require a longer roadway and this is like the roadway leading from a home to the village — our District Women's Institute. Here we can share our knowledge and experiences and provide finances just as the farmer takes his produce to the village, buys goods, gains from and contributes to the welfare of the village. Here much of the traffic halts and returns to its point of origin.

Many things are not available in a village and so there are roads, often improved ones, that lead to towns. These provide a wider range of services where more people are involved and larger projects are carried out as in the Women's Institute Area.

So there are the roads that lead to the super highways which take us to the centres of provincial governments in cities — the provincial

level of the Women's Institute where the fundamental matters affecting all the members are conducted.

A road need be only good enough to handle the traffic in its particular locality. One doesn't need a controlled access highway to get to the village any more than one can expect to move heavy traffic along a dirt road.

Of course inefficiency at each point can produce bottlenecks and slow the traffic. For example, in our Branches each convener compiles, from her notes, a comprehensive and concise report of all that has been done and learned in her convenership that year and sends it on, in plenty of time to the District Convener. Co-operation here is vital to prevent bottlenecks that delay the work of the District Convener. She, in turn, must choose what seems most important and valuable from the Branch reports and send her report, in plenty of time to the Area Convener, and so the process is repeated to the Provincial level.

To provide the speediest and smoothest flow of traffic, only the most road-worthy vehicles are best. So it is with our communications — the most efficient personnel expedite matters. We need to be concerned and take great care that we choose the best possible officers and conveners for the tasks that are to be done. If we do this we can look forward to an efficient set of roadways over which the Women's Institute traffic can glide with a minimum of effort and a maximum of benefit to all.

These are things we might all well keep in mind as we approach the District Annual Meetings and Area Conventions.

Very soon after this issue of Home and Country comes off the press, about two hundred members from Ontario will be travelling the road to attend the Federated Women's Institute of Canada convention in Banff, Alberta. All of us there, by our actions, our words, and co-operation will be communicating the image of the Ontario Women's Institutes to others attending. We have a fine tradition to uphold! Our delegates will have a responsibility when they return, of reporting fully to their Branches, Districts and Areas. It will not be sufficient to report that the Convention was enjoyed, and that Banff was beautiful; or that you heard a fine talk. You need to say why you enjoyed it, what was beautiful about Banff and give the message the speakers tried to convey. Similarly, with the business that comes out of the meeting, all the important items should be reported.

Then in 1974 the long road will lead to Perth, Australia, to the top level of our organization and back again.

Bernice Noblitt