



## *The President's Corner*

*Mrs. Harvey Noblitt, President the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario.*

Here we are well into a new year. Whether we stepped into it thinking of it as going through a gate, standing at a door, or looking through a window to a new space of time, it is an opportunity and a challenge to contribute to the progress of the world according to our abilities and circumstances.

We probably did not accomplish all our aims and objectives last year; some of them will have to be carried over and new ones added in 1974. But objectives and plans we must have or we will be like Stephen Leacock's man who got on a horse and rode off in all directions.

One of our first objectives in the W.I., it seems to me, should be to recognize the value of our organization. I often wonder if we really realize the "pot of gold" the W.I. really is. Some of you will remember the story of the boy who lived on a mountain side. He worked hard helping his parents on their rocky farm. Often he paused to gaze in wonder as the sunrise flooded the valley and he vowed that, when his father gave him a day off, he would go and find the windows of gold on the houses down there. The rest of the story is told in the poem:

There is a legend that has often been told  
Of the boy who searched for THE WINDOWS OF  
GOLD;

The beautiful windows he saw far away  
When he looked in the valley at sunrise each day,  
And he yearned to go down to the valley below  
But he lived on a mountain that was covered with  
snow

And he knew it would be a difficult trek,  
But that was a journey he wanted to make.  
So he planned by day and he dreamed by night  
Of how he could reach THE GREAT SHINING  
LIGHT . . .

And one golden morning when dawn broke through  
And the valley sparkled with diamonds of dew  
He started to climb down the mountainside  
With THE WINDOWS OF GOLD as his goal and his  
guide . . .

He travelled all day and, weary and worn,  
With bleeding feet and clothes that were torn,  
He entered the peaceful valley town  
Just as the golden sun went down,  
But he seemed to have lost his "Guiding Light",  
The windows were dark that had once been bright,  
And hungry and tired and lonely and cold  
He cried "Won't you show me the WINDOWS OF  
GOLD?"

And a kind hand touched him and said, "Behold,  
High on the mountain are the Windows of Gold" —  
For the sun going down in a great golden ball  
Had burnished the windows of his cabin so small . . .

Then there is a Mexican story which goes like this:

There once was a diamond in the gizzard of a poorly feathered hen. It fulfilled its mission of a grinding wheel with resigned humility. It was accompanied by stones from the ant hill and two or three pieces of glass. It earned a bad reputation because of its hardness. The stone and the glass avoided it. The hen was blessed with good digestion because the facets of the diamond ground her food to perfection. Each day, more cleaned and polished, the diamond rolled around within the gizzard.

One day the kitchen maid began to prepare the chicken for the table. Full of hope, the diamond came into the light and shone with all its inner fire. The maid didn't even recognize it and let it run into the sewer to be re-covered with grease and grime.

Our gold and our diamonds are right there in the structure and objectives of our W.I. and in each member of every Branch across the province. The member who, like the boy in *The Golden Windows*, finds the value in her organization will appreciate it and get much more from it than the one, who like the kitchen maid, does not recognize value when she sees it.

A second objective we might well set ourselves is to try at all times to carry out the aims of the W.I. as listed on page six of the Handbook. Perhaps it would help to read them over at the beginning of each meeting along with the *Mary Stewart Collect* with the idea in mind that the aims be implemented with tolerance, understanding and kindness as suggested by the *Collect*.

Even though we recognize the value of our organization and try to develop its ideals, our efforts will, like the diamond in the chicken, go down the drain and be lost forever if we fail to keep getting new members to carry on our work in the future. The results of the membership drive have been excellent to date. Having a membership convener is a splendid way to keep reminding us of our 20% objective. Perhaps each of us could, during the year, assume the personal duty of getting one new member. How wonderful it would be if we could!

As we go forth into 1974 let us face issues with enthusiasm, wisdom, tolerance, and most of all, with courage. In Sir Walter Raleigh's "*Kenilworth*", Queen Elizabeth gave Sir Walter a diamond ring with which he wrote on the window pane, "Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall". The Queen completed the couplet thus: "If thy mind fail thee, do not climb at all". Let it never be said of us that "our minds fail us" as we strive for better and greater accomplishments in our Women's Institute.

**Bernice B. Noblitt**

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And every cover is a door  
That turns on magic hinges.

Nancy Byrd Turner