

## What's it worth?

How much is it worth? At every turn we are concerned about this statement. Usually we think of the worth, as valued in dollars. However, "worth" can be many things. The degree of worth is determined by the individual; and can range from friendship to standards.

How do we measure the degree of worth of the Women's Institutes? Partly, this is dependent on our own values and partly on our expectations of the organization. Often we look at the advantages from our own point of view without questioning how much of ourselves we might give to the organization.

When we hear it said, "There wasn't anything worthwhile in the meeting for me", it is a genuine concern. What does seem to be wrong? Is the individual's expectation too high or are programs not filling the need? It takes working together and planning to present a meaningful meeting. We must create in the minds of all members a keener sense of responsibilities and a fuller realization of the fact that the benefits derived through organizational work are dependent to a very large degree upon the personal effort of those concerned.

It has been demonstrated over the years by the membership, that the regular meetings of a branch is a contributing factor to a successful Institute. The manner of measuring the "worth" of a programme of the local branch is difficult to ascertain. The whole philosophy of the members must be examined. What does the membership want, and where are they going?

The aims and objectives must be defined and the programmes in turn should emulate the objectives. Long time objectives should be kept before us, a fine example is the Erland Lee project. An organization needs such a project always. This creates a sense of belonging to and becoming a part of — it gives all members a common target with one goal. It binds the membership together and involves the members with that intangible something which gives us a sense of pride in belonging. However, every Branch has its specific and immediate aims and in proper programme building we should not lose sight of our reasons for programme planning. The local situations must be analyzed because an effective programme must be built up out of the situation where it is to function. The worth of the WI is to plan programmes around the needs of the community. The old Chinese quotation is quite appropriate "Now you see, it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run twice as fast as that".

What is Women's Institute worth to you? Take nutrition, it's been the talk of the country since Nutrition Canada survey was undertaken and as the Minister of National Health and Welfare Marc Lalonde says "The challenge lies ahead for individual communities. New means of conveying nutritional knowledge to the consumer in meaningful terms also belongs high on the priority list of tasks ahead."

The Home Economics Branch has already set a goal for themselves. Nutrition workshops in every Women's Institute District in Ontario, commencing this Fall. This really isn't new, for every course ever designed by the Food specialists has always had basic nutrition in mind, and every Women's Institute Branch ever taking a course has been mindful of well balanced meals. That isn't to say we always do as we're told, but it does say, we were told. It might very well be, the Fall of '74 should change our food consumption habits and as a result families will benefit. So we really will come back full circle — teach a mother and you teach a family.

As present day Women's Institute members, we have a tremendous responsibility to carry on the work of a great organization. Mr. Erland Lee and Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless pioneered problems in their day — history will record we were the pioneers of our day. What are you planning and how much is it worth?

*Margaret Zoeller*