



The President's Corner

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

Dear W.I. Members:

Congratulations to all of you who became new officers and Conveners at Branch Annual meetings and your District Annuals in April and May. You will have the opportunity now of fulfilling one of the objectives of the Women's Institutes, that of developing leadership. I hope that you are all facing your new positions with enthusiasm and with a genuine desire to make that position a better one than it has ever been before. I think it was John Kennedy who said words to the effect, "Think not what the office can do for you, but what you can do for the office", and this would be applicable here.

Many of you will feel nervous and perhaps inadequate at first. There is nothing wrong with that as long as you have the desire to learn; to make the W.I. a better organization because you have played a part in its growth. The current story of Jonathan Livingston Seagull by Richard Bach is an interesting little narrative concerning what can be accomplished by those who are ambitious to learn. Jonathan was eager to rise above the garbage haunted by the usual horde of screaming seagulls — to keep rising higher and higher, falling, near tragedy, but always with determination, rising to try again; learning; discarding; making mighty efforts. He said, "We **can** lift ourselves out of ignorance, we **can** find ourselves as creatures of excellence and intelligence and skill. We **can** be free!" And as he learned more he exclaimed, "How much more there is now to living!"

Always the flock held him in shame, accused him of "reckless irresponsibility, of violating the dignity and tradition of the Gull family".

How downcast and miserable he was! But he kept urging himself to greater heights, to greater accomplishments.

"The only true law is that which leads to freedom, there is no other," he said, "that freedom is the very nature of being."

Some of the flock scoffed saying he was special, gifted and divine, but he sighted others who had learned to do as he did. He replied, "No more than you. The only difference, the very only one is that they have begun to understand what they are and have begun to practice it." Once Jonathan convinced them that they had no limits to learning, he had many apt pupils.

Have you ever questioned in your mind a practice of your Branch? You scour the Handbook and the

Branch Bylaws, if you have any, but find no justification for the practice. When you begin to enquire from the members you find that this was just a practice that, like Topsy, had just grown! But while it may have been founded in good common sense years ago, it is now not very relevant. Or if it is still relevant and proven a good practice, should it be made a Branch bylaw? Perhaps as you begin the year of W.I. meetings, it would be an idea to take a look at your Branch and see if such practices exist and if so, what the membership now feels should be done about them.

At your District Annuals your Board Directors brought you their reports from the Semi Annual Board meeting in April. This was your business based on decisions made by them on your behalf.

More and more is being expected of Board Directors as W.I.'s grow. More often they are being asked for your views and for other information from your subdivisions. Please recognize them for the important officers they are and keep them informed. Involve them in as many of your activities as you can; ask their advice and let them do things for you. The more they know about their subdivision, the better they can represent your interests at Board. Since their travelling and living expenses are paid by FWIO only for the sessions on the Provincial Board and for attending the district annuals in their own sub-division and their own Area Convention, it would be a courtesy on your part to offer to pay those expenses when they attend any of your branch, district or area functions to which you invite them as board director.

We will be looking forward to a few of you joining us on the long flight to Perth, Australia, in October. It promises to be a wonderful experience.

Wishing you all a happy, healthful summer.

Sincerely,
Bernice B. Noblitt

"If I could have but just one plea
I think that that one prayer would be
With all that such a prayer portends
"Lord make me worthy of my friends."

Help me to be the kind of person
That loyal friends believe I am
Help me to be as true and fine
As they believe — these friends of mine

Give me the courage under stress
That they expect me to possess;
And when they smile and look at me,
Oh, let me be, Lord, what they see!

Help me all pretense to forego,
And simply, without pomp or show,
Repay with true sincerity
The loyal faith they have in me.

And if sometimes I may have erred,
In any thought or deed or word,
Then help me Lord, to make amends —
Lord, make me worthy of my friends."

(Helen Lowrie Marshall)