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*Between  
The  
Lines*

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Mrs. Clarence  
Diamond  
President  
Federated  
Women's Institutes of  
Ontario

Dear WI Members:

1978 is another new beginning and no matter how you greeted it, this unmarked page is a chance to live life more fully, more humanely, less selfishly and very enthusiastically. But this new year also marks the start of a new decade for our organization. From your anniversary celebrations last year I am sure you will have drawn new inspiration for a revitalized Women's Institute. Eighty years is an outstanding milestone, the organization was founded to meet a need and still does. We have been reminded of the debt we owe to those who have gone before and laid down the objectives we can never outgrow because they have been updated with vision and common sense. You are still women of vision who will see the needs in the years ahead and keep alive those sparks of knowledge, goodwill, truth and beauty in what has come to be a very materialistic world. Perhaps there has never before been more need for this vision and resourcefulness than today when gadgets seem to count for more than graciousness. We will always need to create tangibles that will give strong character to our living.

And then this new year is also a serious beginning for me as a new chapter in my life has been opened by my election as your Provincial President. May I say a very sincere "Thank you" for this honour as I humbly accept the responsibility with an assurance to you that I will try to merit your confidence by serving to the best of my ability. With your co-operation we can enthusiastically approach this ninth decade in WI work with a healthy curiosity about what is going on in today's world. With a keen sense of responsibility we can prove, by our studies and our actions, that we are tolerant, understanding and aware of the needs of others.

Naturally we take pride in our past but as we pause and look ahead one factor already emerges. We are not alone on the organizational bandwagon seeking new recruits for our membership ranks. But who are they and where can they be found? I would like to challenge that we have not tried hard enough to involve nor invited our neighbours to participate in our monthly meetings. Let us take this as a personal member blitz as we sit down and think about our own communities and do something about including those who have not yet seen the light of our educationally-oriented meetings. There is now no such thing as the iso-

lation of most rural people from city influence or urban people from the country way of living. Six years ago the subjects under our Convenerships were changed to suggest more appealing avenues for women no matter where they lived. Not all patterns of living are good or bad but each of us needs to discuss and understand the other's viewpoint. If we are truly programing with current new ideas under our objectives, then we will meet the needs of ALL women in our individual districts.

We appreciate the privilege we have of belonging to our organization and the freedom we enjoy to plan and think things out for ourselves. That may mean we need to change some of the ways we have always done things as we aim for MORE goals and set priorities for meeting them. Our structure gives guidance and encourages us to research and discuss today's issues but are we assuming our responsibilities fully? We want a fresh enthusiastic communication in our communities initiated by women of ALL experiences.

At our Area Conventions our Home Economists alerted us to many energy conservation means but did we just go home and think 'that affects the other fellow not me'? We need to discuss our problems and take action as to the way we, as individuals, can save. Two years ago the Home Economics Branch conducted Nutrition Workshops in all of our WI Districts. With what constructive programing did we follow up? Have you ever planned a study on food additives and their effects or taught your members to read the labels of ingredients on food purchase in the supermarket? Our WI has always based its programing on being the medium through which the member and her family could learn to live more nutritionally but also become better informed and thus a better citizen. Changes are with us and we need to discuss the problems of others as well as our own in today's society for family life only fails when humans fail.

The old garment of living does not fit any more. We have to appreciate a backward look at our achievements but if we want to live comfortably in this world all of us must let out the seams of our thinking and gain more knowledge and understanding. Let us destroy the myth that education is over at the end of certain completions, like retirement, and so we will put a period there. Education is a lifelong experience and we can put a comma here and there and go on alert in our times to the goals we want to reach in creating a more peaceful and understanding world. The WI is still concerned whether the beautiful is destroyed, whether the sensitive and tender are bruised, where there is injustice in all parts of our world, and what is being done about these. Our co-founders, Mrs. Hoodless and Mr. Lee, were not afraid to step out in untrodden ways and try to make improvements for the benefit of those who followed and we must not lose that fire.

Future progress in our organization will depend on our attitudes and individual acceptance of the challenge to gain new members and make our organization still more farreaching in our own country. The choices and plans we make today will determine our future when tomorrow arrives.

*Clarence Diamond*