

Women's Institute

home. I want to be able to look forward to a meeting that stimulates my thinking, and encourages me to not miss a single meeting.

You realize I have been very negative, for indeed no meeting could have all those flaws. Lest you think for one minute I'm preaching or nagging — believe me I care so very much about the WI, I just want every single member to do their very best for an organization that has tremendous — and the network structure already set in motion all over the province — toward becoming a strong voice.

An important forward step into the future is to assess the worth of your meetings. What did you learn from your last meeting?

Are we the organization in Ontario, filling the quiet needs in the communities, doing the good and kind deeds that are almost forgotten in today's society?

If you wish to remain low-key and the majority of WI members wish it to be so — fine. This is the way we are and this is the way we shall continue to go, if we do not desire change. If you have no wish to become a high profile organization, then there is no use developing ways and methods for change.

It's entirely up to you — the individual member.

On the other hand: Would you like a high profile organization? One that when changes, are being instigated by industry, government or other organizations, might be asked our opinion. Or are we timid about becoming a high-profile organization — a voice that might have to stand up and be counted?

Where would this lead us? If the decisions were to become controversial would you, the membership, accept those decisions? Along with a higher profile, might we be looked upon as a pressure group? Do we want that? If Government were to ask our advice and we respond, would we be looked upon as a political arm?

Are we prepared to settle down and work hard and come up in a short space of time with answers, briefs, opinions? Is the overall

membership willing to accept the decisions made, especially on some of the current concerns of the day?

There is no use striding in the direction of change, if the majority of members are not interested and do not want it.

I feel the time has come for the members to speak out — how do you feel — Where do you want the WI to go?

At one time I attended a meeting and upon registration, a short questionnaire was handed to each person asking:

1. What can you do well?
2. What do you want to learn more about?

This is a quick and easy method to gain new ideas.

We always seem to be looking for speakers, demonstrators, assistance for meetings. Wouldn't it be an easy way to build up a talent bank?

And, isn't this a slick way to develop ideas for programs, seminars, workshops from the second question: "What do you want to learn more about?"

Try setting up a special committee on ideas for change. The first important step must come about because you asked for it.

Another question I wish to ask — is there any method with which we can deal more objectively with reports.

You are all familiar with Conveners' reports from — Branch — District — Area — FWIO — and back down — if indeed they ever do get back down?

Do you receive a great deal of benefit from these reports? Or does it encourage recycling of programs, mottos, roll calls? Does it encourage us to take the easy way out? Are there too many hours spent by Conveners in preparing reports for the benefits received? Can we afford this kind of time in 1983? Is 100% reporting the main objective? Can you see changes are needed for a greater degree of efficiency? Is this method of reporting too cumbersome? Has the time come to give some thought to restructuring?

I leave you to think about another thought. Has the time come for Ontario to hold a Provincial Convention?

Some of you have recently returned from the FWIC Convention in New Brunswick. Many of you are looking forward to attending the ACWW Conference in British Columbia next June. Both seem to create so much enthusiasm... added ideas for programs... attending extra meetings... tellings about sessions and events.

Perhaps the time has come for Ontario to consider such a Convention, where the Provincial President would first be introduced.

I know we have heard over and over again Ontario is too large. Think of Britain where the Institutes know only half the branches are eligible to attend their convention each year at Albert Hall. This is no deterrent in Britain. If this is a possibility for a higher profile?

You must decide if it is a wise move, but it's worth talking about.

Ideas are developed because of discussion and through member participation.

Do we, in 1983 realize we have keen and alert members in the WI — that we have members who can adjust to every need, members who are so alive to new experiences. Let's be that organization that is not content with past experiences — however satisfying they may appear.

For the WI there will ever be new visions and new ventures.

All these things are within our reach. However, it's up to each member to make it happen if you really want it to.

An organization speaking up on current issues concerning women can become a way of life for WI members if this is what we really want.

Your theme, Therapy of Kindness — can work both ways — kindness toward others and kindness toward ourselves. Flexibility is part of the lives of WI members and the direction we take depends on every single member.