

Women with potential are right here!

WI member Lillian White presented this speech at the London Area Convention in October. It inspired women then and has been included in Home & Country in the hope that it will inspire others.

Our topic this year is Women's Potential. I looked up the word potential in the dictionary, and the definition I liked best was undeveloped power. Sounds great doesn't it? I've never thought much about having power before, undeveloped or whatever. Then I got thinking about some of the women of our time who do have a great deal of power. I got thinking about that great 'Iron Lady', Margaret Thatcher. My, she's such a strong willed person, great determination and courage. Why, if I were like that I'd probably scare my family half to death. Now, take Flora McDonald, for instance. There's a grand lady. She's so dynamic and fairly bursting with vitality . . . But, my all time favorite is the late Judy LaMarsh, plump, not too pretty, blunt and outspoken. Why she'd put a burr under the saddle of those M.P.'s and turn the whole house upside down any old time. For a resolution convenor like me that's the impossible dream.

We homemakers have to be practical, it's unlikely that we would ever achieve such goals in life. So I just shelved those thoughts, and I really didn't know what to talk to you about until last Monday when I held a group study at my home with our District Resolution Convenors. It was then I realized that my talk on Women's Potential was right here under my very own roof.

I'm going to talk to you about the

potential of our own resolution convenors. For some reason (unknown to me) resolution convenors be they branch or district seem to be shoved into the back of the institute, taken out, dusted off once a year for the Area Convention, and then we are swept back under the rug, hopefully not to embarrass anyone until the following year. I've heard it said and again I don't know why, it's claimed to be the most unpopular convenorship in the Institute, when in fact it should be the most popular one. We are the voice of the Institute. Were we not the first convenorship of the Institute?

Anyway, at our group session last Monday, we played it by ear, not a thing was planned, except, of course, the tea. You can't have a meeting without tea. I had to see for myself what kind of women would step forward and do a job that no one else seemed to want. Well, I found these women to be the 'marines' of the Institute and they are surely of the highest calibre. I just sat back in my easy chair and listened. They talked for almost three hours. They didn't gossip. They talked. They talked about everything under the sun. They talked about pornography, about the everlasting and annoying television commercials, the hydro corridors that run through farmer's agriculture land and about agriculture and how hard it is to make a profit on the farm, the exacting research needed for resolutions, Canadian industries concerning the careless manufacturing of toys, bicycle safety, 4-H clubs' work, conservation and history, postal services, the new Rural Organizations and Services Branch, etc. . . . As we sat down to lunch we realized we hadn't even touched on

the one subject near and dear to our hearts (because we are all homemakers and mothers), homemaking. Unlike 30 years or so ago, this would have been the main topic.

At the end of the day the women went home with some new ideas for resolutions, new ideas for speakers and programs. I am sure you'll be hearing about them in the future.

After my guests had left, I came to the conclusion that I had just met with the new breed of resolution convenors. These homemakers are reaching outside their family circle and familiar surroundings into the world of controversy and debate and we are indeed fortunate to have them in our organization. As you saw for yourself today, through resolutions these women are eager and willing to speak for us on our behalf on whatever issue is important and beneficial to the members of the Institute. These women are crusaders, they are energetic, they read their newspapers and keep up with the times. They attend public meetings and are interested in world affairs while education and home economics are no stranger to them. They have their finger on the pulse of every convenorship in this organization. Some are working with the agricultural problems of today, and you can bet they are not a bit shy to stand up in a meeting to voice their opinion no matter how unpopular it may be. At my home the other day, I was very proud these gals were on our side. Yes, indeed, I had met our own Margaret Thatchers, Flora McDonalds and Judy LaMarshs. I have come to realize it's up to us as a body to support these women so they can ably represent the Women's Institute and its unlimited potential.



Margaret Thatcher



Flora MacDonald



Judy LaMarsh