



Federated Women's Institutes of Canada

Dear FWIO Members:

In my last letter in *Home and Country*, I promised I would write about the Human Rights Act, but I am going to exercise a woman's privilege (if we women still have that) and change my mind. That topic is better left for later in the year.

In November, I made my yearly trip to Toronto to give my report as FWIC vice president to the FWIO board. I always look forward to that day. Meeting with the members again — the second and third-year directors and all the first-year ones there for the first time. I know just what is going through the freshmen's minds as thoughts go back to my first year on the board. It is all such a new experience; there is so much material to try to digest at once, and you keep wondering how you will ever get it sorted out and be able to pass it on to the members back in your subdivision. The minister's dinner is always a pleasant break from reports and decision-making, and everyone looks forward to it. The board is kind enough to arrange for me to give my report on the day of the dinner so I can enjoy the fun, too.

This year our provincial secretary, Marcie Johnston, thoughtfully sent me copies of the provincial reports with the board agenda. I appreciated being able to read them before going to board and was thus able to get a "bird's eye view" of activities across the province, especially in the bicentennial year. Besides the quilted wall hanging which FWIO presented to the provincial legislature, there were so many interesting programs sponsored by the branches and districts. I was invited to attend an entertainment in West Carleton district which I thought was innovative. A new private school there was struggling to make ends meet, so the W.I. asked if the pupils would present a musical program for the community. The W.I. sponsored it, charged a small admission fee, and gave the proceeds to the school. This

project served a threefold purpose in that it publicized the school and its school program, was good public relations for W.I., and gave enjoyment to a full hall of interested people.

I am extremely happy to report to you that the Adelaide Hoodless Foundation Fund is growing nicely, thanks to the efforts of all the board directors and officers of the FWIO who publicized it so well. You were all most generous in your giving. The fund grows apace when even a small branch of older members send in what they call their "widow's mite,"

or an area sends a cheque for \$2,000 (which my area did in my honour). Thank you most sincerely, one and all.

When you read this, we will be into a bright new year, a year in which we can sit in the bleachers and watch the world go by, or we can be down in the arena playing the game with all our might. The choice is ours.

Now, to one and all, a very happy and healthful new year.

Sincerely,
Bernice B. Noblitt

Message from international convenor

Everyone has heard and seen on TV the devastation and hunger in Ethiopia. Thousands are dying from starvation. This is only part of the crying need in the whole continent of Africa.

Some areas have not had a drop of rain for three to five years and what appear to be roads are dried-out rivers.

Liv Ullman, the UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador spoke of her visit to Mali, "We watched women dig deep craters with their hands in the desert sand for drinking water, finding only mud. In many places we watched women just sitting, waiting very patiently for hours for a little water rising through the sand so they could fill a small bucket."

Such is the plight of many thousands of women around the world — not only in Africa, but in South America and India.

As we ponder the urgent need of

clean water and better sanitation facilities for "unknown women and children", it is just as important to become aware of shrinking sources of drinking water in our own country.

Much has been written on the state or future state of the water supply in Canada. It is important that while we answer the call of the urgent need in other lands, that we do become aware of and promote the wise use and protection of our own supply. Who knows, we might be, somewhere down the road, in a similar situation.

I ask that each member of our organization get in the stream and find ways to raise \$1 to send to your provincial office, so that in June 1985, we can all say, "I have answered the call for help."

J. McInnes
Convenor, International Affairs
F.W.I.C.