



Federated Women's Institutes of Canada

Dear Members:

Though it will be long past Christmas when you read this, I would like those of you who sent us Christmas greetings to accept at this time our sincere thanks for your lovely cards and notes. Christmas really began for us in the latter part of November when each mail brought all the kindly thoughts and good wishes each one of which we read and reread and treasured.

Recently I read an article in **Today's Country Woman**, December 1984, which states that some young women of today "don't feel that the Women's Institute accomplishes much except perhaps at the local community level." Joyce Canning, Coordinator with the Rural Organizations and Services Branch and Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario liaison, who is fully aware of the magnitude of the accomplishments of Women's Institutes at not only the community level but at the provincial, federal and international levels, appeals to the W.I.'s to 'blow their own horn'.

As members we must remember that each of us is a public relations officer for W.I. When we are asked in public what W.I. does, what do we say? Do we tell people only what W.I. has accomplished in the past, or do we tell them **WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW?**

Do we tell them about the accomplishments of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario in the last year as reported by Rena Cunningham, our P.R., such as the \$3/4 million generated by the 1,152 branches across Ontario to carry out their projects and activities last year; about the awards and scholarships they presented, about the resolutions sustained, the dozens and dozens of community projects, their kindnesses to the elderly and the sick, support of Crisis centres and Block Parent programs; about the ongoing project of the Erland Lee Museum Home,

their generous support of the Adelaide Hoodless Homestead; their W.I. hall at Milton; their significant support of the agricultural fairs, plowing matches and their participation in the bicentennial? Have we told them about the Tweedsmuir History books which every branch brought up to date during the year, or about the project on day care co-sponsored last summer?

Do we tell them that at the Federal level during the triennium, briefs and submissions have been presented to the government on pensions (after a two year study), on pornography and prostitution, on maintenance and custody, on divorce reform (Bill C-10), on sexual offences (Bill C-53), on youth training, on the Health Act; that dozens of letters have been sent

concerning such subjects as CRTC regulations, family allowances, National Film Board retention, on wife battering, on Canada's future as we see it, on day care... to mention only a few. And of course we will have told them about FWIO's affiliation with the world organization, A.C.W.W., their part in the sponsorship of A.C.W.W.'s Triennial Conference in Vancouver in 1983 and their substantial contribution to the UNESCO co-action project of "Clean Water for All" — \$50,000 by June 1985.

Have we told them this — and perhaps much more? If we have, we might challenge them to equal or surpass the Women's Institute record!

BERNICE B. NOBLITT

Reflections from ROS with Joyce Canning

(Rural Organizations and Services)

"Father of 2 children, ages 4 and 6, kills them in their bed, wounds his wife and then turns the gun on himself." "Jane Doe, wife of John Doe, fatally wounded in a domestic dispute." "Elderly woman, robbed and brutally beaten as she entered her apartment building."

These kind of headlines are becoming more and more prevalent in the news recently. VIOLENCE is invading the social structure of our communities — the rural as well as the urban. Is there anything the average person can do to fight this insidious intruder? Yes, I think there is.

In the report of OMAF's study on the needs of rural women, one of the issues identified was violence. Women who attended the meetings held across the province suggested that "EDUCATION is badly needed to make the public aware of the incidence, severity, and characteristics of wife battering." I suggest to you that wife battering is only one part of the

problem — violence affects every segment of our population.

If indeed, the key is education, and I believe that it is — **education** for the **prevention** of this kind of behaviour — then who is in a better position to take the lead in community education than the local Women's Institutes? HOW? First, educate yourselves, get the facts. They are available through doctors, nurses, social workers. Find out what kind of literature is already available, what films and other educational resources. Then develop your action plan. You can work through your local school boards, your churches, local service clubs, involve your media, approach your local T.V. station if you happen to have one, hold public meetings. The possibilities are endless.

Women's Institute members are noted for getting things done. This, ladies, is something that really needs to get done. There's not a moment to lose, so what are you waiting for?