

# A View from Here

By Margaret Eberle

**"The Women's Institute  
is an Educational Organization  
for Personal Development  
and Community Action."**

This is the mission statement of the Women's Institute. It is the reason why it exists, and has existed for 96 years.

As an educational organization, we must provide opportunities for our members and the community to improve their skills and expand their knowledge. This is done by providing speakers, demonstrations and workshops. When was the last time your Branch invited members from the community to one of your meetings, seminars or workshops?

If a Branch has an idea that would be of interest to the District, Area or province, pass it on through the efficient network of our organization. Ideas that have become provincial policy or programs started as an idea from a Branch member.

Some ideas work the first time around, others need to be refined. This is what happened with the Educational Advisory Committee and the provincial short courses. These courses met the needs of



some members, but not others. From suggestions made by several Branches and Districts, and much discussion around the Board table, a different method has emerged.

A local Educational Advisory Committee will be set up with the assistance of the Board Director in each Subdivision. This committee will be responsible for organizing workshops, seminars or demonstrations to meet the needs of members and the local community. And because they are local in origin and nature, they

will better suit the personal development of members and form community action.

Resolutions are another important tool for the advancement of personal development and community action. The guidelines laid out in the new Resolutions Manual, available from the FWIO office, remove the mystery of how to research and write a resolution. A resolution that starts at the Branch level and is passed at the District, Area and provincial levels, will be taken seriously by the organization to which it is directed because they know that a lot of research and discussion has preceded it.

Remember, the Women's Institute in Ontario is a strong and powerful organization. And the changes taking place are aimed at keeping it strong. I always welcome your questions and comments on any WI activity.

P.S. - Have you thought about inviting your Board Director to speak at your Branch meeting? Don't forget to offer to pay her mileage!

*Margaret Eberle is the President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario.*

## Tips from a PRO

By Margaret Atkins

***Spring has sprung, the grass is riz,  
I wonder where the WI is?***

We can do the most for public relations for our organization at Branch level. For instance, what do you do with the extra copies of *Home & Country*? Do you place them in the local Doctor's offices, seniors homes or libraries? Have you thought to take your own copy to the MPP's or MP's office after you have finished reading it? While you are there, explain your personal involvement with the Women's Institute to the Secretary. She is the one who can pass

on pertinent information to her boss. And don't forget to leave a copy at your local municipal office. Or, take a copy and visit your neighbour. Wherever people gather to wait is the place for an issue of *Home & Country*. Remember, replace each issue as they are printed.

Did you realize that WI members put in excess of half a million hours of volunteer work in community projects and organizational activities? Take the opportunity to talk up your WI. Become knowledgeable about the workings of your specific group and be able to sell the benefits to others. In this way, we can best serve our organization. So, talk, talk, talk it up!

Branch Public Relations Officers are responsible for promoting the events,

happenings and monthly reports in the local papers. If one persists, they usually succeed; so don't despair if your first attempt is not successful. Keep sending in the information. Call and ask why it was not printed or how to improve your news release for publication. Try, try, try again!

The Women's Institute is a link to the past and a promise of the future. When great thoughts and deeds have passed into oblivion, the Women's Institute movement will continue to push forward and meet the needs of the changing society, with your continued support.

*Margaret Atkins is the Public Relations Officer for the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario.*