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Delivering Electrical Technology
To the Ontario Housewife, 1920-1939:
An Alliance of Professional Women, Advertisers
and the Electrical Industry

by

Dianne E. Dodd

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

September, 1988

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ABSTRACT

Three groups allied in the interwar period to promote the use of domestic electrical technology, primarily but not exclusively, in urban areas: household advisors, the electrical industry and advertisers.

Electrical and advertising industry spokesmen hoped to increase the use of electrical appliances in Ontario homes in the interwar period, using the predominant business strategy of promoting democratized consumption through an appeal to democratic ideals, the popular conception of home life, the love of technology and to a limited degree, equality for women. In return for the falling prices and improved products which industry promised to deliver to the average Canadian home, it asked for a monopoly on technological and economic expertise. It appears that consumers responded favourably to at least the practical aspects of this program, and increased their use of electricity and electrical appliances.

Household advisors were professional women who worked in the electrical and advertising industries in sales promotion and consumer relations, and journalists who wrote for women's popular magazines. They acted as advisors to housewives on domestic techniques and methods, and advised industry on the design, manufacture, advertising and promotion of domestic products. They apparently added a gender perspective to the advertising message and women's magazines by promoting a program of domestic reform, which amalgamated reform ideas from pre-World War I feminism with business ideas of the 1920s and 1930s. This domestic reform package comprised demands for improved working conditions for women in the home, largely through the application of technology to domestic labour; improved status, through a re-valuation of domestic labour; and financial autonomy.

Attempts to apply the principles of scientific management to housework were largely a failure due to the advisors' uncritical adoption of the male values of efficiency and specialization of labour, in conjunction with an irreconcilable commitment to the traditional, private family.

The program's de-emphasis on moralism in the home, although it failed to re-value domestic labour, did help middle class women move into the public sphere. And the wider availability of domestic technology gave women, especially working class women who had never enjoyed the benefits of domestic servants, improved living and working conditions.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The history of domestic work and the impact of domestic technology on it is a relatively new field of study. It embraces two disciplines: women's studies and the history and philosophy of technology. The latter discipline has given us an understanding of the nature and impact of technology in general, but focuses primarily on the public sphere. Women's studies has raised the issue of women's work in the home and the impact of the ideology of 'separate spheres' on domestic labour. The sexual division of labour which assigns domestic tasks to women and public sphere work, or wage earning to men, is the institutionalization of the doctrine of 'separate spheres'. Largely a product of 19th century industrialization which removed the centre of production from the home, the belief in separate spheres accentuated existing differences in the nature and conditions of women's work vis a vis men's.¹

The impact of industrialization on workers in factories, shops and offices in the late 19th and early 20th century, has received a great deal of attention from historians. The move from craft production to the factory system, the emergence of industrial unionism, and even its effect on workers' culture has been studied.² The Canadian experience of industrialization³ was in many ways similar to the American, with increased concentration of economic control, de-skilling of workers, and transfer of control over the work process from workers to professional engineers.⁴ Mass production techniques soon led to mass consumption as capitalists sought expanded markets and a means of pacifying disgruntled workers. The Canadian experience was tempered by regional disparities, as the National Policy favoured industrialization of central Canada, particularly Ontario, at the expense of the West and the Maritimes.⁵ Massive inflow of American capital through branch plant operations gave the increased concentration of economic control a counter-nationalist thrust.

The equally dramatic transformation of domestic labour wrought by the social, political and technological changes of industrialization is only beginning to receive similar scrutiny. Several American authors have documented the changing nature of domestic work.⁶ Technologies such as running water; gas and electricity, with the myriad appliances which accompanied their introduction; as well as

manufacturing processes which provided ready made clothing, and commercially prepared food products all made domestic labour less physically taxing. Yet the promotion of higher standards in health, cleanliness, nutrition and childcare which accompanied the technology negated some of the gains. The time women spent doing housework remained relatively unchanged.⁷ For example, with the home washing machine, people began to have more clothes and wash them more frequently. With the vacuum cleaner, rugs were cleaned every week or more, as opposed to the twice yearly beatings of earlier times. And, the nature of the work was transformed from manual drudgery to machine tending. Large-scale efficient industrial processes took over many of the household's "productive" tasks such as butter and cheese making, textile production and so on. Whether the consequent loss of traditional skills was a source of decline in status for women is a matter of debate among historians,⁸ but in many cases it brought a loss of income,⁹ as the practice of taking in boarders, laundry or supervising dairy functions declined.

The conditions of work also changed dramatically with the industrialization and urbanization of the late 19th century as the home ceased to be a centre of production. At a time when industrial work, through the factory system was becoming increasingly specialized,¹⁰ domestic labour was following the opposite trend. Men, older children and other relatives or helpers laboured outside the home and were no

longer available to help with domestic tasks or offer companionship.¹¹ For middle class women, the loss of domestic servants, attracted to more prestigious industrial jobs, meant a decline in status from that of household manager to sole worker, responsible for all tasks.¹² For working class women who had always done their own work, the availability of domestic technologies began to significantly improve working conditions,¹³ when they became available through cost reductions. It is doubtful domestic technology improved their status, however. While the major utilities such as running water, gas and electricity were in place in urban settings by the turn of the century, it was the period of the interwar years when mass production/consumption began to make domestic products such as electric appliances available to a wide cross section of the population.

Canadian studies of domestic labour and technology are fewer and much research is needed into this aspect of Canadian women's history. Marilyn Barber has contributed an article on Saskatchewan farm women's efforts to reduce drudgery in the farm household in the 1920s,¹⁴ and Meg Luxton studied working class women for three generations in Flin Flon, Manitoba, from the 1920s to the 1970s.¹⁵ Strong-Boag has offered several overviews, perhaps premature given the state of the literature, of domestic labour in Canada,¹⁶ and another article on childcare advice.¹⁷ Canadian domestic conditions differed somewhat from the American

context in the interwar years, in that there was a larger rural population, where technologies such as gas, electricity and water were unavailable for all but the most wealthy residents. Also in some areas, such as Ontario, some technologies, electricity for example, were more widely available than in the U.S.

Studies done by historians and political scientists on the impact of modern technology have focused largely on workers.¹⁸ When the family has been considered, it has been viewed as a realm of leisure, relaxation and escape -- primarily a male perspective on the home. Prior to Ravetz's 1965 article in Technology and Culture,¹⁹ women's domestic labour had been ignored, with the possible exception of Gideon's Mechanization Takes Command,²⁰ but here a sensitivity to gender inequality was lacking. Gideon attacked labour saving methods as an assault on the sanctity of the home. The recent women's studies literature is an exception to this approach,²¹ stressing women's role as workers in the home. In documenting the alienating effects of 20th century mass production techniques -- the transfer of control over the work process from workers to professional managers and the introduction of the factory system²² -- little attention has been paid to the reasons for their acceptance.

Historians and theorists, conservatives, marxists, and feminists alike, have assumed almost by default, that the technology of consumer capitalism was not so much actively

or willingly accepted as forced upon a passive population, lulled into false consciousness by the psychological manipulation of advertisers. Stuart Ewen, for instance, postulates that "advertising offered itself as a means of efficiently creating consumers and as a way of homogeneously controlling the consumption of a product."²³

By examining one instance of technological change affecting the home in the interwar years, and looking at the various interests promoting it, this thesis will examine the reasons for acceptance of electrification in Ontario homes in the 1920s and 1930s.

Ontario, in the interwar period, lends itself to such an examination. The rate of electrification in southern Ontario was comparable to that in British Columbia which led the way in electrification. The less industrialized Canadian provinces, such as Saskatchewan, Alberta and Prince Edward Island, lagged far behind in comparison.²⁴ For example, while Ontario had 16.92 domestic customers per 100 population, British Columbia and the Yukon, 17.88, and Manitoba, 10.21; Prince Edward Island had only 4.52 domestic customers per 1000 population, Saskatchewan, 4.63 and Alberta, 7.76. Quebec had 13.26 domestic customers per 1000 population. Canadians as a whole could boast that they enjoyed the cheapest power in the world and that only Norway exceeded Canada in per capita generating capacity.²⁵

The Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario took a

pioneering role in North America, becoming the only regional electric system under public ownership in the 1920s.²⁶ As such it was not always popular, especially with private interests, and soon learned the value of courting public opinion. This produced a politically sensitive institution which has left behind valuable sources.

Hydro-electricity was considered a crucial technology throughout the industrialized world in the interwar period.²⁷ It was used in numerous applications in industry, including mining, pulp and paper, manufacturing, as well as domestic and commercial uses.²⁸ Ontario at the turn of the century viewed itself as the industrial heartland of Canada and had ambitions to dominate Canadian manufacturing, although its earlier dependence on American supplies of coal, and scarcity of alternate energy sources, threatened such hegemony.²⁹ Ontario also enjoyed a political culture which was supportive of progressive change.³⁰ All of these considerations, along with Adam Beck's aggressive leadership, led to a political climate supportive of Ontario Hydro's bid to take command of hydro-electric resources in Ontario.³¹

The Hydro Electric Power Commission was particularly aggressive in its efforts to bring all Ontario's municipalities under its control. These efforts, along with low domestic rates and ample hydro electric resources, led to high rates of electrification throughout the province.³² While in 1920 there were 166 municipalities purchasing

commission power and 193,892 domestic customers, by 1935 the number of municipalities had grown to 312, serving 507,132 domestic customers.³³ In 1921 the population of Ontario was 2,933,662, while in 1931 it was 3,431,683.³⁴

The diffusion of hydro-electric power to domestic users was not confined to large urban centres. Hydro electric resources were utilized by the citizens of Ontario's many small towns and hamlets as well as by its major metropolises. Despite its political appeal, rural electrification was minimal, although growing, during the interwar years. The number of farm customers grew from 9,309 in 1928 to 28,198 in 1936. Hamlet customers grew from 17,585 in 1928 to 43,014 in 1936. In 1922 there were 14,000 rural customers, farm and hamlet combined.³⁵

Electricity was one of a number of major technological developments affecting the home in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Electricity's first impact was in the area of residential lighting, replacing gas or coal oil lamps by about 1900.³⁶ By the 1920s and 1930s, the small electric motor had been successfully applied to a number of household devices.³⁷ Domestic electric technology then included electric lighting for homes as well as appliances, such as toasters, irons, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, ventilating fans, electric ranges, hot water heaters, space heaters, and refrigerators. Electricity, unlike other technologies for the home such as gas (either natural or

coal produced), its closest competitor, could be and was applied to almost all of the work processes in the home which were amenable to mechanization, including cooking, food preparation, cleaning, and laundry. It also provided material comforts for all family members through lighting, ventilation and provision of a clean, cool and flameless energy source.

No technology can encompass all domestic labour which includes, besides housework, the transformation of wage income into goods and services for household use (i.e., shopping, money management, sewing, gardening, etc.); the reproduction and care of dependent children; care of working adults; and the care of dependent adults (i.e., the elderly or handicapped).³⁸ However, in the areas of domestic labour amenable to mechanization -- that is, those which did not involve the labour-intensive job of caring for human beings -- electricity offered many benefits.

In the interwar period, falling appliances prices,³⁹ in conjunction with declining electricity rates,⁴⁰ made the benefits of these technological improvements more widely available than they had ever been in the past. By the 1920s advertising techniques were well entrenched as a means of selling the many domestic products made possible by mass production techniques of early 20th century consumer capitalism. The electrical industry, like most others in the interwar period, subscribed to the prevailing business strategy of appealing to lower income groups in an attempt

to increase production, effect economies of scale, lower costs to consumers and expand markets.⁴¹ The electrical industry's impressive growth record attested to the success of such a strategy. Electricity enjoyed widespread popularity because it was the period's engine of growth, harbinger of material and technological progress,⁴² and because it offered comfort and convenience for the home.

Most urban or small town Ontario housewives had access to electricity. The number of wired homes in Canada rose from an estimated 750,000 in 1921 (roughly 40%) to 1,401,983 in 1935⁴³. One industry commentator remarked in 1939 that 62% of Canadian homes were electrified.⁴⁴ In 1921 in Ontario 42% of the population lived on farms,⁴⁵ most of which were not electrified. It would appear that a very large majority of Canadian urban homes were electrified, including working class homes as well as middle class. As Ontario was the industrial centre of the country and not as adversely affected by the depression as the west and maritimes which were more dependent on resource extraction,⁴⁶ its citizens were better placed to avail themselves of the products of industry.

The Ontario housewife was the target of promotional activities on the part of the electrical and advertising industries which attempted to sell her myriad appliances to make use of Ontario's ample and inexpensive electrical resources. She was also exposed to Canadian (and American)

women's magazines which offered advice on the use of electrical appliances and other technological advances for the home. Like her counterpart in other areas of North America the Ontario housewife was affected by numerous social and economic changes which made the use of domestic technology both expedient and beneficial. Industrialization had led to a decline in the availability of domestic servants ⁴⁷ for the middle class housewife. Rising standards of health, cleanliness and childcare⁴⁸ promoted by manufacturers and professional advisors made older methods seem obsolete. Family privacy was also increasingly valued and promoted.⁴⁹ Women's own desires to rise above drudgery and to focus on the more creative aspects of homemaking made electrical technology attractive, and what came onto the market as luxuries soon became necessities. As prices fell, and older methods fell out of use, it became uneconomical not to use appliances. For example, the electric refrigerator became cheaper to run than an ice box as electricity rates fell and ice deliveries became scarce. The electric iron was not only easier than a sadiron, but a necessity with the switch from wood or coal stove to gas or electric.

There were at least three identifiable groups promoting domestic electrical technology in the 1920s and 1930s. First there was the electrical industry, consisting of several branches: utilities such as the Hydro Electric Power Commission which distributed power; manufacturers who

produced appliances; retailers who sold these appliances to the public; and contractors who installed electrical wiring. Secondly there was the advertising industry which promoted the products through local and national advertising outlets including popular magazines. This industry, even more so than the electrical industry,⁵⁰ was dominated by American philosophy and practice. Advertising for appliances often came directly from parent companies in the United States through branch plants. Canadian advertising personnel -- either as independent consultants or working directly for a branch plant manufacturer -- merely adjusted the message for a Canadian audience.⁵¹ Obvious American references were removed, ads translated for the French Canadian market, and messages toned down to fit the more subdued temper of Canadian life.⁵² Finally there were women working in the advertising and electrical industries, and writing for the women's press, who promoted electrical appliances. While these women worked in concert with other industries, they will be treated as a group because of their unique role in bringing gender issues to their industries, and in acting as advisors to Canadian homemakers. This thesis attempts to identify the interests and motivations of these three groups in order to understand the process of household electrification, and gain indirect evidence of consumer attitudes and input into the process.

An examination of sources from the time period of the

introduction of a technology should, it is hoped, allow the historian to view the expectations of various groups, in and out of industry, in relation to the new technology. It is to be hoped that smaller scaled approaches to the study of technology/business history will allow a more complete view of the process of technological change. In the case of domestic electrical appliances several groups within several industries were working toward overlapping goals, although their programs were by no means identical. There was a loose alliance with considerable internal divisions.

Historians of business have generally approached electrification from the perspective of business interests exclusively,⁵³ often portraying industry as a unified, monolithic structure. Householders have either been ignored or assumed to be passive. Their interests in accepting new technologies were not thought to be independent of industry or their propagandists, the advertisers. Therefore, no serious attempts have been made to study them. This failure to take the household into account shows one of the shortcomings of studying business history, relying exclusively on business sources. Thomas Hughes, for example, explained the development of the domestic market for electricity in terms of a business strategy designed to reduce the system's load factor. The domestic market was just one of several new markets which the industry promoted in order to diversify its overall load, making for more efficient distribution, rate reductions, and further

expansion of the system.⁵⁴

H.V. Nelles in his study of the Ontario industry, like Hughes, focuses on the industrial uses of electricity. He points out that electricity took on symbolic significance in Ontario, as elsewhere,⁵⁵ representing progress and prosperity.⁵⁶ As such it was perceived as too important a tool to remain in private hands. In their book, Monopoly's Moment, Armstrong and Nelles pursue their examination of electricity and other public utilities in Canadian economic development, looking at numerous public and private enterprises throughout Canada, including Ontario Hydro. Their primary concern is with the public and private monopolies which sometimes occurred in these industries, which they contend were not inevitable, or natural, but very much a human creation.⁵⁷

The business and technology literature has given insufficient weight to the fact that it was the powerful public power movement which enabled Adam Beck to build his electric 'monopoly', and that this support was based as much on the domestic potential, as the industrial role of electricity. Nelles and Armstrong are correct in identifying the leadership of this movement as businessmen, real estate developers, and municipal reformers,⁵⁸ with diverse interests. These men hoped to promote economic growth and/or to preserve municipal government autonomy.⁵⁹ It is important to remember, however, that the movement did

receive widespread popular support for its philosophy of power at cost. Such groups as the WCTU and labour unions which gave support should not be dismissed as a radical fringe of no real significance.⁶⁰ The impetus to regulate the hydro-electric industry came from a public desire to ensure civic responsibility in handling a commodity vital to public health, safety and well being. The home was an important arena for electrical service to the community.

Nelles and other commentators on the Ontario electrical industry contend that Beck bought political support for his ambitious public monopoly with artificially cheap domestic rates.⁶¹ This public enterprise ironically turned out to be less socially responsible than the private interests it replaced, in its promotion of wasteful consumption and exponential growth.⁶²

A latent acknowledgement of popular support for cheap electricity is all we hear of the domestic user in the history of the electrical industry. Keith Fleming, for instance, in a discussion of the movement for equal rates throughout all Hydro municipalities in the years 1919 to 1923,⁶³ ignores several references in quoted sources to domestic benefits, seeing electricity's significance solely in terms of its industrial use.

Whether householders are manipulated by advertising as with Hughes or bought off with low domestic rates as with Nelles and Armstrong, they are still seen as passive and manipulable in a political/economic system which gives

priority to industrial needs. The business literature has not recognized the enormous domestic benefits for householders. Whatever the long term costs in using the domestic market to promote growth, the question still needs to be raised: Did householders willingly support the electrical industry in exchange for cheap electricity? It seems that the short term immediate and obvious benefits of electricity in the home held great appeal while the longer term costs which industry critics have pointed out⁶⁴ -- industry monopoly and the promotion of wasteful consumption -- were much harder to foresee.

Explanations as to why consumers complied in the electrical industry's program of using the domestic market to benefit the industrial, often focus on advertising as an instrument of economic growth and of consumer manipulation, ignoring or diminishing consumer autonomy and/or input. Advertising was a major tool in propagandizing new technologies such as electrical appliances. As a source which details the perceived benefits of electricity and other new technologies,⁶⁵ it deserves serious study. Advertising, marketing and distribution techniques were consciously developed as a means of selling industry's program of democratized consumption which Ewen claims was both a means of economic growth and of social control.⁶⁶ Thus they are an integral part of the "technology" of the 20th century which transformed the average worker's life in

home and in industry. Any study of the sales strategy behind electric appliances in this period must encompass the inextricably linked philosophy of democratized consumption, or consumerism.

Advertising strategy, founded at the turn of the century, and well established by the interwar period, was based on market research findings. It consisted of appealing to women who did most of the purchasing; appealing to lower income groups in an effort to expand markets; and using emotional rather than rational appeals.⁶⁷ Through the advertiser, industry conveyed its message to the average householder -- the message that prosperity, leisure and luxuries once reserved for the wealthy could be had by all, and that the quality of home life could be improved via technology.

Although the literature has made little of its significance, one of the key selling features of consumerism was the benefits of technologies such as electric appliances, automobiles and radios, which it promised to bestow on the average working family. The private home was targeted as the focus for democratizing wealth.

Advertising psychology was based on the strategy of association. Ewen points out that advertisers consciously appealed to subconscious desires, awakened latent anxieties and deliberately fostered discontent, in order to invest the worker with a psychic desire to consume, fulfilling industry's prescribed role.⁶⁸ Williamson explains that ads

give meaning to a product by making links to a system of meaning or existing ideology, usually on a subconscious level.⁶⁹ By text or by photograph, the advertiser attempts to associate the featured product with an idea or image which has a value independent of the product.

The advertiser in consumer capitalist society appeals to subconscious or primitive wants by denying the production process, focusing solely on consumption, and offering an upper middle class standard of living to all.⁷⁰ This utopian ideal of a society where classlessness, infinite wealth and total leisure are realizable, Borgman has called the promise of technology.⁷¹ Advertisers also appeal to women's desires for autonomy, status and recognition by portraying the housewife as a business partner or as adored mother/wife. By continually appealing to existing ideology, unstated emotional needs and the illusive and unrealizable promise of technology, the advertiser reinforces them. This ideological role which advertising plays exists in conjunction with its more practical role of providing information on products.

There are critics of consumerism on both the right and the left. Though their prognosis for change may be radically different, with conservatives looking back to a romanticized past and marxists hoping for a revolution to dismantle capitalism, they share a common analysis of advertising. Noting the bullying, cajoling, and

exploitation of human weakness to which advertisers have resorted,⁷² they all question consumer autonomy, especially that of the woman consumer. The advertiser has been viewed as omnipotent. When social criticisms such as feminism are incorporated into an advertising message, the advertiser is seen as co-opting dissent, trivializing reform and transforming it into some manageable component which can be manipulated for profit.⁷³ The significance of consumer input is diminished.

Even, one such critic of advertising from the left, has given no evidence that the intended message was taken literally by consumers. While advertisers of the period arrogantly assumed they were creating demand by manipulating the consumer psyche,⁷⁴ this assumption should not be accepted at face value but studied from the viewpoint of the consumer. In a recent re-interpretation of 18th century England, several British historians have suggested that consumer demand fueled economic growth rather than vice versa.⁷⁵ This thesis is certainly worthy of investigation.

Especially in the case of domestic electrical appliances, I would contend that there were practical reasons to heed the advertisers' advice. In the emerging mass production economy, the buyer did not know or trust the seller, nor understand the complex technology which went into the product's manufacture.⁷⁶ Electricity was a new technology which few understood. Most people could not determine the quality of a refrigerator or stove, or even a

toaster or iron by examining it. National advertising with its constant repetition of a product's trademark gave the product and manufacturer a certain familiarity which acted as a substitute for home based or local manufacture. The number of shoddy manufacturers and fly-by-night operators in the intensely competitive electrical business of the 1920s made reliability, safety, and the future availability of parts and service all the more important.

Advertising must be viewed as a necessary by-product of mass production, above and beyond its alleged role as a conscious instrument of social control. We simply do not know with any certainty whether, and to what extent, consumers were responding to the ideological message vis a vis practical considerations. Women working in the home may have bought products for reasons quite different from the advertising message which often glamourized a product in an escapist manner. While readers may have responded to escapist imagery -- as they might respond to a good piece of fiction -- such response is not sufficient evidence that the ideological message was absorbed uncritically. The products of industry have a value of their own, independent of the ideology sometimes used to sell them.

While both Ewen and Fisher point to pockets of resistance against the consumer ideology,⁷⁷ there is no evidence that such resistance was widespread. For the majority of Canadians who judged the products of modern

industry to be desirable, the consumerist ethic may have had more appeal than one might assume with hindsight.

Marxist humanists such as Gutman have emphasized the alienation of labour inherent in mass production techniques -- the assault on human dignity in transferring control over the work process from the worker to an elite of professional managers.⁷⁸ For Ewen it is this degradation of labour which makes the worker vulnerable to the advertiser's psychological manipulation. The advertiser exploits worker dissatisfaction to sell a commoditized solution to a class problem; seducing the worker into accepting democratized consumption in place of true industrial democracy.⁷⁹ For Ewen this process, done in the name of efficiency, has separated the worker from an understanding of what was being made.⁸⁰ Conservative critics of modern technology have also posited that the advertiser's focus on leisure is idealistic and ill-founded because "it is in work that human beings develop and affirm their personality."⁸¹

Critics of technology, on the right and on the left, have placed the human being's essence in his/her labour, and therefore see any tampering with autonomy in this realm as alienation. Leisure activities, generally associated with the private realm, are automatically debased in this somewhat puritanical view. Because of this fixation on labour, the literature on technology has not entertained the possibility that, for the average worker, the promised wealth, leisure, utopian denial of the realities of

production, and enhancement of home life might be preferable to work autonomy and industrial democracy.

The technological literature is divided on the question of what causes this sorry debasement of the industrial worker. Conservatives contend that it is a function of technology itself and/or popular support for it, while marxists focus more on the human agency of the capitalist class as the cause. While the earlier literature has adequately noted that the material benefits of technology in terms of wealth were not evenly distributed, recent historiography is paying attention to the psychological benefits in terms of job satisfaction, personal autonomy and control. These are also not evenly divided. One of the extreme forms of this specialization of labour was seen in the era of scientific management in the early twentieth century. As production became increasingly specialized, fewer and fewer people shared the psychological rewards of technology, that is, a knowledge of the entire work process, the aesthetic pleasures of creative work,⁸² and control over the society's technological expertise and resources. Technology has a degrading effect, not on everyone but on the labourers whose quality of work declines due to repetition and monotony and who have minimal control over the work process. The production of greater wealth and leisure which technology affords is shared (although unequally) with all members of society, although the

psychological rewards are increasingly stratified.

The degraded 'labour' of modern technological society which is robbed of its skill and context must be distinguished from 'work', the creative side of technology, which builds and maintains the technological society.⁸³

Albert Borgman is an exception in recognizing that the worker does not share the intellectual's view of labour. He notes that, for workers, labour is an enslavement rather than a source of personal development and fulfillment.⁸⁴ When one looks at the discrepancies between women's work in the home and industrial labour, the concept of alienation of labour loses some, but not all, of its force. Women who labour in the home do have more control over their work process, although it cannot be emphasized enough that this control is exercised only within the parameters of the sexual division of labour. Homemakers are not subjected to the specialization of labour which fragments the industrial worker's labour and denies a sense of the entire work project. Women are not cut off from the end product of their labour -- the home environment which they create, the children they raise, the relationships they nurture -- but are fully integrated into it. The job allows for the inventiveness, spontaneity and improvisation which the technological order, as Ursula Franklin calls the modern production system, denies workers in the public sphere, where tasks are fragmented, predictable, and fully schedulable, at least in theory.⁸⁵ Yet this degraded

industrial work is rewarded with superior status, financial remuneration and autonomy, relative to the allegedly integrated and unalienated work of the housewife, normally characterized as drudgery and rewarded with financial dependence, low status and confinement?⁸⁶ Housework itself (and not just the conditions under which it is performed) lead one to question the desirability of a completely non-specialized work environment. The housewife is on call 24 hours a day, and although there are creative elements to her work, there is also a great deal of monotony. The price of a more generalized work environment and greater personal autonomy may be drudgery.

Presumably those who give up their autonomy will only do so in exchange for some marginal inclusion in a more ambitious project which produces visible results. The literature on technology has avoided the gender issue altogether. If technology can be broadly defined as a means of control over one's environment, and includes social arrangements,⁸⁷ then it is obvious that the sexual division of labour on which patriarchy rests is also a technology, or perhaps a paradigm for technology.⁸⁸ Conservative critics of technology avoid this issue by equating technology with modern technology and asserting that pre-modern technologies and social arrangements were 'natural' and harmonious.⁸⁹ It is only by ignoring the feminist critique of patriarchy as a social institution⁹⁰ that conservative theorists can

dichotomize modern and pre-modern technology. Here they miss the obvious parallels between women working in the patriarchal home and workers in industry. The sexual division of labour assigns the monotonous maintenance labour of domestic work to women, freeing men to pursue more creative work in the public realm. The specialized hierarchical division of labour in the modern factory assigns monotonous labour to workers, allowing technological experts to create the technological society. Both Ellul and Winner posit that, as individual workers lose control and autonomy in their work lives, they make up for it psychologically by taking vicarious enjoyment and pride in the achievements of technology.⁹¹ Just as housewives, cut off from autonomy and independence while labouring in the home are said to live vicariously through their children,⁹² so men are believed to live vicariously through their machines.

As much of the economic literature on industrial capitalism has centred on the profit motive as a major impetus to technological advancement, non-economic motivations have been ignored. The role which technology played in the popular consciousness deserves more attention than it has so far received. Studies are beginning to show the popular faith in the ability of technology to solve social and political problems.⁹³ The popularity of technologies such as electrical appliances on a practical level was also a powerful impetus to acceptance of the

consumer culture. Products such as electrical appliances, cars and radios were used to sell consumerism.

While the strategy of democratized consumption appealed to business interests as a measure of social control designed to placate worker unrest and expand markets, it also appealed on a more popular level to the faith in technology as a leveler of class distinctions.⁹⁴ The 19th century saw tremendous technological breakthroughs such as the development of electricity which had come into widespread use by the early 20th century. The phenomenal success of science and technology in this period strengthened the notion that such universal social problems as poverty, class conflict, and sexual inequality could be solved with an application of technology.⁹⁵ While Armstrong and Nelles point out that what they call the Theatre of Science⁹⁶ was vigorously promoted by entrepreneur/inventors, we should not take this as a sufficient explanation for the popular belief. While faith in technology may not be shared equally by all members of society -- economic and technological elites have more to gain, given their access to a greater share of its material and psychological benefits -- popular support is needed to allow such elites to proceed with their program of economic and technological progress.

The faith in technological progress did not preclude an equally irrational support for older social arrangements

made obsolete by new technologies. Henry Ford, for example, played a key role in instituting the factory system and giving workers an income level which facilitated participation in consumerism.⁹⁷ He also believed that the factory system and consumer culture could co-exist with rural self-sufficiency and home manufacture of goods.⁹⁸ Such ambivalence towards technology, and the social change it produced, could also be seen in the response to electricity, both in the workplace and in the home. The Hydro Electric Power Commission (HEPC) tried to appease the popular belief that rural electrification would stem the exodus to the city and preserve traditional rural life by actively promoting electrification of Ontario farms. Domestic reformers tried to make the home efficient, while at the same time preserving its old fashioned qualities.⁹⁹ Such ambivalence was probably greatest at the lower levels of the social order, although it appears to have been fairly widespread.

Recognizing the ambivalent and divided response to technology allows the historian to question the assumption of a unified capitalist structure, acting with a clearly defined goal and some sort of internal consistency. Results are too often confused with intent. Thus Hughes can construct a picture of the electrical industry as a 'system' and thereby ignore or downplay consumer and/or social inputs as well as internal divisions.¹⁰⁰ Ewen presents democratized consumption as industry's answer to the

alienation of labour inherent in industrial processes almost in terms of a plot perpetrated against the worker/consumer: "Businessmen ... looked to move beyond their 19th century characterization as captains of industry toward a position in which they could control the entire social realm".¹⁰¹ Ellul reifies technology into a demi-monster controlling the workers' every action through advertising, work planning, mass media, psychoanalysis, and 'employee relations' in the factory.¹⁰²

We need to question whether the effects of a technology can be and are foreseen by looking at the historical record. Reading backward from the effects of a technology to its expected results by a monolithic structure, gives technological change a coherence and direction it seldom shows in reality.¹⁰³

Although most authors reject the conservative thesis that technology is out of control,¹⁰⁴ such critics of technology have made a contribution to the literature in recognizing that technology imposes certain constraints on the social environment.¹⁰⁵ Winner has portrayed the force behind technology which dictates such conditions as specialized labour and centralized control, as the "technological imperative". This is the human faith in technology which hesitates to place any limits on its functioning.¹⁰⁶ The question as to whether the technological imperative is held with greater conviction by

some groups than by others must be addressed. Those who promote the technological order must take a greater share of responsibility for it than those who reluctantly, with ambivalence and from a position of relative weakness, accept it.

As Winner has shown, technology has many unintended consequences and few checks are placed on it by a believing public and an even more believing political and economic elite.¹⁰⁷ One must go to the historical record to determine just how farsighted either industry or the consumer were in assessing the costs and benefits of any new technology or technologies.

Whatever the elite and popular expectations, the end result of this industry - consumer dialectic, I will argue, is none-the-less an unequal exchange. Succumbing to a latent desire for wealth- and leisure-producing technology centred on the home, consumers relinquished whatever control they had, or might have had, over economic and technological decision-making in exchange for marginal inclusion in the ambitious project of industrialism. Workers' support the technological program for the material benefits, but their enthusiasm is tempered by exclusion from other benefits. Their response may range from blind enthusiasm for technology's promise to stark fear of its power, but in either case the response is based on ignorance and exclusion. Manufacturers reinforce this exclusion by pandering to escapist fantasies and pampering consumers with

gadgets. pretty packages and easy operations. This "pampered dependence" of the consumer on industry, wherein limited material gains and vicarious satisfaction in the works of industry are taken in exchange for autonomy and control, bears much resemblance to the relationship between men and women in the traditional patriarchal family. The latter is based on the sexual division of labour and the former on industrial specialization of labour.

While the effects of technology on workers in the public sphere has been examined by labour historians, and the effects of domestic technology on work in the home is beginning to receive academic scrutiny, few studies have recognized the indirect impact of technology on the home. The effect of technology in the public sphere, with its separation of creative work from maintenance labour, has first lowered the status of housewife, and secondly, increased the emotional importance of the home.

Cowan has noted that there are major differences between domestic work and labour force work. As she summarizes it, household work resembles industrialized market labour because it depends upon non-human energy sources which create dependency on a network of social and economic institutions; and because the household is part of the larger social and economic system, and uses tools which can neither be manufactured nor understood by those who use them. However, household work differs in that the labour is

unpaid, isolated and non-specialized.¹⁰⁸ I would add that, for the household worker there is no separation of the world of work from the world of the home, and those spheres are governed by opposing value systems.

Ursula Franklin has noted that the values of the technological order -- efficiency, specialization and centralization -- are in contrast to those of the private realm where diversity of skill, experience, personal loyalty and a sense of continuity are valued.¹⁰⁹ Running a household, especially where children are involved, requires inventiveness, spontaneity and improvisation. The private realm, with its non-specialized work and corresponding values, is clearly at the bottom of the ideological heap. This denigration is of course only true in the larger political sense, as individual members of families clearly value their family lives, although they are forced to separate them from their working lives. The housewife who inhabits the private realm part or full time and whose consciousness is formed there may be less alienated from her work, but this is a dubious distinction as she receives no pay, ambiguous status and few rewards, at least from the dominant public realm. What she receives in intangible rewards is subject to great variation among individuals and their families, and a great deal of insecurity. Because the home is recognized as a centre for leisure and consumption, the housewife is not seen as a worker.¹¹⁰ Her labour is not recognized because it is non-creative (maintenance) labour,

removed from the market economy -- industrial capitalism's measure of value.

Secondly the technological society increases the importance of the home as an arena of compensation for an alienating work environment. The emotional role the family plays is more important than a strictly economic analysis would indicate. As Gordon asserts, the family is romanticized with industrialization not just as a device to keep women at home. The home becomes more important as a balance against the outside world with its alienation in the workforce and weakening of community ties. The resulting new sense of home as a caring and private place, in contrast to the instrumental relations of public areas,¹¹¹ gives the home an importance for individuals, just as the status of the housewife is declining.

Women's studies is beginning to take up the question of technology's direct impact on the home. Alison Ravetz's 1965 article in Technology and Culture was one of the first to raise issues relating to domestic technology.¹¹² Since that time, others have pursued the question of technology's impact on domestic work and life, the relationship between social change and technological change, and women's role as users/consumers, and even creators of technology.¹¹³ Women's studies' first and most important contribution was to uncover the contribution women made,¹¹⁴ despite their relative exclusion from technological and economic decision-

making structures.¹¹⁵ Much is still to be learned about women's role, however. Canadian historiography on domestic technology is largely undeveloped with only a few sources on this topic.¹¹⁶

Ruth Schwartz Cowan, Susan Strasser and Dolores Hayden have studied the impact of technology on the household in the time period from approximately 1860 to mid twentieth century.¹¹⁷ Other smaller studies have addressed the issue as well.¹¹⁸ Technology's impact on the home has clearly been to eliminate drudgery and increase the potential for leisure although some authors have argued it has also de-skilled the housewife, increased her dependency on large technological systems, and left her with little social support, status, or community ties.¹¹⁹

As Cowan points out, domestic technology has also had a homogenizing effect on classes.¹²⁰ As the availability of servants declined, middle class housewives were forced to perform their own labour rather than supervise others. This proletarianization of the middle and upper class housewife was accompanied by a rising standard of living for the lower income groups who gained access to electricity, running water and basic household appliances. Vanek confirms this trend with her comparison of household routines for women of the 1920s and 1930s with those of the 1960s. She found that the time spend on various tasks by all women of the later period resembled that of elite women in the earlier period, in that less time was spent on food preparation and

housework and more time on shopping and childcare.¹²¹ Vanek's study is the only one to empirically test the contention that by mid-twentieth century, the experience of running a household was materially similar for all classes.

Cowan's contention that domestic technology has raised the standard of living¹²² has been questioned by some historians.¹²³ Statistical studies which have attempted to calculate the level of real income of workers¹²⁴ in order to determine whether they were better or worse off in previous decades, have added little to the debate. Such studies may be of limited usefulness given the number of variables significantly affecting the standard of living which cannot be quantified. These include family size which was declining as a result not only of contraception¹²⁵ but also of the decline in boarders and relatives living with a family.¹²⁶ As well, the level of technological infrastructure, such as basic utilities like gas, electricity, and running water had improved standards.¹²⁷ The accepted social definition of poverty also rose as a result of these changes. While disparity in income remained, there is no doubt that technology significantly raised the bare minimum level of subsistence by ensuring near universal access to running water, electricity, domestic appliances and so on. As this thesis will demonstrate, the availability of electric appliances was not exclusive to the middle or upper class woman in the interwar

period, but quickly spread to include working class women.

Some of the earlier literature on household technology has questioned the value of appliances for labour-saving.¹²⁸ Bose, for example, points out that the extra work of cleaning, storing and keeping appliances in repair must be taken into account.¹²⁹ She also found that owning appliances did not significantly improve overall job satisfaction among housewives, nor decrease time spend in housework. It is probably unrealistic to expect job satisfaction to be influenced by appliance ownership. On the other hand, few would agree with Bose that appliances create as much work as they save, except perhaps marginal pieces such as electric can openers or devices new to the market with a poor repair record.

Non-technological (social) factors, such as the wife's employment, or use of outside services, had a greater impact on time spent in housework, Bose contends.¹³⁰ While no one would deny this latter contention, it should be noted that this study measured only time spent in housework and not the quality of work performed. It is only by assuming that the goal of domestic technology is to reduce time spent doing all types housework, rather than to improve standards in certain directions, that technology can be deemed a failure. We do not know what women of the period wanted from the technology.

Within the women's studies literature, as with studies of business, priority is given to the public sphere and the

family is assumed to be passive. Meg Luxton, in one of the first Canadian studies on household work in Canada, More Than a Labour of Love, defined domestic labour almost exclusively in terms of its impact on the labour market. She characterized domestic work as "indispensable labour that converts the wages of the paid worker into the means of subsistence for the entire household and that replenished the labour power of the household members again and again so that it can be re-sold the next day, the next year and in the next generation."¹³¹ Veronica Strong-Boag has suggested that domestic work must be studied with the "same seriousness and respect now being accorded labour in public settings", because it is so inextricably tied to the larger wage-labour economy.¹³² Not only does women's domestic labour provide an essential support structure for the participation of family members in the larger labour force, but it shapes their participation in it. Defining women's work solely in terms of the industrial economy can lead only to theories of women's exploitation within the family.

Domestic labour should be studied not only because it gives us a more complete picture of the "important" economy. It should also be studied because it gives a more complete view of the family, and especially of women who fulfill a primary role within it. If we are to move away from the antiquated view of women in the private realm as victimized, and begin to see them as actors and agents in historical

change, we must make them a primary focus of study. Strong-Boag's study of the lives of girls and women in English Canada from 1919 to 1939, as well as an earlier work on French Canada by the Clío Collective, are excellent examples of the writing of women's history with a new sensitivity to women's unique place as active participants in a private sphere which interacts positively with the public.¹³³

Many of the approaches to the study of domestic technology and/or consumerism adopt the marxist/liberal premise that the private sphere is significant solely in terms of consumption and labour force reproduction. Ewen, for example, states that industrialization stripped the home of its productive function, as capitalism manufactured its clothing, produced its candles, processed its foods, etc. Only emotional ties, reproduction of labour and consumption of capitalism's goods were left as family functions.¹³⁴ Reproduction of labour and emotional ties are so unimportant to Ewen that he does not even discuss them, focusing instead on consumption as women's primary role. Fisher, in her study of Canadian advertising, postulated that the insecurity which advertisers exploited was based on woman's lost productivity.¹³⁵ This predominant view of the family has been challenged by Ruth Schwartz Cowan who maintains that, thanks to domestic technology, 20th century women were far more productive than their forebears.¹³⁶ The notion that making candles or butter is productive labour, while rearing children, cooking, and cleaning a home are not,¹³⁷

is of course based on the public sphere value system which only recognizes work which could be measured by some universally accepted yardstick such as market value. There is no evidence that women's past manufacture of butter or spinning of yarn brought them any greater recognition or status than present day household activities.

Historians are beginning to question the near universal premise that women's low status is a function of non-productivity. Matthews, in her study of ideas of domesticity, found that several forces, evolutionary thought, industrialization, and the culture of professionalism, worked toward downgrading the status of the housewife.¹³⁸ As this thesis will show, women reformers of the interwar period recognized that the homemaker's low status was a function of the non-recognition of the value of their domestic labour.

Women who worked for domestic reform have been misinterpreted in the literature on women's history. Due to their support of consumerism and close links with business, historians have assumed that the motivations and interests of these women were identical with their business allies.¹³⁹ In addition, their acceptance of the sexual division of labour which kept women in the home where their labour was exploited has earned them an anti-feminist label.

The group of professional middle class women who promoted domestic technology in the interwar period will be

called household advisors in this study. In studying this group of women, the literature has generally overlooked the clear links with an earlier domestic reform movement, itself an important part of the first wave feminist movement.¹⁴⁰ Until very recently suffrage and other public sphere reforms received a disproportionate share of attention in the study of women's history, the result of a belief that public sphere reforms were central to the movement. Authors are only now realizing that reform of the private sphere was an equally important component of that movement.¹⁴¹

Women responded to changes affecting domestic labour by initiating a domestic reform movement in the pre-World War I reform era. In Canada, middle class women's organizations, which were active in a wide range of social reform activities from women's suffrage to public health, also promoted the teaching of domestic science in Canadian schools.¹⁴² The campaign to have domestic science recognized as a legitimate subject in the public school system came to be identified with its most zealous proponent, Adelaide Hoodless.¹⁴³ She sought to keep future Canadian mothers informed of developments in science and technology which would affect them in their work as homemakers. Domestic science classes also introduced Canadian girls to the latest technological advances for the home.¹⁴⁴ Domestic reformers hoped to enhance the status of homemaking both to attract middle class women to homemaking as a profession, and working class women to domestic

service.¹⁴⁵

The earlier preoccupation with public sphere reforms in the historiography of women, as well as the domestic reformers' exclusive concern with private sphere reform, has resulted in a characterization of domestic reform as a conservative, anti-feminist movement aimed at restricting women's activities to the private sphere.¹⁴⁶ There is no doubt that Hoodless saw women's role primarily as the moral guardian of family life, and her views helped win support among politicians and educational authorities. Unfortunately there has been a tendency to look no further than Hoodless's conservative conception of women's role, preventing a more complete view of the domestic reform program. Recent re-interpretations have emphasized the obvious practical benefits it offered women and the challenge to the patriarchal devaluation of domestic labour which women perceived as the cause of their low status.¹⁴⁷ And, as Patricia Saidak has pointed out, there were others in the movement who did not share Hoodless's conservatism on the question of sex roles.¹⁴⁸ In keeping with the then popular version of feminism which stressed women's right to a voice in public affairs based on their role in the family, Hoodless's attempts to give homemaking equal status with industrial labour had a radical potential.

By the 1920s and 1930s many Canadian women had been trained in domestic science and the movement had become

institutionalized in the home economics profession.¹⁴⁹ As popularizers of the tenets of domestic reform, these professional women also accepted the prevailing sexual division of labour which assigned homemaking to women and wage earning to men. This study will attempt to look at what these women believed could be gained by allying with business, rather than judging with the benefit of hindsight the results of that alliance. It appears that manufacturers and advertisers influenced the direction of the domestic reform "movement", as household advisors adopted business ideology and modern technology in an attempt to reach their primary goal -- that of revaluing women's domestic labour, or achieving equality of the public sphere with the private. They felt the benefits of modern technology and the opportunity to voice the domestic concerns of women were worth the price of compromise.

Numerous Canadian historians have postulated that the 1920s saw the end of the reform era with the victories of women's suffrage, prohibition and other reforms.¹⁵⁰ This was the first decade to embrace unambivalently the modern ideals of secularism, technology, urbanization, and consumerism.¹⁵¹ Strong-Boag has taken issue with the contention that the women's movement died in the 1920s, and has hypothesized that it turned its attention to reform in the private realm.¹⁵² While household advisors in the interwar period would fit such a generalization, given their pragmatic application of industrial technology to achieving

the goals of domestic reform, one should not forget that reform in the private realm was also on the agenda in the suffrage era. While it is likely premature to suggest that the 1920s saw the end of reform, this thesis will suggest that a new approach to reform, one which embraced modern tools and ideals, was emerging.¹⁵³

And, as Strong-Boag herself notes, the public and private spheres are inextricably interwoven, especially for women. Therefore it may be quite impossible to separate public sphere reforms from private sphere reforms. Even domestic reform which had as its central goal the revaluing of women's domestic labour was not exclusively a private sphere reform. As the devaluation of domestic labour affects women's labour force participation as well as their domestic lives, it is a significant reform for all women, whether housewives or professional women. As long as domestic labour is devalued, so also will be teaching, nursing, waitressing and all the other jobs women do because their domestic expertise "qualifies" them.¹⁵⁴

The separation of the domestic reform movement from the feminist movement in the women's history literature was based on the dubious premise that first wave feminism had as its first and primary goal the integration of women into public sphere positions -- all to the exclusion of reform in the private sphere. The latter was considered at best ameliorative and at worst reinforcing of women's oppression

within the family.¹⁵⁵ Historians are now questioning these assumptions. Strong-Boag, for example, has posited that suffrage -- once maligned as a superficial middle class reform by a generation of historians -- in fact constituted a threat to patriarchal authority in the home by giving women a political voice independent of men. She also suggests that the suffrage movement was motivated by the desire to reform the private sphere.¹⁵⁶ Again, we cannot separate reform in the public sphere from reform in the private sphere.

The idea that men and women could share both domestic work and public sphere work was not contemplated in the 1920s and 1930s due to its obvious assault on male privilege, but also because it clashed with the modernist ideology of domestic reformers. As shown previously, the sexual division of labour is parallel to the industrial specialization of labour. It, like scientific management, which household advisors tried to apply to domestic labour, allowed for greater productivity, albeit at the cost of worker alienation. Like the worker in a scientifically managed factory,¹⁵⁷ whose monotonous labour afforded greater profit and productivity to its owners, women in the home performed maintenance labour which freed men for more satisfying and creative pursuits. Because specialization of labour was highly valued for its promised efficiency which yielded greater leisure and prosperity, household advisors felt more comfortable with the notion of raising the status

of the homemaker to that of a professional,¹⁵⁸ than with the notion of dismantling the sexual division of labour.

The role which women's magazines played in bolstering the sexual division of labour has been discussed in the literature on domestic labour and technology as well as in women's studies in general. Marjorie Ferguson, for instance, holds that the role of women's magazines is to create and maintain a 'cult of femininity' - a shared sense that women have a separate and distinct culture, apart from men.¹⁵⁹ Cowan condemns women's magazines for promoting the idea of housework as a labour of love, and an obsession with cleanliness, which only served to entrap women in the homemaking role, and hindered realization of domestic technology's promised leisure.¹⁶⁰

Advertisers, who strongly influenced magazine policy through their major financial contribution, are seen as the culprits in this scheme to keep women out of the public sphere. Cynthia White, in her study of women's magazines in Britain, acknowledges the influence of advertising in magazine editorial policy, recognizing that a large share of magazine revenue came from advertising, yet she reminds us that subscription lists are used to entice advertisers, and if readership falls off, so does advertising revenue.¹⁶¹ Setting editorial policy is a balancing act which juggles reader interest against advertising interests. The nature of advertising influence does have practical repercussions,

as White notes, such as advice articles geared to complement advertising messages, avoidance of controversial issues, the banning of product comparisons in offering advice on appliance purchases, and so on. However, there is no evidence that it dictates the ideological parameters of the medium.

The realization that women made most of the purchases, that lower income groups had surplus income, and that an appeal to the emotions could produce better results than the old fashioned rational appeal revolutionized advertising strategy in the twentieth century.¹⁶² Fisher asserts that advertisers exploited the insecurities of women whose only 'job prospect' was a husband and whose productive role had allegedly been robbed by industrialism's disruption of the family-based economy, offering products to reassure them of their worth.¹⁶³ Although Fisher does not point this out,¹⁶⁴ this exploitation of insecurity was more pronounced in ads for beauty and personal products than in ads for domestic appliances, where the appeal was more rational.

While there is no doubt that advertisers did exploit existing insecurities, and could serve to reinforce them (at least for those readers who took them seriously), they did not create them. Rather, it would appear that they were symptoms of a period of transition for women. As Mary Vipond points out in her article on Canadian women's magazines in the 1920s,¹⁶⁵ women in the interwar period were supposed to be modern, efficient housekeepers, applying

business principles to their work, while at the same time preserving the more traditional womanly qualities appropriate to home life. The influence of the advertiser should not be exaggerated to the point where the program of popular household advisors is dismissed as no more than a business promotion stunt. While advertisers exploited and manipulated the advisors' ideas to sell products, they did not create the domestic reform movement. Whether one sees this as a genuine alliance between feminist ideals and business goals, or a co-opting of reform energies is a matter of interpretation and hinges, to some degree, on what support the average Canadian woman in the interwar period gave to feminist goals. This remains an unknown.

Women's magazines did play a socially valuable role. As White points out, they provided the housebound woman with information on a fast moving outside world from which she was largely excluded, giving her a positive image, contact with other women, and approval and encouragement which she could get nowhere else due to the break up of kin and community groups.¹⁶⁶ In the historiography, women's magazines are condemned for failing to question the context in which housework was done, that is, the sexual division of labour which assigns housework to women and wage earning to men.¹⁶⁷ The acceptance of separate spheres is not surprising, however. Few professional or trade journals question the rules of the game under which they operate.

More emphasis should be placed, I believe, on the journals' questioning of the widespread denigration of women's work in the home. This was clearly popular with their readers and consistent with the major plank in the household advisors' program -- the need to revalue women's domestic labour.

Our understanding of women's role in consumerism is incomplete at best. We know that women domestic reformers supported the concept of advertising as a means of implementing the industry program of democratized consumption which promised technological resources for the home. By omission the historiography has tended to assume that women supported the industry program wholeheartedly. A major women's critique of advertising (by women in advertising) which attacked emotional copy, or psychological manipulation, and the use of women as sex objects in advertising, has been acknowledged by Fisher,¹⁶⁸ but has received no serious study. Given the number of women active in the advertising industry, their links with consumer groups¹⁶⁹ and their popular influence, they deserve serious academic attention. Strong-Boag tells us a little about the 'consumer movement' but much research is needed into this important area of women's involvement in consumerism.¹⁷⁰

Some American and British historians have begun to question the alleged "oppressiveness" of consumerism for women.¹⁷¹ William Leach in his study of turn of the century American department stores, for example, found that women reacted positively to the new freedoms the marketplace

offered.¹⁷² As he points out, the consumer role was an entry into the public sphere, not only for the few professional women who acted as industry advisors and represented homemakers, but for homemakers themselves.¹⁷³ The task of shopping was surely more enjoyable, creative, challenging and sociable than the drudgery of endless home manufacture of goods which could be bought in the marketplace.

Much new research is also needed before we fully understand the relationship between patriarchy and consumer capitalism. While Stuart Ewen concedes that advertising and the consumer culture it instituted eroded many traditional beliefs and practices including patriarchal authority, community ties and the value of thrift, he also implies that women merely substituted one master for another and lost their productive role in the transition.¹⁷⁴ Conservatives, such as Lasch and Donzelot, also bemoan the loss of patriarchal authority over the family, which they see as a destructive influence.¹⁷⁵ For Marxists, women allegedly gained nothing in the process of switching from patriarchal rule to capitalist rule. It is to be hoped that evidence from the period of transition from old fashioned patriarchy to consumer capitalism will shed light on the very real changes affecting women's role. Patriarchal authority was clearly no friend of the housewife, community bonds could be coercive as well as supportive, and the value of thrift

usually meant making do and doing without. Given the unequal distribution of resources within the family, thrift usually meant more work and greater sacrifice for women.

Women's role vis a vis consumerism needs to be examined in terms of the expected returns anticipated in the interwar period. I will look at the input women had into the advertising of electrical appliances, which centred on the theme of revaluing women's domestic labour, and show that some gains were made out of their business partnership. The practical benefits speak for themselves. Women's role as consumer was encouraged by domestic reformers not merely as a trap to keep them in the home feeding the fires of capitalism, as Hayden suggests,¹⁷⁶ but as a means of giving women input into industrial decisions affecting the home. It was also a means of asserting greater financial autonomy within marriage -- another plank in the domestic reform platform.

Recent research is finding that many women supported the concept of the family wage, even though it meant restrictions on women's workforce participation, and served to reinforce women's domestic role. However, it is important to note that such support was tempered with a demand that wives receive their fair share of the family wage.¹⁷⁷ Given the alienating and de-humanizing aspects of industrial work, in comparison with the more integrated labour in the home, and the pervasiveness of the separate spheres ideology, it is not surprising that women would

attempt to upgrade the conditions, status and financial autonomy of domestic labour, before embarking on the more ambitious project of abandoning their traditional role.

Domestic reformers and their business/advertising allies have also been assigned a greater measure of responsibility for the twentieth century privatization of domestic labour than is probably their due. Hayden has suggested that the private home, fully equipped with its mini-technology, where women labour in isolation and relative inefficiency, was promoted as a means to economic growth which also served to enslave women to the whims of family members, and their role as consumers.¹⁷⁸ Hobbs and Pierson have pointed out that the Canadian government, in promoting economic recovery during the Depression, used home improvement as a means of creating male jobs, assuming women's role as homemakers/consumers.¹⁷⁹ This alliance of capitalism and patriarchy destroyed any potential for centralization of domestic labour which could have liberated women from its drudgery and personal servitude.¹⁸⁰

This analysis is partially true. Some aspects of domestic labour were privatized, such as childcare, cooking to a limited extent, and perhaps laundering. However, a great many other aspects of domestic labour were in fact centralized, such as food processing, clothing manufacture, health care and education.

Cowan also addresses the issue of privatization but

neither she nor Hayden can explain why householders, especially women, were unwilling to centralize all of the home's functions.¹⁸¹ As already shown, advertisers consciously exploited women's (and men's) fears and insecurities, offering some product or service that promised relief from the resulting sense of inadequacy. Stuart Ewen identifies male worker alienation as the source of the advertisers' power over him, while he contends that for women in the home, it was a loss of productivity.¹⁸² Ewen gives a more satisfying explanation for men's cooperation with business in glorifying the home than some of the women's studies literature on the interwar period, which implies they simply wanted to be waited on. Perhaps men were looking for, in the private realm, what they had lost (or never had) in the public? As women live in the same industrialized and alienating world, where technology deskilled the worker and robbed him/her of autonomy, there is no reason to believe that they might not also wish to retreat, although they probably paid a higher price for doing so.

A sensitivity to the role of the home as a refuge from the ravages of industrialization pervades the literature of the Victorian period.¹⁸³ Literature dealing with later periods, however, has tended to forget that a commitment to the importance of home life may be motivated by an alienation from public life, as well as by the decline in community ties which accompanied industrialization. The

home may be the last area of life where autonomy and self-sufficiency are at least possible. The emotional role of the home becomes especially important in periods of technological change, and may be more important for lower income groups, women and others excluded from decision-making authority in the public sphere.

In a later chapter scientific management in the home will be examined. This was an attempt by women to reconcile the popular perception that the private home must be preserved, with the desire of women to use technology to lessen their workload, improve their working conditions and raise their status. The naive hope that the benefits of technology could co-exist with older social arrangements was not uncommon, for men as well as for women.

While women's studies literature has done much to legitimize women's domestic labour and bring it into focus as a feminist issue, the exclusive view of the home as workplace can obscure the obvious fact that it is also living space for women, as well as other family members. Privatization may be the desired strategy for families, given the constraints of the technological order.

In this thesis, I hope to bring together the insights from business history, the history of technology, and women's studies, in order to present a more complete picture of household electrification and its effect on domestic labour in Ontario in the 1920s and 1930s. I have used

women's magazines, and advertising and electrical industry journals to try to get a sense of what the men and women of the 1920s and 1930s believed were the costs and benefits of household electrification.

Electrical and advertising industry journals were examined in an attempt to understand the interests and motivations of these two groups who actively promoted electrification of homes. I also sought to understand the consumer through this second-hand source, as the types of sales appeals and strategies used hint at consumer response to the new technology. The Bulletin, published by the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario (now Ontario Hydro), and Electrical News and Engineering, an electrical industry trade journal for Canada, were used. Printers Ink (U.S.) and Marketing (Canadian), two advertising journals, and some other miscellaneous sources including archival material from Ontario Hydro were also used.

The electrical industry journals and sources document the industry's interests and motivations. In addition, their discussion of strategies for selling domestic appliances give hints as to the interests and preoccupations of the householder. Salesmen's stories of customer response and the relative effectiveness of certain sales pitches over others are especially useful. Ontario Hydro's Bulletin presents the views of the municipal utilities which make up the Hydro Electric Power Commission and which buy power from it, as well as the Commission itself. In that the most

aggressive merchandising of household electricity was done at the municipal level, it is illuminating to get a sense of the priorities and motivations of both groups. The Commission published in the journal valuable statistics on electricity consumption, rates and appliance usage. The advertising journals also represent business interests, and give clues to consumer response in appeals used, strategies taken and in market research studies. In addition, the journals published valuable critiques of advertising by women advertisers, and assessments of these by their male colleagues, which point to differences in motivation and approach between men and women in business.

There are many problems in finding information on the motives of the silent Canadian housewife. While industry sources often addressed themselves to the householder, it is difficult to ascertain whether the intended audience is the housewife, her husband or both. Advertisers often appealed as much to men as to women, especially when selling appliances (although the woman was never ignored).

The prescriptive literature offered to Canadian housewives was examined through Canadian women's magazines. I have looked at both the advertising of electrical appliances by manufacturers, and advice literature offered to women on housework in general and the purchase of appliances specifically. This latter advice came mostly from home economists who advised and represented Canadian

housewives. To get a sense of the literature specifically directed at a Canadian audience, I chose Maclean's's women's section, Chatelaine, Everywoman's World and the Canadian Home Journal even though many American journals such as Ladies Home Journal circulated widely in Canada.

The women's magazines are a valuable source because they do talk about domestic work and technology, are directed exclusively at women, and, in the case of advice literature, do not have a direct commercial intent. However, they are written by elite, professional women, who are not themselves full-time housewives. The magazines also offer a few letters from women readers, and the writers often provide clues as to reader response in the approach they take to problems.

In chapters two and three the promotion of household electrification by the electrical industry will be examined. The benefits of the technology both practical and ideological, as presented to Canadian householders in the 1920s and 1930s, will become evident. The electrical industry's advertising efforts were aimed at market expansion; its strategy was to sell the electric idea. It hoped to sell Ontario householders on the idea of a complete electrical home rather than just one or two appliances. It sought to remove the obstacles to electrification by 1) an attempt to lower the cost, 2) advertising and promotion designed to overcome the fear of new technologies and teach skills in using it, and 3) promotion of better wiring in new

and existing homes. It is evident that once these obstacles to home electrification were removed, most people adopted the electrical lifestyle.

In chapter four the advertising of electrical appliances in national magazines as well as in the Hydro Lamp, a promotional flyer published by the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario in 1924, 1925 and 1926, will be examined. Here we see the influence of women domestic reformers in formulating an advertising message which incorporates commercial interests with a popular version of feminism. Advertisers promoted increased status, financial autonomy and improved working conditions for Canadian homemakers both because these promised gains helped to sell appliances and because advertising women told the advertising industry that women wanted these basic reforms to the patriarchal family.

In Chapter 5, I will examine women's involvement in the process of household electrification in light of the benefits which they foresaw for women. Three groups of middle class professional women were active in promoting domestic reform in the interwar period: women in the electrical industry, women in advertising, and women journalists writing for women's magazines. I have decided to call these women household advisors because their chief role was to advise women on the use of new products and technologies, as well as new ideas affecting domestic work,

through popular magazines and commercial outlets. But they also advised industry on the design, manufacture and advertising of domestic products. These middle class women sought to mediate the impact of industrialization on the home through a propaganda campaign aimed at elevating the status of the private sphere to a position of equality with the public. Influenced both by first wave feminism which first espoused domestic reform, and by the 1920s business philosophy of promoting a consumer culture on the promise of wealth and technology for the home, they demanded improved working conditions, greater financial autonomy and a revaluation of domestic labour. Electrical appliances were an integral part of their program in that the promise of reduced drudgery was key to their support for business, and it was also an important mediation between the twin desires to make the home efficient and to preserve its old fashioned qualities.

The implications of the household advisors' program will also be examined. The movement failed to revalue domestic labour, largely due to two incompatible assumptions, first that the sexual division of labour in the traditional home must be preserved, and secondly that public sphere values of efficiency and specialization of labour could be applied to women's work. The movement reinforced the sexual division of labour, and threatened the traditional homemaker's autonomy by imposing the standards of the male-dominated public sphere on the private. The

loosening of patriarchal authority, however, and the de-emphasis on moralism helped women move into the public sphere.

In Chapter 6, I will discuss the social costs of the process of household electrification -- largely unforeseen -- by looking at the debate on advertising and developments in the electrical industry. The relationship between householder and producer will be examined in relation to the unequal exchange of consumer gadgetry and sexy advertising for an industrial monopoly on economic and technological resources.

In the final chapter, the various strands of evidence, obtained largely through indirect sources will be brought together to give a rough picture of the Canadian homemaker of the interwar period. Conclusions must be tentative as evidence is thin, yet it appears that Canadian homemakers supported household advisors in seeking better working conditions (largely through domestic technology), improved status, and financial autonomy. They do not appear to have supported the program of scientific management as a means to that end, instead emphasizing motherhood as their major social contribution and source of personal satisfaction. They appear to have accepted the sexual division of labour, been ambivalent on the issue of workforce participation for married women, and responded favourably to attacks on the patriarchal devaluation of women's domestic labour.

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102Ellul.

103Armstrong and Nelles have avoided this pitfall in their book on electricity, by looking at the industry at the local, provincial and national levels. See Monopoly's Moment.

104Ellul for example has postulated that modern technology is running out of control, answering the dictates of its own integral logic, impervious to human control. Ellul sees technology as an autonomous entity, with all of modern life governed by its dictates. Ellul: 43. This has been called the technological determinist view of technology. See Borgman: 9.

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CHAPTER TWO

Household Electrification: The Industry Perspective

In turn of the century Ontario, hydro-electric power became a symbol of future economic growth and technological progress. Electricity's perceived importance led to the formation of the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario, a public utility devoted to supplying this valuable resource "at cost" to Ontarians, both in business and at home. Domestic utilization was an important part of electricity's appeal, with domestic comfort ranking alongside progress, prosperity and leisure as major benefits of widespread electrification. Industry enthusiasts promoted electrical technology as a means of ameliorating class inequalities, i.e. promising the working man a middle class lifestyle. Secondary to this goal, his wife was offered liberation from household drudgery. Municipal utilities were the most outspoken activists for household electrification, seeking to bring the benefits of electricity to all, with an

ambitious program of supplying 100% of the householder's light, heat and power needs, wiping out gas competition where necessary. The Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario, the provincial body which generated, transmitted and distributed power to a growing number of utilities throughout the province, reluctantly and much later adopted the domestic market as a priority, in recognition of its stability, vis a vis the industrial.

Ostensibly a municipal co-operative, the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario, formed in 1906, was the product of the Ontario government to which it owed financial backing and legislative powers to regulate the hydro-electric industry in Ontario.¹ It was also, at least in its origins, the creation of several municipalities in Southwestern Ontario concerned that the hydro-electric potential of Niagara Falls would be monopolized by American interests.

By the 1920s the Commission had consolidated its position as Ontario's primary supplier and distributor of hydro-electric energy, absorbing most of its private competitors, and convincing or coercing most Ontario municipalities to join its network. The Commission began in 1910 to supply power to 10 municipalities, distributing 2500 horsepower (hp) annually. By 1920 it was servicing 266 municipalities and delivering 355,000 hp, as well as generating its own power.² "By the end of the 1920s Ontario hydro was firmly in control of the hydro-electric industry

distributing over 75% of all the power consumed in the province", note Armstrong and Nelles.³ In accord with other electrical industry actors across North America, the Commission sought to reduce rates for electricity by promoting increased consumption. The development of the small electric motor and its application to household uses had by this time created a new branch of the electrical industry: domestic appliance manufacturing. The promotion of user education and improved facilities by appliance manufacturers and retailers, in conjunction with the Commission's promotion of electricity consumption, the subject of Chapter 3, constituted a comprehensive program of household electrification.

The electrical industry in Ontario consisted of at least four major branches: electrical dealer-contractors, appliance manufacturers, municipal utilities and the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario. Electrical dealer-contractors did electrical wiring as well as the retailing and servicing of appliances. Manufacturers produced a wide variety of electrical appliances and apparatus for home, factory and office, although this thesis will be concerned with domestic applications. Municipal utilities purchased power wholesale from the Commission and in turn distributed it to households and businesses in their municipality. In other parts of Canada, this function of distributing (and in some cases generating) power was performed by what the industry called central stations. These privately owned

power companies functioned in a similar manner to the Hydro Electric Power Commission.

The existence of two types of industry associations, the Canadian Electrical Association (CEA), representing private central stations, and the Ontario Municipal Electric Association (OMEA) and Association of Municipal Electrical Utilities (AMEU),⁴ representing Ontario's publicly owned utilities, indicate division between public and private utilities. Most of the manufacturers belonged to the CEA which was affiliated with the National Electric Light Association (NELA), an American organization known for its vehement opposition to public ownership. To some extent this division served to isolate the Commission and its utilities from the rest of the electrical industry. Efforts to bring the CEA and AMEU/OMEA together in the 1920s were unsuccessful, although most of the earlier animosity toward publicly owned utilities had died out by the 1930s.

In approach and strategy there was really very little difference between public and private utilities by the 1920s and 1930s, although the former were a little more sensitive to political pressures. Both were in a phase of expansion, using loadbuilding and diversification as a means of reducing costs and encouraging greater consumption. This strategy was compatible with the business atmosphere of the interwar period which sought to expand markets to lower income groups for economic as well as political reasons.

While the HEPC attributed its lower rates to "the power at cost" principle, its rates were falling for the same economic reasons as were those of private utilities. Economies of scale achieved through large hydro-electric generating stations and the linking of these by high voltage transmission lines into large regional networks which could lower peaks and improve load factor, led to falling costs throughout North America.⁵ The Commission could probably also claim to have initiated this expansion program, having recognized the potential of the domestic market earlier than private utilities, but its claims to the superiority of public ownership vis a vis rates were exaggerated.

The 1920s and 1930s can be treated as one period in the history of domestic utilization of electricity because of the steady rise in domestic consumption and appliance usage, despite the impact of the depression. The H.E.P.C. did run into difficulty in the 1930s in sustaining its earlier rate of growth, the result of a dramatic drop in industrial usage and rising costs. In an effort to feed the fires of growth, and meet the competition of gas, the Commission and the municipal utilities which formed its network, promoted high energy consuming appliances such as hot water heaters and ranges. These appliances used large amounts of energy in producing heat and are not, as Ashworth of Toronto Hydro notes, an efficient use of electricity.⁶ The range did offer the benefits of cleanliness, coolness and an absence of open flame which are beneficial to the user in the

kitchen, but the water heater, both slow and expensive relative to gas, offered no such advantages. Electricity is more advantageous in appliances which use small amounts of heat, such as the toaster, or mechanical energy, such as in the washing machine. In the field of lighting its superiority over gas was already well established. Despite their disadvantages, the electric range and water heater were given priority over the more popular and useful appliances, such as washing machines, toasters, vacuum cleaners and refrigerators, in the interests of maintaining electrical industry growth.

H.V. Nelles has pointed out that hydro became a symbol of economic growth in Canada, especially Ontario which could boast the magnificent Niagara Falls.⁷ This symbol appealed to practical as well as poetic sentiment. The widespread belief that energy supply was crucial to economic development⁸ and Canadian superiority over the United States in waterpower offered the promise of lessening dependence upon American coal supplies and developing Ontario's industrial potential.⁹ As well, electricity's qualities of cleanliness and its association with the natural beauty of waterfalls appealed to a world not quite reconciled to the squalors and dislocations of industrial capitalism. Armstrong and Nelles have outlined the reasons for the emergence of public ownership in Ontario, stressing structural factors which allowed the public power movement

to succeed in Ontario where elsewhere it failed. The forceful personality of Adam Beck, the strength and unity of the principal municipal jurisdictions, the harmonious relations between municipal and provincial governments, the threat of an American private monopoly on Ontario's relatively scarce energy resources (i.e., coal) and Ontario's ambitions to be the industrial heartland of Canada gave the public power movement its force.¹⁰ Armstrong and Nelles portray the leaders of the public power movement -- businessmen and civic boosters -- as primarily interested in hydro as a tool of economic development.

This popular support for the HEPC stemmed from what Armstrong and Nelles have termed civic populism.¹¹ Large utilities, especially privately controlled monopolies, became a symbol of the new corporate age, dominated by large, inaccessible and often irresponsible corporations. Public ownership was, in their view, the simple method of enforcing public responsibility on these utilities.¹² There was in fact a whole range of methods for regulating utilities, public ownership being the most extreme. It was seldom resorted to, due to public ambivalence and a fear of inefficiency and corruption.¹³

Public ownership was advocated by a loose coalition of 'radicals' who wanted to democratize local government, and businessmen and professionals who wanted centralized, efficient administration.¹⁴ The strength of the public power movement, which helped form and sustain the

Commission, stemmed from its ability to transcend the usual class and regional divisions. It united Toronto with the "jealous and aspiring industrial towns in its hinterland",¹⁵ and the labourer and farmer with the capitalist. All saw, in electricity, hope for the future, although their visions were not identical. The zeal which marked the forming of the Commission in 1906, with its wide support from groups as disparate as civic boosters, municipal reformers, trade unionists, social gospellers, suffragists and even temperance crusaders (WCTU),¹⁶ should not be lightly dismissed. These unorganized groups, whom Armstrong and Nelles call radicals and fanatics,¹⁷ have received little attention in economic histories. They are important not only because they provide the support which allowed the Commission to grow into the important economic institution that dominated Ontario's electrical industry by the 1920s, but because they point to the importance of electricity in the home, a much neglected factor in industry histories. As well, their ideals influenced industry actors. While it is never explicitly stated, the literature implies that popular beliefs were cynically manipulated by the industry to build itself a monopoly.¹⁸ The notion that industry actors might hold these convictions with equal or greater vigour than their supporters has not been entertained. Yet it is clear from a reading of the trade literature, that industry actors referred to ideals of democracy and equality when addressing

colleagues, as well as when addressing the public.

Electricity's popularity lay not only in its practical benefits to householders but in its vision of a better world. This vision was not confined to the electrical industry, although here one could find its most outspoken proponents. Two Macleans articles wax eloquent about Canada's potential for economic and population growth, world commercial supremacy, better living and the elimination of drudgery.¹⁹ Grattan O'Leary, a popular journalist and political pundit who later became a Conservative MP,²⁰ asserted in 1928, for example, that "the humblest farmer today, in the most remote part of central Canada, enjoys lighting facilities beyond the dreams of palaces 50 years ago".²¹ O'Leary's rhetoric makes up in political appeal what it lacks in accuracy. Few farmers in the 1920s enjoyed the benefits of electricity. Yet such enthusiasm was tempered with a profound ambivalence concerning the social costs of the technology. Visions of a brighter future always mixed the benefits of the new technology with images of the old and familiar. S. Sibley's 1930 article referred to Henry Ford's vision of decentralized workplaces where workers might enjoy the benefits of industry while working their own plots of land in a semi-self-sufficient existence reminiscent of a romanticized past where workers were less vulnerable to a volatile capitalist economy.²²

The hope that electricity could ameliorate the dislocations of industrialism can also be seen in the HEPC's

rhetoric. Motivated by the political appeal of rural enhancement, the Commission had an interest in the farm market. The public service rendered through rural electrification and its presumed assault on rural depopulation helped justify public ownership of the province's hydro-electric resources. Electricity promised to give the farmer the advantages of the city without the disadvantages, answer his crying need for help and keep young men and women on the farm and "away from the cities which are already overcrowded with non-producers."²³ The Commission also hoped that rural electrification would encourage small industries such as cheese factories and flour mills to stay in rural areas. The rural appeal was not mere empty rhetoric designed to dupe the public -- the HEPC did do much more toward rural electrification than private utilities. While in 1928 there were only 9,309 farms hooked up to Commission lines (excluding Hamlet customers), there were 28,198 by 1936.²⁴ This dramatic increase was the result of considerable effort on the part of the Commission to sell farmers on the value of electrification. Whether marginal social groups (farmers, labourers, those in the hinterland regions) held onto the hope of preserving older ways with greater tenacity than those in the centre of technological progress is not known. It would appear, however, that ambivalence toward technological change was not confined to one class or group.

Beck himself put a great deal of energy into reconciling electricity with an image of the past that was probably more popular than real.

Electricity at cost was also promoted for its decentralizing effect. It was asserted that manufacturers would no longer have to go to an energy source -- now electricity could go to the people. "What we want is that every small village be an industrial centre; small towns and villages with plenty of manufacturing, rather than great factory centres with slums and congested populations", said Beck.²⁵ Consistent with this objective, Beck promoted a radial system designed to link up Ontario towns and halt the exodus to the large cities by giving every town equal competitive advantage. This ambitious project met with utter failure and has generally been forgotten except when used as an example of Beck's grandiose ambitions.²⁶ Yet it is quite consistent with the other aspects of the program to use electricity for the greater good of humanity.

The movement for equal rates throughout the province is indicative of the seriousness with which this rhetoric of industrial decentralization was taken, particularly by the hinterland economies whose distance from Niagara Falls was penalized with higher rates.²⁷ The campaign for an equal rate for the whole province ended in compromise. Equal rates were not adopted, but the Farmer government in 1921 passed Bill 262 to assist in the expensive project of rural electrification.

The Commission put a good deal less energy into appealing to women's interests than to farm men's or other marginal groups, although advocates did occasionally offer to "lessen the cares of the housewife by making electricity her servant."²⁸ Low domestic rates did do something toward making the promise a reality, but sexual equality was clearly secondary to class and regional equalities and was thought to follow automatically from elevation of the working man and farmer to a higher standard of living.

The 'utopian' appeal of the public power movement is more than an unimportant preoccupation of fringe groups that industry actors cynically exploited through rhetoric on electricity's social benefits. It influenced the industry in a fundamental way. The hydro-electric industry in early 20th century Ontario was successful in linking its economic goals (growth and profit) with wider social goals. Because of electricity's wide-ranging applications for comfort and labour saving in industry, the urban environment and the home, it could promote electricity both as an engine of growth and a factor contributing to human happiness and progress. Often the two goals became hopelessly intertwined. Public utilities' need to court public opinion probably exaggerated this trend, but it should be emphasized that there was no dichotomy between public and private on this point. Private business shared the same philosophy and strategy. The industry believed that, by its own growth and

expansion, and consequent cost reductions, class equality and, incidentally, sexual equality could be achieved.

The electrical industry's optimism, often bordering on arrogance, came out of an identity of itself as the "keystone of modern industry".²⁹ The electrical industry, along with pulp and paper, mining and automobiles, were, as Thompson and Seager note, the growth industries of the interwar period.³⁰ Even in the darkest days of the Depression, the electrical industry paraded statistics on the slightest increase in electricity consumption or appliance sales.³¹ It exhorted other industries to follow its fine example and pull themselves out of the economic morass by sheer force of will and/or advertising. "Now is the time for the Canadian electrical industry, collectively and individually, to show super-salesmanship. Let everyone think and talk 'electrical' and boost 'electrical' and show the nation that the industry triumphs in adversity,"³² said Electrical News' editor in 1932.

The industry believed in infinitely declining costs for electricity, based on the dubious premise that the 1920s rate of growth could be sustained indefinitely.³³ The belief that hydro-electricity was free for the taking, with an infinitely declining cost to the consumer relative to an increasing rate of consumption, was a major tenet of the industry's philosophy in the interwar period and was shared with other industries in the period. The greater the success of an industry, it would seem, the stronger the

conviction that expansion possibilities were limitless. Based on the premise that the source of electricity was simply 'water over the falls', industry activists believed that the only costs were generating, transmission and distribution equipment as well as labour and administration costs. In the optimistic days of the industry's early development these were assumed to be minor costs relative to fuel costs.

"As it is all water generated power," Joseph Showalter of Canadian Westinghouse argued in an address to the AMEU, and the "costs are nearly all constant, the more power we use, the less it will cost per unit, the more wealth we create and keep in Canada, and the more will be our enjoyment of life."³⁴ Such rhetoric paralleled advertising's assertion that by creating demand and increasing consumption the benefits of mass production would result in declining prices and more widespread distribution to all income groups. As homes and businesses increased their electricity consumption, they would drive the unit cost down. The never ending spiral, as the industry saw it, brought benefits to Ontarians in increased prosperity, leisure, comfort, convenience, health and a general improvement in the standard of living.

This equation of growth and prosperity with electricity, which utility managers in Ontario and elsewhere believed in, has been called the growth paradigm.³⁵ In conjunction with

the belief in electricity's social contribution through alleviating class inequality, this equation gave force to the industry's conviction that economic progress would lead automatically to social progress.

Showalter articulated the industry's vision. He told AMEU delegates:

You are the exponents of the greatest force in our modern civilization, the greatest factor contributing to our prosperity, comfort and happiness, the greatest servant of our citizens, enslaved electricity.³⁶

While the Greeks had slaves, we have electricity, he went on:

Electricity is the soul of our modern civilization. Without it our standard of living would be as it was in the middle of the last century. Electrical engineers and the makers of labour saving, time saving, money saving, health and beauty saving, electrical appliances have made life more interesting and happiness more easy to pursue.³⁷

The electric home was an important part of this new standard of living. However, lest complacency set in to threaten its present rate of growth, Showalter added that people must be continually educated to making use of electricity and the industry must advertise. The mythos of electricity as a "clean, magical force for better living" and its popularity for public lighting and streetcars did not automatically transfer itself to the home.³⁸ Domestic use had to be promoted, at least to achieve the rate of growth the industry wanted.

A much neglected factor in electricity's popular appeal

is its contribution to an improved standard of living in the home. Although Denison and Nelles both tell us that support for the movement came from suffragists and the WCTU, there is no further explanation for their support. The question is not addressed in any of the literature on Ontario Hydro. One is tempted to link women's support with electricity's potential for domestic reform, although there is no evidence in the sources to confirm or deny this connection. The domestic potential of electricity can be seen in a newspaper appeal of 1920 for uniform hydro rates throughout the province.

Under the existent rate structures in the Niagara system the millionaire and the wealthy citizens that live in palatial homes in the southern part of Ontario are privileged to illuminate their palaces in gorgeous display, with light supplied by the local Municipality and the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario at a cost of two- and three-cents per kwh, but the coal shoveller, the tired workman or farmer at some further removed location, if they desire to use electric light while they seek to refresh themselves with a bath, or to read the evening paper, if they do so by the electric light supplied by the Hydro Commission, are compelled to pay a rate of ten and one-half cents per kwh for their limited share of pleasure.³⁹

The combination of promised economic and lifestyle richness for everyone helped make electricity a widely popular symbol. Electrical technology could be used, thought industry enthusiasts, to reduce class conflict by elevating the working class to a middle class standard. Less attention was paid to electricity's potential to directly attack gender inequality within the home, although

by elevating the working class home to a middle class standard, the working class housewife would benefit. Having electricity as her servant, she could rise from the status of household slave to companion.

Historians of the electrical industry have portrayed the domestic utilization of electricity exclusively from an industry perspective, ignoring the consumer viewpoint. Thomas Hughes has suggested that the industry cultivated the domestic market primarily to diversify its load or improve its load factor.⁴⁰ Load factor is the ratio of average demand to maximum demand. If the maximum demand is equal to the average demand, the load factor is one, or as it is sometimes expressed, 100% load factor. That means that all of the generating capacity of a plant or system is being used for all of the 24 hour period, every day of the year, and therefore producing maximum revenue. In other words, the generating and transmission facilities are never lying idle. This ideal condition is, of course, impossible in practice, as demand is subject to daily and seasonal peaks. Because electricity cannot be readily stored, it is in the industry's interest to even out the demand, by lowering the peaks or filling in the valleys. Load factor, then, is simply the technical term for efficiency.

The municipal utilities of the Ontario system certainly had incentive to improve their load factor, increasingly so in the 1930s when the rapid expansion of the 1920s began to slow down. They purchased power from the Commission, paying

a monthly charge for maximum demand, expressed in horsepower. The rationale for not making an energy, or kwh, charge was that hydraulic systems have no fueling cost for energy production.⁴¹ As the municipal utilities paid a premium for peak power, it was in their interests to recoup as much revenue as possible during the off peak hours to lower the unit cost of energy, and/or to keep their peak demand down.

Hughes bases the electrical industry's development on 'systems theory', an ill defined term which seems to refer to the electrical industry's deliberate construction of a vast electrical 'system'.⁴² The domestic consumer is one of several new markets developed in order to increase diversity of use and therefore improve load factor. Compliance is ensured via advertising and promotion and no further explanation as to why householders so willingly electrified their homes is offered. The emphasis on the industrial user implies that the domestic market was manipulated for the benefit of industry.

Similarly Armstrong and Nelles emphasize industrial development. It is electricity as the engine of growth that is the crucial variable in support for the Hydro Electric Power Commission. For them the Commission served the domestic user with low rates for both political and economic reasons. Politically, low domestic rates ensured support for public ownership. Economically, domestic consumption

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was used as a catalyst to growth, which ultimately benefited industry.

Adam Beck was often accused of "reducing the domestic rates in many municipalities in order to obtain public favour and political prestige and loading the resulting reductions in domestic lighting revenue onto the cost of service supplied to the municipalities for street lighting."⁴³ The Commission in its Bulletin repeatedly denied these allegations, yet the fact that they were made indicates the Commission's special relationship with the domestic user. Ashworth of the Toronto Hydro system recalls that these taunts never troubled Beck, as "it was made very clear indeed that public sentiment was much less interested in the principle of 'supply at cost' for all users, than in the continuance of a low domestic rate."⁴⁴

From its inception, the HEPC adopted a differential rate structure which would "popularize or increase the use of energy" for purposes other than lighting.⁴⁵ According to the London Public Utilities Commission the private companies, prior to Hydro's inception, overcharged domestic customers, because their small use made them unprofitable to serve. Prior to World War I, few private companies believed that household appliances could develop into a profitable load. It was only when "publicly responsible" utilities took over, according to the London PUC, that a belief in the potential of the domestic market translated itself into lower rates and higher usage.⁴⁶ It was, in its origins, an

article of faith that reduced domestic rates would increase consumption. But as Ashworth of Toronto Hydro recalls "the Hydro habit of reducing rates in the expectation of increased consumption that would make the reduced rates self-sustaining was for a long time justified by the results".⁴⁷ By the 1920s this expansionist philosophy was not unique to publicly owned utilities, but had been adopted by most electrical interests. The HEPC pioneered in its development, however, and never lost an opportunity to wax eloquent on its commitment to public service.

At least at the level of the Hydro Electric Power Commission, where the construction of a system would presumably originate, the domestic market was not so much cultivated as an engine of growth, but rather stumbled upon. As well as diminishing consumer and/or social inputs, the systems theory approach also assumes foresight on the part of the industry and a unified structure in building this electrical system. Apart from offering low domestic rates, the Commission did nothing to woo domestic users and engaged in few promotional activities designed to electrify Ontario homes. The Commission recognized the importance of the domestic market to the system only after the Depression experience proved it to be more stable than its industrial counterpart and the industry growth rate was threatened by rising costs and the volatility of industrial conditions. Up to the 1930s, the Commission considered the base load for

electricity, which was of primary importance to Ontario's development, to be the industrial load.⁴⁸

It was the municipal utilities, comprising the HEPC system, which first recognized the potential of the domestic market and promoted it most strenuously and consistently. Perry of Windsor, for example, recognized the domestic load as crucial, stating that it was "continuous at all times regardless of commercial depression."⁴⁹ That was in 1925, long before the provincial Commission made any such statement.

The utilities' motivation for promoting growth through domestic electrification included the obvious economic motivation of improving load factor, through increasing electricity consumption and establishing the supremacy of electricity over gas in domestic use. Mixed in with these practical motivations were the more idealistic commitments to public service, and to the inherent egalitarianism of democratized consumption. The compatibility of these ideals with the industry's need to grow and expand markets made the confusion of economic/technological with social/political goals understandable.

The study of technological utopianism has shown that, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the belief that technology could achieve a perfect society was a movement of mainstream rather than peripheral members of society.⁵⁰ Segal contends that the movement sought not to change the direction in which American society was moving, but to speed

it up.⁵¹ Likewise Ferguson contends that American society, from its inception, was inspired by a commitment to democratic ideals, and that its technological missionaries were motivated as much by utopian notions of classlessness as economic gain.⁵² While Canadians may have been ambivalent concerning American ideology, preferring the British model, it was the American vision which influenced their technological and economic structures.⁵³

By the 1920s electrical appliances were reasonably reliable and inexpensive, with consumer credit widely available. Electrical utilities could easily promote household electrification both as a means to electrical industry growth and as a service to the householder. It is doubtful that they themselves fully distinguished the two goals. The belief in electrical technology's ability to level distinctions between rich and poor, to bring an upper middle class standard to the working class seemed to be particularly strong at the municipal level. Secondary to this class appeal the industry promoted the idea that electrical technology could be used to ameliorate certain gender inequalities. Assuming the technology to be male in its origins, electrical industry representatives played knight in shining armour to the ladies by bestowing upon them a technology which would liberate them from household drudgery. As the working man acquired electricity in his home, his wife would be freed from household slavery.

Several of the larger municipal utilities, and even some smaller ones, were aggressive merchandisers of electrical appliances. Many of them opened Hydro Shops to promote the sale of appliances and to fill a gap left by private dealers whom they felt were not doing enough to sell appliances. In the 1920s utilities tended to promote all electrical appliances equally but by the 1930s were focusing on the large current consumers, the range and water heater.⁵⁴ For utilities, the retailing function was a means of increasing the consumption of electricity and not, as was the case with contractor-dealers, a means of profit or livelihood.

The Hydro Shops also fulfilled a public relations function for the publicly owned utilities. The industry observation that merchandising enhanced public relations indicates the popularity of electricity among Ontario householders. One industry observer noted that:

Through the sale of electric appliances a very distinct service is rendered to society as electric appliances reduce the drudgery of household labour, enable the housewife to do her work conveniently, and conserve her strength for more pleasant social and domestic duties.⁵⁵

The Hydro Shops used local advertising extensively, held campaigns and promotional events, and generally promoted home electrification with the zeal and enthusiasm of social reformers. E.V. Buchanan, General Manager of the London Public Utilities Commission, one of Ontario's most aggressive municipal utilities, urged his industry

colleagues as early as 1920, to "realize the tremendous future in the development of electrical apparatus in the home", and "temporarily forget their substations and distribution systems."⁵⁶ He asserted that the appeal of the home and the family for help was most urgent and it was here that electrical energy could be put to best use:

Businessmen may calculate to the last penny where their business is concerned but ninety-nine out of every hundred are generous when it comes to the home and the comforts of the family circle. The average man will make all sorts of sacrifices, put forth extra effort, and spend much time on trains to provide a suburban home which he himself rarely has an opportunity to enjoy by daylight, solely in order that his wife and children may be comfortable. This desire for comfort and happiness in the home is innate in every man.⁵⁷

Utility personnel, it appears, genuinely believed their own rhetoric about the prosperity, happiness, comfort and leisure which electricity would bring to the masses, although their perspective on the home was primarily a male perspective. Buchanan, for instance, believed that the activities of the Hydro Shops were making electrical appliances available for the wife of the working man, whereas only recently they were looked upon as luxuries for the millionaire.⁵⁸ In the AMEU's recommendations to the Commission on means of disposing of surplus power during the Depression, the organization proclaimed that,

the domestic load both urban and rural offers the greatest immediate field. This field is not only worth while pursuing because of the immediate economic benefit to the Commission but also for reasons which transcend the economic, namely

improvements in the standard of living of the people.⁵⁹

The goal of these municipal utilities was an ambitious one -- that of 100% saturation. They wanted to see every home in Ontario wired for electricity, with a complete ensemble of appliances: water heater, range, air heater, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, radio, ample lighting, iron, toaster, coffee percolator, grill, waffle iron, fan, refrigerator and eventually air conditioning and home heating. Some zealous industry spokesmen advocated selling each homeowner a complete ensemble of appliances, to be financed through the mortgage. Piecemeal purchasing was not good enough! After all, the automobile salesman sold the average family a complete car, not body first, then engine and wheels later. The same was true of the bathroom salesman, who sold a complete bathroom, not the tub this year, and floor and walls the next. Why can it not be the same for the electrical equipment, just as necessary to comfort, convenience and social standing as are the modern bathroom and the automobile? asked many industry observers.⁶⁰

The St. Thomas Public Utilities Commissioner, E.E. Seger, felt the Hydro Shops were an important cog in the loadbuilding machine.

When retail outlets are operated efficiently, they automatically rise above the common level of the average retail store, to that of a public service, maintained for the benefit of each and every user of Hydro power, and moreover form a hub around which all things electrical in that community

revolve.⁶¹

Needless to say, the smaller private dealers who also retailed electrical appliances, had a less ambitious program, being content to sell whatever appliances proved popular, and generally did not take it upon themselves to educate consumers to an all-electric lifestyle. Conflict naturally arose between municipal utilities who sometimes sold at a loss in order to increase electrical consumption, and retailers who sold for profit.

During the Depression, this conflict became quite heated, due to intense competition and the commission's vigorous promotion of hot water heaters and ranges as a means of sustaining industry growth. In 1934 the Ontario Municipal Electric Association (OMEA) responded to dealer allegations of unfair competition by asserting that "to leave the entire development of the appliance field to private electrical dealers or contractors results in a very slow development of load".⁶²

There is a necessity for an institution with stability, financial strength and probable long existence to stimulate the sale of electric current through its many uses by promoting the use of electrical appliances, to sell these appliances to consumers and to keep them in constant operation, particularly in order to build up in the minds of the general public a lasting confidence in things electrical and to insure the development of the electrical appliance field.⁶³

Because electrical dealers did not, according to the OMEA, advertise extensively, conduct demonstrations and do promotional work, it was felt that the central station or

utility must lead the way. Although a similar argument was heard in the 1920s, enough evidence had been gathered by the 1930s to conclude that,

where the central station carries on a regular promotional campaign the electrical appliance business thrives, and conversely, where the central station is indifferent to the sale of appliances, there is a considerable lag in the appliance business generally.⁶⁴

There were other criticisms of the hydro shops' 'unfair' competition. It was alleged that manufacturers preferred to deal with the hydro shops, establishing them as exclusive agents and extending volume discounts, and consumers viewed them with greater sympathy because of their utility status.⁶⁵ As well Hydro's existing facilities for collection of payments on appliances gave them a further advantage over the small dealer.⁶⁶

The OMEA asserted that utility merchandising led to greater levels of appliance saturation and therefore of electricity consumption, citing its own studies which compared consumption in Hydro Shop towns with non-Hydro Shop towns.⁶⁷ It failed to mention, however, that the difference in usage was largely accounted for by the large energy users, such as the range and water heater. Both of these were vigorously promoted in the 1930s because of their high energy use. The industry believed that their widespread use could help sustain the falling rate spiral which was becoming difficult to maintain, and wipe out gas competition

in the domestic energy market.

The end result of the conflict between public utilities and private dealers was to establish certain standards in electrical merchandising. As the utilities or central stations did not care who sold the appliances, so long as their customers bought them and used more electricity operating them, a compromise was reached on merchandising among all branches of the industry. Like any set of voluntary guidelines, it was not always faithfully adhered to. All forms of price cutting were to be avoided, list prices were to be maintained, and only reputable appliances sold. In the case of the Hydro Shops a limited line of appliances was carried. In some cases the dealers and utilities cooperated on advertising, and sometimes the utilities helped dealers in offering customers a time payment plan which by the early 1920s was thought necessary to sell major appliances.⁶⁸

The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, unlike its municipal utilities, did not actively promote home electrification until the early 1930s. In the 1920s, as far as the Commission was concerned, its role was to act as a supply authority only.⁶⁹ It did not display at the Canadian National Exhibition until 1933, refusing to take the leading role in propagandizing electrification which many in the industry thought was their duty. Promotional efforts were low key and devoted almost entirely to rural electrification; no institutional advertising⁷⁰ was done

until 1935,⁷¹ and the only attempt at education was the short-lived publication, the Hydro Lamp, which the Commission distributed to municipal utilities in 1924, 1925 and 1926.⁷² This flyer was then distributed to householders with their electricity bills. It is not known why the flyer was discontinued.

In the late 1930s the Commission conceded that from its inception until 1929 or 1930 "Hydro was favoured by a consistent and satisfactory growth in load, year by year".⁷³ In 1939 the Chairman stated that during the first 20 years of its existence the Commission's chief problem was that of providing sufficient power to meet the ever pressing demand.⁷⁴ Throughout the teens and 20s, new areas and municipalities were being added and electrified.⁷⁵ Given that the Commission suffered power shortages throughout the 1920s, causing it to look outside the province for power supplies; that power demand had increased 10% or more annually from 1914 on; and that its position as a high profile public utility left it politically vulnerable to attacks from many quarters, it is not surprising that the Commission decided to refrain from promotional activity.

Several things occurred in the 1930s to alter the Commission's reticence toward loadbuilding in general and the domestic market in particular. The stable domestic market became attractive when industrial markets proved volatile. Due to the politically contentious 'Quebec

contracts', negotiated in the expansionist 1920s when growth predictions foresaw inevitable shortages, the Commission found itself with an expensive and politically embarrassing surplus of power at the height of the Depression. The Commission's Niagara system, which serviced the Toronto area, got into difficulty when it lost several major industrial users. Political uproar focussed on Hydro's unrealistic growth projections, and alleged incompetence, as well as bringing to the surface latent hostilities toward Toronto in the hinterland regions. The Quebec contracts became an election issue in the 1934 campaign -- a symbol of extravagance in the depressed 1930s.⁷⁶ The contracts led to a a major shake-up in the Commission and much negative publicity, and were repudiated in 1935; by 1937, however, the contracts were renegotiated.⁷⁷

In the 1930s the strength and stability of the domestic market caused the Commission to change its priority in favour of the domestic market. The Depression experience taught the Commission that the domestic market was more stable than the industrial market:

while power loads the world over have declined since 1930, the use of electricity by domestic customers has not only shown no decline but has grown steadily and it seems as though a development of load among domestic consumers is exceedingly desirable if stability is to be maintained.⁷⁸

J. Albert Smith, Commissioner, stated in 1938 that,

while municipal load growth during periods of extreme prosperity must sometimes appear insignificant compared to the phenomenal

expansion of industrial load, municipal load based as it mainly is on domestic supply and demand is more rigid and less prone to downward fluctuation.⁷⁹

A stable market became increasingly important with the electrical industry's large and growing capital commitments and consequent need to project growth years ahead. Due to the Depression decline in consumption, total generating capacity had increased more rapidly than load.⁸⁰ There is also evidence that costs of production were beginning to rise beyond initial expectations⁸¹ so that even greater consumption was needed to maintain the lower price spiral.

J. Albert Smith of the Commission explained the stability of the domestic market for electricity. First, he posited that the reduced cost made it attractive to economize in some other direction than electricity consumption, as the disadvantage and inconvenience of doing without electricity did not offset the money saved. Secondly, "due to the much more complete electrification of the home it is impossible to maintain a domestic establishment in efficient operation without electricity".⁸² Evidently, once Ontarians got used to electricity, they did not feel they could do without it. The luxury of electricity soon became a necessity of everyday living.

New evidence also indicated that growth in the number of new customers was slowing down, and that new load growth would have to come from increased consumption by existing customers.⁸³ It was found that many domestic customers used

very small amounts. H. C. Powell, statistician for the Toronto Hydro Electric System found that 75% of customers used less than 1800 kwh per year with 10% using 1800-3000, 10% using 3000-5400 and 5% using over 5400 kwh per year.⁸⁴ The average annual kwh consumption per household was 1600 kwh in 1935.⁸⁵ It would appear that by the 1930s electricity was widely available to residents of urban centres and towns in Ontario. In order to increase consumption the industry would need to encourage the use of more appliances by a wider socio-economic group.

The Commission began to redefine its duty "not only to provide electric service at cost, but to give the best service to the greatest number at as low a cost as possible."⁸⁶ Such an approach meant educating Ontarians to make the fullest use of electricity. Electrical News and Engineering, the electrical industry's major trade journal, praised the Commission's reversal on loadbuilding and promotional activity, reiterating its contention that "only by educating its consumers, domestic, industrial and municipal, in the uses of electric energy, could it fulfill its constitutional purpose of 'supplying electric energy at cost'". The more selling it does "the more sound educational publicity it gives to the multitudinous uses of electricity, the larger its load will grow and the cheaper will be the cost of electricity in Ontario."⁸⁷

The Commission's immediate problem in the early 1930s was to dispose of its surplus power, with as little economic

waste as possible, in a way which was visible and politically attractive. A Loadbuilding Committee was formed, with representatives from both the Commission and the municipalities. Three campaigns were launched -- a water heater campaign (1932), as well as a lighting and range campaign (1935) -- all of which were originally recommended by the OMEA. Some of the more aggressive municipal utilities had already begun their own campaigns to promote ranges and water heaters before the Commission got involved.⁸⁸

An institutional advertising campaign of \$20,000 was announced in 1935 to "disseminate general information and knowledge of the Hydro system, to create a generous attitude of good will."⁸⁹ A general audience was not the goal, however, as papers such as the Financial Post carried the message. These ads, directed largely at men, stressed Hydro's safety, reliability and its contribution to economic progress. Hydro's contribution to domestic happiness, however, was not forgotten.⁹⁰ There was also a radio program directed at a more general audience and advertisements were taken out in trade and farm journals.

In 1939 a new Sales Promotion Department was formed, responsible for advertising and promotional endeavours. The Department was to unite the efforts of the municipal utilities, the Hydro Electric Power Commission and other branches of the electrical industry in the province, toward

greater use of electricity.⁹¹

By emphasizing industry efforts to improve the system's overall and/or domestic load factor, historians of the industry imply that efficiency rather than growth was the motivation for promotion, and that change came from above and filtered down through the system. Such an approach tends to obscure the fact that little distinction was made between loadbuilding and load factor in this time period, and that promotional activity was initiated at the local level. In the 1920s and 1930s the electrical industry was in a state of expansion. The general belief was that loadbuilding automatically led to improved load factor. In other words, the electrical industry equated growth with efficiency. As one utility manager expressed it, "since a consistent policy of loadbuilding had been productive of lower rates in the past, a continuance of this same policy should make for even lower rates in the future."⁹²

The industry was by no means unanimous on what constituted good load factor. The NELA Load Factor Committee reported that there were no easy answers, that local conditions must be thoroughly analyzed before remedies could be applied but that, generally, diversity of use was important. Load factor, they reminded the industry, was in the hands of the consumer and a station's load factor would reflect the habits and methods of the labours and recreations of a community. No matter what the load factor, the Committee asserted, it was a utility's duty to provide

service, but also to inform customers that lower cost service would result from more hours use.⁹³

For Ontario's municipal utilities which actively promoted system growth, the primary goal was to provide service at ever lower cost to an ever greater number of customers. It is only within the parameters of this growth drive that load factor was considered important. Small Ontario municipalities, some of which lacked an industrial load altogether, did strive to improve the load factor of the domestic market. Prior to the 1920s when lighting was the principal residential use of electricity, the domestic load factor was very low, making it an uneconomical market to serve. Industrial and commercial loads appear to have been more even, and therefore received less attention.

While in the 1920s promotional activity encompassed all domestic appliances, by the 1930s the emphasis switched to range and water heater, the high energy using appliances. With the Depression decline in consumption, rising costs, the slowdown of system growth, and gas competition threatening maintenance of the lower price spiral, there was increased incentive to improve load factor, through more growth.

The chart in Figure 1 indicates the relative consumption of electricity vis a vis each appliance with lighting, water heaters and ranges showing the greatest consumption. Possibly because there were no competitors in

FIGURE 1 -- Consumption of Various Domestic Appliances

Source: "Use of Electrical Appliances in Ontario Grows Apace",
Bulletin, December 1936, Vol. XXIII, No. 12

the home light market (electricity had shown its superiority there) the municipalities showed less enthusiasm for its promotion than the water heater and the range which faced gas competition. The approximate kwh per year consumption of the water heater was 3000, the range 2000, refrigerator 600, toaster 50 and the washer, a meagre 25 kwh per year.⁹⁴

There do not appear to be many figures on domestic and/or appliance load factors; however, it appears that the range load factor (when there were a large enough number to provide some diversity of use) was somewhere between 15 and 20%. This was comparable to the domestic lighting load factor.⁹⁵ A fully equipped electric home could have a load factor as high as 30% (comparable to the industrial load)⁹⁶ however the small user of the interwar period (which constituted the majority of users) could be as low as 3% in rural areas and 15% for urban users.

The HEPC Bulletin published the findings of several studies, one done in Brantford and another in an unnamed city of 30,000, showing the range to cause short sharp peaks, which were very expensive.⁹⁷ None-the-less municipal utilities continued to see in the range an excellent way to build load, especially in larger municipalities that used the flat rate water heater in conjunction with the range to recoup some losses due to the range peak.⁹⁸ Generally these municipalities felt they received enough revenue from the range that they could live with the peak. The desire to

meet the competition of gas for cooking and water heating in the home, despite critics who denounced the use of electricity for heat as inefficient,⁹⁹ was based on the perception that early industry rates of growth must be maintained and that a monopoly on domestic energy consumption was necessary to do this.

Some of the smaller municipal utilities felt that a demand charge should be made to range users (based on peak vs. off-peak time usage) and that the customer should be educated to use no other appliance while the range was in use. Demand charges were an obvious inconvenience to the user, incompatible with advertising's message of comfort and convenience, and were vetoed by the larger municipalities. The HEPC Sales Department confirmed in 1935 that there were a number of municipalities discouraging the use of ranges and water heaters because of the increased peak load. Others manipulated industrial and municipal power loads so as to offset the peak created by these appliances.¹⁰⁰ Phelps, Manager of the Sarnia utility, summed up the majority feeling when he insisted that demand charges and user education would only confuse the customer. "We are selling a commodity which is used in the residences by the women. They are going to do a thing when they want to do it".¹⁰¹ His idea of promoting good load factor was to recover the cost of power in the rate for the first 50 kwh per month and then give 1/2 cent rate thereafter to encourage consumption. The load factor would look after

itself, he thought.¹⁰²

The tendency in rates was to move away from demand charges for domestic service. In the late 1920s the monthly service charge of 33 cents for two wire service (lighting and small appliances) and 66 cents for 3 wire service (range and water heater) was dropped at the insistence of the municipal utilities.¹⁰³

The industry was reluctant to charge domestic customers for demand (based on time of use), as they did for industrial customers who paid a lower rate, the higher the load factor. Demand charges were an accurate reflection of the cost. The Canadian Electrical Association reported in 1929 that the question of load factor was becoming increasingly important in determination of rates and that power users were taking a keen interest in reduction of peaks using automatic and signalling devices for controlling demand.¹⁰⁴ However, with domestic customers no "demand charge" was made because of the belief in the customer's ignorance of technical matters, a prejudice against women users and a fear that it would lead to reduced consumption.

The two campaigns which the Commission launched in the 1930s in cooperation with the municipal utilities indicate a desire to increase consumption by focusing on the large current users and attempting to wipe out gas competition.

Launched in 1932, the Water Heater Campaign supplied free low wattage heaters to Hydro customers. Designed by

the Commission's researchers, these heaters ranged from 500 to 1500 watts in capacity, depending on the size of the family and the perceived need¹⁰⁵ and were intended to run continuously, although customers who desired additional service could get a booster heater of a higher wattage. Heaters, thermostats, tank covers and insulation were installed by the Commission onto the customer's own water storage tank.¹⁰⁶ As of April 1937, 36,000 flat rate and 12,000 booster heaters had been installed,¹⁰⁷ with the Commission paying approximately \$20-25 for each heater up until 1936, when the charges were passed on to the municipal utilities, much to their chagrin.¹⁰⁸

The flat rate water heater with its load factor of 55-60%¹⁰⁹ was promoted both as a way of improving domestic load factor and getting people accustomed to doing things electrically. While the low wattage, flat rate hot water heater clearly worked to encourage a healthy load factor, the accompanying booster did not. But the booster was necessary to provide faster service, which could compete favourably with gas, and electric heaters were slow to reheat once the tank was empty.

In deciding which system to recommend (flat rate heater alone, or in combination with a booster) utility personnel had to consider what the customer was used to. If accustomed to turning on a gas heater only on wash days and bath days in order to keep costs down, then a small flat rate heater would suffice. If the customer had had an

automatic heater it would be advisable to recommend a large flat rate heater and a booster.¹¹⁰ Many people preferred to have a booster for continuous hot water.¹¹¹ Some municipalities found that the flat rate heater promoted wasteful consumption with dishes being rinsed under hot water taps, bathtubs filled to overflowing and taps not turned off.¹¹² Given that the Commission advertised "Hot Water -- As Much As You Need at the Turn of a Tap"¹¹³ it is not surprising that people increased consumption. The industry's emphasis on electricity's cheapness no doubt helped justify what would have seemed wasteful extravagance had the energy not been paid for on a flat rate basis. The booster was not provided free as was the flat rate heater, but could be financed over 5 years, and the current was metered. The industry was successful in improving the saturation of hot water heaters, although it did not approach its own ambitious expectations. In 1924 4.8% of Ontario households had electric water heating. By 1938 there were 10.6% flat rate and 9.7% booster saturation levels. These statistics do not indicate how much overlap is caused by customers having both.

The industry tried to sell the idea of continuous, automatic hot water, because manual water heating used one half the energy. It appears consumers wanted this service although they were not always willing to pay for it.¹¹⁴ The industry soon learned that the low flat rates for water

heaters were not high enough to recover costs -- it appears the rates had originally been based on customers' upper limits on what they were willing to pay for water heating, rather than the true cost of service. Ashworth of Toronto noted that the use of electricity for heating is inefficient and therefore very expensive. However, due to the then strong belief that rapid growth could be sustained forever, that "the more we use, the cheaper it gets", these appliances made sense at the time. Once electricity was established as a means of heating water, utilities had to continue to supply current at a price householders would pay.¹¹⁵ Otherwise they could easily switch to gas.

The utilities, anxious to use the hot water heater as a prime loadbuilder, and to meet gas competition which provided cheaper and faster service, had underpriced the hot water heater.¹¹⁶

The range campaign was launched in 1935 and also conducted in cooperation with the municipal utilities. The Commission supplied newspaper cuts and display material, made a \$3.00 advertising allowance per range sold to dealers or Hydro Shops and supplied sales manuals and organizational help to participating municipal utilities. The utilities were expected to do their own advertising, to offer financing to dealers and to wholly or partly finance wiring for 3 wire service. (Heavy wiring needed for electric ranges inhibited sales). 53 municipalities cooperated in 1935.¹¹⁷ In 1936, 99 of Hydro's 302 municipalities

cooperated in the campaign, although these 99 municipalities serviced 80% of Hydro customers. 27 municipalities were financing dealer sales, 54 absorbed partly or wholly the cost of 3 wire service installation and all gave an allowance of \$10 or more on old ranges of all types. By 1938, 144 municipal utilities were participating with 132 subsidizing 3 wire installation.¹¹⁸ 9,200 ranges were sold in this year. In 1939 the Commission was again compiling a Range Campaign book complete with an outline of the program, sales tips, advertising cuts and feature stories on electric cooking, modern kitchens, etc. Apparently the latter were often requested by newspapers and magazines.¹¹⁹ The Range campaign did succeed in increasing the saturation of electric ranges in Ontario. By 1938 29.6% of Ontario households equipped with electricity used an electric range. This had jumped from 13.8% in 1924.

The aggressive competition of gas companies whose product was less expensive (both the appliance itself and the fuel) led to some dubious merchandising practices.¹²⁰ Gas competition forced utilities to offer long term payment plans on ranges (up to five years), easy terms and excessive trade in allowances. Monthly payments in the order of \$1.90 amounting almost to a rental plan were common. The industry felt such generous terms were justified due to the excellent loadbuilding qualities of the range.¹²¹

The Commission did nothing to promote the refrigerator,

a popular appliance which had a good load factor, required no added wiring and could help offset the winter peak.¹²²

The Commission also sponsored a Lighting Campaign, allocating \$15,000 in 1935 for it. (This is more than was spent on the Range Campaign, yet it received a lukewarm response from utilities). Schools were conducted to train home lighting advisors in the "science of seeing". The municipal utilities then hired these advisors, many of whom were home economists, as door-to-door lighting specialists, who promoted the importance of good lighting among Ontario homemakers.¹²³

A booklet was produced, entitled "Let's See", highlighting the aesthetic and health benefits of good home lighting, to be sent to all domestic customers. The campaign was in most instances successful, although only 35 municipalities participated in 1937. It was found in one area where call backs were made that improved lighting had been installed, although, not surprisingly, the improvement was on average not up to the level recommended.¹²⁴

Advisors were also sent to schools, restaurants, factories and commercial establishments taking the message of adequate lighting and its importance to good eyesight, productivity in the factory, academic excellence in the schools, good morale and general all round good health, to all Ontarians. Lighting was considered a good, if unspectacular, load builder as it required little capital expenditure (i.e., a few light bulbs) to generate a sizable

increase in consumption. It was therefore available to rich and poor alike.¹²⁵

The perplexing problem of load factor or efficiency was only given priority within the parameters of the electrical industry's primary goal of rapid and sustained growth, based on the premise that unit costs would continue to fall. The industry sought to increase the load factor of the home itself through loadbuilding focussed on large current consuming appliances, with the aim of monopolizing the home market for light, heat and fuel, and wiping out gas as a competitor.

The domestic market came to be the key to the electrical industry's prosperity and stability. This was not a deliberate strategy pursued by a unified industry, and led by its upper echelons. Municipal utilities were the first to promote domestic electrification, and the Commission followed after. Motivations for promotion of the domestic market mixed the economic with the political and ideological. The industry's practical goal of growth and expansion, especially in the domestic arena, was compatible with democratic ideals of greater economic equality and the new sense of importance attached to the home. Women's equality received less attention and was thought to follow automatically from class equality. The electric industry successfully fused its economic goals with popular aspirations, sometimes confusing the two.

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CHAPTER THREE

Selling the Idea of Electrical Living to Ontario Householders

In the "Better Merchandising" column of Electrical News for January 15, 1922, industry sponsored model electrical home displays were described as educational campaigns designed to,

sow the seed in the public mind that the best way and the only way to keep house is through the utilization of this great and wonderful power that Providence has supplied to us at Niagara Falls -- the heritage of the people of the province.¹

Only the value of electricity should be sold at such displays, the article declared, in an effort to create in the householder the "desire to do things in the most modern, convenient, expeditious, sanitary, labor-saving way the world knows about today."² In the end, of course, this strategy would lead to an increased demand for electrical equipment, and wiring, but in order to sell these, the 'idea' of electrical living must first be sold.

This 'sell-the-idea' strategy was the cornerstone of most advertising and merchandising strategy. Because electrical appliances were a relatively new technology, advertising for them fell under the category of creational advertising -- that is advertising intended to create a new market. Cooperative advertising was often used, especially for refrigerators in the 1930s. Manufacturers and/or utilities together raised funds for an advertising campaign designed to sell a product, irrespective of the brand of manufacture. Brand names were not mentioned in the ads. Co-operative advertising was a recognition of the fact that, in a new and growing market, advertising for one brand was as likely to increase the sales of competitors as one's own product.

A striking feature of the electrical industry in the interwar period was its strength of conviction, and its apparent security in the face of competitors. If there is much infighting, it does not find its way onto the pages of the industry's major trade journal, the Electrical News (renamed Electrical News and Engineering in 1929). Small dealers were occasionally condemned for price-cutting but the larger interests -- manufacturers and central stations -- preferred to cooperate with each other in market expansion. The very real threat of gas, especially in the range and water heater market in the 1930s, was rarely mentioned in the trade literature. When it was, the optimistic projection that, in time, electricity would

replace this old fashioned fuel, was reflected in comments. The major competitor that seemed to block the path of an all-electric home for every Canadian was the annoying propensity of householders to spend extra income on competing "luxuries", such as automobiles and bathroom fixtures, candy and tobacco.³

The industry sought to sell the electric idea to Canadian householders by removing three major obstacles blocking the enjoyment of electrical living from the householders' path. These were cost, deficient education or skill in using the new technology, and a lack of facilities, i.e., adequate wiring to bring sufficient current into the home.

Householders' positive response to this strategy is indicated by the rising constant demand for electricity throughout the period as its cost declined, and a growth in electrical appliance usage. This positive response shows not only the popularity of appliances which began as 'uxuries but quickly became necessities, but an importance placed on home life by urban Ontarians. Whether the quick acceptance of electrical living is a reflection of the greater home centredness of the lower income group the electrical industry increasingly tried to reach throughout the period, or a reflection of twentieth century priorities, it is impossible to tell. Consumer acceptance was tempered, however, by a cautiousness, or reluctance to accept the new

technology without adequate information, guarantees and user education. The acceptance of the new technology was, for most people, gradual and slow.

Knocking over the obstacles: 1) Cost

As already shown, the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario and its municipal utilities believed that the more electricity was consumed the lower would be its cost.⁴ The steady increase in the Commission's peak load, running at approximately 10% annually from its beginning to about 1929, showed a growing demand for electricity by householders, businesses and farms.⁵

Figures 1 and 2 show consumption and revenue for domestic consumers from the year 1914 to 1937, broken down by size of municipality, and between rural and urban users. Note the higher rates of consumption in urban areas. In 1914, when there were 49 municipalities and 64,866 domestic consumers, the average monthly consumption per household was 21.0 kilowatt hours (kwh). The average cost per kwh was 5.08 cents and the average monthly bill was \$1.06. By 1927, there were 267 municipalities, 387,573 domestic consumers and an average monthly consumption of 103.5 kwh. However, the average cost per kwh had fallen to 1.80 cents, so the average monthly bill was still only \$1.87. By 1937, with 304 municipalities and 490,140 domestic customers, average consumption had risen to 157.5 kwh, the average cost per kwh

FIGURE 1 -- Domestic Consumption and Revenue -- Rural

**DATA FOR RURAL POWER DISTRICTS
HAMLET SERVICE**

Year	Annual Revenue	Kilowatt-Hours Consumed	Number of Consumers *Billed	Average Revenue Per Kw-hr.	Average Monthly Bill	Average Monthly Consumption Kw-hr.
1928	\$ 530,407.00	10,702,031	17,585	4.95c	\$2.51	50.7
1929	663,311.00	14,424,770	21,219	4.60	2.85	62.0
1930	757,558.00	17,815,987	25,013	4.25	2.73	64.2
1931	974,224.17	22,127,474	31,176	4.40	2.88	65.6
1932	1,075,081.03	24,654,386	33,638	4.36	2.76	63.3
1933	1,133,368.70	25,410,470	35,941	4.46	2.70	60.1
1934	1,149,876.67	27,768,460	37,466	4.14	2.61	63.0
1935	1,171,873.28	30,802,290	39,751	3.80	2.53	66.5
1936	1,239,010.33	35,666,241	43,014	3.47	2.49	71.8
1937	1,331,919.46	40,935,040	46,785	3.25	2.47	76.0

**DATA FOR RURAL POWER DISTRICTS
FARM SERVICE**

Year	Annual Revenue	Kilowatt-Hours Consumed	Number of Consumers *Billed	Average Revenue Per Kw-hr.	Average Monthly Bill	Average Monthly Consumption Kw-hr.
1928	\$ 569,007.00	10,969,828	9,309	5.18c	\$4.97	96.1
1929	777,736.00	16,022,842	12,605	4.85	5.85	120.8
1930	863,805.00	20,507,063	16,011	4.21	5.03	119.4
1931	1,128,554.28	25,716,141	20,796	4.39	5.11	116.4
1932	1,255,482.13	28,675,400	22,432	4.38	4.84	110.5
1933	1,309,122.96	30,062,194	23,283	4.35	4.75	109.2
1934	1,319,922.69	33,312,314	23,882	3.96	4.66	117.7
1935	1,343,222.39	37,667,453	25,357	3.57	4.55	127.5
1936	1,385,784.39	45,447,669	28,198	3.05	4.31	141.4
1937	1,366,484.50	54,858,240	35,508	2.49	3.57	143.5

*It may be observed that the number of consumers reported here does not agree with those shown in the Annual Report of the Commission. This is due to the fact that Class 2A consumers are considered as hamlet consumers in this report and as farm consumers in the Annual Report. Furthermore, the figures given here represent consumers actually billed, whereas the Annual Report shows the number of contracts executed to the end of each fiscal year. In many cases service is not given until the following year.

Source: "Use of Hydro Continues to Grow Steadily", Bulletin, September 1938

**FIGURE 2 -- Urban
Domestic Consump-
tion and Revenue**

**ALL MUNICIPALITIES TOTALLED
DOMESTIC SERVICE**

Year	No of Municipalities	Annual Revenue	Kilowatt- Hours Consumed	Number of Consumers	Average Cost Per Kw-hr	Average Monthly Bill	Average Monthly Consumption Kw-hr.
1914	49	\$ 730,168.00	14,359,100	64,866	5.08¢	\$1.06	21.0
1917	123	1,340,855.00	41,930,200	131,313	3.20	.91	28.6
1920	166	2,514,658.00	98,211,000	193,892	2.56	1.15	44.6
1923	206	4,955,420.00	242,926,600	286,852	2.04	1.54	75.7
1927	267	8,497,190.79	469,851,690	387,573	1.80	1.87	103.5
1930	273	10,752,720.00	671,028,310	433,260	1.61	2.09	130.1
1933	300	11,639,178.12	742,195,402	460,878	1.57	2.10	134.2
1936	302	12,922,466.47	881,972,324	482,557	1.47	2.23	152.3
1937	305	12,680,921.58	926,350,708	490,140	1.37	2.16	157.5
1938	312	12,880,180.43	1,004,194,525	507,132	1.28	2.12	165.0

**DATA FOR CITIES OVER 10,000 POPULATION
DOMESTIC SERVICE**

Year	No of Municipalities	Annual Revenue	Kilowatt- Hours Consumed	Number of Consumers	Average Cost Per Kw-hr	Average Monthly Bill	Average Monthly Consumption Kw-hr
1914	12	\$ 614,925.00	12,646,400	55,597	4.86¢	\$1.06	21.8
1917	19	1,063,264.00	36,693,100	107,248	2.89	.88	30.5
1920	21	1,926,924.00	84,328,000	154,186	2.29	1.11	48.4
1923	21	3,772,416.00	206,266,200	223,028	1.83	1.53	83.5
1927	24	6,086,753.11	371,945,485	276,632	1.63	1.87	111.1
1930	26	7,921,316.00	541,876,998	315,611	1.46	2.11	144.4
1933	26	8,495,321.93	595,211,863	330,597	1.43	2.14	150.0
1936	26	9,743,091.62	720,002,863	350,083	1.35	2.32	171.1
1937	26	9,557,649.65	752,498,158	353,826	1.27	2.25	177.2
1938	26	9,426,825.47	792,450,767	361,669	1.19	2.17	182.6

**DATA FOR TOWNS OVER 2,000 POPULATION
DOMESTIC SERVICE**

Year	No. of Municipalities	Annual Revenue	Kilowatt- Hours Consumed	Number of Consumers	Average Cost Per Kw-hr	Average Monthly Bill	Average Monthly Consumption Kw-hr
1914	19	\$ 90,330.00	1,414,500	7,410	6.38¢	\$1.11	17.1
1917	27	980,075.00	3,824,600	15,731	1.71	1.01	21.1
1920	36	353,915.00	10,053,100	24,041	3.50	1.26	36.0
1923	43	551,499.00	25,411,300	31,135	2.56	1.57	60.1
1927	55	1,325,096.89	62,105,723	56,813	2.13	1.99	92.3
1930	53	1,468,194.00	73,234,125	58,490	2.01	2.10	105.0
1933	66	1,584,772.57	82,321,996	63,910	1.92	2.07	107.3
1936	57	1,460,916.64	80,678,385	61,102	1.81	1.99	110.1
1937	58	1,428,357.72	86,912,430	63,067	1.64	1.89	113.8
1938	60	1,689,908.10	113,673,154	68,894	1.19	2.01	137.5

**DATA FOR VILLAGES UNDER 2,000 POPULATION
DOMESTIC SERVICE**

Year	No. of Municipalities	Annual Revenue	Kilowatt- Hours Consumed	Number of Consumers	Average Cost Per Kw-hr	Average Monthly Bill	Average Monthly Consumption Kw-hr
1914	18	\$ 24,913.00	291,000	1,859	8.55¢	\$1.10	13.1
1917	77	97,516.00	1,412,500	8,331	6.90	.96	11.0
1920	109	233,819.00	3,829,900	15,661	6.00	1.29	21.2
1923	142	531,505.00	11,249,100	29,689	4.72	1.59	33.7
1927	188	1,095,340.79	35,900,482	52,088	3.06	1.81	79.5
1930	194	1,363,210.00	55,917,187	59,159	2.43	1.95	80.1
1933	214	1,559,083.62	64,651,543	66,371	2.41	1.96	81.2
1936	219	1,718,548.21	81,291,076	71,372	2.11	2.01	91.9
1937	221	1,691,811.21	86,940,142	73,217	1.95	1.93	98.9
1938	226	1,763,146.86	98,070,601	76,109	1.80	1.92	106.2

Source: "The Use of Electricity Grows Steadily", Bulletin, September 1939

had fallen still further to 1.37 cents, yet despite the dramatic increase in consumption, the average monthly bill had increased only slightly to \$2.16.

Figure 3 gives the rate of increase in the number of customers. Note that the increase is quite dramatic until the late 1920s, when it slows down considerably to less than 10% in the 1930s. In urban areas increased consumption was accounted for by increased use by existing customers while in rural areas the number of customers continued to grow.⁶

Figure 4 illustrates graphically the corresponding rise in consumption with the decline in cost. Also note the breakdown in terms of cities versus smaller towns. Villages under 2,000 population show the highest cost per kwh for electricity, and the lowest rate of consumption, with towns 2,000 and over taking the middle ground, and cities 10,000 and over having the lowest cost per kwh and the highest rate of consumption.

In 1929 G.J. Mickler of the HEPC Sales Department noted that "it is gratifying to know that Hydro Service is spreading out among more and more consumers each year and greater use is being made of it by existing consumers with the result that the average cost is being lowered to the benefit of all."⁷ He pointed out that Ontario, with its annual consumption of 1,386 kwh per household, had a domestic consumption three times that of the United States.⁸ Further, there were, he reminded readers, many

FIGURE 3 -- Rate of Increase in Number of Customers

	<u>All Municipalities</u>	<u>Cities Over 10,000 Population</u>	<u>Towns Over 2,000 Population</u>	<u>Villages Under 2,000 Population</u>
<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Customers (%) Increase</u>	<u>Number of Customers (%) Increase</u>	<u>Number of Customers (%) Increase</u>	<u>Number of Customers (%) Increase</u>
1914	64,866	55,597	7,410	1,859
1917	131,313(102.4)	107,248(92.9)	15,731(112.3)	8,334(348.3)
1920	193,892(47.6)	154,186(43.8)	24,041(52.8)	15,665(87.9)
1923	286,852(47.9)	223,028(44.6)	34,135(41.9)	29,689(89.5)
1927	387,573(35.1)	276,632(24.0)	56,813(66.4)	52,088(75.4)
1930	433,260(11.7)	315,611(14.0)	58,490(2.9)	59,159(13.5)
1933	460,878(6.4)	330,597(4.7)	63,910(9.3)	66,371(12.2)
1936	482,557(4.7)	350,083(5.9)	61,102(-4.6)	71,372(7.5)
1937	490,140(1.6)	353,826(1.1)	63,067(3.2)	73,247(2.6)
1938	507,132(3.5)	361,669(2.2)	68,894(9.2)	76,569(4.5)

Number of Customers (% Increase)

	<u>Hamlet</u>	<u>Farm</u>
<u>Year</u>		
1928	17,585	9,309
1929	21,219(20.6)	12,605(35.4)
1930	25,013(17.8)	16,011(27.0)
1931	31,176(24.6)	20,796(29.8)
1932	33,638(7.8)	22,432(7.8)
1933	35,941(6.8)	23,283(3.8)
1934	37,466(4.2)	23,882(2.5)
1935	39,751(6.1)	25,357(6.2)
1936	43,014(8.2)	28,198(11.2)
1937	46,785(8.7)	35,508(25.9)

Source: Hydro Electric Power Commission Bulletin

FIGURE 4 -- Domestic Consumption and Revenue -- Urban

Source: "Use of Electricity Grows Steadily", Bulletin, September 1939, Vol. XXVI, No. 9

municipalities in Ontario where the consumption was much higher than this average, indicating "to what extent Hydro power might be used and also the effect on the rates of the average cost of such extensive use". For example, Ottawa had an "average annual consumption by domestic consumers of 2,772 kilowatt hours and an average cost per kwh of 0.9 cents, and Windsor's consumption was 2,256 kwh with an average cost of 1.6 cents per kwh."⁹

In their 20th Annual Report the Commission published figures indicating that 86.2% of domestic energy was sold where the charge was 1.9 cents per kwh or less, 90.1% of commercial light was sold at 2.9 cents per kwh or less and 78.3% of power for industrial use was sold at \$25 per horsepower (hp) or less.¹⁰ High average annual domestic consumption was attributed to the "at cost" principle and a 3-part rate structure designed to encourage use. In 95% of municipalities, the Commission reported, it was only necessary to reach a \$2.50 bill before earning a 1.8 cent per kwh charge.¹¹

These figures clearly show a relationship between declining rates and increased consumption of electricity, and Hydro's publication of these statistics yearly shows an obvious pride in achieving their goal of rate reduction. Attributing falling rates solely to increased consumption hides many other factors, of course. The availability of cheap energy in areas such as Ottawa, technical advances and

the linking of larger and larger generating stations to a wider area by high voltage transmission lines to form regional networks which could lower peaks and improve load factor, also contributed to falling rates.¹²

As Figure 5 shows, the only province with lower average cost per kwh for the year 1932 is Manitoba at 1.06 cents where there is an average consumption of 3,756 kwh per household. The higher consumption in Manitoba was largely accounted for by the widespread use of flat rate water heaters in Winnipeg. Ontario's average consumption for the same year was 1,558 kwh with an average cost of 1.77 cents per kwh. All other provinces show rates twice as high or more and consumption less than half that of Ontario, indicating a relationship between reduced rates and increased consumption,¹³ although not necessarily directly causal.

The rate of electrification of homes was also higher in Ontario than in most provinces with the exception of British Columbia. While the total number of domestic customers (households) per 100 population in Canada in 1935 was 12.82, the figure for Ontario was 17.19, Manitoba 10.09, B.C. 18.17, Quebec 12.36, with Saskatchewan only 4.65. Despite Manitoba's high average consumption, electrical energy use was largely confined to Winnipeg, whereas Ontario's consumption was more evenly diffused throughout the province. Electrical News and other industry spokesmen regularly made favourable comparisons of Canadian and

Figure 5 -- Domestic Service Consumption -- 1935

Province	Number of Customers		Average Bill for Year	Average per Kilowatt Hour	Average Annual Consumption		Consumption by Domestic Service	
	Total	Per 100 Population			Per Customer	Per Capita	Per cent of Total Provincial Consumption	Per cent Dominion Dom. Serv Consumption
			\$	¢	Kw. Hr.	Kw. Hr.		
P.E. Island	4,199	4.72	32.09	7.82	410	19	33.6	.1
Nova Scotia.....	52,300	9.92	25.44	5.13	496	49	6.7	1.5
New Brunswick...	36,602	8.53	27.18	4.83	563	48	5.4	1.2
Quebec	378,388	12.36	19.29	3.22	598	74	2.2	12.8
Ontario	618,111	17.19	27.78	1.68	1,657	279	13.5	57.8
Manitoba	74,538	10.09	39.11	1.01	3,881	407	21.6	16.3
Saskatchewan ...	45,451	4.65	39.51	5.07	779	38	25.6	2.0
Alberta	58,127	7.45	29.49	5.42	544	41	15.1	1.8
British Columbia and Yukon ...	134,267	18.17	25.47	2.97	857	156	7.5	6.5
CANADA	1,401,983	12.82	26.23	2.08	1,262	162	8.2	100.0

Source: "Domestic Service Consumption", Electrical News and Engineering, May 15, 1937: 29

American rates. For example, in 1932 the average Canadian rate was reported to be 2.29 cents per kwh while the American average was 6.03 cents per kwh. Ontario's average was slightly lower than the Canadian average at 1.75 cents.¹⁴

There were other means of removing or at least getting around the cost obstacle besides rate reductions. One of these was to offer term payment plans for the purchase of major electrical appliances, such as ranges, washing machines, vacuum cleaners and refrigerators. "Any dealer or central station who expects to sell electrical appliances in any reasonable volume, must be prepared to allow extended terms of payment to the purchaser",¹⁵ said Electrical News in 1924. It appears that this practice came into common use in the depressed conditions of 1920-21 when it was felt that a means of enabling people of limited income to acquire electrical conveniences for their homes would help to stimulate business.¹⁶ The practice was widely used in other businesses as well and was part of the business strategy of expanding their markets to encompass wage earning families.¹⁷

The general practice, at least in the early 1920s, was to add approximately 10% to the cash price to cover carrying charges, to ask at least 10% in a down payment, and to extend financing up to 12 months.¹⁸ However, as the practice became more widespread and as competition

increased, finance terms lengthened and the percentages asked for in down payments and in carrying charges decreased. In the 1930s terms for the financing of electric ranges extended from three to five years, and down payments and interest rates were sometimes ridiculously low.

There was obviously little the Commission or its utilities could do to lower the cost of electrical appliances themselves which were manufactured by private companies. Most of the appliance manufacturers were members of the Canadian Electrical Association which included the privately owned central stations in Canada, and was affiliated with the vehemently anti-public ownership organization, the National Electric Light Association (NELA). The Commission, then, had little influence upon electrical manufacturers, whose interest in electrification stopped with the making of profit on the sale of electrical appliances.

Electrical manufacturers, like most businesses in this time period, subscribed to the philosophy that advertising, by 'creating' demand, would encourage mass production and lower the unit cost of manufactured articles, thereby lowering the cost to the consumer. Electrical manufacturers and retailers preferred to enlarge the market through educational promotion, rather than competing with one another on the basis of price for their share of a finite market.¹⁹ Unfortunately there are few figures plotting the increased sale of appliances in relation to their declining

cost,²⁰ although prices were falling throughout the period. Manufacturers were much more secretive about their aims and objectives than was the publicly owned Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario and its municipal utilities.

Among manufacturers and retailers high appliance prices were thought to be a necessary consequence of the large amount of missionary work it took to sell them, especially in the 1920s. The CEA attributed sales resistance to high prices. Apparently there was a widespread belief among the public that appliances, especially motor driven appliances, were expensive to run, costing at least \$4-5 per month.²¹ The industry responded by stressing the low cost of operation, particularly of washing machines.

An American advertiser, writing for Printers Ink in 1922, called for more educational advertising to sell the idea of labour-saving devices.²² Indifference to electrical appliances, fueled by the fact that domestic labour "is not so scarce as it was a few years ago" served to increase the cost of appliances. The need for demonstration, service and the financing of installment sales,²³ all increased retail costs. He listed a number of factors that added to dealer expenses such as delivering appliances to homes, picking up and taking back appliances demonstrated but not sold, loss from selling 'demonstrators' as second hand appliances, free servicing for one year to customers who have electrical or mechanical trouble, 10-15% salesman commissions, collection

of installment accounts, delinquent accounts and time payments.²⁴

C.D. Henderson, a staunch defender of the small dealer, argued in 1925 that attempts to induce big volume selling through lower prices could only lead to price wars and cut-throat competition. The electrical business was different, he said, from the 5 and dime stores which operated on this volume principle in that electrical products were not necessities or staples, but luxuries that required skilled help to overcome sales resistance and hence incurred larger overhead expenses.²⁵ This position was not shared by large manufacturers who felt that volume production -- if not volume selling -- would and should reduce the cost of appliances and make them necessities. Eventually the small dealers who resisted the 'volume' creed of the interwar years were squeezed out of the business.

Once an appliance left the luxury category and gained consumer acceptance, which was happening for most of them throughout the period, higher volume sales could and did lead to lower prices. Printers Ink Monthly assessed the success of the electrical industry in achieving price reductions, highlighting the electric refrigerator which in the U.S. more than in Canada had achieved a meteoric rise in sales during the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s. As reported in Printers Ink Monthly, the average price of a refrigerator in 1925 was \$435, by 1927, \$350 and by 1936, \$166. In addition, increased efficiency of the newer models

made these appliances less expensive to operate.²⁶ The washing machine had dropped in price from \$160 in the early 1920s to \$66.95 by 1937, however its quality had suffered rather than improved due to fierce competition and the large number of manufacturers.²⁷

The Second Obstacle: Education

The second major obstacle to acceptance of the electrical lifestyle was fear of, or indifference to, new technology and/or a lack of skill in using it. The industry responded with a program of consumer education. The principal form of this education was advertising to inform prospective purchasers of the advantages of electrical appliances in particular and the electric lifestyle in general. Among the advantages claimed were: the preservation of the beauty of the operator (and this was directed especially at women), increased leisure, economy, modernity and a solution to the servant problem.

Advertisements for appliances in national magazines and the HEPC's flyer, The Hydro Lamp which will be dealt with in another chapter, were by no means the only way in which the industry sought to sell the electric lifestyle to Canadians.

Many major cities held model electric home displays, and utilities and manufacturers displayed and demonstrated their products at exhibitions such as the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE). The popularity of these displays reflects both an interest on the part of the public in home

electrification, and a determination to see how appliances worked before purchases were made.

The Society for Electrical Development was a propaganda tool for the electrical industry which originated in the United States, and spread to Canada. The Society was organized in 1913 as a cooperative institution for the development of the electric market. It appeared to die out in 1926 but was reorganized in 1927 with ties to the major industry associations.²⁸ Figure 6 is an example of the type of material generated by the Society for publication in newspapers, magazines, etc. Among other things, the S.E.D. sent material to women's magazines explaining how electricity could lighten the burden of the housewife, conducted "Electrical Weeks" and sales campaigns, launched the successful "Do It Electrically" slogan in 1914 and published a monthly sales service which suggested advertising copy, providing material free to members.²⁹

In 1922 the Toronto Electric Home League (later renamed Electric Service League³⁰) was formed. With the cooperation and support of the Society for Electrical Development, the League built four model homes which were equipped and displayed in four separate areas of the city. The shows were done consecutively with intervals of 4 to 6 weeks between them. The project was jointly financed by the Toronto Hydro-Electric System, manufacturers and jobbers, contractor-dealers and real estate firms.³¹

FIGURE 6 -- Society for Electrical Development Literature

All illustration from consumer literature recently issued by the League

Source: "An Organization That Always Boosts the Electrical Idea", Electrical News, March 15, 1924: 85.

Publicity for this early 1920s show was aimed at reaching people who were best suited to avail themselves of the Electric home idea, that is, the wealthy. Electrical News reported that addresses were given to the Electric Club of Toronto, the Rotary Club, the Canadian Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Women's Canadian Club and business men's and women's organizations throughout the city. Mrs. Bruce, president of the Women's Canadian Club, was chosen to officially open the Electric Home.³² While this approach reflects the industry's strategy of the early 1920s of reaching out to higher income groups, the popularity of such displays indicates that interest in the electric home idea was widespread throughout all classes. By the 1930s, the industry's strategy had changed to encompass an appeal to lower income groups. This was the inevitable response to the realization that upper income groups were becoming saturated,³³ the need to find new markets, and the confident belief that they had a worthy product to offer. Electricity as a luxury for the wealthy moved through the period to become a necessity for all.

Although the chief aim of the model home project was to encourage better wiring of homes in order to stimulate appliance use, the appliances themselves were of great interest to the twenty thousand visitors who crowded into the first of these four homes during the 13 day exhibition. Fifteen thousand descriptive booklets, giving a plan of the

house and indicating where the outlets were located, were carried off by interested visitors. So crowded was the home at times that large line-ups occurred and groups of ten were quickly shepherded through the home, so that the next group could come in. The only thing preventing even greater numbers from seeing the home was the capacity of the home itself, and as it was three or four 'traffic' men were necessary to keep parties together and following their proper course through the house.³⁴

Visitors were shown the advantages of ample electric lighting, refrigeration, electric water heating, cooking, laundry equipment, dishwasher and ample outlets for myriad small appliances from grill and toaster in the kitchen/dining room to hair dryer and warming pad in the bedroom.³⁵

The League happily reported the sympathetic attitude of the press, which they attributed not only to the considerable amount of money spent on advertising, but to the fact that the home "caught the fancy and appealed to the intelligence of the women on the reporter staff, with the result that the objects of the exhibit were explained in a very logical way."³⁶ The publicity committee had arranged for the lady reporters of the daily papers to visit the home.

Hamilton and Montreal both in 1922, and Victoria in 1928, reported similar successes with their electrical home exhibits.³⁷

Many manufacturers of electrical appliances demonstrated their products at the CNE, a major gathering for residents of Toronto and area to view the 'latest' developments from the world of industry and technology. Electrical News reported that the displays of home appliances proved most popular. For instance, it was reported in 1921 that "many a housewife and prospective housewife stood watching the water "loop the loop", throwing up a white foam of soap suds inside the Airplane washing machine, and wondered, as she had done many times that day, if that was the machine for her".³⁸ The Blue Bird Washer was also displayed. The Blue Bird Corporation, reported Electrical News, was not slow in realizing the importance of employing a woman demonstrator, as "it is a psychological fact that in buying a washing machine a woman prefers the opinion of one of her sex".³⁹ They also recognized the value of good looks in a machine, this one being described as one of the most attractive of its kind at the exhibition.

In 1923 a reported change in public attitudes toward electrical appliances was noted:

A few years ago they were all incredulity and ignorance. Today they are interested, informed, convinced and often enthusiastic. Housewives who five years ago looked upon electrical appliances somewhat as curiosities, certainly as luxuries, now discuss with the salesman the merits of this or that toaster, range or washer.⁴⁰

Electrical News ventured to say that the Canadian housewife,

is the most intelligent of buyers where domestic electrical appliances are concerned. It seems that before buying a washing machine, a refrigerator, an ironer, vacuum cleaner, floor waxer, or an electric range, she makes a survey of the market and compares the relative merits of each machine before purchasing.⁴¹

At least at the retail level, electrical appliance manufacturers did not view women as malleable, passive or unintelligent consumers of household technology.

In 1921, Electrical News called for a united front, a concerted plan of action to interest the CNE visitor in the use of electricity in general, rather than any one appliance. "It is quite time the impression of the average visitor to the Fair regarding the electrical industry, namely, that it consists chiefly of lighting, and in operating legion types of washing machines, should be rectified."⁴²

In 1928 letters were invited from the industry concerning the problem with high pressure salesmanship at the displays, which understandably was scaring away the public. Comments indicate that the smaller companies, particularly those selling only one or two appliances, usually a washing machine or vacuum cleaner, were most guilty of these offenses, while companies such as Northern Electric, Canadian General Electric and Westinghouse tended to play an "educational" role.⁴³ It is hardly surprising that the latter could afford to pull themselves above the fray of cutthroat competition which characterized aspects of the industry. Smaller companies complained that they could

not afford to exhibit at the CNE unless they could hope to profit through increased sales.

In 1930, the Toronto Hydro Electric System (Toronto's municipal utility) had two booths selling "nothing but good will and helpful advice", one exhibiting labour-saving domestic appliances, the other labour-saving and money-saving industrial applications of electricity.⁴⁴ The Electric Service League also had an educational booth.

In 1934 it was noted that a particularly popular display showed the manufacturing and testing of the component parts of an electric range, and that visitors avoided booths where high pressure salesmanship was evident.⁴⁵ Industry commentators considered high pressure salesmanship a shame, as public interest in electricity was clearly there and needed only to be subtly exploited.

The Commission's participation at the Canadian National Exhibition indicates its changing view of the domestic market and loadbuilding in general in the 1930s. In 1928 Electrical News received letters from industry insiders condemning the Hydro Electric Power Commission for its absence from the CNE and its failure to play an educational role.⁴⁶ 1932 saw a repeated call, this time by the manager of an electrical manufacturing company, to have Ontario Hydro take a promotional role:

...the independent exhibitors in the Electrical building should have the support and cooperation of the public utility responsible for the development, distribution and the usage of

power in the province. It has been argued and may still be argued that the function of the Hydro Electric Power Commission is simply to supply the power needs of the people. It has always seemed to me, however, that a broader and wiser interpretation of the function of the Commission should include an educational programme, and that furthermore their governmental association should make it their recognized duty to instruct the people of the province, particularly the rural population, in the efficient and effective application of electricity to their daily problems.⁴⁷

While the Commission did exhibit in 1933, much to everyone's gratification, the display included only quality hydro lamps, free hot water installations, and electric farm helps. Electrical News hoped that a more complete exhibit would follow in years to come.⁴⁸

By 1935 the Hydro Electric Power Commission had finally joined its colleagues in using the CNE for public education. Its 1935 exhibit featured the figure of Sir Adam Beck and a visual presentation of the Commission's role in developing the province's hydro-electric resources, hydro on the farm, hydro in industry, hydro in the home, and finally hydro for lighting.⁴⁹ The 1936 exhibit reflected the Commission's gradual shift away from farm and industry priorities to domestic use, featuring a model kitchen, home lighting demonstrations and a cooking school, which was attended by 40,000.⁵⁰ In 1939, the exhibit featured the Hydro story, with graphs showing the average cost of domestic power from 1914 to 1939 and the average monthly consumption. The message was that Hydro was cheap and the more you use the

cheaper it gets. The exhibit also featured a panel showing the number of hours of use one cent of electricity would buy for various electrical appliances.⁵¹

The Commission's new Sales Promotion Department was also a product of its late 1930s shift to domestic priorities. The Commission cooperated with electrical appliance manufacturers, jobbers and dealers, and the Toronto Hydro Electric System in the first National Electric Show. Held in Maple Leaf Gardens for three days in April 1939, it was attended by 15,000 to 20,000 people. There were numerous companies displaying household equipment, but the feature attraction was a stage presentation called "The Cavalcade of Electrical Living" presented by a world renowned home economist, Miss E. Frances Thompson. A two act performance allowed numerous household appliances to be demonstrated in dramatic fashion.⁵²

Another of the Commission's efforts to promote home electrification was the Hydro Travel Shop. This motorized trailer unit, fully equipped with modern electrical appliances for the home and for the farm, was "manned" with a crew of trained salesmen and demonstrators.⁵³ The unit went on the road in April of 1939, stopping at various municipalities and rural power districts, where cooking and lighting demonstrations were conducted. Hydro officials gave out information regarding rates and merchandise to interested onlookers.⁵⁴ From April until June of 1939, 30 municipalities had been visited and 10,000 people attended

the demonstrations. The Hydro Travel Shop was not a radical departure for the Commission as its mandate had always been to service the rural districts and smaller municipalities.

Dealers and merchandising utilities alike found that the most effective method of selling was door-to-door canvassing, as prospective buyers needed to be shown how an appliance worked before a purchase could be completed. This type of merchandising was most prevalent in vacuum cleaner and washing machine sales.⁵⁵ What was needed, posited Electrical News in 1922, was a bridge between the sales organization and the prospect. In the case of washing machines, for example, the industry needed contact with the "lady at the old fashioned washtub":

She has seen the advertising and the exhibitions but she is a little bit skeptical. It is a lot of money for her to spend. And then it might not do the work. That would be awful.⁵⁶

The bridge which the industry offered, not only for washing machines but other appliances, was home demonstration. A salesman would bring the machine to a woman's home and do her washing for her so that she could adequately assess its worth. Some dealers put washing machines and vacuum cleaners in homes on a trial basis, claiming that the vast majority of machines were never returned. This door-to-door method was common in the time period, leading to complaints by housewives of harassment by numerous peddlers. Whatever its popularity or lack of it, however, it was clearly assessed by the industry to be

effective. Following the industry's established wisdom that sales resistance could only be broken down through demonstration, some power companies equipped merchandising trucks for the purpose of demonstrating appliances.⁵⁷ This expensive method of merchandising was clearly easier for large utilities and a few large city retailers than for small dealers.

Sales organizations soon learned that satisfied customers were their best source for prospects, as they tended to advise friends and relatives of their new purchase.⁵⁸ It appears that householders relied on this type of advice, ahead of any other (including advertising), in making buying decisions, and dealers were quick to exploit the source, asking customers for the names of interested friends, neighbours or relatives. Satisfied customers not only advised their friends, but often bought more electrical appliances for themselves. The sale of an iron could lead to the purchase of a toaster, or hot plate, a washing machine to a vacuum cleaner, a grill or hot plate to an electric range. Some utilities even offered free servicing simply to keep appliances from collecting dust on the customer's shelf and to keep customers happy.⁵⁹ Free servicing did little to ingratiate them with dealer-contractors, of course.

With electric ranges, electric retailers of both public and private persuasions, found that cooking schools were

both immensely popular, and a good source of interested prospects.⁶⁰ Names and addresses were always collected at these "schools", and sales follow up done. While the idea of electric cookery was sold at these events, that is; its cleanliness, safety, uniform results without constant watching, the elimination of the need for a hot kitchen, and its alleged economy; women also received many practical tips on the use of electric ranges.

Another service offered by many utilities, especially the larger ones, was a Home Institute.⁶¹ A department within the electrical utility, usually headed by a home economist, it functioned as an information source for new and prospective purchasers of electrical appliances. Home Institute personnel would visit the homes of new range owners, for instance, to ensure the proper functioning of the new appliance. Problems could then be corrected and questions answered. New range owners would also be offered advice on how to conserve current by using stored heat after an element was turned off, encouraged to use utensils which fit properly over the elements, and to avoid boiling vegetables at a rapid pace. These services helped customers adjust to electric cooking, kept them happy, and ensured that appliances were working efficiently.

The popularity of kitchen modernization and home improvement was exploited in advertising campaigns and in dealers' merchandising activities. The modern kitchen with continuous countertops and the latest in appliances and

gadgets was promoted as the materialization of the housewife's liberation from drudgery and slave-status within the family. Rather than displaying individual appliances, many dealers found that setting up a model kitchen sold more ranges, and refrigerators.⁶²

Westinghouse responded to the demand for more practical homes and in 1938 announced the creation of a home planning department at its plant at Mansfield, Ohio. The interest in home improvement in the interwar period led to a flurry of designs by architects and technological enthusiasts being discussed and displayed at expositions, in department stores and in home magazines.⁶³ Initial hopes that the techniques of mass production could produce an affordable, mass produced home to meet the housing shortages of the 1920s and extend the potential of democratized consumption into the housing market were shortlived, however. Involvement in the 'Home of Tomorrow' schemes by companies such as Westinghouse and General Electric led to an emphasis on spectacular (and expensive) gadgetry.⁶⁴ R.E. Imhoff of Westinghouse, in announcing the home planning department, declared that "housewives are becoming more and more impatient with antiquated kitchens" and feel that those who profit from rebuilding should contribute sound plans to the operation of other "departments" of the home.⁶⁵ In 1935 Advertising Age reported kitchen planning organizations received 50,000 requests for information and by 1937 the number had swollen

to 600,000.⁶⁶

It is clear that women demanded educational services regarding the use of appliances prior to purchase, and that these services cost the industry considerable expense. Because of the newness of the technology, consumers insisted upon guarantees on appliances.⁶⁷ Electrical appliances manufacturers provided these somewhat grudgingly.

Obstacle Number Three: Facilities

The third obstacle to the enjoyment of the electrical lifestyle was inadequate wiring in new and existing homes, which inhibited sales of large current consuming appliances such as electric ranges and water heaters. Dealers found that they might be able to sell the range, but the expensive wiring job needed to install it inhibited sales.⁶⁸ In Toronto, in 1924 the electrical industry responded to this problem, and to the need for educational work, by forming an Electric Service League. This organization developed out of the Electric Home League had been formed in 1922 to organize an electric home display in Toronto (see pp. 143-146 above).

In its first year of operation, the Toronto Service League established its well-known Red Seal system,⁶⁹ a successful attempt to educate architects, builders and the general public to expect adequate wiring in new homes and apartment buildings by placing a Red Seal of Approval on homes and apartment suites which met its specifications. By 1926 40% of new homes in Toronto had the Red Seal of

Approval and E.M. Ashworth of Toronto Hydro noted with pleasure that the Red Seal was not hard to sell to architects, contractors and the general public, and that it made a significant difference in kwh consumption of electricity.⁷⁰ For instance, 633 Red Seal houses with ranges consumed 174.585 kwh per month, while 633 non Red Seal houses averaged 52.018 kwh. 166 Red Seal houses without ranges consumed 29.317 kwh while 166 non Red Seal houses without ranges consumed 15.747 kwh monthly.⁷¹

As indicated in Figure 7 the percentage of new home constructions securing the Red Seal of Approval was growing rapidly. In 1929 the Electric Service League proudly announced that it had passed the 200 mark for Red Seal apartment houses, involving 2,710 suites. This was no small accomplishment as Red Seal specifications for apartment houses required an electric range and electric refrigerator in every housekeeping suite besides the regular Red Seal standard in other respects.⁷²

Comparison of Canadian and American success in promoting the Red Seal standard prompted the industry to conclude that the Canadian Service Leagues were doing a good job. The number of Red Seal homes in Canada numbered 12,500, most of which could be found in Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg with a combined population of 1,000,000, whereas in the U.S., where some 40 leagues were operating, there were only 28,000 Red Seal homes.⁷³ The success of the Red Seal campaign in Toronto (and other cities) indicates

FIGURE 7: Red Seal Houses

Source: Electrical News and Engineering, April 1, 1929: 40

the popularity of the industry's concept: the modern, all electric home. The Red Seal was the blueprint on which modern homeowners and apartment dwellers could build their modern electric lifestyle.

Diffusion of Electrical Technology

While manufacturers were reticent to discuss price in ads, especially for the larger appliances, it is clear that prices were falling and that greater numbers of Canadians were using electrical appliances as a result. 1936 prices of Westinghouse appliances were listed in Chatelaine at: Autocrat toaster \$8.75, MasterMatic Iron, \$8.75, Brock Percolators, \$8.50, \$9.50 and \$10.50, Sandwich Toaster, \$8.95, with waffle grids, \$12.45.⁷⁴ In the mid 1930s a Westinghouse washer could be purchased from \$79 to \$94,⁷⁵ and 1939 prices for General Electric appliances were listed as follows:⁷⁶

- Hotpoint Coffee Maker -- from \$6.50
- Hotpoint Percolator -- from \$8.75
- Hotpoint Toaster -- \$8.95
- General Electric Telechron Clock -- from \$4.95
- Hotpoint Sandwich Toaster -- \$6.95 and \$9.95
- Hotpoint Range -- from \$99.50
- General Electric Ironer -- from \$39.95
- General Electric Washer -- from \$82
- General Electric Sunlamp -- \$59.50
- General Electric Refrigerator -- from \$188.50
- General Electric Radio -- from \$15.95 to \$194
- General Electric Radio, table models -- from \$15.95
- General Electric Cyclinder-type Cleaner -- \$59.50
- General Electric Upright Cleaner -- \$29.95
- Hotpoint Iron -- from \$3.50
- General Electric Toaster (standard model) -- from \$4.40
- Hotpoint Heating pad -- \$6.95 to \$7.95

Hotpoint Waffle Iron -- \$8.95

General Electric Portable Mixer -- \$24.95

Given that the average annual wage in Canada was \$1200 in 1929,⁷⁷ the purchase of an iron or toaster at \$8 or \$9 would make it a moderate expense. It was not out of reach however. As the more expensive appliances, ranges and refrigerators started at \$100 and \$200 respectively, these were clearly a major expense. Such a purchase would consume at least one month's salary for working people. In 1933 Northern Electric ranges ran from \$69 to \$180.⁷⁸ Starting prices would of course refer to the smallest and least well equipped of the appliance line.

The average wage rate in Ontario was probably higher than the Canadian average, and many individual families would have done considerably better than this average if there were more than one wage earner, as was often the case. The average Canadian family consisted of 4.5 members, and 1.4 wage earners according to the 1921 census.⁷⁹ Depending upon the stage in the family's life cycle, a family might receive added income from a wife, or older children. With consumer credit, many small appliances, and even washing machines could be afforded by some working class families.

The Hydro Electric Power Commission kept statistics on what the industry termed the 'saturation point' of domestic electrical appliances. By this they meant the percentage of wired homes which possessed a particular appliance. By the late 1930s the number of wired homes in Canada numbered

about 1-1/2 million, or about 62%, with the vast majority of these being urban or small town residences.⁸⁰ The extent of rural electrification in this period, although growing quickly, was still small. In Canada by 1939, there were 83,000 farms connected to utility lines, 46,000 of which were in Ontario.⁸¹

Although other branches of the industry did take similar surveys of appliance saturation, the Commission's figures are the most complete and probably the most accurate. Statistics were taken annually from 1924 on, with the exception of the Depression years 1930, 1931, 1932 and 1933. (It is not known why these are missing, but it may have been a cost cutting measure.) The data were collected through questionnaires sent to municipal utilities in Ontario. They did not all make a complete survey each year, but by occasional test checks and surveys kept their information fairly accurate.⁸² By 1928, Mickler could vouch for the accuracy of the statistics as "lately the majority of municipalities have taken sufficient interest in such statistics to make an actual survey and count the number of appliances in use."⁸³ The figures do appear to be fairly consistent from year to year, are consistent with similar surveys done elsewhere,⁸⁴ and correspond to qualitative summaries of the popularity of various appliances given by dealers and salesmen. The figures may be slightly inflated as those municipalities which were more enthusiastic about merchandising and promoting home

electrification may have been more willing to send in returns. However, with 70% returns, the inaccuracies cannot be more than slight. (The Commission used averages for those municipalities which did not respond.) The industry's reason for conducting this type of market research was simply to determine the extent of saturation, and therefore the remaining potential market to be exploited. The figures were not used as propaganda.

The appliances which the Commission and its utilities were vigorously promoting in the 1930s because of their excellent loadbuilding qualities, i.e. the range and the water heater, were not the most popular appliances. As can be seen in Figure 8, the saturation of the electric range, for urban domestic customers in 1938, was 29.6% even after the Commission's range campaign had been in progress for several years. The water heater which was the subject of the Commission's other promotional campaign had a saturation of only 10.6% for flat rate heaters and 9.7% for metered water heaters.⁸⁵

As the appliances which were least advertised had the highest market saturation, this might indicate that consumers responded to advertising only when it was beneficial to do so. The lowly iron which was seldom advertised had a saturation point of 99.8%. The radio had a saturation of 79.7% and toasters 62.1%. Even the more costly clothes washer had a saturation of 51.2%,⁸⁶ while

FIGURE 8 -- Saturation of Electrical Appliances - Urban Domestic Customers

	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
Ranges	13.8	15.9	18.8	21.3	23.1	24.4	26.1	27.3	27.7	28.6	29.6
Hot Plates	5.5	4.3	6.6	8.9	9.3	10.4	14.1	14.9	15.5	16.9	18.1
Washers	15.8	17.7	20.7	23.5	25.9	27.9	38.9	40.1	43.4	45.5	51.2
Vacuum Cleaners	18.6	20.4	19.9	22.5	21.8	22.1	28.6	28.9	30.1	30.6	33.6
* Water Heaters	4.8	7.0	6.9	8.2	9.0	8.8					
Flat Rate							6.2	7.3	7.9	9.5	10.6
Metered							9.0	8.6	8.4	9.1	9.7
Grates	4.4	2.4	4.4	3.4	4.3	4.6	6.9	6.5	7.4	7.3	7.3
Air Heaters	30.0	29.3	28.0	33.4	36.2	36.4	29.9	29.2	29.0	29.6	31.1
Irons	.4	.5	.6	.6	.8	.9	1.4	1.6	1.9	2.3	2.6
Refrigerators	89.2	80.5	82.9	92.8	89.9	89.9	93.6	93.5	93.8	94.9	99.8
Toasters	.2	.4	.7	2.9	3.9	5.9	10.9	12.6	14.3	15.6	18.7
Grills	44.1	42.1	42.5	44.2	47.0	50.4	52.2	53.5	55.1	57.1	62.1
Furnace Blower and	13.8	10.4	11.2	11.3	10.9	11.6	9.1	9.3	9.8	10.7	9.8
Oil Burner							2.7	3.8	4.5	4.7	5.2
Air Conditioner							.2	.3	.3	.5	.7
Radios							60.7	68.7	71.3	72.2	79.7

Number of Customers

469,933 475,604 487,417 494,315 505,100

* Assume only one counted where customer had both flat rate heater and metered booster.

Source: Hydro Electric Power Commission Bulletin

the vacuum cleaner's saturation was 33.6%. These two appliances were highly advertised in the 1920s, but advertising of them declined sharply in the 1930s. The refrigerator and range which were extensively advertised in the 1930s had reached saturation levels of 18.7% and 29.6% respectively. The grill, featured prominently in ads, had a saturation of only 9.8% while the ironing machine (a mangle like machine for ironing clothes which took considerable skill to operate), which was sometimes featured with the washing machine in ads, had a saturation of 2.6%. It would appear, then, that what the electrical industry, utilities from a loadbuilding perspective and advertisers from a sales perspective, wanted from the domestic market and what the domestic market wanted from electricity were not the same thing. It is also clear that throughout the period, electrical appliances were increasingly being used by working class as well as middle class women.

As we can see from Figure 9 the iron enjoyed universal popularity, while the washer showed the highest rate of growth. Toasters moved from 44.1% saturation in 1924 to 62.1% in 1938, while vacuum cleaners moved from 18.6% to 33.6%. Water heaters moved from 4.8% to approximately 10-15%⁸⁸ and ranges from 13.8% to 29.6%. While domestic electrical technology had not yet reached every class in Ontarian society, it was clear from this rate of growth, that the trend was moving in that direction.

FIGURE 9 -- Growth in Use of Important Electrical Appliances, 1924-1935

Source: "Use of Electrical Appliances in Ontario Grows Apace",
Bulletin, December 1936, Vol. XXII, No. 12

Although it was small, the farm market was politically important to the Commission due to its presumed assault on rural depopulation. The Commission therefore took statistics⁸⁹ and monitored the success of those few farms which became electrified in the 1920s and 1930s. It is clear from the literature, especially in the 1920s, that the Commission's main interest was in large scale uses of electricity on the farm, that is, in the barn as opposed to the house. Even as late as 1939, Commission spokesmen were saying "If we consider the farmer as an industrialist in competition with other farmers, we must realize that in order to compete successfully he should equip his factory with every labour saving device at his disposal."⁹⁰ Yet the figures indicate a strong interest in domestic uses for electricity by farm families.

Figure 10 compares urban and rural customers for 1937. Note that for the electric range, the urban saturation is 28.6%, while the farm saturation was 16.97% and hamlet, 11.26%. For washers the urban saturation is lower than farm saturation with urban customers showing a 45.5% saturation and farm customers 57.54%. 30.6% of urban dwellers with electricity owned vacuum cleaners while only 12.76% of farm dwellers did. While 94.9% of urban customers had electric irons, only 75.31% of farm customers did. Radios and toasters had nearly equal saturation points between urban and rural, with 72.2% of urban dwellers having a radio and

FIGURE 10 -- Urban/Rural Appliance Saturation StatisticsTABLE No. 5
COMPARISON OF APPLIANCES IN USE IN HOMES OF URBAN AND RURAL
CONSUMERS

	R.P.D. HAMLET		R.P.D. FARM		URBAN	
	No. of Appliances	% of Saturation	No. of Appliances	% of Saturation	No. of Appliances	% of Saturation
ELECTRIC						
Range	4,992	11.26	6,462	16.97	141,581	28.6
Hot Plate	9,600	21.65	8,300	21.80	85,821	16.9
Washers	18,599	41.94	21,909	57.54	224,992	45.5
Vacuum Cleaner	5,365	12.10	4,859	12.76	151,448	30.6
Water Heater (Flat Rate)	993	2.24	1,281	3.36	47,151	9.5
Water Heater (Metered)	781	1.76	647	1.67	44,745	9.1
Grate	340	.77	288	.75	36,289	7.3
Air Heater	3,379	7.62	3,748	9.84	146,313	29.6
Ironers	402	.91	459	1.21	11,315	2.3
Irons	30,142	67.98	28,672	75.41	469,045	94.9
Refrigerators	4,177	9.42	3,786	9.94	76,974	15.6
Toasters	20,642	46.55	19,941	52.47	282,294	57.1
Radios	28,247	63.68	26,090	68.52	456,761	92.2
Furnace Blower	678	1.53	540	1.42	25,371	5.1

Source: "The Use of Electrical Appliances Continues to Grow in Ontario",
Bulletin, August 1938, Vol. XXV, No. 8

68.52% of farm; 57.1% of urban customers had a toaster while 52.37% of farm customers did. Considering the much later electrification of most rural areas, the saturation percentages are not far apart, especially on some popular appliances, such as the radio, washer, and toaster. It is significant that the clothes washer had a higher rate of use among farm women than among their urban sisters, reflecting the absence of commercial services for performing laundry and the greater scarcity of domestic assistance in rural areas. The radio was also popular in rural areas, a reflection of the greater isolation and distance from cultural and recreational facilities for farm families.

By comparison the rate of saturation of electrical equipment for the barn was somewhat lower, as can be seen in Figure 11. In 1938 the saturation of electric motors in the barn was 16.7%, and the pump 13.3%. It should be noted that the saturation for pumps in the home was 15.2%. It is not clear whether this is an overlap or that the overall saturation of pumps for the farm as a whole should be 28.6%. As pumping and carrying water manually is an onerous task, it is probably one of the first jobs rural dwellers would seek to eliminate. Saturation points for all other items such as cream separators, grain grinders and water heaters were 6% or less. This indicates that the interest in electrification by farm users was motivated as much by a wish to enhance home life, as by an expectation of increased

FIGURE # -- Saturation of Electrical Appliances - Rural

Farm	1934		1936		1937		1938	
	Farm	Hamlet	Farm	Hamlet	Farm	Hamlet	Farm	Hamlet
Motor	12.5	3.9	17.8	3.1	17.0	3.9	16.7	3.7
Pump	15.4	.9	15.4	.7	13.0	1.2	13.3	1.1
Grain Grinder	4.7	--	5.8	.1	5.5	.1	5.4	--
Milking Machine	2.6	--	2.9	--	2.6	.9	2.9	--
Milk Cooler	.7	--	1.3	--	1.5	--	1.7	--
Cream Separator	7.0	--	7.1	.1	6.2	.1	6.7	.1
Churn	.9	--	1.1	.1	1.0	.1	1.1	--
Incubator	1.0	--	1.1	.3	1.1	.1	1.2	.1
Brooder	.6	--	.9	.1	.8	.1	1.0	.1
Hot Bed	.1	--	.1	--	.1	.1	.1	--
Water Heater								
Flat Rate	.1	--	.2	--	.1	.1	.2	--
Metered	.1	--	.1	--	.1	--	.1	--
Air Compressor	--	--	.2	.2	.7	.3	--	--
Battery Charger	--	--	.1	.4	.1	.3	--	--
Miscellaneous	1.5	.4	.7	.3	.9	.3	1.0	1.0

House

	1929	1930	1934		1936		1937		1938	
			Hamlet	Farm	Hamlet	Farm	Hamlet	Farm	Hamlet	Farm
Range	19.1	20.8	10.8	19.8	10.63	19.37	11.26	16.97	12.5	17.2
Hot Plate	16.3	17.6	12.9	22.9	21.19	24.76	21.65	21.60	23.6	21.7
Washer	40.7	53.7	39.4	60.7	39.61	62.96	41.04	57.54	44.9	57.2
Vacuum Cleaner	9.2	8.1	11.5	13.4	11.81	14.21	12.10	12.76	13.6	13.5
Hot Water Heater	3.0	2.8								
- Flat Rate			1.9	2.9	2.49	3.55	2.24	3.36	3.3	4.0
- Metered			1.6	2.4	1.69	2.12	1.76	1.67	2.0	2.0
Irate	1.0	0.8	1.2	1.0	.67	.89	.77	.75	0.8	0.7
Air Heater	3.7	8.6	7.8	11.5	7.47	12.22	7.62	9.84	7.6	9.1
Ironer	1.5	0.6	.2	.8	.99	1.86	.91	1.21	1.2	1.1
Iron	98.5	99.8	68.6	82.3	65.38	81.74	67.99	75.31	72.1	76.6
Refrigerator	2.7	3.1	3.3	7.9	8.51	8.09	9.42	9.94	12.1	11.8
Grill	2.2	1.6								
Toaster	51.0	51.3	42.6	54.1	42.05	54.19	46.55	52.37	49.7	51.4
Churn	1.0	0.7								
Radio	13.7	22.2	55.2	65.4	60.54	69.06	63.68	68.52	68.6	70.3
Percolator	2.0	1.8								
Fan	1.9	1.4								
Sewing Machine	0.2	1.0			.26	.22	.34	.12		
Furnace Blower			1.4	1.7	1.44	1.91	1.52	1.42	1.7	1.6
Sanitary System			9.5	16.1						
Motor			1.5	1.6						
Pump			.7	.2	10.35	18.22	10.78	14.72	11.4	15.2
Miscellaneous			.6	1.0	1.87	1.92	2.75	2.48	4.1	3.3

Source: Hydro Electric Power Commission Bulletin

productivity on the farm. Evidence from these first rural dwellers to acquire the advantages of electricity at first sight appears to contradict the conventional wisdom that farmers modernize their own work space, the barn and outbuildings, to the neglect of their wives' work space, the home. Farm women's organizations had been fighting this tendency to give priority to the barn for some time.⁹¹ This rural sample may be too small to make generalizations. Neither is it representative of the majority of rural inhabitants as the expense involved in electrifying a farm was so great as to preclude all but the wealthier farming establishments. Mr. Purcell of the HEPC, lecturing at the CNE on rural electrification in 1924, pointed out that an electric installation on most farms could be made for about \$500. The Commission, under the Power District Loans Act, offered farm residents loans of up to \$1000 with 5% interest and 5 years to repay to aid in the costly venture of electrifying a farm. The loans could be used not only for wiring but major equipment purchases including ranges, washing machines, motors and grain grinders. Most farm women would probably have agreed with one woman present at the CNE lecture who said that electricity was a great boon to women in rural districts giving them "more time for their families and in general the finer things in life."⁹²

It may be that those who could afford to do both modernized the house as well as the barn, while poorer farmers still gave priority to the barn. This parallels the

priority given by utility managers to use electricity to alleviate class disparity, with reduction in women's drudgery a secondary goal.

While there is some debate as to whether industrialization has raised the standard of living, especially for working class Canadians,⁹³ it is clear that the mass production/consumption of the interwar period was beginning to deliver technology to at least some working class Canadian families. Thompson and Seager cite the fact that only 1/3 of Canadians owned an electric refrigerator and less than 1/2 an electric range by the 1940s as evidence that the tools of efficient housekeeping were out of reach for most of the working class.⁹⁴ Yet the other side of the coin is that over half of urban Ontario households had the use of a washing machine in the 1930s and most had an iron. Given the phenomenal growth in saturation levels over what the previous decade had seen, urban Ontarians had reason to be hopeful that such amenities would soon be universally available.

Statistical studies of real wages⁹⁵ fail to measure the many factors affecting standards of living which cannot be quantified. The reduced family size consequent upon a birth rate which fell from 29.3 per 1000 in 1921 to 20.6 in 1939,⁹⁶ and from a reduction in the number of boarders and/or relatives living with families, affected living standards. And as the technological infrastructure was

improved, the minimum level of comfort rose. The poverty level was constantly being redefined.

While Copp finds, not surprisingly, that income disparity was not affected by industrial growth, as the middle class made equal or better gains than workers,⁹⁷ the overall standards did rise. For urban working class women especially (who had no servants and little marginal income to spend on commercial services) a washing machine meant liberation from the washboard, and an iron meant an end to the sadiron's oppressive heat and heavy labour. For working class men electricity meant improved comforts at home and at least the promise of a material standard of living closer to the middle class. While it fell far short of true equality, and did nothing to affect income disparity, industry's program of democratized consumption in the interwar period delivered enough to convince many Canadians to support it.

Consumer response to the industry's "sell-the-idea" strategy, -- its efforts to lower the cost of electrical living, and to provide education and wiring -- was mixed. There is no question that the falling rates for electricity were met with increased consumption and more widespread distribution of electrical appliances among working class Canadians. The popularity of electric home displays and other demonstrations also indicate the popularity of electricity in the home. Despite these positive factors,

consumers showed caution by demanding extensive information, guarantees, and falling prices.

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CHAPTER FOUR

The Advertising of Electrical Appliances:

National Magazines and the Hydro Lamp

The advertising message conveyed to Canadian women through national advertising and the Hydro Lamp was formulated by the advertising industry and its women advisors. It presented the practical features of electrical appliances along with an ideological message which meshed aspects of feminism with ideas of domesticity. Appliances offered all family members improved comfort, convenience and leisure; and for the middle class a solution to the servant problem. Consumption was presented as a means of addressing class equality. As a secondary goal, consumption was offered as a means of addressing sexual inequalities within the domestic sphere. Influenced particularly by women in the advertising industry, the advertising message also presented a philosophy of equality of spheres, whereby the homemaker's aspirations for better working conditions, financial autonomy and greater status and recognition were

given legitimacy. Advertisements attacked the patriarchal devaluation of women's domestic labour which was thought to be at the root of women's poor conditions and financial dependency.

Advertising is a major tool in the dissemination of new technology, and, by extension, of the consumerist philosophy. The advertiser conveys the promise of technology:¹ the promise that the good life can be had through material improvements in the standard of living and increased leisure. Ewen and other critics of advertising portray the consumerist ideology as both a capitalist tool of market expansion and instrument of social control.² Conservative critics bemoan the materialism that an emphasis on technology and the standard of living fosters.³ Both conservative and marxists discount popular input.⁴ Appeals to popular ideals such as democracy or feminism are always seen as co-opting and trivializing dissent. For instance Strong-Boag sees the advertiser's reference to feminist aspirations as a cynical ploy to channel reform into consumption:

Modern advertisers promised women that desires for a better life could be satisfied through purchases rather than through reform or rebellion. The independence and freedom demanded by feminists were trivialized and stripped of moral content to become merely opportunities for personal self-indulgence. The intended beneficiary was not so much the female population as capitalism.⁵

Yet while the advertiser is influential, s/he is not omnipotent, although this sometimes is lost sight of in the

literature on advertising. In order to imbue a product with personal meaning the advertisement must refer to existing social values or ideas -- what Williamson calls referent systems⁶. Thus the debate over whether advertising imposes the ideology of the ruling class, or merely reflects social reality,⁷ is unnecessarily dichotomized. In some respects, advertising does both, as Vipond points out in her article on women's magazines in the 1920s.⁸ Advertisements are an amalgam of industry's interests in promoting the product, with what industry perceives to be its popular appeal; thus they both reflect and distort the consumer's interests. Perceived benefits are exaggerated, information on disadvantages omitted, and those social values thought conducive to industry interests are reinforced. As controversy must be avoided in order not to offend anyone, advertisements are followers rather than leaders in the opinion field. While any mathematically precise formula for distinguishing between industry vs. consumer interests has not been devised, a sensitivity to both interests allows a more balanced view of advertising's significance.

Whether one sees the advertisers' references to feminist goals as a sinister plot to rob legitimate reform of meaning, or a concession to the new influence of feminism depends to some degree on the popular perception of feminism. While advertising undoubtedly fell short of the elite view, we do not know to what extent it reflected and

reinforced popular ideas. We also cannot know how much real and significant input women had until we know what the women of that time period wanted from advertising and industry. Students of women's magazines have noted that advertising is a major influence on editorial policy,⁹ stressing advertising's role in reinforcing the sexual division of labour. The sexual division of labour is one of the referent systems to which advertisers must appeal because it was generally accepted during the interwar period by women in home economics, women in industry, and the general public.

The end result of advertising's messages when taken together was to channel discontent into consumption. Industry had as its prime goal promoting consumption;¹⁰ one should not forget, however, that the demand for a higher standard of living was also a major plank in labour's program. The literature's emphasis on advertising's faults should not obscure the fact that the consumer does have some input, albeit constrained by industry's priorities, and has something to gain from the promotion of consumption. In addition, social control as a motive for business should not be exaggerated. While Ewen finds industry apologists galore to wax eloquent on democratization of consumption as a deterrent to communism, such rhetoric may be as much a rationalization of existing practice, as a rallying cry. The actions of thousands of capitalists looking for markets in conjunction with millions of consumer/workers looking for

products came together to produce a situation whereby increased consumption acted to quell unrest as advertising appealed to popular ideals of equality.

Advertising also has a practical role in selling products, over and above its ideological role.¹¹ We simply do not know to what degree people responded to advertising in its practical guise vis a vis the ideological message. Even as the promoter of consumption, advertising has its limits. Although some in the advertising industry arrogantly claimed to be creating demand, citing the great success stories of the industry,¹² in reality they were channeling demand.¹³ Paul Nystrom, a business analyst from the period has noted that advertising is most effective in selling products for which there is already a demand and that gambling on new products often does not pay.¹⁴ Advertising accelerated the sale of popular products, but it was ineffective in creating markets for "duds". In addition, it should be noted that advertising was not the only and certainly not the primary influence on consumer buying decisions. Evidence from the electrical industry indicates that purchasers of new electrical appliances tended to rely on the advice of friends, relatives and neighbours, ahead of advertising.¹⁵

The role of advertising in promoting consumerism and women's role as consumer for the family have been portrayed by some historians of domestic labour as a setback for

women. Matthews sees the culture of consumption as destroying the craft traditions of housewifery, denigrating the housewife's skill and expertise and devaluing age and experience.¹⁶ It also helped to erode the respect and status accorded the home. Strasser and Hayden have less respect for traditional housewifery but suggest that capitalism was no less oppressive a master as the patriarchy which preceded it.¹⁷ While the critique of consumerism holds much truth -- and applies to men's work as well as women's -- it fails to explain why women responded favourably to consumerism.¹⁸ This is primarily because the critique ignores the benefits of consumerism, and does not distinguish between the products sold and the method used to sell them.

While the long term social costs of the culture of consumption cannot be ignored, Cowan and others have pointed out that it offered women products which saved them from endless hours of drudgery and enslavement to the home.¹⁹ And it allowed women to cope with the tremendous economic and social changes which altered the role of women in the home. With the traditional skills of domesticity came, besides a certain dubious authority over the private realm, much hard labour, monotony and exclusion from the public sphere. Romanticization of the traditional home also obscures its exclusively middle class nature. Consumerism may have meant a decline in status for the middle class housewife, but the class diffusion of domestic technology

meant an improvement for the lower income woman.²⁰

The advertising industry consisted of copywriters, researchers, space buyers and other consultants, working either freelance, as part of an advertising agency, or directly for a manufacturer or retailer.²¹ The Canadian advertising industry was heavily influenced by American firms, in philosophy and practice,²² due to the general trend toward Americanization in the Canadian economy.²³ Although Canadian advertisers and consumers rebelled against the American presence, one industry observer noted "the queer intangible nationalism of Canada that copies United States advertising yet fights it"²⁴ and that had few real ties with British advertising. Canadian advertising acted to modify the American manufacturers' message for the Canadian audience rather than develop its own approach.²⁵

In the early days many ads appearing in Canadian magazines were imported unchanged from American parent companies. While advertising for Canadian made products was developed in Canada, the advertising industry was heavily influenced by the American example. Also by the 1930s many of the small Canadian companies had been eaten up by large American corporations in the growing trend toward economic concentration. While in the early days branch plant and U.S. companies simply imported their advertising copy directly from the parent company, by the 1930s many had switched to a Canadian advertising agency.²⁶ This, Canadian

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Micred

ad men assured them, would give their copy a note of intimate acquaintance with the tone of Canadian life²⁷ and avoid consumer resentment of the American invasion into Canadian commerce.²⁸

Women's role in the advertising industry was a reflection of the advertiser's need to direct appeals at women, which came with the early 20th century realization that women did most of the family purchasing. The emerging 'Mrs. Consumer' left an obvious role for educated professional women to play in advising industry and their advertisers on what women wanted and how best to appeal to them; and in turn of educating women on the benefits of industry and advertising. Here advertising women's links with women's clubs, women's groups and the home economics profession -- all active in consumer advocacy and sometimes quite critical of advertising -- were indispensable. Educated middle class advertising women came to the profession from home economics, stenography, newspaper work, teaching and retailing.²⁹ However, it was women's domestic experience and expertise which gave them their primary qualification for writing advertisements for domestic products.³⁰ Although advertising women did nothing to alter the image of domestic technology as a male creation with woman as the passive recipient, nor to attack the sexual division of labour which kept women in the home, it would appear that they were able to add a gender perspective to the advertising message.

Relatively little is known about these advertising women. Authorship of advertisements is never revealed, so that it is impossible to tell which ads were written by women. We do know that there were a great many women working in the industry, mostly at the lower levels, and that their influence was grudgingly acknowledged by male advertisers. In the electrical industry, especially in its engineering aspects, such as generation, transmission and distribution, where women were largely excluded, gender issues were secondary to class in terms of promoting the social benefits of electricity consumption. Sexual equality was thought to follow automatically from class equality and little attention was given it beyond this. In the advertising industry, however, there was a fully developed gender analysis, and it was more prevalent in advertisements for specific appliances which were directed at women, than in 'lifestyle' advertisements directed at both sexes. One can surmise that this analysis came from women in the industry given their ties with women's groups and feminist reform.

This chapter will analyze national advertising in Canadian women's magazines, primarily Chatelaine, Maclean's (women's pages) and Canadian Home Journal,³¹ for the period 1920-1939, and a promotional flyer called the Hydro Lamp, published by the HEPC, 1924-1926. The latter publication was sent free of charge to domestic hydro customers and

served as a public relations vehicle for the Commission as well as a promotional device to encourage greater consumption of electricity.³²

The Lamp serves as an interesting comparison with national advertising in women's magazines, as it appealed to a wider socio-economic group, encompassing moderate to lower income groups. National advertising in major magazines, on the other hand, appealed to a consciously middle class audience. This middle class appeal reflects the aspirations more than the actual socio-economic status of the audience. As a form of flattery, magazines appealed to an ideal above the known socio-economic status of its audience.³³ H.V. Tyrell of Maclean's Publishing Company defined a national publication as one with national circulation, edited to be of equal interest to readers in the Maritime provinces, the Central provinces, the prairie provinces, and British Columbia.³⁴ Such periodicals developed "national interest and sympathy"³⁵ but they also created the impression that a product was sold everywhere, could compete with any other product, and therefore must be of the highest quality, an impression which could not be achieved through local advertising.³⁶ National magazines reached "the leadership families in every community who themselves are the best buyers and whose buying example to a very large extent establishes the buying habits of their communities."³⁷

While national advertising presented a middle class image, it sought to take that message to segments of the

working class as well, increasingly so throughout the period. By the 1920s, the advertising industry had discovered a mass audience, learning that lower income groups had disposable income.³⁸ During the 1920s and 1930s the number and circulation of magazines increased many-fold, indicating a much wider readership than had been the case earlier. Maclean's had a circulation of 71,689 in 1920; by 1934 its circulation had risen to 212,370. Chatelaine, one of several Canadian women's magazines, was established in 1928 with an initial circulation of 57,026 and by 1934 sold 217,746 copies.³⁹ Everywoman's World (1920 circulation 102,516), another Canadian women's magazine which published from 1913 to 1921, and the Canadian Home Journal (whose circulation rose from 46,945 in 1920 to 212,116 in 1934)⁴⁰ rivalled Chatelaine for many years. Many Canadians also read American publications such as Ladies Home Journal, Good Housekeeping, Saturday Evening Post, etc., whose circulation was also rising dramatically.⁴¹

Tyrell pointed out that Canadian circulation in proportion to population was nearly as high as that in the United States.⁴² The English language magazines in Canada had a total circulation in 1923 of 325,000 copies per issue, or better than one magazine to every fourth English-speaking family right across the Dominion.⁴³ As circulations increased throughout the interwar period, more and more Canadians of working class background were sharing in this

'middle class' medium. National women's magazines are the major medium for studying women, because they appeal directly to women, and not a mixed audience. National advertising, despite its class bias, is important because it stresses the ideological/social message more than does local advertising.

As well as discovering a mass audience in which women did most of the family purchasing, advertisers came to believe that emotional appeals often worked better than rational ones.⁴⁴ The rational appeal predominant in early twentieth century advertising did not disappear but it was accompanied by appeals which exploited guilt, fear, pride, status-consciousness, ambition and so on.⁴⁵ The emotional appeal was particularly prevalent in women's fashions, cosmetics and personal items, and much less evident in household appliances. Women were made to feel ashamed of themselves if they did not use Listerine to fight dreaded halitosis, and wash their underwear in Lux to ward off body odour. The fear of losing a husband, or worse still, never capturing one, as well as fears concerning infant mortality and illness, were exploited in an attempt to sell products.⁴⁶ Ads directed at men appealed to ambition by promising success to those who used their products.

The shift to emotional appeals led to a need to understand the consumer psyche and thus to extensive market research which ranged from psychologists' hypotheses on unconscious human desires, feedback from dealers and

salesmen who had direct experience with customers, and formal market research such as consumer surveys and ad pre-testing. 47

By the 1930s advertisements for major appliances such as ranges and refrigerators were directed at men as well as women. The message appears to have shifted as a result away from the labour saving theme to home enhancement. The realization that the woman spent "such an overwhelming proportion of the family income that business must not merely cater to her as the purchasing agent, but as the chief customer"⁴⁸ had initially been met with general approval in the industry.⁴⁹ Given the obvious fact of female financial dependence within the patriarchal family, advertisers were slow in coming to the realization that husbands had considerable influence on buying decisions.⁵⁰ When this did happen the shift in appeal toward the husband as buyer of appliances affected the message somewhat. The advertiser's reluctance to give up "Mrs. Consumer" can be explained in part by the insistence of women advertisers and home economists that the homemaker held, or should hold, financial control within the family.

Advertising for Specific Appliances

Advertisements for specific appliances emphasized the more practical benefits of domestic technologies, as well as addressing social questions of class and sexual inequality.

Advertisements for smaller appliances were more likely to be directed primarily at women, while ads for the larger appliances, especially by the 1930s, were directed at men and women.

Fisher's contention that women were bullied through the ads into accepting a subservient and confining role as wife and mother, and adopting higher domestic standards designed to meet the needs of men and children while stifling their own,⁵¹ tells only half the story, and thus distorts the picture.

Although ads assumed the prevailing sexual division of labour, they also appealed to women's interests, promising improved standards of health, cleanliness and nutrition for themselves as much as for their families, as well as improved working conditions and shorter hours for the housewife. While Cowan condemns the advertiser for promoting higher standards because they created more work,⁵² they also meant better living for all, and there is no evidence they were not welcomed by women as well as men. The image of wife and mother was not a self-sacrificing and stultifying one. It offered women a place of greater equality within the family, transformed from slave to companion. This was particularly evident in the Hydro Lamp which did not assume most women had servants, and presented the benefits of domestic technology as being enjoyed directly by the housewife.

Neither is there substantial evidence of bullying women

into staying at home in order to fulfill their role as consumers, as both Fisher and Matthews suggest.⁵³ Leisure activities were encouraged both in and out of the home, and in the 1920s, there are even a few tentative suggestions of careers for women.⁵⁴

When addressing social issues, advertising stressed technology as a means of alleviating class and sexual inequality, although class equality was considered paramount. Redistribution of privileges, resources or responsibilities was not considered, as can be seen in the assumption of male authorship of technology which cast women and to a lesser extent, workers, in the passive, supporting role. Advertisers addressed gender questions by attacking the patriarchal devaluation of women's labour. They stressed the justice of making women's workplaces as efficient, modern and labour saving as their husbands', implying that women's work had a value equal to men's. Spending the family's resources on devices which would ensure this equality and recognizing woman as the family's financial manager meant a redistribution of family income from husband to wife.

A thematic approach to advertising for electrical appliances will be used, as well as a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach. Because several appeals were often used together in the same ad, and because ads were directed sometimes at women, sometimes at men and sometimes

at both, they defy any clear cut classification system. Figure 1 indicates the number of ads appearing for the various appliance groups -- range, refrigerator, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, and small appliances, over the twenty year period.

Numerous full page, high profile advertisements for washing machines appeared in 1920, 1921 and to a lesser extent 1923 and 1924; no ads appeared, however, from 1925 to 1928 and only a few very small ads appeared in the early 1930s. The decline in advertising for washing machines may indicate they were selling well and did not need to be promoted. The Ontario Hydro market saturation figures confirm strong demand.⁵⁵ The greatest advertising push seemed to surround new products with an abundance of ads for electric stoves and refrigerators in the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, and a scarcity of ads for the electric iron which enjoyed nearly total market saturation. The washing machine market was also highly competitive in the 1920s with many manufacturers,⁵⁶ some working on slim margins, who could ill afford large advertising expenditures. And, the washing machine appealed to a lower income group than other large appliances such as ranges and refrigerators and was often sold door to door, in part because of the need to demonstrate.⁵⁷ Like washing machines, vacuum cleaners were advertised more frequently in the early 1920s, declining throughout the period, and were often sold door to door.

Figure 1: Number of Appliance Advertisements Appearing in
Chatelaine and Macleans

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The refrigerator was a late arrival. Advertisements were infrequent until the late 1920s and increased throughout the period, 1926-1939. There was only a slight decline in advertising for refrigerators during the Depression years. Ranges displayed a similar pattern.

While in the early period there were numerous ads for individual appliances, some manufactured by Canadian companies, by the late 1930s many of the ads were placed by General Electric and Westinghouse, advertising a range of appliances within an electric lifestyle theme. Washing machines, vacuum cleaners and small appliances were often grouped together. By 1935 both Moffat and Westinghouse had combined refrigerator and range advertisements, promoting the modern kitchen. This trend reflects a shift toward larger, American based companies using 'lifestyle' advertising.

The Canadian manufacturer, Jack Frost Co. of Toronto, advertised the only refrigerator in the period 1920-1925. These ads disappeared in 1926, when larger manufacturers entered the market. Frigidaire, Westinghouse and Canadian General Electric, all branch plants of American manufacturing companies, dominated the picture by the early 1930s, although Moffat (Toronto) and Beach (Ottawa) also had a strong presence. In 1926-1928 several smaller Canadian manufacturers of refrigerators, such as SMP and Brantford, emerged only to disappear later. The early ads for ranges

were also dominated by a Canadian company, Moffat, which pioneered in range development.⁵⁸ While Moffat, along with two other Canadian companies, McClary and Findlay,⁵⁹ kept a strong presence in advertising throughout, Westinghouse and GEC dominated the market.

As the technology became increasingly streamlined, the numerous types and brands of washing machine also gave way by the 1930s to a standard type. The Coffield (Gyrator) Electric washer, one of the few companies which also manufactured washing machines equipped with gas motors, the Cataract 1900 Electric Washer and the EASY Vacuum Cup Washer were no longer to be found. By the end of the 1930s only electrically powered machines, usually of the gyrator type with wringer attachment, were being advertised. Those operated with vacuum cups and various other arrangements, the hand operated, water powered and gas powered machines, had been mostly displaced.

The refrigerator was considerably improved throughout the period. The early machines consisted of a machine (or motor) which could be fitted onto an icebox, although self-contained units were available.⁶⁰ Sometimes the refrigerating unit was installed in the basement, as these early units were quite noisy. The new refrigerator offered reduced operating costs, better insulation, quieter operation and more features including freezer units, door shelves, crispers, interior lights and two-toned enamelled exteriors. At the same time its cost fell. Over the years

units became more streamlined and compact, dispensing with legs, using the space close to the floor, and moving the motor from the top of the unit to the bottom, despite a loss of efficiency. These changes made the units smaller but necessitated more bending and stooping. Similarly, the range was streamlined by using space at the floor and dispensing with earlier features such as warming ovens, separate broil pan, slow cooker and utility drawers.⁶¹

The effect of the Depression on advertising for appliances is less than one would expect; presumably those with jobs and money during the Depression were taking advantage of the falling prices for appliances. The 1930s did see a greater home centredness in advertising, consistent with the prevailing prejudice against women's employment in these years and the escapist ethos of the Depression.⁶² It may also be a reflection of the lower income market increasingly being appealed to. Market analysts believed that lower socio-economic status was associated with greater home centredness.⁶³ In addition it appears that the 1930s "lifestyle" ads for expensive appliances appealed more to men than women. By contrast, the 1920s advertising strategy was more woman centred, stressing the labour saving qualities of individual appliances.

The practical benefits of domestic appliances were presented as the enhancement of home comfort and convenience

for all. Appliances were promoted as a solution to the servant problem and an aid to entertaining. They also offered benefits in term of economy, status and novelty, health, nutrition and cleanliness. Advertisers also appealed to men by associating appliances with modernity and science.

Appliances were also presented as a means of liberating women from drudgery. While the two goals, home enhancement and women's liberation, were not in all cases compatible, they were often mixed together. Especially when appealing to men, advertisers found it necessary to stress economy and results as well as the labour-saving capacity of appliances, because the devalued and unpaid nature of housework made labour-saving seem a luxury, an impediment when selling to lower income groups. Yet at the same time, advertisers attempted to educate both men and women to elevate the status of housework.⁶⁴ Although the differences are slight, it does appear that the less costly items such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners and small appliances were more likely to appeal to women's interests in saving labour, than electric ranges and refrigerators.

Often ads which promised to improve the housewife's working conditions, simultaneously promised economic benefits for the whole household. One of the advertising appeals used in the interwar period, especially the 1920s, was the appliance as replacement for domestic servants' or laundresses' labour. Advertisers noted that machines never

got cross or rebellious or asked for a raise, but worked quietly and efficiently whenever they were wanted. The pleasures, or at least the advantages, of keeping house without a maid were more often addressed in the Lamp than in national advertising. The Hydro Lamp presented keeping a maid as synonymous with in-house tyranny. In Mrs. Hy Brow's Diary, a regular feature of the Lamp, Mrs. Hy Brow assesses the departure of Katy, her former maid.

Not just her wages, its the little things I never thought of that count most. For instance I was always trying to live up to Katy's idea of how an aristocratic household like ours should be run... I never dared serve the simple kind of meals Hy and I prefer... And so it went -- but now I have a modern servant in my home .. Since the rest of the family gave me those Hydro helps I'm the one who decides what we do in our home. How I love this freedom and independence. Electricity is a servant that's not a master, too.⁶⁵

This none-too-realistic view of domestic servants probably appealed more to those who could not afford their services than to those who could. None-the-less the idea that servants belonged to the past was promoted, particularly in the Hydro Lamp which was published in the 1920s by Ontario Hydro, a public utility especially attuned to using electricity as a leveller of class distinctions.

There were economic benefits as well. The washing machine, for example, could be cheaper in the long run than paying for outside help. Ads often referred to saving the cost of a washerwoman or the expense of sending the laundry out.

Hoover, in several of its ads, appealed to husbands to apply the same principles of efficiency to the home as to the office in order to effect economies as much as to relieve the housewife's labour:

In particular he should have a home labour saver that eliminates the injurious drudgery of sweeping and dusting and one that repeatedly pays its cost, as does the Hoover. For this efficient cleaner ends carpet cleaning expense, increases the efficiency of help and effects other tangible savings. Added life to floor coverings .. Hoover cleaned homes are the standard for cleanliness and healthfulness, so let your next investment be a Hoover.⁶⁶

Prospective Hoover owners were assured that their investment would prolong the life of rugs and save them money.⁶⁷

The economy appeal was used extensively in the mid to late 1930s when the refrigerator industry attempted to reach a lower income market. Westinghouse claimed that the householder could save \$5-7 per month on food bills,⁶⁸ while General Electric went one step further and claimed a \$10 per month food saving with the purchase of its electric refrigerator.⁶⁹ Canadian General Electric had a home economist named Frances Thompson calculate the savings for one of its advertisements.⁷⁰ Several families with old fashioned refrigeration were asked to keep a record of food spoilage for one month. Each family had lost over a quart of milk and a little cream which amounted to 70 - 85 cents per month or \$10/year.⁷¹ The savings on meat were assessed at \$36 per year⁷² assuming that unused bones and 'soup ingredients' were thrown away unused, that meat drippings

were unusable after two or three days with more expensive cooking fats being substituted, and that leftover roasts could not be saved for croquettes and casseroles unless refrigerated electrically.⁷³ The improved buying habits facilitated by refrigeration, that is, quantity purchases and taking advantage of bargains, were alleged to save \$48 per year.⁷⁴ All told, \$124 per year was saved, making the refrigerator a wise investment which would pay for itself in several years.⁷⁵

In addition to linking labour-saving benefits with economic benefits, ads combined the saving of women's labour with the enhancement of a middle class lifestyle in the home. Table top appliances -- grills, toasters, coffee percolators, etc. -- were promoted as entertaining helps for the servantless home, allowing the cook to attend the table and prepare food at the same time. In 1925 Hotpoint, a product of Canadian General Electric, began to call their appliances "servants for the home".⁷⁶ "I call them my servants though I suppose there never was any servant who gave me so little cause for complaint" remarked the housewife⁷⁷ in a 1925 Hotpoint advertisement featuring the three heat grill. Advertisers appealed to a middle class ideal of hospitality:

For the after-theatre snack -- when friends drop by of an evening -- when your fancy turns to a tasty tidbit and a cup of fragrant coffee -- the Hotpoint Electric Percolator and grill prove indispensable servants, ever ready to do your bidding.⁷⁸

The image probably appealed to the middle class housewife longing for a return to servant-prepared and served meals, meals at which she could play the role of hostess and/or matriarch, unencumbered by the labour of preparation, or those aspiring to the ideal. Of course, electric servants did not replace human ones, and table-top appliances did not obliterate the running back and forth from ice-box/refrigerator to cupboard to pantry to stove, etc. The labour-intensive job of meal preparation, table setting and serving was not conducive to mechanization. Consumers may have found such advertising appealing but it did not induce them to buy. As Ontario Hydro's saturation figures indicate, the useful iron and toaster were much more popular than the grill, waffle iron or percolator.⁷⁹ The electric industry knew that this glamorous use of their product was rare and that most purchasers of table-top appliances were students, roomers and apartment house dwellers who lacked full cooking facilities.⁸⁰

Several advertisements were quite explicit in asserting that the refrigerator made entertaining simpler. "No longer need your party menus cause you worry and doubt. No longer need you be at a loss for an unusual salad and a new dessert,"⁸¹ stated one. The women's pages of these magazines accommodated this advertising theme by publishing articles and recipes on frozen desserts and salads, and many of the manufacturers offered recipe books.

A 1937 Canadian General Electric advertisement featured

captions from a woman's diary. All in one week, this General Electric Refrigerator owner gave a dinner party to her husbands' boss and his wife; had in-laws in for cold buffet supper; had girls in for an afternoon of bridge and sandwiches prepared in advance; entertained unexpected neighbours with quick refrigerator snacks; and entertained 14 children at a birthday party planned for 8.⁸² Despite all this entertaining, 'super-Mom-Wife' managed to prepare husbands' dinner on the last day of this marathon week from perfectly fresh odds and ends, kept in the refrigerator. The advantages of preparing materials in advance -- from baby's bottles for the busy day coming, to sandwiches and cookies for entertaining, and even full meals -- were stressed: this woman exclaimed that she was "not a bit tired".⁸³

Advertisements for small appliances seemed to be clustered around December and June due to their apparent popularity as Christmas and wedding gifts. As many "labour-saving" appliances were bought as gifts, they may have been coveted as much for the status value and novelty they brought into the home as for their tendency to save labour. One ad recommended Hotpoint appliances as wedding gifts because they embodied "the suggestion of snappy up-to-date-ness and utility".⁸⁴

Appliances not only improved entertaining but made possible an improved family life. One 1/4 page

advertisement for a 3-heat grill, manufactured by Canadian Beauty Electrical Appliances in Renfrew, presented a picture of ease and refinement in the preparation of cosy family meals:

Down in the morning -- turn on the current and the grill with its large 8" cooking surface will have the eggs frying on top while the bacon is sizzling below. It has three degrees of heat. By the time the eggs and bacon are ready the electric toaster (which toasts two slices of bread at once), will have the toast just nicely browned and the electrically cooked breakfast has put the family in good humour for the day.⁸⁵

Likewise, Kelvinator refrigerator ads displayed homey pictures of elderly men snacking on cold milk and a sandwich, and boys 'raiding' the refrigerator (See Figure 2).⁸⁶ The prospect of improved nutritional and dietary standards was also promoted as a selling feature of the refrigerator.

... you will enjoy providing tempting menus easily prepared for winter entertaining and all the while your G-E Refrigerator is safe-guarding the health of the entire household.⁸⁷

An ad for the electric range portrayed it as a central feature in family happiness:

For years the womanhood of Canada struggled along with a "plaguey" wood stove, doing their best to feed hungry mouths. Cooking, then, was a task, and a heavy one too. Other fuels came but they only served to lighten her drudgery but a little. Those were the days when she was too tired to hum a lullaby.⁸⁸

The technological solution to the hated spring cleaning ritual also promised benefits for husband and children, as well as the housewife who did most of the work. In one

Figure 2: Advertisement, Maclean's, July 1, 1926, p.72.

*Most people who are really
convinced of the Kelvinator's
value believe that anything said
is more than justified, and as
a result they are Kelvinators. Use
the name as much as possible.*

In choosing the particular system that is to bring the recognized advantages of electric refrigeration to your home, this is to be remembered: Kelvinator is the oldest domestic electric refrigeration. Its performance, since 1914, in thousands of homes, is a guarantee of its performance in your home.

*There is a Kelvinator
in our home, too.*

KELVINATOR OF CANADA, LIMITED
1161 DUNDAS STREET EAST, TORONTO, ONTARIO

Kelvinator

The Oldest Domestic Electric Refrigeration

*"Better-
Always-
Better"*

issue of the Hydro Lamp which heralded the end of spring cleaning madness, Mrs. Hart tells her neighbour how the new vacuum cleaner eliminated the need to turn the house inside out at spring cleaning time -- carrying rugs outside for beating, lifting and moving furniture, etc.⁸⁹ While the vacuum cleaner saved the housewife's labour, it also had obvious advantages for the whole family. These were not forgotten in the advertising message. Figure 3 illustrates the obvious convenience of the vacuum cleaner vis a vis spring cleaning.

In the early 1930s when the large electrical manufacturers began advertising a full range of electrical appliances and promoting the modern electric home, the 'happy home' theme was reinforced. The perspective on the home was a male perspective although benefits to the wife were enumerated. While women were confined to the home as it became increasingly important, they also improved their position within it, moving from household drudge to valued companion.

Interest in the ideal home was strong in the 1930s.⁹⁰ Magazine advice literature and advertising emphasized built in cupboards, 'efficient' arrangements of principal work areas such as sink, refrigerator and stove, proper lighting and ventilation and interior decoration. Chatelaine sponsored a contest for the best kitchen renovation project in 1936, publishing several of the winners' plans.⁹¹

figure 3: The Hydro Lamp, May 1924, May 1925.

The HYDRO LAMP

Published Monthly by The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario

VOL. 2 MAY, 1924 No. 7

Circulation this Issue 350,000

The HYDRO LAMP

Published Monthly by The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario

VOL. 3 MAY, 1925 No. 7

Circulation this Issue 250,000

Grandma lives the olden days.
 But Grandma likes the modern ways
 For daughter does with maid and son.
 But there was more than in them.

The modernization theme was exploited by manufacturers in conjunction with the 1937 government Home Improvement Loan Program which, as Hobbs and Pierson have noted, was instituted to meet male needs as workers and property owners.⁹² Under the program, low interest loans were made available to homeowners to be used in permanent household improvements. Electric appliances were not included but the encouragement of kitchen redesign clearly left room for considering the move to electric range and/or refrigerator. Moffat and GE offered readers a free booklet on kitchen modernization⁹³ and pictures of fully modernized kitchens always accompanied ads for ranges and refrigerators.

In 1936 General Electric invited readers to "Come into the General Electric Home". In this April 1936 advertisement (See Figure 4) featuring a modern fully equipped kitchen with electric appliances and built in cupboards, "Work Becomes Play"⁹⁴ promised CGE:

What a joy to prepare delicious meals -- to concoct new and tempting dishes -- in this magical GE Kitchen. On every hand are built-in electrical servants. You simply snap switches, and presto! -- the work is done. Dinner is no problem at all, even when you are out for the afternoon. In your absence, the GE Hotpoint Range will cook the next meal automatically and to the King's taste. You need never worry about perishable foods. They are kept pure and wholesome in the G-E Refrigerator ... Even dishwashing is done electrically with the marvellous G-E Dish-washer .. And every day, your General Electric Telechron Clock reminds you of new golden hours of leisure.⁹⁵

Even the basement was transformed, becoming children's

Figure 4: Advertisement, Maclean's, April 1, 1936.

Come into the
GENERAL ELECTRIC HOME

Work becomes Play in the
GENERAL ELECTRIC KITCHEN

Its trim, business-like beauty will thrill you

WHAT A JOY to prepare delicious meals—to concoct new and tempting dishes—in this magical General Electric Kitchen. On every hand are built-in electrical servants. You simply snap switches, and presto!—the work is done.

Dinner is no problem at all, even when you are out for the afternoon. In your absence, the G-E Hotpoint Range will cook the next meal automatically, and to the King's taste.

You need never worry about perishable foods. They are kept pure and wholesome in the General Electric Refrigerator. . . . Even dishwashing is done electrically with the marvellous G-E Dishwasher And every day, your

General Electric Telechron Clock reminds you of new golden hours of leisure.

Through the Kitchen Planning Division of the G-E Home Bureau, you can obtain suggestions on transforming your kitchen—without charge or obligation. All G-E appliances are designed to harmonize with one another, thus enabling you to add units from time to time and achieve a General Electric Kitchen with a beautiful modern ensemble.

Write today for your free copy of the "General Electric Home"—the illustrated booklet which explains how you can modernize every room in your home.

CANADIAN
GENERAL ELECTRIC
 COMPANY LIMITED

[General Electric Products include Everything Electrical for the Home. Convenient terms available through G-E dealers.]

Canadian General Electric Co. Limited
 212 King St. West, TORONTO

Please send me, without obligation, free copies of the illustrated booklets "The General Electric Home" and "The New Art of Living."

Name

Street Address

Town or City

REM 10555M

playroom by day and adults' recreation room by night, with the completely enclosed General Electric oil furnace and General Electric air conditioning equipment.⁹⁶ The laundryroom of the General Electric home was also transformed. Blue Mondays were unknown in this "bright well-equipped laundry", where, at the flip of a switch, "General Electric Servants go to work, relieving you of age old drudgery and giving you glorious new freedom."⁹⁷ In other rooms of this revolutionary new home a generous number of electric outlets provided abundant light and facilitated the use of modern electrical servants.⁹⁸

Westinghouse emphasized great scientific genius being harnessed to home needs. In 1938 the company adopted the slogan "Better Living and Money Ahead" for its appliance advertisements. Illustrations highlighted the new role for women as companions freed from drudgery. (See Figure 5) They featured a family seated in a breakfast nook -- the wife included -- thanks to 'table top' appliances. The Westinghouse range "offering dependable carefree cookery for the modern home"⁹⁹ was illustrated with a housewife dressed to go out with "Junior" in tow. In another visualization of this happy electric home, mother and son had their heads poked into the Westinghouse dual-automatic refrigerator, which "provides complete economical food protection".¹⁰⁰ Elsewhere mother operated her Westinghouse washer, while father adjusted the fine tuning on the Westinghouse radio.

Figure 5: Advertisement, "Better Living and Money Ahead",
Maclean's, May 15, 1938, p. 37.

BETTER LIVING

...and Money Ahead

KIND anticipation of a modernly equipped home too often leads to some hasty purchase before the buyer realizes that no guarantee of satisfaction and value is half so important as the name of the manufacturer.

To-day, however, anyone can buy an electrical appliance with undeniable security, because the reputation and statistics of Westinghouse are rooted in the experience of millions of satisfied Westinghouse customers in every corner of the globe.

For Better Living and Money Ahead, insist upon securing only appliances made by a manufacturer who will remain permanently in business—take no chances on unknown makes! You will take pride in knowing your home is Westinghouse equipped. Your Westinghouse Dealer will gladly afford you the economy and advantages of convenient purchase.

(left) The Westinghouse Dual Automatic Range—one of six smart models which provide dependable, expert cooking for the modern home.

Complete and more economical food protection in the Westinghouse Dual automatic Refrigerator—seven handsome new models designed and priced to meet every family's requirements.

Deluxe member of the Westinghouse selection of eight Cushioned Action Washers—a model for every buyer—a price for every purse.

Table-top cookery embraces Coffee-Makers, Percolators, Toasters, Waffle Iron, Sandwich Grill and new Automatic Roaster.

This 12-tube All-wave Superheterodyne is one of twenty advanced Westinghouse Radios, AC and Battery types.

CANADIAN WESTINGHOUSE CO., LIMITED
HAMILTON, ONTARIO
Branches in all Principal Cities

Westinghouse

The name that means everything in electricity

WESTINGHOUSE HOME APPLIANCES ARE NOW ON DISPLAY BY LEADING ELECTRICAL DEALERS IN ALL PARTS OF CANADA

RADIO • RANGES • REFRIGERATORS • WASHERS • APPLIANCES • LAMPS • RADIOTRONS

Clearly no tampering with the sexual division of labour in this electric utopia!

The 1930s shift to the dream home was accompanied by a tendency to promote appliances for their beauty as well as their utility. Although it was more pronounced in ads for ranges and refrigerators, even small appliances were offered in colours to match one's kitchen decor. The theme of liberating the kitchen from the dull drab grey made necessary by the un-clean fuels of pre-electric days took on a strident quality during the 1930s and may be a reflection of Depression escapism. And there was less emphasis on labour-saving benefits to women vis a vis enhancement of the home environment for all family members. The home enhancement theme may reflect a conscious shift in advertising appeal to husband and wife, rather than just "Mrs. Consumer". The home-centredness of the Depression era probably served to entrench women in their homemaking role. For example, both leisure and the love of beauty are touched upon in this ad:

EXIT THE DRUDGE ... ENTER THE FAIRY BEAUTIFUL
 With more leisure to do the things she loves best, the modern woman is paying much attention to the surroundings of her kitchen; making them more colourful, more cheery and bright. Drudgery has been banished, the Fairy Beautiful is having her way.
 Moffat's new ranges are now built to fit into the new scheme of things. They have beauty of line and colour, in addition to their traditional qualities of construction, efficiency and economy.
 Moffat ranges were the first in Canada to be Electra Porcelain Enamelled in such colours as

Nile Blue, French Grey, Oriental Green, Yellow, Buff, and Tyrian Rose.¹⁰¹

The appeal of status, beauty and modernity in many range ads may indicate that range purchasers were a higher income group than purchasers of less expensive electrical appliances. The price of electric ranges, even by the mid 1930s, was quite prohibitive -- roughly twice that of a gas range, and the fuel could also be more expensive, depending on local rates. By comparison, the Hydro Lamp in the 1920s stressed time and labour saving features of the range.¹⁰² Figure 6 illustrated the perceived difference between using modern and old fashioned fuel in the kitchen as conveyed by the Lamp. In their early advertisements for electric ranges, Moffat stressed freedom from dirt, mess, smell and explosions; the advantages of even heat; the elimination of smoke, fumes, blackened pots and the carrying of coal and ashes.¹⁰³ As well, Moffat stressed the advantages of electricity as a fuel and its relative cheapness in Canada.¹⁰⁴

Refrigerators also became a thing of beauty. In 1928 Frigidaire presented, in an unusual two-page advertisement, the Frigidaire of "Surpassing Beauty with Tu-Tone Porcelain Cabinet", offering a "rare combination of style and beauty hitherto undreamt of in electric refrigerators".¹⁰⁵

For most consumers, practical matters such as convenience, cleanliness, labour-saving, and regularity in performance would probably take precedence over appearance;

Figure 6: The Hydro Lamp, August 1924, April 1925.

The HYDRO LAMP

Published Monthly by The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario

VOL. 2

AUGUST, 1924

No. 10

Circulation this Issue 250,000

The HYDRO LAMP

Published Monthly by The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario

VOL. 3

APRIL, 1925

No. 6

Circulation this Issue 250,000

He knows a treat's awaiting him
Every single day
For Mother's meals are always good
Cooked the Hydro way

yet manufacturers promoted an aesthetic ideal for the kitchen, which assumed women's traditional role. Critics claimed that the beauty theme was little more than a smokescreen -- a way to avoid offering the lower prices promised of mass production,¹⁰⁶ but few criticized the portrayal of the ideal woman as housewife.

Another of the benefits of technology to be enjoyed by all in the family was improved health. Vacuum cleaner manufacturers promised quick and easy extraction of the 'germ-laden dirt and dust' that was allegedly a constant danger to the family's health.¹⁰⁷ Innocent children were enlisted in the campaign against dirt:

The indoor playground of your children are the rugs. There, at home, under watchful eyes, your babies seem safe, but are they? In the depths of your rugs hides danger. For, unless regularly beaten out, the street dirt which shoes track in find a haven there. Germs breed in it. Little fingers, poking playfully into those unsanitary depths, are contaminated. Mysterious illnesses often result.¹⁰⁸

Advertisers often found it necessary to undermine the housewife's faith in older methods in order to reinforce the need for their own product:

Dusty sweeping is also risky. It scatters germs into the air that all must breath. It causes rugs to appear clean and safe when only the surface dirt has been disturbed. Especially for your children's sake, thoroughly clean your rugs at least weekly. Do it dustlessly, easily, rapidly, with the Hoover.¹⁰⁹

An all-out advertising blitz for the health benefits of

vacuum cleaners seems to have been confined to a few years in the early 1920s when Depression conditions intensified competition. By 1927, the message had shifted back to relief from drudgery.¹¹⁰

The refrigerator also lent itself to the health theme. One ad emphasized the benefits of refrigeration for young children, by making this commonsense observation:

Of what avail are healthy cows, sanitary creameries and pasteurization to protect the purity of baby's milk, if after delivery to the home it is placed in a refrigerator cooled by damp, germ-laden melting ice.¹¹¹

Recognition of the fact that milk has the capacity to promote the growth of bacteria, and to carry disease causing germs, led to the pasteurization of milk. These health considerations, coupled with a general concern over infant mortality and preventive medicine,¹¹² made electric refrigeration attractive. This Frigidaire ad of 1929 offered mothers relief from the age-old fears associated with infant illness.¹¹³ The illustration of a man handing a young child a glass of milk from the refrigerator while its mother looked on, visually demonstrates the contention that knowledge and control over disease was a product of male dominated science from which women were excluded. (See Figure 7)

The need to appeal to husbands as well as wives and the general devaluation of women's labour sometimes led to an exaggeration of higher standards for the family vis a vis

Figure 7: Advertisement, "First Aid to Mothers in
Safeguarding Baby's Health", Maclean's,
July 1, 1929, p. 68.

First aid to mothers in safeguarding baby's health

Frigidaire reduces risks that come with sultry days

"Watch baby's health in summer!" Down through the ages grandmothers passed this warning on to mothers. For with summer came the dangerous "critical period."

For years mothers faced warm weather with dread. The dangers that confronted their children in summer were mysterious dangers. They knew not what to guard against.

But how different it is today. There's nothing mysterious now about the risks that come with summer. It's simply that foods spoil more quickly and bacteria develop more rapidly. And to meet these risks, health authorities everywhere pre-

The Refrigerator
Cold Control
A development of Frigidaire and General Motors engineers.

scribe better refrigeration.

You can provide this better refrigeration with Frigidaire . . . the automatic refrigerator which is powerful enough to keep food at temperatures well below 50 degrees . . . always.

Power that gives a wide margin of safety

Frigidaire operates automatically. It has a wide range of surplus power . . . power that keeps foods fresh and wholesome . . . power that safeguards health day and night, summer and winter . . . unfailingly.

This surplus power means added safety . . . the difference between certainty and doubt . . . and as more than 750,000 Frigidaire users will tell you . . . a feeling

of security beyond all price. Call at the nearest Frigidaire display room and see the exclusive features of Frigidaire, including the new Cold Control . . . find out about the low prices and the liberal G.M.A.C. terms.

Safe and unsafe refrigeration explained in free book...write for it

We have prepared a new book that explains the dangers of inadequate refrigeration and tells how they may be avoided. It is illustrated with photographs taken through a microscope. Mail the coupon for a copy of this book . . . today. Frigidaire Corporation, Subsidiary of General Motors Corporation, Toronto, Ontario.

Frigidaire Corporation,
Marketing Tower, Toronto, Ont.

Please send me your book on healthful refrigeration, also the Frigidaire Recipe Book.

Name

Address

Phone

City

FRIGIDAIRE

The QUIET Automatic Refrigerator

women's convenience. For instance, the obvious advantages of electric over ice refrigeration were seldom used in advertising. Jack Frost made this rare appeal to labour-saving in 1920:

Kitchen refinements are gradually replacing the old drudgery-making, inefficient methods of housekeeping. Housewives the country over have wished for a refrigeration that would do away with the nuisance of leaky drip pans and clogged drain pipes -- of dirt tracked floors and the damp, germ-laden, fluctuating temperature of melting ice. The wish mothered a wonderful invention, and an even, dry, chill cold of electric refrigeration was perfected...114

Certainly an air of urgency and moral imperative could be attached to health, which the convenience argument could not muster. An automatic "ice-box" which required no maintenance apart from periodic defrosting was hardly a matter of life and death. The health pitch cited innocent children, rather than women, as beneficiaries of technology's benefits. The child appeal was always a more effective appeal.

There were limits to the maternal appeal. One Moffat advertisement entitled "A priceless possession" showed a woman holding a small infant while in another corner a Moffat range was illustrated. The text shows a clumsy, ineffective attempt to appeal to maternal sentiment:

A tiny cuddlesome bit of humanity...
soft, pink hands and toes that never stay still ... eyes that shine in happy contentment ... joyous mysterious gurgles of glee that only Mother can understand.

Is there, anywhere in the world, a possession so dear, so precious, so priceless? ... Of course, there's really no comparison, but (speaking of possessions) is there anything in the realm of household conveniences that can equal an up-to-date Moffat Electric Range?¹¹⁵

This Moffat ad is the only such attempt to commandeer women's maternal nature for the sale of electric ranges, and neither the ad nor the theme was repeated. Other range advertisements promised leisure time for golf or favourite pastimes, and stressed the even heat and flawless baking made possible by the Therm-o-matic Oven Heat Control, and porcelain enamelled finish for ease of cleaning.¹¹⁶

Ads also stressed that the housewife should provide a clean environment for the family, for health as well as aesthetic reasons. Cleanliness was used as a selling point in the advertising of washing machines in the interwar period. One 1900 Cataract Electric Washer ad revels in "sunny windows with crisp frilly curtains": "What a joy to see them always fresh and white!", the housewife and her maid are saying in their admiring glances toward the cheery kitchen window.¹¹⁷ The appearance of a maid in an advertisement for an electric appliances is quite rare, although it did occasionally occur in the early 1920s. Advertisers of the Connor Electric Washer (Ottawa) invited the housewife to "consider the luxury of having all the clean linen you want at a cost of a penny a week".¹¹⁸

The heightened standards of cleanliness that advertising promoted have been cited as a factor inhibiting

women's realization of the promised leisure from technology.¹¹⁹ Some have suggested that capitalism's ever expansionist need for millions of private family dwellings, all equipped with expensive and under utilized washing machines, dictated the demise of the commercial or cooperative laundry.¹²⁰ The literature seems to suggest that washing machines, in part through the extensive propaganda of electrical manufacturers, defeated the commercial laundry, thus further privatizing women's work. Yet the commercial laundry was clearly a luxury for the middle class. Full service, that is, clothes washed, dried and ironed, was prohibitive for the lower income buyers of washing machines. Most women buying washers were not replacing a superior commercial service for their own labour in the home but considerably lightening their labour by replacing the scrubboard with the electric washing machine. The labour-saving capacity of the washing machine is most clearly presented in the Hydro Lamp where it was presented as a woman's liberation from the scrubboard.

Appropriate to the utility and popularity of the washing machine, especially among lower income and rural groups, four of the Lamp's issues were devoted to electric washers.¹²¹ All dwelt on the backbreaking drudgery of the washtub, hand wringer, and hot heavy flatiron, and the toll which they took on women's youth, beauty, energy, strength and vitality. There was always a "Mrs. Hardway" and a "Mrs. Spritely" (See Figure 8) both the same age but one

Figure 8: The Hydro Lamp, September 1924.

Blue Monday

*This is
Mrs.
Hardway*

and

*This is
Mrs.
Spritely*

prematurely aged and worn from washtub drudgery, the other enjoying life to the fullest. An electric washer and ironer promised to liberate women for more pleasant tasks -- visiting friends and spending time with the children. In only one of the four issues was there mention of having extra help on laundry day. The Lamp assumed that most women did their own laundry, and emphasized the labour-saving aspects of the washing machine.

V. Cameron in an article for Marketing explained the commercial laundry's relative lack of success. "The housewife fears the use of acids, of fading, of loss, of contact with the germ-filled garments of others", and viewed laundries as haphazardly run institutions unable to handle fine things with requisite care.¹²² Yet initial fears that the washing machine would tear clothes were soon overcome.

As well, there were considerable advertising efforts put into promoting commercial laundries which failed. In 1928 and 1929 the Laundry Owners National Association of the United States and Canada sponsored a series of ads. Appearing in Maclean's and Canadian Home Journal, these ads informed Canadian women of the benefits of sending out one's wash, benefits which were similar to those enumerated by washing machine manufacturers. Women were informed that laundry washed clothes were actually cheaper than home washed, due to economies resulting from an ever increasing volume of business, and superior quality of work. Fears of

damage were allayed by assurances that laundry washed clothes lasted longer, "due to the use of mild soaps, rainsoft water and gentle equipment which leaves every thread unharmed."¹²³

Others promised improved family life. Mondays, once that tedious wearying wasday, now featured lingering breakfasts with the family, afternoons of leisure for outings and entertainment, cosy evenings with the family and no more tiring supervision of laundresses. Women were reminded, too, that mother's bright smiles of welcome made indelible impressions that linger through years to come¹²⁴ -- impressions which need not be marred by the fatigue and harassment of laundry duty.

This co-operative advertising was prompted by the competition of washing machines. The two interests continually discredited one another in advertisements, with laundry owners relating stories of death and injury which had come to hapless owners of washing machines, and washing machine manufacturers referring to the alleged penchant of laundries for shredding garments, returning them buttonless and losing them altogether.¹²⁵ The campaign failed to net the increased sales that washing machines enjoyed with only limited national advertising. Referred to as the "6 million dollar flop"¹²⁶ within the industry, the laundry owners' campaign came under harsh criticism from members. Although it netted a 12.3% increase in volume from 1927 to 1929, and the Association estimated it had increased its market share

from 20% to 27%, laundry owners failed to gain as great a share of the market as the washing machine.¹²⁷

The increased standards of cleanliness, which Cowan contends accompanied the home washing machine,¹²⁸ and which advertisers promoted, may have had an appeal independent of the advertisers' message. For aesthetic as well as health reasons, cleanliness has intrinsic appeal and as Cowan herself points out it was often what marked the poor from the well off.¹²⁹ Cleanliness was part of the higher standard of living which the working class were to achieve by emulating the wealthy. The success of the Cleanliness Institute, organized in 1927 by the Association of American Soap and Glycerin Products to "promote public welfare by teaching the value of cleanliness", and of course to sell soap products, was witness to this trend. The Institute, in a 1930 advertising campaign, offered free booklets on cleanliness, one addressing itself to the preservation of beauty, the other to bathing and the third to housecleaning. The response -- 300,000 coupons in its first year, 685,154 in a subsequent (1932) campaign -- indicates general interest in cleanliness.¹³⁰

Some advertising appeals seemed to be directly at men alone rather than at the family and/or women. A positive appeal to modernity and science, although often made, was directed more to men than to women. While women allegedly benefited from the technology, it was clearly seen as a male

creation. The technical/rational appeal for instance was much more prevalent in ads for range and refrigerators, expensive purchases which normally involved both husband and wife in the buying decision.¹³¹

Westinghouse stressed its 50 years of leadership and its pioneering role in electrical research and development, its longstanding position, and its reputation for durability and reliability.¹³² One advertisement entitled, 'Watch Westinghouse' featured a long list of outstanding achievements attributed to Westinghouse engineers from alternating electric current (by then in nearly universal use) to the first dual-automatic Electric Range.¹³³ To anyone mystified by the new power source of the 20th century, lacking any real understanding of its workings (as most consumers would have), it must have seemed that the dual-automatic refrigerator and Westinghouse range were major scientific breakthroughs on a par with the development of alternating current.

In 1934 Moffat introduced a series of advertisements entitled "New Moffat Pages in the History of Electric Cooking" which compared the woodstove with the electric range, and hailed the achievements of modern science which made it all possible. (See Figure 9)

Kelvinator laid claim to the manufacture of the "oldest domestic electric refrigeration" and linked itself to science:

For half a century Lord Kelvin dominated the

Figure 9: Advertisement, Maclean's, June 15, 1934, p. 3.

NEW MOFFAT PAGES IN THE HISTORY OF ELECTRIC COOKING

The ANCIENT AND MODERN . . . I

JUST HALF A CENTURY ago the designers of the old Plough Boy positively could not believe that anything more efficient would ever be devised. Household Science was still unimproved Electrical Engineering was in its earliest infancy. But tremendous strides have been made in the past few years. Household Science and Electrical Engineering have collaborated in perfecting this age-old domestic necessity. Moffats 1934 Electric Ranges are striking results of this combination of science and engineering.

You cannot find more perfect cooking and baking equipment anywhere. Moffats Electric Ranges cook foods without wasting valuable nutrients, etc. They have been tested in laboratories and proved in the kitchens of nearly the whole world. There no doubt will be more Moffat improvements later. But to date you can obtain nothing better than Moffats New Beauty models. Nothing will cook your food more efficiently, more ethically, more perfectly than Moffats Electric Ranges.

MOFFATS ELECTRIC RANGES

Sold the World Over

MOFFATS • LIMITED • WESTON • ONTARIO

scientific world. He made practical the first Atlantic cable. To his genius is credited the modern mariners compass, the deep sea sounding machine and the tides predictor. And for every problem he undertook he never rested until he found a more precise simpler surer "better way".

His contribution to temperature control introduced a new joy into the homes of thousands upon thousands of housewives -- the domestic ideal that finds such true expression in Kelvinator's "cold that keeps".¹³⁴

Whether the 1930s stress on gadgetry in refrigerator ads also reflected a more male-centred approach, it is difficult to say. In the early 1930s, refrigerator manufacturers began to introduce new features. In 1929, Frigidaire offered the new Cold Control which enabled the user to 'regulate' the temperature in the freezer compartment in order to speed the freezing of ice cubes and desserts.¹³⁵ In 1930 it introduced the Hydrator. The lowly crisper was billed this way:

marvellous new moist air compartment that makes vegetables and salad materials delightfully fresh and tender... You can put wilted celery in the hydrator and make it crisp and fresh again. You can make lettuce tender and brittle. You can quickly restore the firmness of radishes, tomatoes and other vegetables.¹³⁶

In 1931 Kelvinator featured electrically lighted interiors, balanced doors, triple coated porcelain exterior with French Grey trim, crisper, one piece round cornered porcelain food compartments, and Kelvinator's patented Iso-Thermic Tubes for world fastest freezing ice cubes and desserts.¹³⁷

Men, as consumers, were also not completely exempt from

the passive recipient role, vis a vis technology. There was a tendency to play on consumer ignorance by mystifying the reader with technical language, as in a Westinghouse advertisement which told Canadian housewives that steady even heat gradually ruptured the cell walls (of food), releasing the full flavour, yet retaining all the nourishing juices.¹³⁸

Some of the advertisements, by implication, addressed problems with technical features. For example, prospective buyers were assured that washing machines would not tear clothes. Advertisers, probably responding to problems with the early machines, went to great lengths to convince potential buyers that the labour-saving, drudgery-reducing washing machine would not harm clothes. One ad for the 1900 Cataract Electric Washer stressed that the machine, "leaves the daintiest laces unharmed, the heaviest blanket made clean and fluffy and the finest linens a lovely white".¹³⁹ Advertisers of the Blue Bird Electric Clothes Washer informed prospective buyers that its product would not injure the most delicate fabrics.¹⁴⁰ One gets the impression that the implied 'prejudice' against washing machines was probably not unjustified. Similarly, references to statements that vacuum cleaners were hard on rugs¹⁴¹ may also have had some truth.

When Moffat introduced an open-type element for its electric range in 1923, ads stressed that extensive testing had shown the element to be more durable, economical,

faster, and cheaper to renew. The reason Moffat elements do not short circuit, said the advertisement, could be found in Moffat's patented loose hubs and direct terminal connections of the top elements.¹⁴² This advertisement inadvertently pointed to problems with the early ranges, that is, the short life of elements, and the need for constant repair.

Even though technical expertise was linked to men, and much of the advertising stressed the practical benefits of electrical appliances for the entire family, women's interests were not completely subordinated. Labour-saving was a perpetual theme in ads, although it was stronger in the 1920s, and stronger in the Hydro Lamp compared with national advertising.

The electric iron was advertised for its labour-saving features. In 1923 one advertiser featured an iron which was "scientifically designed so that the handle is shaped to fit the hand and is tilted slightly so as to take all the strain from wrist and forearm, eliminating the fatigue in arm and back so commonly caused by ordinary irons."¹⁴³ The belief that science and electricity could take all the unpleasantness out of housework -- almost by magic -- is a persistent theme in the magazine advertising.

The ads and the advice literature in women's magazines lumped all the small appliances together even though some were more labour-saving than others. The electric iron, for instance, was clearly a labour-saver, while the mixmaster

may have brought more work into the kitchen than it saved, by affording the means to make angel-food cakes, mayonnaise, whipped cream and so on. Similarly the electric three-heat grill, the waffle iron and sandwich toaster lent themselves better to entertaining than everyday use. The electric coffee percolator and toaster are conveniences which lend themselves to both uses.

A variation on the earlier theme of 'save your strength and health' can be seen in a 1937 Chatelaine advertisement (See Figure 10) although the appeal has been expanded to include beauty as well. Ostensibly directed at husbands, in its suggestion of a Westinghouse washer for a Christmas gift, this advertisement in truth addressed itself to women.¹⁴⁴ The text then implored women: "Don't let 'washday nerves' rob you of the enjoyment vital to every woman's happiness. Enjoy life on washday too."¹⁴⁵

Advertisers also emphasized leisure for the housewife. The fictional housewife in one 1920 vacuum cleaner advertisement exclaimed, "Of course I have time to go! The Apex has done my cleaning". Housewives were assured that "the time it saves helps the housewife keep young by giving her more time for club, social and charitable affairs."¹⁴⁶ In another Apex advertisement, the new bride was advised that the Apex takes the monotony out of housework -- that sweeping and dusting, stooping and bending day after day which tires one out -- giving you hours of time to keep up your girlhood friendships and associations.¹⁴⁷

Figure 10: Advertisement, Chatelaine, November 1937.

You look so lovely...
I Can Hardly Believe It's Washday

[illegible][illegible]

FOR SALE BY LEADING DEALERS

Cushioned Action **WASHERS**

RADIO • RANGES • REFRIGERATORS • WASHERS • APPLIANCES • LAMPS • RADIOTRONS

In a 1924 MacLean's advertisement, the Easy Vacuum Electric Washer¹⁴⁸ was promoted as a Christmas gift which "saves her time, her strength, enabling her to take her true place in the family circle -- a companion as well as a helpmeet".¹⁴⁹ In ads less obviously directed at husbands, leisure time was no less coveted but golf, bridge, social acquaintances and club work were as important as family, and time with children valued as highly as enhancement of the marital relationship.

While most advertisers assumed women would use their new found leisure for pleasurable activities and/or enhanced homemaking, there were occasional hints at a role for married women in economic life, at least in the 1920s.

One such case can be found in the Lamp, which advised the modern wife who sought to be both companion and housekeeper to put electricity to good use.¹⁵⁰ Louise, a June bride, was offered this advice from her friend, Anne:

It's no small job -- keeping up a real little home of my own, and being at the office all day and every day. Yet I do it with my Hydro helps.¹⁵¹

Anne told her friend that her husband wasn't marrying her for a household drudge but a "real companion for life's long journey".¹⁵² (See Figure 11) Think of how many marriages, she says, have been stripped of their romance by the needless labour that robs women of their youth. This endless labour would bring an end to "your ready smile, that dancing light in your eyes, that even sweet temper we all

Figure 11: The Hydro Lamp, June 1925.

Real Companions to the End

The Gift of Gifts
For the day of days
Is a Hydro gift
To smooth life's ways

LIFE'S JOURNEY NUMBER

Companion

Housekeeper

admire." "Don't do things the hard way!"

There were more than practical benefits to greater use of electrical appliances, as advertisers conveyed to magazine readers. The ideological message promoted the use of technology to ameliorate class inequalities by increasing overall wealth and prosperity. The question of redistribution was not addressed. Sexual equality was given less attention and was thought to follow automatically from class equality. Ads directed at women contained a more detailed program for women's emancipation.

Advertisements which appeared in national magazines in the 1920s linked advertising with the promised equality which technology would bring. They were jointly sponsored by the Association of Canadian Advertisers and the Canadian Association of Advertising Agencies, two industry associations. Advertising was promoted as more than the consumer's guarantee of quality in a mass production world.¹⁵³

Advertising enthusiasts, writing in their industry journals, often adopted a utopian tone when speaking of their role in eliminating class disparity through greater accessibility of goods. One spokesman quoted William Allen White:

Advertising is the genie which is transforming America into a place of comfort, luxury and ease for the millions. Advertising in the last 20 years has changed the economic status of at least 1/5 and probably 1/4 of our people; raising them from a lower to a higher standard,

increasing their wants, increasing their ambitions and hence their capacities and also their purchasing power. Advertising is the Archimedian lever that is moving the world.¹⁵⁴

He stopped short of claiming that technical innovation and invention were the direct outcome of advertising, but he did consider them its by-product:

The advertising urge is thus adding to its service of education, a service of inspiration, a motive to create new things or make old things better, which, without advertising, would proceed much more slowly or not at all.¹⁵⁵

In its apologetics, the advertising industry tied itself to modern technology, especially that which affected the home, seeing the home as an attractive image. Democratization of consumption, which made "luxuries" such as cars and refrigerators available to the everyday workingman, was the industry's trump card.

... how recently have come into general possession, bathrooms, plumbing, pure water, heating, the phonograph and the telephone, sewing machines, vacuum cleaners, gas ranges, electric heating and lighting and electrical devices of all kinds...¹⁵⁶

Some advertising spokesmen saw advertising as a necessary evil of mass production which served to inform people of the means to make life better,¹⁵⁷ and give consumers a guarantee of quality. Others made more grandiose claims, seeing advertising as the creator of modern industry. None-the-less all stressed advertising's educational value,¹⁵⁸ especially in teaching higher standards of nutrition, health, cleanliness, and leisure¹⁵⁹

and its contribution to a rising standard of living.¹⁶⁰ Advertisers could legitimately claim a role in bringing prosperity to greater numbers, as by the late 1920s manufacturers of many new products were reaching down into the moderate-to-lower income groups.

Not to be outdone, the electrical industry also promoted its links to prosperity and good living in advertisements published in Canadian magazines. Electricity worked not only in the factory, but in the home, to promote greater class equality.

Actually every worker is a foreman profiting from the labour of electrical manpower. He supplies the skill .. motor supplies the muscle. In an hour he produces more goods than his father could produce in a day during the pre-electric age. And thus he is enabled to earn more money and attain a new standard of individual prosperity.

Electricity has transformed the whole system of manufacturing in Canada. Dingy, unhealthy factories that once clustered around the coal fields, on the river banks and in congested cities have given way to clean factories in the suburbs of cities and in small centres of population .. wherever the long arm of power extends.

Workers not only have more congenial places of employment but more comfortable homes. Higher standards of living have been achieved by the swift safe transportation of electric cars, the comfort of electric lights, the convenience of electric appliances and the pleasures of electric radios.¹⁶¹

In another advertisement, (See Figure 12) the electric streetcar's emancipation of the worker was addressed. This view of the suburbs as a pleasant retreat for all family members shows a general lack of insight into the isolation which the suburbs brought, especially for women.¹⁶²

Figure 12: Advertisement, "Broken Shackles", Maclean's,
May 1, 1927, p. 31.

Broken Shackles

The electric street car and radial car have done much to promote more healthful living conditions by furnishing inexpensive, comfortable transportation, enabling people to dwell outside of the commercial districts.

TIME WAS, and that not long ago, when the worker was fettered to his workshop, when little groups of drab dwellings huddled around the base of every industrial building, when children were born, grew to maturity and died within sound of the clank of machinery and the insistent call of the factory whistle.

But those days are gone. Garden suburbs have sprung up in our cities and the worker leaves the scene of his toil for the healthful happiness of fresh air, sunshine and freedom, that his family enjoys all day.

Cheap transportation has broken the shackles that bound men to their work. And the transportation which accomplished the most toward this end, which

is serving the greatest masses of people at the lowest cost, is the electric railway—the street car.

The electric street car has provided a dependable, comfortable and rapid means of transportation at a cost within reach of everyone. The electric radial and interurban car has linked town to town and made life more pleasant and interesting for rural dwellers.

It should be gratifying to Canadians to realize that the equipment required in these efficient transportation systems is manufactured in Canada and that the money invested by Canadian workers in this electric transportation is being redistributed to Canadian workers who produce the equipment.

CANADIAN
GENERAL ELECTRIC Co.

HEAD OFFICE - TORONTO

Sales Offices in All Principal Cities

Electricity was also the 'Guardian Force of City Life', safely moving traffic, running the streetcar and preventing crime.¹⁶³

Electricity's importance to Canadian economic development and social life was emphasized in an advertising message which also stressed the male expert's monopoly on technology. Northern Electric, for instance, volunteered to take its rightful place in the proud tradition of Canadian enterprise by telling the Canadian story of electricity. (See Figure 13) Canadians are, the ad said, "fortunate in having had men with vision and capacity to direct their development for the use of municipalities, industries and homes".¹⁶⁴

In another ad (See Figure 14) the message of prosperity was accompanied by an illustration of 'progress' personified in a young woman, seated at a crystal ball glowing with visions of a bright future, while four very scientific technical looking experts (all male) stood behind her.¹⁶⁵ In a similar advertisement, the woman is dispensed with and a group of scientist-engineers are hard at work applying Canada's boundless water power to ever more facets of business and industry.¹⁶⁶ As one Canadian General Electric advertisement which encouraged "electric-minded" young men to go into the electrical field¹⁶⁷ implied, electrical technology was a male preserve.

Canadian General Electric emphasized home enhancement.

Figure 13: Advertisement, "The Quest for Youth", Maclean's,
January 1, 1926, p. 1.

The Quest of Youth

The question has been asked why young Canadians look outside their own borders for their heroes in industry and commerce

THIS is due, perhaps, to the prominence given in magazines from other lands to "stories of successful men" while men who have built vast Canadian enterprises often remain in the background rather than pass under the spotlight of publicity.

Canada has progressed farther in the development of electricity than most nations. Do Canadians fully appreciate what this means? Canada's great water powers are her natural heritage. And she is fortunate in having had men with the vision and capacity to direct their development for the use of municipalities, industries and home. She is doubly fortunate in having had, at the same time, men with the foresight and ability to organize the electrical industry, its manufacture and distribute the millions of pieces of equipment through which electricity has been made the servant of the Canadian people.

This is a story that Canadians should know

One of Canada's great electrical organizations, Northern Electric Company, Limited, takes pride and pleasure in the duty of telling it. Through advertisements in the public press of Canada, Northern Electric is informing the country of the important part that the electrical industry plays in the national life.

The success this company has achieved has come through service—home, business, taking service, and this is assurance to young men of their own success in the electrical field in Canada.

In the electrical industry thousands of young Canadians are, today, laying the cornerstones of permanent prosperity. It is an industry with unlimited opportunities, of golden promise.

The growth, the expansion, the enterprises which follow this one branch alone of Canadian activity, is proof in itself that the future of the youth of this country lies within our own gates.

Northern Electric

COMPANY LIMITED

Equipment for transmitting Sound and Power

This is No. 12 of a series of advertisements issued in the interest of the electrical industry.

Figure 14: Advertisement, "Vision", Maclean's,
April 15, 1926, p.35.

VISION

*Canadian Hydro Plants Captivate
the Imagination of the World*

Information

Hydro-electric development in Canada represents a total investment estimated at \$1,675,000,000. At present rate of progress this total will reach \$1,750,000,000 by 1940.

FEW people realize the speed with which Canada is leaping forward into the new electrical era.

Among the numerous hydro-electric developments under way in Canada, two, by their magnitude, have captivated the imagination of the world.

One is at Queenstown on the Niagara River, where the Ontario Hydro Electric Power Commission is completing the installation of a plant totalling over 200,000 h.p. The other, at the head of the Saguenay River, will have an ultimate capacity of 1,280,000 h.p., of which a large amount will be used in a new industry to be established there--the manufacture of aluminum.

The mighty force of Niagara everybody knows, but few realize the force of the Saguenay. This river in northeastern Quebec is the single outlet of five large and many smaller rivers which run into Lake St. John. This mighty flood pours through the tumultuous Grand Discharge, rushing down over 300 feet to sea level--equal to the drop at Niagara--and flowing a thousand feet deep for sixty miles to the St. Lawrence, to be lifted bodily out of its bed by great engineering works that harness its powers.

This work means the establishment in Canada of another centre of hydro-electric energy comparable to that of Niagara!

For thirty-five years it has been the function of the Northern Electric Company to manufacture and make available the means of transmitting and distributing electrical energy in every form. In the Canada of the future we look forward to an opportunity for even greater service to the public.

Northern Electric
COMPANY LIMITED

Equipment for transmitting Sound and Power

*This is number 15 of a series
of advertisements issued in
the interest of Canada's
electrical development.*

One advertisement asserted that the luxuries of ancient kings fade into insignificance beside the comforts made possible in Canadian homes by the flip of a switch.¹⁶⁸ Electricity transformed the old formal parlour into the modern cosy living room; a room filled with light, music and laughter; a room to be enjoyed by the entire family everyday, no longer reserved for special occasion.¹⁶⁹ In another advertisement by Northern Electric (Figure 15) the message that, next to running water, electricity was the second greatest household labour-saver was conveyed.¹⁷⁰

Although Canadian General Electric offered housebound women youth, beauty and freedom to expand their outlook beyond the home, the image of the knight in shining armour rescuing women from toil is persistent:

The General Electric Company counts it an honour to have aided electricity in its mission to womanhood -- in lifting heavy burdens from weary backs -- in performing tasks that once made tender figures worn with toil -- in giving women back their beauty, youth and freedom -- in opening up new vistas of pleasure and service.¹⁷¹

Women's liberation was offered as an equivalent to class equality for men: the opportunity to have a role outside the home on a par with wealthier women. Sexual equality was portrayed simply as a function of the rising standard of living.

The spinning wheel, whirring far into the night, provided the accompaniment to our grandmother's lullaby, for her work never ceased. In those days people were born to work or they were born to play, and the dividing line was seldom crossed.

Figure 15: Advertisement, "Emancipation", Maclean's,
March 15, 1930, p. 25.

EMANCIPATION

THE first great step towards the lightening of household labour was the introduction of running water into the house. The second step was the installation of electricity. Countless comforts and conveniences are thus placed at the command of the women of our Dominion.

Merely the turn of a knob—and the modern electric washing machine pulsates with life and sets about its task. Merely the flick of a switch, and—smoothly, quickly, quietly—The many “wheels” of housekeeping begin to turn; ironing, cooking, cleaning. Merely the touch of a button and the rooms are flooded with light.

One of the many services performed by the Northern Electric Company is the distribution of dependable electrical “servants” for the home.

In some of the Old World countries the women still kneel to scour their clothes in the streams.

Northern Electric
COMPANY LIMITED
A National Electrical Service

INFORMATION

The Northern Electric Company manufactures the telephone and its accessories, wires and cables for the transmission of power, fire alarm systems, public address systems, and calling system picture apparatus.

The new household servant -- electricity -- by performing much of the housework that was formerly done by the housewife, has made it possible for her to devote more and more hours of the day or night to social duties and even to political affairs. Nowadays, it is not only the Duchess who is a leader of community thought and activity -- modern society is benefiting from the rich experience of individuals from all walks of life.¹⁷²

The electrical and advertising industries were offering humanity a form of class equality, prosperity, home comforts and last but not least, women's emancipation. This scene probably held enough truth to convince many; the streetcar was making the suburbs possible, prosperity was increasing (at least for the moderately well off readers of Maclean's) and productivity was increasing. The images of women's and workers' former enslavement, however, contrast sharply with the glowing vision of freedom and comfort, placing the male fraternity of scientist/engineer in the role of knight in shining armour. And it is clear that greater democratization of wealth would come, not through redistribution of wealth but growth in overall wealth so that even the lowly worker could aspire to the standards set by former elites. Technology, rather than a sharing of privileges and responsibilities between men and women, workers and managers, was advocated as a solution to class and sexual disparities.

It was probably women's influence within advertising which led to discussion of technology's potential to ameliorate sexual inequality. In the electrical industry

literature, sexual equality was thought to follow automatically from class equality. Women's input in advertising was not always welcomed, especially when it took a critical tone. One male advertiser told a women's group that they took their comforts and time saving devices "too doggone much for granted":

None of you would be here to take a crack at advertising if it were not for advertising. It helped produce the saved time you took to come here today. You would be home bending over a hot stove or digging a winter vegetable out of its cold storage place in the cellar...173

He informed them that they were "the folks who make Congressmen, Senators and department heads of the Government stand on their hind legs and demand changes in the way goods are sold and marketed and distributed.¹⁷⁴ By asking for protection against "the advertiser and this 'monopoly'", he told them, women were asking to be protected against progress and the new leisure they now have:

Ladies, your kitchen sink of the proper height, your dishwasher, your oil furnace, your automatic refrigerator, your better kitchen utensils, all were made possible by advertising which made them known and made you want them.¹⁷⁵

Amos Bradbury, a male advertiser, unwittingly summarized the male approach to advertising and household technology. He ignored the contribution women themselves made to domestic technology, and portrayed it as a gift from men to women of which they should be more appreciative. Note also the sop to consumers with the contention that, through buying power, women have power over the advertiser,

manufacturer and government. Women's power it seems is destined to be indirect!

When one looks at ads for specific appliances, however, as opposed to the more general advertising directed at a mixed audience, one sees a more developed gender analysis, independent of the class analysis. The obvious material benefits of electrical appliances for women and their families were not their only selling features. Advertising women's contribution to the advertising message of prosperity and class equality appears to have been a unique philosophy of equality of spheres. They promoted an elevation of the private sphere to a position of equality with the public. Appliance advertisers promoted a philosophy of women's quasi-liberation within the confines of the sexual division of labour. Advertisers asserted that women's labour had as great a value as men's and that therefore women deserved greater status, better working conditions and improved financial autonomy.

The practice of using the language of science and/or business to describe women's domestic labour, in order to raise its legitimacy, came from the domestic reform movement. In one issue of the Lamp, a young business-girl-turned housekeeper explained to a visiting friend that "men in offices and factories, even on farms, provide themselves with every labour-saving device." "When I took on the job of housekeeping for a husband", she said, "I applied the

same principle". Her first investment was an electric stove. "That got rid of dirt, dust, soot, waste and -- best of all -- loss of time", she contended.¹⁷⁶

National advertisers promised to end the drudgery of washday, by applying 'businessman-husband' rationale to the housewife's work. This Blue Bird washing machine ad is typical in conveying an impatience with old fashioned methods, the will to bring housework under the same kind of control as work performed in business and the professions, and the perception that it was male technology which would bring about this domestic revolution. (See Figure 16)

But suppose some Monday morning all the husbands in Canada stayed home from office, shop, field and factory and did the family washing! Suppose they spent next washday bent double over tubs of smelly water from morning till night. Suppose they did the rubbing, carrying, wringing and fussing in a steamy, unpleasant atmosphere, as their wives have to do each week. What then? Would not their first thought be "Is there no other way to accomplish this task?"... When husbands come to realize what they are permitting their wives to do, week in and week out -- THEN there will be a Blue Bird Washer in every Canadian home.¹⁷⁷

Such advertisements advocated a rejection of former female values and methods (generally characterized as senseless martyrdom) and a wholesale and enthusiastic adoption of the 'male' values of efficiency and productivity. Women journalists who wrote advice articles for the magazines made the same assumption, betraying both a contemptuous rejection of the outmoded housekeeper whom they portrayed as enslaved to ignorance and superstition, and an

Figure 16: Advertisement, Maclean's, October 1, 1920.

This Man Actually Allows His Wife to Do the Family Washing!

MAN-MADE logic justifies this, on the grounds of efficiency and comfort. But suppose some Monday morning, all the husbands in Canada stayed in bed, from office shop, field and factory, and did the family washing for a week. They spent most washday bent double over tubs of dirty water, their hands sore and their backs aching. They did the rubbing, scrubbing, wringing and rinsing, and the great surprise of the morning was their wives had to do each week. What then?

Wouldn't it be better if there is other way to do the job?

It wouldn't take them long to decide.

And when they did investigate, what would they find?

They would find, perhaps to their surprise, that the BlueBird Electric Clothes Washer has solved the Washing Problem. **ALREADY** they would find that the BlueBird washes the heaviest clothes **CLEAN** without the use of hot water or extra quantities of the suds, and yet will not injure the most delicate fabric. They would find that on grounds of strictest economy they could have a BlueBird Washer because it lessens the life of clothes, and thereby saves a great deal of money.

Washing is one of the most necessary of household tasks, but it is also the most unpleasant. And not only is it unpleasant, it has ruined the nerves and shortened the lives of generations of women. When husbands come to realize what they are permitting their wives to do week in and week out—

—**THEN** there will be a BlueBird Washer in every Canadian home.

Specifications of the Canadian-Made BlueBird Electric Clothes Washer:

CABINET—White, Green trim, has table top, waist high working parts enclosed, safe for children, attractive appearance, graceful design, enamel finish, easily kept clean.

TUB—Heavy rubber, extra large rocking type, lined inside and perfectly smooth.

ACTION—Oscillating principle—quietest, smoothest, no vibration, simple control, looks on, control when not in operation.

FRAME—Strongest, most heavily constructed frame, built like a bridge, mounted on four double wheel roller bearing casters, easy to move.

MECHANISM—Simplest design, few moving parts.

WRINGER—All metal, enamelled, green, rigid, cannot warp, adjustable, approved safety release, full 17" x 14" extra wide.

ROLLERS—Front quality, highest grade Siam rubber, made by Goodrich, Toronto.

DRAIN—Operated from top of washer.

MOTOR—Strong, dependable, easily cleaned, water proof, ample power, specially designed and built for Canadian BlueBird by Canadian Manufacturing Co.

Leading Dealers Sell BlueBird—The BlueBird Electric Clothes Washer and Wringer will be sold by all leading Household Electric Appliance Shops, Furniture Dealers, Hardware Dealers, Electrical Shops, and at most Electric Light Companies' Showrooms, on a standard List Price. The BlueBird marks the store in which it is sold as the leading Household Appliance Dealer in every district.

It may be that your dealer has not as yet stocked BlueBird Washers. If he has, he will be glad to show and demonstrate them. If you find that he has not, write us for a copy of a booklet "Out of Bondage". It shows in a most interesting way how the washing problem is a problem no longer.

BlueBird Corporation, Limited, Brantford, Canada

The Canadian-Made
BlueBird
ELECTRIC CLOTHES WASHER

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implicit avowal that women's time, health and happiness were of equal value with men's. The zealousness of this rejection of old fashioned methods by women advisors is in fact much stronger than that found in ads, where care was taken not to alienate the traditional homemaker.

No discussion of efficient housekeeping would be complete without the usual encounter of the matronly elder of the kitchen and the young domestic science grad. In the December 1924 issue of the Lamp, young meets old; however, in this version, unlike many found in the women's magazines (both in advice literature and advertising), there is no triumphant conquering of old fashioned methods by modern. In the end "artistry and science -- the old and the new -- happily combine" as young Mary recognizes her mother's expert skill and gives up schemes to re-order her kitchen on scientific principles, but none-the-less persuades her of the need for an electric range.¹⁷⁸ This fable probably reflects the real influence of domestic science.¹⁷⁹ In another issue, the self-sacrificing mother was gently pushed into the twentieth century through her family's generosity in purchasing a complete set of appliances.¹⁸⁰ Here the household martyr, the old fashioned housekeeper, is dealt with more kindly than in other ads, and especially in advice literature written by professional women, where she was roundly condemned.

The wife's right to husbandly standards of labour and

time saving efficiency was more strongly conveyed in several numbers of the Hydro Lamp than in most national advertising. For example, the new owner of a vacuum cleaner says of her husband, "Henry has been going around grinning ever since, just begging for gratitude. If he thinks I'm grateful, though, he's mistaken. He ought to have gotten that cleaner long ago".¹⁸¹ By comparison, national advertising made more concessions to male chivalry than to women's rights.

In the Hydro Lamp, the prevailing notion was that what was good for workers in business was good for women in the home, as a simple matter of justice, and errant husbands had to be severely dealt with. Poor Harry Chapman¹⁸² is an example. "A self-centred husband" who had never noticed the drudgery of his wife's existence, he arrived home one evening to find her ill in bed.¹⁸³ Poor Edith's mother, and the good Dr. Bone hasten to the Chapman home. On the way, Mother-in-law offers her advice on Edith's condition: "No wonder Edith is sick -- she hasn't a single convenience and all that work to do."

Upon arriving at the sickbed, the Dr. diagnoses exhaustion and influenza and, with a figurative wink of the eye, proclaims a grave danger of infection -- the house must be thoroughly cleaned at once! With Dr. and "nurse" busy at the sickbed, a flustered husband is sent off to learn first hand of his wife's working conditions. After scrubbing the kitchen floor on hands and knees, skinning his elbow going down the poorly lit stairs to the cellar to fix the furnace,

cleaning and dusting the parlour and preparing dinner despite the setback of losing two pieces of toast when they fell off the 3 prong toasting fork, poor Hubby's back ached. But still tea and toast must be made for the patient! And then the final blow -- it was announced that the baby's washing must be done. Predictably, the journey to the damp unlit cellar, the scrubbing of clothes on the scrubboard and the journey out into the chilly evening air to hang the steaming laundry, left Harry Chapman with the same symptoms his wife had suffered. A guilty realization came over him as he sank into exhaustion and accepted Dr. Bone's prescription for "one vacuum cleaner, one washer, and other appliances applied liberally with Hydro power."¹⁸⁴

While pure fantasy, this fable was clearly designed to appeal to women in the home. Had Harry Chapman exercised his male prerogative of pleading ignorance of housework, or simply called upon another woman to do it for him, he would have saved himself the indignity of trading places with his beleaguered wife.

If the exercise of the wife's right to partake of the benefits of modern technology necessitated a realignment of the family's financial resources from husband to wife, the Hydro Lamp happily condoned it. For example, the cost of monthly payments for a vacuum cleaner was compared with such everyday indulgences as smoking, phonograph records, and car accessories.¹⁸⁵ These, not coincidentally, are primarily

male expenses. The Hydro Lamp also contended that if the saving of time, strength, and health was a priority; that if the housekeeper's time and well being were considered; one could not only afford it, one could not afford to be without it.¹⁸⁶ National advertisers also condoned women's right to control at least part of the family finances, with their adherence to the 'Mrs. Consumer' model, and their frequent appeals to bring the home up to workplace standards.

Husband's and wife's roles in the domestic paradise of the electric home, were clearly divided along the lines of the traditional sexual division of labour. One Hydro Lamp issue illustrates two children learning their various sex roles. The little girl vacuumed the rug while her brother, sitting in the easy chair reading his paper,¹⁸⁷ lifted his feet out of her way. The outer limits of the homemaker's job were clearly dictated by male needs as was occasionally indicated in references to meals prepared to the "King's taste".¹⁸⁸

Only two issues of the Lamp addressed men directly and both dealt with the provisioning of adequate wiring in the home.¹⁸⁹ All of the other messages were directed at women. Once the husband had recognized the importance of providing modern tools for his wife's workshop, it seems his job was done. Likewise Westinghouse and CGE portrayed husbands as providers of conveniences, who might enjoy their benefits, but who usually did not use appliances, with the exception of the radio.

The model women presented in the Hydro Lamp's domestic fables and in national advertising were the efficient housekeeper, the well rested companion-wife, and the charming hostess. One such model homemaker was the fictional Mrs. Thomas, who was under discussion by the elder matrons at the 'social event of the year'.¹⁹⁰ The Thomas home, remarked Mrs. James, "is run with the smoothness of a machine and without the help of the two servants which you seem to think they have at their beck and call."

Mrs. Thomas, they were told, "arrived at the breakfast room as neat as a pin. In a few minutes, by the aid of her electric percolator, toaster and grill which were on the table beside her, Mrs. Thomas had prepared a delightful meal with a lack of bustle that would astonish you." "After the breakfast dishes are cleared away," explained Mrs. James, Mrs. Thomas "goes over the house rapidly but efficiently with her vacuum cleaner -- work which would take all morning using a broom and duster". On Mondays the electric washer faithfully took care of the laundry chore and even on baking days, one could drop in on Mrs. Thomas without inconvenience, thanks to her electric range and electric mixer. Her kitchen, of course, was a model of cleanliness -- "four white walls, lovely big white kitchen cabinet and beautiful white enamelled electric stove".

The material benefits of electrical appliances were presented in the Hydro Lamp, as well as in national

advertising, in the context of an enhanced family life, and to a lesser degree of a woman-centred philosophy of equality of public and private spheres. In these domestic fantasies, particularly in the 1920s, domestic labour gave women the same status, recognition and financial independence that male workforce participation gave their husbands. While the image of woman is predominantly as housewife, it was a positive image which gave recognition to her labour and allowed her to participate in family life as companion rather than household slave. While popular with women labouring in the home, this philosophy did nothing to alter the sexual division of labour which assigned homemaking exclusively to women and wage earning to men. Neither did it offer any realistic strategy to force men to grant women the recognition, status and financial reward they felt their work warranted.

ENDNOTES

¹Albert Borgman, Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984): 55.

²Stuart Ewen, Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of Consumer Culture, (McGraw Hill: 1976, New York): 19.

³George Grant, Technology and Empire: Perspectives on North America, (Toronto: Anansi, 1969); Borgman; Jacques Ellul, The Technological Society, trans. John Wilkinson, (New York: Vintage Books, 1964); Langdon Winner, Autonomous Technology: Technics-out-of-Control As A Theme in Political Thought, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977).

⁴The theory of consumer sovereignty, the notion that business exists to meet the needs of consumers, is characteristic of traditional liberal thought. It has been challenged by most students of advertising. Neo-liberals such as Galbraith have asserted that needs are created by producers through advertising to promote business growth. Marxists such as Ewen would agree, but see advertising as significant in the larger goal of meeting the capitalist system's crisis of production and legitimacy. Most agree that creation of need is performed through psychological manipulation at the subconscious level but Galbraith sees this as an appeal to relatively weak psychological drives, such as vanity, envy and insecurity, while Vance Packard, C. Wright Mills and Judith Williamson would see these as genuine deeply rooted human needs. See William Leiss, Stephen Kline, Sut Jhally, Social Communication in Advertising, (London and New York: Methuen: 1986): 13-26 for a discussion of the critiques of advertising.

⁵Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939, (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988): 116.

⁶Judith Williamson, Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising, (London: Marion Boyars, 1978): 19.

⁷Susannah J. Wilson, "Changing Image of Woman in Canadian Mass Circulating Magazines, 1930-1970", Atlantis 2 (2), Spring 1977: 33-44.

⁸Mary Vibond, "The Image of Women in Mass Circulation Magazines in the 1920s", in The Neglected Majority, eds. Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, Alison Prentice, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977): 116-124.

⁹Cynthia L. White, Women's Magazines, 1693-1968, (London: Michael Joseph, 1970): 68, 113-115, 201-208; Marjorie Ferguson, Forever Feminine: Women's Magazine and the Cult of Femininity, (London, Exeter: Heineman, 1983): 10; Susannah J. Wilson, "Changing Image of Women in Canadian Mass Circulating Magazines, 1930-1970"; Elaine Fisher, "The Angel and the Whore: The Growth of Psychological Advertising and Its Focus on Women", B.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1983: 93.

¹⁰Ernest Mandel for example contends that capitalism restricts man's development to expressing needs and performing activities which are compatible with buying products. Marxists call this process of encouraging people to satisfy wants through consumption, reification. Others point out that advertising obscures the reality of production and other social facts such as ethnic, class and sexual inequality. Christopher Lasch, a conservative contends that advertising promotes consumption as a way of life. See Leiss, et al, Advertising.

¹¹As Leiss et al. point out, both marxists and neo-liberal critics discount the practical role played by advertising, using it as a departure point for a critique of industrial society. Advertising replaced other intermediaries and middlemen in the distribution system which underwent radical change with the institution of mass production/mass consumption. Advertising acts as an information source as well as an ideological tool. Advertising is also an art form, and plays a role similar to mythology in primitive societies -- it is a symbol system. See Leiss, et al., Advertising.

¹²Julius H. Barnes, "The Philosophy of American Industry", Printers Ink, February 7, 1924; Bruce Barton, "Four Main Accomplishments of Modern Advertising", Printers Ink, October 3, 1929; Frank Presbrey, The History and Development of Advertising, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968); H.E. Stephenson and Carlton McNaught, The Story of Advertising in Canada, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1940)

¹³Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, J.H. Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth Century England, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982)

14Paul H. Nystrom, Economics of Retailing, Vol. II (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1930): 497-499.

15"What Determines the Consumer's Choice", Electrical News, August 1, 1922: 46.

16Glenna Matthews, Just a Housewife: The Rise and Fall of Domesticity, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

17Susan Strasser, Never Done: A History of American Housework, (New York: Pantheon, 1982); Dolores Hayden, The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighbourhoods, and Cities, (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1981).

18Matthews is herself unable to answer this question, Just a Housewife: 194.

19Ruth Schwartz Cowan, More Work For Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave, (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

20Cowan, More Work For Mother.

21Fisher: 50, 51.

22The only significant Canadian advertising journal is Marketing, a trade journal distributed to those employed in the Canadian advertising industry, including not only national advertisers using major magazines such as Chatelaine and Macleans but those using local advertising in newspapers, through direct mail, radio and billboards. The two major American journals used were Printers Ink, the acknowledged leader in the advertising press, and Advertising Age. Canadian advertisers published in American as well as Canadian trade journals.

23"What Should Be Canada's Position in World Advertising", Marketing, August 31, 1929: 109, 110, 124.

24John Herd Thompson, Allen Seager, Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985).

25Fisher: 49; Stephenson and McNaught, The Story of Advertising in Canada.

26"U.S.A. Advertisers Change Their Policy in Regard to Canadian Advertising", Marketing, January 16, 1932.

27Bertram R. Brooker, "How American Advertisers Change Their Canadian Copy", Printers Ink, December 27, 1923: 87-

98.

28L.J. Cunniff, "Ignorance of Canada Displayed in U.S. Advertising Copy", Marketing, May 1, 1921: 312. There was also a growing tendency, noted one Canadian ad man, for manufacturers to incorporate a company under Canadian laws, elect a Canadian directorate, and build or purchase a factory operated largely with Canadian capital and personnel, thus earning the right to use the "Made-in Canada" slogan. See, Bertram Brooker, "How Canadian Advertisers Change Their Canadian Copy", Printers Ink, December 27, 1923.

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30Ida Bailey Allen, "Helpfulness -- the Big Idea in Advertising to Women", Printers Ink, June 14, 1923: 138-140.

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33White.

34H.V. Tyrell, "The Place of National Mediums in Canadian Advertising", Marketing, December 1, 1921: 843, 844.

35Ibid.

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42H.V. Tyrell, "The Place of National Mediums in Canadian Advertising", Marketing, December 1, 1921: 843, 844.

43G. H. Tyndall, "Growth of Canadian Magazines", Marketing, March 10, 1923: 178, 179, 180.

44Ibid.

45Fisher: 35-36.

46Fisher: 62-63, 145-146, 160-166.

47Elsie Mitchell Rushmore, "The Future of Advertising Research", Printers Ink Monthly, June 1930.

48James Collins, "Has Your Business Sex Appeal?", Nation's Business, December 1928: 23-25.

49Ibid; "Mrs. Consumer Spends 90% of Family Funds", Advertising Age, August 29, 1931: 10.

50Several publications, including Redbook and The New York Sun, advertised its mixed audience readership in advertising industry journals, stressing the need to reach both the husband and wife. Advertisement, Printers Ink, May 25, 1933: 58-59; Advertisement, Advertising Age, July 9, 1932: 8; Advertisement, Advertising Age, July 23, 1932: 9; Advertisement, Advertising Age, September 13, 1937: 4; See also, S. E. Gill, "At Least, Males Help Buy", Printers Ink, February 18, 1937; "Lo, the Poor Male", Printers Ink, June 12, 1930; "Healing the Injured Pride of Masculinity", Printers Ink, November 3, 1927: 11.

51Fisher: 157.

52Cowan, More Work for Mother.

53This assumption is shared by most commentators on women's domestic labour. Fisher: 173; Matthews: 186.

54As several authors have suggested, the 1920s was a transitional period for women. Ties to the home were loosening somewhat and workforce participation increasing. Mary Vipond, "The Image of Women in Mass Circulation Magazines in the 1920s", in The Neglected Majority, ed.

Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, Alison Prentice, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977): 116-124; See also, Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled.

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56N. Livingston Larned, "Advertising in a Flood Tide Market", Printers Ink, November 11, 1920: 73-76.

57"Electric Servants", Printers Ink Monthly, August 1937: 89.

58Langton Fife, "Educational Copy Sells Electric Ranges", Marketing, June 30, 1923: 428 - 432.

59These latter manufacturers, who also manufactured gas, wood, coal and combination ranges were the least slick and sophisticated in their advertising techniques. Advertisements, Chatelaine, June 1936: 77; September 1936: 56.

60Advertisement, Maclean's, August 15, 1920: 36.

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65Hydro Lamp, November 1924.

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73One is of course immediately struck by the improvidence of former cooking and eating habits alleged to be associated with the reign of the ice-box! Evidence clearly suggests that such waste as the throwing out of soup bones, milk and leftovers was extremely rare and where it did occur would probably not be cured by the installation of electric refrigeration. See Barbara Riley, "Six Saucepans to One: Domestic Science vs. The Home In British Columbia, 1900-1930" in Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro, eds., Not Just Pin Money, (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984).

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75Ibid.

76Advertisement, Maclean's, April 1, 1926: 53.

77Advertisement, Maclean's, August 1, 1925: 65.

78Advertisement, Maclean's, April 1, 1927: 76.

79"The Use of Electrical Appliances in Ontario", Bulletin, November 1939: 342-6.

80Advertisement, Electrical News and Engineering, January 1, 1924: 12-13.

81Advertisement, Maclean's, June 1, 1929: 58.

82Advertisement, Chatelaine, May 1937: 26.

83Ibid.

84Advertisement, Maclean's, October 1, 1921: 2.

85Advertisement, Maclean's, March 15, 1920: 66.

86Advertisement, Maclean's, July 1, 1926: 72.

87Advertisement, Chatelaine, September 1936: 3.

88Advertisement, Chatelaine, March 1928: 53.

89Hydro Lamp, May 1924.

90Corn, Imagining Tomorrow.

⁹¹Advertisement, Chatelaine, August 1936: 40-41; Helen Campbell, "Kitchen Transformation", Chatelaine, September 1937: 45; "Here's the Prize Kitchen", Chatelaine, February 1937: 22, 23, 77; "Second Prize", Chatelaine, March 1937: 64, 70.

⁹²Margaret Hobbs, Ruth Roach Pierson, "When Is a Kitchen Not a Kitchen?" Canadian Women's Studies, 7 (4) 1986: 71-76.

⁹³Advertisement, Canadian Home Journal, June 1938: 73; Advertisement, Maclean's, March 1, 1937: 27.

⁹⁴Maclean's, April 1, 1936: 29.

⁹⁵Ibid. This reference to a dishwasher is rare; due to their expense they were not advertised on a large scale.

⁹⁶Maclean's, May 15, 1936: 29.

⁹⁷Maclean's, October 1, 1936: 25.

⁹⁸Chatelaine, February 1937: 65.

⁹⁹Maclean's, May 15, 1938: 37.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Advertisement Chatelaine, June 1928: 37.

¹⁰²Hydro Lamp, May 1926.

¹⁰³Moffat of Weston, Ontario which was the pioneer in electric range manufacturing introduced its first model in 1913. By 1923 it had turned out 45,000 electric ranges. Langton Fife, "Educational Copy Sells Electric Ranges", Marketing, June 30, 1923: 428 - 432.

¹⁰⁴Moffat ads were unique in their direct reference to Ontario, Niagara Falls and Canada's particularly abundant supply of electricity. As Canadian manufacturers took a leading role in the advertising, sale and manufacture of electric ranges, it is surprising that more Canadian references are not found. Advertisement, Maclean's, April 1, 1922: 39; Advertisement, Maclean's, March 1, 1922: 35.

¹⁰⁵Advertisement, Maclean's, March 1, 1928: 42, 43.

¹⁰⁶Consumers Research Bulletin, June 1936: 22-24; June 1939: 3-18.

¹⁰⁷Advertisement, Maclean's, September 1, 1920: 7.

108Ibid.

109Advertisement, Maclean's, June 15, 1922: 52.

110Advertisement, Maclean's, December 1, 1927: 37.

111Advertisement, Maclean's, July 1, 1920: 54.

112Ethel M. Chapman, "The New Move for Child Welfare", Maclean's, May 1, 1920: 74, 77; Alice MacKay, "Caring for the Children", Maclean's, August 15, 1928: 63-65; Suzann Buckley, "Ladies or Midwives? Efforts to Reduce Infant and Maternal Mortality" in Linda Kealey, ed. A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880-1920, (Toronto: 1979): 131-150.

113Advertisement, Maclean's, July 1, 1929: 68.

114Advertisement, Maclean's, July 15, 1920: 67

115Advertisement, Maclean's, November 15, 1932.

116Advertisement, Maclean's, April 15: 3.

117Advertisement, Maclean's, January 1, 1920: 94; Macleans, September 15, 1920: 43.

118The reference to a penny a week is the cost of the electric current needed to run the machine and does not include the purchase price. Advertisement, "Abundance of Clean Linen", Maclean's, January 1, 1921: 47.

119Cowan, More Work For Mother: 98.

120Strasser: 116-124; Hayden.

121Hydro Lamp, September 1924, February 1925, August 1925, March 1926.

122v. Cameron, "Advertising to Women Must Gain Their Confidence", Marketing, July 22, 1933.

123Laundry Washed Clothes Last Longer", Maclean's, April 1929: 65.

124Advertisement, Maclean's, August 1, 1929: 60; "Even Your Nose Knows When Its Washday", Canadian Home Journal, September 1928: 87.

125"Laundry Owners Give Cleaning to Advertising", Advertising Age, June 10, 1933.

126"Laundry Challenge", Business Week, August 13, 1938: 25, 27.

127"Laundry Copy Found Critics on Every Side", Advertising Age, August 31, 1931: 6.

128Ruth Schwartz Cowan, "Two Washes in the Morning and a Bridge Party at Night: The American Housewife Between the Wars", in Decades of Discontent, The Woman's Movement, 1920-1940, eds. Lois Scharf and Joan M. Jensen, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983): 177-197.

129Cowan, More Work for Mother: 194-197.

130E.B. Weiss, "An Analysis of 300,000 Inquiries", Printers Ink, May 21, 1931: 3-6, 105-108. Interestingly enough, the beauty appeal was most popular, the bath appeal next and housecleaning least appealing. See also, E.B. Weiss, "An Analysis of 685,154 Inquiries", Printers Ink Monthly, June 1932: 23.

131The conventional wisdom, largely supported by home economists, was that women disliked 'technical talk' and advertisers were encouraged to avoid it.

132Advertisement, Maclean's, May 15, 1938: 37.

133Advertisement, Maclean's, August 15, 1935: 3.

134Advertisement, Maclean's, April 1, 1927: 57.

135Advertisement, Maclean's, February 15, 1929: 72.

136Advertisement, Maclean's, February 1, 1930: inside cover page.

137Advertisement, Maclean's, March 1, 1931: 34.

138Advertisement, Chatelaine, March 1928: 71.

139Advertisement, Maclean's, January 1, 1920: 94.

140Advertisement, Maclean's, October 1, 1920: inside cover page.

141Advertisement, Maclean's, October 15, 1922: 53.

142Advertisement, Maclean's, June 15, 1923: 39.

143Advertisement, Maclean's, May 15, 1923: 74.

144 Advertisers often used an indirect approach, believing women appreciated male chivalry. They thought women preferred husbands to buy appliances for them, showing an insensitivity to women's financial dependence. Harrison McJohnston, "When Letters to the Husband Sell the Wife", Printers Ink, October 7, 1926: 25, 26, 28.

145 Advertisement, Chatelaine, November 1937: 5.

146 Advertisement, Maclean's, April 1, 1920: 75.

147 Advertisement, Maclean's, May 1, 1920: 75.

148 A machine which used vacuum cups instead of a gyator to clean clothes.

149 Advertisement, Maclean's, December 15, 1924: 41.

150 Hydro Lamp, June 1925.

151 Ibid.

152 Ibid.

153 "National Advertising and Household Budgets", Maclean's, January 1, 1921: 35.

154 Earnest Elmo Calkins, "The Place of Advertising in the Economic Scheme", Printers Ink, February 22, 1933: 3-6, 162-183.

155 Ibid.

156 Julius H. Barnes, President of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, "The Philosophy of American Industry", Printers Ink, February 7, 1924: 161-172.

157 George French, "Advertising, a Necessity of Life as Moderns Live it", Marketing, September 22, 1923: 172, 174; Chester M. Wright, "Has Advertising a Saturation Point?" Printers Ink, March 15, 1928: 2-8.

158 Jack Green, "Advertising -- a Creature of Progress", Sanitary and Heating Engineering, November 30, 1923: 356-357.

159 Richard Surrey, "Advertising -- Arch Enemy of Poverty and Disease", Printers Ink, December 10, 1925: 49-52.

160 Donald M. Marvin, "Teaming of Science, Art and Industry Greatly Benefits Humanity", Marketing, November 26, 1927: 397-398; B. W. Keightley, "Urges Advertising

Interests to Refute Criticisms of Advertising", Marketing, June 5, 1937.

161"Electricity Brings Prosperity", Macleans, October 1, 1930: 29.

162"Broken Shackles", Maclean's, May 1, 1927: 31.

163"The Guardian Force of City Life", Maclean's, September 1, 1930: 27.

164"The Quest for Youth", Maclean's, January 1, 1926: 1.

165"Visions", Maclean's, April 15, 1926: 35.

166"Electricity the Greater Canada of Tomorrow", Maclean's, October 15, 1926: 23.

167"Born to Rule An Electrical World", Maclean's, May 1, 1930: 27.

168"Comforts That Kings Would Have Envied", Maclean's, November 1, 1930: 27.

169"When the Living Room was the Parlour", Maclean's, October 1, 1928: 2.

170"Emancipation", Maclean's, March 15, 1930: 25.

171"New Hours of Freedom", Maclean's, April 1, 1930: 31.

172"Vocation", Maclean's, November 15, 1930: 27.

173Amos Bradbury, "To The Ladies", Printers Ink, February 21, 1935: 7-10, 102-103.

174Ibid.

175Ibid.

176Hydro Lamp, May 1926.

177Advertisement, Maclean's, October 1, 1920: inside cover page.

178Hydro Lamp, December, 1924.

179Riley.

180Hydro Lamp, November, 1924.

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181 Lamp, May, 1924.

182 Hydro Lamp, February 1924.

183 Ibid.

184 Ibid.

185 Hydro Lamp, May 1925.

186 Ibid.

187 Hydro Lamp, September 1925.

188 Advertisement, Maclean's, April 1, 1936: 29

189 Hydro Lamp, March 1924, January 1925.

190 Hydro Lamp, January 1924.

CHAPTER 5

The Application of Scientific Management to the Home

The application of business principles such as scientific management to women's traditional work in the home by 'household advisors' -- journalists for Canadian women's magazines, and women in the electrical and advertising industries -- was an attempt to reconcile domestic work with industrialism. These middle class urban women sought to mediate the impact of industrialization on the home through a propaganda campaign aimed at elevating the status of the private sphere to a position of equality with the public. They were both responding to the personal problems of many middle class business women in adjusting to housework in the servantless era, and attempting to raise the standards of less prosperous women by disseminating information on domestic technology and methods. Influenced both by first wave feminism which first espoused domestic reform, and by the 1920s business philosophy of promoting a

consumer culture on the promise of wealth and technology for the home, household advisors seized the opportunity to press demands for improved working conditions, greater financial autonomy and a revaluation of domestic labour.

Despite gaining some practical benefits, and promoting a kind of domestic equality in the popular press, the movement failed to revalue domestic labour. Its accepted parameters -- the sexual division of labour in the home and the male values of efficiency and specialization of labour -- were essentially incompatible. Due to the increased privatization of family life, scientific management could only be applied in a piecemeal and incomplete fashion. Household advisors succeeded only in reinforcing the sexual division of labour, while the imposition of male values on women's work threatened the traditional homemaker's autonomy.

Three groups of middle class professional women who were active in promoting domestic reform in the interwar period will be studied: women in the electrical industry, women in advertising, and women journalists writing for women's magazines.¹ While there may be others involved in domestic reform in the period, these are the principal figures involved at the commercial level. I have decided to call them household advisors because their chief role was to advise women on the use of new products and technologies, and new ideas affecting domestic work through popular

magazines and commercial outlets. But they also advised industry on the design, manufacture and advertising of domestic products. The term advisor reflects their subordinate position within industry, and serves to distinguish them from earlier domestic reformers who were not influenced by the 1920's business ideology.

Advertising and electrical women were relegated to a subordinate position within their industries, tolerated because of their links to women's groups who advocated consumer reform,² and because of the need to tap women's domestic expertise in selling products to women. In the advertising industry, it was felt that "women can frequently give the feminine slant when writing of things pertaining to their own sphere that are outside of a man's personal experience":³

If a boy has been around his mother's kitchen from his earliest years, has wiped the dishes for her and set the table and run errands for the soup ladle, the dishmop, the carpet sweeper -- he will have as good a background for writing copy on household things as a woman with similar early training.⁴

Given the rigidity of the sexual division of labour in the early 20th century, few men could claim such experience while practically all women could. It was an experience few could escape. Advertising in the early 20th century gave some a chance to put it to use in a more prestigious occupation than "housewife", although many were filling two sets of shoes.

Despite their confinement to the lower levels of the

advertising industry, women did have a significant input,⁵ and they were often quite critical of their male colleagues, when they felt women's interests were not adequately represented.⁶

Considering the presumed benefits which electricity would bring to them, women played a small part in the electrical industry. One woman contractor-dealer was featured in Electrical News probably because she was such a rarity. Miss E.L. Schwartzberg of Preston, Ontario, gave up ambitions to be a teacher when she became attracted to the electrical business. Electrical News reported that "this lady finances, manages, directs and carries out every function as ordinarily discharged by the proprietor of an electrical store, and does it efficiently too."⁷ Miss Schwartzberg's success was attributed to her "sympathetic salesmanship".

She can discuss electric ranges as one who uses them in her own home. The same thing applies to electric washing machines. That gives her a considerable advantage in dealing with the woman who is the deciding factor in the purchase of an electric appliance as she is the ultimate user.⁸

It is significant that Schwartzberg only supervised the wiring work, stating that "I could go and do the wiring myself without any trouble. I am afraid however, that would be too much a breach of the conventions; it would hurt business."⁹

The field of electrical engineering was even less

welcoming of women's talents. The Canadian Home Journal in 1930 reported that the only woman member of the Junior Branch of the Electric Institute of Canada was Hazel M. White, an employee of Northern Electric. The Canadian Home Journal reported that the field was the "undisputed possession of men," and any girl wishing to enter could expect to face stiff opposition. "At least two of our most famous Canadian colleges refuse to accept women in the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering."¹⁰ .

Miss White had attended Dalhousie University and taught school at the beginning of her career "as the idea of a woman doing electrical engineering was considered preposterous". The Government of Saskatchewan gave her her first position in electrical engineering in 1923 which led the way to the Northern Electric job.¹¹

Women's involvement in the electrical industry was primarily in support roles. Dealers found it expedient to hire women as demonstrators, sales people and advisors. Home Institute Departments of electric utilities were usually run by women, often home economists. These departments provided consumer education and instruction in appliance use.¹²

Women journalists wrote advice on general household concerns for Canadian homemakers in Canadian women's magazines. These women were somewhat freer from industry constraint than those who worked directly for industry, although the magazines' need to appease the advertiser

influenced them. One must also remember that household advice was a very small part of magazine content, with fiction playing a much larger role.

Household advisors were primarily educated middle class women, some of whom were home economists, while some moved into the field of advertising and/or journalism through retailing positions, stenography or newspaper work.¹³ In most cases, few sources remain which give insight into their private thoughts and feelings. Only their public writings remain. While there are some differences in emphasis and approach between these three groups of women, they all worked to convey the same message to Canadian women. They were themselves predominantly middle class, and the magazine medium, especially in the 1920s, was directed at middle class women and represented a middle class ideal. The magazine writers who promoted scientific management and/or business methods in the home often addressed the stresses encountered by business girls in adjusting to married life without the aid of servants. However, by the 1930s they were increasingly influenced by the business strategy of attempting to reach a mass audience, and by the expanding readership of national magazines. Magazines, then and now, flatter their readers by assuming a higher socio-economic status than is known to be the case; many readers were not middle class. The advertising and electrical women, who promoted new technologies for the home through commercial

outlets, adapted the message to the larger mass audience comprising large segments of the working class.

While it is not clear exactly what the class composition of magazine readers was, it is possible to make a crude comparison of levels of appliance saturation between the Hydro Electric Power Commission's urban customers and Chatelaine readers. A 1935 Chatelaine survey,¹⁴ with over 3000 respondents, indicates that 33% of Chatelaine readers used wood stoves, with electricity a close second (actual numbers not given), coal third, and gas in fourth place. This compares with Ontario Hydro saturation for electric ranges in the same year, of 27.3%. The survey also indicated that of the total number of electric range owners, 50% were in Ontario and 25% in Toronto. Ninety percent of Chatelaine readers reported using an electric washing machine compared with 40.1% HEPC customers. Only 3% had an ironing machine, compared with 1.6% for HEPC customers. There were almost 50% of Chatelaine readers owning a vacuum cleaner, and 28.9% HEPC customers. Among Chatelaine readers almost everyone had an iron, similar to the 93.5% HEPC saturation. Almost all Chatelaine readers had a radio, and over 50% had toasters. HEPC customers showed a 68.7% saturation on radios, and 53.5 on toasters. Only 15% of Chatelaine readers had water heaters (Ontario Hydro saturation, 7.3% for flat rate, and 8.6% booster heaters). Nine percent had a waffle iron, 8% a fan, 8% air heaters, and 4% mixers. Ontario hydro saturations for waffle iron,

mixers and fans were not given, and for air heaters, there was a comparatively high figure of 29.2% saturation. When asked what purchase Chatelaine readers anticipated, the refrigerator headed the list, with kitchen utensils, stoves, washing machines and vacuum cleaners following in popularity.

For many appliances -- range, ironing machine, iron, radio, toaster, water heater -- the saturation figures are surprisingly similar. Only for the washing machine and vacuum cleaner is there a much greater saturation for Chatelaine readers than for HEPC customers. Interestingly enough, the air heater shows a greater use by Ontario customers of the HEPC than by Chatelaine readers, for reasons unknown. Whether these figures indicate that most of Chatelaine readers were urban Ontarians, or whether there is less class disparity between HEPC customers and the average magazine reader than the middle class ideal of magazine content would indicate is not known.

The primary influence on household advisors was turn of the century domestic reform, part of the first wave feminist movement. Domestic reform was a reaction by women to the impact of industrialization on women's work. In Canada, middle class women's organizations, notably the YWCA, the National Council of Women and Women's Institutes which were active in a wide range of social reform activities from women's suffrage to public health, also promoted the

teaching of domestic science in Canadian schools. The campaign to have domestic science recognized as a legitimate subject to be taught in the public school system came to be identified with its most zealous proponent, Adelaide Hoodless. She sought to keep future Canadian mothers informed of developments in science and technology which would affect them in their work as homemakers.¹⁵ The role of germs in the spread of disease, methods of combatting the high rates of infant and maternal mortality, and the importance of sanitation, ventilation and nutrition were all conveyed to Canadian girls. As Barbara Riley has pointed out, domestic science classes also introduced Canadian girls to the latest technological advances for the home.¹⁶ Domestic reformers hoped to enhance the status of homemaking to attract middle class women to homemaking as a profession and working class women to domestic service. The application of science and technology to housework promised to lessen women's drudgery and give them more leisure time to devote to uplifting the moral tone and quality of family life. It also promised to improve the quality of working class family life.

The domestic reform movement has sometimes been portrayed as a conservative, anti-feminist attempt to restrict women's activities to the private sphere.¹⁷ There is no doubt that Hoodless saw women's role primarily as the guardian of family life, and her views helped win support among politicians and educational authorities. The home was

widely believed to have an important moral influence on its occupants with the wife/mother playing the role of moral guide to husband and children. However, the domestic reform program offered women some obvious practical benefits and, in addition, challenged the patriarchal devaluation of domestic labour.¹⁸ In this sense it was more than a reaction to threats against women's traditional role; it was a platform from which to demand improvements in women's working conditions and status. And, as Patricia Saidak has pointed out, there were others in the movement who did not share Hoodless's conservatism on the question of sex roles.¹⁹

Although anti-feminist in its acceptance of the sexual division of labour, Hoodless's program of enhancing the dignity and status of homemaking in an age when popular wisdom could scarcely contemplate the notion of women combining careers and marriage, had a certain appeal to women labouring in the home. In keeping with the then popular version of feminism which stressed women's right to a voice in public affairs based on her role in the family, Hoodless's attempts to give homemaking equal status with industrial labour must have seemed anything but conservative.

By the 1920s and 1930s many Canadian women had been trained in domestic science and the movement had become institutionalized in the home economics profession. As

popularizers of the tenets of domestic reform, these professional women also accepted the prevailing sexual division of labour which assigned homemaking to women and wage earning to men. The alliance they made with manufacturers and advertisers in the promotion of domestic products and new technologies influenced the direction of their "movement", as they adopted the business ideology and methods of the 1920s in their attempt to reach the goals set by earlier reformers. Thus they helped to promote a consumer culture. The assumption, however, that their interests, goals and motivations were identical with their collaborators²⁰ does not stand up to closer scrutiny.

As Stewart Even suggests, industry in the 1920s offered a commoditized solution to the problems of class and sexual inequality.²¹ As a means both of creating new markets and of compensating workers for the loss of control and traditional skills which the modern production process removed, industry cultivated a consumer culture. Respect for age, traditional skills, the value of thrift, community and the family all came under assault by these propagandists who sought to channel protest into consumption.²² While the consumerism of the 1920s was clearly a deliberate corporate strategy, its success should not lead the historian to assume the malleability of the consumer. Despite some very real resistance to this program, including an active and largely female-dominated consumer movement, the enticing and seductive promise of mass, large-scale upward mobility

appealed to many. Long term social costs were generally not foreseen in the enthusiasm to modernize and create wealth. The underlying assumption of technological progress heralding comparable social progress²³ made the sacrifice of personal autonomy in the workplace in exchange for large scale technological efficiency seem progressive. As well, the promise of technological transfer to the home via cars and refrigerators for workers offered real as well as psychological benefits.

Household advisors took this business strategy of promoting economic and technological growth through volume production and adapted it to the needs of women in the home, emphasizing the potential of the new wealth and prosperity to reduce drudgery for women. Like the earlier reformers they sought the benefits of science and technology for women in the home. They demanded for women's work the same benefits which they saw going to men in the workforce. They also looked for increased leisure as did their predecessors, although the 1920s shift toward efficiency rather than moralism in home management left the door open for women to take a more active role in the public sphere.

The role of technology in the program to upgrade the home is crucial. It is the link between household advisors and the earlier reformers, and the basis of their support for the business ideology of the 1920s. That household advisors believed in the promise of domestic technology is

undoubted. While advertising women and home economists were much more critical of the advertising fraternity in advertising trade journals than in popular magazines, which received a large measure of their revenue from advertising, in neither media did they question the beneficial impact of labour-saving domestic technology. That was a given. One professional woman, writing for Printers Ink, told advertisers:

We women take off our hats to all these wonderful household helps. We extol the mind that invented them, and bless the advertisers who bring them to our notice...²⁴

The excitement surrounding labour-saving technology is caught in this piece written for Macleans:

It is difficult to receive calmly the marvels of electric stoves, iceless refrigerators and all the contrivances that minimize labour. Some of the new ranges have perfect time and heat controls. It is possible to plug in the percolator and the double boiler at night with the timer so adjusted that the coffee and cereal will be automatically prepared to just the right degree of excellence at the breakfast hour ... Every day witnesses an increase in the multiplicity of tasks that can be done by machinery. Cunning mechanisms are freeing our hands from the bondage of labour and making it possible for us to learn to live by mind rather than by brawn. Machines are capturing magic and work which formerly took hours of time and involved hard labour is now done speedily and easily with superb effectiveness.²⁵

For these professional women who themselves found full-time homemaking stifling, domestic technology offered the opportunity to combine careers and homemaking. As well, it addressed many of the problems of the average housewife whom they represented and advised. For the middle class woman of

the 1920s struggling to adjust to housework in the servantless home, domestic technology offered a replacement, although a less than satisfactory one in many respects, for servants. For working class women, whom industry increasingly tried to reach by the 1930s, domestic technology offered labour-saving, an elevated standard of living, and an enhanced home life.

Mrs. Christine Frederick provided the model for household advisors to adapt business tools to women's work in the 1920s and 1930s. An American woman, she built a career, which began in 1911 and spanned several decades, on the application of scientific management to the home.²⁶ Frederick founded and directed the Applecroft Experiment Station, an experimental home for the Ladies Home Journal; was consulting household editor of that journal and several other women's magazines; conducted correspondence courses; and wrote several books on scientific management, including texts for home economics classes. She also wrote trade literature for manufacturers of household equipment, founded an advertising women's organization, advised industry on the marketing of home goods and lectured extensively.

Frederick was a professional-turned-housewife who became fatigued and discouraged by the endless monotony and drudgery of housework,²⁷ and encountered difficulty reconciling her experience with a strong commitment to the family as cornerstone of national life. She found a

personal solution by launching a writing and lecturing career which allowed her to combine her homemaking role with an active public life.²⁸

Scientific management was a major tool in the transition from the first factory system -- with its decentralized authority and powerful foremen who controlled the work process as well as hiring and firing procedures -- to the new factory system where professional managers took control.²⁹ Some of the more controversial aspects of scientific management, such as time and motion studies aimed at eliminating superfluous motions by the worker and the subdivision of the work process into numerous small tasks, had a de-skilling and alienating effect on workers. While its proponents alleged that it increased the efficiency and thus the wages of the worker, through incentive wage plans and differential piece rates, the centralization of authority in planning and personnel departments, production control systems, reorganized layout and design considerably reduced the autonomy of all workers, not just the dethroned foreman. Ironically, it was in the years 1911-1917, when Christine Frederick was adopting the ideas to help the middle class housewife reap the benefits of technological innovation, that scientific management came under attack from labour.³⁰

Frederick sought to apply business concepts in an attempt to achieve the goals of the domestic reform movement. Earlier reformers had focused on the educational

system. The 1920s business ideology which promoted economic growth, concentration of economic and technological resources, and the promise of technological developments on a mass scale, appealed to Frederick because it promised to bring domestic technology to women in the home. Scientific management was a way of channeling the tremendous economic and technological resources of the male business world to domestic reform goals. Scientific management was one buzzword among many used by domestic reformers and household advisors in their attempts to attach a legitimacy to domestic work which would put it on a par with public sphere work. Although Frederick sometimes lapsed into preachy and moralistic tones which could alienate her intended audience, her primary goal of saving women's labour remains clear. She believed that work schedules could ensure women an 8-hour day and that the application of technology to women's work could give them the same benefits that men enjoyed in offices, factories and farms.³¹

Frederick advised homemakers that excess steps and motion could be saved by the rearrangement of kitchen furniture and laundry equipment, borrowing here from the time and motion studies of Frank and Lillian Gilbreth.³² In the scientifically managed home, household procedures were standardized, utensils, pots and pans, etc. were hung or stored convenient to the work area, and the use of trays, lazy susans, cupboards and wheeled carts for the transport

of food or dirty dishes facilitated "efficient" housekeeping. Planning was a major component of the 'system'; not only budgetary and menu-planning but task planning.

It is difficult to measure the extent of the influence of the business ideology on the course of domestic reform in Canada as there is no Canadian woman, on a par with Frederick, whose career spans the pre-World War I era to the late 1930s. Frederick's ideas were influential in Canada through articles she wrote both for Canadian women's magazines,³³ and American journals such as the Ladies Home Journal which circulated widely in Canada. She was also active in the American advertising industry which dominated the Canadian industry, and influenced Canadian household advisors through her numerous writings in popular and trade publications.

In Frederick we can see the changes wrought by an increasing interdependence with business, and acceptance of the modern values of the 1920s consumer culture. Her early writings were flavoured with a preoccupation with 'home values' including thrift, the value of home cooking and a moralistic condemnation of the frivolous and parasitic flapper.³⁴ This moralism was replaced in 1929 with a philosophy of 'creative waste'³⁵ to which she credited prosperity and leisure for women.

Frederick's much maligned philosophy of 'creative waste' was another application of male methods to women's

work. Frederick attacked old fashioned frugality as a necessity of poverty which not only caused women endless labour but reinforced poverty. She felt that "the way to break the vicious deadlock of a low standard of living is to spend freely and even waste creatively".³⁶ Creative waste meant economic growth.

As a tribute to woman's genius the old concentration upon pinching economy is exceedingly left handed and negative, on par with tatting or elaborate hand embroideries, because it is essentially a petty, medieval accomplishment. It is an application of brains in the wrong place, for there is no future to penny squeezing beyond a certain point, not even health and good sense. We know today that women's energies should be applied to something else than the infinitesimal tasks on which they expended their energies many years ago.³⁷

Mabel Crews Ringland, a major Canadian advertising woman, also believed that women were as much entitled to the benefits of progressive obsolescence as men. If men could scrap their battleships and cars, before their use was exhausted, in favour of the latest technological developments, then women should be able to do the same with appliances.³⁸

For Frederick old fashioned frugality was indiscriminate, petty, and based on a cruel scarcity of resources. It was also extremely labour-intensive, and the bulk of that onerous responsibility for stretching the resources as far as they would go fell to women. As women often suffered the worst from poverty, given the unequal

distribution of goods within the family, they had little interest in protecting the social virtue of thrift. The practice of reserving the highest quality foods and other basic necessities for wage earning men, and denying women their share, was still prevalent, all the more so for the poor. As shown in Chapter 3, with the few wealthy farm families who electrified their homes as well as their barns, technological resources were spent on saving women's labour in the home, only when there was surplus after male needs were met.

Frederick also attacked the male penchant for spending money and technological resources on war and on liquor. She considered prohibition a great boon for women which would lead to more money being spent on the family, by women.³⁹

She welcomed the post World War I inclination of men to abandon warfare for domesticity:

Man has decided to glorify the fireside rather than the God Mars and to graft upon himself some of the more humanitarian principles with which women have always been concerned. He will fight nature, not himself; make war upon disease, discomfort, ugliness, hunger, ignorance, poverty, and misery rather than upon other men.⁴⁰

She felt the new goal of creating wealth was one "in which women and the family can share mightily. That it makes Mrs. Consumer the pivotal centre of modern life is simply the logic of nature."⁴¹

Frederick did not see any conflict between her professional self-interest in advocating democratized

consumption and her commitment to a kind of quasi-feminism centred on domestic life. Like the utility managers who believed in the social good of promoting greater electricity consumption, Frederick and other women like her in industry believed that the industry/advertising program could be adapted to meet the goals of women.

While in Frederick's moralistic early period, leisure for women was justified in terms of allowing women more time for homemaking -- that is, moral missionary work with husband and children -- the emphasis in the more consumer oriented 1920s shifts to leisure for the sake of women's self-development and pleasure.⁴²

The influence of women's alliance with business can also be seen in the evolution of scientific management itself. The early program was wide-ranging and included many methods and techniques including budgetary and task planning which required little or no capital investment, with labour saving technology being only one part of the program, although an important one. In time, however, labour saving technology became the main focus of scientific management. There is also evidence, as shown in the final chapter, that domestic technology was the most popular aspect of the scientific management program.

While the interwar period will be treated as a whole, there are significant differences between the 1920s and 1930s. In the magazine advice literature and advertising of the 1920s there were depictions of working wives, who sent

out their laundry, used restaurants and other outside services to help combine housekeeping and career interests; such women however, were rare in the 1930s. Helen Campbell said in 1933: "In spite of the vote and a multiplicity of interests to engage her attention, the modern woman is above everything else the *chatelaine* - the mistress of her castle".⁴³ When Chatelaine learned that most women did most of their laundry at home,⁴⁴ the magazine began to recommend this practice. Home cooking was treated similarly with more recipe suggestions being offered. This privatization of domestic labour probably reflects three factors. One is the Depression, with its escapist emphasis on the home as a retreat from a chaotic world. Another is the influence of advertisers anxious to sell domestic products, and finally the wider socio-economic base of magazine readership in the 1930s vis a vis the 1920s.

There is, however, a down side to the 1920s portrayal of the career woman. The traditional housewife, by contrast, was more likely to be castigated for her martyrdom and her failure to adopt modern methods and techniques than was the case in the 1930s. As Vipond suggests, there was a dual image of women in the magazines of the 1920s. The homemaker was the efficient business partner of her husband, as well as the preserver of moral values in the traditional home.⁴⁵

In the Depression decade, there was a more positive

reinforcement of the housewife role, to the exclusion of the working wife alternative, and the use of outside services as an aid to housekeeping. As efficiency replaced moralism as the guiding principle for home life in the interwar years, women were freer to enter the public realm, although there was a cost. The traditional housekeeper's expertise was denigrated, as modern industry and technology attempted to remake the home in its own image.

As White pointed out in her study of British women's magazines, the need to accommodate the advertiser was real enough and could affect editorial policy, but it also had to be weighed against the need to satisfy the magazine's readers.⁴⁶ The ability to attract advertisers was closely linked with magazine sales.

While advertisers did not impose, but reflected and thus reinforced major philosophical positions such as the sexual division of labour, they did impose real constraints. Allying with business interests, whose primary motive was product sales, led to an emphasis on technology as the totality of domestic reform. In the pre-World War era and even in the 1920s it had been one aspect only. The 1920s advice literature is more general, with articles on household procedures, advice on how to wash clothes, do the spring cleaning, how to make inexpensive improvisations for household commodities, and so on. By the 1930s, however, most articles gave only specific advice on how to chose a washing machine, refrigerator, range, or other appliance,

and often featured photos courtesy of major appliance manufacturers. Even this advice was severely limited by the inability to perform product comparisons, of which manufacturers were nervous. Journalists could offer Canadian women no more advice than to buy from a reputable manufacturer, and to follow the manufacturer's instructions for use and care. As a compromise between consumers' interest in gaining access to more product information and manufacturers' interests in using emotional advertising appeals to avoid giving it, Chatelaine and Canadian Home Journal offered their Seal of Approval. Experimental kitchens were set up to test all products advertised in the magazines with only those found satisfactory receiving the Seal of Approval.⁴⁷ Although this eliminated obvious frauds, it was a far cry from the impartial product comparisons which were beginning to be offered by consumers' groups.

By the 1930s, there was less emphasis on woman as the family's financial manager with its implied financial autonomy within the home, and more emphasis on the notion of Mrs. Consumer, the professional buyer. The latter concept was of greater utility to industry and advertiser, as it could be exploited to encourage women to consume more products, but did not necessarily address the question of financial control within the family.

Articles also tended to complement the advertising

message. General or controversial pieces were avoided and there was little or no discussion of women's role outside the home, particularly in the 1930s. The function of magazines was to help women adjust to the status quo. Protest was discouraged, individual solutions to problems encouraged, and married women advised to make the most of the situation they found themselves in.

The Advice Literature

Canadian magazine writers advised Canadian homemakers to impose efficiency on their housekeeping routines in order to save labour, although it was not always clear what the resulting leisure time was to be used for. In the early reform movement it had clearly been for moral guidance to husband and children but by the 1920s moralism was mixed with women's self interest.

One Canadian advisor, in a 1922 Maclean's article, elaborated her particular housekeeping routine. A household budget allegedly took care of financial squabbles, as husband's and wife's allowances were distributed after bills were paid.⁴⁸ Meals were planned in advance, providing for more systematic shopping. Except for meat and greens all shopping for the week was done at one time. The rest of the article offered useful tips on reducing the work of dishwashing and other cleaning chores, however it scarcely constituted a system.⁴⁹

The importance of a well planned work space, taking

time and motion studies into account, was emphasized. The influence of advertisers anxious to exploit these ideas to sell expensive labour-saving equipment and materials can also be seen. It is especially evident in the 1930s when depression conditions rendered advertising revenue scarce. In 1933 Helen Campbell reported on the essentials of the modern kitchen and laundry room for Chatelaine readers.⁵⁰ Campbell was director of the Chatelaine Home Institute which tested products advertised in the magazine,⁵¹ and recipes and housekeeping techniques discussed in the journal articles.⁵²

An efficient plan for one's 'domestic laboratory' (or kitchen) required attention to the four main types of work which made up the kitchen routine: preparation of food, cooking, serving and washing up. "Logical sequence of our activities in meal preparation and service is an important point to consider in order to travel the shortest possible route and avoid the retracing of steps", reported Campbell.⁵³ First in the order of the work process of meal preparation was a surface area for receiving supplies to be sorted and prepared for storage. A refrigerator should be nearby where the food could be placed with a minimum of steps. A cupboard or cabinet should be next in line providing a compact work centre with food supplies and utensils close at hand. As cooking was next in the process, the range should be handy with ample counter space nearby and a utility closet for frequently used utensils. The

sink, centre of the dishwashing task, should if possible be placed under a window to provide plenty of light.

Homemakers were advised that the sink as well as counter and appliance tops should be "properly adjusted to prevent stooping and reduce back fatigue"; thirty-six inches from the floor to the rim being recommended for most women.⁵⁴

The backbreaking height of 32", common in grandmother's day, had been eliminated from the modern kitchen. A comfortable step stool was recommended, allowing the worker to sit for some tasks, again reducing back fatigue, and a becoming colour scheme, it was alleged, would cheer the worker.⁵⁵

Washable walls and counters, and a restful, easy-to-clean floor covering, such as linoleum, and a ventilating fan to take out unpleasant odours were further aids to comfort and labour-saving in the new kitchen.

The modern, well-equipped laundry was also designed to save the Canadian homemaker's labour.⁵⁶ A separate room was advised, preferably on the first floor to avoid carrying wet clothes upstairs to the clothesline. Washable paint on the walls in a bright cheerful colour, attractive easily cleaned linoleum on the floors, and small rubber mats placed at work centres were all advised.⁵⁷ Good lighting and ventilation, convenient arrangement of equipment, a comfortable stool, tubs and tables adjusted to a good working height to prevent stooping, an ironing machine and an ironing board built into the wall, all contributed,

Canadian homemakers were advised, to an efficient, yet pleasant workplace.

Many of these suggested reforms were eventually incorporated into standard home and kitchen designs and no doubt improved domestic conditions. A notable exception is the first floor laundry -- a sensible idea which seems to have been scrapped due to space considerations in the smaller homes of the servantless era.

Matthews points out that the warmth and hospitality of the old kitchen which also served as meeting place was lost with this streamlining trend.⁵⁸ One must remember, however, that the old kitchen was a reality only for the middle class, was extremely labour intensive and required servants' labour to maintain. In fact, it was often the domain of the servants. It was, therefore, not appropriate to the twentieth century reality of the servantless home. Several household advisors remembered with nostalgia 'grandmother's' kitchen but hastened to add that its upkeep was hard on women. Pine floors had to be scrubbed regularly and repainted often, walls scrubbed to remove the soot from wood/coal stoves and coal oil lamps, tables with wooden tops scrubbed frequently, stoves polished, and iron pots and pans were heavy to lift. Says one advisor:

It seems to me that there was something eternal about grandmother's kitchen. It was warm and fragrant and comfortable and had a permanence about it like the trees and mountains that were visible through its windows. There was never any hurry in grandmother's kitchen, but always a great serenity. I am sure that there was much

time occupied in polishing and scrubbing that might have been used to better advantage.⁵⁹

The emphasis on routing the work process in the new kitchen through its various stages to avoid unnecessary steps, however was not entirely appropriate to the conditions of domestic labour as performed in most homes. Frederick strongly advised homemakers against performing several tasks at once, in order to systematize their work procedures. However, constant interruptions by children or others requiring the homemaker's attention probably prevented such rationalization in most homes. Interestingly enough, scientific management proponents rarely ever mentioned such interruptions, and did not try to incorporate aspects of domestic labour other than housework and the transformation of wage income into goods and services for household use. The emphasis on efficiency in home management left little room for the care of children, and the care of working and dependent adults.

Once the work area was set up to eliminate any unnecessary steps or superfluous motions, the housekeeper could begin to apply efficient methods to her work. One 1920s article on part-time housekeeping gives some useful tips to women who combined business and/or other interests with housekeeping. This is one of the few articles which is clear on women's use of leisure time. There are housekeepers, the author reported, "who through choice or necessity divide their time between their homes and

business, profession, sport or social life".⁶⁰

Many women are in business or following a profession or course of study, others whose families are grown and away from the home, have thrown themselves into club work or organized charities. These women cannot be tied to the home all day in order to keep house for two or three adults and there is no need of it, even where there is no maid, if an efficient system is followed.⁶¹

These homemakers were encouraged to "employ the services of the professional dry cleaner, seamstress, window washer, floor polisher", and content themselves with factory canned fruits and jellies. The middle class orientation of this article is typical of the early 1920s, and of the use of scientific management by women to provide themselves with greater leisure to enter professional or business life. The analogy with male work was presented as a way of asserting women's right to equal treatment in the home. The homemaker was advised to "consider it from the viewpoint of the business man":

He doesn't spend 8 hours at the office and then try to do another day's work at home before midnight. Why should the woman needlessly expend nervous energy trying to do so?⁶²

Presumably if the housekeeper was efficient enough, she would enjoy the status and working conditions of men. It was conceded that this 'system' could best be employed by a housekeeper who enjoyed the advantages of gas or electric oven equipped with time or temperature controls so that meals could cook in her absence.⁶³ Clearly domestic technology played a key role in applying scientific

management to the home, so it is not surprising that household advisors joined their business colleagues in trying to spread the use of appliances to larger groups of women.

The use of commercially prepared products was also advocated as a labour saving measure, appealing to middle class professional women, especially in the 1920s. In a series entitled "Adventures in Home Building", one Maclean's article, subtitled "What most women don't know is that housekeeping can be fun instead of drudgery."⁶⁴ described a young wife who found it more economical to buy baked goods in a shop rather than make her own. Not only were these products cheaper, but they were usually better than homemade, the article stated. "Every day and in every way, housekeeping is becoming simpler and simpler because of the gradual socialization of much that was formerly produced at home -- preserving, bread-making, laundry work and the like."⁶⁵ Another enlightened young couple insisted that "laundry work could be more efficiently and economically handled outside the home than in it, and the time thus saved more profitably occupied."⁶⁶ This advocacy of commercial services was dropped in the 1930s with the trend toward privatization of domestic labour. By the 1930s, for example, laundry work was to be done at home.

But how were women to obtain the expensive capital equipment to upgrade their domestic workshop to husband's standards? Or, to purchase expensive commercial substitutes

for home-made products? For many women the reality of financial dependence left them little recourse but to beg, plead, cajol and nag. The advice articles are full of ammunition to fuel women's arguments in favour of re-allocation of the family's financial resources from husband to wife. While an argument based on simple justice was often used, so too was the more expedient appeal to self-interest. Advisors asserted that women deserved working conditions on a par with men's because their labour was difficult, demanding and vital to the nation's health and welfare. Financial autonomy was an essential ingredient in improving the status of the homemaker and an important part of the scientific management program.

Everywoman's World asserted that the modern bride "realizes that she is as much entitled to the most up-to-date homemaking helps as her husband is to his smart filing cabinet or his adding machine".⁶⁷ One Canadian Home Journal article asserted that "the homemaker's time and strength have a value that has to be considered".⁶⁸ However, husbands were also reminded, through their wives, that better equipment would make for happier, more companionable wives, more comfortable homes, better meals, and more quality family time. One author wrote admiringly of the woman who makes her home a lively background for her family's lives, and has plenty of herself left to take an active part in its enjoyment.⁶⁹ In the same article,

however, she measured the worth of household technology in terms of reducing wear and tear on the house and contents.⁷⁰

Still, all of this posturing did nothing to alter the handicap of financial dependence. The household advisors addressed this problem by asserting the wife's right to manage the family finances. Clearly, if women were to be taken seriously as professionals, they must have at least equal partnership with their husbands in financial affairs. While the women's press was full of advice on household accounting systems, and made reference to the homemaker as controller of the family purse strings, it was never quite clear exactly what this meant. For Frederick, the family's financial manager kept the household accounts. She rejected the household allowance system as a relic of the past which prevented women from seeing the whole financial picture, resulted in extravagance and one-sided expenditure, and forced women into the undignified necessity of begging or skimping for every penny they should have by right.⁷¹ Magazine advisors asserted unequivocally that women had a right to a share of their husband's income,⁷² whether they merely received an allowance or handled all the finances. Most advisors stopped short of advocating salaries for housewives, though.

In the advice column of the Canadian Home Journal, husbands who refused to share control over the family's purse strings were harshly condemned. One young woman, engaged to be married to a man who refused to discuss

financial matters on the grounds 'it was none of her business', was advised "marriage should be a true partnership in which both members of the firm have equal knowledge of the assets at their command".⁷³ Given the high regard normally shown by magazine writers for the marital state, the fact that this young woman was advised to consider a postponement, indicates the seriousness with which financial autonomy was viewed. Everywoman's World advised women contemplating marriage to put romance aside long enough to decide upon the terms of financial responsibility for the upcoming marriage.⁷⁴ Though it may have been more of a prescriptive posture than an accurate reflection of reality, the insistence by household advisors that women were financial partners in marriage indicates a strong sense of the justice of such an arrangement. The question of how to force men to cooperate in instituting this state of financial equality was not addressed, however.

Some historians have suggested that working class women did not suffer as great a degree of financial dependence as middle class women, citing evidence that "the majority of husbands either shared budgeting or allocated the greater part of their wages to their wives withholding only enough perhaps to pay for smokes or lunches or an occasional beer".⁷⁵ Because there is little or no surplus left after necessities are bought, there is allegedly no argument over who controls the purse. It is a responsibility -- and not

always a pleasant one -- of the wife, to stretch the money far enough to cover expenses.

However, there is no conclusive evidence that this working class custom was universal. As well, given the imbalance of power within the family, the husband's "allowance" was determined exclusively by him, and the wife and children left to stretch the remainder far enough to survive.* There was no recourse for a wife who felt she received less than her fair share of the family wage. Women's support of prohibition was in part motivated by the economic deprivations caused by men who took too great a share of the family wage to the local pub. In addition, the low status of wife and children vis a vis the wage earner justified the common practice of depriving women and children of comparable nutritional and clothing standards.⁷⁶ There may be less surplus to spend in absolute dollars in working class families, but the issue of allocation of resources within the family is no less real. Working class women did not have a medium to complain in, as middle class women did, hence the historian does not know how they felt about family finances.

As necessities are socially defined, they are constantly in a state of change. And, as incomes increased and prices of new commodities such as electrical appliances dropped, some products moved quickly from luxury to necessity. Yet the perception of luxury versus necessity may be very different when viewed from the wife's

perspective than from the husband's.

In addition to, and in conjunction with, their demand for financial autonomy within marriage, household advisors sought greater status for the homemaker. While their predecessors had thus hoped to keep middle class women at home, working class women in domestic service, and improve the conditions in working class homes, by the interwar period the decline in availability of servants changed the texture of reform. Household advisors applied the language of science and/or business to domestic work, in hopes of revaluing the work primarily for the benefit of middle class women adapting to servantless status. Analogies with work in the public sphere; the insistence on labour saving technology for women on par with industry; the attempt to give women the same eight hour day as their husbands worked; all were based on the assumption that domestic work had a value equal to industrial work and deserved the same rewards.

Other Canadian women used a similar strategy for domestic reform, as Marilyn Barber has pointed out in her article on Saskatchewan farm women's efforts to relieve household drudgery. Working within the existing sexual division of labour, these farm women "sought to place women's work in the farm home on a basis of equality with men's work in the fields and the barn".⁷⁷ Through the women's pages of farm periodicals and through farm women's

organizations, they challenged the allocation of financial resources to male labour saving technology, and demanded similar benefits for farm women.⁷⁸ The similarities between this rural campaign which was relatively free of commercial input, and that of the household advisors working for Chatelaine, Canadian General Electric and the like, indicates a broad popular support. Saskatchewan farm women differed from household advisors, however, in having a clear vision for women's leisure hours. Women were to become involved in political life. Household advisors were largely silent on women's role outside the home except as regards the safe traditional pursuits such as charity, club work, and recreation.

Unlike feminists who demanded greater equality of the sexes in the public sphere, household advisors sought equality of the spheres. While conservative in its acceptance of the sexual division of labour, the program did much to alter the material circumstances of women's domestic work by having economic/technological resources applied to women's work which the earlier domestic reformers had advocated.

Some historians of domestic labour have questioned the benefits of domestic technology. Matthews, for instance, questions the value of preground, prepackaged coffee due to its inferior taste. She has a similar critique for baking powder over whipped egg whites as a leavening agent for cakes.⁷⁹ Yet these are middle class aesthetics, which

ignore or downplay the labour saving potential of domestic technology in its entirety. While some women might prefer the quality of cakes made with egg whites, most would forego the slight increase in quality rather than invest in the labour intensive job of beating endless egg whites, until "the arm ached".⁸⁰ When one considers the major technological improvements and their contribution to raising the material standard of living for all -- running water, electricity, gas and commercial food products of all types, the material benefits are obvious. If one wants to attack the technology, most particularly the way in which it was disseminated, one must look at long term social costs. These social costs, some of which were unforeseen, will be examined in the next chapter. In terms of material benefits, however, one cannot argue the superiority of the scrubboard over the washing machine, or the coal oil lamp over the electric light bulb.

But the household advisors' program also challenged the patriarchal devaluation of women's domestic labour. As this notion is the underlying justification for the appalling working conditions of domestic workers which they sought to improve, and the financial dependence they consistently attacked, the demand is fundamental and the program consistent within its parameters. Had the program been feasible to implement, it would have constituted a major challenge to patriarchal authority in the home. The close

relationship between women's domestic labour and workforce participation, rendered this attack on the patriarchal devaluation crucial. The nature of women's work in industry and the professions was shaped by their perceived domestic expertise. As long as domestic work was devalued, so also would be teaching, nursing, waitressing and all of the other jobs women did because they fit the stereotype of women's traditional role.

The effect of consumerism on patriarchy has been little studied and largely downplayed. Even acknowledges that consumerism attacked the integrity of the home by removing women's tasks to the factory.⁸¹ Yet it also attacked patriarchal authority in the home, giving women a clear interest in allying with capitalists. While women had more reason to be ambivalent toward the industry monopoly over control of economic resources -- a topic to be broached in the next chapter -- consumerism's products as well as its attack on patriarchy did offer women some benefits.

Household advisors' support for domestic technology was uncritical and unanimous. Likewise, women both in and out of industry did not question the sexual division of labour in the home, advocating instead a higher status for the homemaker. Without private writings for any of these women journalists, or industry women, it is difficult to clarify their views on women's role in the public sphere. While they publicly adhered to the conventional wisdom that homemaking was woman's primary vocation, they did not voice

any opposition to careers for married women, and they did offer advice to women who combined homemaking with careers or other outside activities, particularly in the 1920s. Both Frederick and Mabel Crews Ringland were married women with children and identified themselves as both housekeepers and career women. Not enough is yet known about other women in industry to ascertain whether Frederick and Ringland are the norm or an exception. Professional women, in their critique of the advertiser, also insisted that business women were important consumers, and that all of the attention should not go to the housewife.⁸²

Household advisors' exclusive concern with the home may be a reflection of the advertiser's influence, as topics which might be controversial and which could not be used to sell products were generally avoided in the women's magazines.⁸³ The question of women's role outside the home was not addressed in the program of the household advisors. They displayed an indifference rather than a hostility to women's integration into the public sphere on a basis of equality with men. In this regard, they differed from the farm women of Saskatchewan, who were not affiliated with commercial interests.

The strong ethic of professionalism also led to a belief in specialization of labour, thus reinforcing the tendency to adopt the sexual division of labour. This may explain in part the hostility to the idea of males sharing

domestic responsibility with women. The strategy of raising women's status to that of a professional, rather than trying to integrate domestic work with public sphere labour, was compatible with the prevalent belief that wealth and progress followed from specialization of labour. The sexual division of labour is, of course, one of the earliest forms of specialization of labour which has freed men to pursue ambitious projects leaving women a greater share of maintenance labour.

Household advisors did not see any conflict between their interests as women, their desire to represent women in industry, and their professional self-interest. While Frederick could clearly be authoritarian in approach, her own experience of housekeeping led her into the campaign to professionalize housework, and it appears that her support for industry was motivated by a belief, then very widespread, that industry could create great wealth.

Women's support for the industry program of democratized consumption through advertising was not unequivocal, however. Women in advertising were especially critical of their male colleagues for failing to take women seriously as professionals in their homemaking role. Advertising women also criticized their industry for failing to give women enough information on products to enable them to make intelligent choices.⁸⁴ They condemned the use of the pretty dumb blond stereotype to sell products, as well as the use of manipulative emotional appeals in advertising products

for the home.⁸⁵ Women such as Mabel Crews Ringland, an active writer, advertiser and household advisor for T. Eaton Co., took many of the concerns of the growing consumer movement of the 1930s to industry. She made stinging denunciations of the male failure to take women's protests against corporate and advertising abuses seriously.⁸⁶ Even Frederick, who was no friend of the consumer movement, condemned the use of the pretty girl to adorn ads. She reminded advertising colleagues, who loved to quote studies depicting the average woman consumer as having the intelligence of a 14 year old, that this intelligence was "of a native kind rather than a mere school rated kind, and that this instinctive, practical intelligence is most competent shrewd and effective."⁸⁷

Professional women both in and out of industry were critical of advertising for the same reasons, although independent women such as Alice Edwards, President of the American Home Economics Association, were more outspoken. Edwards felt there was an educational role for the advertiser to play, especially in the dissemination of information on nutritive values of foods, the role of germs in the spread of disease and so on. She felt that most products were worthy and that advertising, if ethical, was a legitimate pursuit. She condemned the advertiser, however, for giving insufficient information on products, making exaggerated claims, and resorting to manipulative emotional

appeals, rather than rational ones.⁸⁸ She parted company with industry women on how to reform advertising. Industry women hoped for internal reform, while those outside the industry began to look for consumer information from impartial sources, such as the Consumer Research Bulletin, which began publishing in the 1930s, and to support the movement to buy on the basis of detailed product specifications rather than national advertising.

Yet the influence of business was not all negative for women. Advertisers allied with domestic reformers in depicting the modern homemaker as the efficient, financially autonomous "business partner" both hoped to make her. Their combined propaganda strongly reinforced the image.

Also, with the concern for efficiency rather than morality in the home, came a loosening of the ties that bound women to the home. The notion that married women could work outside the home was gaining acceptance in the interwar period.⁸⁹ Frederick's earlier insistence that women's primary role remained in the home gave way to an acceptance of the two earner family.⁹⁰

The household advisors of the interwar period were ultimately unsuccessful in applying industrial techniques such as scientific management to household labour, or in having homemaking recognized as a real profession with the prestige, financial autonomy and recognized expertise professionalism entailed. In practical terms, however, their program was a success. As advisors to advertisers and

manufacturers, household advisors advocated the application of technological resources to the home. Democratization of consumption fulfilled this objective. They helped to popularize, among consumers and within industry, many commonsense, practical ideas and products such as proper working heights for kitchen surfaces, toe space, and adequate lighting and ventilation. They also informed women of everything from vitamins and calories to the value of labour-saving devices to lessen time spent in housework. And they helped popularize ideas such as the value of domestic labour, and financial partnership within marriage. How much this changed the lives of individual women, touched by their propaganda, we can never know, but their practical commonsense ideas must have had appeal to women.

Yet despite making a very real contribution on a practical level, the household advisors' program was riddled with contradictions and inconsistencies which ultimately doomed it to failure. By demanding the benefits of science and technology to ease the burdens of domestic labour, they recognized the housewife's time and labour as valuable, yet they also denigrated women's traditional skills and expertise by trying to impose a male-defined system on the private realm. The assumption of male authorship of household labour-saving technologies, for example, took some of the control over domestic work out of women's hands. One magazine article, which advised the use of a spray hose in

washing dishes, attributed the 'invention' to 'some man' who was reduced to washing dishes while his wife went on summer vacation.⁹¹ He simply applied the technique of washing the motor car to washing the dishes and presto! -- centuries of doing dishes the hard way were obliterated.

Given this frame of reference, the application of business-like methods to housework implied not only that grandmother's way of doing things was inferior to the modern homemaker's, but that women's methods were inferior to men's. Technology offered benefits but it also encroached upon the one sphere where women did have power, the home. As professional women sided with men in promoting this male controlled technology, a rift between the traditional homemaker and the career women was created.

A 1922 Maclean's article, that was nearly as long on criticism of housewifely shortcomings as it was on advice, was typical of the critical, condescending tone of magazine literature, especially in the 1920s.⁹² Entitled "Housekeeping and Happiness" and subtitled "How Introducing Business Methods Into the Home Helped to Make a Small Salary Adequate", it addressed the plight of the business girl turned housewife struggling to run a household without a domestic servant. The piece begins with a visit to the newly married Marie whose homemaking experience had been anything but happy:

Ted wasn't making enough for Marie to have a maid and she didn't ever seem to have any leisure. Always there was baking or mending or cleaning to

be done. She just finished the dishes from one meal and it was time to turn around and prepare for the next. She was too tired to go out; greasy dishwater and furniture polish were ruining her hands ...⁹³

The once pretty Marie had stopped curling her hair and powdering her nose and complained bitterly "I'm losing all my friends -- no woman can keep intelligent friends and be a kitchen drudge, doing her own work."⁹⁴ Marie gets a less than sympathetic ear from the young author, herself about to embark on the profession of housekeeping, who tells her "you can if you use as much intelligence in your work as you use in impressing your friends ... you make me sick."⁹⁵

This interchange was followed by a tearful scene in which Marie gave in to her despair. She reproached her new husband for not telephoning to say that he had eaten fish for lunch, checking that she had not prepared the same for the evening meal, and complained that he "never thought of anything but his stomach and the office". With this the indignant young author departed, advising the young husband to "use a shingle on that girl", and vowed that no such scenes would be enacted in her household, either before friends or alone.⁹⁶

While many of the household advice articles offered useful information, the dissemination of knowledge was liberally spotted with lectures to the young housewife:

Housework is no excuse for a woman falling into discontentment, into slovenly ways or nagging habits. Neither can it withhold her from intelligent society nor from enjoying more leisure than she ever knew as a business

girl. But housework is made the excuse for laziness, for uncoiffed hair, and unkempt hands, for the loss of friends and the waning of that interest in, and knowledge of the outer world -- for the loss of that very alertness and animation which first attracted her husband to her.⁹⁷

Authors advised women to put 'brain' into their housework:

Save time and you'll have leisure. Be efficient and you'll be satisfied. Keep abreast of the times and you'll have respect. Keep happy and make a home happy and you'll win the homage of your husband -- his friends and your own.⁹⁸

As a further insult to women trained by their mothers in the more traditional methods of housekeeping, young women who solved the housework problem in the articles did so by applying their business training to setting up their new homes.

Gypsy has overturned some hoary traditions in housekeeping but in their place she has put efficiency which is rapidly ousting tradition in practically every line of endeavour.⁹⁹

One fictional young husband delivered a stinging denunciation of old-fashioned women who failed to take full advantage of the products of the male inventive genius:

I consider, said Sandy, that a homemaker is not keeping abreast of the times who has things done in her house that can be more economically and competently done in places set apart for such purposes. Men, he continued oratorically, are constantly inventing household devices which will provide women with more leisure, but the dear things will cling to old ideas and are in the majority of cases, hostile to change. I can remember the horror expressed by my grandmother at the idea of bread being provided for the family by the baker, but nowadays homemade bread is a most unusual production, and often is unpalatable,

because it is produced unscientifically.¹⁰⁰

Such statements displayed an arrogance and insensitivity few women could relate to. The rhetoric showed little sympathy for the very real frustrations of domestic work and little respect for traditional skills and methods. Further, the underlying causes of women's conservatism in adopting new methods and technologies, that is, their lack of independent financial resources and exclusion from technological expertise, were not addressed. The fact that these modern ideas were sometimes expressed by men only served to reinforce the average homemaker's impression that scientific management in the home represented a male intrusion upon woman's traditional sphere. The women journalists' zealous condemnation of old fashioned martyrdom on the part of women was not matched in the advertising message. The advertiser was more careful to flatter the housewife. Professional women were particularly anxious, it would appear, to shed the low status of pre-modern housewifery.

Household advisors clearly believed that, to become the equals of their husbands, they had to accept male-defined values and standards. The fact that many of the women who applied scientific methods did so in conjunction with their husbands indicates a desire on the part of women to be companions to them, sharing their work and lives. This would indicate women's support for companionship within marriage, and reflects the breakdown of separate cultures

for women and men, characteristic of the 19th century.¹⁰¹

One article, describing a woman's transformation from old fashioned to 'efficient' housekeeping, cites the new interest her husband took in her work as a decided plus.¹⁰² While the spirit of co-operation between husband and wife offered a real opportunity, it could also impose a new and sometimes unwelcome standard. The ideal homemaker was not only wife and mother, by now working largely without domestic help, but an intelligent 'professional' woman keeping abreast of developments in the world of business and politics.

The assumption of male authorship of domestic technology on the part of household advisors reinforced traditional female passivity and exclusion from technological expertise. These women also downplayed their own very real contribution to domestic reform as industry advisors. In their enthusiasm to gain the benefits of 'male' technology for women, they inadvertently threatened female autonomy in the private sphere, and reinforced traditional passivity in the public.

Household advisors, in their efforts to gain recognition for women's labour, tended to forget that the values of the private sphere were not only different from but often in opposition to the public sphere. Domestic labour was devalued, not because individual women were inefficient, as propaganda on scientific management for the

home implied, but because the labour was 'unproductive' according to the public sphere's measurement of value -- wages or profits. The devaluation of domestic labour was rooted in the public sphere values the household advisors so enthusiastically endorsed. Thus they could offer no means, short of moral suasion, to force men to recognize housewives' labour.

The household advisors' maternal feminist predecessors had been able to mount an effective critique of industrialism by measuring its mania for productivity and profit against the values of the private sphere. Their goal was to humanize the public sphere with what they saw as the more ethical values inculcated by women in the home. While their old fashioned moralism regarding the home could be restrictive for women, it had a radical potential for reform. In fact, many of the women active in political life in the interwar years were nursed by the maternal feminist sense of outrage against the anti-humanist abuses of industrialism.¹⁰³ It would appear that by accepting the industrial standard, along with the sexual division of labour which confined women to a devalued domestic role, household advisors sacrificed the independent ethical standards associated with the private sphere. In gaining the advantages of male technology, household advisors also lost the will and ability to criticize the male world. The distance between women's interests and industry's interests grew smaller, until they were almost indistinguishable.

Reform was reduced to a question of asking for a bigger piece of the economic pie. Scientific management turned into the promotion of domestic technology and the issues of revaluing domestic labour and giving housewives greater financial autonomy were forgotten.

The scientific management program, in part because it lost the moral zealotry of the early domestic reform movement, and because it adopted business values, inadequately represented the interests of working class women. While improved working conditions did benefit working class women, the question of status was less of a consideration for them than middle class women. So also was the opportunity to break into the professional world. The rhetoric of much of the scientific management proponents, with its analogies with business and the professions, would not have had the positive appeal for working class women that it may have had for middle class women. The earlier domestic reformers, despite their class bias, had sought to improve domestic conditions for working class families. This moral reform was lost with the household advisors who represented middle class women only. While the business goal of democratized consumption vis a vis appliances became the commercial replacement of moral reform, it was reduced to elements compatible with business goals.

At the same time as household advisors sought to reduce women's labour, they also urged women to upgrade their

standards and modernize their homemaking practices. As Cowan has pointed out, this meant more work for mother.¹⁰⁴ Yet here they had little choice but to advocate modernization. In order to gain the status of a professional, the homemaker was forced to accept the higher standards of health, cleanliness, nutrition, and childcare which corresponded to new scientific discoveries in these areas. In addition, the higher standards were probably welcomed as they brought improved living for everyone in the family, women included.

None-the-less there remains in the literature, an ambivalence, largely unexamined, between using labour saving technology to increase women's leisure and to enhance domestic standards. As household advisors never addressed this question, women reading the Canadian women's magazines of the 1920s and 1930s were left with the impression that they should do both. Household advisors told homemakers to use commercial services for products which could be more efficiently produced outside the home, and enthusiastically endorsed electrical appliances which allowed the homemaker to produce her own ice cream or home-made mayonnaise.¹⁰⁵ If the household advisors were aware of the contradictions inherent in their advice, they gave no indication in their writings. The omission, in part, reflects magazine dependence on advertising revenue, and its influence on editorial decision-making. Articles were made to complement the advertising message,¹⁰⁶ especially during the 1930s

when advertising revenue declined. The household advisors' own uncritical enthusiasm for modern technology in the home also played a role and as a result these women failed to distinguish between good domestic technology and bad. And, it is likely that the advisors' ambivalence reflected readers' contradictory feelings; the desire to have both a better home and more leisure. Finally, the exclusive concern with domestic reform left these advisors with no clear direction as to what women should do with their leisure time.

Higher standards were often promoted in light of the benefits to children and/or the whole family, or even the nation. Because of the lack of private writings for household advisors, it is not known whether this argument was a practical expedient, much like the maternal feminist argument for the vote. Perhaps the real motivation for promoting domestic technology was women's convenience and leisure.

While household advisors defended women's right to a role in business and the professions, and admonished advertisers to remember the business girl, they at the same time elevated homemaking to a female profession, ghettoizing women's work and reinforcing the sexual division of labour. This contradiction cannot be explained wholly in terms of personal hypocrisy, however, despite the seeming contradiction of women making a profession out of advocating

professional homemaking. Though by taking a public sphere role themselves, they denigrated the status of the full-time homemaker, it would have been impossible to represent their constituency in any other way. In a highly stratified and specialized society, it is not uncommon for elites to represent groups with whom they have considerably less in common than these household advisors had with homemakers. Many were themselves part time homemakers. And, because they were popularizers of ideas rather than originators, they had to work within a popular culture which still saw women's primary role as homemaker.¹⁰⁷

Discrimination also made it difficult for many women to gain a foothold in 'male' professions such as medicine, law or engineering. Because women were relegated to public sphere roles which drew upon their recognized domestic expertise, ambitious young women were channeled into professions such as home economics, where they would not have to compete with men, but where they could make a social contribution by "advising" their homemaking sisters.

Scientific management could only be applied to the home in a half-hearted way given the need to accommodate the conventional wisdom that the family was the cornerstone of society. Household advisors never contemplated the fundamental restructuring of the family which the full scale imposition of scientific management implied. They assumed, without much thinking on the matter, that the traditional home must be preserved, albeit in a reformed state. In

industry, scientific management required large scale production techniques with many specialized workers. Yet in the early 20th century home there was usually only one worker, and she was required to perform varied tasks. To fully 'modernize' the home in the way that other work processes had been transformed through the factory system, would have effectively destroyed it, at least as the Canadian of the interwar period knew it. This attempt to reconcile an older, familiar social arrangement with a new and incompatible technology is not unique to household advisors. In fact, it is typical of technological enthusiasts (such as we found in the advertising industry and among electrical utility managers); and has parallels in the twin desires to halt rural depopulation while enjoying the benefits of centralized, large scale production.

The failure to centralize all aspects of domestic labour is a question which is only beginning to be addressed by historians. The adoption of the single family, fully equipped private home, which was vigorously promoted in the 1920s, is viewed by some as the product of an alliance between capitalists anxious to tap the lucrative home market and male heads of households anxious to maintain the sexual division of labour for their own comfort and convenience.¹⁰⁸ The promotion of consumption for women was accompanied by the promotion of home ownership for working class men in the 1930s. As Hobbs and Pierson point out, the Home Improvement

Loan Program of 1937 used the middle class home ideal as a catalyst for economic recovery and as a method of defusing radicalism among the jobless, assuming women's role as full time homemaker/consumer.¹⁰⁹ But recounting once again the industry/government motivation for exploiting the very potent ideal of home ownership¹¹⁰ tells us nothing about the part women played, and leaves a gap too likely to be filled with assumptions of passivity. While Cowan contends that women welcomed the trend toward privatization of family life despite its alleged inefficiencies,¹¹¹ she does little to explain why. Recent research into women's support for the concept of a "family wage", in conjunction with demands for the wife's share of it,¹¹² indicates support for the traditional family, as well as a desire for reform within it. In the final chapter, the reaction to scientific management in the home will be examined in an effort to understand why men and especially women supported the "middle class ideal" of enhanced home life.

In conclusion, household advisors, influenced by earlier domestic reformers and the business ideology of growth and democratized consumption, promoted a philosophy of equality of spheres. They sought increased status, financial autonomy and improved working conditions for the homemaker. The program was unsuccessful due to the impossibility of reconciling the old fashioned home, whose role the advisors had not fully examined, with the values of the modern industrial world.

ENDNOTES

¹This reform focussed primarily on cities and towns and had a clear urban bias. For rural women who lacked the basics of electricity and running water, domestic reform took on an entirely different perspective. Sources for the journalists were women's magazines such as Chatelaine, Canadian Home Journal, Everywoman's World and the women's pages of Macleans. Electrical industry and advertising industry sources include Electrical News and Engineering, the Hydro Electric Power Commission (Ontario Hydro) Bulletin, Marketing, and Printers Ink.

²The role of women in the consumer movement in Canada has yet to be fully explored but it would appear that consumer protest was initiated by women's groups. This movement may have been taken over by male 'experts' who sought to give the consumer detailed product information independent of industry. See: Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988): 118-119.

³Frances Maule, "The 'Woman Appeal'", Printers Ink, January 31, 1924: 105-110.

⁴Ibid.

⁵While one American advertising woman claimed that women in the industry had increased numerically to a much greater extent than they had advanced professionally, another took exception to this and stressed women's contribution. Dorothy Dignam, "Some Women Have Made Good in Advertising But As to Others", Printers Ink, April 27, 1939: 15-18; Eunice Wolfe, "So...Miss Dignam Believes Only Some Women Have Made Good in Advertising", Printers Ink, May 11, 1939: 67-77.

⁶Mabel Crews Ringland for example often wrote in both Marketing and Printers Ink, criticizing her male colleagues for their treatment of women. See Mabel Crews Ringland, "Consult the Woman Who Uses One Before Deciding How to Sell Her", Marketing, November 27, 1937: 2; Ringland, "To Male Copy Writers", Printers Ink, April 8, 1937: 83-86.

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CHAPTER 6:

Pampered Dependence: The Industry/Consumer Relationship

Through advertising, industry offered the householder prosperity, technological advance, home comfort and convenience, as well as leisure. It exacted a high price, however. Industry wanted in return control over economic and technological decision-making. The consumer was asked to place complete trust in advertising as a source of information and in industry as a beneficial social force, and was largely excluded from major decisions concerning design, pricing, advertising and construction of new appliances. Industry's response to the consumer movement, that is, to ignore organized consumer demands for more product information and the use of rational advertising appeals, indicates its authoritarian and manipulative approach to consumer relations. Manufacturers preferred to dismiss the consumer movement as unrepresentative and take their cues instead from market research findings. Based on

this passive, indirect consumer input, industry stressed the emotional appeal, exploited consumer ambivalence between realistic and utopian expectations of the new technology, and downplayed technical details, thus reinforcing consumer ignorance of technology. Consumers may have been pampered with gadgets, frequent style changes, and sexy advertising, but were at the same time rendered dependent through exclusion from major decisions.

Underlying the industrial strategy was both a faith in the capacity of the economy for infinite growth, and a belief that material wealth would compensate for any social dislocations. Industry sought a technological solution to class and sexual inequality in order to avoid redistribution of wealth, and dismantling of male sexual privileges. A new standard of living was promoted which was based on the lifestyle of the wealthy. While the industry program was portrayed as socially as well as technologically innovative, in reality economic/technological progress received all of industry's attention, while social progress was assumed to follow automatically.

The industry program of the interwar period was to promise the consumer economic and technological abundance in exchange for monopoly control by industry. By refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of consumer input, and responding to consumer protests with propaganda hailing the wealth and technology it had to offer, industry in effect refused to

share its power and knowledge with those who bought its products.

One example serves to illustrate the program. The refrigerator industry was hailed as the model industry by businessmen in both Canada and the United States. The Canadian electrical and advertising industries were heavily influenced by American technology, corporation structures and business ideals. While the electrical industry in Ontario was unique in using public ownership to generate and transmit electricity, much of the technology came from the United States. In the manufacturing of appliances, the American influence was even greater, with branch plants of American firms dominating the manufacture of appliances by the 1930s.

While the refrigerator success story of the United States was not exactly duplicated in Canada, the industry is significant as a business model. The U.S. saturation of 50% in the late 1930s compares with approximately 19% in Ontario, despite lower cost electricity. The rate of saturation for electric ranges, however, was dramatically higher in Canada than in the United States. Some of the difference may be explained in terms of climate, but industry promotion also played a role. In addition, the American economy was less severely affected by the Depression due to its lesser reliance upon resource extraction than was the case in Canada.¹ It may be that American consumers had more disposable income in the 1930s.

The refrigerator industry symbolized the ideals of growth, efficiency, technological advancement and seeming consumer acquiescence which business philosophy in the interwar period hailed as progressive. The industry also managed to withstand the ravages of the Depression.

Gilbert W. Clemens, an industry observer, compared the quick acceptance of the refrigerator with the much slower acceptance of the typewriter, noting that typewriter companies had done little advertising, perfected their machines slowly, did much petty competitive fighting, and employed small capital and organization. As a result so essential a business tool took two decades to gain acceptance. Experience from the refrigerator industry, however,

shows that in a country thoroughly organized with advertising media, advertising technique, cooperative interrelationships, organization and large scale capital we need no longer wait for lengthy and tortuous processes of "introduction" for a good product.²

The dissemination of a new technology -- such as the refrigerator -- had become a technology in itself and the refrigerator industry seemed to have perfected it. The refrigerator industry could attribute its success to five tools: 1) research; 2) large scale capital and organization; 3) aggressive advertising; 4) cooperative technique; and 5) consolidation:

Research finds out in a brief time what would take years of ordinary experience to discover. Large scale capital and organization enables an industry

to organize the entire possible market at once. Advertising eliminates dependence on the slow percolation of ideas ... The cooperative technique so well used by the refrigerator group makes possible a progress by united effort rather than by hampered individual enterprise with obstructive competition and waste.³

Finally, the consolidation method, the earmark of the industry, avoided the situation as with radio of a mass of small manufacturers clogging the wheels of progress with their "job-lot and low-standard goods and unintelligent over-production".⁴

Even as early as 1926, grandiose predictions were made for the American refrigerator industry. G.A. Nichols told Printers Ink readers that \$10 million would be invested in 1927 to advertise refrigerators, with more than a million units being built.

There are those who say that the business is bound to become the most important single industry in the country -- greater even than the automobile -- and that it will attain this growth at a rate that will make the rise of the automobile seem slow in proportion.⁵

Such enthusiasm seems to be based on the "sheer bigness attained almost spontaneously" of the refrigerator industry.⁶ With the exception of 1932, increases in refrigerator sales in the United States were dramatic up until 1938, when sales declined temporarily.⁷

While most advertisers tended to regard this growth as a notable achievement in merchandising and related the quick consumer acceptance to extensive and effective advertising, industry executives gave a larger place to their product's

intrinsic worth. The refrigerator, commented Howard E. Blood of Norge Corporation, combines comfort and enjoyment of daily living with justifying economies.⁸ Likewise Louis Ruthenberg of Copeland thought the advantages of food preservation, health, and labour-saving convenience helped sell the refrigerator.⁹

Some advertisers interpreted the fact that a boom industry had been based on a kitchen utility rather than a "novelty" item such as automobile or radio as evidence they had "created" the boom with their brilliant copy alone.¹⁰ However, it probably reflected the more home centred interests of moderate to low income buyers in the 1930s, who were the new target of the democratizers of consumption.

Nichols believed that the business's ability to apply the merchandising principles of the auto had significantly contributed to its success. He used Frigidaire as the example. Unlike the automobile which was placed on the market as an experiment, for which service was unknown and owner education unheard of, the refrigerator industry started out full grown. The product was first perfected before being introduced.¹¹ Using market research, Frigidaire tackled the problem of high price restricting access. Surveys showed that consumers viewed the product as a luxury, so Frigidaire placed advertisements emphasizing its practical utility and availability. To introduce the market to the electric refrigerator idea and to combat price resistance, Frigidaire introduced in 1924 a refrigerator

mechanism which could be placed on an icebox.¹² Frigidaire hoped to pull down the price by increasing volume, and used the General Motors Acceptance Corporation for financing installment buying.

Public reaction to this creational advertising was so positive that plans for a \$100,000,000 factory extension, to increase production, were already underway in 1926¹³ -- before the real boom in sales began. Frigidaire made no secret of its intent to dominate the business and was willing to forego present profits for future sales based on a belief that the industry was up and coming. Frigidaire was thus able to cope with the demand as it grew, with distribution and service facilities already in place. The extensive advertising appropriation would not be wasted.

As electric refrigerator sales increased throughout the 1930s, manufacturers increased their appropriations in anticipation of even greater sales. In 1935, for instance, Frigidaire enlarged its advertising appropriation on the basis of a belief that sales would increase 50% to 100% over 1934. Besides the usual business indicators for this prediction, Frigidaire had contacted 100,000 homes to find out what refrigerator buyers wanted. On the basis of this survey Frigidaire built its 1935 product, advertising and sales program. Claimed H.W. Newell, VP Sales, "these facts are woven into product design, sales appeal, advertising copy, advertising media, sales methods and merchandising

strategy."¹⁴

The refrigerator could also be used as a shining example of the potency of industry to offer consumers ever falling prices. The American industry had begun by selling the higher income groups, its early models going for approximately \$400 in the United States, but soon moved to the middle income groups as prices declined to the \$200-\$300 range and as the upper income market became saturated.¹⁵ So intoxicated with its own rhetoric and success, the industry in the late 1930s made the mistake of abandoning the middle income group in an ambitious attempt to sell the low income group. Some forgot that it still took over \$170 in 1939 to buy a refrigerator. In Canada prices for refrigerators were a little higher, beginning at \$190 in 1939.¹⁶ Printers Ink Monthly reported that the lower third of wage earners received yearly cash incomes of \$471 or \$9 per week. How, asks the authors, "can anyone buy an electric refrigerator on \$9 a week after paying for the essentials of food, clothes, rent and household operations?"¹⁷ Sales declined 46% despite low or non-existent down payments. Repossessions inevitably followed. The industry was caught, in its ambitions to sell 100% of the market.

The American refrigerator industry was also a model of efficiency for all the world, in that it accepted the "inevitable and inexorable development" of larger producing and selling units crowding out the smaller. While Nichols admitted that a few years ago this would have been seen as

the work of unholy trusts, it was now recognized as "an economic unfolding which cuts out waste in manufacture and selling and makes possible better automobiles for less money than ever have been offered up to now."¹⁸ The American refrigerator industry simply avoided the slow evolutionary process of small units being gobbled up by big, and started out big in the beginning. In Canada, Frigidaire, the industry giant, dominated the market in the 1930s with Westinghouse, Moffat and Canadian General Electric running behind. Only one of these was a Canadian company -- the rest of the industry was imported almost directly from the United States.

The American refrigerator industry was further exalted as the seemingly Depression-proof industry, because its growth continued despite the economic downturn. "Just as the rapid development of new industries -- such as the radio, the automobile and the motion picture -- was of definite aid in pulling the nation out of the Depression of 1921-22," it was believed that the mechanical refrigerator would be effective in setting the pace in the present decade.¹⁹ Like the elusive holy grail, industry was always looking for its engine of growth. American manufacturers found it in the refrigerator in the 1930s, just as Ontario businessmen and electric utility managers had found it in electricity generation and transmission in the 1920s.

The electric washing machine industry was in many ways

the antithesis of the refrigerator industry. The washing machine was developed much earlier, with gas, water and hand powered machines preceding electric ones, and was certainly not perfected before market introduction. There were many manufacturers competing with one another, and many different types and qualities of machine on the market. Printers Ink reported that "for more than a year an average of two good electric or water-powered washing machines have been coming on the market each month."²⁰ There was little cooperative advertising among the many manufacturers, many of whom did not stay in business long. Because the washing machine appealed to a lower income market, price competition was the norm for some time. Despite these factors, the washing machine did sell well, although the later rationalization of the industry made it less profitable. The industry was also much slower to diffuse the technology. Clearly economic concentration and an united, industry-wide advertising effort, aimed at market expansion rather than price competition, was the business ideal.

Industry's response to criticism against advertising -- industry's messenger in the interwar period -- is one indication of its view of the consumer role in the program of democratized consumption. Criticism of advertising was accelerated by the 1930's Depression but had been 'in the air' much longer. While acknowledging certain social costs in advertising and the mass production it allegedly stimulated, industry spokesmen always fell back on the

rising standard of living as justification.

The men and women who worked in the advertising industry perceived themselves as practical people; they were doers rather than thinkers and did not conceal their disdain for 'armchair critics' who failed to share their vision of unbridled progress and prosperity.

When Marketing's editor, Bertram R. Brooker, took on two critics of advertising, one of them a professor of Latin at University College in Toronto, he could not help poking fun at his professorial status. "One does not expect expert knowledge or sound judgment on modern business methods from a professor of a dead language,"²¹ he noted.

"Fortunately business has less and less time for these men," proclaimed another advertiser. "Its own pace is too dizzy to be greatly concerned with such pseudo-Joshuas commanding the sun and moon to stand still":

But every year we are seeing Tom, Dick or Harry making a better mousetrap and a fortune out of it, while Gloomy Gus and Stubborn Steve sit around and bemoan the relations between capital and labour and make perfect armchair arguments why this and that can't be done because it was never done before.²²

Brooker believed that advertising's benefits and faults must be considered together and was confident that most consumer/citizens would live with advertising's faults in exchange for the prosperity and high living it allegedly brought.

The moral critics of advertising may have been hardest

to answer (even though they received the least attention) as they objected to the materialism of the business ideology of consumption, its promotion of mass discontent and fueling of personal greed and ambition.²³ Advertisers contended that such was the price of progress, that the masses were too complacent anyway, and that the rising standard of living was worth the price. Moral critics were caricatured as lady dogooders and misguided elitists who would keep the finer things in life for a limited aristocracy.²⁴

The shallowness of the response to moral criticism of advertising can be seen in Marketing's response to Rev. Dr. George A. Little who lectured his Peterborough, Ontario, congregation on the subject of truth in advertising. This lecture was reported in the Globe and Mail and criticized in Marketing.²⁵ Dr. Little's defense also appeared in Marketing. The Reverend's reported contention that advertising was a "pack of lies" was described by Marketing as libellous. The advertising journal then attempted to slur Little by associating him with moral zealotry: "The examples he cites have to do mostly with beer and tobacco, two products which Dr. Little most heartily and sincerely loathes and regarding which it is impossible for him to speak in fairness or moderation."²⁶ While Marketing pointed out, in defense of the advertising profession, the efforts made to ensure "truth" in advertising through the Better Business Bureau, it became clear Dr. Little was not accusing advertisers of literal lies but the distortion of reality

through images that create a false picture, and omit vital information. His analysis could easily be applied to products other than liquor or cigarettes. In this sense these distortions were far more serious than literal lies, even though they carefully avoided the latter, to stay within the letter of the law.

Because advertisers had a simplistic conception of the social costs of advertising, they believed that campaigns to regulate 'truth in advertising' would correct these 'minor' objections.

The aesthetic critic who objected to the mass appeal of advertising, its lack of taste and exploitation of the baser emotional instincts, was easier to dismiss. The advertiser defended his trade by asserting that advertising merely reflected popular taste and in a democratic society this hardly needed justification. Indeed the counter accusation that such critics were elitist snobs contained some truth. And, advertisers contended, with increased leisure and prosperity the level of popular taste would be elevated.²⁷

A further indication of the role the advertising industry wanted consumers to play can be seen in its hostile response toward the consumer movement, and its refusal to treat consumers as fully rational adults. While the advertising industry repeatedly referred to a consumer movement both in the United States and Canada, the Canadian movement, about which little is known, was largely

unorganized. Consumer protest, which appears to have originated in the efforts of women's groups to improve the manufacture, labeling and advertising of products sold to housewives, was not institutionalized until 1947²⁸ when the Consumer's Association of Canada was founded.

Manufacturers fully exploited and thereby accentuated the tension between consumer desires for rational and realistic portrayals of products and the consumer's unconscious desires. Through market research manufacturers attempted to discover what consumers wanted, but ignored suggestions which would not net them a profit. The consumer was pampered with gadgets for comfort and convenience (door shelves in refrigerators, interior lights, etc.). Stylish appearance was emphasized over utility. Ads often appealed to fantasy and escape deflecting attention away from the product. Refrigerator mechanisms went below in order to improve appearance despite decreased efficiency, moving parts were hidden from view, and advertisements did the thinking for consumers by attaching personal meaning to products.

The practice of going to the consumer for ideas on sales appeal was well used in most industries²⁹ in both the United States and Canada. The consumer's opinion was being sought by survey, samplings, cross sections, coupon tests and other devices, furnishing the advertising themes of today and tomorrow, claimed an advertising director.³⁰ General Electric's strategy in 1939, based on a series of

surveys "which proved unmistakably that the basic feminine instinct was to stay young and beautiful," was to advise women "It's easy to stay young with electricity."³¹ GE set out to "make the women of the country conscious of the complete array of electrical servants which science has placed at their command, and at the same time to interpret this silent and efficient service to them in terms of their own desires."³² Ads explored the story of electrical appliances as personal services which saved labour and thereby preserved youth and aided physical well-being.³³

The findings of a U.S. Gallup survey tabulating the reactions of 4000 readers to advertisements in six issues of four leading general weekly magazines, gave the North American advertising industry the evidence it needed to ignore consumer and women's groups' demands for a more rational appeal.³⁴ In this survey, the economy appeal ranked first by advertisers (that is, used most often) yet it was shown to be 8th in effectiveness by men readers and ninth by women readers. (As industry insiders would have assigned an 'appeal' to each ad, one wonders whether consumer critics would have agreed with their rankings). Efficiency of the product was another popular advertising appeal which ranked 9th with both sexes. The sex appeal, obversely, ranked 9th among advertisers, second among men readers and first among women readers. Vanity, self-beautification, personal improvement and variations on this

theme tied for 9th in popularity of use by advertisers but was 6th in effectiveness among men and 2nd among women.³⁵

The use of specific experiences of users in headlines involving direct or indirect testimonials was 4th in frequency of use by advertisers but was ranked first in attention value by both men and women. Headlines showing the product in use were most popular among advertisers but 5th in effectiveness among men and 4th among women.³⁶ Drawings of people and photographs were effective in attracting the attention of both men and women, women more so than men, and it was found that the use of colour added attention value.³⁷

Advertisers seemed to be concluding that what attracted attention -- the sex appeal, colour, human interest -- would necessarily sell products.³⁸ They seemed to be recommending an abandonment of the rational appeals based on economy or efficiency for those more glamorous appeals which attached meaning to a product quite unrelated to its utility.

Advertisers, of course, were highly selective in the cues they took from the consumer response to market surveys. While ads were pre-tested to weed out those with poor appeal, there was no direct input by consumers into what type of ads got as far as the testing stage. In 1933 Frigidaire pre-tested an advertising campaign which stressed the fact that the refrigerator "uses no more electricity than an ordinary lamp bulb". Despite finding that the lamp

bulb story, an economy appeal, was immensely popular, Frigidaire decided that forthcoming copy would bring out more strongly such features as automatic ice tray release, automatic defrosting, bottle storage space and one fourth more food storage space.³⁹ It was not stated whether demand for these features was unearthed in the survey.

Advertisements attached a personal meaning to products for consumers, interpreting its value according to the consumer viewpoint. Philip Spane, in a Marketing article, justified the use of emotionalism in selling, contending that the difference between intellectual and emotional selling was the difference between science and art, or analysis and synthesis.⁴⁰ He described the intellectual method, associated with the much maligned consumer activists and professorial types, as a demonstration by logic or scientific analysis that some idea or product was better than some other. Those who refused to accept the argument were considered nincompoops and discarded as unimportant. Then, he said, when

somebody comes along - an orator or missionary in one case, or a super-salesman in the other -- who applies persuasive methods, uses emotional appeals and imagination, and visualizes for the nincompoops what the idea or the product will do for them, instead of demonstrating what it is made of, the intellectualists promptly accuse the emotionalists of dishonesty and hypnotism and rail at the public for being influenced by superstition and suggestion.⁴¹

"Only the artist, the poet, the visualizer of life can make a product come alive"; it is a synthetic process,

Spane contended, "a different faculty altogether but not necessarily dishonest". While the scientist tells what the universe does as a process completely separate from human experience, the artist tells what the universe does to you, as a human experience, he contended.⁴² As the whole structure of logic necessitates the establishment of abstract values and the removal of personal and emotional influences, it had no place in selling which must appeal to the individual's own personal meaning and values.⁴³ Since most prospects were more emotional than intellectual, the emotional salesman was more effective, said Spane. But, because man likes to regard himself as a rational being, he devises a reasonable argument to justify the purchase.⁴⁴ The smart salesman or advertiser knows this and provides the argument while at the same time appealing to the right emotion.

While the emotional/utopian appeal gave personal meaning to a product or idea to those excluded from its formulation, it also was an invidious form of flattery which underhandedly reinforced emotionalism while pretending to appeal to reason. Emotionalism subtly undermined the foundation on which scientific and technological progress was allegedly based, that is, science.

Technical talk was studiously avoided in advertisements, especially to women, and only the service to the customer was emphasized. C. M. Frankel, advertising

manager of National Electric Heating Co. Ltd. (Toronto), told Marketing that, in its newspaper advertising for an electric range featuring a unique new heating element, technical jargon was avoided. "As we present them, these points are readily grasped and appreciated by the housewife. We do not scare or puzzle her with technical jargon which only an electrician can really understand, but we show her a cooking range as simple in operation as a gas stove, giving heat, with no dirt, odor or needless work."⁴⁵

Household advisors reinforced this trend with advice to manufacturers to keep the user in mind. Their advice resulted in practical suggestions, such as proper working heights for appliances and countertops in order to reduce fatigue, easy to clean surfaces, and safe operation near children.⁴⁶ However, it also led to advice to keep all working parts hidden, based on the premise that women "have a certain reluctance toward machinery in motion."⁴⁷ The concealment ensured improved safety and women's acceptance of labour-saving devices (something home economists were committed to) but it also served unwittingly to reinforce an ignorance and corresponding fear of technology. The acceptance of women's aversion to machinery extended to the advertising of household equipment as well. Advertisers were warned to avoid 'technical talk', to refrain from emphasizing details of design or construction, rather to stress what the machine will do for the housewife, in words that she could understand. Manufacturers were also advised

that the home purchaser of equipment, unlike industrial purchasers, would not tolerate minor occasional defects, even when they had no effect on performance.⁴⁸

Industry tried to appeal to subconscious desires. Advertising psychologists offered various portraits of basic subconscious desires motivating the consumer,⁴⁹ and suggested that advertisers could ignore what consumers said they wanted -- their conscious desires -- and focus on the unconscious, as revealed by the psychologist.

Working on the subconscious level allowed advertisers to turn inarticulate wants into conscious needs, in other words to redefine the standard of living. Advertisers redefined necessities as not only "those commodities and services that were necessary for the bare sustaining of life, but also those which were needed to make life endurable and pleasurable."⁵⁰ The line between essential need and 'non-essential' needs is, of course, very fuzzy and highly personal, and one Marketing contributor condemned moralists for denouncing certain goods as unnecessary and extravagant. Using the example of washing machines, for which there was a "great unrealized need in the majority of homes," he asserted that this need was vague, undefined and unrecognized. Housewives know only the drudgery of washday -- the advertiser must suggest to them the means of escape.⁵¹ Needs, while they could not be created, could be brought to light. Presenting the ethical problem for

advertisers as the need to "know how far it is proper to go in the processes of incitement in the minds of people to create the condition of want or necessity",⁵² he offered no solution to this problem, turning his attention instead to more practical matters.

It would appear that in the absence of any analysis the model for defining a new set of needs, or acceptable standard of living, fell by default to the middle or upper middle class. Industry spokesmen did not address this question, assuming that everyone would seek to emulate the wealthy. Conspicuous consumption was to be the prerogative of all in the prosperous society.

Often these subconscious desires were unrealizable. Advertisers presented images of a technological fantasy land where work was eliminated and wealth was infinite. A Marketing profile of consumer wants or needs, which advertisers seem to be appealing to in their quest to tap the great unconscious for commercial exploitation, reveals a utopian note:

Today man wants more leisure; freedom from the anxieties related to old age, illness and unemployment; the delights and culture of travel; a job which fits him as a glove fits the hand; machines to perform unpleasant and arduous physical and mental labour. He wants good roads everywhere, and escape from the perils of level crossings; he wants his dwelling places warmed or cooled without effort or thought on his part; he wants to banish the offensiveness of noise and ugliness. Always he wants better safeguards against discomfort and the mischance of untimely death. In industry he wants protection against the upheavals of business cycles, and in trading enterprise he wants security.⁵³

In addition, there is a huge and obvious potential for abuse and exploitation in this devious technique. The appeal to mother-love, or scare-copy directed at mothers of young children, was an extreme manifestation of the emotional appeal. In its worst forms, it seems to have been rejected by industry analysts and the public alike almost as soon as it appeared, although its exploitation of maternal concern and women's dependency, when subtly used, was condoned as "educational". Though a few advertisers pointed out that fathers also cared for their children's welfare,⁵⁴ advertisers focussed on mother. One industry spokesman implored advertisers to stop picking on the 'mental cripples', "utterly lacking in any means of defense against suggestions that dire things may happen to the children". Fear copy was cowardly because it was easy to play on the heartstrings (leaves more time for golf) but inefficient because, if overdone, it repels its intended victim. Women avoided these fear-copy advertisements, he suggested, which build mountains of horror out of mole-hills of fact. "They don't like them and eventually refuse to be harried."⁵⁵ Another spokesman implored advertisers not to overdo the child appeal, lest its effectiveness for legitimate causes be undermined.

If we all fall to shouting "Mother!" in warning accents, mother will have to stop her ears against the din. And if mothers get to giggling over our hysterical fussing it will be just too bad for a lot of good, honest products that mother ought to know about for the good of her

youngsters.⁵⁶

But the advertiser seemed to object to picking on the cripples only so far as such tyrannies result in rebellion. They saw a legitimate role for the child appeal, providing the product was really effective in improving the child's health and happiness and the picture painted was not so bleak as to frighten.⁵⁷

Most male advertisers and even a few female advertisers defended the lack of realism in advertisements. A male advertising colleague of Mabel Crews Ringland infuriated her with his contention that the American public liked advertising because it "paints a rainbow", is "cheerful and optimistic" and "invests common things with romance".⁵⁸ Yet another advertising woman suggested that "woman is first a dreamer, visionary and deeply romantic". "If you are selling vacuum cleaners, washing machines or any other utility, then sell dreams of leisure hours, of rest, of happy, contented homes and simplified housework".⁵⁹

But many consumers -- in and out of industry -- objected to this utopian appeal. One woman writing for Printers Ink condemned advertisers for their appeal to fantasies of labour elimination:

Don't try to convince us that your article is an Aladdin's lamp, that all we have to do is to rub it and some genii will appear and do the work while we sit idly by, play the piano or read and improve our minds. Tell us how much time and how much labour it will save us, but don't tell us that a washing machine takes care of the washing, a mangle does the ironing, a vacuum cleaner keeps the house clean, a patent

dishwasher clears the table, washes and wipes the dishes and puts them away -- that all one has to do in the morning is to turn on a switch and breakfast is served while our lady, as well as friend husband, read the morning paper.⁶⁰

Industry response to consumer advocates who maintained that consumers wanted more information on products and a rational appeal in advertising, indicates its hostility toward real consumer input. Everything possible was done to deny consumers a voice -- by offering concessions on minor points, and promising unrealistic fantasies of unlimited wealth and labour elimination.

Criticism of advertising's psychological manipulation and related demeaning of consumer input accelerated in the 1930s. What came to be called the consumer movement by the advertisers began as a response by women to advertising appeals directed at them, and reflects women's desire to have input into industrial decision-making affecting products they purchased for themselves and their homes. The movement influenced industry and its advertising strategy in the U.S. and Canada,⁶¹ and is significant in showing how the North American advertising and manufacturing industries responded to consumer criticism.

One Printers Ink contributor contended that legislation regulating truth in advertising in the United States was the direct result of women's agitation. "It is undoubtedly true that women have played the major part in bringing these reforms to a legal status through the determined campaign waged by consumer groups and women's clubs throughout the

United States."⁶² Many women's organizations -- social groups, welfare leagues, domestic science clubs, voters clubs, consumer councils, housewives' organizations and business and professional groups tried to convince manufacturers and advertisers that women wanted reform to advertising practices.⁶³

Although the movement was unorganized in Canada before 1947, it appears that many Canadian women's groups had an interest in consumer reform, among other interests. Mabel Crews Ringland campaigned within the Canadian advertising industry for more informative advertising and wrote extensively on the consumer movement in both Marketing and Printers Ink. She insisted that food products should include clear, easy-to-follow cooking instructions, canned goods should be labelled as to grade of product and quality of contents, the new synthetic fabrics should be labelled for washing instructions, pre-shrinking and so on and related products should be assembled and shown together as they would be used in the home.⁶⁴

Ida Bailey Allen, writing in Printers Ink, suggested that manufacturers provide more information in the form of diagrams or illustrations showing women how to operate washing machines, booklets on laundering, and figures from physicians showing how much backache was due to wrong postures while washing.⁶⁵ Mrs. Millicent Yackey Taylor, a home economist, teacher, advisor to advertisers and editor

of the homemaking department of the Ladies Home Journal advised that the advertising and merchandising of large and expensive household equipment, such as washing machines, should include pertinent information on electric current and water usage.⁶⁶

The American Home Economics Association repeatedly urged that more useful information be given about products, so that women, in their role as purchasing agent and financial manager, could make intelligent choices. Industry, however, always raised the objection that specifications on composition, construction and performance of a commodity could not be understood by consumers and that consumers didn't want to be bothered by such intricate details anyway. Frederick agreed with this position. She contended that consumer clubs for testing of goods and the preparation of specifications as consumer buying guides were doomed to failure because "we already have far better machinery for guiding and protecting the consumer" in 1) consumer voting power through purchasing 2) magazines and newspaper consumer service and testing departments and their advertising standards of admission and 3) policing efforts of Federal Trade Commission, Better Business Bureaus and such organization.⁶⁷ She dismissed political routes to ensuring better goods as "snares and delusions" and felt that women wanted "less burdensome buying and consumption, not more technical labour and care".⁶⁸ The notion of buying by product specification rather than national advertising,

she found unacceptable. "We consumers simply do not care to waste time on the great mass of technical data about household goods; we would become a walking encyclopedia if we tried to master it all."⁶⁹ While Frederick may be correct when she says that most consumers would or could not master specifications on all of the many products in use in the twentieth century home, this is no reason to deny such information to those who wanted it. It is an argument on a par with the anti-suffrage contention that the majority of women do not want the vote, and therefore no woman should have it.

Alice Edwards, President of the American Home Economics Association, regarded this objection as a smoke screen for manufacturers who wanted to avoid letting consumers know the truth about their products and for those who were too lazy to determine what facts the consumer needed to choose a commodity, and then to develop the phrasing by which to give consumers this information in a form they could readily understand and use.⁷⁰

Mabel Crews Ringland was much more sympathetic to the demand of consumers than Frederick. She used the threat of consumer revolt to encourage industry reform. Declaring that the consumer movement of the 1930s grew out of a real problem, that is, the inability of homemakers to have all of the things advertisers made them want,⁷¹ she summarized women's demands:

reduction of distribution costs, more truthful and informative advertising, the establishment of standards of quality, informative labels and specifications; more sales service and less sales pressure; doing away with strident, offensive and indecent advertising.⁷²

Ringland believed that 'Mrs. Consumer' would demand of her leaders "a square deal through some modification of the present system, cooperative stores or an entirely new set up."⁷³ In a veiled threat to her industry colleagues, she cited the fact that consumer co-ops took some five hundred million dollars of retail business from private retail firms last year alone (1936). She cited consumer strength in boycotts and the unmasking of retail trickery. She cited the formation of a Consumer-Retailer Relations Council in the United States whose mandate was to promote the value and use of adequate standards for consumer goods; the general use of informative labeling, uniform terminology and truthful and informative national and local advertising. Already joining the Council was the American Home Economics Association, General Federation of Women's Clubs, American Association of University Women, National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the National League of Women Voters.⁷⁴ While this level of organization by consumers had not yet reached the Canadian market, there was criticism of advertising in Canadian periodicals and a few sporadic consumer revolts.⁷⁵ These affected the industry enough to spur Canadian advertising industry associations into sponsoring an advertising campaign designed to promote the

socially beneficial aspects of advertising.

Ringland was infuriated with a male colleague's all too typical suggestion that organized opposition to advertising might be dismissed as unrepresentative. His assertion that,

we advertising men do not know what the masses really think about advertising. Of course we know what women leaders think. They are quite vocal about it. They criticize. How far their ideas percolate down among the masses who read and buy from advertising is a question we would like to explore.⁷⁶

This raised Ringland's ire. Her contact with the consumers' movement had told her that:

there is no little resentment against the advertising "magician" who draws synthetic salvation, sex appeal and health bunkum out of the most unromantic products of everyday use. Even the "average" woman who obviously rates as a moron in advertising circles, doesn't want to be kidded quite that much.⁷⁷

To Ringland's mind, the glamour appeal had been so overworked as to cause resentment and mistrust among women toward advertisers.

It appears that male 'experts' became involved in the American consumer movement by the 1930s, when anti-business sentiment was at its peak.⁷⁸ These experts,⁷⁹ who offered impartial product information, also tended to downplay women's role in the movement. Besides exposing corporate abuses not only in advertising, but in the sale of useless or dangerous substances under false premises, these male experts took the occasional swipe at "lay women, amateur dietitians, self appointed guardians of the public health".⁸⁰ They conspicuously referred to the consumer as

'he', in contrast to advertising and home economics literature. While they recognized a role for those women's groups which were independent of business, in agitating for political reforms, they questioned the integrity of some professional women. As well, they saw the administration of standards as a scientific enterprise, to be conducted solely by experts. They called for many of the same reforms as women's groups, such as product standards, more information, improved labeling, (lists of ingredients), grading of products, buying according to impartial scientific tests rather than the fanfare of the advertiser⁸¹ and more effective regulation of the Food and Drug Act.⁸²

These critics, like the professional women, were not offering a radical critique of capitalism. Rather they felt advertising was not working as effectively as it should, to offer the lower prices promised of mass production.

Consumers Research Bulletin, an American publication which circulated in Canada, claimed that the refrigerator industry, in its attempt to milk the replacement market with lavish advertising, new models, and gadgetry, was trying to prevent prices from taking their natural decline when research, development and factory tooling costs have been covered. "As with automobiles, if designs were stabilized, and new claims for grandeur, luxury and the like, were not invented, prices would tend to decline rapidly because consumers would tend to stay out of the market, wearing

their product out before buying again."⁸³ CR asserted that:

It is a pretty safe rule that the more an advertiser talks about "Breath-Taking Beauty", "Foodexes", "Rotorites", "Adjusto-Shelves", and "Touch-a-Bars", the fewer and less important qualities he can truthfully and fairly claim in respect to efficient and dependable performance, or, it may be, the less he is willing to rely upon the good sense and intelligence of consumers to provide his sales volume.⁸⁴

One advertiser in 1932 cited as evidence of an ominous loss of public faith in advertising "the sudden appearance of a group of satirical magazines which exist for the sole purpose of ridiculing present-day advertising",⁸⁵ and perhaps most significantly the emergence of an independent research organization which "undertakes to give its subscribers a truthful and unbiased report on the value of products placed on the market and advertised". He held that the insincerity, trickery and abuse of certain advertisers, responding to the increased competition of hard times with unethical advertising and merchandising techniques, had led to this sorry state.⁸⁶

The Consumers Research Bulletin, a precursor of the consumer magazine, soon won the wrath of advertisers who were nervous of product comparisons done by independent consumer advisors. These consumer groups advocated buying by specification, and set out to give consumers an alternative information source. They rejected advertising's emotionalism and psychological manipulation, and offered a straight forward presentation of the facts, a strictly

rational appeal.

Consumers Research was independent of business, although, judging by the thoroughness of its product testing, and its own acknowledgement of expert help, often given anonymously, many individuals in business gave their support 'under the table'. The June 1939 issue of the Bulletin expressed its indebtedness. "Services have mostly been given without charge or at extremely modest rates" reported CR, and "At their own request many of them must remain nameless in our Bulletins."⁸⁷

In June 1936 CR tested mechanical refrigerators (gas and electric) for comparative operating economy, refrigerating capacity, electric shock hazard, staining of interior enamel by fruit acids, noise of operation, and maintenance of efficiency during a high humidity endurance test.⁸⁸ Consumers were advised that the 'economy' or low priced models were often little different from the higher priced ones, apart from gadgetry and of course dealer profit, and the cheaper models were not well displayed or advertised.⁸⁹ Consumers often had to ask for them as the higher priced models were given prominence.

Test results indicated that the advertisers' claim of assured good quality through national advertising was somewhat misleading. The claim was meaningless in the case of refrigerators, as all manufacturers were national advertisers. Some products tested out much better than others, with a Westinghouse model receiving the worst

rating. Also it appears some models manufactured by the same company tested better than others, with price not necessarily positively correlated with quality. CR hoped to free consumers from the need to rely on price as the only measure of quality. CR noted that "It is no wonder that Electrical Refrigeration News casts doubts on CR as a competent authority on electric refrigeration." The journal asserted that "comparative tests are always questionable".⁹⁰ Comparative tests revealed a great deal about product performance, and it was for this reason that industry opposed them.

Ringland's appeal to heed the consumer movement went unheeded by advertising executives, however, and the movement was met generally with hostility. While a few agreed that, if the consumer movement gave the industry the push it needed to get rid of the unscrupulous minority of advertisers and to work even harder toward truth in advertising, it would be doing a service both to consumers and the industry, most dismissed or ignored it.⁹¹

In October 1938 the Association of Canadian Advertisers and the Canadian Association of Advertising Agencies, which had earlier sponsored the advertising campaign in Canadian magazines, pronounced that the consumer movement had been exaggerated and kept aflame by professional agitators and was no real threat to advertising. A questionnaire sent to 1000 householders received only 58 answers, indicating, they

welcoming of women's talents. The Canadian Home Journal in 1930 reported that the only woman member of the Junior Branch of the Electric Institute of Canada was Hazel M. White, an employee of Northern Electric. The Canadian Home Journal reported that the field was the "undisputed possession of men," and any girl wishing to enter could expect to face stiff opposition. "At least two of our most famous Canadian colleges refuse to accept women in the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering."¹⁰ .

Miss White had attended Dalhousie University and taught school at the beginning of her career "as the idea of a woman doing electrical engineering was considered preposterous". The Government of Saskatchewan gave her her first position in electrical engineering in 1923 which led the way to the Northern Electric job.¹¹

Women's involvement in the electrical industry was primarily in support roles. Dealers found it expedient to hire women as demonstrators, sales people and advisors. Home Institute Departments of electric utilities were usually run by women, often home economists. These departments provided consumer education and instruction in appliance use.¹²

Women journalists wrote advice on general household concerns for Canadian homemakers in Canadian women's magazines. These women were somewhat freer from industry constraint than those who worked directly for industry, although the magazines' need to appease the advertiser

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concluded, "little interest in the consuming public in what might be termed objectionable advertising".⁹² There was to be no joint campaign that year to educate consumers on the value of advertising; however, the joint committee headed by H.H. Rimmer of Canadian General Electric was kept intact. This committee had, in the 1920s, responded to criticism against advertising abuses by launching a major advertising campaign to promote the value of advertising.

While Ringland was the only outspoken critic of advertising among household advisors, it is probably not coincidental that she worked as a freelance writer and advertiser. Those advisors who worked for industry, or the national magazines, were not free to criticize the advertiser. Most advisors shared Ringland's concerns, however, that women be treated as professionals in their homemaking role.

Industry was clearly not willing to share power with the consumer either in the U.S. or in Canada. The consumer was allowed a voice through buying power alone, political interference was resented, and organized protests were either ignored or sidestepped, on the basis that they were unrepresentative of consumers' 'real' needs. If the consumer was torn between demands for direct input into industry based on realistic expectations, and subconscious desires for fantasy fulfillment, industry ignored the former, and catered to the latter.

The critiques of advertising and of the electrical

industry, and the industry's response to them, are important to an understanding of the perceived costs of development. Although some of the social costs inherent in the program were foreseen, and tolerated in the name of greater wealth, others were not. The critique of the industry program reveals what was perceived to be important by actors on the economic stage at the time. The industry/advertising program was based on several unexamined assumptions. One was the capacity of the economy for infinite growth, and the other an association of technological progress with social progress.

The moral and aesthetic critique of advertising was generally dismissed by advertisers with the assertion that wealth and prosperity were worth the price. The economic indictment against advertising was taken far more seriously. The 'economic' critics questioned the ability of advertisers to lower prices through increased consumption,⁹³ arguing that ultimately the consumer must pay for advertising. Advertisers impatiently pointed out, to these conservative and frugal types, that increased consumption more than paid for the cost of advertising. Our friend Bradbury dusted off the oft quoted example of canned soup, which it was reported cost 17/100th of a cent per can to advertise in 1923.⁹⁴ Because of the ever increasing consumption of these products, the advertising expenditure per unit declined, even though advertising appropriations, in absolute dollars,

went up.

Another advertiser asserted that advertising paid for itself by increasing outlets and making possible economic production.⁹⁵ The paradox, he felt, was that advertising, almost by magic, could do this without cost to distributor, manufacturer or consumer. There is in the advertising literature a fascination with the alleged self-generating wealth of the economic system. Of course, it was only without monetary cost (and even this was temporary), as this advertising apologist conceded that many people found advertising to be a vulgar nuisance, an intrusion upon private rights with its cluttering of the landscape and a menace to ethical standards because it "glorifies things" and led men and women to believe that happiness and satisfaction might be secured through the acquisition and possession of material objects.⁹⁶

No one within the advertising industry seems to have foreseen, or at least articulated, the concern that advertising was only "free" in an expanding economy. As the possibility of infinitely expanding wealth was remote, belief in it was utopian.

The electrical utility industry also claimed to be the harbinger of progress and prosperity, assuming limitless growth. In the 1920s when rapid growth allowed economic optimism to reach hysterical proportions among industry spokesmen, and declining rates seemed to justify it, the industry was the darling of the public.⁹⁷ But when the

Depression hit, the growth mania came under attack. Ontario Hydro, for example, was condemned for contracts signed with Quebec power companies in the late 1920s and early 1930s. These contracts were entered into on the basis of growth projections made in the expansionist 1920s,⁹⁸ but when Depression conditions led to decreased consumption, Ontario Hydro was left with a power surplus.

Press allegations that the entire industry had been recklessly overdeveloped met with a defensive response from the industry. The editor of Electrical News, the major Canadian electrical industry journal, suggested that journalists had lately,

acquired a bad attack of the blues and instead of taking a trip to the west, or to the mining country for a breath of unadulterated optimism, they have vented their spleen by taking to undermine our faith in the Canadian waterpower industry.⁹⁹

This industry, "securely founded by farsighted Canadian industrialists and engineers over the past 40 years, will easily withstand the petty scratchings of these pessimistic journalists,"¹⁰⁰ asserted this industry spokesman.

The growth mania had adherents outside of industry circles, although they had become scarcer by the 1930s. In 1928 Grattan O'Leary assured Maclean's readers that Canada's available hydro-electric power would support an additional population of 30,800,000 souls, and provide in wages the stupendous sum of \$9,279,600,000 a year based on an as yet undeveloped potential of 16 million horsepower.¹⁰¹

World industrialists and statesmen concede, said O'Leary, that electrical energy, meaning cheaper production, holds the way to commercial supremacy. "The cheapened, enlarged production is making Canada a factor in world trade, providing jobs and wages and purchasing power for Canadians, a home market for Canadian agriculture, traffic for Canadian railways and shipping for Canadian ports.¹⁰² Invoking the ghost of Sir Wilfred Laurier, O'Leary hypothesized that Canada with the second greatest per capita installation in the world at 513 h.p. per 100 population, indeed had the 20th century in the palm of its hand.

Domestic consumption, having reached the total of 4,000,000 h.p., played a vital role in this growth. He compared Ontario's rate of 1.85 cents per kw hour with the U.S. average of 7.5 cents.¹⁰³ Clearly such superiority over our American neighbours in an industry seen as key to economic growth was cause for optimism!

The municipal utilities also worked on the infinite growth assumption, responding to the Depression by promoting high energy using appliances in an attempt to maintain the lower price spiral which had worked so well in the past. Industry, in general, did not lose faith in their growth potential, believing the Depression to be a minor setback on the road to progress. M.K. Pike, President of Northern Electric, for example, asserted that the difficult times were a sign of transition from outworn conditions to new and

better things. Though depressions come and go, at least they are no longer accompanied by famine and hunger, asserted Pike, believing this depression to be "the eve of a great prosperity".¹⁰⁴

Another major criticism, perhaps best called the political-economic critique, posited that advertising and mass production accelerated the industry trend toward economic concentration. A few large companies, it was alleged, could tyrannize vulnerable consumers, and buy out smaller companies with fewer economic resources. There was little use denying this obvious trend except to resort to the silly contention that consumers, through their buying power, held ultimate power over manufacturers, or to fall back on the notion that monopoly control was a small price to pay for prosperity and progress. Thompson and Seager note that "corporate concentration was characteristic of the period."¹⁰⁵ Also, foreign capital was increasingly important, especially in the mining, hydro and automobile industries. Many Canadian independents were vanishing.¹⁰⁶

The concentration of economic power into a few hands can be seen in the retailing and manufacturing of electrical appliances, and in the provisioning of electricity. The conflict between private electrical retailers and municipal utilities who retailed electrical appliances through the Hydro Shops which was examined in an earlier chapter, was an example of small enterprises losing out to large. Public fears of huge inaccessible corporations which would not

respond to public input were fueled by the economic trend toward centralization.

The Electrical Contractors and Dealers of Ontario blamed the Hydro Shops for frequent failures among private contractor-dealers. In 1934 they complained to Premier Hepburn and the HEPC that the Hydro Shops abused their public image and monopoly power to corner the retailing market.¹⁰⁷ The provision of free labour on appliance servicing was a particularly bitter point which they believed led to public misconception of the true cost of servicing electrical appliances.¹⁰⁸

Hydro Shop municipalities were also criticized for using public money to compete with private interests. In response to dealer criticism that Hydro Shops paid no taxes, legislation was passed, on the recommendation of the HEPC, by which Hydro Shops were subject to the same municipal taxation as other merchants. Small dealers had difficulty competing with the large utilities in advertising expenditures, although the utilities maintained that dealers benefited from their advertising, through spin-off effects.¹⁰⁹

Contractor-Dealers complained that Hydro was at an advantage in offering term payment plans as it already had collection facilities for payment of Hydro bills, and further that it could threaten to cut off a customer's Hydro for non-payment of appliance instalments. Hydro vehemently

denied this practice was ever resorted to.¹¹⁰ It would also appear that the public trusted Hydro municipal utilities over private dealers, perhaps because of their status as a utility.¹¹¹ This gave them a further edge.

The small dealer also found it difficult to offer competitive trade-in allowances and extended time payments.¹¹² In an attempt to overcome the dealers' capital limitations, the municipal utilities sometimes assisted dealers in offering financing plans, but in the long run, it was the larger retailing groups and the municipal utilities who were in a healthier financial position, who took the lead in the retailing of large electrical appliances.

Even though it was clear that Hydro Shops were squeezing out smaller dealers, the industry insisted that utilities continue to merchandise, because dealers "were not sufficiently well financed and manned to take over the promotion and sale in anything like the volume done by the power companies."¹¹³ For the utilities to discontinue retailing would only mean,

a loss in promotional advertising, a loss in merchandising sales, with the consequent loss of employment of retail salesmen and manufacturing hands, but will also be a dead loss in domestic load and revenue which, if widespread would be disastrous to the rapid growth of the whole electrical industry.¹¹⁴

The OMEA asserted, using its own statistics to back up its claim, that appliance merchandising led to higher consumption of electricity.¹¹⁵ Most of the difference in higher consumption was made up for by the hot water heater

and range.¹¹⁶

Small retailers, especially in small towns, were also hurt by other centralizing trends in this period. The perception that department stores in large, urban areas could offer better prices through volume buying, the introduction of the automobile, and sophisticated merchandising techniques all contributed toward the decline of small dealers and small town merchants.¹¹⁷ The dealers were eventually phased out of retailing and retained only that part of the business for which their technical expertise gave them a natural monopoly, that is, servicing and wiring.¹¹⁸ The merchandising function went to those who had expertise in merchandising itself, rather than the product, and who had ample capital resources.

Manufacturing was also affected by the trend toward concentration. While in the 1920s there were many manufacturers of electrical appliances, including Canadian independents, by the late 1930s the market was dominated by a few large manufacturers, who advertised extensively, such as Westinghouse, Canadian General Electric, and Frigidaire. With the economic concentration also came a streamlining in the product. Fewer makes of washing machines were available, one standard type of range was replacing the many sizes, shapes and styles of the early interwar period and the refrigerator came in one basic style.

Concentration in economic resources and mass production

ideology may have been a factor in the defeat of the commercial laundry vis a vis the home washing machine. The commercial laundry is a local service, where economies of scale are not applicable, whereas the washing machine could be mass produced.¹¹⁹

Ontario Hydro's growing monopoly over electricity generation, transmission and distribution in the early 20th century has been documented by Armstrong and Nelles.¹²⁰ By the late 1920s the publicly-owned utility had bought out most private power companies in Southern Ontario, abusing its regulatory powers over the industry in order to drive competitors out of business.¹²¹ It also enjoyed the financial backing of the provincial government, and considerable political power in cabinet.

As has been pointed out, Adam Beck, the Commission's founder, used artificially low domestic rates, in conjunction with the popular perception that electrical development was essential to economic growth, to establish his public monopoly.¹²² Like the manufacturing industry which, through advertising, bought off the consumer with the promise of greater prosperity, Ontario Hydro ensured popular support through low domestic rates. While in the short run, this appeared beneficial to the consumer, it had some less attractive long term costs. Low rates had to be subsidized by government loans, which left less government revenue for other programs and social services.¹²³ Low rates, especially for ranges and water heaters, promoted wasteful

and inefficient consumption of electricity and created the illusion that electricity was cheap, when in fact costs were rising by the 1930s.

Ashworth, of Toronto Hydro, explained that "while electricity holds the field against all competitors in the production of light and mechanical power, its use in the production of heat, except in small amounts where the combustion of fuel is practically out of the question, is a distinct low grade use".¹²⁴ The range was not as low grade a use of electricity as the water heater, because it was only on for a short time each day and was used in the kitchen where coolness, cleanliness and absence of any products of combustion gave it an advantage. While the water heater was first promoted as a means of recouping some losses due to low domestic rates, using off peak power, and selling it cheaply at a low flat rate, this did not work as neatly as planned. The flat rate encouraged wasteful consumption,¹²⁵ consumers resented the high cost, the availability of off peak hours declined as more people used the service, and, once installed, the service which was "a luxury at a low cost," soon "became in the eyes of many people an urgent household necessity."¹²⁶ Utilities had to continue to service customers or they would return to gas or other competitors. Given the belief that 'the more we use the less it costs', utilities became locked into a mindset committed to a virtual monopoly over domestic energy use.

The promotion of indiscriminate growth in consumption eventually led to the need to look beyond Ontario's abundant water resources for electricity. Ontario Hydro rushed into nuclear and coal generated power sources after World War II when demand increased faster than supply.¹²⁷ The growth mentality encouraged the focus on megaprojects and abandonment of small hydro sites.¹²⁸ It also precluded the possibility of encouraging energy conservation.¹²⁹ As well as creating accelerated costs and adding to the provincial debt, the growth mentality led to increased pollution and risks to public safety,¹³⁰ through coal and nuclear generated power.

Ironically, as Armstrong and Nelles point out in their chapter on Civic Populism in Monopoly's Moment, it was popular fears of "large scale consolidations of capital inimical to the public interest"¹³¹ which had first led to the perceived need to regulate the private utilities.¹³² Ontario Hydro became a public monopoly much more powerful than the private one it replaced, and behaved in an astonishingly similar fashion.

Not all within industry, and few outside of it, were unanimous on the desirability of economic centralization. Ambivalence about the centralizing effect of economic development, fears that small self-sufficient economic players were being replaced by large impersonal corporations can be seen, both in fears of rural depopulation and the petit bourgeois critique of advertising.

This ambivalence about technology -- a desire to partake of its material benefits, while leaving intact social arrangements consistent with an earlier technology -- appears to be a typical response, especially among enthusiasts. Social conservatism and technological innovation co-existed in an uneasy balance. Of course, the promise of rural enhancement, of sustaining rural self sufficiency, like so many promises of industry and advertising, was impossible of fulfillment.

In a 1927 article by Bertram Brooker, the Hon. James Malcolm, Minister of Trade and Commerce, was quoted as saying that advertising put prices up, with too little profit going to the manufacturer.¹³³ He asserted also that advertisers had too much power over the retailer. The advertiser's direct appeal to the consumer, usurping the retailer's former role in advising consumers, selecting stock and setting prices, was resented. Fisher described this resentment over the growing power of advertisers in her study of Canadian advertising.¹³⁴ H.H. Stevens made a big splash in the nostalgic 1930s, with his Price Spreads Commission and Reconstruction Party in an attempt to defend the small businessman,¹³⁵ but it made scarcely a dent on the economic trend toward large corporate enterprise.

In a 1930 Maclean's article entitled "The New Power Age," a nostalgic view of hydro's potential to correct the trend toward centralization was presented.¹³⁶ This author

saw the discovery of distributable power -- "the ability to transport power at a moment's notice hundreds of miles from its source" -- as the key to a new civilization. As was once promised of the railway,¹³⁷ electricity would obliterate the limitations of location, and physical geography, developing Canada's remote areas. Distributable power promised to do no less than halt urbanization and centralization. The hauling of raw materials to power centres made necessary by the concentration of industries and populations in cities had led to the emergence of congested areas in which workmen must live.¹³⁸ The problems of urban congestion -- transport of food, water purification and sewage disposal -- had, in this author's view, brought urbanization to its zenith and electricity would now allow populations to be more widely distributed across the land.

Manufacturing plants can be located in districts where population is rooted to the soil, thus supplying whole time and part time work to the people, as in the days when village handicrafts flourished. This will make factory workers more or less independent of temporary depressions, and will at times enable them to live under pleasant conditions, drawing much of the sustenance themselves from the soil.¹³⁹

He even quoted Henry Ford as forecasting the break up of huge centralizing factories into smaller units specializing in parts, and the spread of these plants over the countryside where workers will have land available for growing their own food as a part time employment.¹⁴⁰

This physical decentralization of industry, however,

should not be confused with diffusion of political and economic power. In this back-to-the-land effort, the author forgot the cost involved in transporting power. Neither did he consider the possible unwillingness of people to live this semi-self-sufficient lifestyle once better times returned.

But the author is clear about one thing -- the benefits of technology are to be enjoyed by all. He forecast the "increase and wider spread of industrial activities, and the more general diffusion of wealth and good living over the land".¹⁴¹ The application of electricity to home and farm, electric railways, illuminated highways, television, alarms systems, etc. would effect an equally great transformation, that is, the elimination of drudgery.¹⁴²

It seems that there were fewer defenders of the small retailer than of the family farm, however. Rural depopulation was viewed with alarm throughout most of the early 20th century. Despite, or perhaps because of, electricity's role in centralizing industry and speeding urbanization, industry enthusiasts contended that electricity would halt rural depopulation. Ontario Hydro made this a major plank in its political program.

The omissions in the critique of advertising and industry are as important as the actual critique, as they indicate which of the social, political, and economic costs of advertising were foreseen and those which were not. Whether catalyst or consequence of the massive social,

economic and technological changes of the twentieth century, advertising held firm on its assumption of infinite economic growth, reflecting economic optimism of nearly pathological proportions. Although conservatives tenaciously held that consumers paid the price of advertising, no one articulated a comprehensive critique of the capacity for infinite growth.

While critics did foresee the oligopolistic control by large corporations and their advertisers over economic and technological resources, no one, at least in the popular press, seems to have foreseen the cultural homogenization which accompanied product standardization and the mass appeal of advertising. In the interests of selling to as large a market as possible, American advertisers in particular presented an ideal image of cultural, racial and class homogeneity which masked real differences. Despite their 'egalitarian' intentions, advertisers tended to focus on community leaders -- a white, urban, anglo-saxon, middle class family ideal. Single people, rural populations, the native and recent immigrant populations, and the poor generally were excluded.

Market research conducted by advertisers and their medium, national magazines, legitimized the focus on the typical consumer. One magazine study justified the choice of a large city because "buying tends toward the larger places, and toward the buying and consumption patterns set

by those larger places."¹⁴³ The poor were also excluded. Several magazine studies concluded that the lowest income group was not worth the advertiser's attention.¹⁴⁴

There was a widespread belief that the middle income groups were the best sales prospects, especially for labour-saving appliances.¹⁴⁵ While advertisers and manufacturers, especially in the United States, liked to couch this tendency in democratic rhetoric, there is little evidence that middle income groups were generally better buyers, although that group was both numerically stronger and not as saturated as the higher income groups.

Age was also a consideration, with young married couples from ages 25 to 35, the "age of accumulation," the preferred market.¹⁴⁶ Chatelaine, for example, advertised in Advertising Age that the younger married families of Canada for whom Chatelaine was designed were the "biggest purchasers of homes, furnishings, equipment, clothing, automobiles, health and beauty products, food and housekeepers' supplies".¹⁴⁷

When the U.S. Bureau of Labour and Department of Agriculture undertook a study of American buying habits by family size, income level, geographic distribution and degree of urbanization, the survey was deliberately limited to "families consisting of at least a husband and wife who have been married for at least a year and are living in housekeeping quarters and who were both born in the United States".¹⁴⁸

The Canadian government was less ethnocentric in its market research than the U.S., but still focussed on families. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics in 1939 undertook a survey of nutritional and family living expenditures among 1135 wage earner families of British origin in 11 cities and 211 of French origin in 2 Quebec cities. Unlike comparable American studies, the immigrant was not deliberately ignored, as 93 records were obtained in Montreal and Winnipeg from families of racial origins other than English and French.¹⁴⁹ Canadian advertisers also tended to pay more attention to their larger rural market,¹⁵⁰ although an urban bias is still present in national magazines.

The older single woman was largely seen as a write-off, despite the fact that she was usually employed, with income to spend. It was not until the late 1930s that advertisers began to recognize the existence of married women who were also employed, and pay attention to single women.¹⁵¹

Most interesting perhaps is the failure, even among women critics of advertising, of whom there were many, to criticize the sexual division of labour in the home. On the contrary advertisers were condemned for not taking women's homemaking role seriously enough. At the popular level this is not surprising, as the technology to allow women an escape from homemaking was not yet fully in place, and barely within reach of all but the most wealthy. The

perceived importance of the home, as reflected in advertising literature, acted as an impediment to women's rejection of the full-time homemaking role.

For the captains of industry and consciousness, the creation of new wealth by ever more aggressive players on the economic stage was promoted as the route to raising the worker's standard of living and emancipating women from household slavery. Neither redistribution of existing wealth nor altering the sexual division of labour were considered. In exchange for the material benefits of a technological wonderland, and its illusive promises, the consumer was asked to grant industry a very real monopoly over technological and economic resources.

While advertisers and manufacturers revelled in fast-paced change and embraced new techniques and devices with seemingly insatiable hunger, their philosophy must be seen as socially conservative. The uncritical acceptance of modern capitalism as the vehicle of progress, and reinforcement of the sexual division of labour as well as ethnic, sexual and social stereotypes, show a disregard for social or political "progress". In that realm, they were essentially bolstering the status quo.

The appeal to individual emotions, personal greed and vanity rather than the intellect and/or community consciousness potentially negated the material benefits of modern industry. The alleged greater civilizing effect this would have -- people would presumably better themselves with

their newly won leisure and prosperity despite the discontent which preceded it -- was assumed but not adequately demonstrated. The appeal to fantasy and subconscious utopian desires hid the realities of the modern world -- class and ethnic divisions, worker alienation, and sexual inequality. Despite a belief that social progress followed automatically behind technological-economic progress, in practice "social" progress was given secondary consideration.

The method of selling the products of industry served only to reinforce consumer ignorance of technology, especially among women, the principal users of domestic technology, making them more dependent on the manufacturers and utilities which brought the electric lifestyle to them. Psychological advertising techniques, in conjunction with consumer powerlessness exaggerated the emotionalism it exploited. The consumer became the spoiled child of the business world -- in one sense a ruthless tyrant and in another a helpless dependent. Like women and children in the patriarchal family, the consumer had only a passive, indirect input into the business world.

Given the alienating work environment most workers experienced, and their limited decision-making authority in the realm of consumption, most consumers experienced modern technology only in a vicarious and non-participatory manner. The method of selling the products of that technology

reinforced ignorance and exclusion, and made it nearly impossible for consumers to fully utilize the increased leisure and wealth for self-fulfillment. Advertising's emphasis on emotionalism created a dichotomy between production, based on science and technology, and consumption, based on subconscious impulse. The consumer, especially the housewife, was doomed to low status, as long as her experience of technology was as a machine tender, rather than a creator.

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CHAPTER SEVEN:

Canadian Housewives: Perspectives on Advertising,
Technology and Professionalization

Although the historian has few direct sources from the housewife herself, letters written to women's magazines, the response to consumer and magazine surveys, trade literature assessments of the consumer, and magazine portrayals of individual circumstances do offer some clues as to the housewife's and householder's perspectives on domestic reform. Unfortunately much of the testimony we have comes through commercial media such as women's magazines and market research surveys, and we do not know how selective the editorial process has been in providing these rare glimpses of Canadian home life. As well, there is a process of self-selection which is impossible to escape. Women motivated to write letters or testimonials, even to answer questionnaires or surveys, are more likely to be educated, articulate and interested in the issue at hand. The evidence is not only inconclusive but sometimes

inconsistent. As one would expect, all Canadian women were not in agreement on issues facing them. Although biased, these sources do offer a beginning.

Like the professionalizers of housework, Canadian housewives affirmed the dignity and worth of homemaking. Occasionally giving expression to the frustrations and hardships they had to endure, they were certain that they made a contribution, one which was not always adequately recognized. Housewives also endorsed their advisors' demands for financial autonomy, feeling a strong sense of injustice at their financial dependence.

Canadian housewives appear to have focussed on motherhood as the central facet of their social contribution, while household advisors gave it scant attention in their enthusiasm to rationalize household procedures. Though Canadian homemakers seemed willing enough to adopt the benefits of domestic technology and advertising, they were less enthusiastic than the professional women. They were also skeptical about the worth of scientific management and the potential of professionalism to upgrade homemaking.

Husbands appear to have had a more enthusiastic response to technology in the home than their wives, and their participation in home life appears to have been increasing. The discussion of companionship within marriage was generally told from the wives' point of view, however,

and was fraught with ambivalence.

Though apparently certain of their worth as homemakers and their desire for increased status and financial independence, Canadian women were ambivalent on the issue of careers for married women. Especially during the Depression when many Canadians felt jobs should be reserved for men, some women blamed their employed sisters for economic woes.

The extent to which Canadian homemakers agreed with their elite advisors -- the proponents of scientific management -- is also poorly understood. Did professional women have anything of value to offer the housewife, in exchange for the decline in autonomy and status they exacted as their 'fee'? Which aspects of the program of scientific management and democratized consumption did the housewife find appealing and which did she reject? The role of husbands in accepting domestic technology is often quite different from that of their wives, and the limited evidence we have can shed some light on relations between men and women within the family. Although further research, perhaps in the area of oral interviews, will be needed to make definitive conclusions concerning Canadian housewives of the interwar period, this chapter may suggest directions.

Two testimonies from women tell the story of the 'problem' of housework in the interwar period. Comparisons with paid labour, which was increasingly available to women, made household labour seem all the more onerous to many Canadian women who had worked in the labour force before

marriage. In a 1921 article entitled "Dishwashing and Divorce", a frustrated young housewife (former professional) hypothesizes, in a tone which is not entirely tongue-in-cheek, that housework is responsible for more divorce than brutality, jealousy or infidelity.¹ In this very personal piece, the new wife cries out against the monotony and loneliness of housework in the modern age. The demands of a young child, the high cost of outside help, and a husband's prejudice against working wives forced her to stay home when she preferred outside work. She suspected that she might be able to accept with decent cheerfulness the hated housework if it were not for people's attitude toward it.² "Why should I be expected to like solitary manual labour?" asked this former business woman who had "always before marriage mixed and had the companionship of intelligent people."³ To those who say that housework is not manual labour, she replied with refreshing frankness:

What is more manual than cooking and cleaning? After a few weeks even an attempt at enthusiasm cannot prevent these things from becoming mechanical. I might as well be hideous and a hundred for all I do during the day. Other people do not like to drop in if they think they will find you working, so most of the day I am alone, except for my baby, who tries as hard as she can, but who at eight months is hardly a mental companion. Where are the food and exercise for my brain? I cannot commune with dishes.⁴

For this woman the dishes seemed to symbolize her enslavement to household drudgery; her longing for laughter and conversation; for liberation from the daily task of

scrubbing grease out of pots and pans. "I think some of the grease must get into my soul through my pores," she complained. "At any rate I feel an intense desire to scrub out my soul with sandsoap."⁵

Responding to a neighbour's advice that she show the old fashioned qualities of dutifulness and submission to one's husband, this perceptive young wife replied, that with the possible exception of mealtimes, the average modern man would be bored to death with the sweet, staid, old fashioned wife.⁶ The requirements of wives to be intelligent companions as well as 'household drudges' clearly were incompatible in this woman's eyes.

The epitome of her fallen status as a housewife was, for her, her husband's remark that, "I don't see that there's much to do around a house anyway."⁷ She responded, "It makes you want to pull his hair and bite."⁸ The huge gulf in understanding between the two members of an otherwise loving couple was rooted in the sexual division of labour. This woman felt that it would destroy her marriage. She summed up her feelings:

But to give all my energy and time and the best years of my youth in the kind of work I hate, and then to have the person it is done for say he cannot see that there is much to do would take the heart out of anything but a cow.⁹

In another testimonial/article entitled "This Bondage", a woman described her role as wife and mother. Even leaving aside the "pains of childbirth, the cruel, tortuous months

of discomfort and suffering that precede them and the sleepless nights and constant care and vigilance necessary to bring children safely through the critical stages of babyhood", this mother of five believed that her job was as hard and as nerve-racking as any business career.¹⁰ She described her daily routine, which began with waking husband and children, and then preparing breakfast and bag lunches amid perpetual confusion. "John is fastidious about his breakfast," she wrote, liking it "well and freshly cooked and piping hot". In addition she felt obligated to maintain a cheery posture and send him off to business with the memory of a smiling face.¹¹

Once the morning rush ended, the round of bedmaking, housework, ironing and sweeping began. The family did not have a servant, preferring to put any extra money into an education fund for the children. Before her husband had bought her a washing machine, she had had a woman come in once a week to do the washing and heavy cleaning. Now, with a machine, she did her own laundry (and presumably the heavy cleaning as well). The rest of the day was occupied with preparation of a mid-day meal for two of the younger children, followed by preparation of the evening meal for the whole family, as well as sewing, mending, marketing etc. After the evening meal, while the children did the dishes, she and her husband had a quiet hour of reading and conversation. This she described as the happiest hour of her day, although it was sometimes interrupted by

quarrelsome children.¹² Evenings also carried their stresses as this wife felt it her duty to adjudicate disputes between other family members, a function which required "all the diplomacy and tact I am capable of".¹³ Even at bedtime duty did not end, for if John wishes to discuss a business deal or plans for altering the garden, "I must listen patiently and answer him intelligently as a dutiful wife should".¹⁴

In comparing her life with that of her unmarried sister the source of most bitterness and regret lay with her financial dependence. "I could stand the hard work, the nervous strain, the anxiety and worry all so much more cheerfully if only I had some money of my very own".¹⁵ The humiliation and sense of injustice at having to ask for every cent, her husband's refusal to give her an allowance, and the failure to recognize a wife's claim to the smallest part of her husband's salary, clearly caused this woman grief. Visits from her independent sister were followed by days of remorse.¹⁶ She conceded that her husband was a good provider, but "he likes to feel that he is a sort of feudal lord dispensing bounty to his subjects" and explained that he is the sort who hates to part with money.¹⁷

In another testimonial style article from the pages of the Canadian Home Journal, a woman recounted her years as the wife of a miser. This man's refusal to share the family wage took an extreme form wherein the wife and children were

asked to make meals from scraps picked from nearby garbage and to salvage clothes from inexpensive remnants while the husband enjoyed a lifestyle appropriate to his professional status.¹⁸ Her husband had successfully convinced friends and neighbours that his wife was "not quite right mentally" and denied her credit at local shops.¹⁹ He maintained a respected position in the community concealing his tyrannical behaviour at home.

Though this woman received the sympathetic ear of her doctor and a lawyer she consulted, she was powerless to alter her circumstances. She could not divorce him because he had not deserted, beaten or been unfaithful to her, and was providing "support". In Canada mental cruelty was not grounds for divorce, though her slave status in the home and her ostracization from community was certainly a form of sadistic cruelty. When her children were old enough to help support her, she left him, musing "I wonder what he'll do without his unpaid servant".²⁰ Significantly, she justified her failure to leave sooner by noting that "twenty-five years ago women did not get out and look for jobs, that a woman who left her husband was an abandoned creature and that every man's hand was against her".²¹ By the time the war came, and women could get jobs and still remain respectable, she had two small children, her physical and mental health impaired by mistreatment. Domestic isolation, poverty and slave status had taken their toll, contributing toward a feeling of mental instability.²²

Letters to Eleanor Dare, the Ann Landers of the Canadian Home Journal, described other women in similar, if less extreme, circumstances:

One woman's husband wished to leave her with two small children and a third on the way and to allow her fifty dollars a month for maintenance. Another gave her husband all her money when she married him. He built up his business with that money and now after thirty-five years, he has handed over the business to his married son, gives his wife no allowance and she is taking in boarders to run their home. A third tells a story of abject slavery to a husband who shows her less consideration than a wild animal would give its mate. She has two children and he allows her a dollar each day for all the household expenses. Every morning she begs and pleads for the dollar until, tired of his sport of playing with her as a cat with a mouse, he throws it at her. She has no clothes, no amusements, no money for necessary dental or medical attentions, and his abuse of her sounds more like the horrors of the Middle Ages than the sanity of modern Canada.²³

At least in these Canadian homes, business-like housework was not being practiced -- based as it was on budgetary control and financial management by the housekeeper. These complaints of vulnerability to the whims of one's master within the private home, lack of independence and free hours are very similar to the complaints heard from domestic servants.

A Ladies Home Journal survey²⁴ in 1938 showed that many women in the U.S.A. still did not have the freedom to spend the family income as they saw fit. Survey respondents believed that the wife was more capable of handling the family budget than the husband, yet 88% protested the lack of such responsibility.²⁵ 75% said that household spending

was currently a partnership between husband and wife and only 48% received household allowances, although most believed them their right. 94% of unmarried girls had issued ultimatums demanding such allowances before marriage.²⁶

While many Canadian housewives complained of frustration, low status and lack of independence, they believed that they played an important role, especially as mothers, and objected to suggestions that women did not make a contribution to society. In a lively and provocative article entitled "Is a Wife Worthwhile?", Madge MacBeth, a Canadian authoress, took the male viewpoint, suggesting that wives were a financial liability. While women believe they should be provided for financially, and expect to do less work after marriage than before, men are taught to expect they must support women, she said. Women were costing men so much, said MacBeth, that "they are afraid of us."²⁷ Despite their new financial independence, Macbeth claimed women took the best of both worlds by refusing to take financial responsibility and spending all of their money on themselves. What's more, women's demands for money drove men to strike for higher wages. "To do without crepe de chine underwear has become more terrifying than to do without a fully rounded existence, love, children",²⁸ said the author.

Reader response to the article is more interesting than

the piece itself. One woman expressed indignation and pain that "one of our own number should so misrepresent us."²⁹ She challenged the assumption that "Because it is not the custom for women to receive a cash payment for the work they do in their own homes, or for a monetary value to be attached thereto, therefore that work has no money value and we do not pay our way in the world." She correctly pointed out that the domestic servant who received money for working in a home was, by this logic, paying her way while the mother who helped with the work, supervised, brought children into the world, cared for them and performed myriad wifely duties was not said to pay her own way.³⁰

Macbeth responded by saying that she was not referring to homemakers, who clearly could not pay financially, yet paid in so many other ways, but the working women who earned almost equal pay with men yet did not pay their share.³¹ Macbeth argued that she had not stated or implied that the woman who earned her money becomes one of the minority women paying their share in the upkeep of existence, nor that the homemaker is a financial parasite because she does not pay in dollars and cents.³² Despite her protests, of course, this was the message taken by Canadian homemakers. Their inability to measure their worth by the financial yardstick only confirmed an ambivalent status in a world where women were "free" to work for wages.

In a similar exchange in Chatelaine (1938), readers responded to "What Did Your Husband Give Up For Marriage?"³³

This article was a tired restatement of the old contention that men give up everything for marriage while women gain everything. Even in terms of the financial picture alone, this is a half-truth at best and the utter silliness of the argument suggests it was intended to provoke consternation, perhaps with an eye to increasing magazine sales. But again the response is interesting and shows what Canadian women thought of marriage and their role in the home. One woman wrote:

I gave up my business career to marry. My husband continued his. I gave up economic independence. My husband still holds his own purse strings. Marriage and its resultant babies have forced me to give up 80% of my contacts with the world. My husband has given up practically none of his. Marriage has limited my opportunities for coy adventure to the milkman, the baker and the 16 year old paper boy. It has in no wise limited my husband's. 34

A business girl wrote, suggesting that marriage was a contract in which the groom invests personal freedom and assumes responsibilities, but expects tremendous dividends. "In marriage he enjoys the stimulation of a partnership in which each is giving his best because they realize it is the way they will receive the best". She further asserted that a wife,

gives up everything for him, for now his success is her success. The man really doubles his power and is given the understanding, consideration and respect which is not the lot of even the wealthiest bachelor. 35

She contended that women gave up financial and personal

independence for the security of married status and assumed the responsibility of supervising the physical and mental development of children, a task which "demands more than the measurable financing which is so often the husband's sole contribution."³⁶

A spinster wrote that, while women give up name and job to marry, a husband's job becomes more secure. "Marriage is therefore a sort of unemployment insurance with no premiums to pay".³⁷ And when an addition to the family is expected,

does the man spend months of discomfort pain and embarrassment? He does not. He may, if he is really big hearted, occasionally take his wife for a walk around the block, after dark, for exercise. Later does he go down to the very jaws of death to bring in that new little life? No, indeed! If he had to, I venture to say that the human race would have died out aeons ago.³⁸

Motherhood was clearly the crucial contribution women felt they were making even if they found difficulty articulating their frustrations in not being allowed an adequate measurement of its worth. In an open letter (presented in article form) to Canadian women from a relief mother in the April 1933 issue of Chatelaine, one women railed against the hypocrisy of exalting motherhood in word but not in deed,³⁹ expressing the futility and despair of having the knowledge of childhood nutrition without the means.

My country realizes that my children are its greatest asset. My country knows that the wisdom and intelligence I exercise now in teaching and training my children contribute

much to their usefulness but a few years hence, and that the foods used in body-building now decide whether they shall become a burden or an asset. My country knows this and spends time and money to send out useful information to mothers within its borders. I am a Canadian mother and the recipient of more free advice than any other mortal on earth.⁴⁰

If this mother of seven, including twin babies, believed the message that the government literature portrayed, she must have been forced to watch her children slowly deteriorate for lack of proper nourishment, bitter and helpless to stop it. Her impatience with the empty rhetoric of motherhood is understandable.

She was provided with groceries, she tells us, but no milk. "To growing children milk is essential for the growth and strength of teeth and bones and finger nails. Everyone knows that," she says. She quoted one expert: "to cut down on the milk supply is similar to cutting off all food; in the latter case ultimate death is sure, while without milk ultimate sickness is certain."⁴¹ Appealing to the Relief Board for milk, she was allowed two quarts per day. Of this the twin infants took $\frac{2}{3}$ a quart daily, and she was feeding the rest to the other five children, "a teaspoon at a time, as medicine."⁴²

This woman took pride in her children:

My children are beautiful. All children are beautiful. My children are intelligent and clever. Nearly all children are. So Canadian mothers do not look to their country for reward. We have not all life has to offer, but we have the best.⁴³

This Canadian mother was not asking for pity, but merely the means to do her job properly -- in accord with the government's free advice and the maternal rhetoric spewing forth from all channels.

Canadian women had few illusions about marriage; yet they held a firm belief in the value of the work they performed, which was reflected and reinforced in the women's magazines. There was little discussion in these letters of professionalism, or the use of business methods to make homemaking more efficient, but there was anger and resentment at the lack of recognition and the inability to measure homemaking by public sphere criteria. Nellie McClung was not the only Canadian woman to express the belief that mothering was an important task, an achievement deserving of real respect rather than mere empty rhetoric such as abundantly flows on Mothers' Day.⁴⁴

Housewives and domestic servants performed personal services for others in the private home and as such their conditions were often described as feudal. Domestic servants, like housewives, were vulnerable, due to the private nature of their work, to the whims and petty tyrannies of mistresses, and, in the case of wives, masters.

Domestic service, like the housewife's role, continued to be plagued by low status. Yet it would appear that middle class Canadian women, in practice, undermined the domestic reformers' rhetoric about the dignity of housework, by refusing to pay the domestic servant an adequate wage

commensurate with the skill required to do the job. Many were unwilling to share all of the household duties with servants and/or grant them independence. Canadian mistresses were unwilling to pay for the luxury of having the freedom to come and go as they pleased, knowing household tasks were taken care of.

Girls either in domestic service, or contemplating entering it, cited disrespectful treatment and low social status as points against it. Several mentioned an attitude of superiority on the part of mistresses -- sometimes encouraged even by the children -- and a propensity to humiliate maids in front of guests. One woman praised her present mistress for training her maids properly rather than failing to teach them how to perform certain tasks and then telling friends how stupid they were.⁴⁵

Household advisors addressed the problem of the low status of domestic servants. One Maclean's contributor wailed a familiar cry:

Is it not an honourable thing to serve gracefully and loyally within the four walls of a home?
Is it as servile a task as the hours at a telephone switchboard, the toil in a restaurant, the waiting behind a counter, the drudgery in a factory or a foundry?⁴⁶

Social critics scratched their heads in bewilderment that Canadian girls preferred the dreary low-paid monotony of factory work to paid housework, which, they quite correctly opined, required far more skill and intelligence in its varied duties than industrial work. If only

mistresses and the general public could put out of their heads the ridiculous notion that housework was the most demeaning and humiliating of all tasks, the chronic shortage would disappear, it was generally believed. Often the blame for this lack of status was placed squarely on the heads of mistresses whose mistreatment, condescending attitude, and general all-round 'unprofessionalism', drove women from domestic service, it was said.⁴⁷

One of the proposed solutions to the domestic servant problem was to train the homemaker through domestic science courses in much the same manner as nurses or other professionals were trained.⁴⁸ Many of the courses offered to domestic servants, some of which were free to servants whose employers permitted them to attend, went unpatronized by domestics because mistresses would not allow their help two free afternoons a week to attend classes.⁴⁹

In looking at the problem of domestic service from the perspective of middle class Canadian women, one cannot help but note a lack of flexibility and creativity on the part of housekeepers in adapting to the shortage. The type and amount of work expected of the domestic worker, the long hours, and lack of privacy were clearly unacceptable to modern Canadian women, yet pleas by reformers to have mistresses reduce hours and improve conditions seem to have gone unheeded.

The suggestion that the live-in domestic servant be

replaced by a daily worker, employed at an hourly rate and for specified hours and duties, as was the case with public sphere workers, had been floating around for some time. Such a solution was generally found to be inadequate by authors in Chatelaine and Maclean's, due to the extra expense of paying a salary adequate to pay "room rent and board and carfare" and the time lost in transportation".⁵⁰ There was also a feeling that, in the moderate-sized household with children, this arrangement was insufficient to meet the family's needs.⁵¹ For most middle class families, only one servant would be hired, who was called a 'general' or 'cook general'. Her duties, on an average day, included: cooking breakfast, washing dishes, cleaning the stove, making beds, dusting, tidying the house, preparing lunch and an evening meal. She also answered the door and the phone, put the children to bed at night while their mother and father had gone to the theatre, and took responsibility for the house in the evenings. In some homes she might also be expected to do the laundry.⁵²

Maude Petitt Hill described one woman's solution to the servant problem. This woman (as is the case with most of the women in the magazine pages who found solutions to household problems) had had a professional career prior to marriage, and her knowledge of the business world "enabled her to study housework from a business-like angle".⁵³ After conducting an experiment in which she acted as her own cook general, she concluded that the problem with domestic

service was the long hours and lack of freedom to enjoy a normal social life. She successfully sought a live-in worker, offering 5 free evenings a week and used the then innovative arrangement of hiring neighbouring students as babysitters for evening excursions. Even this arrangement, however, did not necessitate the mistress taking on some of the maid's duties, as 'evenings off' meant, after 7:15 when the evening meal had been prepared and dishes done.⁵⁴

Although it did not say so, one can assume the day began in the early morning with breakfast preparations as this was the accepted norm. This liberal arrangement still meant a long day of physical labour, yet many mistresses were not willing to concede even this.

One 1936 article in Chatelaine, entitled "Codes for the Kitchen," summarized the views of the YWCA and other groups, concerned both with the servant problem and with working conditions for women.⁵⁵ In November 1934 the Economics Relations Committee of the National Council of the YWCA drew up its 'Nine-Point Plan', in hopes of bringing conditions in paid housework more in line with conditions in industry, calling for:

The 60 hour week and a maximum 10 hour day.
 Wages adjusted to the prevailing wage in a particular community.
 Time off to be recognized as a legitimate claim and arranged at time of employment.
 Private room and some facilities for entertaining friends.
 Compulsory accident and health insurance for domestic workers.
 Adequate and recognized training centres.⁵⁶

The Victoria Local Council of Woman supported a similar program, with a 60 hour week and a \$15 per month salary for inexperienced help. A code drawn up by the Saskatoon committee of the YWCA, including representatives of the Local Council of Women, three employers, the General and Employment Secretaries of the YWCA and the Government Employment Secretary and Secretary of Women's British Immigration League, called for a 75 hour week and 12 hour day.⁵⁷ This particular code was seen, by the author, as more practical, and therefore more likely to be put into practice. Obviously the 60 hour week was an ideal, which it was not anticipated most mistresses would accept. The Toronto Local Council of Women came up with a code calling for a 69-hour week, while the Houseworkers Union of Toronto, a group which we are told was affiliated with the radical labour movement, called for a 48 hour week, starting salary of \$30 per month and a fixed hourly rate for overtime.⁵⁸

The greatest complaint against domestic service was not wages but the long hours, and mistresses appeared unwilling to alter these. "How can hours be shortened without breaking up the whole regime of the household?" one author queried.⁵⁹ Long hours were justified on the basis that maids were doing actual work only part of the time:

The factory girl ordinarily works at high tension for her full eight hours; she spends an hour or two daily going to and from work; her meal hours come out of her free time. The maid's work is varied and she can usually take it at her own speed; her meal hours are

included in her working day, and during part of her hours on duty she often has nothing to do but answer the doorbell or telephone. When these things are balanced, the consensus of opinion is that the maid who is on duty 60 or even 69 hours is as well off as the factory girl working forty-eight.⁶⁰

While Canadian homemakers shared with professional women a desire for greater financial freedom and recognition, they did not adopt the strategy of professionalization, or of scientific management, either in their own work or in supervision of servants. In answer to a request by Chatelaine to pinpoint what makes a good maid and a good mistress, Canadian women rejected the ideals of scientific management in the home. Letters received from mistresses on the servant question revealed that Canadian women believed that a systematically run household as well as stated hours of work helped maintain good mistress/maid relations many, however, did not agree that domestic service could be run on a business basis.⁶¹ One respondent gave a realistic assessment of the one-maid family where business-like methods were not possible. Success depends so much on the personal relation between the maid and the mistress, said this Canadian mistress.⁶² Canadian women clearly recognized that household work (unless done with a large staff) and especially where there were children, would remain general, unspecialized work which was not amenable to business methods.

Several market research surveys confirmed the lack of interest in home management issues, at least as they were

portrayed by the magazines. A McCall survey, which investigated the interests of magazine reading women, found that fiction, food, style and beauty, current events, home decoration, pictures, and advertising all came ahead of home management as a motive for reading women's magazines.⁶³ Results of the General Electric survey,⁶⁴ which led to selling appliances as beauty aids, showed a lack of interest in housecleaning and/or ideas on how to improve it.

The Cleanliness Institute campaign also confirmed women's lack of interest in improving housework routines. The 1930 advertising campaign offered three booklets: "The 30 Day Loveliness Test", "The Book About Baths", and "A Cleaner House by 12 O'Clock". The bath appeal was the most convincing general appeal, loveliness was more effective than cleaning as an appeal, and ads dealing with housework were the least effective.⁶⁵

Roscoe C. Edlund, director of the Cleanliness Institute, told Advertising Age that the analysis of coupons indicated beauty as the never failing appeal to women. These prove beyond question, he said, that "the feminine portion of our population is far more interested in advice about improving their personal appearance than in advice about housework, even when the latter is based upon a plan to cut drudgery and increase leisure."⁶⁶

Letters accompanying the coupons indicated motives for the loveliness quest, explained Edlund. "Beauty for

beauty's sake had little or no place in their thoughts", he said. "They wanted beauty in order to interest a suitor or husband, or 'to keep young with the children'". These letters also shed light on reasons why women wanted the booklet 'A Cleaner House by 12 O'clock'. "All sought more leisure, the majority for social pursuits, but many for time for study or general reading. Many wished for more time to spend with children, both in recreation and serious projects".⁶⁷ Others, concluded Edlund, wanted to lure families back to the hearth by making homes more attractive.

Leisure, comfort, immaculate homes, well groomed children are all compelling objectives and prized weapons in the copywriters arsenal but they are all small guns compared with the universal desire for an attractive personal appearance.⁶⁸

These conclusions of course fit very well into existing advertising practice and may be a confirmation of advertisers' prejudice concerning women rather than an accurate reflection of reality. As the letters constitute only 5% of returns (most sent in coupons without comment), they may not be representative of the entire group.

Whatever the advertisers' prejudices, housewives appear to have held little faith in reformers' efforts to elevate the low status of housework by imposing the values of industrialism on it. Canadian housewives appear to have been more interested in giving motherhood an exalted place than in imposing business values on those aspects of housework which could be mechanized, rationalized or centralized. Motherhood, the most labour intensive,

emotion-laden and creative aspect of homemaking, was also the least amenable to scientific management theories. Thus it was generally ignored by household advisors. While Frederick strongly advised homemakers against performing several tasks at once,⁶⁹ in order to systematize their work procedures, constant interruptions by children or others requiring the homemaker's attention prevented such rationalization of work in most homes. Women recognized the impossibility of scheduling domestic work by ridiculing the attempt to 'mind the baby' on an eight hour schedule.⁷⁰

The emotional fulfillment and creativity of mothering⁷¹ is an important compensation for the low status and dependence of housework. Yet the cult of motherhood was more than this, at least potentially. In its rejection of the values of technological society, maternalism has a radical side. Although it does serve to bolster women's exclusion from the public sphere, the exaltation of motherhood is also a statement of opposition to a world that devalues nurturing as opposed to productive labour. Such sentiments could only be expressed indirectly by Canadian homemakers.

Another of the compensations for playing the housekeeping role is the housewife's freedom to use her time as her own.⁷² The housewife has no "boss" standing over her shoulder telling her what to do each minute of the day. Women clearly resisted the factory-like regimentation

inherent in the scientific management program. Many woman had told Frederick "Oh, I couldn't bear to do my housework like factory work. I want to rest when I want to, and to do things as I feel like it".⁷³ Given its goal of regimenting housekeeping duties, its denigration of traditional skills, its near denial of childrearing, its emotionally neutral ethos, and its imposition of 'male' values on women's work, scientific management had little appeal to women. Scientific management did not address the issue of forcing males to recognize the worth of mothering and the values of the private sphere thought to go with it. Rather, homemaking only acquired "status" by adopting the antithetical values of measurable efficiency and productivity.

The reaction of women to scientific management does offer a hint at women's role in the twentieth century privatization of some aspects of domestic labour. While the private home does deny domestic workers the advantages of centralization and specialized labour, it is not clear that the majority of women would have welcomed these advantages. Scientific management, especially in the factory could mean a loss of autonomy in work processes, and its obsession with efficiency was inappropriate to the home.

Not enough is known about the Canadian homemakers of the 1920s and 1930s to determine whether they viewed their work with a different set of values than the professional women who wanted to imbue it with the ethics of

industrialism. The answer to such a question could shed light on the issue of women's culture.

Like their husbands, Canadian women were practical in their relationship to domestic technology and its messenger, advertising. Most Canadian homemakers wished to reduce the drudgery of housekeeping and, given ideal circumstances, generally adopted labour-saving technology. The one aspect of the scientific management program which was popular was its advocacy of domestic technology. Acceptance was strongest among professional women (those who had the most to gain from increased leisure), then men in general. The traditional homemaker showed the least enthusiasm.

Despite this limited acceptance of domestic technology by women in the home, many male advertisers and women professionalizers condemned women's "conservatism" in the face of new technology. The portrayal of women as technologically conservative reflected the zeal of the promoters of technology as much as any realistic portrayal of Canadian housewives. Canadian women were electrifying their homes, though not as quickly as advertisers and their women advisors thought they should. Marketing, for instance, commented in 1922 that advertising for electrical appliances had been largely creational because it had to "compete with long established custom and to oust household tools which have been in use since the flood". Such advertising, it was thought, could do much to break down

prejudice and prepare the way for almost revolutionary methods on the part of "nature's most conservative creature -- woman".⁷⁴

Langton Fife, another Marketing contributor, bemoaned the fact that a large body of public opinion "instinctively organizes itself into opposition against innovations", and only a small minority welcome the unknown and the untried. Being an advertiser and an optimist, however, he believed that "given time, an inherently good idea will always make its way into public favour" but he also felt the process too often a long dreary fight against reaction, indifference and ignorance.⁷⁵ In the case of domestic electrical appliances, where an elementary fear of electricity as an unruly element had always mitigated against its wider use, he felt educational advertising had a role to play. There still exists a subconscious timidity toward the sprightly "juice" in the minds of women which renders it necessary for advertisers of this class of product to be educational in their publicity,⁷⁶ he noted, adding that woman, "by nature a conservative,"⁷⁷ was not inclined to make radical changes in the running and operation of her home.

A more sympathetic portrayal of this alleged conservatism was presented by Dr. Margaret Stewart, Director of a Home Institute for an electric utility:

Electricity is new to many women and because, unlike men who work in industry, they are unaccustomed to change, women are skeptical toward new methods. They need to observe appliances in use and be given an opportunity

to actually operate them before their feelings of timidity before the unknown quality, electricity, can dissipate.⁷⁸

Stewart explained women's "conservatism" as the consequence of their exclusion from the process of technological development rather than innate sexual differences.

Even given women's greater conservatism, there was also clearly a "mystique" about electricity which elicited a response among Canadian men and women ranging from fear to blind enthusiasm. Whichever the response, it was generally based on an ignorance of the technology -- one which manufacturers did little to dispel. One Canadian woman who had just purchased an electric washer called for service when it failed to clean her clothes. When the incredulous service representative pointed out that she had forgotten to put soap and water in the tub, she replied "Soap and Water! Why I thought you said this machine washed electrically".⁷⁹ She had taken the industry's slogan, "Do It Electrically" literally. Another woman expected the clothes to go through the wringer automatically.⁸⁰ There were also stories of men buying appliances which their wives absolutely refused to use.⁸¹

One woman, writing for Electrical News felt that the hardest woman to sell was the martyr:

The woman who is willing to go on day after day, year after year, washing and scrubbing in the hardest way in order that her children may have more of the luxuries and comforts of life. It is because of these unselfish women that there are 8 million automobiles in use today and only two million washing machines and

12 million phonographs and only 3 million vacuum cleaners.⁸²

She contended that these women were impossible to sell and must be reached through husband and children.⁸³

Women's conservatism was not necessarily pigheaded. The technology was not always labour saving for women, if it was used by husbands to economize on domestic help. One woman testified that she lost her washerwoman (who also did floors) with her husband's purchase of an electric washing machine.⁸⁴

Neither was the technology labour saving in individual circumstances if it necessitated learning extensive or difficult new skills. One of the biggest hurdles in selling electric ranges was the perceived need to learn to cook all over again. It is not surprising that younger, less experienced homemakers were more frequent purchasers and that cooking classes were an integral part of sales promotion.⁸⁵ For the experienced cook the labour saving capacity of the electric range was nullified by the effort needed to learn new methods. The ironing machine did not gain acceptance because the skill required to learn to operate it did not justify the amount of labour saved. Husbandly enthusiasm for new technology often did not take these practical considerations into account.

The traditional homemakers' more conservative response to domestic technology than their husbands', and professional women's, reflected their exclusion from

technological processes, financial dependence, and the conditions of implementation.

The response of Canadian women to advertising, technology's messenger, was mixed. There is no reason to believe that women accepted the industry message at face value. Rather it appears they took from it what they found useful and generally rejected the rest. Canadian households reacted positively to information and practical advice and on the whole bought advertised goods, probably for practical as much as ideological reasons. The buy-by-specification movement lost out to the nationally advertised brands, despite a threatening posture during the Depression. Canadian women were, however, resentful of the insults and exaggeration of advertising, although their resentment did not translate itself into mass support for organized consumer groups. The extent to which psychological manipulation influenced women is an unknown, simply because we do not know how seriously it was taken.

Eleanor K. Violet, in an article written for Marketing, described herself as a woman consumer. She claimed that advertising had emancipated women from household slavery. She felt that, whatever advertising's cost, it had saved women from nerve-wracking exhaustion of both body and brain and entrapment within four walls. She dismissed the much debated question as to who pays for advertising -- the consumer or the advertiser -- by asserting that: "The important thing is that advertising is worth paying for".⁸⁶

"Advertising has given me leisure, comfort, health, and as the papers say, a lot of other things too numerous to mention".⁸⁷ In strictly cash terms, household appliances, such as vacuum cleaners and washing machines, were more expensive than the ways of our grandmothers, she conceded, but they had emancipated women from household slavery. The conserving of time, energy, vitality and the freedom to cultivate interests outside the home had been well worth the price, in this woman's view:

Who pays for advertising? What matter! The consumer gets her money's worth in health, pleasure, leisure, comfort, beauty and service.⁸⁸

An open letter to advertisers, by Gertrude Woodstock, was less sympathetic. This woman condemned advertisements for insulting women's intelligence, for raising false hopes by suggesting there were short cuts to clean clothes when there were not, and for presenting fairy tale illustrations. She appreciated the recipes, however.⁸⁹

On household helps, she told the manufacturer that she already knew how desirable washing machines and vacuum cleaners were, but resented suggestions that her friends would scorn her if she didn't buy them. "Apparently we don't have the same kind of friends,"⁹⁰ she said. She wanted the advertiser to tell her not only how much work appliances would save, but how much they cost.

She asked why the advertisers insulted women:

You picture my friends as criticizing me for the

condition of my floors or for the more personal condition of my smells. Don't you read the articles on bringing up children? We do. We teach our children not to make personal remarks ... And we do not hobnob with people who talk about us behind our backs. I don't doubt that there are thousands of people so uncertain of themselves that they take unto themselves whatever criticism you suggest, but I know that there are thousands who have had ordinary middle class bringing up.⁹¹

She felt advertising should try to build sales among the intelligent and stable rather than the vulnerable and easily influenced. Another letter to the editor, written by a "busy housewife and mother of two boys," agreed with the former, believing that ads might profitably be keyed to those of average and above average intelligence who read the magazines.⁹²

In Marketing (1933) a busy housewife and mother of three articulated her reactions to advertisements.⁹³ (This woman was not struggling as she owned an electric refrigerator, an electric washing machine which she described as her most prized possession, a radio and a car.) She said she used to believe the ads -- they seemed "so friendly, so natural, so understanding," as if addressed to her personally. But now it's different, she says, "Everybody's shouting and shouting so loud and saying hysterical things that I really can't understand half of it."⁹⁴

Like many women, she appreciated recipes and food preparation suggestions as they "take the monotony out of cooking and raise a little enthusiasm at the dinner table."

Although she liked the recipes, she was skeptical of the 'vitamin story'. "I don't ever remember buying one food item because it contained vitamins or alkalinity or manganese. Eating in our house is still an enjoyment and a delight".⁹⁵ She was all for new ideas to brighten up her menu, but she resolved to "leave the medicine for the doctor".⁹⁶

In a later piece written by the same woman, fear copy was attacked. Although a regular user of Lux soap, she had lost faith in it, due to the "vulgar" ads telling women they must wash their underwear in it or risk body odour. Advertisers of toothpaste, coffee and cough syrups were also condemned for exaggerated statements.⁹⁷ She felt that the ads for Listerine were more likely to make her refrain from buying it, as "it's like admitting to my druggist that I'm the wallflower type trying to get a dancing partner, or a jilted wife."⁹⁸

About vacuum cleaners, she had this to say:

My children are the healthiest, happiest youngsters you ever saw and we still use the old fashioned vacuum cleaner. It just gets my Irish up to be told that I'm risking my children's health by not buying a certain tricky contraption for lifting dirt.⁹⁹

Both a desire to enhance married life, and a fear of marriage breakdown were reflected in the advice columns. With the "companionship" ideal came both the possibility of developing interests outside the home and the challenge of the 'other woman' at the office, who was often free of

domestic cares.

While the literature on companionate marriage has focussed on the male perspective -- the desire to mould women into helpmeet and companion¹⁰⁰ -- little has been heard from women themselves. Did women welcome companionship as an enrichment of their emotional lives, and/or as a means to assert more authority within marriage? Did women view it merely as another duty added onto an already burdensome schedule, or as a threat to their female network of friends, family, and neighbours which excluded male participation, and assumed separate social lives for men and women.¹⁰¹

The perception on the part of wives that they must be intelligent partners for their husbands and adjudicate family quarrels was fraught with ambivalence. Many women described the happiest part of their lives as the moments of closeness with husbands, free from household cares. Yet this opportunity to enhance the quality of home life was also a duty and the threat of noncompliance could be the loss of one's husband and/or children.

One woman who described herself as a "good housekeeper" was reformed into a homemaker by a persistent mother-in-law. The immaculate home and well cooked meals of this old fashioned housekeeper would not, it was insisted, make up for the alienation of children and husband. Wouldn't your children rather remember "a home in which there had been

laughter and love, in which their friends were welcome, in which there was understanding and sympathy?" mother-in-law asks.¹⁰² This wife was encouraged to spend less time on housekeeping and give herself time for a little reading, piano, relaxation and time with husband. "Don't you realize that your mother's methods don't work with the modern man? He can hire a housekeeper. What he wants is a companion; a living, breathing woman, not a robot who grinds out so many hours of housework a day?"¹⁰³ Wife was warned not to let husband take his pleasures and relaxations outside the home without her, and was reminded that the world was full of 'party-women' who thrive on the husband whose wife does not fill his horizon.

A series of letters on the eternal triangle highlighted the fears married women felt of losing their husbands to attractive and interesting businesswomen, and the need to maintain interests outside the home and children. The other woman, significantly, was often a secretary. One woman recounted how her husband's infidelity led to a marriage crisis which forced her to recognize that her total absorption in children and household affairs had alienated her husband:

I had taken the attitude that they were MY children, and had put him outside the circle. I had neglected my appearance ... I had no topics of conversation but the children, the house, the servants. My husband was a man of charm, of social instincts, of looks and breeding. What wonder he had looked outside his home for companionship.¹⁰⁴

This woman did not appear to resent the fact that she had to fight to win back her husband and asserted that, if a marriage succeeded, it was the wife who must take the credit. Despite modern women and their talk of careers, she felt most women still wanted to be a "happy and beloved wife".¹⁰⁵

Eleanor Dare, the Canadian Home Journal's personal advice columnist, concurred and advised the wife of an unfaithful husband to

sit down quietly and search her soul to see wherein she is to blame for the present situation. Often a woman, engrossed in her love and care for her children, takes her husband for granted and forgets that he too needs love and attention.¹⁰⁶

Wronged wives were usually advised to stay with their deceitful husbands, except in extreme circumstances because of the social stigma attached to divorce and presumed damage to children.¹⁰⁷ Of course not all unfaithful partners were men. Some women also professed to extra marital relationships, often provoked by boredom with husbands who never wanted to go out. They were not dealt with as sympathetically as unfaithful husbands however.

Dare's conservatism regarding marriage reflected popular opinion in the period. No one in these popular media questioned the injustice of assigning women the all encompassing job of domesticity while at the same time expecting them to remain conversant with the ways of the world.

The sexual division of labour went largely unquestioned. Dare suggested psychiatric assistance for a distressed woman who felt no maternal instinct for her child, preferring to work outside the home and leave him with a housekeeper.¹⁰⁸ She rarely sanctioned divorce, usually advising women to suffer for the sake of the children, and advised women to use the indirect approach when asking anything of husbands or fathers.

Yet martyrdom was not acceptable to all. One woman wrote "no man appreciates economies or sacrifices on his wife's part if she looks old and unattractive. They accept the services and go elsewhere for amusement". She also felt children would prefer a mother they could boast of and do things with than a dowdily dressed drudge "ever so slightly contemptuous of her readiness to do things they were too lazy or bored to do".¹⁰⁹

With both financial dependence and emotional and marital insecurity facing Canadian women, it is no wonder that a profound conservatism, as seen in an unquestioning acceptance of the sexual division of labour, shines through. It would appear that while household advisors saw the ideal of companionship as an opportunity to enter into more equitable relations with their husband, the average housewife was more likely to be fearful of it. This divergence between professional women and the traditional homemaker could only cause tension and division between the two groups.

Canadian women were also ambivalent on the question of careers for women, especially in the Depression when married women were attacked for taking jobs from breadwinning men and unmarried women.¹¹⁰ One woman, who contended that unmarried women "suffer in want, sickness and despair because of unemployment," blamed it on married women living in luxury.¹¹¹ Another wrote, complaining bitterly that her son had not been able to find work and blaming the firms who employed girls because they were cheaper than men.¹¹²

Another women, however, called the movement to force women back into the home the Hitler movement and asked: "Are we going to return to the medieval ages when women were forced into marriages, whether or not they wished to marry?"¹¹³ One working wife wrote into the column, asserting that working women create employment for others by creating demand via their spending power.¹¹⁴ Women's right to employment outside the home may have been gaining ground in the 1920 and 1930s, despite the setback of the Depression, but it remained an issue of great divisiveness among women.

The 20th century cult of domesticity was clearly not the creation of the advertiser alone, although he manipulated it to sell products. It may be it was simply a product of the democratization of consumption. Studies on women's magazine content and surveys on the interests and socio-economic characteristics of women magazine readers

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indicate the higher the socio-economic status the more outside interests women had.¹¹⁵ Home centredness may have been a function of poverty for both men and women as exclusion from power centres of business and politics, less satisfying jobs and less surplus income to spend on public sphere recreational or educational activities, imbued domesticity with greater meaning. As advertisers appealed to lower income groups, they confirmed and reinforced this home centredness among the less well off.

While the motivation of women may be more complex, the motivation of male workers in preserving the private family is easier to explain. The preservation of male prerogative is not a complete answer, however. In an industrial society dominated by the principles of efficiency, centralization and specialization of labour epitomized in concepts such as scientific management, there is little regard for human needs. The home with its antithetical values may be the last place most people want regimented. Although the home cannot be insulated from the public sphere, the desire to make it a refuge appears to be a popular preoccupation, all the more so for those furthest removed from decision-making power. The less autonomy male workers have over their work lives, the more importance they place on the home where the needs of the human individual are not sacrificed to efficiency and profit. While this places a greater burden on women who are given exclusive responsibility for domestic work, it may also result in a

new willingness on the part of husbands to treat women as the partners in domestic life which household advisors sought to make them.

Women's conservatism in accepting the sexual division of labour should not be explained solely by recourse to theories of false consciousness through the psychological manipulation of advertising. On the one hand, the glorification of motherhood and the confirmation of women's worth as homemakers which magazines reflected and reinforced for commercial reasons, did help women cope with the frustrations of their daily lives. The unquestioned acceptance of the sexual division of labour and the confirmation of the importance of home life bolstered women's self esteem. Of course this conservatism also entrenched women in the homemaker role. Some women even condemned married women for taking jobs away from men and unmarried women, when they attempted to escape the servitude of the home by entering the labour force.

Household advisors did offer a reform package which addressed many of the grievances women expressed, such as financial dependence, lack of leisure, low status and so on, although housewives do not appear to have accepted their route to reform, via scientific management. This reform was ameliorative rather than radical, and left existing gender roles basically the same.

Given the economic and emotional insecurity the

homemaker faced, it should not be surprising to find an essentially conservative response. They did not have a secure foundation upon which to present a critique of society. Even professional women -- who had a niche in the business world -- presented only a partial critique of sexual roles, attempting to reconcile the traditional home with business values. It should not be surprising that traditional homemakers, beset by fears of losing home and family to the threatening "office girl", lacking in the financial means to improve their homes or themselves, and preyed upon by advertisers who manipulated ambivalences and insecurities, clung to traditional and familiar ways. Likewise many Canadian women were forced to be conservative in their adoption of domestic technology, due to their exclusion from technological decision-making and lack of independent financial resources. Canadian homemakers, in their economic and emotional dependency and relative exclusion from the workforce (both by lack of opportunity and the burden of familial duties), took refuge in the magazines' confirmation of the worth and dignity of their traditional role.

Whatever status and economic security Canadian homemakers possessed was tied up in their husband's position and income. Just as Canadian workers gave up some autonomy for marginal inclusion in the larger, ambitious program of democratized consumption and general prosperity, women gave up autonomy to their husbands who bestowed upon them an

indirect status and a standard of living they could not achieve on their own.

While a few women sought a solution to the problem of housework's declining status in workforce or public sphere participation, most, in this period, remained at home and the rift between homemaker and professional woman grew wider.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

The object of this thesis was to investigate the process of household electrification in Ontario in the interwar years. The principal question posed was quite simply: who wanted the electrification of homes, and why? As most urban, and a few rural Ontario homes were already wired for electricity by the 1920s, with householders enjoying the benefits of electric lighting, the process of electrifying an urban home meant the purchase of electrical appliances. Relatively new to the market were the electric iron, toaster, range, refrigerator, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, hot water heater, mixer and miscellaneous others.

With a recognition that more than one participant was involved in this process of technological change affecting the home, and that the householder, particularly the housewife, had a significant input, traditional sources have been examined with a view toward adding the consumer

perspective. Because the householder's influence was indirect, there are few sources documenting it. Evidence comes largely through material written by business and professional interests. This scarcity of sources does not make the householder's input less real or less important, however; it only makes it more difficult to study. Adding an understanding of the householder's perspective provides a more balanced view of the process of technological change than earlier works which only examined industry's motivation.

In addition to recognizing the householder's input, this thesis was guided by the premise that there was no unified and monolithic capitalist structure directing the process of household electrification. Thus a number of groups working toward household electrification, although not always in harmony, were studied in an effort to understand how their interests overlapped. These include: professional women influenced by the early domestic reform movement of the pre-World War I era and by the business ideology of the period, the electrical industry in all its many branches, and the advertising industry.

Because it was a desire to understand the influence of the householder and especially the housewife, which motivated the research, it seems appropriate to use the householder as a focus for summarizing the findings of this thesis. In the interwar period, most Canadians lived in

households consisting of any combination of: husband, wife, children and sometimes other relatives, boarders or friends, although the latter were declining. Just as industry was not one unified monolithic entity, neither was the household. The interests of women and men within a household are by no means identical, and can at times be in opposition. Therefore any study of the private sphere must be sensitive to gender politics.

Electrical technology for the home had its greatest impact on women, who, by the logic of the sexual division of labour, were responsible for most of the work entailed in running a household. The impact of domestic technology cannot be assessed without first knowing what women expected from it. Did Canadian women hope to use the technology to escape the role of homemaker? Or, did they hope to upgrade standards in the home, and improve their own status, as household advisors advocated, focusing on the creative aspects of homemaking? What did women feel about their changing role and how much tacit support did they give to advocates of domestic reform? Or, to the feminist movement? How did ordinary Canadian women view the professional who offered advice on how to run their homes, manage their finances and raise their children? Whether the professional is seen as the impartial disseminator of valuable information and technology, or as the self-interested enemy of traditional skills and expertise, hinges on how their "clients" viewed the exchange.

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Finally, the relationship between public and private spheres can be understood more clearly when the household is studied as an independent actor rather than a passive receptacle. For most Canadian women in the interwar period, the private sphere was their only arena of authority and recognized expertise. If historians want to give women a greater voice in history and to understand the perspective of the ordinary Canadian woman, they must look in the home as well as outside it. Why did householders accept domestic technology, which the advertising and electrical industries linked to democratized consumption? Did they value the practical benefits of the technology and/or the application of technological resources to the home? Or, did they simply get swept along by the manipulation of advertisers, and have no real choice? This question cannot be answered without small scaled, detailed examinations of the process of technological change which are sensitive to the many actors involved.

Householders generally, as the limited evidence suggests, responded favourably toward domestic technology. Through advertising and promotional events such as model home shows and cooking demonstrations, the practical benefits of the technology were stressed. Electrical appliances offered a solution to the domestic servant scarcity, for those who had traditionally employed servants. Electrical appliances were also promoted as a way of

enhancing the family's comfort and convenience, improving its standards of health, cleanliness and diet, and saving the housewife's labour. Appliances could also be used to economize, advertisers pointed out, on laundresses or servants. The increasing saturation of electrical appliances throughout the period, and the rising consumption of electricity by domestic customers, as shown in the HEPC statistics, indicate the popularity of appliances. By the end of the period, most working class as well as middle class householders were using at least some of the major electrical appliances. The electrical industry's 'sell-the-idea' strategy, which comprised an attempt to lower the cost of electricity and appliances in order to improve availability, provide better facilities for use, and employ advertising and promotional activities to teach new skills in using the technology, was largely successful. As the cost of electrical living fell, and alternatives declined, electricity became a necessity of living upon which most urban Ontarians became dependent.

Despite general acceptance, Canadian homemakers were not as enthusiastic about domestic technology as industry enthusiasts and professional women would have liked. Neither were they as enthusiastic as their husbands. This should surprise no one given the ideological message women received. Advertisements stressed technology as a male preserve and cast women, and consumers of either sex, in the role of passive recipient. Even the women's advisors, both

in magazine advice literature, and in their advice to manufacturers, recognized and reinforced women's ignorance of, and fear toward, technology. While household advisors hoped to promote more widespread use of domestic technology among Canadian women, they did nothing to promote an understanding of it. Coupled with the growing dependence on electricity for household operations, household advisors' reinforcement of women's exclusion from technological expertise left women powerless to control or understand the technology.

Homemakers had further reason to be apprehensive concerning the new technology if husbands' motivations for buying appliances conflicted with women's interests. Labour-saving devices were not always labour saving if new skills had to be learned to use them. As shown, the electrical industry responded to this problem by offering education to consumers in the use of appliances. When appliances were used by husbands to economize on expensive commercial services, or the wages of servants or laundresses, the benefit of the technology did not go to the housewife. Appliances could be a poor substitute for human labour.

Advertising for appliances indirectly conceded the difference in motivation between men and women by directing ads at both husband and wife and using a slightly different approach for each. In appealing to women, advertisers

stressed the obvious labour-saving qualities of appliances, sometimes within the context of a package of limited reforms to the family, including a re-valuation of domestic labour, improved working conditions and greater financial autonomy. Advertising appeals to men stressed economy and improved standards of comfort for the home, as well as technology as an appeal in itself. They tended to downplay labour saving.

Advertising portrayals of family life reflected the advertisers' perception that men as well as women were interested in enhancing home life. At times the quality of home life theme was given prominence over women's leisure and convenience, although the two were often tied together. Advertisers portrayed domestic technology as enhancing home life for men and at the same time elevating women from their former status as household slave, to that of companion. As long as men were showing an interest in domestic life, women could seize the opportunity to press for changes in the family. Technology offered women leisure to enjoy family life, although it was part of the male model of home life, a chance to partake of some of the traditional male privileges.

Household advisors and advertisers alike encouraged the companionship ideal in marriage, although the limited evidence from Canadian homemakers indicates that they felt somewhat threatened by it. The addition of another duty -- the role of companion to husband -- onto an already long list of obligations may have been viewed as oppressive.

This would be especially true for those who could not afford the new technology to free them from much of the drudgery of housework. It is difficult to be the interesting and informed companion, conversant with the ways of the world, and the tired overworked housewife. The failure to provide companionship could lead to loss of husband and children, and there was no guarantee the new relationship would be any more reciprocal than the old.

It is not known how women viewed the threat that the companionship ideal presented to "women's culture" -- the female social network of friends and relatives, centred on domestic life, which excluded men.

As an ideal, of course, it seems unlikely that many women would have chosen the over-worked drudge over that of the interesting companion. A companion implies a measure of equality that household drudge, or slave, clearly does not. The new ideal may not have been liberation in the fullest sense, but it was a distinct improvement over what came before, especially for those who had never enjoyed the benefit of servants. As a reform measure, it was compatible with the apparent interest of men in home life. Evidence both from advertising and from the HEPC's broad popular support based on low domestic rates, indicates the popularity of home as an appeal. Women could realistically hope to exploit the ideal to give themselves a better position with the family.

Clearly the professional woman, who could afford the new technology to relieve her of drudgery or who perhaps was one of the declining number who enjoyed the services of a domestic servant, had reason to welcome the companionship ideal as an opportunity to press for more equitable relations within the home. The poorer woman, who still worked with more primitive tools, was more likely to view companionship as incompatible with her other duties.

Household advisors were involved in the promotion of household technology, giving advice to homemakers on household methods and technology, as well as advising industry on the design, manufacture and advertising of products for the home. They acted as a liaison between industry and homemaker, and their program was thus a mix of the two groups' interests. Household advisors accepted industry's strategy of democratized consumption through advertising, yet they added a gender perspective influenced by turn of the century domestic reform. They advocated equality of the private sphere with the public, by demanding financial autonomy, better working conditions and a re-valuation of domestic labour. Household advisors accepted the industry goal of creating new wealth and leisure through the dissemination of technology; however, they emphasized women's interests in using the technology to increase their leisure and improve their working and living conditions in the home.

Household advisors sought to improve working conditions

primarily through the dissemination of technology. In this regard they remained in accord with homemakers who valued the technology and with industry which sought to sell more appliances.

Household advisors' campaign for financial autonomy -- the wife's right to a share of the family wage -- was also probably supported, the limited evidence indicates, by homemakers. While industry was indifferent to the distribution of income within the home, it was willing to recognize Mrs. Consumer and the philosophy of equality of spheres, to the extent that it helped sell products for the home.

Household advisors and their "clients" were in apparent agreement that homemaking deserved a higher status than it received, although they disagreed on the route to achieving greater status and recognition. Again, industry was largely indifferent to women's status except in so far as it sold appliances. However, an attack on the low status of housework did help legitimize labour saving technology and hence industry allied with women in an attempt to elevate the status of housework.

Household advisors attempted to apply the ideas of scientific management to the home in order to achieve their dual objectives of greater leisure and enhanced status. Because male work had been made easier through technology, household advisors reasoned that women's work could benefit

not only by an application of technology but by male work methods such as routinized work schedules, step saving efficiency, planned budgets and meal preparations. They also assumed that by using the methods of the workplace, they could give women's work the legitimacy of men's. In effect, they were imposing the male value system on women's work in the hopes of gaining some male privileges.

Canadian housewives rejected scientific management as a route to improved status. In part, their response was a simple recognition that the regimentation involved in scientific management was impossible to achieve where children and other human beings interrupted the work process. Neither does it appear that Canadian homemakers agreed with professional advice which implied that the housewife's low status was a result of inefficiency. Although they had difficulty articulating their views, housewives were frustrated with their society's method of measuring values solely by market mechanisms. Housewives believed that they performed a valuable role, received too little reward and recognition, and were angered at suggestions that they did not pay their way. Unlike household advisors, however, Canadian homemakers emphasized motherhood as their major social contribution.

Canadian homemakers seem to have rejected the regimentation inherent in scientific management because it threatened two of the most valued aspects of their work. One was the freedom to determine their own work and leisure

routines, and the other was the emotional rewards of mothering. Scientific management, which tended to ignore motherhood because the labour intensive and emotion laden job was incompatible with theories of efficiency or methods of mechanization, threatened the distinct values and ethical standards of the private sphere. Unlike their maternal feminist predecessors, household advisors forgot the important emotional role the family plays in meeting human needs, and that the values of the home are different from and sometimes in opposition to the workplace. Household advisors uncritically accepted the traditional family and bolstered the sexual division of labour in the home by advocating a professionalization of homemaking. They tried to reconcile the traditional family with industrialization by advocating modernization. But, because they had lost the respect for the home which had imbued an earlier generation of maternal feminists with a sense of outrage at the abuses of industrialism, household advisors' program became merely an imposition of male values on a female sphere.

Also, as a result of their conflicting interests -- support for the traditional family and efficiency in domestic work -- household advisors could not implement the scientific management program in full. Instead they adopted whatever technology could be incorporated without disruption into the traditional home, but failed to centralize most aspects of domestic labour.

The popular conception of the home as escape from the world was clearly incompatible with the goals of efficiency and rationalization. While the image of the home as retreat probably had greater appeal to men than to women, whose experience of the home was of necessity more realistic, it appears that it had broad appeal. Women did not seem to be in a hurry to rationalize or centralize their work at least in the manner presented to them by household advisors, if it meant adopting the values of the workplace in the home. While most women responded favourably to domestic technology -- if they could afford it -- the language of scientific management with its denigration of traditional housekeepers, and its business and professional analogies probably alienated many women. Whether homemakers would have responded to a program other than scientific management with its contradictory premises, one can only speculate.

Looked at from the point of view of government and industry, the family provides essential support for the economy, and acts as an agent of social control and socialization. If one does not look further to the individual perspective, it appears that women's labour is exploited for the benefits of men, of society, and of the economy. Canadian homemakers' rejection of scientific management and their apparently unquestioned support for the sexual division of labour in the traditional family must be seen in light of the important emotional role the family played. The literature on technology in the workplace

indicates that industrialization created an increasingly alienating work environment. This could only serve to strengthen the emotional role the family plays in individual lives. Scientific management as a concept epitomized, for factory workers at least, the negative effects of technology in the workplace. As an organizational principle for the factory, it stressed efficiency, centralized planning and control, producing an alienating and de-skilling work experience. Yet women's experience of the home is both as workplace and centre for emotional fulfillment; their work and their emotional lives are meshed together. Scientific management threatened to take what little autonomy women had within the private realm as worker, and to destroy the home as emotional retreat for both themselves and their families.

Given the low status of the Canadian housewife, her financial dependence, and many demands upon her, it is not surprising that many women held a conservative view of the family. Their relative powerlessness and insecurity gave women in the home a poor foundation on which to build a critique of the established order. Some even condemned married women for taking jobs away from men. Certainly their professional advisors gave them little leadership in formulating any such critique of the family. Canadian homemakers did have some grievances which professional women articulated in their program for reform of the patriarchal family. Canadian homemakers may not have supported the

methods household advisors chose in their attempts to elevate the status and working conditions of women, but it appears they approved of their goals.

How a woman responded to the household advisors' program might depend to some degree upon her social class. Status seems, at least on one level, to have been a greater concern for middle class women than working class women. The middle class woman who had to begin doing her own housework without the aid of a servant had suffered a decline in status. However, in another sense, the status of all housewives fell with industrialization, which separated the household from recognized productive activity, and associated it exclusively with leisure and consumption.

For the working class woman who had always done her own work, domestic technology could have more beneficial effect on her working conditions. The working class woman could use the technology to improve her family's living standards and her own working conditions. However, the working class woman was more likely to be alienated by analogies made with professional and business standards because her experience of business and the professions would have been less positive than that of her middle class counterpart. Rhetoric designed to meet an essentially middle class concern for status was probably ignored by working class women, although the technology was readily adopted.

There is no evidence that middle class women found financial dependency any more or less onerous than did

working class women, although middle class women in the interwar years had a medium in which to voice their complaints.

Certainly, much was done to court the working class family by both the advertising and electrical industries. Advertising offered the working class man and his wife a vision of general prosperity, and the application of technological resources to the home. Local utility managers waxed eloquent on electricity's role in bringing a higher standard of living to the working man. In essence industry recommended a technological solution to the political problem of class inequality. Advertising and electrical industry leaders promoted the perception that technological progress meant social progress. Although considerably less attention was paid to social or political progress, than to technological and economic progress, the tremendous increase in the number of new products coming onto the market, the improvement in others, and the falling prices of some, was apparently enough to confirm the belief that technology could work miracles.

A limited gender analysis in ads, apparently contributed by women in advertising, was part of the ideological message. The gender perspective was subordinate to the class theme, however, as advertising and electrical industry spokesmen assumed that class equality would come first, with sexual equality following behind. Once the working man

acquired the technological trappings of the wealthy, his wife would be freed from the drudgery of housework. She could then take her rightful place as companion -- a slave no more.

. Democratization of consumption and the diffusion of technology to a wider socio-economic group in the interwar period clearly centred on the home. While the notion that industry deliberately bolstered a domestic ideal in an effort to keep women at home consuming products seems far fetched, how can the links between domesticity and democratized consumption be explained? In trying to sell the benefits of mass production/consumption to the average worker/consumer, why did industry stress domestic products? Why did the founders of Ontario Hydro build and maintain their political power base on cheap electricity for domestic users? Perhaps the strong strain of domesticity in commercial rhetoric in the interwar period was a reflection of the greater home centredness of the lower income groups the industry was trying to reach. As the home fulfills an emotional function, it seems clear that for those most excluded from public sphere life, the home could potentially hold the greatest appeal.

The emotional importance of the home may have increased as a result of industrialization in the workplace. As well, the breakup of traditional kin and community groups left individuals with reduced social support. However, not enough is known about families in the past to say with any

certainly whether this homecentredness was a change in orientation at all. Perhaps lower income groups have always been more home centred. In the interwar years, this group was being appealed to for the first time in public media such as advertisements, magazines and promotional literature. Their concerns, interests and prejudices were manipulated publicly for the first time, to sell products.

What is the effect on women of the promotion of domesticity? Is the philosophy of equality of spheres a sincere attempt to improve conditions or part of a ploy to keep women at home? Did household advisors ally with capitalists, against the interests of women, in exchange for hanging onto their status as professionals? The same question could also be asked of advertising women. Did they formulate the gender analysis which was prevalent in many appliance ads directed at women out of sincere concern or self-interest?

Household advisors did share with industry a desire to sell products, for self-interested reasons, and like all professionals, they protected their position. However, they also differed from their male colleagues in that they were expected to represent the homemaker's interests. As professional women, they also had much to gain from the technology they promoted. The question of motivation is complex and cannot be fully answered without further research into the women themselves, for whom there do not

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appear to be any private writings.

Perhaps, a more apt question would be -- Does it matter what these women thought about feminism if they were reflecting the ideas of the women they were supposed to represent? Did household advisors' quasi-feminism, or perhaps we should call it domestic feminism, reflect the views of Canadian women who were confined to the home? If one believes that new ideas are dictated by elites and filter down to the masses, then only the advisors need be studied. If, however, one believes that ideas begin at the grass roots, then one needs to study both. Answers to these questions concerning the relationship between household advisors and Canadian homemakers must await more detailed research, but it is hoped that this thesis will offer directions.

The examination of the electrical industry lends some limited support to the notion that change comes, at least in part, from below. Domestic use of electricity was an important factor in its popularity, and helped the Commission build its powerful base. Promotion of the domestic market began as a high risk gamble led by the municipalities, which were the most sensitive to the householders' needs, and was not fully accepted by the higher authorities until the catastrophe of the Depression proved the domestic market to be more stable than the industrial.

Recognizing the input of householders should not blind

us to the very crucial role that elites played in channeling and promoting popular ideas and needs. The relationship between the consumer and industry was not an equal exchange. In return for prosperity, a limited attack on class and sexual inequality, via democratized consumption and equality of spheres, and a vicarious enjoyment of technology, the consumer granted industry a monopoly on technological and economic resources. Did consumers support such a program because they believed it to be a fair exchange? Or, did they accept it passively because they were helpless to change it? At least in the area of electrical appliances, the focus of this study, industry was able to deliver something on its promise. While it fell far short of providing universal access, it did in a short time dramatically increase the use of this new technology. It was not a miracle but perhaps it was enough to convince workers/consumers to support democratized consumption. Like women in the home who gave up their autonomy to allow men to pursue more creative work, workers gave up autonomy for marginal inclusion in a more ambitious project: democratized consumption. They gained some increase in wealth and access to the technology as users although as passive recipients rather than participants.

Canadian consumers' status as passive recipients of a technology shows up in their ambivalence toward it. New and prospective owners of electrical appliances approached the

product with feelings ranging from blind fear of its unknown power, to an unrealistic enthusiasm bordering on worship. This same ambivalence can be seen in the twin but contradictory beliefs that the benefits of technology could be enjoyed without social dislocation. In fact, many believed that electricity, the new technology of the age, could right the wrongs of earlier technologies which had created big cities, centralized manufacturing and threatened rural life. Men as well as women, elites and non-elites alike, were guilty of this self-deception. The HEPC stressed electricity's potential to halt rural depopulation and economic centralization, while anticipating unprecedented economic growth. Household advisors thought that domestic technology and industrial techniques could give women the same leisure and status as labour force workers, while at the same time preserving the traditional family structure. To what extent this ambivalence toward 'progress' was a product of exclusion from technological expertise, or simply a typical response to technological change, is not known.

The alliance which household advisors made with industry must also be viewed as an unequal exchange. While women gained access to powerful technology which had ameliorative effects on domestic working conditions, substantial compromises had to be made. Household advisors lost control of the domestic reform agenda -- letting the emphasis on technology become the whole program and losing

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sight of its other aspects -- financial autonomy, and the status of the homemaker. The influence of professionalism as a creed of the interwar period may explain why household advisors took the route of elevating the status of the homemaker rather than attempting to dismantle the sexual division of labour. Perhaps household advisors sincerely believed that every housewife must become a professional specialized in home management because it seemed that the way of the future lay in specialization of labour. Nonetheless, by adopting the male values of efficiency and productivity, and the language of business and professionalism, household advisors threatened women's autonomy and expertise in the home, and created a rift between traditional homemakers and professional women.

Whether the elevation of the public sphere to a position of equality with the public was a viable strategy is perhaps a separate question from the examination of household advisors' sincerity and/or commitment to feminism. Their program failed to revalue domestic labour for a variety of reasons, not least of which was the contradictory goals of the family and consumer capitalism. Household advisors set upon a goal which was much larger and more difficult to achieve than they themselves probably realized. To set the private sphere on a par with the public, would be to give nurturance the same status as productivity, and to value humanity as highly as wealth and technology.

Household advisors were clearly unequal to the task. In their enthusiasm to gain the benefits of technology for the housewife, they uncritically adopted the values of the industrial world. Their attempted imposition of male values on the female realm served to devalue an already low status occupation. Their goal had been to elevate it.

Household advisors lost the lessons of an earlier generation of reformers who used the home as a base for a critique of the industrial world, yet retained an exclusive concern with domestic reform. Their lack of direction for women outside the home reinforced the sexual division of labour, while robbing the home of its moral content and radical potential. Household advisors kept the worst of maternal feminism -- its acceptance of the traditional home-- and discarded the best -- its critique of industrial society. Their acceptance of business goals and values made it too easy for their business allies to sidestep any demands which did not lend themselves to increased sales.

Yet the failure of the household advisors' program of equality of spheres, does have positive aspects. Greater status for the homemaker was, especially in the early domestic reform movement which preceded the household advisors' program, tied to a rigid sexual division of labour which allowed no other work options for married women. With the loosening of the moral ties to the home which came with the efficiency craze of the 1920s women were freer to enter the public sphere. The shift in emphasis away from the home

as moral influence left room for a few middle class married women to enter the public sphere. Industrialization brought a devaluation of the home via its identification with leisure and consumption, forcing middle class women to seek employment outside the home in order to maintain their status as recognized productive members of society.

Ironically at the same time, it brought the technology which household advisors so vigorously promoted, and which gave middle class women a material base to enter the public sphere as participants in the workforce, rather than as moral saviours of a corrupt world. For working class women who had traditionally worked outside the home, if intermittently, and in less prestigious jobs, domestic technology offered a very real improvement in working and living conditions. If industry and its advisors conspired to keep women at home with an ideological message promoting domesticity, the twentieth century has amply proven its impotence in manipulating the social environment to meet its needs.

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