

techniques the better. Too many of our administrative anomalies of the past grew up to answer what the government of the day fondly hoped was a temporary situation. However the very existence of these agencies created a need which could be answered only by their continuation. We cannot without great difficulty alter the system of cabinet government, parliamentary government nor would there appear to be any general desire to do so. We must therefore fit new administrative agencies into it. The war has brought to us the great increase in government activity which most countries experienced thirty years ago. It is hard to believe that the change will not be permanent.

It is probable that the government is not unaware of this possibility. Many new agencies have, sometimes after false starts, been fitted into the traditional pattern of cabinet government. Other seems to have been given a deliberately temporary form in the belief, possibly erroneous, that they represent the kind of activity which will be redundant after the war. Such are the Wartime Information Board and the Prices Board. The change that has taken place has been one of size and not of kind in our system of government, and that change has so far only served to emphasise the durability and adaptability of cabinet government.

Maritime Women at Work in War and Peace

By AIDA McANN

WHAT were the 549,969 women of the Maritime Provinces doing before the present war?

What are they doing to-day in the midst of war?

What will become of women workers when the war is won?

According as we conceive the answer to this third question our post-war plans must be made. Are we planning now to go forward into an expanding economy including modern homes, nurseries, schools and civic centers—facilities which raise homemaking to the level of a modern career? Or are we drifting back, planless and apathetic, into an era where man's fear of unemployment strives to restrict woman's activities as much as possible to the drudgery of an ill-equipped kitchen?

Without the aid of statistics most of us know vaguely what the women of the Maritime Provinces were doing before the present war. The majority were housewives. A few statistics will serve

to focus attention on some of their problems. More than two-thirds of our homemakers lived in dingy out-of-date quarters without even the amenity of bathing facilities. According to the last Dominion housing census (1941), 79 per cent of the dwellings in Prince Edward Island, 69 per cent of those in New Brunswick, and 65 per cent of those in Nova Scotia had no bath or shower.

In 1939 the majority of Maritime homemakers were struggling to raise a family on insufficient means. The following figures compiled by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics from salaries and wages paid in forty leading industries, give the average man's annual income for that year: in Prince Edward Island, it was \$581; in New Brunswick, \$894; and in Nova Scotia, \$939. On such earnings a family cannot enjoy a very high standard of living to say nothing of adequate medical and dental care.

In order to supplement their husband's meagre earnings, many married women who could be spared at home, and who were able to find work, undertook it. Like their single sisters they worked

for much less than men, and usually at less desirable jobs. Based on forty leading industries, the average annual income of a woman worker in 1939 was: in Prince Edward Island, \$288; in New Brunswick, \$493; and in Nova Scotia, \$539.

Of the more than six thousand women teaching school in the three Provinces, more than one-third averaged \$500 or less per year. Thousands were in domestic service receiving as little as \$8, \$10 or \$12 per month. Average annual wages of women employed as farm help, cited by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics for the years 1939-1941 were: Prince Edward Island, \$122; Nova Scotia, \$143; and New Brunswick, \$172. Of necessity, domestic and farm helpers receive board and room in addition to wages.

The above facts give some idea of what the majority of women in the Maritime Provinces were doing prior to the war and of what monetary returns they received for their labors.

What Maritime Women Are Doing Now

And what are Maritime women doing to-day in the midst of war? On the tremendous amount of voluntary work being well done by women in the various war services, it is unnecessary to comment here. The percentage of enlistments in the armed forces is about the same in the Maritimes as in Canada as a whole—approximately 1 per cent. There is no way of finding out how many Maritime women enlisted while in other Provinces, but the number of those enlisting in the Maritimes follows: Royal Canadian Air Force, 1609; Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service, 325; Canadian Women's Army Corps, 2004; and Nursing Sisters, 377. This number is, of course, increasing daily.

In October, 1943 when it is generally conceded, the peak of employment was reached, there were 23,499 women wage earners in the three Provinces—15.8 per cent of the total wage earners. This was an increase of 4599 over the same

period in 1942, when the percentage of women workers in the total was only 13.3. It is interesting to note that during 1943, 43,545 women out of a total placement of 134,178, were allocated to jobs by the 30 local Employment and Selective Service offices and 7 sub-offices in the Maritime Provinces.

In considering these figures, it must be remembered that the Maritimes is among Canada's least industrialized areas. With 9.81 per cent of Canada's population, we have but 5 per cent of the industry. And in the case of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick at least, the trend toward unbalanced concentration of industry in central Canada has only been accentuated by war-time production. Many thousands of Maritime women have left their homes to do war work in other provinces.

Recently the Maritime Regional Office of the Unemployment Insurance Commission sent out a questionnaire to a group of Maritime employers in the following industries: aircraft, shipyards, steel mills, fruit and vegetable dehydrating, textiles, veneer wood, ammunition case manufacture, and paper products. These industries were chosen because they are the largest employers of women in the Maritimes; and because many of them would be the first to be affected by any slackening in war production. It is, therefore, important to know as much as possible about the status of women employed in these industries, as well as to know how employers evaluate their work.

What the Questionnaire Revealed

The questions asked employers were these: How many women (exclusive of clerical workers) are employed in your industry? What different jobs do they do? How many are married? How many are servicemen's wives? How many have children? How many have means of support outside of their jobs (including parents' homes to which they might go)? How many would like to stay in industrial work when the war is over? Do women workers get the same rate

of pay as men for the same kind of work? How do you consider women's work in your plant compared with that of men? Viewed from the business viewpoint only, would you care to continue to employ women in your industry? Do you find women have a lower accident rate than men? How many of your women employees are members of a labor union? How many hours do you consider reasonable as a work day for women?

The answers, because of the relatively small number of workers covered (approximately 2,000) can give only a partial picture. The number of women employed in some of the plants may be of interest: one aircraft industry employs 600 women; one shipyard, 376; one textile plant, 213; dehydrating plants employ 60, 125, 190, 106 and 163 respectively; and a veneer wood plant, 170.

Answers revealed an amazing number of jobs, many of them hitherto regarded as men's exclusive province, now being done by women. In a steel mill, women were working as bundlers, learners in the machine shop, coremakers in the foundry, burners in the boiler shop, truck drivers, sweepers, helpers in the foundry, helpers in the car shop, scarfers, stampers, chemists, crane operators, bloom saw operators checkers, hot bed levers, markers in the billet yard, ingot tracers, scalers, die room helpers, inspectors in the plate mill, helpers in the repair shop, blacksmiths' helpers, gate-women and mail girls.

The help of women has made possible the turning out in record time of the ship tonnage needed for war. In Maritime yards, women have helped to repair and build ships, large and small. They have performed tasks that are difficult, disagreeable and dangerous. They are to be found in the ship's hold sweltering in summer heat, as well as shivering in the yards at sub-zero temperatures. They are to be seen climbing to dizzy heights on scaffoldings, as well as crawling with their welding kit through small holes in the hull. They even clean out the bilge and oil the engines.

In the opinion of the women's personnel

director of one large Maritime shipyard, the following work can be done *better* by women than by men: burning (shop work), boiler cleaning, tank cleaning, painting (some types), piecework counting and checking, sorting nuts and bolts, threading machine operating, general labor. Jobs that women do as well as men are listed as: crane operating (in the shop), passing, welding (shop work), and drilling machine operating. Women heaters are said to do this work as well as men, but it is not considered suitable work for women.

Without the aid of women workers, the assembling of aircraft done so successfully in the Maritimes would not have been done so well nor so speedily. The director of Industrial Relations at one large aircraft plant where several hundred women are employed says: "Women in this industry have made a particularly good contribution. In the younger group their effort compares very favorably with that of men; if anything, they are steadier, have more patience with monotonous or routine work, and detail work. They are particularly adapt at fabrics, and electrical detail, that is, the assembling of small parts."

In the food and fabric industries, traditionally considered women's work, women continue as before except that the work is now stepped up to war-time tempo. In the textile industry, they act as foreladies, sewing machine operators, operators in the assembly line spinning wool, cotton and rayon yarns, as weavers of cotton, rayon and woollen cloth, as operators of knitting machines making men's, women's, and children's underwear and hosiery, and in the boarding, labelling and boxing of hosiery, underwear, cloth and yarn. The nimble fingers and speed of women workers is very valuable in this industry and there is no anticipation of a slackening off in the number of women employed when peace comes. To help solve the housing problem, one Nova Scotia textile industry has prepared a beautiful home, under the supervision of an attractive young matron, to provide comfortable

rooms and excellent meals at low cost for its girls workers.

Because of sugar rationing, there has been some decrease in the number of women employed in candy, soft drink and bakery establishments. For seasonal work in canneries, however, the demand has been unprecedented. The fish canning industry has been particularly active, with an increase of almost 2,000 per cent in the Canadian canning of herring alone—the bulk of which is packed in the Maritimes.

In another, and this time a new branch of the food industry, the dehydrating of fruits and vegetables, the demand for women workers has also been great. In the dehydrating plants women work night and day in two ten-hour shifts as sorters, peelers, slicers, trimmers, weighers, tray loaders and packers of the finished product. In these operations, speed is of the essence, and those unable to keep up to a certain standard are dropped, while those who are fast workers make extra money. A few workers make as much as \$25 per week before tax and sundry deductions are made.

Further answers to the questionnaire sent out by the Regional Office of the Unemployment Insurance Commission revealed that approximately 27 per cent of the women employed are married; 6 per cent are the wives of service men; 9 per cent have children; and about 31 per cent have a relative's home to which they might go in case of unemployment. In this regard, however, one employer summed up the general situation when he said: "Practically all single employees have homes to which they could go; but they need to work in order that they won't be dependent on parents. Married women need wages to supplement family income."

Approximately 70 per cent of the women interviewed stated that they wanted to remain in industry when the war is over. The general consensus of opinion among employers was that women's work compares very favorably with that of men. On this point, a personnel manager in a shipyard, and an

industrial relations officer in an aircraft plant have just been quoted. Opinions as to the accident rate differed: some employers said they found it much higher among women, others much lower. Almost all employers said they would like to hire women for certain types of work after the war. Hours suggested as reasonable for women workers varied from 8 to 10. In regard to similar wages for similar work, most employers stated that women were doing different types of work from men. In the ship building, aircraft and transport industries women are being paid the same wages as men for the same work. It is interesting to note that it is in these three industries that the largest percentage of women belong to labor unions. A very small percentage of Maritime women workers are members of a labor union.

Essential Civilian Services

Such essential civilian services as laundries, dry cleaning establishments, hotels, hospitals, restaurants, some stores, bakeries, and domestic service, have found it very difficult to get help during the present emergency. Many women, especially part-time workers, have entered such employment from a patriotic motive, plus the added incentive in many cases of earning a little extra money. But from the viewpoint of the woman who has nothing outside of what she earns, these services require too great a sacrifice if other work is available. Unfortunately there has been little effort even during the war period to increase the wages or to provide more attractive living and working conditions in such jobs. For example, one large Maritime institution (in December, 1943) was offering its domestic help one free afternoon per month instead of the customary one whole day's rest in every seven.

Minimum Wage Laws in the Maritimes

What protection are Maritime women workers afforded by Minimum Wage Laws? In Prince Edward Island, there is no minimum wage rate set for either men or women. In New Brunswick,

there are no minimum wage orders of a general nature, though orders to establish minimum rates on various individual plants and in certain industries in several counties of the Province. An example of such a New Brunswick order is quoted in the *Canada Year Book*, 1942, by which a minimum of 25 cents an hour is set for men over 18 and 15 cents an hour for women and boys working canneries and establishments manufacturing equipment for canneries and the fishing industry in the northeastern counties of the Province. Nova Scotia has a Minimum Wage Act for women which normally applies in cities and incorporated towns, though it may be ordered applied to any part of the Province. This Act does not cover women in farm or domestic work.

Equal Pay for Equal Work

In spite of the fact that the National War Labor Board some time ago adopted the principle of equal pay for equal work, wages and salaries paid to women are much lower in general than those paid to men. Such a custom is equally unjust to both sexes since its inevitable result is to throw men out of work when female labor is available for less; and to reduce the general level of all wages.

During the war years certain factors have tended to increase the average income of the woman worker. Among these factors are the cost of living bonus, the many wage increases granted through the up-grading of workers as they acquire more experience, increases in teachers' salaries secured through provincial enactments, the law of supply and demand as it applies to domestic service, the adoption of the principle of equal pay for equal work by the aircraft, ship building and transport industries. As men's wages have increased, homemakers have benefitted.

No one need worry as to how the marriage and birth rates will be affected by increased opportunities for women. These will undoubtedly rise as women get more scope in which to pursue their fundamental womanly ambitions. Those who argue to the contrary either fear unem-

ployment or are gnawed by a deep-seated inferiority complex which makes them eager to preserve at least the semblance of domination.

A Fair Deal for Women Who Must Work

The transition period from war to peace is bound to be a difficult one. In laying off workers, special care is necessary in order to insure a fair deal for the woman who must work. It must always be borne in mind that a large percentage of our women workers are not just emergency workers helping out as a patriotic duty. Many of the women now working in war plants were working before the war and from necessity. Many more will have to work after the war because (1) there are not enough men to allow a husband and home for every woman. (2) Many women whose husbands have been killed, will have to become breadwinners for the family. And (3) as a result of this war, many women will have to help support either partially or totally disabled dependents.

Even while the war is still being fought, many workers are being laid off in the Maritime Provinces and elsewhere. Already large numbers of women who found war work in other Provinces are coming home jobless. If they are between the ages of 18 and 45, and if they have no restricting home ties, women now being laid off can join the Armed Forces. "Joining-up" enables a woman to render patriotic service and at the same time offers an opportunity to learn a new skill, trade or profession. Generous provision is being made for both ex-service men and ex-service women to continue their education and train themselves for jobs at the close of the war.

Through the War Emergency Training Classes developed by the Federal Government in co-operation with the Provincial Governments, thousands of Maritime young women have received training in the skills needed in war industries. Because of the necessity for speedy training, most of the girls, and boys too, trained under this program

became specialists able to operate just one machine rather than skilled all-around tradesmen. The psychological hazard here is that these young people will feel injured if there is no call in the post-war period for their specialized services; and if they are unable to get wages as high as they are now receiving.

The apprenticeship training classes, recently authorized by the Federal Government, will be of special advantage to these partially trained young people. The re-opening of the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Home Service Training Schools would also be of great benefit to many young girls as well as to the community as a whole. The Home Service Training Schools where cooking, basic nutrition, sewing and child care are all taught offer the best kind of preparation for home making. Moreover, these trained young women, as home-makers' assistants, would help relieve the present difficult domestic help situation. In this regard, education is essential not only for the employees but also for the women who employ them. Women's organizations could render invaluable service to all if they would undertake now to do their utmost toward making domestic service a profession—and a profession to which no stigma of social inferiority is attached.

When asked what they want to do when the war is over, the majority of the young women in the forces and in the factories who were interviewed expressed the natural desire to get married and have a home of their own. But most of them rebel at the idea of hard pioneer living conditions and of having to bring up a family on insufficient means. These girls are intelligent. The women in the forces have seen modern

kitchen equipment in action, and they have tasted the joys of community life. Women in industry have learned to share the experiences of men workers, and have made strides also in getting on with and being loyal to each other. The women of the Maritimes don't want to "go back" anywhere; they want to go forward to better conditions in the home, the school, industry and business.

According to the opinion of many intelligent men and women, the "woman problem" is very simple. Pay men enough to support a family in health and decency, they say, and there will be few married women wanting jobs in industry. Pay men and women equal wages for equal work, not only as a principle of common justice, but also because if you do not, many men will be replaced by women workers; and eventually, the standard of all wages will be depressed. Don't discriminate against women—remember many of them **MUST** work in order to live; and many have special aptitudes which, exercised, leave the entire country the richer. Finally in order to build a better world for to-day's children, and to prevent future wars, let every governing body, municipal, provincial or federal, be made up of an equal number of men and women.

When G. B. Shaw was recently asked the question: "What line do you think women's contribution to reconstruction could usefully take?" He replied:

"All sorts of lines of course, like the men's. All the professions and crafts should be as open to women with no domestic aptitudes as they are to men with no industrial athletic or military aptitudes. We shall need them all at their best."