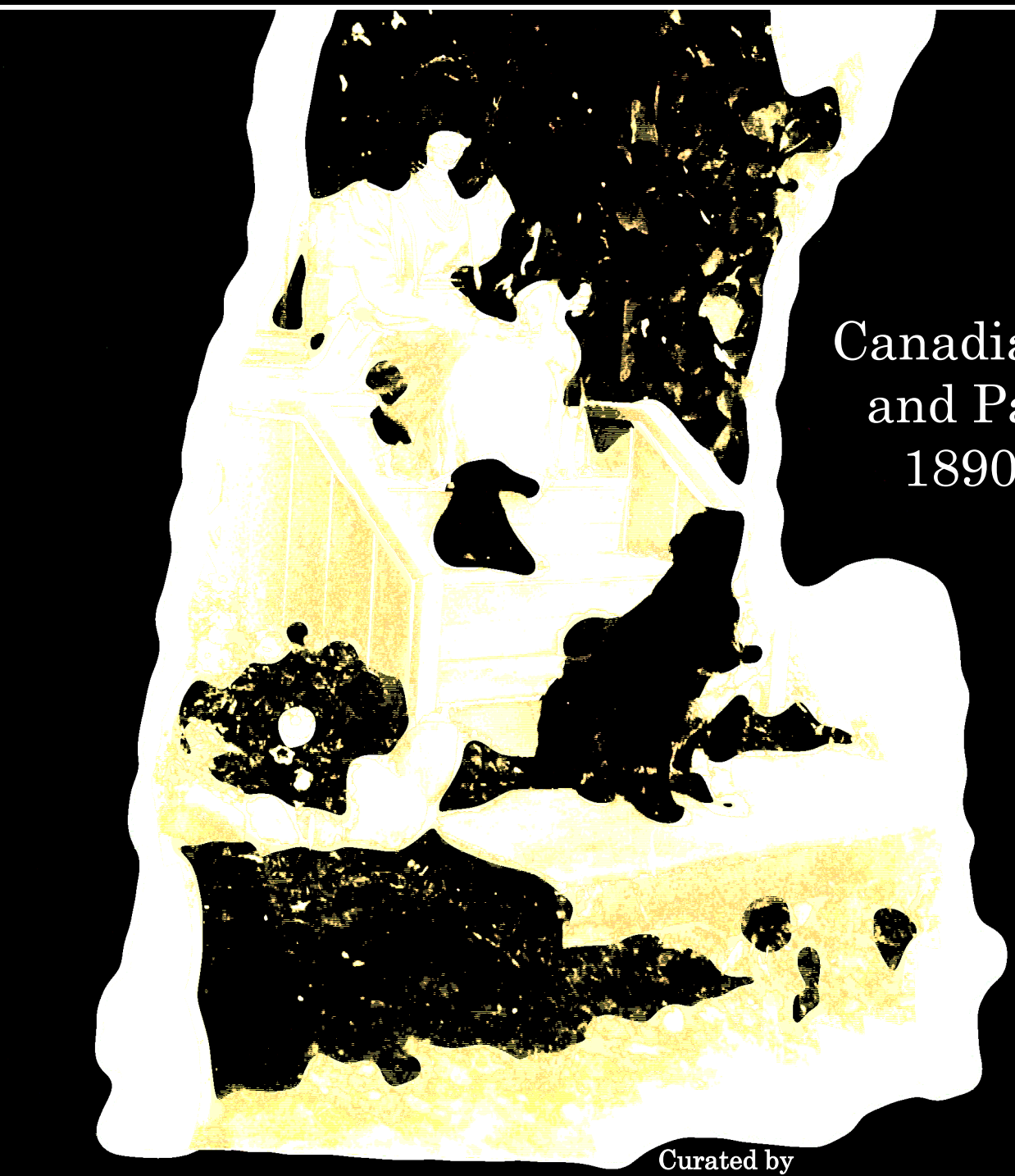
“Only a working girl”



Canadian Women and Paid Work 1890 – 1921

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"Only a working girl"[1]

I know I am only a working girl,
And I'm not ashamed to say
I belong to the ranks of those that toil
For a living day by day.
With willing feet I pass along
In the paths that I must tread,
Proud that I have the strength and skill
To earn my daily bread.

I belong to the "lower classes"-
That's a phrase we often meet-
There are some who sneer at working girls
As they pass us on the street.
They stare at us in proud disdain
And their lips in scorn will curl,
And sometimes we hear them say-
"She's only a working girl."

Only a working girl! Thank God!
With willing hands and heart,
Able to earn my daily bread,
And in life's battle take my part.
You could offer me no title
I would be more proud to own;
I stand as high in sight of God
As the queen upon her throne.

Ye gentle folks, who pride yourselves
Upon your wealth and birth,
And look with scorn on those who have
Naught else but honest worth.
Your gentle birth we laugh to scorn,
For we hold this as our creed-
"That none are gentle save the one
Who does a gentle deed."

We are only the "lower classes,"
But the Holy Scriptures tell
How when the King of Glory
Came down on earth to dwell,
Not with the rich and mighty,
'Neath costly palace dome,
But with the poor and lowly
He chose to make his home.

He was one of the "lower classes,"
And had to toil for bread;
So poor, that oftentimes he had
No place to lay his head.
He knows what it is to labor
And toil the long day through;
He knows how we get tired,
For he's been tired too.

Oh, working girls remember
It is neither crime nor shame
To work for honest wages
Since Christ has done the same.
And wealth and high position
Must seem of little worth
To those whose fellow-laborer
Is King of Heaven and Earth.

So, when you meet with scornful sneers
Just lift your heads in pride;
The shield of honest womanhood
Can turn such sneers aside.
And scoffers yet will understand
That the purest, brightest pearl,
'Mid the gems of noble womanhood
Is "Only a Working Girl!"

[1] From Joussaye, M. (1901, October 26). ONLY A WORKING GIRL. *The Province*, p. 6. By Marie Joussaye (1864 - 1949), Canadian poet and onetime president of the Working Girls' Union.

Trades and Case Studies

"Of Many Daughters"[2] (August, 1890)

It never occurred to me in all my romantic girlhood that I should live to have daughters tall enough to look over my head; and it seems very funny that seven little girls called me "mother" before I was thirty-five. Dear old Dan was a happy father of these "silks and jewels, bangs and curls," without a boy to bear his name. But they all had a welcome to his fatherly arms and heart. "She looks like you, wife," he said, when the first was born, and insisted on giving her my name. He looked in the blinking eyes of the second and they were like his mother's, so he called her Jane, softened afterwards to Janie. The third was a plain-looking, good natured baby that, he said, reminded him of his dead sister Rachel, so "Ray" became the pet of the family. The next was a delicate infant and we dubbed her Lily. The fifth looked like my mother and I had her named Eliza. The sixth was such a great disappointment that I was determined to call her Danelda, and she well sustained the name, for "Elder" is her father's counterpart in many ways.

Then one stormy night the last baby came. It was a big snow-storm, and as the wind howled and everything was so dreary we talked a little and I said smiling, "She will be the Hope of our old age." "Then," said Dan, "we'll call her Hope," and so our crowd of little girls grew to womanhood. They suffered childish ills, in a take-it-for-granted manner, enjoying all the fun that they could get out of life, and wore old clothes and cut-down frocks with composure and content. Early in life I marked out a career for each and did not consider that a difference in sex ought to make such a difference in their success in life work. The eldest devoted her leisure to music, and fitted herself to teach, but when she wanted to be paid the same price as Professor Bangum, she was told that a gentleman's prices were allowed to be higher than a lady's, and had to be contented to take about one-half, even though doing as good work.

Janie started out to be a lawyer, but though she was very good at an argument, somebody proved better, for she married Tom Jenkens the second year, and I saved the rest of the school money for her setting-out, and took her home to study housekeeping with me. "Ray" grew up as plain as her babyhood promised, but her sunny temper sweetened and brightened all our lives. I wanted to keep her to myself, and Janie's engagement gave me a decided "turn."

I didn't want the girls to marry and spoil all my ideas of a career, so looked for an occupation for Ray, whose principal gift seemed to be to brighten the home, and that could not be classed among the professions, though the most indispensable, I admit, for there ought to be H. B. after the name of such girls, as an every day help and "Home Brightener." But then, it doesn't require a seven years' course of study.

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[2] From Jack, A.L. (1890, August 5). "Of Many Daughters." *The Regina Leader*, p. 6. By Annie L. Jack (1839 – 1912).

When aunt Neville came in from the country, she used to wag her head, and say, "Oh, let Ray alone, wait till Mr. Right comes along." But I didn't want to wait, and besides I am not such an orthodox believer in predestination as aunt Neville, who is sure you can't get past what is allotted to you. Ray liked to dig in the ground, and grow plants from seeds in our little back garden when she was quite a child, potting them and selling to the neighbors in summer, till she saved enough money to build a little glass house off of the dining room and grow plants for the florist, who tried at first to get them cheaper because a woman grew them. But little "Ray" had some determination, and knowing they were a first class article she would not sell them under value, but took more pains with the quality of her plants, and now has money in the bank and her career is secured as long as plants are in fashion.

"Lily" grew strong and took type writing, but is not able to earn as much as Harry Sayers, who works beside her, and does no more than she, besides going out for a smoke and losing time at noon, which the girls never think of doing. Liza teaches in the High School, another case of reduced pay, but it was reserved for Elda and Hope to show us what women could do. For after they finished schooling, and while they were looking for a career, Dan fell and broke his leg. His business is house decorator and painter, and he had a very important contract on hand just at that time, for it was early autumn when everybody wanted work done before cold weather set in. "Elda" took all the work in and superintended it. She had shown a talent for house painting and decorative art, and studied the journals he subscribed for on the subject. She had painted and frescoed our own rooms sufficiently well to meet with her father's approval, and caused him to say he wished she was a boy; but it had never occurred to him that her hands were as well suited to the work as a boy's could be, and her brain quite as clear for designing and coloring in artistic taste if only she was trained as a boy would be.

Before Dan was better the girls had such a hold on the business, and did so well, that he took them fairly into partnership – Hope to keep the books, and Elda as general manager. And so they are still helping Dan in his business, but able to assist me when needed – none the less housewifely because they understand a trade and can earn their living. There is no need of marrying for a home, and there is blessed independence in being able to earn one's living. House decorating is a work of taste and art, better suited to a woman who knows women's needs and ideas on these subjects, and so we have decided that "girls" are as good as boys, if given opportunity.

"Western Ladies Wear are made in Winnipeg"[3] (July, 1907)

For centuries the women of America have been doing homage to Paris, homage abject and unreasonable – first to Paris and after that to New York and every other great center of fashion. And the adage is still true that a prophet is not without honor save in his own country. Even the ready-to-wear garment must come from abroad,

[3] From WOMEN'S GARMENTS LARGELY MADE AT HOME. (1907, July 11). *The Manitoba Morning Free Press*, p. 7.

and until recently the knowledge that her skirt came from a down town shop was enough to make any ordinary woman blush, but if these slaves of custom knew that the garment was not only bought, but manufactured in their own western city, how great would have been their shame.

In the last few years a new sentiment has been slowly developing among our western women. They are no longer ashamed to wear home-made suits, and perhaps many of them will not be very much shocked to learn that there are two factories in Winnipeg where the manufacture of ready-made garments for women and children is an important industry. All skirts, blouses or suits stamped Western Ladies Wear are made in Winnipeg, and the owners of the factory are preparing a new stamp which will include the word "Winnipeg," and this stamp will be so attached to each piece that it will last as long as the garment. The other firm is the Model Manufacturing Co.

These firms employ nearly sixty hands and have in constant use almost as many machines. Nor is the number employed limited by the demand for the finished product, but by the difficulty in securing help, competent or otherwise. That which forced eastern manufacturers to desert their splendidly equipped buildings in the suburbs and build new ones in the centre of the city in order to secure the necessary operators is the great handicap to western manufacture. It is not so much the prejudice against home production that this industry has to contend with, but the inability to persuade girls to learn the work.

LABOR DIFFICULTY

It would seem that factory work is being black-listed by the modern girl, and many of them would prefer to sit long hours operating a typewriter for a mere pittance rather than enter a factory at a fair wage. But this condition of things cannot last. The time will come when the demand even for stenographers will not increase as rapidly as the business colleges can turn out eligible, and girls will be compelled to turn to factory work for their support. Then, Winnipeg's manufacturers will be in a position to keep pace with her development along other lines.

Even as it is, the progress has been remarkable. One firm, starting in business here last November, has been compelled to increase the number of its employees to five times the original. One hundred and fifty dozen (1,800) blouses, and seventy-five dozen (900) skirts are sent out by one of these firms every month, besides which there are boxes and boxes of underwear and piles of aprons.

PLEASANT WORKROOMS

In the long, well-lighted rooms are rows of power machines, where young girls and even gray haired women make dozens of blouses or skirts or suits with a rapidity that comes of long practice. With deft fingers they transform the piles of cloth beside them into plies of clothes ready for the presser, who with gas or electric irons soon completes the process and has the garment ready for the shipping department. So expert do these workers become that the visitor would lose very little time by waiting to watch the whole process of some simple garment, from the cutting until it is put away in a box ready for shipment.

The garments made in our home factories vary in quality, as they do in price. They make the very plainest of gingham or beautiful silk and lace robes, but all are carefully made and bear the trade mark of the maker as proof that they have confidence in their own work. A beautiful brown silk jumper suit was being pressed in the factory when we visited it. It was very simple and stylish and carefully finished. A black silk skirt made almost after the pattern of the kilt was very beautiful and was sufficient proof that our factories can shape the more dainty costumes as well as simple blouses and skirts, and why should they not? Can we be loyal citizens if the stamp "Made in Winnipeg" detracts from our appreciation of an article?

It would be impossible to give anything like a definite estimate of the number of women in Winnipeg who make their living sewing, but it has been ascertained that in the departmental stores alone (where dressmaking is done), in the busy season there are between 200 and 300 girls employed. These stores do all kinds of dressmaking and ladies' tailoring, and during the busy seasons of spring and fall are often unable to supply the demand.

These houses charge, on an average, from $15 to $25 for making a fancy evening dress. A shirt-waist suit costs from $8 to $20 for making, and a tailored suit from $14 to $25. These establishments keep up-to-date books, one establishment paying $50 a year for one fashion sheet alone. Some have fashion sheets sent exclusively to them, and every effort is made to have the work done in Winnipeg second to none.

This does not include the dozens of establishments devoted exclusively to dressmaking and ladies' tailoring, nor does it include the women who sew in their homes, and the hundreds of sewing girls who sew by the day. There must be upwards of a thousand women in Winnipeg who are competent dressmakers, and yet the demand for help along this line always seems to exceed the supply.

Then there are a large number of men engaged in ladies' tailoring, and they are always busy, the general complaint being that competent help is almost impossible to obtain. Many of these establishments turn out only the very best class of work, and are consequently almost always busy.

The busiest season of the year for dressmaking and ladies' tailoring is the spring and fall; the middle of winter being the slackest season. March, April and May; and September, October and November are always the busy months. The necessary investment for a dressmaking establishment is practically nothing, except the machines, fashion books and irons. The larger establishments use power machines and electric or gas irons, but the smaller places get along very well with the ordinary machines and irons.

"Making biscuits and confectionery"[4] (July, 1907)

The baker and confectionery industry is essentially a neighborhood industry, and it must stand or fall with the country. The official figures, however, show that there is still room for importation of foreign products, at least in the matter of chocolates, the demand for which has certainly grown faster than the country, and Winnipeg appears as one of the largest importing cities. It can not be said, however, that our manufacturers have not done fairly well in meeting the demands of the public. […] Canada has even become an exporting country in this line. […]

IN THE BISCUIT FACTORY

When you take a soda biscuit from the box in which it is so neatly packed, perhaps you may idly notice that it bears a home label. Possibly it is made by Foley, Lock & Larson, or it may be the product of the Paulin-Chambers company. In either case, it is sure to be pretty good and equal to the best made the wide world round. "Patronize home industries" is a well-worn motto, but it is to be feared that many neither know nor care whether a thing is home-made or not. If it suits them, they get into the habit of looking for it, however, and that is how the local manufacturing business has grown by leaps and bounds within the last ten years.

It is nice to have things fresh, and […] that difficulties of transportation don't worry the grocer. "Sorry, but we are just out," is not often heard in Winnipeg when biscuits are called for, though last winter the country dealers had to be disappointed once or twice by the manufacturers. A firm which only started the manufacturing of biscuits a year ago, is now practically running full capacity. It has its own transfer track, and the extent of its business may be estimated from the fact that there are sometimes seven cars standing on this siding.

The time taken in the cooking of a biscuit is about six minutes, a thermometer being placed in the centre of the ovens, by which the heat may be regulated. Large mixers, holding 3,5, 8 and 12 barrels of flour each, are run by electricity. Every housewife knows the process of mixing, and except that hand labor is eliminated in this case, the biscuit dough receives the same treatment. Of course everything is on a mammoth scale. In Paulin-Chambers' establishment, I saw great dishpans full of butter waiting for the baker, and they told me that the weekly consumption was 2,000 pounds. Multiply that by 26 cents, and the bill is no small one for this one item alone.

GINGER SNAP DOUGH

The big "arms" of one huge machine beat the dough thoroughly. I saw a great wooden trough of "Ginger-snap" dough, ready for rolling and baking, which they said held between 500 and 600 pounds.

After being mixed, the dough is dumped into large troughs on wheels and run into machines which roll it out into the proper thickness, and cut it into regulation shapes, perforated neatly as it goes its swift way to the ovens. In connection with this operation one machine does the work of fifteen men, and the almost human

[4] From MAKING BISCUITS AND CONFECTIONERY. (1907, July 11). *The Manitoba Morning Free Press*, p. 31. Image by Hay Stead (1872 – 1924).

intelligence shown by the clutching "fingers" is most fascinating to watch. All day the endless chain revolves which brings the hot biscuits to the rows of waiting girls from the furnace below. Down there these sultry days, men are working like mad that you may have biscuits for your cheese on your dinner table, madam. Into the fierce heat the trays of biscuits are shoved continuously, and when taken out on the other side are placed on a small elevator with shelves. When it reaches a certain level, that of the packing table upstairs, there is a revolving wheel which takes each one of the pans on to an endless-chain arrangement, which carries the pans all along in front of the waiting girls. As it slips swiftly past, they sweep the rows of ginger-snaps with nimble fingers into the boxes, or "cartons" as they are called. Meantime the tray has come to the end of its journey. Of its own impetus it falls over and is caught by another chain, which takes it underneath the table and so back to the oven from which it started. Some pans don't have time to get cooled off in their rapid transit.

HOT YET SWEET

We went round and found a biscuit at its hottest, and it tasted better than any just toasted in an oven, even if we did have to take it without butter. The girls did not seem to mind the heat, but worked steadily at the never-ending stream of pans, which brooked not a moment's neglect. A few of the biscuits were burned, and there was a good deal of broken stuff, but the latter is sold for cracker-meal or to the camps, so there is no great loss on it. In one batch only 8½ pounds of broken biscuits resulted from the mixing of ten barrels of flour. Manitoba hard wheat is too strong for the high-grade soda biscuit, so that soft winter wheat must be used. The ginger for ginger-nuts is imported direct from Japan. It takes several carloads of soda each year to make biscuits for western Canada, as far as Foley, Lock & Larson are concerned. This firm has 11 travelers in the biscuit department alone, and 26 travelers in all. The speed with which the product reaches the consumer may be judged from the fact that goods baked in the morning are shipped the same afternoon.

WEST'S FANCY TASTES

Soda biscuits alone have so far been considered, but there is a great demand in the west for fancy biscuits, and to this the above-named factory, with others, also caters. Among the varieties made are the Abernathy "Animals," marshmallow tarts and balls, jumbles, cookies, arrowroot biscuits, assorted sandwiches, bananas, Brunswicks, Buster Brown buttons, chocolate bars, fig bars, crisp wafers, toffee bars, Dixie sandwiches, fig newtons, iced fruit cakes, lemon creams, Java coffee cakes, jelly lady fingers, macaroon snaps, "moss roses," "newsboys," "Neapolitan bars," Regina cakes, rice croquettes, Vanilla bars and Vienna crisps. And these are only "among those present".

The young girl in the sample room knows all the varieties of cakes, candies and biscuits, and knows the price of each. She has a position which the manager would find hard to fill in her absence. In the sample room there are trays to be made up each day for the use of the travelers, and she it is who must do her best all the time, and do it often in a hurry, for all the different men who besiege her for their own wares. They travel "light," these men, for their bags have a collapsible interior, and the

candies vanish in their depths, yet manage to keep in their proper niches when opened out.

The "sample girl" and I went from top to bottom of the huge establishment on Market street east, and when we grew weary we sat down on boxes and barrels and sympathized with each other over the pursuits of knowledge, sweet as it was (and to that, I can testify, for I nibbled all the way along, being so requested to do). The "sample girl" had been asked to see that I carried away "samples," but I fancy she forgot, or else she thought I had made a pretty fair showing as it was. She confided to me that she was not a "candy-taster," all flavors seeming alike to her, and I reflected upon the ways of fat. Just think how "Matinee Girl" would like to be "sample girl," for one whole day.

MACHINERY AND CHOCOLATE

First of all we wandered into the depths of the building, but we soon fled, for the heat was appalling. The engineer was very proud of his up-to-date and powerful machinery. My notes look somewhat wild, and as I remember the heat of the day I do not wonder at this. I see that […] an engine of 100 horse-power generates power for the whole building, and that there are two 100 horse-power boilers. An artesian well is on the premises. He said regretfully, in the midst of some statistics, that "if it was a man now, he'd understand, but it ain't much use telling a lady these things, I expect." Not at any rate on a very hot day among 100 horse-power boilers!

Then we went on to the floor above, where huge cauldrons of chocolates were heating. Periodically, a pailful was ladled out into another cauldron into which the creams for "polo" chocolates were dipped in trays of wires. The "polo" is the cheapest grade – conical in shape. Two or three girls are kept busy filling the holes in the wires with the creams, and when full each tray is placed on a machine which submerges them in the thick brown liquid. The tray executes a somersault and the "drops" drop out, and are put into the refrigerators and eventually sold in bulk.

Not for these are the fancy boxes and fine paper lace of the "superbas," with their thirty-five different varieties. One would expect the "Cinderellas" to come last, with twenty-two kinds, but the "polo" of the small boy is the only kind dipped by machinery, which indicates its rank in the social scale. It tastes all right, too, even if it does not have the glossy even finish and correct "stroke" of the hand-dipped bon-bons. Each variety, whether it be a pine-apple, maple or vanilla, is distinguished by a special twist made by the girl dipping, and many of these are different in shape also.

The nut, as a finish, is often seen on bon-bons, and another favorite device is the tiny crystallized violet, rose or cherry. The chocolates with little bits of "silver" on top are known as "dragees".

LOT OF THE EMPLOYEES

Thirty-four girls are employed in the chocolate department, these being paid by piece-work. It takes about eight months for a girl to become expert at this work, which looks to the uninitiated easy enough. With the left hand the girl picks up a nut or a cream, and throws it in a flash to the restless right hand, which whirls it a second in the thick chocolate, gives it the finishing "stroke" and puts it on the cardboard

sheet, covered with specially prepared paper, waiting for it. Each sheet is then decorated with a brass coin, bearing the number of the girl. A skilled worker will turn out from 125 to 130 pounds a day, this being packed in 5-pound boxes. An expert dipper has sometimes made as much as $14.60 a week, while the average runs about $6 to $10. A girl learning would get $5 a week, not being put on piece work. When two or three girls come from one family, it will be seen that the weekly earnings of these members would make no small showing in the year's income. The manager, speaking of the benefit to Winnipeg shopkeepers alone of this money in circulation, said that they should realize what local manufacturers meant to the city. The factory allows the girls to leave at 5.30, because [of] the fact that they wish to shop and have no other opportunity during the week, with the exception of Saturday afternoon. The girls are due at 7.30 in the morning. They are allowed to talk among themselves to a reasonable extent. Throughout the candy department, the workers are permitted to eat the sweets if they want to, though of course it is forbidden to carry any away. But they soon have all they want, and after the first few days lose desire for nibbling.

Chocolate requires a certain exact temperature in its use. If this is too low, it will not mix; if too high it will turn white. A new refrigerator plant is being installed which will keep the room at a temperature of about 55 or 60 in the summer. It is kept at this during the winter, and while some girls find themselves affected by the cold, most do not seem to mind. From the heat of the racks of the biscuits to the coolness of the chocolate room there is certainly a choice of all climates in a factory of this kind.

According to those in authority in all the manufacturing establishments, the number of girls employed is surprising. The candy makers can pick and choose, for sometimes ten in a day come to the Paulin-Cambers people asking for employment. The work, in most cases, is light and pleasant; there is not much standing, and while monotonous, there is no nerve strain. Girls who had been operating typewriters have applied on different occasions, saying that the latter work was too hard on them. Some foremen will tell you that piece work is the best method. If the girl is capable, she is given every chance to show what she can do. "The better paid class of people gives the least trouble," said one in authority. "When we see a girl anxious to forge ahead, we help her along." Again, another man told me that he did not believe in piece work, because quality was there likely to be sacrificed to quantity.

The elevator in bakeries and confectionery establishments is slow, but sure. You stand on a piece of the floor, which goes up to the roof, successive bits of ceiling opening nicely to let you ascend.

MAKING LOZENGES

When we left the chocolate dippers, we went right up to the top of the building. Here it was quiet and cool, and here the lozenges were being made. I think Foley's is the only firm which manufactures them. That is an old fashioned word – lozenge. In old days it was a little square cake of preserved herbs or flowers, or else of sugar and confections. Occasionally it was medicated, as in the words of an old book, "For to make losinges to comfort the stomack." It was originally made in the form of a rhomb, but is now of various shapes. I remember a kind-hearted old gentleman who always had a supply of white peppermints for a certain little girl. He slipped them most

unostentatiously into her keeping at church, and looked serenely unconscious as the pungent aroma mad the Grown-up Person sniff and glance suspiciously around. Then, who does not know the motto of the crackers at the children's party, "Yes or not?" "Will you be mine?" The girl who turns out these sweet nothings by the dozen called them glibly "Cupid's Whispers." She was not the least bit like one of Cupid's messengers, as she picked up a stamp and printed in rose pink the fateful words "Is your hand free?" She took these various stamps in rotation and in the most matter-of-fact fashion; she made "conversation lozenges" while I waited. A young fellow near by was rolling out a creamy paste which eventually became "druggist mints." The cream for this is mixed by machinery, beaten sufficiently and placed on sheets of paper, going through all kinds of machines before being finished. In connection with the tiny "Nonesuch," with its coating of colored dots, non-pareil sugar is thrown on when the sweetmeat is soft. The "Assorted pearls," with their odd taste of perfumery, are indeed scented with extract of violet, peaches, etc. A "sizer" does what the name implies, regulates the size of each lozenge.

THE PACKING

In the bigger factories all the biscuit boxes are made by hand on the premises. The "cartons," or cardboard boxes, are made by girls who become very dexterous at creasing and folding. It takes about five minutes to make a chocolate box. The strips of paste-daubed paper are laid on a sheet of glass, and one at a time these are taken up and put round the edge of the box. Wooden pails come in car lots for the various "mixtures" such as are the delight of small boys at Sunday school picnics. The yellow tissue paper sometimes put in strips into boxes of chocolates to keep them from moving is called "Excelsior" and comes from Chicago.

In one of the rooms of Paulin-Chambers, I saw a sheaf of stuff that looked something like the core of a goose quill. This was called "Japanese Jelly," coming from Japan. It is used in the manufacture of that nice little oblong bit of sweetness which is half jelly and half cream and crystallized sugar. I tasted it afterwards, but I have forgotten what it is called. St. Charles' condensed cream is used in the manufacture of Paulin candies.

MYSTERIES OF CONFECTIONERY

How do you suppose the crystals form on rock candy? I was shown a square tin box which had to be "threaded" across, almost as one does in a sewing machine, except that it was not so complicated a performance. The syrup is poured in this, and the crystals cling round that thread like a lot of thirsty July mosquitoes. Then the syrup is drained off, and the bar cut out. Something of the same kind was seen at Foley's, where the fancy biscuit known as "Neapolitan Bar" was hanging on a many angled rack. After being dipped in the marshmallow cream it is allowed to dry for a day, and the effect of these dripping "bars" is odd, as they look like clothes hung up to air.

Gun drops are kept from a week to ten days in a special steam heated room, where they dry off in a temperature verging on 120 degrees.

The making of creams is an interesting process to watch; first of all the "beater" churns the cream up and down and then the latter is boiled with the sugar. Some of the huge receptacles will hold three barrels of sugar. The starch trays, resembling a

moulding board, are made ready for the cream, which is regularly dropped by the machine known as the "depositor" into the holes or thimble-like impressions which another process has prepared. There are 143 of these in each tray, and as the latter moves along in its rhythm-like progress, the drops of cream fall into the holes, and starch is sifted over them. When cooled, they are put into a machine which dusts and brushes all the starch off in the neatest way possible, and there is the smooth, clean shape ready for the chocolate dipping, if such is to be its fate. All kinds of plaster of Paris molds are used in the preparation of these creams. Of course, the process is only outlined here.

IMPRESSIVE SCENES

It is well worth a visit to a candy factory to watch all the different kinds of candy being made. The huge quantities impressed me as much as anything. It seemed as if a child's fairy tale had come true, and that the want had been waved which spread riches untold, in the way of sweetness, before one's eyes. For instance, at one table a man with a flat stick was separating rows of red and yellow pear drops. Barrels full were there, I am sure. On another table, mixed creams were lying in great heaps. Cough drops, jelly beans, burnt almonds, winter berries, etc., are thrown in shoals into huge copper revolving kettles lined with a thin beeswax-coating, which are known as dragee pans and which give a fine polish. Before another copper kettle of much smaller size, I saw a man beating white of egg for nougat. He said it would take about half an hour's work before it was the right consistency. Marshmallow goes through a process of beating which reminds one of the whipping of eggs, but this is done by machinery. Marshmallow is so called because it resembles the pulp of the marshmallow plant, and because the root of the latter is sometimes used in confectionery. They do queer things with it for the delight of children. A "Banana" tinted a pinkish yellow fairly melts in the mouth, while "cigars" are made in the exact similitude of a ten-center, brown, with a white tip to resemble the "ash."

Bull machines make "glass alleys" for the joy of small boys. For certain kinds of candy (including, I suppose, the "golden nuggets" or "honey smacks," which come wrapped in tissue paper, and which are guaranteed to "last" a long time) the taffy is pulled by the strong hands of a man for about five minutes. In the making of syrup I saw one receptacle which holds 400 barrels of sugar in solution, and which looks as though it contained 25 pounds. It is pretty to see the clear sheet of syrup descend from the cooler.

CHOCOLATE BOXES

Almost as important to the trade as the quality of the chocolates is the appearance of the boxes in which they are sold. So many women like to keep these on their dressing tables, when they are sufficiently artistic, that it has been found profitable to engage the services of several women who paint box covers, with a special view, of course, to the Christmas and Easter trade. It will be remembered that last April many cleverly executed sketches of chicks and eggs, etc., were seen in shop windows. These were done in the city and met with much appreciation. Then, of course, there are the very elaborate boxes, which may be used afterwards either for gloves, veils or handkerchiefs, with velvet covers, perhaps satin bows and artificial

flowers. Every kind of picture is to be found on less expensive boxes, some of them being most attractive.

PURE CREAM AND ICE CREAM

The best and only satisfactory method of making ice-cream, confectioners will tell you, is to use pure cream. Electricity forms the motive power for its manufacture, the ice can revolving in a bed of ice. While one can is being frozen, the cream is being prepared for the next one, so no time is lost. Satisfying the public demand for this cooling and palatable dish is the work of many people.

"Sometimes I feel pretty tired"[5] (June, 1911)

Dear Editress – Will you kindly answer the following questions in your lines in the Tribune? I am making $12 per week as stenographer, bookkeeper and cashier in one of the stores in this city [Winnipeg]. I give my mother $7.50 every week, which leaves me $4.50 for car fare and clothes. I am kept pretty busy all day, and in the evening I would like to take a walk, or sometimes I feel pretty tired.

Now, as I am only 17, I have no boy friends, so when I go out in the evening I have to go with a girl and want to get home before dark, but my mother wants me to do all the after supper work. She doesn't have to do all the work herself, as I have a married sister who lives with us and helps her along. On Sunday I clean the upstairs rooms, but my mother thinks I do not help her enough. What can I do? I must go out and get some fresh air. Do you not think I do my share?

I have a pongee dress which I would like to have made up. Do you think trimming of the same color would do? It's the natural color. I have an opera cloak of the same color; would it do to wear with any light-colored dress?

Troubled One.

Ans. – I have read and re-read your letter. As a rule, I generally take sides with the mother, for usually they are right, but you have stated your case so concisely that I really believe your mother is a trifle too exacting. When a girl pegs away at office work all day she needs air, as you say, and few feel like taking hold of housework, besides, in a well regulated household there should not be any housework to do after the evening meal but wash up the dishes. It should be the time of day, of all times, when the work is finished and the family enjoy the rest and pleasure of a musical evening or reading aloud by different members of the family, while others do a bit of fancy work, or some little outing in the pleasant summer evenings; so that the evening is looked forward to with a degree of joy as the pleasantest part of the whole day, when the family have all returned to the home nest and the mother should be the queen of that group. But alas, many middle-aged women become rather discontented and fail to see the necessity of keeping cheerful and bright for the family's sake, and think only of the housework and the necessity of retiring early in

[5] Troubled One & Glencross, N. (1911, June 10). CORRESPONDENCE. *The Winnipeg Tribune*, p. 25. "Editress" is Thomasina Frances "Nina" Glencross Dennis (1867 – 1954), writing as Nina Glencross.

order to be up and at it next day, leaving the family to wander at will wherever fancy leads.

Now, is it possible your mother may have reached this stage? If so, cannot you lead her out of it? Entice her into a car ride with you, or visit some friend for an hour or two, or meet you at six with a nice little lunch to eat in the park. Possibly, if this is the case, you may, by so doing, open her eyes to the true way of living and make it more pleasurable for both your mother and yourself. Try it, and write me again. I am always interested in my page friends' affairs, and desire to help you all.

If you touch up your natural colored pongee with blue it is an exceeding good combination, and brightens up the dress wonderfully. Yes, the opera cloak of that shad could be worn with any light color very nicely, and not clash at all.

"How I found my work"[6] (January, 1913)

When the woman who thinks business is the highest work in the world next to farming was asked if she would tell other women how she happened to go into business and what helped her to succeed, she answered that she was very glad to do anything to help.

"What do you think of business?" I said to her, after we had been talking for a while. She thought for a moment, and a look came over her face which meant that she was going to speak seriously from deep conviction.

"I think," she said, "that business is the highest work in the world next to farming." This woman thinks business is work worth doing. Her whole heart is in her work. She believes that she is helping with the good work of the world; that she is a comrade in her own way with nation-builders. Without this conviction no woman or man who works can be successful in the highest degree. This is the most important lesson and the first lesson which women who work have to learn; and all real women must work in one way or another.

"I had to work," she began. "There were two of us at home. A friend came to me and said that if I really wanted to work she could get me all the work I needed. So I began to work at home, and then I began to save. When I had three or four hundred dollars saved, the two of us made up our minds that we would go into business on our own account. I had learned the principal details while I was working at home. I had learned a good deal about designing."

I asked her afterwards if she could have got on as well without this practical home experience, when everything was done in a small way. She smiled and said, "Oh, no," in the way people do when they are quite sure of what they are saying.

So this woman went into business on her own account with one other member of her family. I asked her to tell me what had helped her in business. She replied, "In the first place, it was their willingness to work hard, to wait for returns, and to unite unselfishly in everything for the good of the partnership. We were down at eight in

[6] From MacMurchy, M. (1913, January 25). HOW I FOUND MY WORK. *The Ottawa Journal*, p. 13. By Lady Marjory Jardine Ramsay MacMurchy Willison (1869 – 1938).

the morning, worked till six, and went back very often at night making up orders. If any of the work people come back at night, they are paid overtime, of course. I looked after the details always; just to be there makes such a difference. They know you are there, and it helps to make things go right."

"Did you enjoy it?" I asked.

She said that she enjoyed bustiness and work. "But it means giving up almost everything else. The woman who is to succeed in business cannot be thinking about marriage all the time. She must give her mind to her work and plan about it. She must put work first, and she must have enthusiasm. Then you must make sure that there is as little waste as possible."

I said to her that a woman ought to be specially fitted to look after eliminating waste both in time and material, and she agreed that this was true.

"I owe a great deal of my success," she said, "to the people who work for me. My forewoman is a wonderful woman. Every girl in the factory will go to her and confide in her. She is one of the women whom people trust because she is so human and so kind. I remember when I first noticed her. I wanted a girl for some work, and I asked a number of them to write their names, and to write as well figures from one up to ten. I liked the way this girl wrote, and I sent for her. I liked her clear eyes and the way she looked at me, and that was the way it all began. She was only seventeen then. After she had been with us a good while, a company was formed and she held stock. She is a very successful business woman and a fine woman. She began just like any other girl who goes to work in a factory."

In reply to a question as to how much capital a woman needs to start in business, this successful Canadian woman said that she had started with only a few hundred dollars. She added that if a business could be started on a thousand dollars, and someone said to the person starting business that he or she could have five thousand dollars, it was often a misfortune. It is better to manage on a thousand capital, if that is possible, knowing more money than is absolutely necessary makes one not so careful.

"Strangely enough," added the successful business woman, "we were most prosperous in hard times. It was then we made most money. But almost from the beginning we had more orders than we could handle. We were always driven with our work."

It is years since this successful business woman could have afforded to retire, if she had wanted to. She did retire for a while, but as she tells herself, "When a woman's mind has become accustomed to occupation – when she has learned to love work – she finds that she cannot do without it." After having tried retirement, and finding it distasteful, she is now personally looking after a large concern.

I asked if there was any difficulty in a woman becoming the employer of other women. "No," was the answer, "but she must be HUMAN. You remember that I told you about my forewoman. A woman must be human with her employees. She must forget herself in business, she must not be self-conscious, and she must learn to take the rough with the smooth."

"The best business principle to learn is to be honest, always to keep your word even if it means loss. Buy at good prices, pay good wages, see you get good value for what you pay, sell to good people and get good prices."

There are splendid opportunities for the right woman in business, is the opinion of this successful Canadian woman. A woman, to make a good business woman, should have executive ability, ability to grasp details, and good business ideas. A Canadian woman of this class, who has to earn her living, has every reason to hope for success. And business experience, instead of harming a woman, is of great advantage, not only to her character; it makes her of greater service to the world.

"Sewing by the day"[7] (February, 1913)

A correspondent has written asking for the discussion of sewing by the day as an occupation for women. She was, herself, a seamstress of whitewear, but has given up the occupation since she does not find it satisfactory. Her letter to the department […] reads as follows:

Allow me to take advantage of your business discussion to ask your advice and opinion as to the rights, etc., of a seamstress; in practice she seems to have no definite rights, and if you think any good purpose can be gained, please make what use you like of my remarks.

There is a very general complaint that there are so few seamstresses who can sew well. One of my regular employers says she has had seamstresses, not one satisfactory. Some can sew well, but cannot put their knowledge to practical use, since they do not know how to put a garment together properly. Others can fit and cut, but are not neat sewers.

The employers are largely to blame, themselves, if they find seamstresses unsatisfactory. They require the work done far too quickly to be done well. Again, good sewers go in for dressmaking, as I am now doing; it pays better. I have found that sewing whitewear – which really must be made and sewn well, and in my opinion is quite as important as dressmaking – will not fetch more than $1.50 a day – generally $1.25 – often with not more than one meal in addition, and sometimes car fare. There should be a recognized standard of payment for sewing by the day, where there is not at present.

Dressmakers can earn $1.75 to $2.50 a day. I sometimes get car fare in addition, generally two meals, sometimes three. Speaking of meals, mine are generous and nicely served, although two or three employers have astonished me by the meagerness of the meals which they served; practically I was starved.

I have worked for a lady who expected six nightgowns to be made in two days, fitted, tucked, trimmed with embroidery, and finished with my very best work. She expected me to work from eight to six. She was in and out, worrying all day. I left her

[7] From MacMurchy, M. & G.E.M. (1913, February 22). Occupations for Women: Sewing by The Day. *The Regina Leader*, p. 36. By Lady Marjory Jardine Ramsay MacMurchy Willison (1869 – 1938) & 'G.E.M.'

the second day, being unable to stand the strain. The day following I was unable to work as a consequence. Another woman engaged me to make a dress and acquiesced when I told her my terms were $2.00 and car fare. As her goods were short by two yards, the work took me over three days, instead of two. I had to manoeuvre and join, still the dress was a success. I charged her five dollars and car fares instead of six dollars. She would only pay me four dollars. This lady complains that she cannot get satisfactory work done, but she admitted that mine was.

Another lady engaged me to make a dress and to work four days for her. I had to work in three different rooms, and after I had cut out the goods she decided not to have the dress made as she had first intended. She told me that she would get more goods. I was to go to her the next day. When I arrived, she put me off till the next. I telephoned her and she put me off until she would have the goods ready. She would only pay me $1.50 and so I declined to go again. Through her conduct I lost four days' work at $2.00 a day and meals. Yet I am told that I have no redress. Surely there is something wrong.

Still, speaking on the whole, I am well considered. I would like to know, however, what are the correct hours for a seamstress who sews by the day, how much she should be paid by the day, and what would be considered a fair amount of work to be done in a day. If seamstresses would give more attention to details, and if employers would allow more time for elaborate work and for good work, and would pay accordingly, good sewers would feel more encouragement to remain in the trade.

Yours sincerely,

G. E. M.

I must thank 'G.E.M.' for her letter, which deals with an occupation for women that promises to be a most interesting study. Is sewing by the day an occupation for women which is likely to disappear? From inquiries, it seems that sewing by the day is likely to remain as an occupation for women. It is true, as 'G.E.M.' states, that the woman employer often says the seamstress is inefficient. I know, however, many women in households who speak with a good deal of satisfaction regarding the seamstress. In many cases, they are genuinely attached to the seamstress. They feel that she does a great deal of good work for them, and that she enables them to use the good material […] which otherwise they would be unable to utilize.

The seamstress who works by the day is invaluable in a household with children. As a rule, however, employing a woman who sews by the day is only economically satisfactory when the woman of the house sews with the seamstress. When the woman of the house has too many other duties to be able to sew with the seamstress, then it is scarcely considered good management to employ a woman who sews by the day. In such a case, the woman of the house either has to fall back on ready-made clothes, or she has to pay more for her clothes at a dressmaking establishment. For alterations and "made-overs," the woman who sews by the day is of great value. The dressmaker who has her own establishment is unwilling to make alterations or to use material which has already been made up in a dress.

It is plain that sewing by the day is a good woman's occupation, as far as permanence is concerned. A good sewer can get two dollars, or one seventy-five a day, with three meals and car fare. This is a pretty fair wage, as wage-earning occupations go. There are two points that the woman who sews by the day should make sure of. First, she should spare no pains to become a most efficient worker. A good seamstress is in constant, indeed, eager, demand. There are numbers of women in Canada who sew by the day who cannot take any more customers, because their whole time is occupied with the customers they already have. An efficient seamstress can pick her customers. This is the second point that she ought to make sure of. If she finds a customer unreasonable, asking for too much work, pressing her to get through with unduly haste, serving her poor meals, the remedy is in her own hands. She should drop the customer and take someone else who is a good employer. The efficient seamstress can do this without difficulty.

'G.E.M.'s questions, I think, are now to some extent answered. The ordinary hours for a woman who sews by the day are apparently from eight to six. A woman whose work is in much demand can shorten her day, if she chooses. In some cases the day begins at 8.30, or 9, and ends at 5, or 5.30. The pay is sometimes as low as 41.50 and even $1.25. But I believe that no good sewer needs to take $1.25 a day, or even $1.50 if her work is really good. The best sewers get from $1.75 to $2.00 a day. In one case, a woman who sews by the day gets as high as $2.50. As far as the amount of work which ought to constitute a day's sewing, this department would like very much to hear from other seamstresses, and especially from women who employ seamstresses.

Matilda Harper[8] (June, 1914)

Few more interesting stories of achievement can be found anywhere than those of the modern business world. The story of the woman's business built up by Martha Matilda Harper is among one of the most fascinating. Years ago, when she was a spirited little girl, she played games with other children in the little Canadian town of Oakville. She must have been a leader then. Today a woman of middle age, Miss Harper is the head and owner of a business which has 134 branches in 128 cities. These cities are in Canada, the United States, England, Scotland, Germany, shortly in Rome, Italy, and requests come from China and from Australia for branch businesses to be established in these countries. It is part of Miss Harper's plan never to advertise her business, and never to establish a new branch of her business until the women of a city ask for it. When the new branch is established, a brief announcement to this effect is made in the local press. But the patrons of the business make it known to their friends, and in this way only the business of the branch grows.

To know Miss Harper is to understand the reason for this really wonderful business success. She is a woman of strong character, of excellent judgment, and of

[8] From MacMurchy, M. (1914, June 13). MATILDA HARPER A WOMAN WHO HAS BUSINESS INSTINCT. *The Regina Leader*, p. 18. By Lady Marjory Jardine Ramsay MacMurchy Willison (1869 – 1938).

great intelligence. Her intelligence appears first in her choice of business. The success of women in business undoubtedly depends largely on their choosing a business in which a woman has a natural advantage. Many another woman has been employed in a shampooing business. Miss Harper was one of the very few who determined to have a shampooing business of her own. But it was to be no ordinary shampooing establishment. The care of the hair, and its treatment, were to be put on a basis superior to anything else of the same kind. It was this choice of the best, and the best only, which has had a great deal to do with Miss Harper's success.

A STORY OF FRIENDSHIPS

Miss Harper has always had a wonderful capacity for attaching friends. The story of her life is a story of friendships. But these friendships belong to her own private life. Yet it may be said that partly through the encouragement of a friend, the young Canadian girl began the study of anatomy, so that she might better understand the business in which she intended to engage. A formula for a tonic was added to this unusual equipment. Miss Harper gave her tonic a Spanish name, meaning "more beautiful." She began a course of treatment which she has since perfected, and which includes massage of the head and neck. It will be readily seen that this Canadian woman had a wonderful grasp of the possibilities of her business.

For private reasons she began her business first in Rochester, where the head office is still. She opened her business in one room, with her tonic, since become famous, with her methods of quiet and repose, absolute cleanliness, an atmosphere of good and good-will, and a complete ignoring of all the meretricious aids to beauty, which commonly go by what is generally known as a "beauty parlor." The fashionable, or semi-fashionable woman, who unwisely wants her hair "bleached," or to have her hair dressed in the extreme of fashion, will not find what she wants in the agencies of the Martha Matilda Harper Method. What she will find is a delightful process of hair-washing, shampooing, massage, and treatment; and generally the attendant will end by saying quietly, "You will prefer to dress your hair yourself."

COMMON SENSE METHODS

Such are the Martha Matilda Harper methods; very quiet, common sense in character, without frills and furbelows, genuine, self-respecting; in their own way, scientific. Naturally, the women who are clients of these agencies tend more or less to belong to a certain class, educated, genuine, refined, opposed to show, fond of personal quiet, and delicacy of touch with treatment. All this explains, it will be readily seen, the wonderful way in which Miss Harper's business is actually on its way round the world. Already it extends from Edmonton and Winnipeg to Dresden, Berlin and Paris. In a few months it will have reached Rome. No one can tell into what distant city it may go yet.

Perhaps the most remarkable fact about this great business owned and managed by a woman is the fact that the woman at its head does not feel the business either a strain or an anxiety. When asked at what time she experienced the period of most stress in handling all these agencies, Miss Harper replies that there never has been any stress. The business has grown naturally and has carried easily. It began in one room in Rochester. It now furnishes employment for some five or six hundred

women workers, about two hundred of whom have been trained under Miss Harper's supervision. The business in Rochester includes a training school where Miss Harper trains attendants. From this school, her agencies are furnished with managers. Usually Miss Harper furnishes the capital to begin each agency. But desire for monopoly is entirely foreign to her character. It is a great happiness to her to have furnished so many women with a good employment, a good business into which they put their own savings, and the profit of which is theirs. They follow the Martha Matilda Harper method. They are graduates of her school. They get supplies from her laboratories, one of which is in Canada and one in the united States. But the profit of the local business is for the local agent. Truly, Miss Harper is a remarkable woman; and she adds to modern business a grace, justice, and freedom of her own.

HARDSHIPS OF HER YOUTH

Miss Harper spent the first half only of her life in Canada. She says that as a child she was headstrong and willful. This, of course, must have been only that those who dealt with her did not understand the strength of her nature. No one explained to her why such a thing should be so. She was expected to obey without explanations. But as soon as she began to understand why anything ought to be done, life became reasonable and kind to her. She became self-supporting at a very early age. All her hardships, she says, came in her youth.

By some means, likely by the hardships of youth, to some extent at least, Miss Harper has become one of the kindest and most sympathetic of beings. She wants to help, and it does not make any difference what kind of person is in need of help. There is very little narrowness or prejudice in her personality. She is at the same time, however, an unusually keen and sure judge of human nature. Like all genuine people of wealth and character who have had to work instead of spending years at school, Miss Harper has thrown herself with uncommon zest into the pursuit of education. She reads widely and with delight.

One of the rules of her training school will reveal much of the finesse of her character. She never allows any of her assistants to discuss any of the clients who come for treatment; and there are never any tales carried out of school. Miss Harper at the same time has a keen sense of humor. Her pupils have the advantage of being taught by an instructor who is wise in dealing with human nature, and who believes with passionate conviction in giving everyone a chance.

"Operators are entitled to a better return"[9] (May, 1917)

Twelve dollars a week is the minimum wage paid to telephone operators by a large local mercantile establishment which conducts its own exchange and employs 13 operators, according to the evidence given by one of the officers of the concern today before the board inquiring into the grievances of the Manitoba Government Telephone operators, who are asking for minimum monthly wages of at least $40 a

[9] From MARRIAGE CHANCE POOR; SAYS GIRLS NEED HIGHER PAY. (1917, May 16). *The Winnipeg Tribune*, p. 8.

month. The $12 weekly minimum is paid, the official said, because the company believes its telephone operators are entitled to a better return than ordinary unskilled help, but none of the girls employed by the concern receives less than $9 per week, unless she is under 18 years of age, and lives at home with her parents.

One of the senior operators, a highly-intelligent, well-educated girl, was the principal witness at the morning session of the board. She submitted a list of her expenditures for the last year, showing that it had cost her $42.50 a month to buy the necessities of life. She now gets a salary of $50 a month, but she declares that she will have as hard a time as ever getting along, owing to the high cost of living.

HAS UNIQUE ARGUMENT

Here is a unique argument made by this young woman in support of her claim that a substantial increase in salary should be given to all operators in the employ of the commission:

"Girls can no longer count on getting married on account of the scarcity of men, and the country owes it to them to pay them a salary large enough to enable them to save something each month. Otherwise, they will be an expense to the country in their old age."

A representative of another large local mercantile establishment, which employs many girls, also gave evidence. His concern, he stated, pays girls from 14 to 17, from $5 to $8 a week. These girls live with their parents and are not hired unless they do. Girls 18 years old are not required to live with their parents. They are not skilled workers, but the lowest salary paid to them is $9 a week. This rate of pay has been in force for five years, and is based on conditions at that time. The managers of the business consider that it costs girls $7.15 a week for room, board and laundry, providing they live two in a room. Most of the girls also are given increases every six months, and the business recently established a bonus system which will help the employés considerably, he said. The increases amounted to approximately $1 a month. The ordinary girl employed can count on earning $11 a week after being employed for a year. About 35 per cent. of the girls make the larger earnings. Many ordinary girl employés, owing to regular increases, are earning $18 to $20 a week, he testified.

OPERATE OWN EXCHANGE

The official testified that the concern had a private telephone exchange which it controlled itself and which employed 13 girls. These girls are given $12 a week to start with.

"Do you consider that the operators should be paid a better return than unskilled workers?" Mr. Murray asked.

"Yes."

"Are the girls experienced when you employ them?"

"Yes, in some cases. When they are paid more than $12 a week."

"You consider an ordinarily efficient telephone operator worth $12 a week?"

"Yes."

"What is the highest pay you give to any of your telephone operators?"

"Sixteen dollars a week. The young lady in charge of the switch board gets higher wages still, but she has been with the concern for several years."

HAVE NO SUNDAY WORK

The official said the concern's operators did not necessarily lose their pay if they were away ill, that they had very little overtime work, and no Sunday work.

Are four hats per year at $4.00 each an extravagance?

Not in the opinion of one of the operators examined.

"When one has to take hats on and off as often as we do," she explained, "one cannot get along on a smaller allowance."

The girl testified that she had a salary of $40 last year, and that her expenditures for necessities during the year amounted to $42.50 a month. She admitted that she bought three pairs of boots at an average cost of $9.00 per pair, and that she spent $1.25 a month on books, which were her only amusement.

MUST BE WELL DRESSED

"A girl must have good shoes and good gloves to be well dressed," she said. "I think it is sensible to indulge oneself in that respect."

"Has it occurred to you that the telephone operators are getting less money than the average domestic servant in Winnipeg?" Mr. Murray asked.

HOURS ARE REGULAR

"Yes, I have often thought that," she replied. "I am making less money than I was before I went into the business. The business has one advantage over the work of domestic servants, in that the hours are regular."

It is a matter of etiquette among telephone operators not to inquire too closely into each other's financial standing, the girl testified. She said most of the girls were absolutely without money before pay day.

"I know because I have tried to borrow," she declared. "The notoriously low-paying stores in Winnipeg pay their sales girls better than the Manitoba Government Telephones pays, when you take into consideration holidays and the fact that the sales girls have no Sunday work," she said.

R. F. McWilliams, government council, challenged the latter statement, saying that he would produce records to show that it was not correct.

"The lowest paid operator should receive not less than $42.50 a month in Winnipeg under present conditions," the operator asserted. "By sacrificing some of her needs and by working overtime, she might get along on $40 a month. To live comfortably, a girl should have a salary of $60 a month. The $42.50 a month would not provide for any amusements or holidays."

SCORES DEMERIT SYSTEM

Speaking of the demerit system, the operator said that it discouraged the girls. The operators, she insisted, recognized that some efficiency system was necessary, but such a system should not affect wages.

For the first year, operators should be given increases every three months, according to this operator; after that, increases should be given twice a year.

Mr. McWilliams cross-examined the witness at length with the object of showing that her increase in salary to $50 a month permitted her to improve her standard of living considerably, but the witness would not admit this.

"It permits me to live on a less-low standard," she declared.

"What do the teachers say?"[10] (September, 1918)

It will be good news to teachers to learn that Hon. Dr. Cody, Minister of Education, is about to inaugurate a movement for the advancement of the salaries of the women engaged in the profession. It is generally understood that the teachers of Ontario are the best paid body of women in the world at the present moment. What will it be when the increase comes? -Milton Champion.

A school in the district advertised for a teacher. A young lady from Grand Valley made a motor trip and examined the school premises, and then phoned the trustees that she would not accept, as the said premises were not sufficiently up to date. -Bolton Enterprise.

Thus the press.

What do the teachers say?

The married man with a family to support is justified for asking for a raise in salary. But he is negligible in the article I have in mind to write. The female teacher, and especially the female teacher of the rural districts, is the one I had in mind as I read and clipped the items above.

The average teacher thinks she is pretty well-paid. The complaints about salaries, in so far as I have heard them, have come chiefly from women who live in homes where other members of the family are employed in vocations that call for longer hours and higher pay than in the case of the average teacher. Of course, if a teacher spends all she makes on dress, no salary would be large enough to gratify her tastes. The teacher of to-day is not noted for the size of her bank account. Expensive trips, indulgences of various kinds in which the teacher of a decade ago would have thought it beneath the profession to partake, all can make a call on the salary of the teacher to-day, that causes unthinking people to pronounce the teacher underpaid.

But all income and outlay are proportionate. When it is considered that the average teacher receives $600 for teaching less than 40 weeks in the year, or a salary of fifteen dollars per week for five days of less than six hours each, she is not badly paid as remuneration goes. And if she makes no further use of the hours at her disposal, and spends all that she makes and even calls on the people at home for more, as I have known some teachers to do, she is apt to consider herself under-paid.

High-salaried stenographers, nurses and munition workers are the only women who receive more money than school teachers, and their hours are much longer.

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[10] From A WOMAN TEACHER. (1918, September 7). TEACHERS WANT GOOD CONDITIONS, NOT MORE MONEY. *The Regina Leader*, p. 34.

The only teacher whom I have heard talking about being under-paid during the past twelve months, and I am in contact with teachers all the time, was one who had been in the profession 15 years, and who is a failure. She wanted to secure an advance on the salary of the teacher whom she had succeeded, before assuming her duties at all. Now that the end of her year has come, she is interested in the page devoted to "Teachers Wanted."

But while I have not heard a teacher say that she ought to be getting more money, I have heard many teachers speak in unqualified terms of things that should be done for teachers in order to make it possible for them to earn the salary they do receive in a manner satisfactory from every standpoint.

I can appreciate to the full the attitude of the teacher who motored from her home town, inspected the school and said: "I won't teach there!" I admire her spunk, and when what she did becomes generally known, not a teacher will fail to applaud her action.

Take my experience. Think of appearing as teacher at the door of a school where the well was never pumped out from year's end to year's end, where the children were made responsible for putting the winter's supply of hardwood in the shed, where the teacher had to sweep, dust and light the fires, where the outbuildings were more than three hundred feet from the school, and open to the north winds that swept across the fields with sufficient force to take the smaller children off their feet.

RURAL CONDITIONS BAD

Imagine my feelings when I found that inside the building matters were equally bad. The windows had to be opened by main force, the blinds, what were left of them, raised and lowered by boy power, applied as the boy stood on the sill of the windows. The heating plant was adequate only for a chicken house on a mild day. The winds poured into the building from every corner of the earth. The equipment was conspicuous by its absence.

Yet I spent three years in that school and prepared and "passed" three entrance classes.

Why did I stay there when the conditions were so bad? I had to earn a livelihood for myself, and there were others dependent on me, so that I could not afford to pick and choose. And, besides, I might have gotten into worse surroundings. Beyond all that, I had a reputation to sustain for being "no quitter." When things have been very, very bad, I became possessed of a sporting instinct to get through them any way.

But my mind was made up that there were vocations which presented better fields for work, better environment for working in, and better opportunities for making the most of life's possibilities. A teacher I must always be, having been born with an unusual aptitude for teaching and for training. In school and out of it, I prepared for a change and when the change came, I willingly laid down the pointer for the pen and the copy-paper of a newspaper office.

Among ideal surroundings for work, making a little home in a bachelor woman's flat, I am earning a livelihood as a writer and whenever and whatever the opportunity offers, I am employing my powers as a teacher and trainer.

My salary for my last year's teaching was $625. Now by dint of steady application to the various lines open to a writer on a newspaper, I can make $800 a year. The increased cost of living in a town uses up that additional $175, but I am recompensed by the improved conditions under which I am working.

Within a radius of six miles from that school in which I taught, were four schools on which mine had nothing when it came to being out of date. These schools were situated in a locality where the great bank barns, with their adjoining stables, sheltering herds of sleek, beautiful and valuable cattle, can be seen for miles around; where every farmer has a car; where the women can take a place among the most advanced thinkers of the Province.

But their motto is: "It was good enough for us when we went to school, it is good enough for the children now." The fathers and mothers of the children now attending these schools were educated in these very buildings as they stand. They fared forth into the world, and have made good according to their ideals. Why cannot their children do the same, they say.

They do not see that while the mark of progress is stamped on everything else in the neighborhood, the school and often the church, too, are guiltless of any such distinguishing feature.

If the Minister of Education should ask each rural teacher for a full and unbiased description of the last school in which she taught, with an accompanying list of recommendations that might be applied to the improvement of the school, I am afraid he would be appalled at the reading matter that would be piled upon him.

But the appearance and equipment of the schools are only two of the many things to which teachers object in viewing a new field. There is the question of a home. Within ten miles of where I sit writing, it is almost impossible to find anyone willing to "board the teacher." One teacher, a very fine, very capable young woman, will have to board in the town nearest her school, and either walk or wheel to school daily. When the weather becomes unfit for wheeling, by reason of the wet, or the snow that blocks that road very badly in winter, she will have to make the two miles on foot, often breaking the road, as she struggles, up to her knees, through the drifts.

POOR MEALS AND ROOM

Would a factory girl do that daily? Not any factory girl of my acquaintance, and I know several score of them. But there are hundreds of school teachers who do it every winter in the Province of Ontario.

"Well, it don't hurt them!" says some clever trustee, speaking out of his recollections of the teachers who have done it for 25 years within his ken. "It will make them all the stronger!" he continues facetiously.

Does it not hurt the teachers to undergo such exposure? I know from experience that it does hurt them. I could cite cases of teachers, who had to make that sort of struggle for several years, played out by it. I could tell of a schoolmate who is entering on the third year of an enforced rest after a winter spent in struggling through just such conditions, combined with a smoky, badly-heated schoolroom, and a heatless room at her boarding-house.

If the teacher is allowed to board in the neighborhood, she must take what she is given in the shape of a room. The meals are usually served without consulting her tastes. If she suggests that her room is too warm or too cold, according to the season, she is accorded the privilege of finding something she will like better.

Following on such a search, if she is brave enough to undertake it, is the discovery that the entire neighborhood is her enemy, and she too, may begin to take an interest in the columns of "Teachers Wanted."

In some sections the people will, and do, see that the teacher has a home, that she is taken to and from the school on bad days, that she gets to church regularly, and that she has an opportunity to leave the section occasionally. They do not expect her to sweep a quantity of the section out of the schoolroom every night, when her nerves are tired, and when her vitality has been lowered by teaching in a poor atmosphere all day. Nor do they derive pleasure from the fact that she has to break a road to the school at 8 a.m., in order to have the building warm when the scholars arrive at 9 o'clock.

But such sections are few and far between. In a section in the northern part of the Province, the teacher committed suicide because of loneliness, and the condition of the school, and the lack of everything that was homelike in the poor boarding house. Her successor stayed less than two months.

It is no use to say that a teacher should have more spunk. It does no good to urge teachers to have more backbone. It will not remedy matters to tell teachers of the sublime and uplifting calling of which they have become followers.

Teachers there must be and teaching there will be. But whether the teachers are going to view the land and then refuse to till it, or whether they are going to put up with conditions as they are to be found in most rural schools, for a couple of years, and then leave the profession for something better, remains for the Minister of Education in Ontario to see to.

One reason given for teachers leaving the profession is by way of being improved. No teacher can honestly say that the curriculum, as it stands, is conducive to keeping teachers in the profession. With an improvement there, alone, more teachers will pluck up heart and stay "on the job."

The freshest teacher, newly out from the Normal School, with her head filled with the idealistic stuff taught there, becomes weary of trying to get in all the subjects called for in the different grades. It takes a species of planning that ends in persistent brain-fag, to arrange a time-table that will be acceptable to the inspector when he makes his semi-annual visit. The little folks do not respond as easily to the present system of teaching as they did to the system in use a generation ago. There is more demand on the teacher and less on the pupil. There is to be seen in the scholars that lassitude of mind that results in an undesirable activity of body – the fidgets.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS DISGRACEFUL

By-and-bye, the teacher gets the fidgets herself, but the doctor calls it a nervous breakdown, and prescribes a long rest. She may try teaching again. It is much more probable that she will try something else.

It is the ruination of schools to have the teachers constantly changing. The children are longer getting through school than they were a decade ago, owing to the changed curriculum. When the teacher changes every six months into the bargain, the child's school life is shortened, though he may attend regularly every session.

Can the teachers be kept in the profession? Oh, yes, indeed! And they can be kept there without any outcry over an increase of salary that will set the teeth of the rural trustees on edge, and cause bitter words and more or less wrangling in the sections.

Give the teachers the square deal that they would receive if they [were] employed in factories, and expecting a visit from a Government inspector at any time. See that they have proper places in which to work, proper homes in which to live, proper means for transportation in bad weather.

Let the Department of Education make this imperative. At present all matters pertaining to the schools, their equipment, their surroundings, are in the hands of three men for each section, who may or who may not voice the sentiment of the whole section. They usually do voice the sentiment of the section when it is expressed in the words, "Keep the school taxes down, for Heaven's sake!" But instead of leaving the matter to the choice of the rural sections, to allow the school to be a disgrace to the neighboring farmsteads, as it often is, it should be made imperative that the school and its equipment should keep pace with the best equipped farm in the vicinity.

The second section of the rules and regulations should make provision for a home, not a boarding house, for the teacher. If this home must be at a distance from the school, the regulations should say that the teacher may expect to be transported whenever she so desires. The up-to-date teacher will accept this regulation, and pay for it as she pays her railway or her street car fare.

"Women who spy on store windows"[11] (August, 1921)

A tall, dark woman, dressed in fashion was strolling down Yonge street, Toronto. It was a blistering hot day, but, garbed in summery costume, she appeared indifferent to the mounting mercury. She had eyes for nothing but certain store windows as she passed slowly along.

Shoe, music, candy, drug stores she gave but the scantiest attention, but when a millinery or ladies' wear window drifted into view, her eyes became focused upon it with a peculiarly penetrating intensity. Something in the window would be singled out for special attention, but after as minute an inspection as possible, she would purse her lips, and, with an almost imperceptible shake of the head, continue her slow journey of investigation.

It was a very small millinery store window, squeezed in between two domineering establishments, that succeeded first in gaining her eager interest. Only some half dozen hats were displayed, but these riveted the tall woman's attention as

[11] From Meldrun, J. (1921, August 27). WOMEN WHO SPY ON STORE WINDOWS. *The Regina Leader*, p. 29. By John Meldrum (1862 – 1945).

much more pretentious exhibits in big stores had failed to do. She glanced quickly through the glass doorway and over the window partition into the store beyond. Lifting back a flap on her handbag, she revealed a tablet of white paper. Drawing a pencil from inside, she proceeded with firm strokes to sketch two of the creations in the window. A few penciled words in shorthand completed the task. The page was stripped off and slipped in behind the pad. The flap was replaced, and the tall woman resumed her deliberate progress down Yonge street.

It was a large furrier's window that halted her next. A window dresser was adding the last touches to a truly wonderful display. He was particularly solicitous over a magnificent coat of a new and striking design. The tall woman shared his solicitude. Her fingers itched to convey the coat's ravishing lines to paper, but the display man lingered lovingly over his task. There was nothing for it but to saunter on and return later. She wandered on as far as King street, but saw nothing worthy of her pencil except a silk waist whose design she transferred faithfully and with lightning rapidity to her pad. That done, she retraced her steps and studied the fur coat for fifteen or twenty minutes. She made no effort to sketch this article, but contented herself with a mental photograph of its plan and elevation from as many points of the compass as the window afforded. She then hailed a taxi, and was driven swiftly from the scene of her morning's labors.

HAD EXACT REPLICAS

Within the week a certain Toronto establishment had on view exact replicas of the hat, coat and waist that had been so scientifically copied by the tall woman. She was a spy, whose business it is to provide her employers with up-to-the-minute information on their rivals' scoops.

When told of the tall woman's surreptitious activities, the display man in one of Yonge street's largest stores smiled.

"She's not the only one," he laughed. "Every time we complete a big window dressing there are from half a dozen to a dozen spies outside sketching for dear life. They make no secret about it, and they work at a speed that seems to indicate their sole desire is to get back first to the factory and beat the other fellows to it. They confine their attentions to millinery and ladies' outerwear garments. Anything new in color or design sends them into a frenzy of activity, and we know that within a week over a dozen manufacturing houses in the city will be offering very credible imitations of our exclusive Paris and New York designs."

"Is there no protection from such piracy?" the display man was asked.

"We protect ourselves by not showing in advance anything really new, except to select patrons," was the answer. "By the time goods get into our windows, these pirates, if they knew the ropes, could already have obtained the designs elsewhere with infinitely less trouble and no publicity. Some of our windows are openly photographed, but in such cases the 'spying' is the legitimate work of trade journal employés, whose attentions we welcome and encourage. These men will photograph any window that presents an unusual display, but your spy confines his eagle optics to ladies' hats and coats. He is not interested in men's fashions or shoes, beyond noting the prices."

"She makes miles and miles of pies"[12] (August, 1921)

If you want to reach a man's heart by the shortest cut – feed him pie. Such was the advice of the old-fashioned mamma to her red-cheeked, smiling daughter. She was desperately in love with John, but she mustn't let him know – no, not for worlds!

After that, whenever he called, a tempting bit of pie was offered. And the strangest part of it all was that John himself never knew what it was about Mary that made her seem quite nice. But she was quite the nicest girl he had ever known. So her married her, and the honeymoon was very sweet.

"But, mamma, now that I have him, how will I keep him?" asks the blushing bride.

"Keep on making pies, of course," mamma replies. "Didn't you ever notice that I always had a pie on hand for your papa when he least expected it? When it appeared, the frowns disappeared, and he always declared I was the best little wife that ever man had. He thinks so to this day!"

But time changes all things, and the modern girl has other methods of her own. Possibly they are more subtle, but the lists of brides increase as the years go on. However, the astounding fact still remains – that the majority of men would rather eat pies than all the ice cream and candy in Christendom! They sink into utter insignificance when the mere smell of a pie is near.

Why is it that excessive pie eating is confined to the male sex? Why don't women want it with every meal?

Now the truth is out. Another discovery has been added to the science! It's not because women folks like pies less – but their complexions more. This, at least, is the way that one of Toronto's expert women pastry cooks solves the riddle. She ought to know, too, for she's been making all varieties of pies for the last twenty-five years.

"Men are the greatest pie eaters I know," she says. "And I love to cook for the dear souls. Women are fond of them, too, but it's their complexions they're afraid of," in a whisper. "A woman's pride is her complexion. Very few can eat lots of pastry and have a milky white skin – the kind you read about in story books. It's too rich, you know."

This celebrated pastry cook makes the most delicious of all delicious pies. The "yummie-yum" kind. All flakey with the insides bubbling over with creaminess and topped with the loveliest gold meringues. She's quite the last word in expertness, and when she has finished with her pies they look as if they ought to be admired instead of consumed.

In her twenty-five years of pie-making, she's made 695 miles of pastry. If all her pies were set along the railroad track, they'd make a neat little procession from Toronto to Montreal!

"Who has eaten these pies?" you'll ask.

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[12] From Clifford, C. (1921, August 27). SHE MAKES MILES AND MILES OF PIES. *The Regina Leader*, p. 29. Written by Clara 'Clarie' Clifford (1885 – 1923).

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

The answer is that a large number of Ontario people are responsible for their disappearance. For, during that twenty-five years of pie-making, this woman pastry cook has confined her efforts to this province. She has been chief pastry cook in a great many hotels, and it is her boast that she never had anyone working over her. She has always been the "head."

She was born near Lindsay on a large farm, and, somehow or other, ever since she can remember – pies seemed always to come her way.

"They just seemed to be in my line," she explains. "When I was thirteen years old I left school after passing the entrance. I was the eldest girl of twelve children, so you can imagine I was needed on our farm. I can remember at that time making as many as twenty-five pies a week for the family and hired help. Of course, I did other cooking besides. But country folks are like city folk in one respect – they like pies, too, especially the men.

"But later, when the family grew up, I decided to leave home and seek my fortune. I wanted to become expert in man's greatest weakness. I went to a summer hotel in Muskoka, and it was there I got my start. From that time until now I have never stopped making pies, and have turned out an average of 200 a day."

This pastry marvel believes that practice makes perfect. "One must improve as they go on," is her daily motto. "If you don't, you go back." And surely no one could ever accuse her of that. We think her pies are perfection, and that a French chef would have to sit up nights to get ahead of her.

If the truth must be told, she has never had a lesson in pie making in her life. "I just kept my two eyes wide open and never missed anything that could make my pies a little better."

"Do you roll your pastry both ways or just one way?" we wanted to know.

"I roll it in both directions," she replies. "It's hard for me to tell you how I do it, so just watch me."

At this she took a chunk of pastry out of a pan, floured her board, and proceeded to roll it. She had just enough to cover her pie plate and none to cut away from the sides. Every movement was so graceful and expert that to us it looked the simplest thing in the world.

It was fresh peach pie, so that when the pastry was in the pan, she threw in a little flour and sugar. Then she sliced luscious peaches. On top of them came some more flour and sugar for thickening, and sweetening and a little water. Lastly came the top crust. "But I just make the pies – I don't bake them," she adds, as she hands them to a girl who passed them on to a chef – "he does the baking.

"I believe in careful handling and mixing," she continues as she beats twenty-two eggs for six custard pies. "And the baking counts as much as the making. Some people don't think so. They speak about 'luck' when their pies happen to be good. But there's no such thing as luck in pie making. Use the best ingredients, be careful in preparation and cooking, and you'll have success. But the greatest secret is constant practice, for it's practice that makes perfect, you know."

Conditions of Life and Work

"In practically every form of activity"[13] (May, 1910)

Canadian women are employed in practically every form of activity in which it is possible for a woman to engage. They are bookkeepers, stenographers, confidential clerks, banker, dentists, doctors, teachers, lawyers, florists, caterers, musicians, artists, journalists, boarding house keepers and settlement workers. The Canadian young woman has made a success of business life. She has no intention of allowing herself to be "put upon." Work is plentiful, and she adapts herself with remarkable ease to any change in her circumstances. Generally speaking, she is as active in the work of helping others as she is on her own account.

In a large office building in Toronto in which 140 young women are employed as clerks and stenographers, one of the staff, a girl not long out from England, fell ill with tuberculosis. Her companions, upon their own initiative and practically unaided, sent her to a sanatorium. Treatment having been undertaken too late, and the girl longing to return to England, these young Canadians secured a subscription from their employers, arranged for the sick girl's passage, for some one to travel with her, and for every other necessary detail of the complicated undertaking. The invalid had to travel in bed, and her comrades saw that her bed was lifted on to the end of the train and carried into the stateroom of the sleeping car before they said good-bye. Altogether these business girls gave 400 dol. For the relief of their friend, an amount sufficiently large to have cost some of them a sacrifice.

WOMEN IN THE COUNTRY

Activity and initiative are by no means confined to Canadian women who live in cities. A few weeks ago an Ontario country girl of 19 wrote to a prominent citizen whose benevolence is as widely known as his business success. She said that she thought he might help her to make some money. Her father, a farmer, was old, and had sufficient only for his own needs. She did not want to lessen his comfort in any way, but she had hardly ever been on a train. She had never seen anything beyond her own country neighborhood, and she wanted to have good times, like other girls. She could only make home-made bread. Did he think that people in the city would buy her bread? The energy behind every word in the letter spelt success.

Such women are to be found in country places all over Canada. British Columbia, with its flower gardens and fruit valleys, offers them unrivalled opportunities. Almost every little house on the western prairie is the home of a woman in whose heart are dreams of greatness for her children. It is lonely on the prairie to-day. But to-morrow it will not be so lonely. Women on Western farms and ranches undoubtedly have hardships to bear. But there is a freedom and optimism in the life which many of them find priceless. There is for the women of the West, as well as for the men, an opportunity for advancement which would come only after years of waiting in the older-settled parts of Canada. Some girl who is reckoned

[13] From CANADIAN WOMEN. (1910, May 24). *The London Times*, p. 46.

hardly more than a child in a village in Ontario or New Brunswick, and who is certainly no more promising than her neighbours, goes as a teacher to the West. In a few years she is one of the leaders of a growing community. Her counsel is sought. Her word is obeyed. Her character is developed almost beyond recognition by her companions of a few years before in the East.

WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Canadian universities first began to confer degrees on women within a generation. Queen's University, in Kingston, opened its doors to women students in 1878; Dalhousie University, Halifax, in 1881; Toronto and McGill in 1884; the University of New Brunswick in 1886; the University of Manitoba in 1887. Canadian women undergraduates are conscientious and hard working. The majority seek a university degree to help them in earning a living. Women graduates either teach or marry, and they frequently marry men who have been their classmates. College life for women in Canada is free from restraint, and unconventional when compared with university life in older countries. Honours have been won by women in every department of university study. The other day at Queen's university a young woman won the gold medal for Greek and the prize for Latin and Greek prose. At Dalhousie it Is said that women take honors in mathematics more frequently than in any other department. McGill, at its next Convocation, will confer an honorary degree on Dr. Maude Abbott for her contributions to medical science. The standing of women at Toronto and the University of Manitoba has also been distinguished.

Eighty-five per cent. of those teaching in the province of Ontario are women. A woman stands at the head of the polls at the election of the advisory council to the Minister of Education in Ontario. Canadian women are universally admitted to be careful and able teachers, but there is a considerable feeling against the feminization of the teaching staff in the more advanced schools. Yet the country owes an enormous debt to its women teachers for the ideals they have sought to teach Canadian children. Miss Sarah Maxwell, whose name became in a day one of the most dearly loved in the annals of Canada, was a teacher in a Montreal school, who lost her life because she would not leave the children whom she could not save. Many Canadian women would act with the same heroism in like circumstances.

WOMEN'S CLUBS

Women's Canadian Clubs and the organization known as the Daughters of the Empire are patriotic societies which are immensely successful in Canada. Given the opportunity to show what is in her heart, the most reserved Canadian woman will show herself to be a passionate lover of her country. She is an ardent supporter of union within the Empire. In municipal elections women who are ratepayers have votes, and in questions affecting public health and social betterment they have on occasions made their influence powerfully felt. In Toronto two years ago the Women's National Council carried on a strong campaign for pure water, and probably was the determining element in carrying a by-law for filtration. The recent victory for municipal honesty in Montreal was owing partly to the good work of Montreal women.

One of the finest movements among Canadian women is known as the Women's Institute. It is an organization of farmers' wives and daughters, carried on

with the active encouragement of the Ontario government. Its object is to improve rural life in every possible way, to discover expedients which will lighten the work of women on the farm, and to encourage social intercourse.

Boating, swimming, and camping in summer; skating, skiing, and show-shoeing in winter touch the cheek of the Canadian girl with a glow like the sunset. She is frank and simple, high-spirited and a good comrade, yet sufficiently a woman to possess the charm of mystery and unexpectedness. In all likelihood, she may be the great-grandchild of some strong-hearted English or Highland woman who came to Canada four generations ago and carded with her own hands the wool to make her sons' homespun clothes. If the girl is a university graduate, or rich enough to drive her own motor, or a happy wife in a beautiful Canadian home, or a physician, artist, or scientist making a name renowned beyond Canada, she knows very well that she owes much of all that she has to-day to the little old woman who left the home of her heart and came across the sea to Canada. And still to-day in Canada the pioneer woman, with dreams in her heart, is forgetting herself for the sake of her children.

"Less than five dollars a week"[14] (August, 1912)

The most urgent demand of social science at the present time is for a method by which the problem of the needs of the working girl may be attacked and worked out to a logical conclusion; in other words, a firm basis upon which the so-called betterment of the female factory hand may be built up, and the greatest good of the greatest number be thus accomplished.

Women of all ages have worked at practically everything that men have, with the difference that until recently much of this work has been done in the comparative security of their own homes, whence the finished work has been sent out and the receipts therefrom became the lawful property of the man of the family.

In the last decade conditions have changed vitally, so that at present the average working girl not only receives her wages herself, but works side by side in the factory with male hands. It can therefore be readily understood that the modern working girl has many problems to confront which were unknown to her prototypes; chief among these problems ranks the question of a healthy environment, and it is with this problem that we shall deal first.

THE "HOMELESS" ARE MANY

It is not exaggerating to say that fully one-third of the world's women are forced by circumstances to live beyond the shelter of their homes, so that it is towards this division hat the chief interest of social workers is directed, as their need of help is unquestionably the greatest.

So then the factory girl is confronted with the problem of providing herself with lodging in a safe, and if possible comfortable, section of the city. This is no easy matter when one considers the average rate of wages earned.

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[14] From M. (1912, August 17). AVERAGE WAGE OF FACTORY GIRL IN OTTAWA IS FIVE DOLLARS A WEEK. *The Ottawa Journal*, p. 9.

Investigation has proven that in Ottawa the average working girl is living on less than five dollars a week, therefore it is evident that much skill and forethought, as well as privation, is necessary to make existence possible on such a wage.

Ten years ago, living on this income might have been accomplished with some degree of ease, but owing to the fact that the factory girl is doing principally unskilled labor, the rise in food stuffs and the general cost of living has not been equaled by the rises in wages. So the working girl [is] compelled to live now in rather sordid surroundings and forced to practice the most rigid economy in order to make both ends meet at all.

The social worker has therefore to approach this problem from one of two standpoints; either to work towards an increase of wages, or towards a decrease of the cost of living by teaching them to help themselves. The first plan is liable to fail for three main reasons: The extreme youth of so many of the operators in the larger industrial concerns, the lack of skill required in most of the work and their inability to become skilled operators resulting from lack of time to acquire it, and perhaps more especially from the attitude of the girls themselves towards the work, in the fact that they all intend to give it up upon marriage and are therefore apt to be careless and give the learning of the trade only a superficial attention. So that the problem, while appearing to have two possible solutions, has in reality only one, namely the lowering of their personal expenses.

LODGING HOUSES WON'T DO

In some of the model villages in England and the United States, lodging houses have been erected on the "community of interest" plan, and there the factory hands find it possible to live at the minimum of expense. Such a plan is impracticable here, as it is necessary to have an amount of financial support which is impossible to obtain here until it has gained the sympathy and co-operation of the wealthier class. So the social worker has to commence more humbly and provide means by which the working girls may be taught to help themselves, and thus, lessen their personal expenses.

Leaving aside for the moment the possible solution of this problem, some of the other difficulties with which the factory girl has to contend may be considered. It is a well-known fact that the work done by the average woman is more monotonous, as well as lighter, than that done by men. Granting them that, according to their strength, their labor is in a measure equal to that done by men, have the working girls anything like the chances to obtain healthy recreation or even as varied employment during their working hours as have the other sex? Obviously not, since their sex prevents to a large extent the freedom of action which is possible to men.

In almost every case their only spare time is in the evening; while natural enjoyment is far more necessary to their well-being on account of the unvaried monotony of their daily tasks. Now, recreation of the right sort is not in reality very hard to find, but to a mind somewhat below the average, ideas of the most profitable ways in which to obtain one's pleasure do not occur as readily as they might, and so we find the second duty of the social worker summed up in the necessity of providing

healthy play for those whom she would help. This problem is not of any less important than that of providing them with healthy environment.

Now, this second one is a very difficult problem to solve because there are so many counter attractions which are far from healthy, and which are the most attractive on account of their cheapness, so that the average working girl is to be found falling gradually into the habit of spending her evenings in the "nickel shows" or on the street, the two places where it is obviously unwise for her to be for hygienic and moral reasons. So there is ample scope for the social worker in the solving of the second problem, but once again let the solution be left until the third and probably the most important of these problems, namely the working girl's choice of companions, is considered.

WHO REALLY ARE FRIENDS?

The first question that the working girl has to ask herself in choosing companions is, "what standards of character must I have to apply to those who are to be my friends?" Naturally, if her surroundings are unhealthy, her playtime spent in dull and morbid pursuits and her working day composed of monotonous routine tasks, her moral sense will become dulled to such an extent as to make it impossible that her standards of character should be very high, and here most particularly will the sympathetic friendship of a social service worker be one of the best things that life has offered her. She is only human, after all, this little factory hand with her many problems, and the person who is willing to help her will find herself the confidant of just such troubles, joys and perplexities as she shares in common with her more fortunate sisters, except for the fact that in most respects her life is more vital and contains many more of the hard things.

FOR OTTAWA'S WORKERS

Having dealt thus briefly with the three main difficulties in the life of the working girl, let us briefly consider here what may be done to help her solve and overcome them. This social service work has been hitherto left undone in Ottawa, but it is hoped that this year great strides may be made in this line of philanthropic activity if it is possible to enlist the sympathy and co-operation of the citizens.

It has fallen to the lot of the Y.W.C.A. to undertake the initial steps in this process, and with this end in view it has engaged a special social secretary whose work is to be mainly among the factory women in this city. The rest of the article must therefore of necessity deal with the plans of the association with regard to the solution of the aforementioned problems.

HELPING THE GIRL

With regard to the proper housing of the factory girls, the association has on its books lists of boarding and rooming houses where it is possible to secure comfortable lodges at the minimum rate. Each of these places is known to the association, and only homes where a Christian influence will be found are recommended to the girls for advice or help in the matter of securing a boarding home. In addition to this, the association maintains a boarding home of its own where girls receiving salary of eight dollars a week and less are received, and where everything

possible is done for the girls' comfort and pleasure, and where those who prefer living in a private house may obtain meals at an extremely reasonable rate.

YEAR'S AID: $1

In dealing with the second problem, that of providing healthy recreation for the girls at a minimum expense, it is the purpose of the association to open classes the first of September which will prove not only interesting but of practical use to those who join them. These classes will include dress making, domestic science, art, needle work, physical culture and basket ball, and will be free to all members of the association upon the payment of a yearly fee of one dollar, except those in which material is required, when it will be possible to obtain at cost or for the girls to provide their own. These classes will obviously be a great help to the girls, not only so far as providing a healthy way of spending an evening, but in helping the girls to fit themselves for the responsibilities of the home to which they are all looking forward eventually. […]

It is scarcely necessary to add in what way this will help the girls towards healthy friendships. Obviously, with healthy surroundings and employment, the moral standards which each girl will unconsciously set for herself will demand an answering degree of morality and cleanness of life in her associates and this third and last difficulty will solve itself as the natural outcome of the solution of the first two.

"For the protection of women workers"[15] (March, 1913)

Armed with rows of figure son the cost of living for girls, Mrs. J. Kemp and Mrs. F. McDonald, of the Local Council of Women, yesterday afternoon insisted that the labor commission[16] recommend a minimum wage scale, and the women placed this at $7.50. Many girls working in the city received far less than this a week.

The suggestions presented to the commission were embodied in [six] clauses, which the women hope will be incorporated in legislation for the protection of women workers and women clerks in stores and factories. The clauses:

1. That in no case shall Caucasians be permitted to work together with or to be employed by Asiatics, Greeks or Italians. 2. That the hours of assistants or employees in offices, shops and factories be regulated, so that they may not be compelled to work longer than 47 hours in one week, nor more than 8 hours in a day (except one day, when the maximum time shall be 11 hours). 3. That there should be a full hour for lunch and, in case of overtime, a full hour for dinner. 4. That no persons of 14 or over shall be paid less than $5 a week. 5. That a half-holiday each week shall be compulsory. 6. That the law be enforced providing for seats for females, and that

[15] From ASK COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND A MINIMUM WAGE. (1913, March 13). *The Vancouver World*, p. 28.

[16] British Columbia's Royal Commission on Labor, 1912-1914. In 1914, their report (now known as the 'Parsons Report') recommended a Workmen's Compensation Board, and made no mention of a minimum wage.

employees be authorized to use such seats when they are not employed in the work or duty to which they are assigned.

The council also suggested that a woman inspector be appointed for factories, shops and offices where women are employed.

PITIFUL WAGES PAID

The Council presented the commission with a report of a committee assigned the task of collecting data on wages paid women and girls. It stated that the investigation resulted in the discovery that wages paid girls were as low as $3 a week, and that in unusual cases girls and women received $25 a week. The Council emphasized the statement that no girl could be expected to live upon less than $7.50 a week.

TWO-FIFTY PER WEEK

Mr. J. E. Wilton gave some testimony on the employment of girls in stores. He said that some girls were paid as low as $2.50 a week, although the average wage seemed to be about $7 a week. Mr. Wilton said that the wages paid men clerks were low, and often enough inadequate. Married men, he said, were working in Vancouver today in stores and offices for as little as $13 or $14 a week, and many of them had three or four children to support. Mr. Wilton said that legislation was expected in Ontario which would fix the minimum wage for women at $9 a week. He said that he thought the minimum wage in Vancouver should be $10 a week. He did not think that a girl could live on less under proper conditions.

The cost of living as figured out by the Council of Women places board and room at $5; carfare at 50 cents; laundry, 50 cents, and $1.50 for clothes, hats, shoes, amusement, medicines, postage and anything else that girls want or need.

The committee from the council stated that conditions at the telephone offices are a great deal better than at most places where girls are employed, both in regard to wages paid and in the care and treatment accorded the girls by the company.

"The minimum wage of girls"[17] (March, 1913)

It seems to me that the women who are crying the loudest for women's rights and are talking the most about helping the working girl, according to last night's World, are the ones who are willing to sacrifice our girls on the minimum paltry sum of $7.50 a week. It is suggested that the girls live on $5 a week, and in addition, carfare 50c, laundry 50c and $1.50 for clothes, hats, shoes, amusements, medicine, postage and anything else that the girls want and need.

I am a working woman myself, having worked in one of the largest cities in the United States, and in Vancouver I find the cost of living a great deal higher, and no girl can live on $7.50 a week away from home; she might exist. I know from my own experience that a young woman cannot get board and room in a respectable locality for less than $6 a week, and considering that the steam laundries charge 25c and up

[17] From Sharpe, J. E. (1913, March 17). THE MINIMUM WAGE OF GIRLS. *The Vancouver World*, p. 19. By Jessie Eleanor Sharpe (1866 – 1953).

for a plain shirt waist, of which it will take two a week with the greatest care, or that the Chinese laundries charge by the dozen and bring them back highly perfumed with opium and not fit to wear, and owing to the fact that clothing for women is very high, it will take a girl earning $7.50 a week, if she saves the extra $1.50 per week (which is the amount allowed by the Local Council of Women for clothes, amusements, etc.), at least three months before she can save $18. Paying $15 for a suit and allowing the extra three dollars for a blouse and gloves, the girl will have to wait another three months before she can buy shoes, stockings, hats and other incidentals.

How many of the ladies comprising the Local Council of Women would be willing to live on $7.50 a week? Or how would they like to think of their daughters having no home and obliged to live among strangers, living on the minimum wage they suggest? How many of the members of this council have already paid $7.50, or even more, for the hats they are now wearing? Say nothing of amusements, how can a girl get along on $1.50 which you allow for clothing and other incidentals?

I agree with Mr. Wilton that the minimum wage of a girl in Vancouver should be not less than $10 a week, on which she may be able to save enough for a rainy day.

"Not from starvation wages"[18] (March, 1913)

Managers of department stores faced the labor commission this morning and effectively routed those who contended that starvation wages were paid women clerks and that immoral conditions prevailed in the stores.

Wages as low as $2.50 were paid, but girls earning these worked as messengers between departments and as parcel girls. Those girls who boarded out and had to earn their own way were paid minimum wages of eight dollars a week, and in every case the conditions were described as being good.

Mr. H. T. Lockyer, general manager of the Hudson's Bay Stores, Mr. Bishop, general manager of David Spencer's, and Mr. F. C. Woodward, secretary-treasurer of Woodward's department store, and Mr. N. L. McCannon, of F. W. Woolworth's department store, testified.

Miss Dixon, principal of the training school maintained by the telephone company, also attested to conditions in that company's operating rooms and wages paid, which were above the standard.

MR. LOCKYER TESTIFIES

Armed with sheaves of papers, documents and books, from which he frequently read, Mr. H. T. Lockyer, general manager of the Hudson's Bay Company for seventeen years, went directly into a discussion of minimum wages for girls.

He said that the question was one which should be qualified. There were girls of thirteen or fourteen years of age in his store who, acting as messenger girls, received $3.00 a week. These, the company was sure, lived at home. After six months

[18] From BIG STORES REPLY TO CRITICISMS OF WAGES PAID HELP. (1913, March 14). *The Vancouver World*, p. 1.

the girls received $4.00 a week. They were apprentices and were learning the store business.

After girls graduated from that class, in about a year to eighteen months, the girls drew $6.00 a week, and from that point salaries were advanced to as much as $25 a week.

He produced a form of application and said that girls when employed signed a memorandum of agreement with the company.

NOT FROM STARVATION WAGES

"I have never yet heard of a girl, in my twenty years' experience, who went astray because of what has been called starvation wages," said Mr. Lockyer.

He said that there was not enough experienced help, and that often enough experienced girls had to be brought from the east.

RULED GIRLS MUST LIVE AT HOME

He said that a young girl of fourteen who had, unfortunately, no parents or guardians, would be in an unfortunate position when he was asked what those girls would do with a wage of $3.00 a week, but he declared that their position would be no worse in Vancouver than in Montreal, Toronto or Winnipeg. He repeated his statement that his store began girls at that wage when they lived at home.

ENDORSED HALF HOLIDAY PLAN

He welcomed the suggestion that stores give half holidays to their employees, but said that such an arrangement might better be embodied in an act, which would force the small store keepers to comply with the custom which the big store keepers would gladly establish.

He quote from his firm's payroll, showing that some of their saleswomen receive salaries of $800 and $900 a year. Lunches were served in the Hudson's Bay store at request of the employees, but these were not compulsory. Stools were provided girls, and when they had nothing to do they were permitted to rest.

EFFECT OF MINIMUM WAGE LAW

Answering a question propounded by Commissioner Harper, he said that […] enforcing a minimum wage of $10 a week would mean the doing away with the cheaper class of labor, and that the employer would discriminate in favor of the more efficient.

Girls got wages of $16.50 in some cases, and received commissions as well, so that their receipts were often larger. The commission, he said, was one per cent. on some goods. Selling premiums or bonuses were put on some lines carried. Wages were paid every Saturday morning for the week ending the previous Thursday, but he expected this would be made up to Friday night.

Wages were paid in cash, but the management and the executive of the stores were paid by cheque. […]

He said that accommodation provided girls was good, but that it would be better in the new store which the company was to build.

COULD LIVE ON $10 A WEEK

He said that a wage of $10 a week would be "low enough" for a girl who was not living at home, and he supplemented this statement by saying that he thought a girl should be able to live on this wage.

He stated, too, that employees obtained liberal discounts on all goods which they bought in the store, and that in the case of a married man this discount was extended to the members of his family. […]

TELEPHONE GIRLS' CONDITIONS

Miss Mary Dixon, principal of the training school made by the telephone company, followed Mr. Lockyer to the stand.

Her testimony went to show that girls in the employ of the telephone company worked under unusually good conditions, and that wages paid were fair. Operators experienced in telephone work received $1.40 a day; supervisors, girl operators advanced one step, received more.

When the company paid $1 a day to operators a year ago, complaints were received that it was impossible to live on this scale. Since the wage was raised to about $9 a week, or say $1.20 a day, no complaints were heard. Most of the girls lived at home with their friends and relatives. In addition, free lunches consisting of tea, coffee, buns, jams, marmalades, cheese and occasionally fish, were served the girls.

The company was planning to install a cafeteria where meals would be sold at cost and less, and a good meal could be obtained for fifteen cents. […]

Miss Dixon was asked how much girls could spend on clothes, and she said that many of the girls came from the Old Country, and that these brought big supplies of clothing with them, and that the other girls could get along with about $10 or $15 a month for clothing.

LOWEST WAGE PAID, $2.50

Mr. Bishop, manager of David Spencer, Ltd., said that some of their employees sometimes volunteered to work at less wages than the company offered. The lowest wages paid [were] $2.50 a week to young girls for work at the parcel desk, and that these were raised to $3 a week in four weeks' time.

He said that the establishment of a minimum wage would mean that many of the young girls who could not earn, say, $10 a week, would be thrown out of employment.

Women, he said, received on the average $8.67 a week, and that 350 women were employed. Male clerks were paid on an average $14.50 a week.

SUGGESTS HALF HOLIDAY

He favored the establishment of a half holiday and suggested Saturday afternoon as a half holiday. He knew of no girls becoming immoral because of low wages paid. Holidays were given clerks in the employ of the company, and discounts were allowed on goods clerks bought, which often exceeded wages paid weekly.

NEEDED $8 A WEEK TO BOARD

The average salary of a woman boarding, he said, was $12 a week. He said a girl, to pay her own expenses, should have a salary of $8 a week.

He said that the store was always able to get help, and that it frequently happened that clerks returned to the store voluntarily after having left.

$5 A WEEK LOWEST AT WOODWARD'S

Mr. W. C. Woodward, secretary-treasurer of Woodward's department store, succeeded Mr. Bishop. The minimum wage paid in his store, he said, was $4 a week, and his company, after four months, raised this to $5 a week. At the present time there [were] no clerks receiving less than $5 a week. Girls who did not live at home were not employed if they could not earn $9 a week, and the average wage for women was $9.15 a week. He favored a half holiday weekly, but thought that it was premature to institute a Saturday half holiday at the present time. He favored a mid-week half holiday, and at the present time the store maintained a 51-hour week. Overtime was put in at Christmas only. A week's holidays, or more, are granted after one year of service.

He thought that the minimum wage law would work a hardship. He argued with Mr. Bishop that the lowest wage a girl should receive when living away from home was $8 a week.

Girls came on at $4 a week. After six months they received $6. Later they were paid $8 a week by his store. In the second year of their employment, they were paid $12, and after three years they were paid more. […] He said he did not know of any occupation where immorality was so infrequent as in city department stores.

His store would not employ a girl whose character could not be substantiated.

BAR OVERTIME AT WOLWORTH'S

Mr. N. L. McCannon, manager of F. W. Woolworth & Co.'s department store, said that no girls receive less than $4.50 a week in his store, and wages ranged up to $15 a week. No girl was permitted to work overtime.

"The afternoon is the hardest part"[19] (April, 1919)

In her address held before the regular meeting of the Calgary branch of the Women's Institute, held yesterday afternoon in the parlors of the Y.W.C.A., Mrs. Lewis, local factory inspector, gave a very clear and concise outline of the Factories Act as far as it had been possible to work it out up to the present time.

According to the speaker, Alberta takes the lead in industrial legislation for women and children, having been the first province to enact a minimum wage act and to secure for women workers better hours and better sanitation in the work rooms. The cause of the woman worker had received more attention than that of the man employee for the reason that few men had to go home after their day's work and devote two or three hours to housework, sewing and even washing in order to keep the home up. The future generation of workers depends on the health of the woman worker, and the industrial strength of the nation could only be measured by the strength of its workers. An 8-hour day had been found to be as much as any woman could stand. Children and young women could not work for longer than four hours at

[19] From Rights of Women Workers Defined. (1919, April 22). *The Calgary Herald*, p. 14.

a stretch without a break for relaxation and a good drink of water. Any one doing manual labor loses much of the moisture of the body and no factory proprietor should overlook this fact, and neglect to have a supply of good pure water. In some establishments where the work is particularly strenuous it was suggested that arrangements might even be made to supply the workers with a cup of tea.

The afternoon is the hardest part of the whole day; the work done after 5 o'clock had been found to be of very little value. Mrs. Lewis stated that a few minutes' break in the afternoon would be profitable to the employers.

As factory inspector, it had been necessary for her on several occasions to grant a permit to boys and girls under the working age set down in the act, owing to the fact that home conditions demanded that they be employed. The minimum wage for these children was $6 for the first year, at the end of which the act required that they be paid $9.

The class of workers which it had been hardest to help were those employed in hotels and restaurants. The waitress, who, in the course of her day, travelled about twenty miles, carrying heavy trays and having to exercise the greatest patience, was obliged to spend her Sunday the same as the recognized work days, as there was nothing in the Factory Act to prevent this. Even the Lord's Day Alliance did not take care of such a situation. Mrs. Lewis said she would like to see the women of this city demand that there be no over-time work done.

Alberta and the "Domestic Problem"

"I want people to like me"[20] (April, 1919)

Dear Miss Grey – Please help me if you can. I want people to like me ,and the people I work for are real nice to me, but I can't understand why people run away the minute they hear I do housework. Ye gods! I make my living honestly enough, don't I? Well, for instance, I've had lots of men friends who think "I'm just it" as long as I don't let them know what I do. All I have to do is to tell them what I do, and "good night, nurse."

Would you advise me to get a job in some kind of a factory or something like that? Mother always tells me I'm good at housework and cooking, so why not stick to it and not worry about the world and what it thinks? Is she right? I'm really pretty and have nice ways with me until I mention housework. But I like to scrub and clean and wash, so why do people act so? I'm 18. The woman I work for says some man will like to get somebody who knows more than just how to powder and paint and run the streets, but she doesn't understand that I want people to like me, and I'm willing to change my job to be liked.

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[20] From POOR ME. (1919, April 10). WILL MAKE A GOOD WIFE. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. 13. The letter was addressed to Cynthia Grey, which appears to be a pseudonym for the author(s) of the advice column. On the off chance that this is not the case, I have not reproduced Grey's reply to avoid possible copyright issues.

I don't want them to turn away from me as if I had the "flu." Do tell me if it is a crime to be [a] "pot-slinger." Married women do housework and cook, so why can't I? Please, Cynthia Grey, give me a lift, won't you? You are so good to help the rest who come to you. Maybe you will be like the others, turn away and not answer[21].

POOR ME.

"This is serious"[22] (May, 1919)

So serious has become the domestic help situation in Calgary and throughout the province that the Government Employment Bureau has called a conference of all those societies including in their work a department for the placing of women workers, which conference is being held today at the Y.W.C.A.

Unless young women can be persuaded to take housework as a profession and thereby make something of themselves worth while instead of going into any kind of employment that leaves them free to spend their time in picture shows and dance halls, the government will have to take action of some sort even if it means the importing of foreign help to meet the growing demand. It is the patriotic duty of these young women to protect the interests of their sister citizens by filling the positions which will otherwise go to foreigners, and untrained ones at that, who will tend to lower the standard of housekeepers as well as the wage paid to this class of workers.

Miss Manning of the Housekeepers' Association said in a recent talk with the editor of this department that in her mind the situation was most alarming. Young women working in homes were being paid good wages at the present time and the position of the houseworker was every day receiving more attention and consideration from the employers, but, if in order to supply help to city and country homes it became necessary to bring in unskilled foreign labor, the future of the domestic helper was anything but rosy.

There is certainly not a scarcity of young women who have to earn their living, and there ought to be enough of them with the spirit of national service to avert the influx of foreign help already threatened.

"The employer has some share in the responsibility"[23] (May, 1919)

Just now the domestic problem seems to be a burning question, and in various centres efforts are being made to solve it. Personally the domestic problem does not affect me to any extent, but I was struck with a paragraph in a Calgary paper the other day, which seemed to require a little clearing up. The paragraph to which I take exception reads:

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[21] Cynthia Grey replied to the effect that once the soldiers were back from the war, some among them would appreciate her home-making skills.

[22] From THIS IS SERIOUS. (1919, May 1). *The Calgary Herald*, p. 14.

[23] From AS I WAS SAYING. (1919, May 10). *The Edmonton Journal*, p. 9.

"Unless young women can be persuaded to take housework as a profession and thereby make something of themselves worth while instead of going into any kind of employment that leaves them free to spend their time in picture shows and dance halls, the government will have to take action of some sort even if it means the importing of foreign help to meet the growing demand. It is the patriotic duty of these young women to protect the interests of their sister citizens by filling the positions which will otherwise go to foreigners, and untrained ones at that, who will tend to lower the standard of housekeepers as well as the wage paid to this class of workers."

This is not by way of unkind criticism, but merely because I feel the writer has not gone far enough in summing up the situation, and throws the onus of the blame for the situation upon the worker, whereas in my opinion it should be shared equally by the employer and the employee. It is surely the patriotic duty of workers to protect their profession or calling as the case may be, maintaining the highest standard of efficiency and wages. Almost every occupation now has its union[24] for this purpose, but it is generally acknowledged that the employer has some share in the responsibility with the employee.

I have been wondering just what line of employment these Calgary young women are finding which leaves them unlimited time to spend in picture shows and dance halls, as the article implies. Generally speaking, the girls in offices, stores and factories work as many hours in the day as the girls in the home, the only difference lying in the fact that their work is confined to a set period, while the work in the average home is spread over a longer period, with intervals of leisure in between.

The girl working outside the home has, as the article states, greater freedom to follow her own inclination. But when it comes to a question of time, I think the scale turns in favor of the girl engaged in housework. When a girl works in business from eight to ten hours a day, makes her own clothing, as many girls do, does her laundry, as most girls have to do in order to make both ends meet, probably prepares her own meals and keeps her room in order, as so many girls do these days, she really has not so much time left for riotous living as one might think. Even the most energetic girl must sleep some time.

Then the question of recreation comes in. Surely the girl working outside the home is entitled to some recreation, and the girl in the home as well. I have frequently heard women whom force of circumstances, or perhaps their own mismanagement, debarred to a great extent from outside amusement, complaining bitterly of the fact, and receiving sympathy, too. If it is desirable that the women in their homes get away from their responsibilities at times, is it not equally desirable that the girls get away from theirs?

As to frequenting dance halls and picture shows, I think this denunciation is rather sweeping. Of course it applies to some girls, but I doubt if the majority of girls engaged in work outside the home frequent the picture shows more than do the girls

[24] "A union of girls and women employed as domestic help has been formed in Vancouver, the objects of which are described as 'a nine-hour day, a minimum wage, and recognition as a body of industrial workers.'" A union. (1913, April 22). *The Vancouver Daily World*, p. 6.

living in the shelter of their own homes, or the married women who call in vain for household helpers.

As for the dance halls, it is merely a question of relative values. Each one so inclined goes to the place of amusement for which she has entry. If the factory girl has not [heard of] the underlying danger, she is apt to feel it quite as right for her to go to the dance hall where she would meet others in her own walk of life, and would not feel embarrassed by reason of her clothes, as for you to go to places where the same amusement is indulged in under more luxurious and less objectionable surroundings. Her environment and upbringing may not have given her the understanding that it is quite, quite wrong for her to dance in one public place, and quite all right for your daughter to dance in another. It is difficult to see where the difference lies when one is young and the day's work drab, and the only alternative between an evening spent in a dance hall or a picture show is an evening spent in a dreary, lonely little bedroom, probably ill-heated, ill-lighted and quite devoid of comfort.

Then to come back to the paragraph under consideration, it does not necessarily follow that because a girl refuses to engage in housework she is not "making of herself something worth while." I wonder in how many homes where girls are engaged is there any incentive for them to even become efficient workers? And apart from that, how many mistresses inspire or encourage their assistants to higher intellectual attainments? If, for instance, assistants desired to join night classes for the purpose of furthering their education, how many mistresses would make an earnest effort to arrange the work so that it would be possible to attend such classes regularly and promptly?

I think myself it would be an excellent plan for the government to take some action in the matter as threatened. I would suggest the first step be recognizing housework as a profession rather than a drudgery. It is all well to raise one's voice in the market place, lauding the work which goes to the making of a home as the noblest hand can turn to. Words are cheap, and frequently as spoken, meaningless.

Come to think of it, I believe it is the women in their homes who should take the first step, and I would suggest to them the principle of a resolution recently adopted by the Alberta Teachers' Alliance, which places upon the members of the alliance an obligation to refrain from speaking disparagingly or disrespectfully of teaching as a profession.

It is rather a boast of Canada that her women in every walk of life are so capable and versatile. In few Canadian homes do the wheels stop when the assistance sees fit to seek other fields. Nor as a rule does the home suffer, though the housewife may. It is simply a case of "business as usual," with the burden laid upon the mistress. In spite of this, many women look upon the work they do themselves when circumstances demand, as a drudgery, and speak of it in terms of disparagement. If they who enjoy the full benefits of such work do not show proper respect for housework as a profession, they can scarcely expect to exalt it in the eyes of assistants whose interests are impersonal, and whose benefits merely a matter of the wages received.

With the proper standing given housework, the women in the homes might next insist upon it receiving recognition abroad.

Just recently we had in Edmonton an example of the status accorded the work which pertains to home life. You remember the school board, after long deliberation, decided to raise the salaries of women teachers instructing grades above ten, and placing them on the same salary basis as men teachers doing the same work? Now, as it so happens, this will only apply to women teaching academic subjects. There are on the high and technical high school staff women teachers instructing your daughters in household arts, but they do not profit by this new regulation. Yet, they must be qualified by years of special training in order to carry on this important work. Their hours are as long and their work as arduous as that of the other teachers, but because of the attitude of persons toward the work which goes to the making of the home, their work is considered as less valuable, and consequently receives less pay. They teach your daughters to make their clothing, to understand textiles, to cook, to know food values, to buy to best advantage; they teach them sanitation and home nursing and many other branches of the utmost importance in making a home, but that does not balance the scale when thrown against Greek and Latin.

During the influenza epidemic, which we will not soon forget, while the appeal was made to all teachers to assist, and they responded nobly, it was to the household science teachers a special appeal was made to organize the big nursing centre and keep it in operation. And they did it, so far as their numbers would permit. They put their hands to the plough and never relaxed an effort until the worst was over – and after. Long hours every day were their lot. Others might knock off for a day or so if overtired, but they never. It was a time when the art of household science overshadowed in importance knowledge of the so-called finer arts. For a season the household science teachers reigned supreme. Blessings attended their way, and descended upon their heads. Strong men almost wept when they endeavored to express their appreciation of said noble efforts. Finally the need passed and the nursing centres closed. The household science teachers turned wearily to the task of putting the schools in order before they re-opened, then settled down to everyday routine. Their efforts were soon forgotten, even by members of the school board, who knew all about them – at least judging from the ruling which draws a sharp line of demarcation between the high school teachers of academic branches and those of household science.

Could not the women in their homes who should realize, if any one does, the value of this training, do something by way of protest? It would not only be a question of standing for principle of equality, but would also go to show that they accord to household science the dignity and respect which is its due.

The Paid Domestic Worker

Part I[25] (November, 1912)

The story which follows explains itself. It was told this summer on a train going south from Algonquin park to Toronto. The chief speaker was a man. The woman listened and contributed occasionally a word or two of comment. The man explained that he had been left some years ago executor of an estate belonging to a widow who had a family of young children. The estate consisted of a farm, which the executor sold. The interest on the amount of money obtained for the farm was barely sufficient to keep the widow. The family of young people he had put to earn their own living, and at the same time obtain an education to fit them for better work. He had explained to them that whatever there was in the estate must go to keep the mother. They would have to provide an education for themselves by their own exertions. All this struck the woman as being very sensible, right, and belonging to good Canadian citizenship. The story of the eldest child, who is the only girl in the family, impressed the woman considerably. The man said: "She attends school in the winter, and I mean to make a teacher of her. In the summer months I see that she gets a good place as a domestic servant. She doesn't like it. But I tell her that she has got to put up with it. I don't know any other way as satisfactory for her as taking a servant's place in the summer months."

OSTRACIZED BECAUSE SERVANT

He went on to say that he heard from the girl regularly. She had a good place this summer with people who treated her well. It was true things happened that she did not like. As, for instance, the people who hired her were spending the summer at a big hotel in a lake town where Americans come for the summer months. The people had thought well of the girl, and had taken her to an entertainment in the hotel. At the entertainment she had met some people who were agreeable to her. The next time she had met them on the street, they had looked at her with apparent dislike, and did not acknowledge the acquaintance. She supposed that when they heard she was a servant, they resented the fact that she had been introduced to them.

The man and woman agreed that the people who had treated the girl in this way were ill-bred, and that she had nothing to regret in the loss of their acquaintance. But what about the girl? She was young, clever, attractive. She was to be a teacher. She was the daughter of an Ontario farmer. What is there about housework that should place her in such a position? It is better to be honest with the situation. If one of us had the guardianship of a young girl in Canada, who had her own future to provide for – such a girl as has been described here – would we be willing for her to take a job as a domestic servant?

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[25] From Macmurchy, M. (1912, November 9). THE NEW HOUSE KEEPING PROBLEM OF THE PAID DOMESTIC WORKER. *The Saskatoon Phoenix*, p. 18. Written by Lady Marjory Macmurchy Willison (1870 - 1938).

The woman who listened to the man's story felt that he could not know what being a servant would mean to this girl, or he would not have insisted on her being a domestic. The woman herself would not have been willing to send a young girl for whom she was responsible to be a servant. The reason which would influence her is the fact that it would be difficult for the girl to make friends with whom she could be happy and feel at home. How many Canadian women would be willing to send their daughters into service? Under present conditions very few would be willing. Why? Not because the work is too hard. Not because the work is too hard. Not because it is badly paid. But simply because the girl would have a poorer chance as a servant to make a good marriage and to form the agreeable relations with other people of her own kind which control so much of our happiness and usefulness in life.

PURELY SOCIAL REASONS

The man's story proved to the woman – and she was not willing to be convinced – that in her own mind she regarded domestic service as an unsatisfactory occupation for the girl who deserves a bright future. This is wrong. It is time we revolutionized domestic service and the household arrangements which control domestic service. The position of the paid domestic worker is regarded as the most unsatisfactory occupation, socially, for girls in Canada.

The purpose of these articles is to show that the profession of housework is the best of all professions for women. When its conditions are made satisfactory, no other occupation for women will be able to stand in the same rank at all with it. Teaching, nursing, office work, factory work, work in a shop, bookkeeping, newspaper work, stenography and every other occupation in which women are engaged for gain, will have to yield place to the profession of housework. But this time of reorganized housework is a long way off yet. The nearer it is, the better for women and for society.

The first necessity is to obtain an accurate statement of the present situation. Let us get at the truth about the servant question. We have been looking at the domestic helper from an antiquated, even a medieval point of view. To get at the truth, the situation has to be studied first as it looks to the girl who is in domestic service. The second point of view is the point of view of the mistress. The third point of view is that of the household. This point of view is not always represented by the viewpoint of the woman of the house. Decidedly not. There is also the viewpoint of the man of the house; and the viewpoint of the children. And last, there is the point of view of society in general.

LONELINESS A CAUSE

The present situation from the point of view of the girl who might be a domestic worker is this: Either she will not go into the trade of housework; or if she becomes a paid worker she objects to: the long hours of work, without any fixed hour when she goes off duty; the impossibility of seeing her friends with reasonable frequency; the difficulty of making friends at all if she is a stranger, as usually she is; the loneliness of her life; ill-arranged housework and work not standardized; the fact that the girls and the young men who ought to be her friends say to her: "Why don't you go into a shop, or a factory, or a telephone office, and be as good as other people?"

The rest of the world try to tell the girl that this advice from her friends is mistaken advice. But saying so does not alter the fact that this is the way life looks to the friends of the girl in domestic work. And so this is the way life must look to her. Yet there are thousands of girls, hundreds of thousands of girls, who are better suited physically and in every other way, to the work of a house than to [other occupations]. These girls are strong, uneducated, without training and therefore should be in housework. I do not mean that the average girl has greater talents for making a house a good place to live in than she has for working in a factory, selling in a shop, bookkeeping in an office, or attending to a telephone switchboard in a departmental store. Make the conditions of paid domestic work human, business-like, and of attractive social standing; and the greater part of the problem will be solved. It is easy to say this. But how is it to be done?

MISTRESS' VIEWPOINT

From the point of view of the mistress of the house, the difficulties of the present domestic situation are as follows: High wages out of all proportion to the poor quality of the work performed; constant change and shifting; discontent on the part of the domestic worker; a generally unsatisfactory adjustment of the household work.

There are many households, many paid domestic workers, and many women who have charge of a house who are managing the domestic problem admirably. When this is so, it is because of the superior gifts of the domestic worker, and of the woman in charge of the house. The situation is against them. They conquer the situation by overcoming it. The domestic problem at present has proved too much for the average woman to handle successfully by herself.

Can it be solved? Yes. In the scientific laboratory of observation and study, where all human problems must be solved, this problem of the paid domestic worker can be solved, too. Th women of Canada should not wait for some man – probably a university professor – to come along and find the solution. The discussion of the problem may excite some feeling. But it must do good. In the present discussion, both the woman in charge of the house and the paid domestic worker will have her say. One thing is certainly true. If it had not been for the long line of failures, and successes, friends and enemies, helps and hindrances, comedies and tragedies, geniuses and stupidities, benefactors and teachers, dear girls and girls one tries not to think about often, Mary, Martha, Etta, Jane, Polly, Annie, Caroline, Appolonia, Susan, Katie, Sarah and the Widow, one would never have determined to find out the satisfactory place for the paid domestic worker in the "New Housekeeping."

Part II[26] (November, 1912)

The stories of the girl and of the woman who employs the girl are the first item in the discussion of the problem. How is it that the girls fail to be satisfactorily

[26] From Macmurchy, M. (1912, November 9). THE NEW HOUSE KEEPING PROBLEM OF THE PAID DOMESTIC WORKER. *The Saskatoon Phoenix*, p. 15. Written by Lady Marjory Macmurchy Willison (1870 - 1938).

domestic workers, and what can be said for them? How far is the woman of the house responsible for the difficulties of the domestic situation, and is there any good excuse which may be offered for her?

Let us first consider the case of the woman who employs domestic help. The woman is an employer. On her success as an employer, no matter how young or inexperienced she may be, depends largely her success as a woman. She is responsible, not wholly, but largely, for the well-being of the girl who is her paid domestic helper. What follows here is a statement of the average experience of the average woman who employs one domestic helper, and also the reply in part of the domestic worker to the story of the woman who employs her.

The woman employer finds herself without help. The girl who worked for her has married, gone into other than domestic work, or has taken a position as maid at higher wages, where there is less work and a smaller family. The woman advertises, or goes to an agency. She has few applicants; this is invariably true. The majority of applicants she would not consider for a moment, unless she happens to be physically unable to get on without help. However, one of the applicants is promising, and is engaged. The average wages of a general servant in the east of Canada are from eighteen to twenty dollars a month. In the west wages are as high as thirty dollars a month. In eight cases out of ten, the domestic worker who has been engaged at, say, eighteen dollars a month, is found by the woman employer to know practically nothing of housework. In some cases, not remarkably rare, a girl paid eighteen dollars a month does not know how to make toast, coffee, how to cook meat or vegetables. But because she is strong, active and reliable, the woman employer is willing to teach her. She does teach her thoroughly, or she sends her to a cooking school. At the end of two months, it is no uncommon occurrence for the girl to be offered twenty-five dollars a month to work for some other woman employer. In about seven cases out of ten, the girl stays with her first employer at slightly increased wages. As far as can be ascertained, girls do not invariably take the place which offers the most money. If a girl is happy and fairly treated, she prefers to remain in a good situation – not good merely from a money point of view.

SHORTAGE OF TRAINED WORKERS

There are a number of well-trained domestic helpers in Canada. But they are in the minority. These well-trained workers suffer an injustice. Girls having no training are paid wages practically as high. This is unfair to the trained worker. It is a matter of grave injustice to the woman employer and the household. A typical case on record tells of a girl paid sixteen dollars a month for domestic work, who attempted to wash windows with a dishcloth and a teacup. The wages would have been the same to a trained girl.

What is the reply of the paid domestic worker to this statement that the average girl is not trained, made by Canadian women who are in charge of households? Her reply is that her want of training is not her fault. Everyone must admit that the average girl who is willing to be a domestic worker has no opportunity whatever of learning how work ought to be done in a well-conducted household, except by taking a position in such a household. She ought to receive low wages? So

she ought. But with applicants so few, and so many positions offering, a girl who would propose to work for eight dollars a month because she knows nothing of housework would be morally in the same class with Madeleine Vercheres and Abigail Becker, good Canadian heroines of extraordinary fortitude. No, lack of training, and wages not adjusted to the skill of the worker, are not the fault of the girl who is employed in domestic work in Canada. The situation is extremely hard on the women of our households. But they, and the public, are the only ones who can remedy it. How they can remedy it will be considered later.

The woman who is known to be a good employer, fair, just, kind, and who pays good wages, can reasonably expect to keep her maid, under ordinary circumstances, for two or three years. She cannot hope to keep her longer. The average woman, who is only an average employer, cannot hope for as much. Why is the length of service in domestic work so short? For two causes. The work is not well regarded from a social point of view. Social disability is a powerful influence which sends girls from domestic work into other employments, shortening the term of domestic service. The length or service of the average young woman in any occupation is short, because the average young woman marries. All employments for women must be regulated so as to take this circumstance into account. One has never heard of a woman employer so lacking in goodwill as to be sorry when a good maid makes a good marriage. Nevertheless, it is hard on the woman employer to be constantly changing domestics. If the girls are trained, it would not be so hard. To devise some system of training for domestic helpers [is] in the interest of women employers.

DISCONTENT AMONG EMPLOYERS

These two facts of domestic employment – lack of training and constant change – are the chief sources of discontent among women who employ domestic help. Otherwise, there is the rebellion of the girl against the character of her employment. She does not want to wear a uniform. She resents the fact of having a mistress, and the character of her own position in the household. These statements do not apply to the highly-trained domestic workers. They do apply to the girl who lacks training. This last statement may seem curious, but it is true. The matter of uniform – caps and aprons – the present writer regards as unessential, except as an indication of the direction in which a solution may be found for the domestic problem. The uniform apparently causes feeling. But in reality it is not the uniform which causes feeling, it is another element which must be dealt with in its turn. This feeling of resentment will have to be overcome by the efforts of the woman employer. As between the two, employer and employee, the employer holds the position which has the influence to bring about a remedy.

Then we have what is called "ingratitude" on the part of the domestic worker. It is often stated by women who have charge of households that kindness to domestic workers is thrown away. One woman's story, recently told, related how a girl, foreign-born, had been taken into a household and taught housework. The girl fell ill and was looked after in the hospital by her woman employer. Her place was kept for her. She came back, but as soon as she was strong she went to another situation at higher wages. It is frequently said by women who employ domestic help that the more

considerate one is of the girl's comfort, and the more careful to make her work easy, the more likely she is to shirk work altogether. […] One girl's answer to the charge of ingratitude […] was this: She did not want kindness. If anyone thinks this reply unreasonable and ungrateful on the part of the girl, let it be remembered that what we ourselves want first in our business relations is not kindness but just business, a fair square bargain on the one side and the other. Finally, women who employ domestic help often experience anxiety as to their associations during hours off duty. The girl's answer to this is that she is lonely, and must have some social relaxation.

SITUATION OF EMPLOYERS

Briefly, the situation of the woman employer is as follows: She needs trained help. Generally speaking, her help is untrained. Wages are extremely high: in many cases altogether too high. There is no adjustment to the value of the workers. Domestic help is constantly changing. The woman employer is always teaching a new maid.

Part III[27] (November, 1912)

How the home helper is to do her work, how she is to be paid for it, and the adjustment of her position in the household, as far as we are concerned, is a Canadian problem. The home helper lives in Canada and has entered into the inheritance of Canadian social opportunities. No woman living in Great Britain has exactly the same problem with which to deal as the woman managing a household in Canada has in dealing with her paid help. A little story will help to make this plain.

A member of one of our local legislatures was standing one day on the main street of his native town, which he represents with marked ability. He was talking with the wife of one of his constituents who had driven in that morning to market. In the middle of this conversation her received a hearty slap on his shoulder, hearty enough, as he expressed it, almost to knock him down.

A playful voice exclaimed, "Ah ha! I've caught you; I'll tell your wife on you." Turning, the legislator beheld the smiling countenance of his wife's domestic helper, who was taking the legislator's baby for an airing. He knew perfectly that Lizzie-Polly-Annie meant no harm. She liked the family. She liked her employers. She knew all about them. She had known all about them since she was a baby herself. Both the legislator and his wife having a sense of humor, Lizzie continued undisturbed in her employment. But the time came when madame felt that Lizzie's usefulness was diminishing. She kept callers too long, conversing with them on the steps and in the hall. Lizzie went into a factory, then married a young farmer and went west. The chances are fairly good that Lizzie herself may be some day the wife of a legislator. Let us hope that she will be as sensible with her domestic workers as her employer was in her case.

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[27] From Macmurchy, M. (1912, November 16). THE NEW HOUSE KEEPING PROBLEM OF THE PAID DOMESTIC WORKER. *The Saskatoon Phoenix*, p. 28. Written by Lady Marjory Macmurchy Willison (1870 - 1938).

WHAT IS WRONG WITH DOMESTIC WORK?

From the girl's point of view, what is satisfactory with domestic work as an occupation? Women employers very often want to know why girls will not go in for domestic work. By some women employers it is regarded as a misdemeanor on the part of young women that they do not go in for domestic work and prefer, for instance, to work in factories and shops.

Now, why do girls not go into domestic work? The girl's answer is that she prefers work with fixed hours. It is true that there are many disadvantages in factory and shop work as compared with domestic work, but to the girl, the fixed hours outweighs them. If hours were fixed, would girls go into domestic service? The writer believes they would, much more largely than they do now.

On two occasions a university professor, as he related recently […], wrote out an advertisement for domestic help. He had heard that it was most impossible to get a maid in Canada. He believed that he knew why. He felt sure it was not a question of wages. His advertisement offered good wages, no work in the evenings, Saturday afternoons off at three o'clock, Sunday off at the same hour. This advertisement brought eight applicants the same evening that it appeared in the press, and more the next morning when the situation had been filled. In this household, the maid had her own part of the house, which is hers. When her hour of going off duty comes, she may remain or go out, but she is not called on for any service. She may receive her friends. This household is never without a satisfactory maid.

THE FACTORY OR THE HOMESIDE

Canadian women who employ domestic help, is there anything unreasonable about this solution? Consider it well. A girl who works in a factory has her evening after half past five or six o'clock, as a matter of course; Saturday afternoons; and all day Sunday. If we ourselves had the choice between factory work, with the hours specified for going off work, and doing domestic work, which begins, say, at half past ten, ends at eight or later, or a little earlier; one afternoon off a week, beginning at two or three, which occupation would you prefer? It is not difficult to understand the choice of the girls, even if there are other advantages in domestic work.

The woman employer replies that her maid has from two to three hours off every afternoon, that she practically has nothing to do after washing the lunch dishes until she begins to get dinner ready. What exactly does this mean? The girl goes upstairs to dress, comes down again in an hour or so and sits at the kitchen, or in rare cases in a sitting room of her own. She attends to the door and to the telephone. She is on call. The girl considers this the same as being [unable] to do what she wants to do, to come or go as she likes. If the girl went out every afternoon for two or three hours, and her employer stayed in and answered the door and the telephone, would the woman ever consider that she had nothing to do?

The responsibility of a house counts for something. To be alert for a call is being on duty. As a rule, the woman employer says, "My maid has a great deal of time off. She goes out every evening, one afternoon a week off, and every Sunday. What do girls want?" She asks this sin a tone of indignation, almost invariably. Why the indignation? After all, why shouldn't the girl go out every evening? What less time

could the worker who is paid wages have than [a] lone afternoon a week, and part of every Sunday?

If this study in sociology – the sociology of the domestic worker and her woman employer – is to be any use, it must be keen. Why is the woman employer indignant about the situation? This situation is unsatisfactory. Yes. But not because the domestic worker has too many privileges. Wages are too high. The worker is often untrained. Frankly and honestly, is it any wonder that the girl wants fixed hours to go on duty? Has the woman employer any cause to be indignant because the girl goes out every evening? If she stays in, she should be off duty. Certainly she should. After all, a girl, or a woman employer, does go out in the daytime; should she not go out for the sake of her health and the fresh air in the evening?

The girl who leaves domestic service, and the girl who will not go into it, seldom give as a reason the social disability of the occupation. But social disability as a con against domestic work is seldom out of her mind. The opinion of her friends is heavily with her, as it ought. How swiftly does this opinion act?

A woman specialist in manicuring, chiropody and so on one day told a sad tale to a customer. Her maid was leaving her, her good maid, but why? What had she not done for [the] girl, and what could she do? She paid her wages, twenty dollars a month. She wanted a companion in the house, and the girl was her companion. She talked to her just as she would to a companion. They had their meals together. Their rooms were just the same in furnishing, and so on. But the girl's young man would not have her stay as a servant, and so she was leaving. "There you are," said the woman employer, and like as not the young man would not marry her after all.

This last opinion was naturally induced by natural disappointment on the specialist's part. But if the social disability of domestic service is felt in such a case, where the mistress and the girl have their meals in company, it must be felt in every case – to some extent. The trained domestic worker of high standing holds her own position and knows that she is practically under very little, if any, social disability. But this is the way that the majority of Canadians look at things. There can be no doubt about that. Other objections that girls have to domestic work are the loneliness and the lack of opportunity to meet or make friends. These can be remedied, without much difficulty, by the woman employer who is in earnest in solving the domestic problem.

Objections which have a sharper touch are that the work in Canadian households is often ill-arranged, that the woman employer does not know how long a given piece of work should be done, and as a consequence is unreasonable. Passing over these for the moment, we come to the strongest statement of the case of the domestic worker, except her case for fixed hours. The girls says she would prefer more of a business arrangement and less of a feudal arrangement. "Feudal," is a word put into the girl's mouth by the writer.

What the girl sometimes says is: "I am as good as she is!" meaning her employer. What the woman employer sometimes says is: "What are girls coming to? They want to be as good as their mistress." If a girl goes into a shop downtown as a saleswoman, questions of this kind do not arise. They have no proper relation to

business, or to work of any kind. They must be got rid of domestic work. The girl may be better than her mistress. The mistress may be better than her maid. It has nothing to do with their relation as worker and employer, which depends on the honest carrying out of a business arrangement.

Part IV[28] (November, 1912)

THE BUSINESS RELATION

Objection has been taken to the statement made last week that girls in domestic service prefer to have the agreement between themselves and their women employers more of a business arrangement than it is at present. The objection is, briefly, that the present arrangement, partly business, and partly one of guarding authority on the part of the woman employer, is of greater advantage to the domestic worker. Does the domestic sometimes suffer a business injustice because the man of the house and the woman of the house have no clear idea of what the home-help business really is? The following story answers this question. It was told, not by the girl who suffered the injustice, but by the woman employer when she was old enough to recognize how unjust and unbusinesslike she had been.

The woman said that when she first married the household consisted of her husband, herself and one maid. Her husband was away all day. The woman spent the best part of her time at her mother's. As a consequence, the maid did the work, ordered the provisions, planned the meals, and stayed in the house every day but one in the week. One day, when the woman came home, the girl said that she must go out for a little while, and please to come with her. She had been so much indoors and so much alone that she did not know what she would do if she stayed indoors any longer. The woman went out with the girl, but she did not understand that some change should be made in the household arrangements.

Things went on as before. In the evenings, the husband and wife frequently went out together, leaving the house in charge of the girl. One night, when they came home late, they found the girl asleep with her head on the dining-room table. She was tired out. It was summer, and the doors and windows were open. The husband was so angry when he found his property not under what he considered proper surveillance that he woke the girl up and discharged her on the spot.

The woman who told the story said that the girl was the best maid she had ever had. She never knew what became of the girl. But when she learned more of how households ought to be managed, she was ashamed, and has always wished that she could tell the girl how sorry she was for having treated her so unfairly. This kind of story would not be true if there was a proper business arrangement between the girl and her woman employer. We may as well acknowledge the fact that there are Canadian households in which such harmful misconceptions as this prevail concerning the work a girl ought to do, and the kind of life she ought to lead.

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[28] From Macmurchy, M. (1912, November 23). THE NEW HOUSE KEEPING PROBLEM OF THE PAID DOMESTIC WORKER. *The Saskatoon Phoenix*, p. 17. Written by Lady Marjory Macmurchy Willison (1870 - 1938).

THE SUPPLY OF GIRLS

Let us consider the supply of girls on which Canadian households are typically able to draw for their home help. Typical Canadian households report that in the last twenty years, the supply of native born Canadian girls has very largely diminished. Canadian girls do sometimes enter household work, but now only in rare instances. The daughters of Canadian farmers no longer are available in any appreciable number for house work. Our Canadian women managing households could count on strong, willing, good-hearted, capable Canadian girls who knew little, except to be splendidly clean in their work, but who could be taught. They were independent, sometimes saucy without meaning to be, headstrong, and not well trained. But they wanted to learn, and to see what city homes were like. Where are they now, these Canadian girls? They have gone into factories and shops. They are stenographers and bookkeepers. They have gone west, but not to become home helps.

The supply which is available is largely drawn from England, Scotland and Ireland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. It is on the whole a supply of good quality. A large percentage of these girls are well trained. They come to Canada, stay in house work a little while, then a large number of them enter other occupations. The woman employer finds that some former maid of her own who is now a telephone operator, perhaps, calling in a friendly manner – for many Canadian women do keep the friendship of their former maids – advises the present domestic paid worker to leave housework. It is an occupation beneath a girl in Canada. This is a wrong view of life, of course, but it is a very influential view, as stated by the Canadian girl, who was once in house work herself. The girl from the old country has to adjust herself to life in Canada. Is it any wonder that in this land of promise she begins to think that housework as an occupation is socially undesirable? The problem of Canadian women with households is to reorganize household work in such a way that it will come into its own as the best wage-earning occupation of women.

THE SOCIAL STATUS

The question of the social status of the paid domestic worker is more serious than at present realized. Perhaps the following incident will help Canadian women to see what threatens the household if we acquiesce in the estimating of domestic work as the most undesirable occupation from a social point of view for women in Canada.

A woman in one of our Canadian cities asked a settlement worker in that city if she knew of any girl who would like a good position as a maid. The reply of the settlement worker was that she could take no interest in any girl who had so little ambition to better herself as to be willing to enter domestic service.

Understand what that means. Nothing is too good for our homes. The best must be kept for home life. Shall we allow the girls who live in our households to be described as undesirable socially? If we are so foolish and so wrong, we will pay the severest penalty. It is not possible for any member of a household to be placed at a disadvantage without the whole household losing something. One does not mean to say that this penalty has begun to be paid in Canada. But this is the direction in which the Canadian household will have to pay.

The settlement worker referred to above was quite within her rights when she chose to limit her social activities to girls who were ambitious to get on in the world. Where we have made the mistake has been to allow anyone – settlement worker or anyone else – to rate the domestic worker as a girl not anxious to get on and not capable of becoming the best type of a Canadian woman citizen. This end we must work for, or our homes will be sorry.

But the settlement worker never saw Caroline Dill, who came from one of the St. Lawrence counties, did house work as a paid domestic worker for ten years, then married an Ontario farmer, and now visits her former employer clad in black silk, with a long gold watch chain and white kid gloves. Caroline is one of the most successful farmer's wives of Ontario. The settlement worker does not know Mary Train, who came from Monmouthshire, was in house work for four years, and married a man who works in a foundry. They have a little city home and two of the finest, fattest babies belonging to any home in the city where they live. This is the kind of future to which any paid domestic worker can aspire. Is there anything the matter with this, which would justify the social disability of the domestic worker? Quite the contrary. The writer would like to know if already in this present discussion the problem of the paid domestic worker has not begun to alter its aspect.

Part V[29] (November, 1912)

DEBATABLE POINTS

Three points have been raised with regard to the present inquiry by people interested in the problem of the paid domestic worker. These are:

1. How many people does the inquiry affect? Is not its scope limited?

2. Conditions in the west of Canada are so different from those in the east that an inquiry in one part of the country cannot benefit the other.

3. What can be done immediately by the woman employer who cannot engage domestic help and yet who must have help if her household is to be properly conducted?

The answer to the first query is that women who employ domestic help have to do with this problem. Every girl in domestic service is affected by the conditions of her employment, and that is the subject of the present inquiry. The ultimate aim of the inquiry is to show that when training has placed the domestic worker on at least an equality with [other occupations], the trained home helper will be one of the best occupations, if not the best, for wage earning women. The scope of the inquiry includes women employers of domestic help, girls who are at present domestic workers, and women generally who are, or may become, self-supporting. It is not necessary to add that the question affects the life of the community directly. It has to do with the success of women as home makers, employers of domestic help, and as wage earners.

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[29] From Macmurchy, M. (1912, November 30). THE NEW HOUSE KEEPING PROBLEM OF THE PAID DOMESTIC WORKER. *The Saskatoon Phoenix*, p. 15. Written by Lady Marjory Macmurchy Willison (1870 - 1938).

CONDITIONS IN [THE] WEST

The second statement is to some extent answered in the reply to the first query. Two conditions of domestic help in the west of Canada do not obtain to any extent in the east. The first is the lady help, or home helper. The Chinese house worker has taught a valuable lesson to the woman employer of domestic help; all she needs to do is benefit by it. The mother's help, lady help, or home helper is one phase of the problem of the domestic worker, and the present inquiry proposes to deal with this part of the problem. Otherwise, there are girls in domestic service in the west of Canada. The number of these girls must increase. It is quite possible, even probable, that the solution of the problem of domestic help will begin in the west.

As to the lesson taught by the Chinaman in domestic service. The wife of a Dominion cabinet minister who had a Chinese cook was giving a dinner at Ottawa. A few hours before the dinner, the entirely capable cook went on strike. The wife of the cabinet minister asked for an interview. What was the matter? Was there anything about the dinner that he did not like? Did he not approve of dinners? He had understood that they were to give dinners when he was engaged as a cook. After much probing, the lady discovered that the cook had gone on strike because the eldest son of the house had come home to live. He had engaged to cook for two people. He was now to cook for three people, and nothing had been said to him. The lady said, "Was she not to be allowed to have her own son at home? What was that to John?" His wages were raised and he stayed. John was right. A bargain had been made and it had been broken. This principle is understood in western Canada – as far s Chinamen are concerned. It is the same story everywhere. Part of the domestic difficulty will vanish when the woman employer learns that she makes a business bargain with her helper, and that she ought to keep it.

FATAL CHARACTERISTICS

What can be done immediately by the woman employer who cannot engage domestic help and yet who must have help if her household is to be properly conducted? Frankly, in the older settled parts of Canada there is something wrong with the conditions of domestic employment in a household when that household cannot secure a domestic worker. Either the wages are too low, or an unreasonable amount of work is required, or the girl has to lead too lonely a life, or the particular woman employer – quite unintentionally, it is granted – is not an agreeable person for whom to work. The woman employer may habitually assume an attitude which means that she considers the girl an inferior. This is an impossible attitude in the twentieth century. It is wrong and indefensible. The woman employer may assume it if she chooses, but she will do without domestic help. It is right that she should. On the other hand, the woman employer may say – she generally does say so – that she treats the girl in the kindest possible way, that she nurses her when sick and is constantly giving her holidays and treats. This same mistress may keep after the girl and tell her how to do her work all day long. She may be what the girl calls "bossy." All these characteristics interfere fatally with the supply of domestic help.

UNREASONABLE WORK

What is meant by unreasonable work? This is unreasonable: To expect a girl, when she is the only girl employed, to bring the letters from the postman to her employer on a salver. To ring a bell for the only maid and send her up to a bedroom for a handkerchief. To keep a supply of kitchen towels on hand, and whenever the girl sits down in the afternoon, to give her the towel to hem. These are instances of unreasonable work asked for in Canadian households. The girls left their positions, of course. When conditions of work are manifestly unreasonable, it is better for the girl to leave.

What is the other side of the story? There are girls employed as domestics in Canada who exercise a tyranny over their women employers. Instances might be multiplied almost unbelievably. One will do. The woman of a household had gone out to do some shopping with a friend. As soon as she had closed the door behind her, she found that she had forgotten her purse. She was afraid to ring the bell because the girl would be angry at being brought to the door. She mustered sufficient courage, with the moral support of her friend, and the girl was angry. The domestic tyrant should be told to find another place. There are girls, good girls, to be employed where wages are good and work is reasonable. A large part of the happiness of a home depends on a good domestic worker. Part of the trouble is that the girl is never told this, or very rarely.

Good wages, fixed hours, business fairness, arrangements made so that the girl may find friends and see them, will provide the average city household with an average domestic helper. Conditions being as they are in Canada at present, the woman employer cannot be promised a trained helper.

Part VI[30] (December, 1912)

What is it that girls in domestic work suffer from most? On the whole, the girls' own testimony is to the effect that loneliness is the hardest thing they have to bear. They are not underpaid, except in rare instances. The conditions under which they work are not perfect. But generally they are fairly reasonable. Loneliness, however, is sadly prevalent.

In connection with this one would like to point out to women employing domestic help that a large number of the girls employed do not have good health. It seems a strange thing that the health of domestic workers is not good. One would say offhand that a domestic worker leads one of the healthiest lives among wage earners. Yet ask any physician whose practice includes a number of domestics, and he or she will tell you that the girl in domestic employment is frequently in ill health. […] Loneliness is one of the chief causes of ill health among paid domestic workers.

[30] From Macmurchy, M. (1912, December 14). THE NEW HOUSE KEEPING PROBLEM OF THE PAID DOMESTIC WORKER. *The Saskatoon Phoenix*, p. 21. Written by Lady Marjory Macmurchy Willison (1870 - 1938).

Part VII[31] (January, 1913)

If it is seriously contended that a girl cannot depend on having regular nights off during the week, then women employers will have to make up their minds to a continued scarcity of domestic help, to abnormally high wages, incompetent help, and other disabilities [that] exist in occupations considered unsatisfactory by workers. Domestic work is different in character from other work, but not to such an extent as the average woman seems to think it is.

Let us consider how the work of a hospital is arranged. In hospitals, as a rule, the nurse is on duty from seven to seven, with time for meals and two hours off. These two hours are sometimes broken in on. But at meal time, the nurse is entirely off duty. Night work is taken by a night nurse. Nurses in private practice may go on and off duty, have time for meals and time to go out for a walk. If they take night work, then another nurse or one of the family is on duty in the day. It is true that there are households where a nurse is expected to be on duty both night and day. This is the principal reason why nurses dislike private practice. For the same reason, nurses in private practice frequently become physical wrecks. […]

KINDNESS

A woman once in domestic service, now married and caring for a large family, writes from the country to say she does not agree that girls do not want kindness, but would prefer more of a business arrangement with their women employers. She says also that she has never forgotten how a woman who had once employed her came to see her at the back door of another place in which she worked as a domestic. That call was probably of the true spirit of kindness. She wanted to be sure that the girl was happy and in a good home.

One would not for anything in the world give the impression intentionally that kindness should not exist between the woman employer and her domestic helper. Getting down to the foundation on which the relation between employer and helper is based, justice and kindness are the two essential qualities. The girl can be as kind to her employer as the employer is to the girl. Women have experienced much kindness from the girl who will not do her work properly, who is inconsiderate, and whose temper disturbs the tranquility of the house. Many women employers are models of kindness to their domestics. But there is the woman who expects the girl to pay her back for her kindness. She gives her a discarded dress and asks the girl back [on] her evenings out. She sends the girl occasionally to a theatre, or pays her fare for a car ride. In return the girl is to relinquish her Sunday evening. This is not kindness. It is a particularly mean form of barter. The woman gets back as much as she gives, and has the gratification of calling herself kind into the bargain. How often we hear women say, "I have been kind to that girl, and now she is leaving me." If the kindness is given to secure a permanent helper, it is not kindness, but an investment.

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[31] From Macmurchy, M. (1913, January 4). THE NEW HOUSE KEEPING PROBLEM OF THE PAID DOMESTIC WORKER. *The Saskatoon Phoenix*, p. 16. Written by Lady Marjory Macmurchy Willison (1870 - 1938).

The investment may turn out badly, of course. But it is a question if the girl should be called ungrateful.

Kindness which asks no return will fortunately always remain. On the whole, experience in Canada teaches us that there are as many really kind women employers as there are kind and thoughtful domestic helpers. It is only just to make this statement.

Part VIII[32] (January, 1913)

How many Canadian women have employed domestic workers for fifteen or twenty years and have not been compelled to know that these girls are subjected to great temptation? They give way to temptation sometimes, because they are lonely; and it is acknowledged with pain that those who choose them for their victims do so because the girls are not as well regarded socially as they ought to be. This is a wrong which society in general has offered to the domestic worker. Miss Jane Adams makes the statement for the United States that a higher percentage is found among fallen women from the domestic worker class than from any other class of wage earning women. We have reason to believe that there is no great, no radical difference in Canadian conditions. The health of domestic workers is extremely unsatisfactory as compared with that of other working women. […]

Girls in domestic work themselves say that they are shown less respect in public places than is shown other classes of women workers. A girl who has worked in a shop and households states that the is shown more respect when engaged as a shop girl than when engaged as a domestic. Surely this ought to awaken the indignation of Canadian women employers of domestic help. I have heard more than once agents for selling photographs, and in one instance an agent for selling an illustrated Bible, at the backdoor of a house attempt to extort money from a domestic in a hectoring way which ought to have secured the agent a rebuke from the police magistrate.

Part IX[33] (January, 1913)

A story of a domestic worker was told the other day which seems so improbable that most of the people who are following this discussion will be inclined not to believe it. It should be told here nevertheless because it touches on one side of this problem which has not yet been dwelt on fully.

The domestic worker of this story is foreign born and can speak only broken English. Now, every Canadian has a great work to do. He has to help to make good

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[32] From Macmurchy, M. (1913, January 11). THE NEW HOUSE KEEPING PROBLEM OF THE PAID DOMESTIC WORKER. *The Saskatoon Phoenix*, p. 19. Written by Lady Marjory Macmurchy Willison (1870 - 1938).

[33] From Macmurchy, M. (1913, January 18). THE NEW HOUSE KEEPING PROBLEM OF THE PAID DOMESTIC WORKER. *The Saskatoon Phoenix*, p. 18. Written by Lady Marjory Macmurchy Willison (1870 - 1938).

Canadians out of our emigrants. Every Canadian woman who employs an emigrant domestic worker ought to help to make that domestic worker a good Canadian.

This girl, who speaks broken English, is employed as a domestic in a household in one of the best residential districts of a Canadian city. She is the only maid kept in the household, and does the ordinary work of a general servant. She is allowed to go to church on Sunday evenings. She is allowed out one or two evenings a week. She is paid five dollars a month.

The reply made to the domestic worker who told this story was that there must be some explanation. The girl was paying back her passage money to the woman who employed her; or the employer had paid a bonus to some agency which had brought the girl out to Canada. The answer was no; the girl's father, who lives in Germany, had bound the girl to stay with this mistress for a year. The father, of course, did not know conditions in Canada.

One reason this improbable story – which may be true in every particular, nevertheless – is told here is to point out the effect incidents of this kind have on girls in domestic work who hear such stories. This girl told her story to a group of domestic workers who questioned her keenly and eagerly. What do you suppose these domestic workers think of the girl's mistress? They will not think she is a typical Canadian mistress, but they will say that a domestic worker is sometimes treated in this way in Canada. Canadian women employers of domestic help cannot afford to let their good names as employers suffer because of the unfairness of a few. […]

Neither should the thoroughly trained, good domestic workers allow themselves to be classed any longer with the untrained, incompetent, unfair girls in domestic work who keep households in disorder and discomfort and are paid the same wages as the competent girl.

Here is a companion incident to that of a general domestic worker receiving five dollars a month. What would you think of a domestic worker who, if the man of the house is late, clears away the food from the table and lets the man do without his dinner? Impossible, you say. Well, it ought to be impossible. […]

THE REFORMS NEEDED

What improvements would the woman employer of domestic help like to see accomplished? She wants competent, trained help. She would like to see a better class of girls entering domestic work, and the supply of domestic help larger than it is at present.

It is plain that the woman employer can secure these improvements by organizing her household work in such a way that the domestic helper goes on and off duty at fixed hours, overtime to be paid for. The woman employer can begin to agitate for a training school of domestic help. The woman employer should see that the domestic helper is placed in the way of forming agreeable and helpful friendships. The average sleeping and eating accommodation of domestic help should be improved. The woman employer should arrange the household work so that the domestic helper has an opportunity to have sufficient fresh air. She should take a sympathetic and intelligent interest in the girl's health, as the modern employer of help in factories or stores must if his business is to be wholly successful. The woman employer should

recognize the domestic helper as a responsible person with private rights of her own, under her own control. When these necessary reforms are attended to, with the help of training in domestic work, the social position of the domestic helper will be greatly improved. When the social disability is removed, there will be a plentiful supply of domestic helpers. With a sufficient supply, wages will become, or will remain, normal.

The reforms wanted by the domestic helper have been outlined in the above paragraph. It is not easy to see how a fair woman employer can consider them unreasonable. Otherwise, the domestic workers themselves should study the situation in which they find themselves, should remedy their loneliness by forming girls' clubs, should insist on recognition of the trained domestic worker; and the trained, competent domestic worker should arrange her hours and her work with her employer. […]

Employments for women must be regulated largely by the fact that the average woman marries. The domestic worker, especially the trained, competent worker, is fitted by her employment to become, when she marries, a competent homemaker. This is one of the reasons why domestic employment can be made the best wage earning occupation for women. When the conditions of domestic employment are humanized, and its present social disability is removed, a girl of any class may look forward to domestic work as a suitable employment, just as any girl now may look forward to being a trained nurse. The gain in delightful human relations in the household will be great.

Canadian Women Bank Clerks and the Great War

"Clerks and stenographers"[34] (March, 1913)

The expansion of the Canadian banking system is so great and has been so rapid that banks have found it impossible to obtain men clerks and assistants in sufficient numbers and of a suitable class. This has led to a very considerable demand for women to enter the employ of Canadian banks, both as stenographers and bank clerks. In one banking office alone there are sixty women clerks and stenographers. A number of questions suggest themselves at once. What class of woman employee do banks prefer? What opportunities and disadvantages are connected with banking as an occupation for women? These questions were answered by a banker of international fame, and by a woman who has been known for some years as one of the ablest and most competent women employed by a bank in Canada.

WHY THERE IS DEMAND FOR WOMEN WORKERS

First of all, then, as the banker explained, there is a considerable demand for women in Canadian banks, both as clerks and stenographers. This demand is likely to increase, rather than diminish, for the simple reason that every man in Canada is needed for work that only a man can do. When women can do any particular work, employment will be offered them not only in this year but in the years to come. The class of woman employee that Canadian banks are looking for is a woman of refinement and education. It is almost safe to make the statement that, given refinement and education, the bank prefers that its women employees should not be in their first youth. The bank wants dependable service from women whose minds are occupied with their work. No bank wants to train an employee, and then lose the trained employee because she marries. Not that the bank as an institution discourages women from marrying. Quite the contrary. Banks are notably generous to their women employees when they marry. Still, the woman employee of between twenty-eight and forty is likely to give the bank better and more continuous service than the young stenographer of eighteen or twenty.

Since the bank requires education, refinement, and particularly good service from its women employees, it follows as a matter of course that women clerks and stenographers in banks are paid at a somewhat higher rate than the general run of stenographers. Actual figures will have to be modified in different parts of Canada, but generally speaking, the woman stenographer in a bank begins at about ten dollars a week. Bank employees are given bonuses, which help out wonderfully when it comes to reckoning up the woman's salary. The banks also very generally provide luncheon for their employees. This, also, is a considerable item when the entire income is computed. Besides this, the hot luncheon of good food has a great deal to do with maintaining the standard of health among the bank's women employees. One of the

[34] From Macmurchy, M. (1913, March 15). Occupations for Women – Women in Canadian Banks. *The Regina Leader*, p. 37. By Lady Marjory Jardine Ramsay MacMurchy Willison (1869 – 1938).

last advantages mentioned by the banker, who is an acknowledged leader in finance, is that in banks women employees are treated as ladies. From all this, it will be seen that for a large class of Canadian women – educated, gently bred women whose sensibilities would suffer from the untampered rush of the world – employment in a bank is a desirable occupation.

THE CASE OF THE CLEVER WOMAN

The great banker said many significant things; one of them, however, has remained more significant than any of the others. He was speaking of the special gifts which women have for employment in a bank. "The able woman," he said, "who is employed as a stenographer in a bank is so much more able than the clever man who is employed as a stenographer."

This strikes straight at the root of one aspect of banking as an employment for women. Suppose "a very able woman" – in the words of the banker – goes into business. The world is before her to conquer. […] An able woman who goes into a bank cannot look forward to a remarkable success of this kind. She may become of great value to the bank. She may have an intensely interesting, useful occupation, and is likely to be happy in her work. She can study and understand Canadian finance, and finance is a great subject which informs the mind and gives the woman insight into the history of the world as it is today. But the highest positions in banking, and the big salaries, are not for women employees. This is not so true in the United States.

Now, remember what the great banker said: "The able woman who is employed in a bank as a stenographer is so much more able than the clever man who is employed as a stenographer." The meaning of this, put in other words, is as follows. A man of ability equal to that of the clever woman employee will not take a position as a stenographer, or if he does, he remains in it only a short time. The able woman in banking is compelled to remain in such a position, because no better position is open for her. The conclusion of which is, perhaps, that if a woman has remarkable ability and is very ambitious, she had better choose some other occupation rather than employment in a Canadian bank, unless she is willing to take less money and have less authority in her employment than she might in a few other occupations. But these employments are, after all, very few.

The demand for women employees in banks began from eight to ten years ago in Canada, and has increased steadily. This is a well-paid occupation for Canadian women, and the probabilities are that gradually banking will offer more attractions to the able woman, as well as to the well-educated woman of refinement and a good average of ability.

To the average woman of refinement, who has good ability and is well educated, employment in a Canadian bank may be heartily recommended. She will receive a good salary, as salaries are reckoned for women in Canada. She will be treated with consideration. Her surroundings are pleasant. These considerations count for a great deal with women. Much of the work of a bank is particularly suited to women. They are so careful, accurate, painstaking and faithful, when they are good employees. Even if a woman has no training as a stenographer or book keeper, the

demand for good service and for suitable employees is so keen, that a bank is sometimes willing to take an untrained woman and teach her how to be useful to the bank, as, for instance, in filing documents, or in other work of a similar character. All of which means that there is plenty of work for women in Canada who seriously want work.

"Woman's work grows with war"[35] (May, 1918)

Though not specifically about bank clerks, this article gives one view the impact of the war on Canadian women and work.

"For this is woman's war as well as man's; so woman must work that men may fight." This is said to be a pronouncement of Lloyd-George and it sounds that way; the main thing about it, though, is that it is a statement of a fact amply borne out by events; never was there a time when women had so much work to do or so many kinds of work. From early days, women have been fairly busy, but sometimes – more particularly of recent years – a good many women belonged to the leisure class and, reversing the ancient order of things, had far less real work to do than the men of their families. The time had passed when the woman was drudge and the man the lord of all family affairs; the time had come. with thousands, when on the nose of the male was laid upon the grindstone of hard work, where the none too gentle hand of wife or daughters, or both, held it with relentless compulsion.

The war has changed all that, and while the men of the family are fighting on the fields of France, the women are doing accustomed and unaccustomed work that is as truly a part of winning the war as anything done on the battlefield or in ships that guard the safety of the seas. Many men are employed at home tasks, too, and are working as they have never worked before, to support the armies and navies at war, and to hold up strongly the hands of those who, by reason of youth and fitness, are filling the more strenuous places of the war.

The old song – that "Everybody Works But Father" – is set to a new and livelier tune with a change of words that show the true state of affairs when nations are at war so earnestly and engrossingly that everybody works, and father and mother, too. All along the line, from infants to grandsires and grandmothers, the people whose hearts are in the war find something for formerly idle hands to do, and this is particularly true of the women of nations at war; theirs is a steadier, and more universal work; theirs the call to do all that their mothers did and many things besides. The woman of today is the best and busiest worker in the field of war tasks.

Woman's work in the war is made remarkable by the fact that hundreds of women have taken over work that has been done by men for generations and which was considered as man's work: the idea that a woman could do the work was rarely suggested, and the suggestion was promptly scoffed at when made. It turns out that the weak woman was not half as weak as she was rated; on the contrary, she was not

[35] War, Women and Work; Woman's Work Grows with War. (1918, May 27). *The Edmonton Journal*, p. 7.

only willing, but entirely capable of doing scores of things that had been taken over by men as their peculiar property and jealously guarded from the incursions of possibly willing, but woefully weak womankind.

Along with many other delusions this has been thrown into the discard and it is known, for sure and certain, that the assumption of man that he alone was capable of doing heavy work, and mechanical work that called for both skill and strength, was a hollow mockery that only awaited the ruthless hand of war to pluck it from the place where man had put it and expose its emptiness to the world.

It was the mad and reckless haste with which men rushed to the forefront of the fight in the early days of the war that started the house of cards so carefully built upon the foundation of man's assured superiority, to its doom of destruction. This rush included thousands of capable men workers in shops and factories, and their loss was felt sharply when the clarion call of war for munitions and other war material was dinned into the ears of the industrial world by the men at the front. It was too late to recall the skilled workers who had enlisted, and there were not enough men left to supply the machines [that] must go to the font, and keep on going until enough were there to win over a powerful and resourceful enemy.

Women came to the rescue of beleaguered and inadequate men, as they have done countless times. Some daring spirit suggested that women be given some of the lighter mechanical tasks, and this was done. It soon was demonstrated that women were more than capable of doing such work, and it was found, too, that modern machinery made such small demand for physical strength that women of less than peculiarly strong physique could do work that men had been keeping to themselves for years and pretending that this same work called for so much strength and skill that strong men were tired after the shortest work day at such arduous tasks. Lathes and milling machines were found to respond as readily to the supposedly weak hand of woman as they did to the almost supposedly strong and skillful touch of man. Street cars, motor cars, trucks, even trains on steam railways, elevators, and other heavy and light machinery was put in the charge of women and fine results obtained. Man might – must – go to war, but while he was gone, woman could – and would – take up the work at home.

"Why, women have even changed the kind of clothes they wear, since the war began," said one of the sex which has again upset the calculations of mere man. "Before the war we wouldn't have worn overalls for the world – I should think not – but now thousands of women wear them and find that kind of clothes much better to work in than a bunch of skirts and loose ends that catch in everything that moves every time they get the chance. Of course we knew all the time that men had the best of everything in the world – including us – but it took the war to give us the chance to prove some of our contentions – we never could have done it without the war.

"But now we have showed that we claimed no more than our just due when we said we could do a lot of things that men said only they could do because women were not skillful enough, to begin with, and hadn't strength to do, anyway. And now we find that these hard tasks are easier than the housework we have been doing for years and which was supposed – by men – to be too easy to talk about. Why, my goodness

gracious! Running these machines in a shop is a life of ease and comfort beside doing the family washing and ironing, scrubbing floors, or even cooking. If any man who works in a light machine shop thinks he has hard work to do, let him tackle a busy day at housework and see how he likes it. We know – now – that the light machine work is easier and a heap more interesting than housework, that is the same old thing day after day; the same clothes to wash and iron; the same dishes to wash; the same kind of meals to get; and the same man to work for all the time. Of course, we like that last part of it if he is a good man, but he isn't always, and then we could do with somebody else to talk to until he gets good again.

"But the best of it all is that we can do so many things that fashion and custom said we mustn't do, and that we are so much more useful than we used to be. It is a far cry from evening dress to overalls, from diamonds to denim, but the way is full of teaching and we are learning every day – learning that there are only a few things we cannot do and many, many that we can do. It seems a bit strange to see advertisements for women's overalls but, after all, it is the most sensible kind of clothing to wear at rough work and this is a time to be sensible, isn't it? Certainly it isn't a time to be fussy about a little matter of clothes when we have a war on that we simply must win. And we shall win it and, thank God, when we shall have done so, everybody will agree that women have done their part."

"Fifty percent of the bank clerks in the city"[36] (January, 1917)

Not only are women being employed in Vancouver as munitions workers, but the number of positions they are holding in other occupations here is rapidly increasing. It was stated by a local banker yesterday that fifty per cent. of the bank clerks in the city are women, and the proportion is increasing.

This situation is, of course, general throughout Canada. A large number of the male employees of the banks have enlisted, and they are replaced by women. In fact, it is estimated that there are nearly 4,000 women bank clerks in Canada now.

Their positions range from junior clerkships to posts as ledger keepers and tellers. So far, Vancouver has no women tellers, but several of the banks already possess women ledger-keepers. The employment of women in this way is increasing and being developed, more responsible positions being given to them as time goes on.

It is the opinion of bank officials that most of these women intend to remain in the banks. The supply, too, seems to be practically unlimited, so that those who leave can be readily replaced.

There are, of course, two great obstacles in the way. The chief is matrimony, which, however, is a danger that lies before women in all forms of employment. School teaching and other professions in which there are large numbers of women are constantly suffering in this way from the depredations of men.

[36] From MANY WOMEN ENGAGED IN VANCOUVER BANKS AND NUMBERS GROWING. (1917, January 19). *The Vancouver Sun*, p. 10.

In this way, it is not likely that matrimony will be any worse obstacle to the employment of women bank clerks than to their use in other forms of earning. There is, however, another inconvenience in bank work; clerks are often transferred from one office to another.

There can be no doubt that it is not as easy for a woman to move to a strange city as it is for a man to strike camp. There may be more consideration for the women in that particular than for the men, as bank officials seem to think that most of the women want to stay if they are not moved from one part of the country to another.

"In the business to stay[37]" (November, 1917)

Women workers have been taken on the local bank staffs in comparatively large numbers. They have made good, generally speaking, and are in the business to stay, considering, of course, the possible return of bank clerks who have enlisted, and whose positions are held open for them. This is the consensus of opinion expressed by Edmonton bank managers, with other considerations of the question which I shall take up in detail.

THE DEMON CURIOSITY

Curiosity is a hard task master. At least, that is as I found it when the little demon was aroused in my mind by various items appearing from time to time in the social columns of newspapers to the effect that "Miss Brown of the Bank of ----- staff is spending her holidays… etc." This was something entirely new. I was quite accustomed to reading that Mr. Brown of the bank of ----- staff was holidaying at the lake, but somehow the Mr. Browns from the bank staffs did not appear to be so numerous as the Miss Browns. On top of this, I read a statement by Sir Edmund Walker, president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, to the effect that as a result of the war and the consequent exodus of men from the ranks of bank clerks to the ranks of the army, over one thousand women were employed in the different branches of that institution.

"How about Edmonton?" I wondered. "And how are the women employees working out?" was the second thought, which followed quickly on the first. "Better find out," suggested the little demon Curiosity.

My own opinion at the conclusion of my quest was that if the workers did not make good, then they did not appreciate the managers under whom they worked. Even in the busiest hour of the busiest day in the month, I found them in every instance most courteous and interested in their employés and my mission. Speaking from experience, I can say it means a great deal to be courteous in the busiest hour of the busiest day of the month.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE INEXPERIENCED

"Working out splendidly," was the opinion expressed by one manager. "As conditions are now, we could not carry on the work of the bank without the assistance

[37] From Kells, E. (1917, November 9). Bankers Recognize Worth of Women Bank Clerks; Are in the Business to Stay. *The Edmonton Journal*, p. 11. Written by Edna Kells (1880 – 1947). She was an editor at the Edmonton Journal from 1910 to 1933.

of women." Banking affords an opportunity for the girls or women with no special training or experience to work into business, this manager continued. A fair education, a desire to learn, and an interest in her work are the main qualifications. The girls are started at the beginning, but have the same chance to work up as the men. Consideration for the health and comfort of the girl workers was expressed, and a regret that bank buildings have not been built with a view to supplying residence for the girls. This, however, was a condition bound to be remedied in time. Another rather usual consideration expressed, was that which recognized the value of time's influence on character. A woman of twenty-five, for instance, was naturally more responsible than a girl of eighteen, and could not be started to work on the same basis. The women workers were found to be more dependable, as a class, than boys. This was not said by way of criticism, the manager showing a sympathetic understanding of the out of door attractions which appeal more to boys than to girls.

AFTERNOON TEA MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN LEDGER

Spice of variety was provided in the next interview, which was with the inspector of that particular bank which appears to have experienced the difficulties of handling the irresponsible ones. That they were working out fairly satisfactorily, or would when the poorer ones were weeded out, was the highest praise the conscience of this inspector would permit him to say. Women workers, he claimed, lack a sense of responsibility, concentration, and a proper interest in the business in which they engage. Social life attracts them and makes them careless about their work. In fact, they do not care whether the ledger balances or not, provided they get out to afternoon tea. Furthermore, they are too fond of chattering in the back of the office, which every one knows is poor policy for the girl who is anxious to make good. In this bank, the men have frequently to work overtime to keep the work up to the necessary mark. This is due to the incompetency of the girls. There was no bitterness or undue desire to "knock" apparent in the criticism. A frank statement was asked for, and was given, with the parting suggestion that I advise the girl workers in banks to cultivate concentration, a sense of responsibility, and an interest in the business.

SOME GOOD, SOME POOR

"On the whole, the girl workers check up as well as the men," was the opinion of another manager. There are some good, and some poor, but as in the case of men, the poor ones are gradually weeded out. This manager was not only highly pleased with the manner in which the girl workers had taken up the work, but greatly surprised that they had done so well. They are started at the beginning and work up. At the present time, some are occupying responsible positions of different kinds on the books, and as tellers in some departments.

MATRIMONY A DRAWBACK

"To lay it down as a principal, banking institutions would sooner have boys on the staff than girls, when boys are available," stated another manager, who further claimed that while many girls work out well, a larger proportion of boys make good. Matrimony is a barrier to a woman's success in the profession. It frequently happens that just when a girl becomes familiar with the work, and generally useful to the

bank, she gets married. With a man, the situation is different. Matrimony, for him, means a stricter attention to business.

MUST BE EXPERIENCED

Inexperienced girls are not considered in another bank. They must have some experience in the business before they are put on the books. This has been managed by promoting stenographers to the accounting department, and the experiment has worked out satisfactorily. The manager of this bank also expressed the belief that there would be more and more women workers in the banking business as time goes on.

GENERALLY SATISFACTORY

"Generally satisfactory," were the words in which another manager summed up the result of the experiment. Still another bank had not found it necessary to take on women workers except stenographers, so could not express an opinion from personal experience. This manager, however, said that in other branches of the bank, it had worked out very well, and he expects that if war continues any length of time, it will be necessary for him to take on girl clerks. A third bank had little experience, but that little [was] satisfactory.

GIRLS NOT NATURALLY BANKERS

"A good girl is better than a poor man, but girls are not naturally bankers," was the opinion of the next manager interviewed, who further stated he would never take girls if men were procurable. Girls, he said, are not in the business for the sake of making good; their idea of business is to draw a salary. They have no sense of responsibility, and do not take their work seriously. They do not care what is left undone when they want to get away from the office. In meeting the public, they are too trusting. "Girls trust men until they find them dishonest; I distrust everybody until I find them honest," he said. While the girls are strictly honest as far as handling cash is concerned, he continued, they are too talkative, and apt to give away business secrets. Matrimony, too, is a serious handicap, though a natural phase of a woman's career. Until they marry, girls might better stay at home and help their mothers, devoting spare time to opportunities for cheering the lonely, than to rush into business.

MORE DEPENDABLE THAN MEN

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," appeared to be the opinion of another manager. The prospect of matrimony interfering with his staff appeared to be the least of his troubles, and whatever his troubles may be, they seemed to have no connection with the women members of his staff. The inspector of his bank, he said, had just concluded a fortnight's inspection of the business, and had congratulated him on the splendid staff of girls working in the various departments. He had found them entirely dependable; more so than men. They were anxious to make good, and never allowed private life to interfere with business. Business sense and a desire to make good were the necessary qualifications, while a few months' experience in other offices helped. Women clerks were accurate and faithful, sure of promotion, and in the business to stay; that is, if matrimony did not step in and snatch them from the ledgers. This manager further did not look upon possible

matrimony as a reason for debarring the women from equal consideration with men in the matter of promotion.

DRAWBACKS OF A LIMITED VOCABULARY

In some phases of banking, it would seem, such as in the handling of delinquent debtors, an extensive vocabulary of "strong" language, whose use is unhampered by any conscientious scruples, helps some. In fact, it is almost necessary. That this is the only place where the girl bank clerks are apt to fail, appeared to be the opinion of a manager who stated that he was well satisfied with the result of the experiment. Girls, he said, work out as well as men; are quick to adapt themselves, and appear anxious to familiarize themselves with the work. Women clerks did not so readily adapt themselves to meeting the public in a business way, as did men, but this was the natural result of centuries of home life. It would take a decade to overcome this difficulty. One large bank, which employs many more girls than this branch, reports than since the introduction of girl clerks the efficiency of the bank has increased, this manager said.

PERSONALITY AN ASSET

Personality counts greatly in the matter of success in banking, said another manager who had tried girl clerks out and found them generally satisfactory. As yet, however, the employment of girls was in the nature of an experiment. Some are poor, and some good. He had not found that social affairs interfered with business life; that is entirely a matter of personality. Matrimony has a tendency to interfere with women's success in their profession.

LOSE THEIR HEADS

That the women employés are working out very well, but cannot be placed in all departments, was the opinion of another manager. They can handle the books all right, but cannot be placed as tellers, since they feel their responsibility too keenly, and in the rush hours are apt to lose their heads, a serious matter when it comes to handling money. In the matter of promotion, this bank considers men first, on account of the possibility of matrimony interfering with their continuance in the work. Every bank, he said, must have three senior men, at least. Girls can do the other work. It would not be possible to keep the country branches open were it not for the girl clerks coming to the rescue.

"Too much experience," smilingly said another manager, when questioned as to whether he had had any experience in employing girl clerks. Some girls had been found wanting, while others had worked out well; on the whole they had worked out as well as the boys. "You cannot talk to girls the same as to boys; but they need less talking to," he said. No trouble had been experienced with girls discussing the bank's business, and he was satisfied they were in the banks to stay. Further, that as time goes on the banks will make openings for them. There is one drawback, however. Girls cannot stand the strain of long hours which the work sometimes demands, he said, and there seems to be a tendency on the part of girls, starting in, to consider that the work is light and the hours short. A knowledge of mathematics, an ability to make legible figures and write plainly are necessary qualifications. All inexperienced girls must start at the beginning. Women clerks take all the interest in the bank

necessary; all that is called for is an interest in their individual work. This they do take. There was no reason why they should not work up in the profession. In many cases, this manager had found that communications coming in from other banks were signed by women clerks for the managers.

Such is the opinion of the Edmonton bank managers, as to the introduction of women bank clerks brought about as a result of the war.

"Women bank clerks to be eliminated"[38] (June, 1921)

Making way for male employees, the Financial Post understands the tendency will be to eliminate the women bank clerks, and that as governing the immediate future, girl employees will not be favored in the service of Canadian banking institutions. The woman banker, while accepted as a success up to a certain position under the Canadian system of branch banking, after a six year test, has proved to be a serious stumbling block to the promotion system. Probably ninety per cent. of the women clerks will not accept transfers from branch to branch. As a result, the promotion system, as evolved out of a period of many years' Canadian banking practice, is said recently to have seriously broken down.

Among all the changes which business conditions of recent years brought about in Canadian banks, undeniably the most outstanding was the throwing open of new positions to women. Prior to the war, girls were not employed in Canadian banks in a clerking capacity. The depletion of staffs when the men went to the front first opened the way for women. The tremendous business expansion immediately following the cessation of war continued the need of retaining female workers to supplement [the male].

Complete figures have never been available [that] fully indicate the strength of women bankers in the Dominion, but that the ratio is considerable is indicated in the announcements of two of the larger banking institutions, one of which recently reported that of a staff of 2,300, more than 700 were women, and the other that of a staff of 1,300, some 400 were women.

Staffing of our banks was an acute problem in the first days of the reconstruction era. The overwhelming expansion of the branch system made serious inroads into the staffs. For this reason, the temporary staff engaged during the war period, in the full expectation of being released when the war stopped, was retained. The girls, however, remained upon the temporary staffs and for this reason may the more readily be released at this time.

BUSINESS HAS CONTRACTED

It is no secret that the volume of business passing through all Canadian banks, tremendously extended a year ago, has declined very appreciably. For many months now, too, the tendency has been to reduce rather than extend the number of operating branches. These very potent reasons, coupled, of course, with the situation generally

[38] From WOMEN BANK CLERKS TO BE ELIMINATED. (1921, June 24). *The Financial Post*, p. 12.

as concerning employment, has virtually forced upon bank executives the necessity of reducing staffs or keeping them at a minimum.

Canadian bankers in the past have been prone to retain as complete staffs as possible, in spite of periods of depression. Once a man entered the service of a Canadian bank, it came to be accepted that he would not be "let out" except for very urgent cause, or except at his own desire. For this reason, in adopting a general policy that has for its main decision the weeding out of the women employees, it is not believed our bankers will put drastic orders into effect. A well informed bank executive assured the Financial Post this week that the process of elimination was not designed to work a hardship upon any girl employee. It is readily conceded that many girls still in the banks were originally impelled to work from patriotic motives. Not actually in need of the income except for personal account, these young women will be quickly "weeded out." There will be the natural elimination of those girls who are about to marry, and who will no longer be retained in positions once they are wedded, as has been the case up to the present time. Gradually, all those young women not actually requiring employment will be released.

"Why look beyond this point?" questioned our banker-informant. "For by then, we very much hope, Canada will be harvesting a bumper crop which will react upon our banks in requiring every person with banking knowledge in Canada to be strenuously at work."

"Women bank clerks give place to men"[39] (September, 1921)

Owing to the fact that there are now plenty of men available for bank clerk positions, Vancouver girl clerks who came to the fore during the war are beginning noticeably to disappear. It is true that marriage has carried off some of them, but others are obliged to give way to the returned men.

Only recently, two of the highest paid women bank clerks in Vancouver received their congé[40], and their places will be filled by men.

Vancouver bank managers recently admitted that eventually the woman bank clerk would have to go, though girls who had rendered satisfactory service during the war and were dependent on their earnings, would probably be retained. Local women bank clerks generally, however, are not feeling very secure in their positions, it is said.

Heads of banks in Eastern Canada have intimated that they will not engage any more women to fill positions in their institutions, except as stenographers. This policy, it is announced, is not due to any deficiency on the part of women, who, the bankers point out, made good during the war, but is owing to the fact that young men are now available in large numbers. The young women who have rendered satisfactory service, however, will be retained as long as they desire to remain.

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[39] From Women Bank Clerks Give Place to Men. (1921, September 26). *Vancouver Daily World*, p. 7.
[40] That is, they were laid off. From the French word for 'time off', which is also used in the context of giving notice of the end of employment – "donner sa congé à".

"Their services would not be required"[41] (November, 1921)

WINNIPEG, Nov. 11. – In accordance with the general plans adopted by Canadian banks to return to pre-war basis, as it was declared women clerks held up the promotion system, ten women employés of a local bank this week received notice that their services would not be required after two weeks. It was stated that several of the girls were not depending upon their salaries for a livelihood and that more girls in a similar position would be let out soon.

[41] From WOMEN BANK CLERKS GET WALKING TICKET. (1921, November 12). *The Ottawa Journal*, p. 26.