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THERE can be no question of the importance of woman's position in today's world. It has to do with sociological as well as economic policies; it affects home life, and family life is the basis upon which democracies are built; it has to do with the future of the country's population, both in numbers and quality. Business, political and social problems present themselves with bewildering rapidity these days, and they cannot be solved without the closest teamwork between women and men. It is practicable here to offer only an enumeration of the factors involved, without attempting to pronounce judgment or lay down infallible rules. Even in this modest enterprise, any writer is entering a domain already strewn with the wreckage of hypotheses, haunted by the ghosts of long-ago prejudices, and menaced by present-day biases.

Detouring back through the old days when they used to give girls names like Patience and Prudence, it is interesting to read Lord Byron's opinion of women's place in the world: "They ought to mind home, and be well fed and clothed, but not mixed in society. Well educated, too, in religion, but to read neither poetry nor politics, nothing but books of piety and cookery."

In escaping from this, women passed through the industrial revolution, and though many denounce its defects and deplore its results, that revolution had a great deal to do with getting women into the world. The introduction of machinery, displacing hand skills formerly performed in the home, opened to women factory employment on a large scale. They expanded their ideas not only of what they themselves might be, but of what society could become. They grew in education, experience, and understanding of wide issues. It is true that industrialization posed new problems. Middle-class wives became "genteel", which means that they had nothing to do but keep up appearances amid useless lives, and this went on until they revolted, as in Ibsen's *Doll's House*. Generally, however, industrialization meant emancipation from the routine of subsistence housewifery.

Throughout all the economic changes which have taken place, there has run a deeper current. Women have not only widened their viewpoint, but they have become tired of "pulling the strings" unseen, and are fighting their way out into the open where they can

act as themselves, and not through men. It has been a difficult task, but the attitude of society toward women's education, capabilities, position and opportunities has undoubtedly changed in their favour. So long as women were tied down to one sphere no one had the opportunity to realize their possibilities for leadership, and though even today executives in all fields know the antagonism which is aroused by an attempt to place a woman in an important position hitherto held by a man, there are without doubt more chances open to women. The chief interest of the community is the carrying on of its life in the best way, and not in the maintenance of obsolete traditions, but the old ghosts are touchy, and may walk again if given provocation.

Speaking on emancipation platforms, women have been heard to deplore the fact that they are merely "zeros" in the arithmetical scale of life, but they are not nonentities at census time. Canada's census of 1941 recorded 1,328,489 single women 15 years of age or over, and 2,292,478 married women. This was an increase from 765,092 and 1,247,761 in 1911. The excess of males over females in Canada is 2.56 in each 100 population. Only two countries have greater excess of males over females, while 21 of the 31 countries listed in *Canada Year Book* have an excess of women: in England and Wales this excess reaches 4.22 women per hundred population. The birth-rate follows the same pattern. Canada, which stood 18th among the nations in crude birthrate in 1943, has had an average male birth-rate of around 51 per cent and female 49 per cent since 1926. Just as another sidelight, it is interesting to note that whereas there were only 2,255 women divorced or legally separated in 1911, there were 51,399 in 1941, and widows had increased from 178,961 to 345,378.

These statistics have, of course, much to do with consideration of the question whether women should work outside the home. Some of the prejudices are based upon the supposition that men are unalterably superior to women in every type of activity. It is particularly charged that the woman worker is less serious about working, less efficient, less business-like, less emotionally stable, and too likely to get married just as soon as she becomes useful in the factory, office or school. On the other hand, it is argued that women have learned in a matter of a few years jobs

which were in men's private province for centuries. As to being unbusiness-like, Edith Efron says in a New York Times Magazine article: "If men want women to cut out their arch behavior between the hours of 9 and 6, yet insist that they be cute little kittens mornings, evenings and week-ends, they will drive women workers into mass schizophrenia, or else they will browbeat the cultural cuteness out of them." A director of women personnel remarked that women have made offices more habitable. Their instinctive reaction on entering the usual office is to put pictures on the walls and flowers on their desks, because they spend most of their days in this place, and see no reason why it should look like a penitentiary. "The woman worker," says Miss Efron, "is scornful of the \$50-a-week men who sneer at her attempts to prettify her surroundings, because she has noticed that the first thing a \$50,000-a-year man does is to get himself a fancy office with rugs, wallpaper, flowers, pictures and a leather sofa."

Some objections to women workers go deeper than this. Lord Northcliffe declared in one of his frequent emphatic moments that women have no sense of responsibility unless you frighten them, and Field Marshal Montgomery refused to consider requests that he accredit English newspaperwomen to his armies on the Continent, though some of the best eyewitness accounts of conditions in released countries were being written by United States women journalists.

This leads to consideration of the much-advertised "battle of the sexes," in which men are exercised to prevent women getting between them and their base of operations, outreaching men by the very elements which are set down by philosophers as women's weaknesses. Dr. Alice I. Bryan of Columbia University put her finger on an important factor in the battle when she told a McGill University audience: "Man is much less dependent than formerly for the satisfaction of his material needs and his physical welfare upon the acquisition of a wife and the establishment of a household. At the same time, woman is also far less dependent upon man for economic support and protection, because the forces that have deprived her of her dominant role in the home have also made it possible for her to find employment and subsistence outside the family circle." It is not unusual, in battles, to find each side taking advantage of the other's handicaps, and men's greatest handicap seems to be tradition. It is not logical that an otherwise modern man-woman situation should be depicted as that of a medieval or even Victorian lady dependent for her sustenance and safety upon the favor of a chivalrous gentleman. On the other hand, is it logical to suppose, when men for centuries have taken toward women an attitude of chivalry, yielding them every advantage and form of protection, that upon entering business women can at once lay aside the habit of expecting favours of men? One secretary when asked: "Do you mean to say that girls come into business demanding equality of opportunity, intellectual recognition and pay, and in addition requiring deference according to an old code?" answered without a trace of hesitation: "Surely, why not?" Contrariwise, some women enter

business with a chip on their shoulders, suspecting little acts of chivalric intent and looking with a jaundiced eye on overtures for equality of work as either (1) activated by "ulterior motives", or (2) prompted by an attempt to get more work out of them.

Miss Byrne Hope Sanders sees no need for building barriers between men and women, but does stand up for wholesome co-operation. In an address at the annual meeting of the Y.W.C.A. in Montreal early this year she said: "It is only as partners that men and women can achieve anything stable for the national good." Parenthetically, Miss Sanders pointed out that until the war women's place in that partnership had been woefully weak due to their own apathy.

It is indisputable that in whatever activity they engage, men need women alongside them. Take Polti's 36 dramatic situations and their hundreds of variations covering every possibility for story, play and poem, stick a pin in a page at random, and the situation indicated is certain to have a woman in it. It was, to be sure, a cynic who once remarked that the road to success is filled with women, pushing their husbands in front of them. That may not be literally true, but it is known to everyone that the successful businessman, feted on his promotion, always rises to pass on the credit for his success to his wife. Woman brings to whatever work she does a sense of values that man rarely shows, and this sense of values makes woman revolt against anything that obstructs advancement. In short, women wish to progress in themselves and in their world; they realized long ago that in order to do so they must know more than just how to cook and sew and take care of babies and be tactful with their husbands; and today they are stepping out of their cloisters with a firm tread.

Consequent upon their growing sense of their value and importance, women are urging that they should have equality with men in both opportunity and reward. A sub-commission on the status of women told the United Nations Economic and Social Council in May that equality with men in all fields of human enterprise — political, civil, educational, social and economic — should be sought simultaneously. There is a growing conviction in democratic countries today that the only test in employing people on any work should be their efficiency.

Many women's organizations subscribe to the principle that wage rates for women should be the same as for men, including the entrance rate, and reason that it is basically unfair to pay one worker a lower wage than another for substantially the same work. Against this it is said that men's wages are higher because they support families, but today a large percentage of employed women also support dependents; in fact, the young unmarried man usually assumes less financial responsibility for the home than does his sister. Since the basis of payment in this country is not a "family wage" but a wage for the work done, it is argued that injecting difference of sex to justify lower scales is illogical.

The war gave women their first chance on a large scale to demonstrate dexterity at jobs which had always been considered "men's jobs." They used latent abilities and learned new skills. Colonel Margaret C. Eaton, O.B.E., Director-General of the Canadian Women's Army Corps, told the Canadian Manufacturers' Association annual meeting last year of the work her girls did at home and abroad. Many officers in Sicily and Italy viewed arrival of the Army women with grave doubts, said Colonel Eaton, but "the girls proved in a very short time that they could dig in and do a job."

Now that the world is back to peace, what is the position of women? Between November 1945 and February 1946, the number of women in the Canadian labour force fell by 136,000, indicative of the retirement of women from the labour market on a fairly large scale. At the same time, the male labour force grew by about 125,000. There were, in spring this year, 3,309,000 women, 14 years and over, who were tabulated as "non-workers" by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Of these, 2,731,000 were keeping house, 311,000 were going to school, 132,000 were permanently unable or too old to work, and 125,000 were retired or voluntarily idle.

A list of occupations open to women includes nearly the whole alphabet from accountancy to zoology. The United States Department of Labor has listed 1,050 industrial occupations out of 1,500 as suitable for women, and an additional 350 as "practically suitable." Much of the change in acceptability of women in industry is due to wise management, which is concentrating on fitting conditions of work to the needs of the workers, and is realizing more and more that deftness in execution may more than make up for lack of strength.

The influx of women into office occupations during the last few decades was one of the most phenomenal of the economic changes transforming the lives of women during that period. There are in Canada today 80,000 women stenographers and typists, who are taking an increasing part of the responsibility in business. But the importance of office occupations is not to be rated in numerical terms only. They have a strong social significance because of the psychological connotations which have come to be attached to them. They are accompanied by freedom of association and conversation with men co-workers and with executives, and they provide the opportunity to learn at first-hand about the broad lines of the economic and social system which could never be adequately assimilated second or third hand.

Teaching in the public schools has become essentially a woman's vocation. Out of 74,000 teachers in Canadian public and high schools in 1943, 79 per cent were women. Similar progress has not been made in universities, where the proportion of women teachers is only 14 per cent in a total of 6,800. However, staid old Vassar broke precedent this spring when Sarah Gibson Blanding was named president.

Though women constitute the majority of all workers in the health and medical fields, among physicians they are relatively few. The 1941 Census recorded only 142 women physicians and surgeons in Canada. The effects of the war, which increased the demand for women physicians, have not yet projected far enough into peace to give an indication of their permanency. Nursing, of course, has no near rival as the largest single occupation for women in the health and medical services. Nurses with specialized training, such as in anesthesia, have commanded premium salaries, and specialization also leads to higher remuneration in private practice. Although there seems to be no obvious reason for their scarcity, women dentists are relatively few, but some have specialized in the care of children's teeth, in orthodontics, and in public health work.

Domestic service was, not so long ago, looked upon as the natural position of women seeking work. This spring, thousands of advertisements carried in Canadian newspapers offered wages ranging from \$40 to \$70 monthly. Because this is smaller than girls earned in war plants, and because the hours are longer, the displaced women workers are looking for industrial jobs.

Farm women hold a position of first importance, based upon the significance of agriculture in the economy of the country. Under war conditions young women left the farms, and the older women have been bearing intolerable burdens. There are, on Canadian farms, 800,000 women between 14 and 64 years of age, and many organizations are seeking ways of making life easier for them. The principal needs are: electrification, water supply, communications, improved housing, health service, education, remunerative enterprises, and recreation.

Homemakers are in a peculiar position. They contribute so much to the family, community and state, yet are classed roughly as non-workers because they appear in a column of statistics headed "not in gainful occupations." One homemaker has kept a scientific record for 15 years. She has proved to her own satisfaction that the average woman who prepares meals, cans, preserves, bakes, and launders at home, for her own family, produces substantially the equal value of the man's economic contribution in industry. Men who think back over the past six years will realize the wonderful job their womenfolk have done in spreading thin and making ends meet.

The responsibilities of women as contributors to the family exchequer are considerably larger than many persons have realized. The idea with regard to employment of women most frequently expressed by women workers is that jobs should be distributed on the basis of need, but this raises the intricate problem of determining what is need. Single women who live with their families, or live alone, have obvious obligations. Many single women must provide for aged parents and young brothers and sisters. Many older women, widowed or divorced, work to support themselves, because they refuse to become dependent upon grown-up children who have responsibilities of their own.

Married women working outside the home form a comparatively small group, but it is the centre of never-ending controversy. Grace L. Coyle, of Columbia University, said in an article in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* some years ago: "Unmarried women in the offices regard them as unfair competitors who should leave the field to the girl who has no other support." A director of women personnel was quite definite in stating that married women cannot be depended upon in the same way as unmarried workers. They are more independent in their attitudes, less friendly with their fellow workers, more quick to show strain, and less punctual. It is, therefore, possible that what a married woman worker thinks of as discrimination because of her marriage is really her inability to hold a job due to softening of her keenness, closed personality, or other cause affecting her work.

The situation in regard to continued employment of women, now that the wartime crisis has passed, was summed up by the Department of Labour in a survey report in December: "Women plan to withdraw from the labour force in large part only if their husbands secure relatively high incomes." On the other hand, many have a toe-hold which they are reluctant to relinquish, particularly since they see, as never before, women reaching heights formerly thought unattainable for the sex. Man may have invented the wheel, the plumb line, and the first cutting edge of metal, but we may be sure it was woman who saw to it that these discoveries were turned to civilized uses. Every mother knows how her son, playing with gadgets, is satisfied when something "works" and drops it for a new project, without applying it.

Good as her record has been, woman cannot sit back placidly and depend upon laws or upon forces already in motion to carry her to any desired goal. This is pertinently illustrated by the situation in Montreal last March, when there were 8,000 jobs open for women and 4,000 women drawing unemployment insurance benefits. The newspaper report said: "Many of the 200 work-seekers who daily visit the National Employment Service Women's Division want only office jobs, yet they have not the education to fit them for such positions." Parents have to bear a certain part of the responsibility for such a situation, because they have failed to persuade their daughters to obtain the right kind of education. When a gainful occupation is regarded as a temporary experience, or as a fill-in between school and marriage, the tendency is to take anything that offers itself, without wasting time or money in learning. Many girls are in search of romance mixed with a minimum of work, like the sisters in *Eve Langley's "Not Yet the Moon."* But life persists in insisting upon choices between this and that, and the sense of frustration besetting women—and men—is brought about not because the world is discriminating against them, but because they chose something else instead of education and preparation.

All of this has been about women in everyday work. There is a wider field in which women are pressing forward. Support of the women of the world is essential to success of the United Nations, and recognition of this fact is being called for. In May, a message was presented to the secretary-general of the United Nations by Mrs. Merrill Denison and Mme. Jan Papanek, in which it was said: "the importance of women as the molders of public opinion in every country is not yet taken sufficiently into account by the man-made committees of international organizations." In her presidential address at the annual meeting of the National Council of Women of Canada last year, Mrs. Edgar D. Hardy, C.B.E., declared: "Who in the main carries out all programs dealing with health, social welfare, nutrition, etc., but women; at least all man-made legislation on these questions would go pretty well by the board unless energetic women saw to it that such legislation is carried out."

In his "Republic" Plato remarks: "Woman has all the talents man has, and should share the same offices," but women won the vote in the Dominion in 1918, and has woman achieved all she hoped for in these 28 years? Dr. Charlotte Whitton points out, in an article in *Saturday Night*, that it is on the home front of the municipality, where Britain's elected women number thousands, that "Canadian women exhibit their gravest indolence and impotence." After tabulating the small numbers of women engaged in municipal governments and councils, Dr. Whitton adds: "Canadian women could be lifted out of the cellar position they now occupy in western democracy within 24 months, were even a small group of determined, informed women to assume responsibility for mobilizing and training a few 'commandos'." Most people would be heartily in favor if women, exercising their political power (51 per cent of those eligible to vote in Canada are women) can end the wandering amid alarms and unrest in the world. After all, women are given credit for the founding of Rome, where it is said they burned the ships in which they were tired of wandering, and sought to keep the men ashore to build a city.

People have a persistent habit of differing in their opinion of what is best. Some women like things exactly as they are, and want to keep them that way: they think that the male of the species has the problems well in hand. Others wish to leap the whole gap of milleniums in the space of a few years. Whatever opinion is held, this seems to be a good time to take stock. What have women gained as individuals by the social, economic, educational and political changes which have resulted from new education, new freedoms and new opportunities? Has the modern woman kept her sense of balance and proportion? The whole question seems to boil down to one very simple query: Have things been managed so that the woman of today knows how to be happier than her mother and her grandmother?