

Others, for an extra wage, will wash dishes, mend and sometimes cook and take over for a week-end. In most cities, a home-maker's service is available in case of illness, and visiting nurses will also come to the house when necessary.

The housewife's job has also been made easier by the "shopping centre". Even quite new suburban communities are now being served by specially-built centres which usually include a self-service food store, a bank, a hair-dressing salon, a dry-cleaning business, a drugstore, and often a branch of a big department store. Such centres usually have large parking lots, which means that many housewives need rarely go into the heart of the city.

The shopping centre has become a social meeting place, rather like the village well in Asia or the back fence in small towns, at which busy women talk together for a few minutes. This is particularly true of the cash-and-carry chain store, where the shoppers themselves select the merchandise they want to buy. A large variety of food is carefully packaged and displayed on convenient shelves in these "super-markets". Wire express wagons, often with a seat for a baby, are supplied at the door. Women wheel them round as they help themselves to cereals, canned goods, frozen fish and vegetables, milk, cheese, and a great variety of cake and biscuit mixes. Large meat-counters hold all cuts of meat already weighed and wrapped in cellophane, but butchers are also in attendance to supply special demands. Improved storage and transportation methods make it possible for Canadian housewives to have a supply of fresh vegetables and fruits throughout the year.

Voluntary Organizations

Canadian women are making a great contribution to the life of the country through membership in voluntary organizations. Many farm women belong to the Women's Institutes, which are affiliated with the Associated Country Women of the World. The Women's Institutes were started in Canada by Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless, of Stoney Creek, Ontario, who felt that farm women could help themselves to be more efficient wives and mothers by getting together to study nutrition, hygiene and home economics. For many months, she travelled about the country lecturing to small groups of women. The idea caught on and spread not only to every part of Canada but to 40 other countries. In 1964, there were 4000 Women's Institutes in Canada with a membership of 75,000 women.

City housewives often belong to such organizations as church bodies, parent-teacher groups, reading clubs or service clubs which require members to do voluntary work for the community every week. Many women who do not belong to a service club register with a volunteer bureau run by the Council of Social Agencies; in due course, they are placed where their particular skills can do most good. Canadian volunteers are busy taking case histories in hospitals, driving crippled children to clinics, doing group work in the YWCA, assisting in Red Cross blood-donors' clinics, and helping with group work activities and a score of other projects. Women also earn money for worthwhile projects by putting on bazaars, running second-hand clothing stores and organizing charity balls and theatrical entertainment. Every year, an army of volunteers canvass for social and service agencies dependent on public subscriptions for support.

The National Council of Women, the Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the University Women's Clubs and the Canadian Association of Consumers are highly efficient pressure groups that can be credited with persuading the federal, provincial and municipal governments to bring in many needed reforms.