

In the East (Quebec, the Atlantic Provinces and Ontario), "mixed farming" on small holdings is usual and the farm wife still performs the traditional chores of growing the vegetables, feeding the chickens and collecting the eggs. "Egg money" is one of her time-honoured sources of private income.

On the other hand, on the prairies of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, farms ranging from 300 to several thousand acres are often entirely mechanized, so that the farmer's wife need do little more out-of-door work than she would if she lived in the suburbs of an urban community. The same is true of the wife of the man operating a big cattle ranch in the foothill country of Alberta. When times are good, many Western farmers and their wives travel during the winter months or move into town until it is time for spring seeding.

Of course, the many women living in the far North or in sparsely-populated parts of the country lead a restricted social life, especially in the winter; but, because of the radio and the aeroplane, they are no longer cut off as in the past.

City Housewives

An ever-increasing number of Canadian women now live in towns and cities. Many young married couples occupy a small apartment in "centre town" during their first years of marriage until they have saved enough money for the down-payment on a house, usually in the suburbs. Home ownership is important to family security as well as to social prestige. Often, when the family has grown up, older couples move back from the suburbs to a city apartment.

The average Canadian house has four or five rooms and is either detached or semi-detached. In a climate where heating is needed for eight out of the 12 months, the cost of fuel is an important item in the budget, so that most Canadian homes have small rooms and are only two storeys high. In recent years, "ranch-style bungalows" and "split-level" one-and-a-half storey houses have become popular, even though they cost more to heat.

As of May 1963, 98.7 Canadian housewives out of 100 had electricity; 82.6 per cent had either gas or an electric cooking stove; 90.9 per cent had a furnace that burnt gas, coal or oil; 94.2 per cent had an electric refrigerator; 86.8 had an electric washing machine; 92.4 had running water; 96.3 per cent had a radio and 89.8 per cent television; and 87.3 per cent had a telephone.

Most Canadian women do their own housework and look after their own children. The cook-general and nursemaid have practically vanished from the scene, and those few who do remain demand such high wages that few housewives can afford to employ them. As a result, even business girls living alone in apartments do their own domestic chores, perhaps with help of a weekly cleaning woman, as do the mothers of large families in every walk of life. Visitors from other countries are often surprised to find that the wives of many cabinet ministers, top civil servants and highly-paid executives do their own housework. In some cases, women wishing to entertain rely on persons paid by the hour to cook and serve a meal or cater for a reception.

The "baby sitter" has taken the place of the nursemaid of the past. High-school and college students of both sexes, older women or housewives, who want to earn a few dollars a week without being tied down, will visit a house to stay with the children when their parents go out. Many "baby sitters" are only willing to sit in the livingroom reading, doing lessons or watching television.