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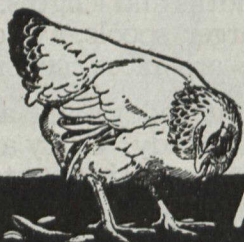


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# Building the New World

And the Part Women Will Play In It

By MARJORIE MacMURCHY



HAVE been asked to state briefly what part Canadian women have in Reconstruction.

What is Reconstruction? Its meaning is changing constantly. It stands for more to the world to-day than it did a month ago. Reconstruction, in the first year of the War, was a plan for the rebuilding of the destroyed parts of Belgium and France.

In its fullest meaning, Reconstruction may be stated to be the comprehensive effort to reorganize ourselves for better work, better social conditions and better spiritual life.

The material, intellectual and spiritual determination of the democratic half of our race to prove that it is fit to survive in this new world, and that it will succeed in making the new world better than the old, is the dynamic impetus behind the highest conception of Reconstruction. We are witnessing and sharing the cumulative effort of the soul of democracy to save itself from annihilation.

Why does Reconstruction mean more now than it did last year? Why is it more imperative? Because this is the day of the last man and the last dollar which must win the war, and help to build the new world. Every national activity must be kept at its best, as far as possible, to maintain the economic strength which is directly and perilously involved in this death struggle.

Democracy is calling on its reserve of free women. This, one believes, is in reality the underlying reason for the enfranchisement of women in democratic countries. We are being given every possible freedom to serve. To serve to the best advantage, we must have a clear understanding of national economic problems. How shall we get this clear understanding? First, by being interested; then, by study and reading; and by good honest thinking.

The German conception is that the individual exists for the State. The result of this conception is to be found in the uses to which Germany puts her armies, destroying and dehumanizing millions of individual men—not that freedom may live, but for material power.

The conception of free people is that the state exists for the individual. But to justify this conception and save civilization, the free individual must be unselfish, co-operative, a better individual, man for man and woman for woman, than the state-owned man and woman.

What will happen?

If democracy is less productive and more extravagant than autocracy?

If our free co-operation is less thorough and effective than their state-owned single management?

### For Us To Answer

**E**VERY Canadian woman must answer these questions. She must answer them as an individual. She must answer them in her home. She must answer them in the nation as a citizen.

The material well-being of the homes of Canada, and of individual men and women, depends on sound national economic conditions. The Canadian contribution to the stability of democracy will be great or less according to the strength of these economic conditions. These are:—

The control and development of our own natural resources.

Increasing production in manufactures, agriculture, mining, fishing and forestry.

The conservation of wealth by thrift.

Ample capital for use in production and development.

Sound national finance.

An export trade to pay national debts and of a character to promote the employment of Canadians in Canada.

An import trade which will further the development of industry and employment in Canada, and which will not create merely unproductive debt.

The friendly and effective co-operation of Labor and Capital.

Wages, housing and standards of living which will endure national well-being and efficiency.

The encouragement of ability in management and genius in organization and initiative.

A sufficient reward or incentive to encourage the individual to put forth his and her best powers.

To work for a right solution of any of these economic problems is to be engaged in Reconstruction.

It is of the utmost importance that reconstructive plans should be practical, and should work efficiently. No social advance can be secured permanently unless supported by right economic conditions. Premier Hughes of Australia, says that the welfare of labor depends on a sound economic basis. Reconstruction can only be effectively planned with a practical knowledge of democratic human nature, free, independent, resentful of control, liberty loving, yet progressively capable of co-operation, self-centred and strongly endowed with the instincts of self-preservation, yet highly idealistic and ready to lay down all that it has—its life—in the crusade of humanity.

What persuades Canadian women to grapple strongly with these economic problems? Love of Canadian men, women and children, love of home and country, love of humanity. Economic problems will tend more and more to become daily considerations in the Canadian woman's life.

There remains the intellectual reconstruction of education, the fitting of school training to life for boys and girls, and the application of scientific research to industry.

Spiritual reconstruction is to be found in a league of good will. It is absolutely necessary for Canadian women to inaugurate good will in Canada, between country and city, English and French, East and West, Liberal and Conservative. The future of the nation requires it. We are as yet only at the beginning of intellectual and spiritual reconstruction.

If democracy is to build the New World on lasting foundations, we must serve God, humanity and our country with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength and with all our mind.

These are but the plain teachings of what we call common sense. The war has made them the plain truths of democracy. It used to be thought that Reconstruction could be left until after the War. This is a mistake. Reconstruction must win the war.

### If Everywoman's World Is Late

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Miss Marjorie MacMurchy, who is Planning Reconstruction

Photo by Minna Keene, F.R.P.S.