

What the Canadian Girl Learns at School

By MARJORY MacMURCHY

AN inquiry into the efficiency of the Canadian girl wage-earner, the result of which was published in the Canadian Courier for May 4th, 11th, 18th, and August 10th, 1912, convinced the writer that low wages are to some extent the consequence of lack of earning power on the part of the girl at work. This is no excuse for the employer who underpays. The Canadian Courier is a constant advocate of the minimum wage for women. It seems more than probable that minimum wage legislation will be a powerful remedy against the poverty and hardship of the wage-earner.

The more intimately, however, the writer becomes acquainted with the circumstances of individual girls who are wage-earners the more she is impressed with the good chance of the girl with knowledge of a certain character and the poor chance of the girl who is without this knowledge. The girl who knows enough to keep herself in good health and fit for her work, who knows what to eat, when to rest, how to buy clothes and something about making them, who knows how to get her money's worth when she spends her wages, is practically certain to do well, even if she has no craft or trade training. She has the essential knowledge. The wage-earning girl who is without this knowledge cannot get on.

THE serious condition of affairs which we have to face in Canada is that the average girl wage-earner, and the average girl as well who is not a wage-earner, are poorly equipped in regard to this knowledge. The writer hopes to convince the readers of the Canadian Courier that under present conditions the average girl can be given this knowledge most effectively only in the public schools. A system of public school instruction has grown up in all parts of the English-speaking world which takes almost no cognizance of the fact that girls have a special need for knowledge of this kind.

Let us try, from an unprejudiced point of view, to come to a conclusion as to what girls, if they are to be useful women, most need to know. The most important knowledge for a woman is the care and nurture of infants. How to make and keep herself in health, and how to maintain and promote the good health of others, is the next requirement in the equipment of a woman. Knowing how to prepare food and plan meals is a part of the woman's health and efficiency knowledge. Knowing how to spend money, how to buy, is the next essential for the woman. To this should be added some knowledge of the making of clothes and millinery. It is practically impossible for the average woman without this last-named knowledge to make the best use of money. An understanding of the buying value of money, and the proper division of an income, whether of an individual or a household, is knowledge that the average woman requires to-day so wholly, and so differently from years ago that it seems strange no plan has yet been devised to give the buying value of money a place in school—or even in home—instruction.

These are not the only subjects on which girls need to receive instruction. But consider how poorly the average woman is equipped for her business in life who is without this special knowledge. On the other hand, a man may be efficient without much knowledge of any of these subjects, although some knowledge is desirable, for neither men nor women do their best without help from the other side of the house.

LET anyone who does not agree that a girl needs teaching on these subjects consider whether a boy who had as little training for any particular occupation as the average girl often has for her particular occupation, would be likely to succeed, unless he had more than average ability. It is not wise to plan everyone's school for the exceptional person. Our public schools are what we have made them.

In no spirit of fault-finding, the statement is made that our public school curriculum, generally speaking, is planned to show the attractiveness of clerical and professional occupations. The public school prepares for the high school and the high school for the university. The public school curriculum—in all probability quite unconsciously—develops the attractiveness of city life as against the attractiveness, which is not shown, of country life. It is generally conceded that the public school curriculum should show the attractiveness of other occupations as well as of clerical and professional callings; and that the school curriculum should certainly be planned to do justice to the attractiveness of country life.

HAS ANYONE CONSIDERED THAT OUR SCHOOL LIFE HAS ALWAYS TENDED, AND IS TENDING NOW, TO MAKE THE SPECIAL WORK OF WOMEN SEEM UNATTRACTIVE AND UNIMPORTANT?

LET us see what girls are taught in the public schools. Take the lessons taught in the junior and senior fourth classes, considering work required from girls of fourteen and fifteen with sufficient accuracy for our purpose. The reason for taking these classes is because we want to arrive at what the average girl is taught before she leaves school. Statistics, generally speaking, are very difficult to get in Canada. In the United States, school

authorities say that seven per cent. only of children who attend public schools become pupils in high schools. In Canada, in one instance at least, it is reckoned that ten per cent. only of the children attending public schools ever become high school pupils. Making generous allowance, both in age and in numbers, one is safe in saying that from 80 per cent. to 90 per cent. of Canadian boys and girls leave school between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. The curriculum of the junior and senior fourth classes gives what the average Canadian girl is taught at school before she goes to work or is employed at home. The curriculum taken is that of the Toronto public schools, which may fairly be regarded as representative.

The school week numbers 25 hours, from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon, with an interval of an hour and a half at noon, five hours a day. Please remember that you are considering how a girl of about fourteen spends her hours in school from nine till four, five days in the week:

Arithmetic, 3 3-4 hours	15%
Physical Exercise, 25 minutes	1 2-3%
Reading and Literature, 3 3-4 hours	15%
(45 minutes for Scripture reading.)	
Writing, Gymnastics, 25 minutes	1 2-3%
Recess, 2 1-12 hours	8 1-3%
History, 1 1-3 hours	5 1-3%
Geography, 1 1-3 hours	5 1-3%
Drawing, 1 1-6 hours	4 2-3%
Spelling, 1 2-3 hours	6 2-3%
Grammar, 1 1-2 hours	6%
Composition, 2 1-4 hours	9%
Music, 5-6 hour	3 1-3%
Nature Study, 1 hour	4%
Needlework, 1-2 hour	2%
Hygiene, 1-2 hour	2%
Writing and Business Forms, 2 1-12 hours	8 1-3%
Domestic Science, 5-6 hour	3 1-3%
Special Teaching, 1 1-4 hours	5%
Closing Exercises, 5-12 hour	1 2-3%

Total 100%
(Concluded on page 15.)

IN TIME OF PEACE, REMEMBERING WAR

A Patriotic Ceremony on the Battlefield of Beaver Dams, June 24th.



The 12th York Rangers from Niagara Camp did a "feu de joie" and march past, and patriotic speeches were delivered by United Empire Loyalists in honour of the heroes in the most historic battle of 1813.



Chief David Sky, of the Mohawks, about to shake hands with Lieut.-Col. G. Sterling Ryerson, when the President of the United Empire Loyalist Association was made honorary chief of the tribe, with the title "Rah-de-vi-yohs," which means "Great Warrior."