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WOMEN IN CANADA

(Prepared by the Women's Bureau, Department of Labour, Ottawa.)

Since the Second World War, advances in medicine and technology, the development of mass communications, growing urbanization and broader educational opportunities have had an important effect on the lives of Canadian men and women.

Women represent about 50 per cent of the population of Canada, which is approaching 22,600,000. This percentage rises in the over-50 age-group, of which women make up about 56 per cent.

Women in rural and urban areas

Canada has an area of over 3.8 million square miles, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west and extending north as far as the Arctic Ocean. This vast region includes mountains and wooded areas, broad plains where grain is grown and cattle are raised, areas that are highly industrialized and others that are almost uninhabited.

Most of Canada's population lives in a corridor 100 to 200 miles wide along its southern border. Several hundred miles further north are isolated centres most of whose inhabitants are engaged in mining, lumbering or energy development.

The social and material conditions of rural women are, on the whole, similar to those of city women. Nearly all Canadian families have radio, telephone, television, running water, an electric or gas stove and a refrigerator. About three-quarters have a car and some two-thirds own their own homes.

In addition, now that new highways and improved means of transportation have made travel easier, contact between the country and the city is more frequent than in the past and, thanks to radio and television, women in rural areas are much less isolated, except in very remote places.

Education For several decades it has been compulsory for boys and girls to attend primary and secondary school until the age of 15 or 16, depending on the provinces in which they live. However, a considerable increase in the number of women entering university has been observed in recent years. In 1962-1963, women represented 27.9 per cent of Canada's bachelor of arts graduates. Ten years later,

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