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Qualified Encouragement and Conditional Acceptance:  
Advertising Directed at Women During World War Two

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## Abstract

This thesis is an analysis of advertising directed at Canadian women that appeared in Canadian publications during World War Two. The reaction advertisers had to women's new wartime roles reveals much about what they believed was appropriate for women. Wartime advertisements often appeared quite progressive in their portrayal of women at first glance. However, a closer look reveals that many advertisements contained ideas about women that were quite traditional, even if the surface image seemed progressive. Commercial and government advertisements have been analysed separately and this separate analysis reveals several differences between the two. Commercial advertisements encouraged consumption and presented it as an aid to women doing war work and to help them stay feminine while government advertisements stressed thrift and portrayed women as capable participants in the war effort. Despite this reliance on the traditional, much that is positive can be seen in advertising's wartime portrayal of women.

## Thesis Introduction

Canada required a great deal from its women during the Second World War. They had to take on many of the roles that had previously been filled by men, make due with smaller quantities of the items they used to run their households and in some cases, do without things they had once taken for granted. As a result, Canadian women had to change the way they lived their lives. The people, organizations and businesses who played a role in women's lives also had to adjust in order to respond to these changes. This was the case for advertisers whose job was to sell their products and services to women. Wartime advertisements directed at women were shaped by the reactions advertisers had to the changes taking place in women's lives. The resulting advertisements often presented more than one message as advertisers tried to sell their products and maintain demand for them, and at the same time show their support to women in all of their many wartime roles.

On the surface many wartime advertisements appeared to be very progressive. Advertisers needed to show consumers that they supported them, but these advertisements also suggested that advertisers were only offering their approval and support on a temporary basis. Many advertisers had traditional beliefs as far as women were concerned and these beliefs could be seen in the way advertisers approached the changes brought by the war. This approach included embracing what women were doing but at the same time suggesting that they could not handle their new roles without the assistance of the product being advertised. Suggesting women's new roles could be a threat to women's femininity unless they purchased the product being advertised was

another means of doing this. While this progressive approach regarding women's new roles seems merely a temporary stance taken in a time of need, it does suggest that advertisers were willing to see women as more than homemakers and mothers, even if they were only willing to present women in this way under emergency conditions.

The two main types of publicity that targeted women were commercial and government advertisements. These two types of advertisements approached the changes the war brought to women's lives in different ways. Commercial advertisers wanted women to spend their money on the products the companies had to offer. This involved creating a perceived need, focusing on an existing one or maintaining loyalty even if the war necessitated limiting or completely removing their products from the market. Government advertisers also wanted women to give them money, but for a different reason. The various war related departments of the government needed financial help from Canadian citizens and often targeted women, who were the main purchasers in Canadian families, in order to get them to put aside money from their household budgets to help with the war effort. Government advertisers needed more than just money from Canadian women. Government advertisements also asked women for material donations in the form of household scraps and womanpower in the form of war jobs and service in the armed forces. These complex needs required government advertisers to approach women on a variety of levels beyond the financial. It is hoped that this thesis provides greater insight into the approach taken by advertisers, both commercial and government, regarding advertising directed at women during World War Two.

Advertising was touted as an important way for women to obtain information about more than just consumer goods, including what was popular and how to behave in

certain social situations. Women were encouraged to study advertisements in magazines and newspapers carefully before going shopping in order to get this information. In turn, magazines and newspapers reminded advertisers that women were the main consumers in Canada and therefore the primary targets for advertising. Advertisers wanted a consumer based society and needed or believed that they needed women in traditional roles as consuming homemakers or working girls who would eventually take on the homemaker role in order to sell products. Advertisers saw the war and the changes it brought to women's lives as temporary, something to be dealt with and embraced without leaving traditional roles behind. This point of view was especially popular among those advertisers whose products ceased to be available during the war. These companies tried to hold women's attention and attract new consumers to their products with patriotic claims and support for women's war effort. Once an end to the war was in sight advertisers created advertisements portraying women giving up their wartime roles and eagerly anticipating a future as a homemaker in a house full of the latest appliances and household gadgets.

The advertisements that were analyzed for this thesis were collected from a variety of newspapers and magazines for the time period of 1938 and September 1939 to May 1945 when the majority of war related advertisements were no longer used in publications. Newspapers and magazines from 1938 were used in order to ascertain how advertisers used their advertisements to target women prior to the Second World War and for what products. Doing this revealed how much or how little advertisements changed once the war began in terms of advertising messages and whether or not advertisers who traditionally sold their products to men switched their sales pitches to women as a result

of the war. Advertisements from every issue of the magazines and the Monday and Friday issues of each week from the seven newspapers chosen were analysed for the time period chosen for this study. The Monday and Friday issues were chosen because they represented both the beginning and the end of the week and it was believed that this would offer a wider range of advertisements. The magazines used were Maclean's, a magazine with general readership and Chatelaine and Canadian Home Journal, magazines with female readerships. The newspapers used were from major cities across the country. These newspapers were as follows: the Halifax Chronicle, the Montreal Gazette, the Ottawa Citizen, the Toronto Star, the Winnipeg Free Press, the Calgary Herald and the Vancouver Sun. Unfortunately, the Montreal Star which had the highest circulation of all newspapers in Canada was overlooked and should have been included. This was an error on the author's part as she was not familiar with this newspaper. While these newspapers provide a cross section of the nation and its regions, the thesis is limited somewhat in that only English language advertisements were analyzed. This was done because the author did not feel that her comprehension of the French language was not strong enough for the quality of analysis that was required for the thesis. As a result, French advertisements directed at Canada's French speaking population are absent from this thesis.

From all of the advertisements analysed, seven illustrations were chosen to be used in this thesis as examples of the advertisements that depicted women both in 1938 and during the war. These advertisements were chosen both for their content and because they were found in Maclean's or Chatelaine magazines, whose page layouts presented the advertisements in a manner that provided the best quality for reproduction.

Chapter one of this thesis is a historiography of the work that has been done on this subject and related topics by other historians, both from Canada and from other countries. The majority of the research done on this topic has been done for other countries and the purpose of this thesis has been to expand on this topic from a Canadian perspective. The second chapter provides some background for the thesis by looking at the advertising industry during the 1930s and how women were targeted as consumers at this time. Chapter three provides a depiction of women as consumers during the war. The chapter discusses women's needs as consumers as well as the limitations they faced when shopping as a result of the war. The fourth chapter is an analysis of commercial advertisements that looks at the different approaches advertisers took regarding the changes the war brought to women's lives. The various approaches included being cheerleaders for patriotic women by encouraging them to keep the home front going and build up morale among their fellow Canadians. Other approaches involved stressing that women were frail and needed to overcome this weakness, highlighting anxieties that existed about gender norms and claiming that the products in the advertisements could alleviate these problems, and discussing the need to return to pre-war normality. The fifth chapter is an analysis of the publicity produced by the Canadian Government. These advertisements tried to encourage women to get involved in the war effort by purchasing War Savings Certificates and Stamps, saving household scraps and other material vital to the war effort, taking war jobs and joining the armed services.

Looking at several other questions could further the discussion of this topic. The role of the Canadian government in propaganda during the war could be considered in order to ascertain whether or not it had an influence on the advertisements produced by

advertisers. What kind of involvement, if any did the Wartime Information Board have with advertising during the war? Were Canadian advertisers involved in the WIB and did they voluntarily make adjustments to their advertisements based upon the work of the WIB? Advertisements were also present in other media, especially radio which was seen as a threat to print media's share of advertising revenue during the era discussed in this thesis. Were advertisements created for radio drastically different from those in the print media or was there little change? Did radio allow advertisers to be more creative and progressive than print media did or was it more constraining for advertisers? Was the movement during 1944 and 1945 to encourage women to abandon their jobs and return to the home merely an attempt by advertisers to get women to buy the products considered necessary to be a successful housewife, or were they actually trying to help the government ensure that there were enough jobs for the returning veterans? How long did this single - minded message that women were expected to be in the home and not in the work force remain the theme in Canadian advertising? There may have been a return in advertising to the dual message regarding women being both in the home and the work force during the mid 1950s that bears investigation. Another dimension of this topic that has not been addressed in this thesis is French language advertisements. Were advertisements in French merely translated copies of English ones or did they reflect ideas about the war and women's place in society that were unique to those who lived in French speaking regions of Canada? It is likely that both types of advertisements existed and an analysis of these advertisements would be quite interesting.

## Chapter One – Historiography

When discussing the impact of the Second World War on women historians have considered various aspects of the war. Much attention has been given to the experiences of women who took jobs in the war industry, the armed services and other areas that had traditionally been reserved for men. Historians have also studied life on the home front, women's volunteer activities and a variety of other topics. Some consideration has also been given to media and advertising in the combatant nations and their motives and impact where women were concerned. The majority of historians who have addressed this issue have focussed on countries other than Canada, most often looking at advertising and the media in the United States. Some attention has been given to the reaction of the Canadian media to women's involvement in the war and to a lesser extent this has been done for Canadian advertising directed at women. However, a more in depth study, including an analysis of the different types of wartime advertising and the messages used in advertisements to target women is lacking.

Historians have concluded that the desire of media and advertising to maintain a conservative image of womanhood directed their portrayal of women during all stages of the war. Even when they were praising the new accomplishments of women, it was done in a way that kept traditional womanhood firmly in place. Historians have differing opinions as to the way in which this was done but for the most part they agree that little changed for women from their recruitment into the war effort until the campaign to get them to return home, even when on the surface things appeared otherwise.

Some historians see little that was positive about the reaction media and advertisers had to the changes that were taking place in women's lives. These historians

contend that advertisers and the media reacted to this situation by refusing to acknowledge any of the changes that were brought to women's lives by the war.

Historians such as Maureen Honey and Yvonne Mathews – Klein accuse advertisers and the media of trivializing women's wartime activities and refusing to recognize that the skill level of women when participating in these activities was equal to that of men.

Karen Anderson also suggests that emphasis was placed on traditional female roles and non – traditional roles were dismissed as merely a temporary and insignificant aberration that would quickly be left behind at war's end.

Historians have shown that advertisers and the media had certain expectations about how women should live their lives. How advertisers and the media reacted to the changes taking place was often connected to their interest in marketing themselves to people, especially women. In her book Creating Rosie the Riveter – Class, Gender, and Propaganda During World War II Maureen Honey claims that American advertisers wanted to stay within conventional social frameworks and avoid addressing the changes women were experiencing because they could not afford to alienate any potential customers. Advertisers tried to connect their products with what they believed were the popular dreams of women. Honey suggests that much can be learned from the symbols used in advertisements about the common fantasies that were held by women at this time.<sup>1</sup>

Honey explains that the campaign to recruit women into war production was part of a larger drive to turn the home front into an economic army that was well disciplined, extremely motivated by patriotism and willing to make sacrifices for the good of

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<sup>1</sup> Maureen Honey, Creating Rosie the Riveter – Class, Gender, and Propaganda During World War II (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1984) 16.

American soldiers. This all-consuming goal of World War Two propaganda encompassed the campaign to recruit women and had a major role in shaping its direction.<sup>2</sup> While some recruitment propaganda informed the public that being biased against women who worked in nontraditional occupations was wrong and that they did not need to choose between family and a job, less progressive ideas about women's employment were also present.<sup>3</sup> In the less progressive propaganda the emphasis was not on women's right to be treated fairly and judged as individual workers but on their heroic and selfless service to the nation. This was a duty that required them to sacrifice and put the welfare of soldiers above one's own desires.<sup>4</sup> Women were expected to be all things at all times, taking on new roles without leaving the traditional ones behind.

On some occasions images of pioneering were used in American media to portray ordinary people meeting the challenge of survival with resourcefulness and determination. Women were portrayed as militant partners in the struggle to defeat the enemy by advertisers who placed female war workers in a long tradition of heroines providing their men with assistance in wartime.<sup>5</sup> However, women were also placed in a vulnerable role. Unlike the image of competent woman standing shoulder to shoulder with her man as in pioneer days, this image presented women as struggling in fear to take care of her family during the war. According to Honey, propagandists saw women as the personification of vulnerability that they were looking for to bring home to civilians the realities of war and the message that they needed to help American soldiers protect the nation's interests. Wives were often portrayed as fearfully trying to protect their family

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 92.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 51.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 85 and 111.

amid the horror of war. Even though they were courageous and determined, it was clear that they were not capable of defending themselves and needed men to protect them.<sup>6</sup>

Factory work was often compared to housework by the media in recruitment campaigns. Honey explains that this was done in order to assure women that their previous life experience made them sufficiently prepared to take on their new roles. Honey believes that presenting nontraditional work through domestic images served to trivialize women's abilities. Propaganda of this kind implied that female war workers had experienced nothing in their lives except homemaking and this served to subtly undermine the idea that they could do the same work as men. Instead, female war workers were presented as dutiful wives performing the same function in the factory that they had at home, with the task of bringing their man home sooner as their main goal.<sup>7</sup>

Honey found that because women were expected to view their war jobs in terms of service, not self-advancement, these jobs were seen as temporary. Campaigns to generate positive attitudes about child care and shorten the time spent on housework that were necessary for the success of the war effort were dropped once the war appeared to be winding down. These campaigns were replaced with discussions about the social ills, such as juvenile delinquency, that were blamed on working mothers. The main goal of this change in attitude was to convince women to return to the home, and if they had to work they were expected to transfer to traditionally female occupations.<sup>8</sup> Honey explains that as the war came to an end, women were portrayed as the chief heralders to peace just as they had been militant home front fighters during the war. The new desire for rest, serenity and comfort fed readily into the portrayal of women in the traditional helping

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 128 – 29.

role. Advertisers and the media idealized them as healers who had done their bit and were now ready to return home in order to salve their man's wounds and nurture the next generation.<sup>9</sup>

Yvonne Mathews – Klein discusses the media's reluctance to attach any value to women's war activities in her article "How They Saw Us: Images of Women in National Film Board Films of the 1940's and 1950's". She states that those who were responsible for recruitment campaign films in Canada saw no reason to present the war as a path to profound social change for women as they had in World War One. It was believed that all of the necessary change required in women's lives had already occurred.<sup>10</sup> Mathews – Klein argues that Canadian recruitment films attempted to address the public's concerns about women being in the armed forces by trivializing their experiences. She explains that while recruitment films often exposed recruits in their unavoidable awkwardness the effect of doing so in women's films was decidedly different than in those depicting men. Men's films suggested that once the learning stages were over boys would become men. However, the awkwardness in women's films comes from the fact that women were portrayed as being physically out of place. They were too short to reach the top bunk, which was designed for taller men; the tear gas drill was trivialized because women were not supposed to have any worry about being gassed. According to Mathews – Klein, recruitment films stressed that war remained a game for women, who were shown continually engaging in stereotypical 'feminine' behaviour.<sup>11</sup> The creators of National

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 55.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 216.

<sup>10</sup> Yvonne Mathews – Klein, "How They Saw Us: Images of Women in National Film Board Films of the 1940's and 1950's," *Atlantis* 4 (1979): 22.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 23.

Film Board films failed to give women in the armed forces credit for their hard work and sacrifice during the war and instead tried to make light of their experiences.

Media and advertisers frequently focussed on the war work that women could do in their traditional role of housewife. This work was often glorified above all other kinds of war work that they could do. In her book Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women During World War II, Karen Anderson explains that the American media believed that “the kitchen and the sewing room are the housewife’s battleground.”<sup>12</sup> This emphasis on the importance of women contributing to the war effort in their traditional role of housewife suggests the media believed that this role was still very much the centre of women’s lives and should remain that way. According to Anderson, the media did not give much importance to the work women were doing outside of their homes during the war and suggested that this outside work would be quickly abandoned once the war came to an end. Anderson states that the media predicted nature would “...provide the answer when peace comes” about the direction women’s lives would take at war’s end.<sup>13</sup> Heeding nature meant that they would willingly give up their jobs outside of the home and take on the roles of homemaker, wife and mother at the first opportunity.

These historians see the reaction of advertisers and the media to the roles women had taken on during World War Two in a negative light. Honey and Mathews – Klein believe that advertisers and the media trivialized women’s new roles and refused to recognize that they were proving to be quite skilled at their new jobs. Anderson believes

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<sup>12</sup> Karen Anderson, Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women During World War II (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981) 87.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 161.

that women's traditional roles remained the central focus for advertisers and the media, with non – traditional roles getting minimal attention.

Not all historians took such a negative approach to their analysis of the reaction advertisers and the media had to women's involvement in the war effort. Some historians contend that there are many ambiguities to be found in the approach advertisers and the media took on this subject. Historians such as William Chafe, Leila Rupp and Ruth Roach Pierson believe that a closer look at the progressive approach advertisers and the media appeared to be taking reveals more than meets the eye about how these two groups reacted to the changes taking place in women's lives.

Some historians have found that advertisers and the media were quite willing to shift their approach to a particular subject if the need presented itself. Such a need did present itself when women were required to fill men's jobs during the war. In his book The Paradox of Change – American Women in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, William Chafe states that when necessity required that new female workers join the labour force, the American media cooperated by praising women who took jobs during the war. Work was glamorized and women were encouraged to enlist for work as quickly as possible. This was a major change from the Depression years when employment was scarce and they were discouraged from seeking work by the media who supported restrictions on the hiring of women.<sup>14</sup>

When attempts were made to attract women to war work advertisers and the media often relied on traditional images of female work, even when the jobs being offered were traditionally considered to be male areas of employment. The tasks

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<sup>14</sup> William H. Chafe, The Paradox of Change – American Women in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (New York: Oxford University, 1991) 131.

performed by housewives were often used to convince women that making the move from housework to factory work would be quite simple. The new roles they were taking on were often touted as being just like running a vacuum cleaner or baking a cake. William Chafe suggests that the reliance on this kind of traditional imagery reveals a great deal about the difficulty of trying to change basic assumptions about sex roles.<sup>15</sup>

Women were often given praise and encouragement when their labour was needed but Chafe states that this praise and encouragement was quite fragile and quickly disappeared when women's labour was no longer necessary. According to Chafe the desire to get women out of the workforce led to a change in the way they were addressed by media and advertising. Positive reviews of their abilities were replaced by negative reviews of their work and on occasion, outright hostility towards the way women conducted themselves during the war. Chafe explains that in the later stages of the war magazines were full of articles that revived old stereotypes about women, such as having less physical strength and lower fatigue points than men, and questioned women's ability to compete with them in the workforce.<sup>16</sup>

Advertisers and the media reacted to changes in women's lives during the war by altering the image of women to suit the needs of the time. In her book Mobilizing Women For War: German and American Propaganda, 1939 – 1945, Leila Rupp suggests that while basic ideas about proper sex roles held by society changed extremely slowly, public images were often prone to sudden and temporary changes according to the dictates of economic need. In the United States, the dominant public image of the time did not include women working in fields previously considered masculine and had to be

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 124.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 156.

altered to meet the needs of the wartime economy.<sup>17</sup> Recruitment campaigns designed to get them to take a war job had to both create interest among women and address the public's concerns about whether or not war work was appropriate for women. Leila Rupp explains that recruitment propaganda needed to overcome widespread conceptions about sex roles in order to convince both men and women that women should take part in the war effort.<sup>18</sup> Leila Rupp believes that the image of American women was transformed by the war. She states "That the ideal woman in 1943 worked at all was a change. But that she worked in a factory, in a job previously defined as 'masculine,' was unprecedented."<sup>19</sup> However, while a new surface image of women was created by propaganda, basic assumptions about their peacetime sex roles remained unchallenged.

This was true even when it appeared that traditional roles were being given little attention in advertising and the media. Rupp contends that propaganda played down the role of wife and mother and instead emphasized women performing their new duties. However, at the same time, Rupp states that basic assumptions about women's nature were challenged as little as possible. Instead, she explains that propaganda stressed that they had taken on their new roles to bring home their men sooner.<sup>20</sup> Rupp suggests that by depicting women as being solely interested in responding to the needs of their country and their men, propagandists were able to avoid or play down economic motivation as a reason for women's involvement. According to Rupp, the lack of propa.ganda appeals to

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<sup>17</sup> Leila Rupp, Mobilizing Women For War: German and American Propaganda, 1939 - 1945 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1978): 4. Only the American perspective was considered for this thesis.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 155.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 143.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 166.

women's need or desire to make money solidifies the impression that traditional assumptions about women were not being challenged.<sup>21</sup>

Any attention that advertisers and the media gave to working women during the war had to be presented in the least threatening manner possible. Rupp explains that the new wartime American glamour girl was one who worked during the war and this war work led to the creation of a new image of American women. Rupp suggests that the glamorization of war work was an attempt to ease the transformation of the prewar image of the apron-wearing housewife to that of the female war work in pants. She states that "Rosie the Riveter, like the flapper, was exotic in appearance, even perhaps in lifestyle. But the new image did not mean that the ideal American woman had changed beyond recognition. Beneath her begrimed exterior, she remained very much a traditional woman."<sup>22</sup>

As the war appeared to be coming to an end, women were the target of a media backlash, often for contradicting reasons. She states that in 1945 editorials women were denounced for their contribution, or lack of contribution as far as some were concerned, during the war. While some had worked, others had not. Editorials claimed that too many women could be placed in the latter category and they were lazy, apathetic and ill-informed. Those who had not taken a war job were accused of letting their country down in its time of need. Rupp believes that this harsh criticism, which occurred as the war was coming to a close and women were already concerned about losing their jobs, implies

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 170.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 151.

that an attempt was made to belittle the contribution American women had made to the coming victory.<sup>23</sup>

At the same time that some writers were condemning women for not taking war jobs quickly enough, others were voicing concerns that those who had would not vacate these positions with proper haste at the end of the war. However, most writers were firmly convinced that women would happily leave their jobs once the war was over. Rupp observes that the reality that many wanted to stay in the work force played little part in the image of post war womanhood presented to the public.<sup>24</sup> Rupp concludes that the change regarding women that took place in wartime media and advertising was temporary but this change in image, however transient was important. For the first time working women dominated the public image in America. For the duration women were portrayed as "...riveting housewives in slacks, not mothers, domestic beings, or civilizers."<sup>25</sup>

A Canadian perspective is provided by Ruth Roach Pierson who also looks at these ambiguities to some extent in her book "They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood. Advertisers and the media were only willing to give out conditional praise that was followed by constant reminders about what was expected of women when the war came to an end. Pierson also contends that advertisers, especially those who sold beauty products, were just as likely to place doubt in the minds of women about their ability to do a man's job as they were to praise and encourage them. Pierson claims that beauty soap and cosmetic manufacturers played upon women's fear of losing their femininity by suggesting that female factory workers

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 160 – 61.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

would remain 'womanly' only if they used the product being advertised.<sup>26</sup> Advertisers and the media also had a complicated approach to women's involvement in the armed forces. Pierson argues that a deep ambivalence was present in recruitment propaganda, promotional news stories and patriotic advertising towards women in the armed forces. She explains that while the achievements and initiative of servicewomen were celebrated there were also assurances that joining the forces would not change anything about women's nature or their place in Canadian society.<sup>27</sup>

According to Pierson, women were told that being self-reliant and doing a man's job well was fine, as long as they remembered that eventually the war would end and men would return to take their privileged place in the paid work force and in the family.<sup>28</sup> As part of the drive to get women to leave the workforce the congratulations the media gave them for breaking into nontraditional roles in their country's time of need were taken back once they were no longer needed amidst assurances and predictions that they would return home at war's end.<sup>29</sup> Pierson states that advertisements also revealed the expectation that women would return to motherhood at war's end and regard it as their life's work. These advertisements implied that in the post war future all women would be back home where they belonged, taking care of their home and raising the next generation of Canadians.<sup>30</sup>

These three historians see the reaction advertisers and the media had to women's new roles in a more positive light than the previous three historians did. While they do

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 165.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 154.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 133.

<sup>28</sup> Ruth Roach Pierson "They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986) 215.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 220.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 132 – 33.

see things more positively, these historians do not suggest that there was a great deal to be positive about regarding this reaction. Indeed, Chafe, Rupp and Pierson stress that the reaction advertisers and the media did have was an ambiguous one, especially where the images of women that advertisers and the media chose to depict were concerned.

Other historians focus on the result of the ambiguity that existed in media and advertising regarding the images of women that were presented during World War Two. Historians such as Deborah Montgomerie, M. Susan Bland and Susan Hartmann took this approach in their research. These historians believe that this ambiguity has led some people to believe that images of women were more positive and innovative than they really were. Instead, they suggest that in spite of a trend towards progressive depictions of women during the war, traditional ideas about women were always present, even if they did not appear to be.

Even though it appeared that much had changed in the approach advertisers and the media took when dealing with women, a closer analysis done by one Canadian historian suggests otherwise. In her article "Henrietta the Homemaker, and 'Rosie the Riveter': Images of Women in Advertising in Maclean's Magazine, 1939 – 1950", M. Susan Bland suggests that the traditional themes of the 1930s never really left advertisements, even when female roles depicted in advertisements were changed to reflect the war. Advertisers exploited the widespread feelings of patriotism during the war and used war images in their advertisements in order to focus attention on issues that they believed were important to women. Bland states that themes that were important in 1939 were given heightened importance in wartime advertisements.<sup>31</sup> She believes that

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<sup>31</sup> M. Susan Bland, "Henrietta the Homemaker, and 'Rosie the Riveter': Images of Women in Advertising in Maclean's Magazine, 1939 – 50," *Atlantis* 8:2 (1983): 82. The year 1939 was the first year that Bland

while advertisers acknowledged women's roles had changed during the war, they did not change their attitudes about women in the long run. Bland claims that women's changing role during the war contributed, albeit indirectly, to the rise in popularity of the homemaker role after the war.<sup>32</sup>

According to Bland, the post – war period began for advertisers in 1944. At this time a gradual return to the traditional images of women that were present in the early days of the war took place. Feelings of patriotism in wartime advertisements were replaced by feelings of optimism and a desire for security. Advertisers relied on “the fear and loneliness experienced by so many... women during World War II which heightened their already romantic notions of home and family.”<sup>33</sup> Bland contends that advertisers did not hesitate to remind women that because they had been deprived of so many products for several years, it was now their right to enjoy the new merchandise that filled the market as production resumed.<sup>34</sup> Women were expected to give up their war time roles for a return to domesticity, a state of being that advertisers considered to be synonymous with consumption.

Even in the midst of all of the changes taking place in women's lives, tradition was never far from the surface. In her article “Reassessing Rosie: World War II, New Zealand Women and the Iconography of Femininity,” Deborah Montgomerie argues that any progressive change that was present in media and advertising in New Zealand was cancelled out by a reliance on traditional ideas about women. She states that discussions in wartime magazines about femininity, women's work and female bodies emphasized

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used in her study and she considered it to be a prewar year as far as advertising was concerned as no advertisements using a war theme were present in Maclean's during the first months of the war.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 84.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 82.

the extent to which any progressive changes in female employment were neutralized by the conservative reshaping of an ideology that was able to trivialize, glamourize and exalt women at the same time.<sup>35</sup>

The new roles women had taken on were treated like novelties and received a great deal of attention from advertisers and the media. Montgomerie suggests that in some cases the attention given to women who had entered fields of employment that had previously been reserved for men was out of proportion to the actual number of women in these jobs. She explains that in New Zealand the few women who took on traditionally 'male' jobs received extensive publicity as the media across that country declared that a sexual revolution was taking place in the workforce. However, the media portrayal did not reflect the reality as the majority of women in New Zealand continued to hold stereotypically feminine jobs.<sup>36</sup> Later in her article Montgomerie contends that the 'Rosie the Riveter' image of the competent working woman has tended to overshadow other images that were considerably more ambivalent about gender destabilization. She believes that this 'conservative iconography of femininity' needs to be looked at in order to gain insight into the constraints on wartime change.<sup>37</sup> This iconography as it appears in advertising will be explored to some extent in this thesis.

Media and advertising also reacted to women's new roles by glamorizing them. Montgomerie explains that advertisers in New Zealand preferred to glamorize uniformed occupations or invoke comfort with images of homemakers. There were few images of female factory workers that could fit into this pattern, but those that did glamorized

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Deborah Montgomerie, "Reassessing Rosie: World War II, New Zealand Women and the Iconography of Femininity," *Gender and History* 8 (1996): 115.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 110 – 11.

working women and at the same time suggested that they were future homemakers.<sup>38</sup> Advertisers and the media also tried to stress women's femininity when discussing the new roles women were taking on. Montgomerie explains that advertisers, columnists and propagandists tried to counter the threat of masculinization with a series of images depicting women reconciling femininity and war work. Advertisements were created portraying dressing up and applying make – up as war work and concern for appearances became a patriotic obligation.<sup>39</sup>

The images of women portrayed in wartime media and advertising were often stereotypical but they did provide women with a glimpse of a more positive and less constraining way of looking at themselves, especially as housewives. Montgomerie explains that advertising was the principal forum for visual images of women as housewives. This imagery objectified women, presenting them as desired objects but it also offered them the opportunity to be desiring individuals. They were addressed directly and encouraged to dream as advertisers presented them with the ability to transform their hopes and dreams into material realities.<sup>40</sup> While this kind of consumer 'freedom' may not seem like freedom to some, it may have been a wonderful opportunity for women who were limited by the war and the difficulties of housekeeping.

When women's place in the post war world was discussed advertisers considered traditional roles to be the ideal. Advertisers had already formed specific ideas about the role women would play in their post war world. In New Zealand, Montgomerie states that government and commercial advertisers both agreed that the home would be the centre of

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 128.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 123.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 119.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 127.

an emerging culture of consumption once the war had ended. This new culture promised to make up for years of wartime deprivation. Women's bodies and labour were to be the base upon which this consuming social vision rested. Images that reflected this new vision became increasingly common as the war drew to a close.<sup>41</sup>

In her book The Home Front and Beyond – American Women in the 1940s Susan Hartmann states that society's experiences, attitudes, hopes and concerns are reflected in the mass media. As a result, most American media presented and endorsed women's new roles during the war and confirmed that women were capable of rising to the challenges they experienced. Public concerns about these departures from the traditional were also represented in the media. The presence of housewives being glorified as vital war workers, warnings about careerism and an emphasis on femininity and romantic relationships in media and advertising indicated uncertainty towards or opposition to women's changing lifestyles and activities.<sup>42</sup> Hartmann explains that even though the media presented women with a widening range of acceptable behaviour, complete with positive examples of unconventional women and a blurring of traditional gender differences, these changes were always presented in a context which maintained the importance of relationships with men and the home. Being appealing to men and fulfilling one's responsibilities in the home were to continue to be their primary concerns.<sup>43</sup>

Hartmann also discusses the importance placed on women's patriotism and obligation to their country above their own self – fulfillment and the enjoyment they

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 125.

<sup>42</sup> Susan M. Hartmann, The Home Front and Beyond – American Women in the 1940s. (Boston: Twayne, 1982) 204.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 189.

experienced in their work in some propaganda. This kind of propaganda also highlighted the temporary nature of that duty.<sup>44</sup> Hartmann states that propaganda for the American armed services also presented women's involvement in terms of their traditional feminine relationships and responsibilities. This propaganda also stressed that servicewomen would only be performing duties that were similar to what women did in civilian life and in doing so they would be speeding the return of their sweethearts and husbands.<sup>45</sup> The approaching end of the war brought about a narrowing of the range of appropriate female behaviour that was portrayed in advertising and the media. Articles appeared in publications proclaiming that women's place was in the home, and that the experience they gained in war jobs would lead to better domestic understanding once they returned home at war's end. The articles emphasized the assumption held in the mass media that women's employment was temporary and that the greatest benefit they received from paid work was not for themselves but for their marriage.<sup>46</sup>

This group of historians has chosen to consider the result of the ambiguity that was present in the images of women in their new roles that advertisers and the media produced during the war. Montgomerie, Bland and Hartmann suggest that the presence of this ambiguity in images of women in advertising and the media led people to believe that these images were more progressive than they really were. In reality, these historians contend that traditional ideas about women were always present even if at first glance they did not appear to be.

Jeffrey Keshen has taken a different and more positive approach in his analysis of the result of this ambiguity. He suggests that the image of women breaking new ground,

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 211.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 42.

one of two images that were promoted by the media, later served to reinforce women's position when they demanded changes in their lives. While Keshen does address the negative aspect of the ambiguity present in the image of women presented by advertisers and the media, he prefers to look at the positive aspects that emerged from the reaction advertisers and the media had to women's experiences in the Second World War.

The previous historians suggest that the media only presented the changes in women's lives as an extension of their traditional roles. If any balancing was attempted the scales tended to tilt towards favoring tradition. In his article "Revisiting Canada's Civilian Women During World War II," Jeff Keshen suggests that perhaps some progressive movement was present in Canadian media and advertising in how they addressed women. He claims that while stereotypes that objectified and trivialized women continued to be present in advertising, it is also possible that "...firms were moving with the times to serve, and perhaps inherently encourage, the modern working woman by suggesting that she could balance traditional concerns such as appearance with the new demands of the war economy."<sup>47</sup> Keshen believes that the print media was a reflector of social trends and in filling this role encouraged both a move towards post-war conservatism (by linking female employment with a lack of morals and family instability) and a progressive mindset by portraying female strength and skill under adversity.<sup>48</sup> This suggestion that the approach media and advertising took regarding women's place in the war can be viewed in more than one light bears investigation. Perhaps this is only evident in the Canadian experience, as most of the other historians

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 189 and 200.

<sup>47</sup> Jeff Keshen, "Revisiting Canada's Civilian Women During World War II," *Social History* 22 (1997): 242.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 266.

have addressed the approach to women in American and New Zealand media and advertising. While this study will not address other nations, it will provide a more in depth look into the approach taken in Canadian advertising regarding the roles women were encouraged to fill during the war and what types of opportunities or limitations advertisers wanted for them.

Keshen observed that there were both negative and positive opinions in the media about women doing war work. Some articles addressed concerns about the movement of women into the paid labour force and expressed a desire to return to patriarchal order when men returned from the war. Other articles, especially those from female journalists, discussed women's ability to perform successfully in areas beyond the home and pointed out their interest in achieving greater equality in all areas.<sup>49</sup> Keshen also discusses the attention given to housewives who were praised as 'Canada's Housoldiers' in the Canadian media. He explains that while this term was sexist and stereotypical, *Chatelaine* magazine also saw it as a positive image of women. The magazine claimed that this term highlighted the rising importance of women within the family and altered the perception of what had often been considered the 'rather dreary' position of housewife.<sup>50</sup> This may not seem like much of an improvement because it did not address women in any role beyond the traditional. However this praise was likely an attempt to provide women who did not take on any wartime role outside of the home with a sense of pride in their work and a belief that they were making a positive contribution to the war effort.

Keshen noted that several news articles reflected and encouraged the reality that many women, if given the choice, would keep their traditionally male jobs. Many had

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 240.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 245.

earned record salaries and remembered the difficult days of the Depression when they did not work. They also believed that they could balance work and home successfully and often expressed satisfaction about the independence they enjoyed because of their war jobs. As a result, this divergent opinion led to increased debate in the media about exactly what 'woman's place' was.<sup>51</sup>

Keshen has taken a unique viewpoint among the historians whose research has been analysed for this thesis. Keshen sees much that is positive about the reaction advertisers and the media had to the new roles women took on during the war. He believes that although most of the changes that occurred in the way women were portrayed in media and advertising were temporary, these changes laid the foundation for future improvements in their lives and revealed that the media recognized that traditional female roles were not embraced by all women.

While the image of women went through several changes during the war these changes were often temporary. Historians conclude that in the long run little real change occurred in the image of women presented to the public by media and advertising. The changes that occurred were deemed to be a necessary part of the campaign to get involved in the war effort and as a result would be of little use once the emergency was over. According to historians, even when women were depicted in nontraditional roles the public was reassured that they had very traditional reasons for being there. Attempts to recruit women into war jobs also relied on traditional imagery. Advertisers and the media believed that once the war was over women would realize they were no longer needed and happily return home. Historians have concluded that the reality that many women had no interest whatsoever in giving up their wartime jobs received little attention

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 255.

in media and advertising's post war portrayal of women. What is lacking in the discussion about the reaction advertisers and the media had to women's new roles during the Second World War is a more in depth Canadian perspective. It is hoped that this thesis will fill that void.

## Chapter 2 – Advertising in the 1930s

Women were a popular target audience for advertisers during the 1930s.

Advertisers knew that the majority of consumers were women and tried to attract their business through advertisements that presented products as items that women needed or would be interested in buying. They were also beginning to view women more receptively. While this was done mostly for the purpose of selling more to them, it did suggest that advertisers were slowly taking a more progressive approach in their attempts to reach the female market. Women were not only targeted by advertisers selling traditionally female products but also by those advertisers that had so – called men’s products such as automobiles and insurance to sell. Newspapers and magazines realized that the purchasing power of women was extremely valuable and encouraged advertisers to target them through their publications. In turn, women were encouraged to study these advertisements prior to going shopping because, they were assured, if a product appeared in a particular publication then it had to be of high quality. An analysis of advertisements from the 1930s reveals whether or not the war significantly changed the ways in which advertisers addressed women.

### **A – How Advertisers Addressed Themselves to Women**

Advertisers tried to convince women that what they had to offer was what women needed and wanted. They did this by focussing on what they believed was important to women. Advertisements offered women ways to make housework easier, to feed their families better, to look better, catch a man and keep him. This was done both with advice

and by offering a particular product as the key to success. All of these were issues that were thought to be of central importance in the lives of the 1930s women. If work was mentioned it was done in the context of the career woman who was foregoing a husband and children in order to work. Newspapers and magazines focused their attention on getting women to make full use of advertisements by pointing out what advertising had to offer them. In January of 1938 the Calgary Herald printed a poem about the life of housewife and the ability of advertising to help make it a little bit easier. This poem illustrated quite well the lot of a housewife of this era and the way in which many advertisers hoped to appeal to her on the most basic level.

A Great Wife...if you don't Weaken/  
 You plan the meals./  
 You buy the food;/ Your menu deals/  
 With a family's mood/  
 You clean the house/ And wash the dishes./  
 You help your spouse/  
 And fill his wishes./ You sew and mend/  
 And wash a bit-/ And in the end/  
 You're pleased with it.

To have more fun./ More joy, more ease;/  
 To get more done- / Remember, please:/  
 The budget's small./ And time is dear:  
 / So shop through all/ the ads in here!  
 - Advertising is your servant.  
 It helps to make the most of your shopping time  
 and get the most for your budget dollar.<sup>52</sup>

Magazines and newspapers assured readers that only the best products and services would be advertised in their publications. By choosing only these quality items readers would avoid costly mistakes when shopping.

The Advertising Club of Montreal also got involved in this campaign by stating in the Montreal Gazette that goods that offered themselves up to the limelight of advertising

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<sup>52</sup> Calgary Herald, Jan. 17, 1938.

had to be of the best quality and therefore were the only goods that consumers should buy because, "...every manufacturer knows that he dare not advertise unless his goods are as near perfect as he can make them... and that if he ever departs from that very high standard, his reputation is lost for ever."<sup>53</sup> Chatelaine magazine also addressed this issue in their January 1938 issue. "Only worthy products and services are accepted...Readers therefore, can buy the lines advertised in Chatelaine with confidence of satisfactory service. By insisting on trademarked lines of known quality and value, Chatelaine readers avoid costly mistakes when buying for their homes."<sup>54</sup> Consumers were told to study the advertisements in their daily newspapers and favourite magazines because of this promise of high quality and because of the other vital information advertisements contained, such as where the products could be purchased and how much they would cost. It was believed that advertisements were great time savers and therefore, very helpful to the busy housewife trying to manage on a tight budget.

The creators of women's advertising in the 1930s believed that what they were doing was extremely important and had changed for the better in recent years. They also implied that female consumers themselves had played a role in the improvements that had taken place by the late 1930s. Rose B. Knox of the Mrs. Knox Gelatine company described what had taken place in a 1939 advertising manual. "Advertising is a high art. The adjectives we once used have been replaced by a more direct and personal appeal... I

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<sup>53</sup> Montreal Gazette, Nov. 25, 1938.

<sup>54</sup> Chatelaine, Jan. 1938.

congratulate women on the way... they have educated themselves in better buying methods, and their insistence on the whys and wherefores in present – day advertising.”<sup>55</sup>

Advertising targeted women in ways that were thought to be sure to attract her attention. Copywriters, especially female ones, were encouraged to write advertising copy as though they were writing a letter to a friend with the purpose of sharing information about a product that would be of interest to her. One advertising manual encouraged copywriters to “Write to the friend who needs and wants the product and will bless you forever for telling her about it.”<sup>56</sup> However, it was believed that not all advertising directed towards women could be this spontaneous or personal. In situations where this was the case the advertising manual encouraged copywriters to “...write to one person and not to the million – odd who may read the page, you’ll produce a more natural message.”<sup>57</sup> The key was to create advertising copy that made women feel that the advertisement was being directed solely towards them.

Brevity was considered to be very important in advertising but there was an exception to be found when advertising for women. The advertising manual referred to above contained a chapter which claimed that “...in all kinds of advertising you must be brief, you must be dramatic, to attract an audience. Except in beauty advertising! ...women will read as many as 900 words of small, closely set type straight through, if it

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<sup>55</sup> Christine Frederick, “Historical Introduction,” Advertising Careers for Women, ed. Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939) xviii.

<sup>56</sup> Dorothy Dignam, “Women in Advertising Agencies: Ideas and Copy,” Advertising Careers for Women, ed. Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939) 22.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

is about beauty.”<sup>58</sup> This same chapter also illustrated the contribution that advertisers believed beauty advertising made to women’s lives. “...good beauty advertising tells a straightforward, understated story of some contribution to a woman’s vital desire to improve her appearance.”<sup>59</sup> This belief that advertising played a major role in women’s daily efforts to maintain their beauty was also present in a review of Canadian advertising from 1890 to 1940. The authors, who were longtime members of the advertising field in Canada claimed that, “...it was advertising,...that taught women to use the soaps, creams, lotions, powders and lipsticks which minister to daintiness and charm, and kept her constantly reminded that all these things are futile without proper habits of diet, exercise and hygiene from which all real beauty springs.”<sup>60</sup> It was implied that without advertising, women would surely be lax in the areas of beauty, health and hygiene, areas that they could not afford to fail in if they hoped to find and keep a man.

Advertisers claimed that they played a major role in all aspects of a woman’s life through advice, guidance and the introduction of new products. Canadian advertisers took credit for transforming “...the appearance of woman and her manner of living, familiarizing her with new ways to escape drudgery of housework, revolutionizing cookery and the preservation of food, introducing a new simplicity and convenience in clothing, spreading the gospel of cleanliness, health and charm.”<sup>61</sup> They believed that advertisements displaying new fashions for women had encouraged them to wear styles

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<sup>58</sup> Elizabeth Colt Kidd, “Women in Cosmetic Advertising How to Advertise Cosmetics and Toiletries,” Advertising Careers for Women, ed. Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939) 92.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 93.

<sup>60</sup> H. E. Stephenson and Carlton McNaught, The Story of Advertising in Canada A Chronicle of Fifty Years (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1940) 228.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. 81.

that provided them with greater freedom of movement, comfort and a higher level of physical well – being. They claimed that even those women who were usually hesitant about adopting new fashions had taken to the new modern clothing because of their campaigns.<sup>62</sup> Credit was also taken for new innovations in hair care and cleanliness.

Some advertisements in Canadian publications during 1938 provide illustrations of how advertisers addressed women in the 1930s. Advertisers that were selling health and beauty products targeted what they believed was a constant desire by women to maintain an attractive appearance. An advertisement for Bile Beans in the February 21, 1938 issue of the Calgary Daily Herald featured a woman with a nice figure and asked ‘What is the Secret of Her Attractive Figure?’. The response they provided was “You too can help retain that attractive figure so much admired by the opposite sex and help keep in radiant health by taking Bile Beans at bedtime.”<sup>63</sup> The maintenance of beauty was often paired with the desire to find a man in advertisements for beauty products.

Advertising also believed that aging was a major concern for women, and if it was not, advertisers tried to make it so. An advertisement for Elizabeth Arden skin cream in the March 1938 edition of Chatelaine magazine suggested that using this product was a sure way to cope with the results of aging.

Do you live in perpetual dread of middle – age wrinkles, flabby contours, lines around the eyes, furrows on your forehead? Whether lines have just begun to develop or are deeply in evidence, the importance of using Elizabeth Arden’s Joie de Vivre Gland Cream cannot be over – emphasized... Joie de Vivre Gland Cream is Miss Arden’s most important contribution to beauty... after a few weeks’ nightly use, all

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid. 220.

<sup>63</sup> Calgary Daily Herald, Feb. 21, 1938.

fears of future, disfiguring wrinkles will be banished.<sup>64</sup>

Women's vanity was often addressed in blatantly stereotypical ways, even when advertisements directly targeted women. An advertisement for shoes from Robert Simpson Montreal Ltd. Department Store in the June 24, 1938 issue of the Montreal Gazette proclaimed that 'Woman's Place is on a PEDESTAL'. This advertisement explained that,

The desire to lift oneself above the crowd, to add grace and dignity is not new by any means! Chinese queens and Venetian ladies of olden times wore elevated soles to emphasize the importance of their rank... and so today this same feminine desire is answered by Bryne Mawr in the new 'Pedestal' shoes. The thick platform sole forms a cushion for the foot and the effect is most flattering!... In fact, your feet look scandalously small, distractingly gay in them!<sup>65</sup>

Advertisers hoped that comparing the woman of 1938 with glamorous examples of women from history would reach women's egos and spark their interest in the latest fashion in shoes.

Advertisers of appliances and household goods targeted women by claiming that their product offered a variety of positive improvements to the home. Advertisements proclaimed that not only did these products take the drudgery out of housework they also provided women with free time to pursue other interests. As well, advertisers claimed that

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<sup>64</sup> Chatelaine, March 1938.

<sup>65</sup> Montreal Gazette, June 24, 1938.

these products brought greater efficiency, refinement, cleanliness and health to the home.<sup>66</sup>

Advertisers tried to present their product or service as just what women needed to make their lives easier. In the May 15, 1938 issue of Maclean's, the Commercial Credit Corporation of Canada offered women payment plans that would enable them to go out and buy new time – saving appliances right away. This advertisement was entitled ‘Time out for Mother...’ and explained that, “MAN IN Industry has been concentrating on the job of making things easier for Woman in the Home. They used to say that Woman’s work was never done. Now, nearly every laborious household task can be performed by some automatic appliance – giving Mother ‘time out’ for her recreation.”<sup>67</sup> This advertisement enticed women with the possibilities appliances offered and then offered the means to pay for them, even if they did not have enough money to make a lump sum payment, through time payment plans. Most publicity directed at women had a similar motive, to show them that the product or service that was offered would make their lives easier and better.

### **B – Why Advertisers Addressed Themselves to Women, and For What Products**

Advertising in newspapers and magazines was very important to advertisers and publications alike. The advertiser obviously wanted the exposure that publications could offer while publications wanted the revenue they received from selling advertising space to advertisers. The bulk of the campaign by Canadian newspapers to attract advertisers

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<sup>66</sup> Stevenson 110.

<sup>67</sup> Maclean's, May 15, 1938.

was based on the ability newspapers had to reach the female consumer. According to the newspapers, women scanned the pages of their local newspaper prior to going shopping. Therefore if an advertiser wanted their product to be seen by the largest consumer group, who were of course women, they should put advertisements in that newspaper. These segments were in fact advertisements designed to sell the newspaper to advertisers.

The Montreal Gazette ran a campaign urging advertisers to watch their wives and other women in order to learn what they read and what sort of interest they took in advertisements. The Gazette suggested that they would find that like the majority of homemakers, their wives gave close attention to the advertisements in their local newspaper. Women paid close attention to advertisements because they wanted "...to know not only what to buy but where it can be bought and how much it costs...Remember when you consider advertising for your business, that the majority of women buy from newspaper advertisements."<sup>68</sup> The Calgary Daily Herald also tried to encourage advertisers to pay extra attention to housewives because of their importance as consumers.

‘And they list her: HOUSEWIFE’

On census report and tax return, she may be listed only ‘housewife,’ while her husband bears the more definite title of ‘lawyer,’ or ‘doctor,’ or ‘storekeeper’. But housewife hardly does this wife and mother justice. She is the modern Jill – of – all – trades. Her job includes being dietician, interior decorator, costume designer, gardener, chauffeur – not to mention educator and health authority. How does she get away with it? She is informed! Just as her husband depends upon business news in this paper, she finds in the advertising pages the latest facts and price quotations on all the materials needed for her various job...

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<sup>68</sup> Montreal Gazette, May 30, 1938.

That's why, when she is termed officially 'housewife,' she can run six jobs instead of one, and have time left over for amusement and relaxation. (The advertisements help her here, too.)<sup>69</sup>

The recurring message newspapers wanted to send to advertisers was that if higher sales and a wider consumer base was what they were after, placing advertisements in their newspapers was the way to go. They also stated that the female market was extremely important and using the newspaper was the way to reach it because the newspaper was where women, especially housewives, turned to get the information they needed for their daily lives.

One of the main reasons advertisers targeted women was because the vast majority of consumers were women. Surveys had revealed that women, especially housewives which the majority of women in the 1930s were, had been found to have a favourable attitude towards advertising. They had some concerns about the effect of advertising on prices and honesty in advertisements but the large majority expressed confidence in products that had been advertised. Women claimed to like magazine and newspaper advertising and used retail and national advertisement as an aid when making purchases.<sup>70</sup> Advertisers made use of this sort of information to increase and widen their appeals to them through advertisements.

Not only were women targeted in traditional ways, such as housekeepers, they were also beginning to be targeted in sales pitches for products that had once been seen as holding no interest for women. Advertisers who had traditionally directed their products exclusively towards men were encouraged to look to general magazines and women's

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<sup>69</sup> Calgary Daily Herald, May 16, 1938.

magazines as well as newspapers in an attempt to attract women. Products such as sporting goods, boats and cars, as well as office supplies and products for home construction were now considered to be items that could be sold to them. Women were seen not just as the chief purchasers in their homes, but as individuals with a constantly increasing assortment of personal desires.<sup>71</sup> It was even suggested in the historical review of Canadian advertising that, "So far as the advertiser is concerned, it is no longer a man's world, for there are few spheres in which a woman can be excluded from consideration when it comes to selling a product or service".<sup>72</sup> While this was an emancipation based on consumption it did suggest that advertisers were beginning to entertain the possibility that women could be considered on an equal footing with men.

This possibility was noted in other advertising manuals. The claim was that "Women are going to have much more to do with the planning and equipping of the homes in which they spend so great a part of their lives. Building and decorating materials... will all be 'sold' to wives as thoroughly as to their husbands."<sup>73</sup> Companies selling automobiles were also encouraged to advertise to women because "...it has been known that one out of every three licensed drivers is a woman and wives almost invariably influence the choice of the family car."<sup>74</sup> Women were viewed as a whole new group of potential consumers just waiting to be sold products that had once been the sole interest of men.

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<sup>70</sup> Neil H. Borden, The Economic Effects of Advertising (Chicago: Richard D. Irwin, 1942) 765.

<sup>71</sup> Stevenson 217 and 219.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 217.

<sup>73</sup> Frederick xxi.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

Introducing new products was also one of the reasons why advertisers targeted women. This was illustrated in the Charles Ogilvy Limited Department Store advertisement that appeared in the April, 25, 1938 edition of the Ottawa Citizen. This advertisement claimed that “In the Spring a woman’s fancy turns to the newest Hoover – A wonder – cleaner That Every Woman can own.”<sup>75</sup> This product was lauded as the latest in cleaning equipment that made cleaning easier and was affordable to own. The first line also implied that it was natural for a woman to want the latest innovation Hoover had to offer when they did their Spring cleaning.

Even companies whose products did not make a tangible contribution to a housewife’s household duties offered themselves up as a means to make the job easier. This was illustrated in an advertisement for tea in the January 7, 1938 issue of the Montreal Gazette. This advertisement featured a frazzled housewife who finds relief in a cup of tea. The advertisement claimed to understand the difficulties of a housewife’s job and suggested a cup of tea was just the thing to make her life easier.

The routine of housework is fully as exhausting as that of business life. There are periods in every housewife’s day when she feels a complete lack of energy, an overwhelming boredom and no interest whatsoever in her work. Tempers get frayed and children seem especially made to create confusion and riot. That’s when the Droops have really arrived. Pause then for a quiet and welcome cup of tea – and you’ll see that Tea is a safe and sure cure as well as a preventative of the droops.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ottawa Citizen, Apr. 25, 1938.

<sup>76</sup> Montreal Gazette, Jan. 7, 1938.

Advertisers realized that women had many responsibilities to deal with and were usually interested in ways to make their household tasks easier. Even companies that sold products that really did not fit into the category of a labour or time saver tried to present their product as an aid to housewives through advertisements.

Advertisers also turned their attention to women when new advancements were made in household equipment and appliances and in the branding and packaging of food. These new products needed to be 'sold' to housewives, many of whom would have needed good reasons to give up their old way of doing things and embrace change. The claim was that the benefits of these new innovations could not have been introduced to them and gained wide spread popularity in such a short amount of time without advertising.<sup>77</sup> Without the support of women, companies with new household products on the market would never have success selling those products.

By the end of the 1930s women were not only being sold traditionally female products such as cosmetics, clothing and household products but also products such as cars and building equipment that had once been directed only at men. This was illustrated in an advertisement for the Imperial Oil Dealers in the May 16, 1938 issue of the Calgary Daily Herald. This advertisement depicted a woman telling an Esso serviceman to "Just do those things you talk about in the ads."<sup>78</sup> While the woman was portrayed as not understanding exactly what the serviceman was going to do to her car, she was being shown in the novel position of taking the car to the service station for a tune up instead of leaving it to her husband. Women were also being targeted by insurance companies

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<sup>77</sup> Stephenson 110.

<sup>78</sup> Calgary Daily Herald, July 15, 1938.

Illustration 1: Commercial Credit Corporation of Canada, Maclean's May 15, 1938



# "Time out" for Mother...

"MAN IN INDUSTRY" has been concentrating on the job of making things easier for Woman in the Home. They used to say that woman's work was never done. Now, nearly every laborious household task can be performed by some automatic appliance—giving Mother "time out" for her recreation.

Let us be thankful for the marvels that have been wrought in our time... give credit to the vision that conceived and the skill that produced those things that we take for granted.

Consider the benefits we receive from the motor car, the automatic refrigerator, heating and air-conditioning equipment and the radio

... but in considering, remember that the millions who enjoy these things could never have purchased them in sufficient numbers to make the present "big volume" prices possible if they had not been able to purchase out of their incomes.

*Things that last a long time and which add to the health, comfort and happiness of your family can properly be purchased on a time-payment plan.*

Commercial Credit Corporation of Canada, Limited invites you to call our local representative who will gladly sit down with you and show

you how to make Commercial Credit time-payment plans work for the health and happiness of your whole family.

The Commercial Credit Corporation is a great financial institution... offers you a time-payment plan which enables you to invest regularly a small part of your income in durable possessions contributing to family health, comfort and happiness. This is a form of saving that pays dividends in better living. When you buy on time, ask your dealer to finance your purchase on the Commercial Credit Corporation plan and you may enjoy the advantages of low cost, courteous treatment with adequate protection.



COMMERCIAL CREDIT CORPORATION  
OF CANADA, LIMITED HEAD OFFICE: TORONTO

Offices in HALIFAX — MONTREAL — QUEBEC — OTTAWA — TORONTO — HAMILTON — LONDON  
WINDSOR — ROUYN — FORT WILLIAM — REGINA — CALGARY — EDMONTON — VANCOUVER  
Local Representation in SYDNEY — SAINT JOHN — BELLEVILLE — TIMMINS — SASKATOON

including Imperial Life, who claimed in the December 12, 1938 issue of the Montreal Gazette, that ‘...it’s a woman’s affair, too!’

Time was when life insurance was considered ‘a man’s affair’ - now it’s a woman’s affair, too. If you are a woman in business, with a parent, brother or sister depending on you, there is an Imperial Life policy designed to help you. Or if your ambition is to have an independent income to provide leisure and happiness in your later years, the Imperial Life will help you as it has many others to achieve that purpose.<sup>79</sup>

By 1939, advertisers were used to targeting women – even for non – feminine products. When the war sent the men overseas, they had their strategies in place. Their main arguments will even remain the same, with an emphasis on preserving attractiveness and on saving time, but will be adjusted to reflect the realities of war. On some occasions however, the direction of advertising campaigns had to be changed altogether.

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<sup>79</sup> Montreal Gazette, Dec. 12, 1938.

### Chapter 3 - Women as Consumers during the War

The vast majority of consumers during the Second World War were women. The war brought a variety of changes in the lives of women as they encountered everything from new job opportunities and volunteer activities, to the challenge of creating wholesome meals in spite of rationing and shortages. The consequences of the war required them to change their purchasing habits. Women went shopping with new needs, concerns and limitations in mind.

#### **How Were Women's Activities Affecting Their Purchases?**

Women took on new roles and increased responsibilities during the war. There was increased employment, which gave some women the opportunity to work for the first time and others a chance to return to employment for the first time since they had married. Many of them took on high paying jobs in the war industries. Women who had been working prior to the war also took employment in this area because these jobs, which had been held almost exclusively by men before the war, gave them the opportunity to earn better wages than traditional female jobs could offer. Women also joined the armed forces or the nursing sisters in order to contribute to the war effort. Even if they did not become involved in the war in some official capacity, they often contributed through some sort of volunteer work or by donating money or other materials to the war effort. As well, women found themselves shouldering most or all of the household responsibilities if their husbands were in the armed forces or working long hours at a war job. These responsibilities were usually added to their other household duties.

The new activities women took on often affected their shopping and the purchases they made. Those women who had increased household responsibilities were looking for time saving products to use for household chores and daily meals. Saving time was also an issue for those with factory jobs or volunteer work to complete. This was especially true if they were involved in more than one of these activities. Women were encouraged by the government and the media to 'streamline their housekeeping at home' in order to participate in some form of outside work.<sup>80</sup> Saving time and money and eliminating household drudgery were considered to be women's duties and they were expected to use their spare time and money for the war effort.<sup>81</sup> When women went shopping they wanted products that would make cleaning the house quicker and easier but would not break the budget. They were also looking for foods that were easy to prepare while still creating healthy meals for their families.

Women who joined the armed forces had different priorities when shopping than their civilian female counterparts. They had their meals and living quarters provided for them wherever they were serving and did not need to spend their earnings on household goods and groceries. Any money spent on food and home was usually in the form of prepared meals and drinks at restaurants or on transportation home while on leave.

The Second World War was the first time that Canadian women were allowed to enlist in the armed forces and there was much concern about whether they could maintain their femininity in what was considered an extremely masculine way of life. Many women who joined the armed forces also had these concerns which were addressed by the leadership of the three women's divisions. This was especially the case in the

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<sup>80</sup> Pierson 28.

<sup>81</sup> Bland 67.

Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC), which was the target of much of the negative feelings concerning women in the military. As a result, armed forces women were encouraged to spend their earnings on items that would show the public, and themselves, that in spite of their military uniforms they were still feminine.

Allowing women the opportunity to dress and feel 'like women' as much as possible while in uniform resulted in several rulings regarding appearance and apparel that differed from what the men were subject to. Almost from the beginning the Army told women that they would not have to wear 'issue' underwear. When women enlisted they were given fifteen dollars for 'necessaries'. This allowed them to purchase undergarments from women's clothing stores that carried items that were more feminine than anything the Army could provide. They were also given a dress allowance and three dollars every quarter for replacements and upkeep of their undergarments. In April of 1944, a ruling was passed which allowed CWACs to wear civilian clothing on any pass over 36 hours. The April 1944 issue of the CWAC News Letter claimed that this was the 'happiest new ruling' governing the Corps.<sup>82</sup> The uniform of the women's army was considered drab and unfeminine by some and this ruling was hailed as an opportunity to wear pretty dresses and let their femininity shine through.

This desire for women to maintain their femininity was also evident in the lessons new recruits were given about how to properly apply cosmetics. Members of the Canadian Women's Army Corps were allowed to use cosmetics if they did so in good taste.<sup>83</sup> Concerns about femininity were also an issue for female factory workers. There was concern that working in difficult and dirty factory jobs that were usually done by

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<sup>82</sup> Pierson 147.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. 153.

men would be detrimental to a woman's femininity. Many women in both lines of work, even though they often enjoyed their jobs, were concerned about this and looked for ways to maintain their appearance.

### **How Did Rationing Affect Women's Purchases?**

The Second World War brought about the end of the Depression for Canada. Employment levels increased as the country geared up for war. This increase in employment levels along with the high wages offered in many war industries led to a rapid increase in the average Canadian's purchasing power. A study entitled "Recent Trends in Consumption" that was published in the August 1941 issue of The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science looked at monthly indexes of retail sales from January 1938 until March of 1941. The monthly indexes revealed a reasonably steady increase in several categories of consumer goods from the outbreak of war until the end of the time period used in the study.<sup>84</sup> For the early months of the war Canadians were taking advantage of their improved economic situation to purchase items that they could not afford during the Depression or, as the months passed, to purchase something that could soon be unavailable, even if they did have the money to buy it.

This would soon change as prices rose, shortages of certain products occurred and rationing was implemented. In a collection of love letters Norah Egner exchanged with her husband Fred during the war, she shared information with him about rising food prices and items that were no longer available. On July 6, 1941 she told Fred that bacon

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<sup>84</sup> S. B. Stocking, "Recent Trends in Consumption," The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science 3.7 (1941): 377 – 78. The study looked at levels of consumption using the index of retail sales as compiled by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. The data was presented in monthly totals beginning with January 1938 and ending with March 1941 using the following categories: General order, Grocery and

was 50 cents a pound, eggs was 32 cents a dozen and butter had increased in price by two or three cents. As well, spices, tea and meat were much more expensive.<sup>85</sup> One month later her letter stated that bacon had gone up fifteen cents from the previous month and eggs had gone up eight cents. Special deliveries for milk, cream and ice cream were no longer available and in her letter the following week she told Fred that ordering and planning of meals and cooking was becoming a real difficulty because of the rise in food prices.<sup>86</sup> Her September 19, 1941 letter informed Fred that all aluminium products, as well as permanent waves, nail polish and sliced bread were no longer available.<sup>87</sup>

In October of 1942 the situation was even more taxing for Norah. She constantly had to watch her money and was even considering sewing her own clothes. Norah had heard that consideration was being given to a possible rationing of butter, tea and sugar. Planning meals was becoming more difficult every day because of the many things that were unavailable.<sup>88</sup> In December of that year the prices of tea, coffee, milk and oranges were reduced but by spring of the following year a meat ration was introduced.<sup>89</sup> She told Fred that the "...variety and planning and procuring of food..." as well as the cut backs in food deliveries was becoming a major issue.<sup>90</sup> She found that it was almost impossible to run a household, which included her two children and her parents, smoothly by this time. While Norah was not employed and was forced to make do on her savings and the

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meat stores, Men's clothing stores, Women's clothing stores, Boot and shoe stores, Furniture stores, Radio and electric stores and Candy stores.

<sup>85</sup> Fred and Norah Egener, *A Time Apart: Letters of Love and War*, ed. Joan Barfoot, (Owen Sound, ON: Ginger, 1995) 12.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* 16 – 18.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 23.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* 89.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* 95.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.* 113.

money she received from Fred's armed forces salary, the struggles she encountered were similar to what other women encountered even if they were working themselves.

Rationing, shortages and rising prices made shopping difficult for women especially when it came to buying food. Major food items including meat, sugar, tea and butter were rationed and meals had to be created using modified recipes and alternatives to these foods. Rationing had a major impact in the kitchen and a 1943 poll found that only 45% of Canadians favoured tighter restrictions.<sup>91</sup>

Shortages and restrictions were also a problem when women went shopping for other products. Aluminium products were completely unavailable to consumers after the fall of 1941. Anyone who needed a new washing machine, pots and pans or silverware was out of luck. They would have to find some used ones or make do with what they had until the end of the war.

As far as clothing was concerned, the selection and styles available to women were greatly reduced. Stockings were hard to find and when women were able to purchase them they had to settle for rayon because silk was unavailable. It was rare that women could obtain more than two pairs at once and when they had to do without they resorted to painting lines on the back of their legs to create the illusion of wearing stockings.<sup>92</sup> As stated above, cosmetics were also an important part of a woman's shopping list. These products were also in short supply and women were encouraged to melt the stubby ends of their lipsticks and put them into small pots in order to make them

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<sup>91</sup> Desmond Morton and J. L. Granastein, *Victory 1945: Canadians From War to Peace* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1995) 77.

<sup>92</sup> Jean Bruce, *Back the Attack! Canadian Women During the Second World War – At Home and Abroad* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1985) 8.

go farther. It was also suggested that the life span of other products such as soap and nail polish could be prolonged in order to save money.<sup>93</sup>

The need to save money for the war effort as well as concerns about the possibility of rising inflation, which was a major issue in the First World War, caused women to be especially vigilant about prices and shortages when shopping. The Wartime Prices and Trade Board set price and production ceilings on many consumer items during 1941 and 1942. Women's clubs created committees in order to keep an eye on the movement of prices and the availability of products that were necessary for housekeeping and family care. The members of these committees made note of price infractions or commodities that were scarce at food, clothing and hardware stores and reported them to the appropriate authorities. This led to the creation of the Consumer Branch of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board under the direction of *Chatelaine's* editor Byrne Hope Sanders to coordinate the activities of these committees.<sup>94</sup> These activities were necessary to halt inflation and women played a role in keep inflation under control during the war.

There was also a fair amount of pressure placed on women, and men as well, to limit their purchases to only what they needed. Buying more than was necessary was considered hoarding, and the Wartime Prices and Trade Board labelled hoarders as 'Public Enemy No. 1'. They were called public enemies because those who bought more than they needed and the merchants who encouraged this were believed to be sabotaging the war effort. Stocking up was frowned on as being unfair to others. Women were told that loyal citizens did not hoard but instead cheerfully adjusted "...their standard of

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Pierson 39.

living, realizing that their country's needs must come first. They do not try to gain unfair advantages over their neighbours".<sup>95</sup>

Women were also asked to save their money for the war effort and not buy things that they could do without. Wanting nice things that one really did not need was considered selfish. In December of 1941 Charlotte Whitton, the President of the Canada Welfare Council encouraged women to ask themselves "Do I need this so much that my country must release war machinery to make it for me? Must I be so different from other women that workers and machines, needed for blankets, uniforms, and parachutes, are to be used on elaborate styles and silk stockings for me?"<sup>96</sup> This plea to think twice before purchasing something that was not a necessity led many women to restrict their purchases to only those articles that were absolutely essential to keep their home clean and their family well fed and properly clothed. Anything that was not considered a necessity would have to wait until the war was over.

Women's consumer needs changed during World War Two. For the woman who was busy with a war job or volunteer work shopping was all about finding ways to save time in the home and save money while doing so. Grocery shopping was also an issue for women trying to run a home. As more and more items were rationed or completely unavailable, they had to make do with less and find suitable substitutes when planning and preparing meals. Keeping the home running smoothly became an increasingly difficult task because of a lack of many consumer goods. Armed forces and factory women had to deal with questions about their femininity and were strongly encouraged to make cosmetics and feminine clothing the main items on their shopping lists. At the same

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<sup>95</sup> Bruce 7.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

time, women were told that spending money on extras was considered a waste of money that could be used for the war effort. They were given information on how to make things last longer or find creative alternatives instead of buying items that were in short supply or seen as unnecessary. Advertisers tried to address this problem in their advertisements by stressing that their product was an essential part of a woman's life and could even be considered a vital part of the war effort. Shopping during the war was characterised by rationing, shortages, the need to save money and the constant need to decide whether a potential purchase was a necessity or something that could wait until another time.

## Chapter Four – Commercial Advertising

The Second World War required advertisers to alter the way that they pitched their products to women. As was stated earlier, during the 1930s, advertisers who had traditionally targeted men became increasingly interested in directing their sales pitches at women while advertisers that traditionally focused their campaigns on them presented their products as a way to improve one's life and save time for personal activities. By the end of the 1930s they were seen as potential consumers of virtually any product. During the war they continued to be targeted for a wide variety of products, especially as more and more women were left in charge of their homes and families. Advertisers were also well aware of the other changes that the war had brought to women's lives. While commercial advertisers often embraced these new roles in their advertisements, this acceptance was never without conditions involving traditional stereotypes and a self-serving desire to influence female consumption patterns. Some advertisements implied that women were naturally frail and that this was a condition that needed to be overcome for the good of the nation. Advertisements also addressed concerns about gender norms that existed because of these new roles and suggested ways, usually through the use of the advertised product, that these concerns could be alleviated. Advertisers tried to present themselves as cheerleaders and guides, willing to support women in their new roles and provide them with the necessary products to help them get the job done. Advertisements encouraged them to keep the home front going and praised them for their efforts in this task. They were also encouraged through advertising to realize that they were responsible for maintaining their nation's morale. As the war appeared to be coming

to an end the themes of advertisements switched from the above mentioned topics to a campaign to encourage women to return to pre – war ‘normality’ as soon as possible once the war was over. That this was not a path that every woman wished to take was not even addressed in advertisements during this phase of the war. The advertisements analysed in this chapter illustrate how advertisers reacted to the changes in women’s lives by always keeping traditional ideas about women in mind, even when a progressive portrayal was presented.

### **A. Cheerleading the Patriotic Woman**

#### **1. Keeping the Home Front Going**

The vast majority of Canadian women spent the war on the home front and whether they were housewives, factory workers or servicewomen they were expected to do their part to keep it running smoothly. Advertisers realized this and used their advertisements to praise women for their work on the home front and encourage more women to get involved. Some advertisers did this without including a product pitch while others offered their product as an aid to maintaining a successful home front. These advertisements were both a public service to the nation and an attempt to increase the sales of advertisers’ products.

Advertisers of beauty products often linked their praise of women’s efforts on the home front with the promise that their product could provide them with ample time to contribute to the war effort and still look their best. DuBarry Beauty Preparations illustrated this theme in the December 1943 issue of Chatelaine.

Tonight in far – off Italy – Kisha – over Germany or on the broad sea lanes, Canadian men are fighting to finish this war sooner. At home Canadian women are answering the call – a call to take their places in war production – community work - and necessary civilian service jobs. When our government urgently asked for help, the chief stumbling – block was time. There just didn't seem to be enough hours in the day, but Canadian women are learning to save time and today in ever – increasing numbers are offering their services so that more men may be released for fighting.

DuBarry – beauty helps prepared so that you can give more time for Victory and still stay as lovely as you are.<sup>97</sup>

As was evident in the above advertisement, accompanying all of this praise of women's war work and volunteering was the suggestion that they needed something extra that would provide them with the time to contribute even more to the war effort than they already were. Appliance companies ensured women that their appliances were the ultimate time savers that any patriotic woman ought to own. In the December 1941 issue of Chatelaine magazine, Canadian General Electric offered up their appliances as being just that. "For women who want 'extra' hours to help Canada's all – out drive for victory, G – E Appliances are gifts they will welcome to conserve their energy for this great task. G – E Appliances save time, money and effort."<sup>98</sup> While this advertisement was aimed at people, likely husbands, who were doing Christmas shopping for women, the fact that it appeared in Chatelaine magazine suggested that Canadian General Electric hoped women would see these appliances as just what they needed and drop hints to that effect to their loved ones. Unfortunately for the appliance companies, a shortage of metal for civilian goods and the need to convert to war production put an end to this ingenious advertising theme by the spring of the following year.

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<sup>97</sup> Chatelaine, Dec. 1943.

For many advertisers 'Keeping the Home Front Going' literally referred to women's homes. According to advertisers, the largest part of a housewife's war effort was her ability to keep a clean house and keep her family healthy and well - fed. An advertisement for Liquid Veneer Furniture Polish in October of 1942 claimed that keeping a bright and cheerful home was "An Important Contribution to VICTORY... Make it part of a winning 'home front'".<sup>99</sup> The H. J. Heinz Company of Canada stressed the importance of keeping those on the home front in good physical condition in an advertisement in the October 1942 issue of Chatelaine. According to Heinz, achieving this called,

...for the right food. You Canadian housewives are engaged in an all - important job, sustaining the family well - being at a time when the nation's health standards must be maintained. Many of you are doing double - duty today. To those who serve in the dual - role of home - maker and war - worker Heinz foods are saving thousands of kitchen hours. For there is spare - time in every Heinz container on your pantry shelves... spare - time that provides more hours for the many worth - while services that you Canadian housewives are dedicating to your country.<sup>100</sup>

To those women who were asking what was the most useful thing that housewives could do, The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company offered up the goal of keeping families healthy in the October 15, 1941 issue of Maclean's.

Of all the many types of war work in which Canadian women are engaged - one takes first place. Today, more than ever

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., Dec. 1941.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., Oct. 1942.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.



# Canada's **HOUSOLDIERS** ARE SERVING THE NATION

BRINGING ALL THEIR SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE TO THE JOB OF FEEDING THOSE WHO WORK FOR VICTORY

ALL-OUT PRODUCTION demands a healthy people. War workers must not only get to their jobs... they must stay on them... work readily and efficiently... resist the strain of long hours and tiring labour.

At home, then, to those mothers and wives who are exerting every effort to keep the workers of Canada fit, vigorous and keyed to "victory through production." They are *Canada's Housoldiers*. They are doing their part by devoting their skill and knowledge to providing appetizing and nourishing meals that protect and preserve the health of those carrying on the war work of the nation.

Top of the list of products chosen by Canada's Housoldiers are many produced by The Canada Starch Company... such outstanding favourites as Benson's Corn Starch and Canada Corn Starch, for delightful desserts... Crown Brand Syrup, the delicious and nourishing table sweet... Mazola, the ideal salad oil... and many others.

*Canada's war diet, for "victory through production," demands the highest quality and purity as well as economy in foodstuffs. That is why Canada Starch Products can play so fine a role in the maintenance of human health and the attainment of better living conditions.*

*... for better health and improved fitness.*



**BENSON'S CORN STARCH**  
and  
**CANADA CORN STARCH**  
*For Delightful, Economical Desserts*

**CROWN BRAND SYRUP**  
*The corn syrup with the delicious flavour*

**LILY WHITE CORN SYRUP**

**KARO SYRUP**

**MAZOLA**

*The ideal oil for salad dressings or deep frying*  
*And other famous products*

**THE CANADA STARCH COMPANY LIMITED - Montreal - Toronto**

before, they must help keep their families healthy. Physical fitness and a high level of national health are vital of Canada's war effort. Keeping healthy begins with the eating of proper food... Correct nutrition affects us all in many ways. It affects the health and working efficiency of the thousands of war workers engaged in essential war industries – it is important that they do not lose a single hour from their jobs. It affects our national morale and courage... Here is a war time responsibility that is squarely put up to every housewife by Canada's Council on Nutrition.<sup>101</sup>

As the war continued women were praised for doing their part in this effort to keep families healthy, and through this accomplishment, keep the home front running smoothly. Advertisements for cooking ingredients tended to lead the way with this kind of advertisement. The Canada Starch Company Limited acknowledged the contribution that Canada's 'Housoldiers', as housewives were often called in advertisements, were making to the war effort. An advertisement in the November 15, 1942 issue of Maclean's proclaimed that,

Canada's 'Housoldiers' are serving the nation. Bring all their skill and knowledge to the job of feeding those who work for victory. All – out production demands a healthy people. War workers must not only get to their jobs... they must stay on them... work steadily and efficiently... resist the strain of long hours and exacting labour.

All honour, then, to those mothers and wives who are exerting every effort to keep the workers of Canada fit, vigorous and keyed to 'victory through production'. They are Canada's Housoldiers. They are doing their part by devoting their skill and knowledge to providing appetizing and nourishing meals that protect and preserve the health of those carrying on the war work of the nation.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Maclean's, Oct. 15, 1941.

An advertisement for OXO Cubes and Liquid in the November 29, 1943 edition of the Ottawa Citizen also gave praise to women for their work, especially as the circumstances under which they had to work became increasingly difficult.

Women are Wonderful. Keeping house and feeding a family isn't any picnic these days. You're working overtime – all the time, with your hands, your head, and your heart... and doing a great job. You know that food and fitness, victory and vitamins are all related. You know rationing is necessary so you cope with more and more mental arithmetic and remember more and more dates. Shortages can't be helped so if you can't get this you substitute that. You conserve, preserve – you stretch and save. You're ingenious, industrious and cheerful. Your patience and good humour are unfailing. You've got all the courage of the pioneer women and you're armed with the power and influence of much new knowledge and many new skills. In fact you're wonderful! That's what we think and we want you to know it. Housekeepers of Canada – we salute you!<sup>103</sup>

While the company presenting the advertisement usually mentioned the product or products that they sold, there was rarely a product sales pitch offered in this type of advertisement. However, as it was often a company that produced some type of food or cooking ingredient, it was likely that advertisers hoped women would see the product being advertised as being part of the preparation of healthy meals.

The home front was an important part of the war effort and women were told that they were an important and vital part of the home front. Advertisers played a role in encouraging them to do their part to keep the home front running smoothly. They also praised women for the work that they were doing. This was sometimes done without including product pitches. However, advertisers also used this style of advertisement to

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid. Nov. 15, 1942

offer their products as items that could improve women's ability to keep the home front going during the emergency.

## 2. Building Morale

Maintaining morale became increasingly important, especially when it appeared that the war was going to last for several years. This was also a task that was handed to women by the media who claimed that building morale was a natural part of any woman's war effort. Companies also got into the act through their advertisements by praising women for their efforts to maintain the nation's morale as well as their own. Advertisers, especially those who sold beauty products, presented their product as a way for women to maintain their morale, as well as the morale of those around them.

Advertisements for beauty products, clothing stores and salons often claimed that the best way for a woman to keep up her morale, and more importantly the morale of others, was to be as beautiful as she could be. A May 3, 1943 advertisement in the Ottawa Citizen for Harriet Hubbard Ayer Beauty Products claimed that a beautiful woman was an inspiring sight in a war weary world.

There's a gallant air about the woman whose skin is fresh and smooth, eyes clear, chin lifted, mouth bright, that cheers all who see her. Her radiance – as challenging as a bugle – inspires valor, lifts morale. Beauty has ever been woman's valiant gesture in time of war. Make that gesture now – for the men who fight, the women who work, because looking your best helps you do your own victory job better.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ottawa Citizen, Nov. 29, 1943.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. May 3, 1943.

This advertisement encouraged women to be beautiful not just for herself but for everyone who was working hard for the war effort. Other advertisements told women that they should be beautiful for the morale of one specific individual – the man in their lives. In an April 26, 1943 advertisement for Laura Thomas clothing store that appeared in the Ottawa Citizen, women were spoken to as individuals and told that their man was fighting for them and they should be beautiful in order to encourage him. “You are what he is fighting for... To him you are beautiful... through a thousand conflicts that leave him exhausted and painracked, through the hell that is total war, your image will rise 10,000 times to give him the will to carry on – you are his personal reward for victory.”<sup>105</sup>

These advertisements did not make a product pitch but some companies did link their product or service with the maintenance of morale. An example of this can be found in an October 31, 1941 advertisement for the Salon Elysee. This advertisement appeared in the Montreal Gazette under the heading ‘Beauty – Your Duty!’ The advertisement contended that a woman’s hairstyle played a role in morale maintenance and that the Salon Elysee was the place to go to get a morale building hairstyle. “That left – down look is no way to raise your country’s morale! What if your hair must be shorter, more casual... the Salon Elysee’s coiffeurs have a way with 3” coiffures that will enchant you, and be equally good for day or evening.”<sup>106</sup> This seemed to be a common theme for beauty salons. Another example of this occurred in a rather romantic advertisement in the Toronto Star from the licensed Zotos Beauty Salons proclaimed,

Morale is a woman's business. Every time you listen to war news on the radio you think 'How can I do more to help?' You go to First - aid classes. You spend hours at the Red Cross. And

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid. Apr. 26, 1943.

<sup>106</sup> Montreal Gazette, Oct. 31, 1941.

*The Stars Over Home*

Continued from page 25

not alone. The collie had begun to whimper and was trotting toward a clump of Juneberry bushes on the slope back of where Lige was sitting. He got up and followed hesitantly until he saw the light burn in a crumpled heap. "The girl!"

scented like anger when he stood over her: "I—I thought I'd be alone out here, at this time of night!" she stammered, drawing her leather jacket more closely about her. But the starlight showed the glisten of tears on her cheeks, and the break in her voice stirred him with odd anxiety.

He knelt awkwardly on the ground beside her and put a hand on her arm. "I didn't mean to barge in on you. I thought I was alone. Do you think you ought to be out here, like this? There's a heavy dew on the ground, and—"

"It won't hurt me." She started to rise as though in desperate impatience at herself, but Lige's fingers tightened about her arm.

"Don't go—please. Can't you tell me what's the matter?" he asked. "I don't know you yet, of course, and maybe I haven't any right to ask you what's wrong, but—"

"Why did you come out?"

"I came because I had to make up my mind where I belong in this cock-eyed world. I didn't want to stay here on the farm—and now I don't know. Perhaps this is my place. Something queer happened to me while I was sitting over there. I don't know for sure what it was—just yet—but perhaps, by daylight I will."

"You'd think of leaving this, now that you've come back?" the girl said. "I was brought up on a farm—my brother Rolf and I. When he was ten and I was twelve, my father died, and Rolf and I went to live with my uncle in the city after that. But we always dreamed of making enough money to have a farm of our own again—until he felt he had to go and help win the war."

"Well—when he gets back—"

"He's not coming back," she told him. "Tonight, before you and the others came home from town, I had a telephone call from my uncle. Rolf went down with his plane—somewhere in the North Sea."

It was long seconds before Lige found a voice to speak with. "Why didn't you tell us—right away—Thora?" he asked evenly.

His first uttering of her name moved from his lips with a small shock of warmth. The stars showed the upward widening of her eyes as she searched his face.

"You had just come home," she replied in simple surprise. "We were always taught to welcome those who return."

Those who return . . .

Lige stared up at the starlight, and then at the girl, Thora, and found that he could not see her very clearly.

*If your Chatelaine is late . . .*

Every effort is made to have your copy arrive on time—but wartime brings transportation difficulties which occasionally may cause your

*Morale Builder  
Extraordinary*



This girl with such exquisite taste, wearing her clothes with significant grace, traceable to a perfect Flexees foundation. She's his favorite morale builder—upper . . . and Flexees are the chief source of her clothes confidence . . . improving the fit of her suit; sculpturing lovelier contours for her figure. Why not try one of the new Flexees . . . superbly! Combinations and Girdles: \$6.00 to \$16.50.

*Flexees*  
FOR A FINER FIGURE



**BEAUTY CURE**  
A Department of Style, Health



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still you feel a little apologetic because you're only a woman. You even feel guilty when you take time off for feminine things, like buying a new hat or getting your hair done. BUT HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT SMALL, TERRIBLY IMPORTANT WORD 'MORALE'? Have you forgotten that morale is a woman's business, now, more than ever? The way you look affects so many people around you... your family, your friends, even strangers who pass you in the street. To them, a woman's beauty stands for courage, serenity, a gallant heart... all the things that men need so desperately these days. The time spent in your favorite beauty salon every week isn't selfish or frivolous. It's part of your job of morale. It's a woman's way of saying we won't be beaten.<sup>107</sup>

This rather dramatic speech was followed by the suggestion that women make an appointment with their beauty salon right away. Within this flowery speech about morale was an attempt by beauty salons to keep up their business. This may have been necessary if large numbers of women were deciding that trips to the salon required time that they simply did not have or were an unnecessary expense at a time when extra money should have been going to the war effort. By convincing women that maintaining people's morale by looking beautiful was the most important war work they could do, beauty salons hoped to attract those who wanted to make a bigger contribution or merely wanted some reason to justify what could be called 'frivolous' trips to the beauty salon.

Beauty salons were not the only companies that used this form of advertising. In the October 1942 issue of Chatelaine, Flexees Foundation Garments claimed that their product was key to maintaining morale, calling a woman wearing Flexees a 'Morale Builder Extraordinary'. "This girl with such exquisite taste, wearing her clothes with significant grace, traceable to a perfect Flexees foundation. She's his favorite morale

builder – upper... and Flexees are the chief source of her clothes confidence... improving the fit of her suit; sculpturing lovelier contours for her figure.”<sup>108</sup>

Advertisers also took it upon themselves to praise women for all of the work they were doing to maintain the country’s morale. Product pitches were absent in these advertisements but they often encouraged continued support of war bond drives or patience with rationing and restrictions. It can also be suggested that these advertisers hoped that women would remember that they supported and praised women for their work during the war and respond to that support by buying their products. The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company of Canada Limited placed one such advertisement in the November 2, 1942 edition of the Calgary Herald. This advertisement addressed itself to Canadian women and praised them in this way.

When the call is for multiplied muscle and brain to do mansize jobs, you are there. When comforts are needed for those in the forces, your busy needles fly far into the night. You make the homes, you care for the children, you inspire the men. You are the real heart and soul of the nation and your devotion, tested by three years of war does not pass unobserved.

But great duties yet lie upon you. To still bear up courageously under war’s quickening demands. To yet radiate cheer, fortitude and encouragement on every side. To yet dispel the spirit of complaint with the spirit of thankfulness for our blessings. To yet demonstrate a faith unbounded in Canada’s future.

Canada counts on you – confident that you will play your part to the end. Today it is urgent duty of every woman to make the current Victory Loan a success. May your voice and your influence urge... Let’s buy all we can.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Toronto Star, Mar. 16, 1942.

<sup>108</sup> Chatelaine, Oct. 1942.

<sup>109</sup> Calgary Herald, Nov. 2, 1942.

This advertisement joined praise with the reminder that the task of morale building was far from finished. Women were encouraged to continue to do their best to be courageous and cheerful in spite of hardship for the good of the nation. As part of this they were encouraged to give more to the Victory Loan and encourage others to do the same. Firestone was a company that was more likely to direct themselves towards men, but perhaps this kind of advertisement reflected advertisers' interest in targeting women in new areas that was evident prior to the war. In their praise of Canada's women it could be suggested that Firestone was hoping to attract more women to their products.

Another advertisement that praised women for their inspiring efforts was placed in the May 22, 1944 issue of the Montreal Gazette by Holt Renfrew & Company Limited. Holt Renfrew was a company that had traditionally directed their advertisements towards women and on this occasion praised them as consumers for maintaining their morale in spite of restrictions and rationing that made shopping difficult.

Praise to the Women of Canada. You have been Wonderful! You are Wonderful! Your innate gift of good management and creative economy – your determined foresight – your unfaltering good sense – your firm reason – your unflinching endurance – your wise leadership... have been the source of lofty inspiration to the whole of Canada to uphold steadfastly and willingly the arm of the Government in its successful struggle against the evils of inflation.

Your patient understanding of the difficulties your retail merchant has to conform with because of the shortage of labour, the unavailability of certain stocks of merchandise and restrictions called forth by present emergency regulations ...finds its reverberation in the plain and sincere... Thank you, Mrs. Consumer.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Montreal Gazette, May 22, 1944.

This advertisement was a personal 'thank you' from Holt Renfrew to its female consumers for their patience and support during a time that Holt Renfrew could not offer women the kind of service or selection that they expected to receive from the store. By praising women for their morale in this way, Holt Renfrew was probably hoping that they would respond favourably by overlooking any difficulties and continue to shop at a place that held them in such esteem.

Morale building advertisements were popular among advertisers. Through this kind of advertisement advertisers praised women for their ability to keep cheerful in the face of adversity while encouraging everyone else. Women were seen as morale builders and advertisers reminded them of this responsibility and encouraged them to keep it up even when times were difficult. Again this type of advertisement was sometimes presented without a product pitch but many advertisers also used this style of advertisement as a way to present their product in a favourable and useful light. Advertisers who did this acknowledged that keeping up one's morale, as well as everyone else's was a difficult job, but it was one that could not be neglected and the products they offered were supposed to keep that from happening. After all, as many an advertisement claimed, a charming and beautiful woman was the ultimate morale – builder to keep the nation's spirits up.

### **B. Women's Frailty and How to Overcome it**

It was a firmly held belief at this time that women were frail and as a result, not up to strenuous physical and mental activity or high stress situations. When women were called upon in the Second World War to take war jobs in munitions factories, join the

FOR  
LOVELIER  
CURVES AND  
LESS FATIGUE

That sense of competence—which you're eager to bring to your war-time work—is very considerably enhanced when you choose Flexees. Not only do Flexees give you lovelier curves, a more slender waistline; they bring, too, welcome support to help you overcome fatigue. Ask for Flexees:

Girdles and Combinations: \$6 to \$16.50  
FLEXEES, 240 Richmond St. W., Toronto, Ont.

*Flexees*

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armed services or take on other roles that had been filled solely by men prior to the war, there was considerable doubt as to whether they were up to the task. Women themselves had some doubt as to whether they were capable of handling the new roles that they were asked to fill. Advertisers came forward to offer up their product as something that women needed in order to overcome their traditional frailty.

Advertisements for foundation garments presented this product as essential for female war – workers who were required to put in long, tiring days. Flexees Undergarments presented their product as being ‘For lovelier curves... and less fatigue’ in the April 1943 issue of Chatelaine. The advertisement explained that, “That sense of competence – which you’re eager to bring to your wartime work – is very considerably enhanced when you choose Flexees. Not only do Flexees give you lovelier curves, a more slender waistline; they bring, too, welcome support to help you overcome fatigue.”<sup>111</sup> The implication was that if a woman wanted to be a success in her war job, she had better invest in a Flexees undergarment. Gossards Foundation Garments also offered working women the support that they supposedly needed in order to be able to handle their new job. In an advertisement in the September 1942 issue of Chatelaine the company claimed that “Gossard gives you day – long support and comfort. Defense worker, housewife, career girl – whatever your job – your health demands the day – long support and comfort provided by a really good foundation garment... scientifically designed not only to relieve fatigue and strain but also to control figure faults effectively.”<sup>112</sup> It was believed that women’s frailty made maintaining their health a major concern when they took on

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<sup>111</sup> Chatelaine, Apr. 1943.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. Sept. 1942.

extra responsibilities. They needed artificial support for their body in order to cope with the stress of their new jobs.

Advertisements for sanitary napkins also carried the theme of women's frailty. It was claimed that if not for a particular brand of sanitary napkin it would be impossible for women to handle a natural part of being a woman and still be a success at their jobs. An advertisement for Modess Sanitary Napkins in the July 15, 1942 issue of Maclean's depicted a woman who worked in an office that had become very busy as a result of the war. This woman relied on Modess to get her through her 'difficult days'.

A priority used to be what I had on my best beau. Now it's a word that keeps our office busy as a beehive -- and me working overtime! I guess most offices are the same. With so many men doing direct war work -- we have to take over the office front, and do more jobs and work harder at them. Mostly it's fun and I love it. But there are days when I feel like the proverbial lame -- brain and everything goes wrong. It's then that I'm grateful for the comfort and serenity of Modess.<sup>113</sup>

The suggestion was that if not for Modess, women would be unable to keep it together at work. Kotex Sanitary Napkins also claimed that their product was what women needed to make difficult days tolerable. A Kotex advertisement in the May 15, 1942 edition of Maclean's even suggested that without Kotex, they would be unable to keep up with their wartime responsibilities and as a result would be shirking their duty to their country.

You've got the glooms... want to crawl off in a corner and have a good cry. But you keep saying to yourself: 'Snap out of it... I won't be a slacker... there's so much to do today! Big important things that mean far more than your own fun

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<sup>113</sup> Maclean's, July 15, 1942.

and frolics. Things that really matter! Making bandages this morning. A War Savings Stamp luncheon. Then you've simply got to finish that navy helmet. And tonight, the boys come home from camp. You'd be a fine citizen spoiling their furlough with a faceful of frowns. What's the answer?... simply give up? No, a thousand times... there must be a way to be comfortable and at ease on trying days of the month! There is a way... USE KOTEX<sup>114</sup>

This advertisement suggested that female frailty was unavoidable but succumbing to it was unacceptable, even an insult to those who were risking their lives for Canada. Kotex was presented as being the way for women to avoid letting feminine weakness get the best of them.

Health tonics also pledged to help women overcome their frailty in order to keep up with their wartime duties. In the December 1, 1943 issue of Maclean's, Sal Hepatica laxative was advertised as the solution for women who were having difficulty holding up against the stress of their job.

So much depends on how You feel Today. Switchboard operator? Stenographer? Salesgirl? Waitress? It doesn't matter what your job is – it's important that you do it well. On the sea, on land, in the air... our fighting men are depending on you to keep things rolling... you won't let them down. But you can't do good work if you feel half – sick. You've got to keep fit, got to keep feeling your best to do your best. Sal Hepatica often means a big day's work instead of a half – done job.<sup>115</sup>

Even though the jobs suggested were ones that women had held prior to the war and were indeed considered to be traditionally female occupations, the implication was that their

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., May 15, 1942.

frailty made life difficult even in jobs that were considered within their capabilities. Another remedy for female frailty was found in a March 8, 1943 advertisement for Dr. Chase's Nerve Food in the Halifax Chronicle. This advertisement praised women for the war work they were doing, but pointed out that some of them were having a difficult time handling their new responsibilities. Dr. Chase's Nerve Food was presented as the cure for these women.

It's Tops with the War Worker Girls as a 'pick – me – up when they are tired, nervous and jittery. All honour to you girls who are helping to provide guns and munitions of war. Many of you have left softer jobs or the ease and comfort of home life to take on work which is both interesting and strenuous. To some this change brings nerve strain, chronic fatigue and discouragement. It is under such conditions that Dr. Chase's Nerve Food can be of real help as a 'pick – me – up' to enable you to carry on without loss of time.<sup>116</sup>

Lost time was a major issue for female workers and advertisers whose products could be considered as a remedy for female weakness presented their product as something that women had to use if they wanted to avoid missing work and damaging the war effort.

Even Doublemint Gum was offered as a remedy for female frailty. In the September 19, 1941 issue of the Halifax Chronicle they ran an advertisement featuring a woman doing war work in a factory beside the claim that “You can't GO ALL OUT if your nerves are ALL IN! DOUBLEMINT helps you stand the pace! Whatever your job,

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid. Jan. 1, 1944.

<sup>116</sup> Halifax Chronicle, Mar. 8, 1943.

keep fresh and fit to do your best. DOUBLEMINT GUM helps to relieve fatigue and nervous tension WHILE you work!"<sup>117</sup>

The frail woman was an unproductive woman, and she had no place in wartime Canada where time was of the essence for war production. It was assumed that because of women's traditionally frail constitution, many women would fall into this category when they took on new responsibilities for the war effort. Advertisers for products such as foundation garments and sanitary napkins were quick to address this perceived problem and presented their products as ways for women to cope with their natural frailty. In spite of evidence that most women were holding up relatively well, even with their new responsibilities, women were still portrayed in advertisements as not being able to get the job done without help from an advertised product.

### **C. Gender Norm Anxieties and How to Alleviate Them**

There was a great deal of concern that women would lose their femininity when they took on 'men's jobs' during the war. Advertisers, especially those selling cosmetics and skin creams, were quick to present their product as something that would keep a woman feminine, even when she was doing a man's job. An advertisement for Jergen's Lotion that ran in the February 1943 issue of Chatelaine was quite straightforward in addressing the issue of women doing war work and still being feminine. This advertisement was relatively simple with a headline that read 'Lovelier to Remember - feminine hands that are soft', followed by a picture of a soldier kissing a woman. Following this was one sentence that laid out what was expected of women doing war work. "It's PATRIOTIC for a woman's hands to work hard - and still look well groomed,

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., Sept. 19, 1941.

feel pleurably soft."<sup>118</sup> The main message that Jergen's was trying to give women in this advertisement was that they were expected to reach a balance in their lives if they did war work - work hard at their jobs but at the same time never let their femininity be questioned.

In an advertisement in the April 1944 issue of Canadian Home Journal readers were told the story of Evelyn, a tiny woman who was proud of her man - sized job as a truck driver. The advertisement explained that, "Evelyn's hands, strong and capable on the wheel of her big truck, are soft and feminine as hands of any stay - at - home".<sup>119</sup> She used Cutex Hand Cream at the end of every run to keep them that way. This advertisement told women that even in a difficult job that might be hard on their hands, Cutex Hand Cream would allow them to have hands just like the ultimate traditional example of femininity, the stay - at - home woman. In the February 1943 issue of Chatelaine magazine the makers of Campana's Balm claimed that women who had taken on war jobs would need to use their product more than ever. "The harder the work is on the hands, the greater the need for Campana's Balm to protect them. Since women have taken over extra and unusual work, Campana's Balm is being used more than ever to keep busy hands soft, smooth and lovely."<sup>120</sup> In mentioning that women were doing 'unusual work,' Campana's suggested that they were doing something that was completely out of their nature and would need extra help to keep their delicate skin from becoming rough and masculine looking.

Some women may have been convinced that their appearance would be a casualty of the war when they took on a war job but advertisers such as Palmolive claimed that

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<sup>118</sup> Chatelaine, Feb. 1943.

<sup>119</sup> Canadian Home Journal, Apr. 1944.

this did not have to happen if they used the right product. In a February 8, 1943 advertisement in the Calgary Herald, Palmolive presented a young war worker who, because of a lack of time, cut her beauty routine down to washing her face with Palmolive and achieved pleasant results.

I'm doing a Man's Job but I'm still a Woman on the surface. When I took this mansize job, I said 'What price glamour! I'll give up my complexion for my country. because i simply won't have time for my long sessions with fancy beauty aids'. So I sighed to myself: 'Oh well. with John away at camp and my work at the plant, my complexion can shift for itself. I'll just take two minutes twice a day for quick, through skin -- cleansing with soap and water'. I'd always used Palmolive, so I stuck to it. Well, John's home on leave and wonder of wonders, first thing he said was: 'Darling, you're lovelier than ever. What's the new glamour -- recipe?' Was I ever surprised! Could it be I used to spend time and money on beauty aids I never really needed? And now... only Facials with the new, improved Palmolive keep my complexion radiant!  
I've promised to keep on with my 'new' beauty care till Johnny comes marchin' home! Now more than ever I trust Palmolive to keep me lovely for Him!<sup>121</sup>

Palmolive appears to have had two goals with this advertisement. The first goal was to convince women that they could still be feminine and beautiful even when life was busy and time was short, if they made Palmolive a part of their daily routine. The second goal was, having attracted women in search of a timesaver to Paimolive, to make them so impressed with the results that they would stay with Palmolive after the war and not go back to their more complicated beauty routines.

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<sup>120</sup> Chatelaine, February 1943.

<sup>121</sup> Calgary Herald, Feb. 8, 1943.

Some advertisements suggested that receiving the approval of a man was a sure sign that women were not letting the masculine nature of their job effect their femininity. The products in these advertisements were presented as the key to receiving that approval. "My boss says I've got as pretty a pair of hands as ever monkeyed a wrench... Sure I'm a factory worker – jeep suit and all. Greasy grime was tough on my hands till I started using Hinds Honey and Almond Cream... Now my hands wash up smooth and pretty as you please,"<sup>122</sup> proclaimed the woman featured in a Hinds for Hands lotion advertisement in the September 1942 issue of *Chatelaine*. It was significant that the boss praised her hands and not her work in this advertisement. The most obvious reason for this would be that hand lotion was the product being advertised. As well, by focusing on the woman's hands the advertisement showed readers that her femininity was being maintained.

Hinds for Hands addressed this issue again in the April 17, 1944 edition of the Montreal Gazette. This advertisement featured a woman who had attained the rank of Sergeant in the armed forces but was still anxious to receive her man's approval. The headline of the advertisement read 'Imagine a Sergeant with sweet kissable hands!' In spite of the presence of women in the armed forces for several years at this point, the absurdity of the statement would still be enough to attract attention. The text of the advertisement portrayed the woman as a sergeant but also served to take away much of the potential disrespect or distaste readers might have had for a female sergeant by making her prime concern her appearance, a very stereotypical female concern. "Even a sergeant has softer moments... especially for smooth, kissable hands. Of course there's another sergeant in my life... and I want him to be proud of my hands... My romance

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<sup>122</sup> Chatelaine, Sept. 1942.

won't go A.W.O.L.... because I keep Hinds on 'guard' duty 24 hours a day."<sup>123</sup> This advertisement was carefully crafted to portray both the traditional and the nontraditional side of womanhood in the 1940s. Here was a woman who was serving her country in a way women had never done before, and doing it well enough to receive a promotion, but underneath all of that she was still very much a woman. Her main concerns were making her hands presentable for her off duty life and keeping her romance going. The fact that she had a romance was stressed with the use of the words 'of course'. It was necessary to stress that a woman who had achieved a promotion in the armed forces could also have a man in her life because women of rank had been stereotypically branded as harsh and unfeminine.

Some advertisers offered women ways to feel feminine in their off duty hours. These products would supposedly allow both the women themselves and other Canadians to see that even if women were doing war jobs, they were still feminine. In the February 1943 issue of Chatelaine an advertisement for Cutex Nail Polish proclaimed 'Beautiful, Dutiful Hands are Wearing Alert'. "You're leading a double life! All war activity and efficiency by day... all glamour and femininity after dark! And Cutex Alert is just the nail polish shade to brighten your day and heighten his evening! A brave gay red to match your brave new spirit. Get a bottle today"<sup>124</sup> Once again, it was suggested that the right product would bring male approval, the ultimate sign that a woman was being successful at maintaining her femininity. An Eaton's advertisement in the June 29, 1942 issue of the Toronto Star also appealed to women who wanted to be completely feminine in the few hours that they had out of factory overalls. "War work by day but play by

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<sup>123</sup> Montreal Gazette, Apr. 17, 1944.

<sup>124</sup> Chatelaine, Feb. 1943.

night... Day after day, you tie your pretty curls up in a kerchief. It's safer! You copy male attire... not because you like it, but because it speeds up production! Yet all the time, your feminine heart is yearning for the frills that flatter a woman's beauty... and off duty - those are the things you wear!"<sup>125</sup> This kind of advertisement served to reassure people, and women doing war jobs especially, that there were ways for a woman to maintain her femininity no matter how 'masculine' her job was. Women were given respect for the job they were doing, but at the same time attention was given to their dislike of the 'male' attire that they had to wear to do that job. Many women missed being able to wear the interesting styles of traditional female apparel. As a department store Eaton's had the clothing that they were looking for to help them feel more feminine when the working day was done. This kind of advertisement was designed to tell people that they should not worry about women losing their femininity. According to this advertisement women did their jobs and put up with their uniforms but they would much rather be wearing feminine clothing that flattered their beauty. Wearing overalls was merely a sacrifice that they were willing to make to help bring the war to an end.

Advertisements that addressed the issue of gender -- norm anxieties implied that the new roles women were taking on were clearly out of character and that assistance was required in order for them to remain feminine. Advertisers presented their products as being necessities for women doing men's work if they wanted any chance of maintaining their femininity. The approval of a man was depicted as one way that women could be assured that they were successfully maintaining their femininity. Women were told that by using the products featured in this type of advertisement they would be able to achieve this approval. By depicting them as still being concerned about appearance and men's

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<sup>125</sup> Toronto Star, June 29, 1942.

approval in spite of their new roles, advertisers tried to reassure people that traditional gender roles were still in place.

#### **D. Returning to Pre – War ‘Normality’**

Once it appeared that the momentum of the war was shifting in the Allies’ favour and an end to the war was in sight, advertisers began to shift the themes of their advertisements to the end of the war and what they believed post – war Canadian life would be like. By and large, this view of post – war life portrayed women as returning to the home to begin new lives with their husbands, whom they would rely on for financial support. There was no mention of women holding jobs in the post – war world created by advertisers, which suggested that advertisers expected work outside the home would not play a role in the lives of women after the war.

Among the first companies to shift their advertising to a post - war theme was Community Silverplate. In the October 1943 issue of Chatelaine the first of these advertisements ran with the headline 'There'll come a day' and pictured a man and woman embracing. "There's a great day coming when you'll run down the path - straight into the arms you've ached for! You'll live again - laugh again - love again...And when his eyes look into yours across the breakfast table, all the ages you've waited won't matter anymore."<sup>126</sup> Community pledged that when that day arrived and peace was realized, they would begin to produce their silverware again. Over the year and a half that followed Community encouraged women to think of the day when their men would be back and Community would be available again with the following stirring promises, all of which appeared in Maclean's magazine. In the April 15, 1944 issue women were told,

In the space of a heartbeat... some never - to - be forgotten day... the lump in your throat will melt away - and the man in your life will be home. Home to chase away from your heart those 'lonesome blues'... Home to laugh away that tight, forlorn knot that's become part of you. Home... for always and a!ways. It's the day you dream of... and Community is dreaming, too... Dreaming... with you... for you... that we may trade the tools of war for the pleasant crafts of peace. Hoping... with you... for you... that it won't be long now - there will come a day!<sup>127</sup>

A December 1, 1944 advertisement for Community Silverplate talked of thoughts turning towards the home and the opportunity to actually think about making plans for the future. "You'll cry - the tears you haven't dared to cry since the day he went away. You'll laugh - the deep - welling laughter of two heart happy people who once again are one. You'll make a million plans - for now you can see your plans come true... Community will be... there with you... Our hearts, like yours, are turning home."<sup>128</sup>

The final advertisement of this kind appeared in the April 15, 1945 issue, only a few weeks before the war in Europe came to an end. In this advertisement the man's return was no longer a dream soon to be realized but a reality. "It's that moment you've dreamed of, longed for, ached for... you and your man, home for keeps. You were cold, you are warm; you were scared, you are safe... this is something old, something new, this is forever."<sup>129</sup> Women were told that the day when they would have everything they wanted: their home, their man and their own Community Silverplate would soon be at hand. All of the women in these advertisements were at home waiting for their men to

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<sup>126</sup> Chatelaine, Oct. 1943.

<sup>127</sup> Maclean's, Apr. 15, 1944.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., Dec. 1, 1944.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., Apr. 15, 1945.

come home, and they always did. The world created by Community advertisements was one where families were always reunited, women stayed home and everyone lived happily ever after.

Westinghouse was also anticipating the day when they would be able to produce their appliances again. In an advertisement entitled 'When DREAMS come TRUE' in the May 19, 1944 issue of the Montreal Gazette, Westinghouse implied that women were dreaming, not of an exciting career but of a home and all of the latest appliances for it. "The deluxe Westinghouse Automatic Electric Range caused many a feminine heart to flutter before wartime restrictions called a halt to its production. When civilian goods are again available, you will find Westinghouse ready to give reality to your dreams of an electric home."<sup>130</sup> Appliance companies had once offered their products as a time saving device that gave women more time for war jobs, volunteer work and free time. As the war appeared to be coming to an end, all trace of this kind of advertising disappeared to be replaced with thoughts of home.

This change of attitude was also directed towards a woman's appearance, especially in 1945. The March 5, 1945 edition of the Toronto Star ran an advertisement from Eaton's Department Store that featured the new spring fashions. The advertisement included drawings of the new fashion trends such as little waistlines and softer skirts and claimed that woman was '...Spring, 1945'.

She is her loveliest self in this season of femininity  
Deliberately, designingly, Fashion has recalled all the gentle  
graces... A sequel to the Edwardian elegance of the Fall,  
fashions have grown quieter but prettier, planned, polished,  
perfected to a studied serenity... depending for their ultimate

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<sup>130</sup> Montreal Gazette, May 19, 1944.

effect, their infinite becomingness, upon the good taste with which they are assembled.<sup>131</sup>

DuBarry Beauty Preparations also ran this type of advertisement in the May 1945 issue of Chatelaine promising that it would not be long before women would be returning to the feminine fashions and behaviours of the years before the war.

Soon now, we trust, ALL the women of Canada will be back in the flowered hats and romantic, feminine clothes that go with a return to peace. For the women of this country have earned the right to indulge their love of beauty and to express their personal allure in the ways that women understand and instinctively desire. It's BEEN A LONG TIME of self denial. For many, it has been a long time of loneliness. But at last we can look forward to reunions and rejoicing, to a renewal of the way of life for which we have fought and triumphed. The demands of wartime service and sacrifice have been eagerly met by Canadian women. But through all the trying years of this war, Canadian women have always remembered that they are women, as well as soldiers.<sup>132</sup>

The message was clear. When the war was over women were expected to return to the way they were before the war. According to advertisers, this meant feminine fashions and behaviour as well as so - called feminine dreams. Advertisers stressed that no matter what women had done during the war, they had stayed women through it all. The message from advertisers was that this preoccupation with femininity, marriage and home was what all women wanted and if it was not, it was something they should want. There was no other option offered for women in the advertisements in the latter part of the war.

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<sup>131</sup> Toronto Star, Mar. 5, 1945.

<sup>132</sup> Chatelaine, May 1945.

*It won't be long*



SOON now, we trust, ALL the women of Canada will be back in the flowered hats and romantic, feminine clothes they go with a return to peace. For the women of this country have earned the right to indulge their love of beauty and to express their personal allure in the ways that women understand and instinctively desire.

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME of self denial. For many, has been a long time of loneliness. But at last we can look forward to reunion and rejoicing, to a renewal of the way of life for which we have fought and triumphed.

THE demands of wartime service and sacrifice have been eagerly met by Canadian women. But through all the trying years of this war, Canadian women have always remembered that they are women, as well as soldiers.

MANY HAVE LEARNED the Du Barry secret of loveliness. A few minutes care the Du Barry way is the answer not only for "today", but also for the other glorious days to lie ahead.

First pour just a few drops of Du Barry Foundation Lotion in the palm of your hand. Then stroke your face and throat until the lotion is well smoothed in. Remove any excess with tissues. Du Barry Foundation Lotion, \$1.50.

Next blend Du Barry Rouge carefully upward and outward being sure to leave no hard edges. Du Barry Rouge, \$1.25.

Now carefully apply Du Barry Lipstick, first making sure your lips are dry, and don't forget to blot off any excess with tissue. Du Barry Lipstick, \$1.15.

Finally with Du Barry soft-flinging Powder, begin at the base of the throat and work upward... powder generously and press the powder in so as to blend it to your powder base. The excess powder brushes off as you blend it in. Du Barry Face Powder, in large box, \$2.00.



See your Du Barry beauty adviser at better cosmetic counters everywhere. She can assist you with your make-up problems.

*Du Barry*

BEAUTY PREPARATIONS

By Richard Hudnut

Featured at better cosmetic counters from coast to coast

Illustration 5: DuBarry Beauty Preparation's, Chatelaine May 1945

Some advertisements that were directed mostly towards men addressed concerns women had about their post – war future. Even though advertisers were primarily targeting men with these advertisements, women were also targeted because it was their interests being discussed in the advertisements. These advertisements stated that in the post – war world they were going to be relying on their men to take care of them. The Dominion Oilcloth and Linoleum Company placed an advertisement in the April 1, 1944 edition of Maclean's in order to reassure the wives of their employees that they would not have to worry about their husband's jobs after the war. The advertisement featured a man talking to his worried wife under the headline 'Pete reassures his wife!' The advertisement reassured women that there would be plenty of work for their husbands after the war and that they would be well taken care of, including receiving a pension upon retirement.<sup>133</sup> Another advertisement with a similar theme was placed in the September 11, 1944 issue of the Ottawa Citizen by The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company. This advertisement suggested that women would not be working in post – war Canada and would instead be relying on their husbands to take care of them.

Post – War Plans for her begin at home. Your wife is just as much concerned about post – war planning as anyone, but she thinks in terms of her home and family now. She wants security, but she must rely on you alone to guard against the hazards that threaten it. What assurances has she that the family will have money to buy the necessities of life if you are taken from them? Life insurance provides a means by which you can guarantee to them a continuing income. To provide this security in any other way is quite impossible for most husbands. To do it through systematic and regular life insurance premiums is both practical and sure.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Maclean's, Apr. 1, 1944.

<sup>134</sup> Ottawa Citizen, Sept. 11, 1944.

This advertisement clearly stated that women would need their husbands to take care of them because they would have no other source of financial support. As far as The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company was concerned, married women would not be working in the post – war world.

The companies that tended to be the most enthusiastic about using ‘back to normal’ style advertisements were those whose products had not been available for several years. They tried to get women excited about returning to the home or setting up housekeeping for the first time. These advertisers offered their product as a vital part of the new post – war world that they had to look forward to. The post – war world that advertisers had created was part romantic and part nostalgic longing for the pre – war past. Women were depicted as longing to give up their work clothes permanently for the feminine clothes that were the fashion as the war came to an end. They were also shown as being focused on their home life and longing for the chance to return to ‘normal’.

## **Conclusion**

The war brought many changes to the lives of women, and advertisers altered their sales pitches to them accordingly. They did this by responding to the changes and new roles women had taken on without forgetting traditional ideas about women. Advertisers took note of such public concerns as women’s ability to handle difficult work and the fear that they would lose their femininity doing men’s work and incorporated them into advertisements, offering their products as the solution to these concerns. They also incorporated the traditional themes of woman as morale builder and guardian of the

home front in wartime into their advertisements by praising and encouraging them in these tasks, complete with product pitch for something to help women do these tasks better. Companies that sold household products began the war with advertisements offering their products as time savers that would enable women to get out of the house and dedicate more time to war work. Once these products were no longer available, these advertisers adapted to the situation by attempting to keep their products in the minds of women and presenting themselves as a cheerleader for women and their role in the war effort. As early as the fall of 1943, some advertisers, especially those whose products were not available due to war production, began to shift their advertising to post war themes. This shift began to occur more often in 1944 as advertisers realized that an end to the war was in sight. Advertisers set out to create a new post – war Canada through their advertisements. This world had women leaving their jobs behind in return for a husband, a family and a home full of newly available products. Advertisers also assured the public that women would be giving up their work clothes in return for feminine dresses and accessories for a long anticipated return to normal. As far as advertisers were concerned, the roles women took on and the thrift that they practiced during the war was an abnormal state for them to be living in and they strongly encouraged a return to traditional womanhood, a way of life they considered quite consumption friendly.

## Chapter Five – Governmental Advertising

Government advertising during World War Two was somewhat different from commercial advertising. The government agencies that placed advertisements directed at women had needs that differed from their commercial counterparts and therefore approached their advertisements in different ways. Government agencies that were directly involved in the war effort needed more than just money from Canadian women. They also needed them to save and collect scraps and other vital materials, take war jobs and join the armed forces. The government agencies in charge of financing the war effort needed women, who were often in charge of purchasing consumer goods for their families, to put aside some of their household budget for the purchase of War Savings Stamps and Certificates. As part of the drive to collect this money these agencies created advertisements that focussed on issues that were considered important parts of women's lives and encourage them to contribute to the cause. Agencies that were in charge of the collection of household scraps needed advertisements that stressed the importance of these items and create enthusiasm among women about carrying out this task. Advertisements that informed women about war jobs often needed little more than basic information about the job and the training that was necessary to be able to do the type of work being advertised. High paying war jobs required little in the way of a sales pitch from the government. This was not the case for those responsible for recruiting women for the armed services. Advertisements for the armed services needed to convince them that life in the women's divisions of the Army, Navy or Air Force was exciting and important without being detrimental to a woman's femininity. The latter also needed to

be stressed to Canadians in general who were skeptical about the presence of women in the armed forces.

## **A. The Home Front**

### *1. Save, Reuse and Recycle*

Part of the Canadian Government's advertising campaign involved trying to encourage Canadians to contribute money, make items last longer and collect household scraps for the war effort. Women were the main targets of these advertisements because they were usually responsible for household care and purchases for their homes and families. By encouraging women to do their part in this way it was hoped that they would encourage the rest of their families to get involved. Government advertisements asking women to contribute in this manner used a variety of tactics from patriotism to guilt and fear to try to get them involved in the Government's campaigns to collect money and other necessary items.

The drive to raise funds was a key part of the war effort. The government targeted housewives as part of their campaign to raise funds by encouraging them to spend less and contribute more. The headline in a November 17, 1941 advertisement in the Ottawa Citizen read 'This is The Last Week in our War Weapons Drive – what have you done?' and featured a housewife explaining how she was doing her bit. "We housewives are just as eager to help win the war as everybody else. And we're doing it, too, in our own way – by cutting down our household expenses, by saving every dollar we can, and putting them into War Savings Certificates. We know that we must spend less – even sacrifice to do it."<sup>134</sup> Women were expected to look at what they had done for the war effort and

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<sup>134</sup> Ottawa Citizen, Nov. 17, 1941.

realize that they had more to do, even if it meant sacrifices had to be made. The government was not above forcing women to take a good hard look at where they stood as far as the war was concerned by suggesting that taking a neutral stance was actually showing support for the enemy. A National War Finance Committee advertisement in the June 15, 1942 edition of the Ottawa Citizen featured a woman confronting another woman with the words ‘Which side are you on Mrs. Brown?’

Maybe you think your small change cannot help... that ‘total war’ means ‘somebody else.’ Maybe you’re one of the thousands of housewives who haven’t yet started to put even 50c a week into War Savings Stamps – just a neutral... There aren’t any neutrals in this war! You’re a help or a hindrance to victory. You can’t get out of it. If you spend thoughtlessly you’ll deny our fighting forces the arms they need and imperil your own future. If you – and 2,000,000 other housewives in Canada - put only 50c a week into War Savings Stamps, it means \$1,000,000 a week to help win the war. Which side are you on?<sup>135</sup>

The War Finance Committee presented to women the possibility that someday one of their friends or neighbours was going to question them about what they were doing to help the war. If the answer was ‘nothing’, the advertisement suggested this could be the reaction they would receive. The possibility of being viewed in such a light could hardly have been flattering in a nation that was geared up for total war.

The government tried to combat excess spending by telling women that spending large amounts of money on themselves was a detriment to the country's war effort. In May of 1942 the National War Finance Committee ran an advertisement with the

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid. June 15, 1942.

headline 'Hitler would just love to see how smart you look!' and pictured an older woman talking to a young woman sitting in front of a mirror.

Yes, you're smart... or are you? I thought I was smart too, back in the 20's. Then the depression came and taught me a lesson! We'd be a lot smarter if we put less of our money into our own outfits and more of it into the outfits of the boys who are defending us... By pledging ourselves to do without so that they may have plenty to do with! You want them to win don't you?<sup>136</sup>

This advertisement offered two powerful deterrents to excess spending, the threat of Hitler and the memory of the Depression. Even if the Depression had not struck a woman very hard, the threat of what Hitler might do if he won the war would make diverting funds from clothing to Victory Bonds an easy decision for many women. Hitler was also used in another advertisement designed to get women to only buy necessities. A July 1, 1942 National War Finance Committee Advertisement in Maclean's magazine featured an illustration of Hitler whispering 'Go on spend it... what's the difference?' into the ear of a woman with an open purse. The advertisement went on to explain just what the 'difference' would be. "Canadians... the time has come when every nickel, dime and quarter you spend needlessly is money spent in the cause of our enemies! Now, more than any time, since this war began, national THRIFT is essential... From now on resolve that needless spending is out. Your personal war job is to save every cent you can..."<sup>137</sup>

Women were expected to use the money that they saved to purchase War Savings Stamps.

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<sup>136</sup> Calgary Herald, May 18, 1942.

<sup>137</sup> Maclean's, July 1, 1942.

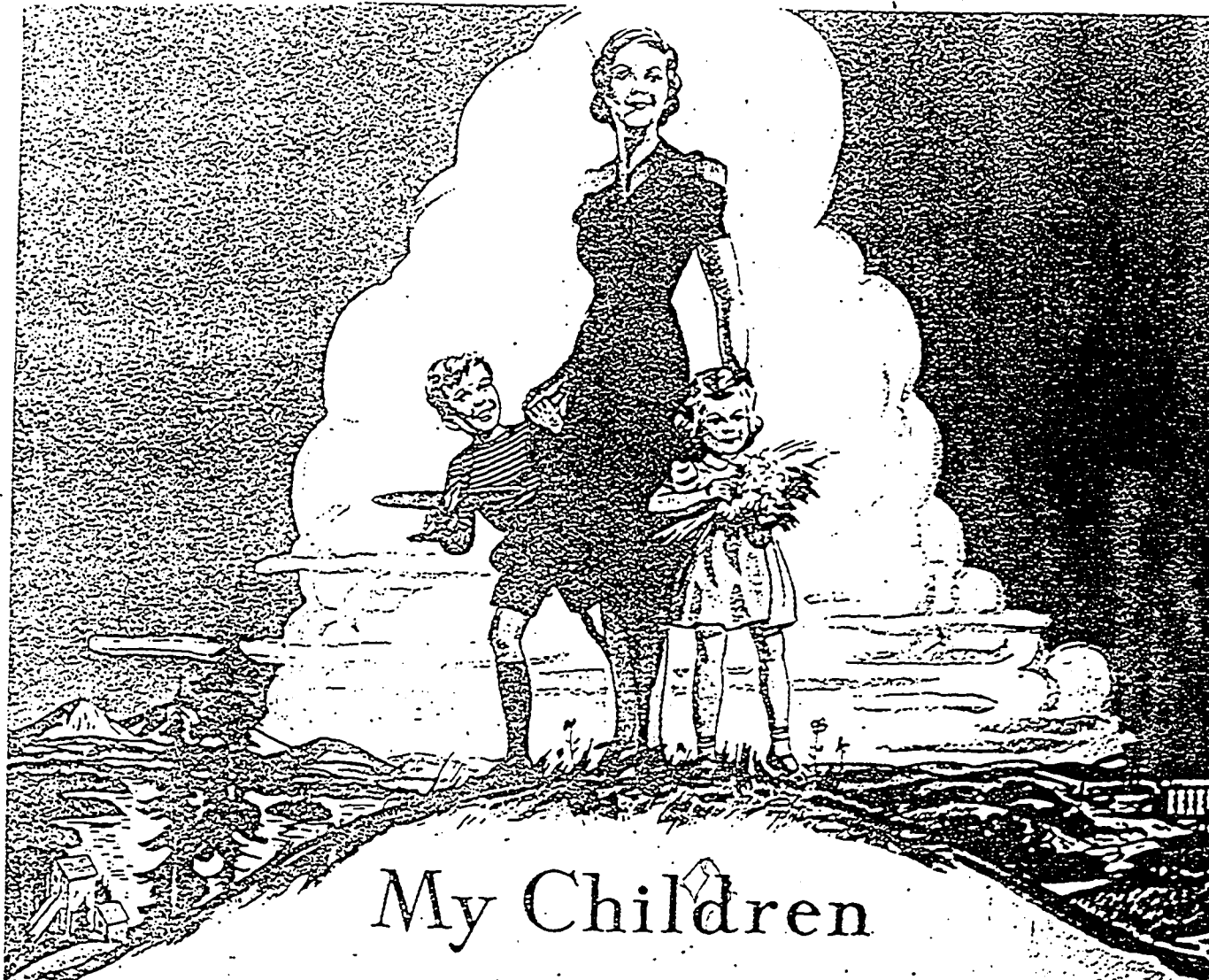
Women were also strongly encouraged to be willing to receive part of their change in War Savings Stamps instead of cash when shopping. An advertisement featuring a grocer asking a woman if she would 'Take part of your change in War Savings Stamps Madam?' that the National War Finance Committee placed in the August 15, 1942 issue of Maclean's suggested that there was only one acceptable answer to this question.

'Of course,' should be the answer of every woman – for it is every homemaker's war job to shop economically, live simply, save in the kitchen, on clothes and in every possible way – in order to turn those savings into War Savings Stamps.

In this war, that is the one all – important way for women to protect our homes – to help arm our fighting men' And saving will help you keep prices down, too, as well as give you a nice little nest egg to help your family readjust itself when victory is won and armament production ceases.<sup>138</sup>

This advertisement suggested that even if women did nothing else to help the war effort, they would be making the ultimate contribution that Canadian women could make if they were careful with their money and spent what they saved on War Savings Stamps.

Two government committees targeted women in one of their most vulnerable areas in the drive to raise funds – their children. The threat of what might become of children if Hitler was allowed to win the war made for compelling advertising copy and these committees hoped that it would lead women to purchase War Savings Stamps and Certificates as often as possible, and get their children to do the same. A National War Finance Committee advertisement in the June 8, 1942 edition of the Ottawa Citizen was quite straightforward about what had to be done if Hitler was to be stopped. The



## My Children

my loving—trusting—little children . . . Mine! God's precious gift to me. Mine to nurture—to guide and to shield. Yes, mine the blessing—but mine, too, the responsibility. They're little children now—in a few short years they will be beautiful in the valiant strength of their maturity. What is to be their future?—their Country's future? *Now* they are free,—free to develop in mind and spirit. No tyrant is here to break these children, to dwarf them and warp them body and soul. Yet by my bare hands alone I cannot protect my children from the terrors of Nazi barbarism and slavery. I must join with thousands of other Canadian mothers—to provide supplies for the Army, Navy and Air Force—to crush the terror that threatens all free, happy children—and keep the Hitler pestilence from our land.

## My Pledge to Them —and to Canada

*I will not fail or falter—I will not weaken or tire—in my efforts to keep my children free—to keep Canada free. I will—I must pledge, and pledge my very utmost, to save and lend. I will keep on buying War Savings Certificates.*

Published by the War Savings Committee, Ottawa

**Buy WAR SAVINGS CERTIFICATES Regularly**

Illustration 6: The War Savings Committee, Maclean's May 1, 1941

advertisement featured a woman and her children holding War Savings Stamps and a piggy bank as she vowed,

Hitler's not going to teach my children! I've read how Hitler starts training his killers when they're toddlers. So I reckon it's up to me and every other Canadian mother to train our children to realize that they've got to pay for their freedom!

That's why I see to it that all of my children buy War Savings Stamps every week. I tell them what freedom means – what grown – ups are fighting for – that it's for them! So they've got to give up something too – and the money - \$5.00 back for every \$4.00 saved now – will come in mighty handy – when they start out on their own!<sup>139</sup>

The War Savings Committee also used this theme in an advertisement that appeared in the May 1, 1941 issue of Maclean's. This rather dramatic advertisement featuring a woman and her children standing on a hill with Canadian scenery in the background proclaimed that it was a woman's responsibility to protect her children from the evils of Nazism. The advertisement claimed that while she could not do this on her own, she could join with other Canadian mothers in purchasing War Savings Certificates to help provide supplies for the Armed Services.

My children – my loving – trusting – little children... Mine! God's precious gift to me. Mine to nurture – to guide and to shield. Yes, mine the blessing – but mine, too, the responsibility. They're little children now – in a few short years they will be beautiful in the valiant strength of their maturity. What is to be their future? – Their Country's future? Now they are free. - free to develop in mind and spirit. No tyrant is here to break these children, to dwarf them and warp them body and soul. Yet by my bare hands alone I cannot protect my children from

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., Aug. 15, 1942.

<sup>139</sup> Ottawa Citizen, June 8, 1942

the terrors of Nazi barbarism and slavery. I must join with thousands of other Canadian mothers – to provide supplies for the Army, Navy and Air Force – to crush the terror that threatens all free, happy children – and keep the Hitler pestilence from our land. MY Pledge to Them – and to Canada – I will not fail or falter – I will not weaken or tire – in my efforts to keep my children free – to keep Canada free. I will – I must pledge, and pledge my very utmost to save and lend. I will keep on buying War Savings Certificates.<sup>140</sup>

The War Savings Committee's use of both patriotism and an appeal to motherly love reveals an attempt to get to the heart of what they believed was most important to women and encourage them to invest in War Savings Certificates to insure that these things were maintained.

If for some reason this was not enough of an incentive for women the War Savings Committee placed an advertisement in the October 1941 issue of Chatelaine asking women to purchase War Savings Certificates in order to protect endangered children in Britain. Once again a dramatic style was used to touch their hearts and get them to open their pocket books.

Shorten their nights of fear! They're not asking for sympathy - they need your help. The world is stirred by the fortitude of the people of Britain – and mothers' hearts everywhere are touched by scenes like this. Poor little tots, some of them motherless, going night after night into underground shelters for their bed. What a contrast to the life and security of your own Canadian children! Yet that fate would befall us and the Hitler terror reach Canada, if our supplies of war materials were to fail. You can protect these children... and your own, too, by lending all the money you can to help buy guns and planes and ships and tanks. You can 'hasten the end by what you lend'. Every dollar you spend needlessly may mean a needless night of fear for these children... or your own. One

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<sup>140</sup> Maclean's, May 1, 1941.

Bomber is worth a thousand sighs. An open purse helps more than an open heart.<sup>141</sup>

This advertisement encouraged women to compare their children's lives to the lives of British children and consider the possible consequences that inaction on their part could have for children on both sides of the Atlantic.

The government also carried out a campaign to get women and their families to save household scraps and donate them to the war effort. A November 30, 1942 advertisement placed in the Halifax Chronicle by the National Salvage Division of the Department of National War Services encouraged women to get involved, saying, "Housewives Here's a Day – to – Day War Job for You"<sup>142</sup> and asked them to save the fat and bones from their cooking. This campaign began in early 1941 when the Department of National War Services asked them to save all kinds of scraps from their homes for the war effort. In an advertisement in the April 21, 1941 edition of the Ottawa Citizen the Department of National War Services claimed that scraps such as paper, metal, rags and bones were the war weapons of those who could not go into battle. "We cannot all march into battle – but we can march into the attics, the cellars and store – away places in our homes. There are war weapons in these places – and in your household waste, which can be turned into a valuable contribution to Canada's war production and into funds for the auxiliary services."<sup>143</sup> This type of advertisement attempted to not only provide the government with the materials they needed but also to

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<sup>141</sup> Chatelaine, Oct. 1941.

<sup>142</sup> Halifax Chronicle, Nov. 30, 1942.

<sup>143</sup> Ottawa Citizen, Apr. 21, 1941.

get housewives who may have felt that they had little to contribute involved in the war effort.

Government advertisements that asked women to contribute financially to the war effort were similar to commercial advertisements in that the government agency placing the advertisement was trying to get women to give them money. However, what government advertisements were selling was completely different from what commercial advertisements were offering to women. The government was not offering anything tangible, and unlike the products being offered in commercial advertisements, women could not use what government agencies were selling as soon as they paid for it. Instead, government agencies tried to sell victory, peace of mind and the feeling that those who contributed financially, and collected scrap materials, were making an important contribution. In fact, the government did not want women to spend their money on unnecessary commercial extras and asked them to save their money and donate in to the war effort through the purchase of War Savings Stamps and Certificates. Government advertisements often contained some of the same themes that commercial advertisements did, such as patriotism and praise for a job well done. However, the tone of the advertisements was often different from commercial advertisements because of the magnitude of what the government wanted women to contribute to. The majority of these advertisements were serious, with the consequences that would result if women failed to contribute made painfully clear.

## *2. Take a War Job*

The government did not need to create a large advertising campaign in order to convince women to take a job in the war industries. Jobs in the war industries tended to pay quite well, especially in comparison to what the average working woman would have

made prior to the war. Since little incentive was required for women to take one of these jobs, there are few advertisements covering this particular subject. Most companies were able to fill positions by placing help wanted advertisements in newspapers. On those occasions when companies needed help recruiting women they turned to the government who placed advertisements requesting women for work under the War Emergency Training Program. Problems did exist among average Canadians who were unsure of how to react to the sight of women in factory garb on the streets of their towns and cities. The Department of Munitions and Supply was responsible for the items being produced in the war industries and had to respond to this problem by explaining why they needed to take these jobs and reassuring Canadians that women in pants was really nothing to worry about.

The War Emergency Training Program offered to train women for a particular job and find them a place doing that job in the war industry. These advertisements were quite simple and provided only the basic information that interested women would need to know in order to get involved in the program. An example of this type of advertisement was placed in the July 9, 1943 issue of the Halifax Chronicle entitled 'Women Wanted to Learn Aircraft Metal Construction'. The advertisement addressed itself "To the Women of Lunenburg County only. Under the War Emergency Training Program arrangements have been completed to train and then employ a number of women from this county."<sup>144</sup> Little encouragement or enticement was needed in this type of advertisement, unlike advertisements that were designed to encourage women to join the armed forces.

The large number of women who had taken on war jobs was a cause for concern among Canadians, especially as more and more women appeared in public in decidedly

unfeminine attire. Some Canadians reacted to the sight of women in overalls and pants with unconcealed disdain. The fact that dressing in this manner made the work easier and much safer to complete did little to improve their opinion of it. The Department of Munitions and Supply ran an advertisement entitled 'Please don't stare at my pants' in March of 1942 that both praised women for their work and sought to justify the need to wear pants. Readers were told that the blue trousers many women were wearing were their work clothes and that those who wore them demonstrated,

...the revival of the heroic spirit of the pioneers who laid the foundations of our country. The women folk in those days stood shoulder to shoulder with their men, either at the plow or the palisade. Today, these young women are again standing behind their men in the hour of their country's peril. In the months to come, the uniform of the blue trousers will be seen more and more frequently in our country because girls and women are contributing their skill and their delicacy of touch to the production of instruments of war for our fighting men.<sup>145</sup>

The Department of Munitions and Supply was able to praise women for the work they were doing and the sacrifices they had to make while at the same time providing reassurance to those who disapproved of the changes in women's lives with this advertisement. By referring to how they were backing up their men or wearing pants because it was safer, the message that these changes were only temporary appears to be coming through. In a sense, people were told not to worry because women were only doing what they were doing because their men needed them and as the reference to the pioneer women indicated, they were fulfilling a traditional duty.

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<sup>144</sup> Halifax Chronicle, July 9, 1943.

<sup>145</sup> Maclean's, Mar. 1, 1942.

## **B. Military Advertisements**

Getting women to enlist in the armed forces often required a strong sales pitch. This involved convincing women and their families, as well as the general public, that enlisting was an acceptable and indeed commendable way for them to get involved in the war effort. This was a difficult task because there were those who did not think it was appropriate for a woman to be in uniform and did not hesitate to make their opinions about what they thought of those who did enlist known. Advertisements encouraging women to join the armed forces had to portray servicewomen working hard at interesting and important jobs and still behaving like proper ladies. They also had to impress upon women how much the armed forces needed them to release men for active service by taking over their behind the scenes jobs.

In order to attract women to the armed forces recruiters needed to show them that the armed forces could provide them with what they were looking for, both as a life experience and as an opportunity to contribute to the war effort. Recruitment advertisements tried to convince them that this was something that they should be a part of. In an August 23, 1943 advertisement in the Ottawa Citizen, a woman was pictured looking out the window as a parade of women in uniform marched by with the headline, 'Me Too'. The woman told readers, "When I see a parade of those girls of the Forces go by... boy, it gives me a thrill! I'm doing just an ordinary kind of job I suppose, but those girls are doing something really important. No wonder they look so proud... and how

smart their uniforms are. I guess it's time I joined them."<sup>146</sup> The advertisement went on to stress that women were urgently needed in the armed forces and that it was just as much their responsibility to do whatever they could as it was for the men to go overseas and fight. The woman in the advertisement was portrayed as feeling that her regular job was inadequate and being jealous of those who had already joined up in order to make women feel that there was more that they could be doing for the war effort.

A Canadian Women's Army Corps advertisement that appeared in Maclean's a month earlier suggested that the Women's Army was the place for women who felt like the woman in the previous advertisement and tried to encourage them to enlist.

...I'm part of a great army of women that is doing its share in our great drive for victory. It's a kind of glorious feeling... that, although I'm not able to be out in the front line fighting, I have been able to release a man who wanted to get there... What makes it happier, is that I'm doing work I like... I've never felt better. Regular meals, regular hours and regular exercise have made me a new woman. The chances for promotion are good too. It's a great life, girls. Great in every way you look at it, but the thing that I like about it, and the thing that the thousands of girls already in the Canadian Women's Army Corps like about it, is that this is our battle, too, and we're doing our part.<sup>147</sup>

This advertisement presented readers with a positive portrayal of a woman and more importantly, a positive portrayal of the Canadian Women's Army Corps, a much - maligned member of war - time society. This woman was proud of her job and the contribution she was making to the war effort. She even sounded slightly apologetic that she was unable to join the men on the front lines but was happy to be able to release a

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<sup>146</sup> Ottawa Citizen, Aug. 23, 1943.

<sup>147</sup> Maclean's, July 15, 1943.

man to go there instead. As well as feeling good about herself because of the contribution she was making she was also able to benefit physically through the routine, good meals and exercise she was getting. As she stated in the advertisement, the experience was making her feel like a new woman whose life had improved because of her membership in the Canadian Women's Army Corps.

The Royal Canadian Air Force used a similar theme in an advertisement in the February 15, 1943 issue of Maclean's. This advertisement featured the headline 'She's Right in the Middle of the Biggest Job on Earth!' and a woman in an Air Force uniform working at a desk. The advertisement addressed women by appealing to their sense of excitement and adventure.

Just outside the window, aircraft are warming up, taking off, coming in. Those keen young airmen are tomorrow's fighting heroes. Wouldn't you like to be there to help them on their way? As an airwoman in the R.C.A.F. you'll see them come in as students; you'll be there to applaud when they get their wings. A few months later you'll see their names in the headlines. Then you'll remember how you helped them on their way.<sup>148</sup>

While the emphasis was on a woman's sense of excitement and adventure, it was evident from the text of the advertisement that much of this was to come vicariously, as women watched men train for the war, helped them prepare and then heard about their exploits from secondhand sources. Concerned citizens did not need to worry that Canadian women would be involved in anything unfeminine or life threatening while they were a member of the Airforce.

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<sup>148</sup> Maclean's, Feb. 15, 1943.

Being the envy of others was another theme used in order to recruit women. The Royal Canadian Air Force used this theme in an advertisement entitled 'The envy of them all,' in the October 15, 1943 edition of Maclean's magazine. This was an interesting choice as a theme for a recruitment advertisement as women joining the armed forces often inspired reactions quite the opposite of envy from their peers.

When you come home on your first leave... when your friends see how smart you look in air force blue... when you hold your head high, knowing you have followed the call of duty and are serving your country... you'll certainly be they envy of them all. Yes, when you join the colors, you share in the glory of every R.C.A.F. air attack on the enemy. As an airwoman, you release a man for combat duty against the enemy. The bombing of enemy strongholds, the blasting of enemy ships are made possible because you took over his ground job.<sup>149</sup>

This advertisement seemed to suggest that if only people understood what women were doing in the armed forces they would be envious of the wonderful experience these women were having. This advertisement incorporated pride in oneself and pride in the uniform with the knowledge that by joining the R.C.A.F., women could release men for combat. This combination of the traditional (helping men) with the new (joining the armed forces) was an attempt to balance out concerns about having women in the armed forces with the positive experiences they would derive from joining up.

The Women's Divisions of the armed forces praised their women on a regular basis. In an advertisement in the August 15, 1943 issue of Maclean's the three divisions got together to praise their members and encourage more women to join them. Readers were told that servicewomen were doing high quality work for their country. "By their



## "It's Our War Too..."

"We enlisted for three distinctly different reasons . . . Joan wanted to do her bit and help bring Harry home sooner . . . Barbara says frankly her chief reason was adventure and travel . . . I joined up because I realized that this is just as much my war as anybody's. They were all good reasons.

"Once we got on active duty, we had a new appreciation of why women should enlist. The simple fact is that there are thousands of jobs in the Services which women could — and should — be doing".

*By their ability and devotion to duty, the 25,000 women already in Canada's Armed Forces have more than proven their right to take their place beside their fighting brothers. But many times that number of women must be enlisted if women are to do their share in this total war.*

Women don't require special qualifications to enlist in Canada's Armed Forces. If you are between the ages of 18 and 45 (50 in some cases) and are in good health, there's a place waiting for you. Go to any recruiting Centre and talk it over.

**WRCNS**

Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service

**CWAC**

Canadian Women's Army Corps

**RCAF**

Royal Canadian Air Force

Illustration 7: Women's Divisions of the Canadian Armed Forces, Maclean's August 15, 1943

ability and devotion to duty, the 25,000 women already in Canada's Armed Forces have more than proven their right to take their place beside their fighting brothers."<sup>150</sup> This advertisement also presented some of the reasons that women had for joining the armed forces. Three women, representing each of the three armed services were depicted, with one of the women explaining why they had joined up.

We enlisted for three distinctly different reasons... Jean wanted to do her bit and help bring Harry home sooner... Barbara says frankly her chief reason was adventure and travel... I joined up because I realized that this is just as much my war as anybody's. They are all good reasons. Once we got on active duty, we had a new appreciation of why women should enlist. The simple fact is that there are thousands of jobs in the Services which could – and should – be doing.<sup>151</sup>

This advertisement attempted to convince women that they were needed and that there were many good reasons for wanting to join the armed services. Only one of the three reasons involved joining up because of a man, while the other two women had more individual reasons for enlisting. The reasons given for joining up suggested that the armed forces were aware that women's motivations for enlisting were not completely selfless as some media and advertisements tried to suggest, and embraced these more self serving motivations as valid reasons to enlist.

Being willing to leave the comfort of home was also praised, especially by the armed services who were in need of recruits, but at the same time the importance of the home was usually emphasized. An RCAF advertisement in the November 8, 1943 edition of the Ottawa Citizen featured a young woman who had been a stay - at - home type but

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid. Oct. 15, 1943.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. Aug. 15, 1943.

joined up because her brothers did. "I used to get a kick out of just being a home girl. While others sought jobs and careers, I enjoyed helping out at home. I know the home is still important... but other things are far more so today. Boys we love are fighting to preserve those things. That's why, when my brothers joined up... I felt I should too."<sup>152</sup> She told readers that every patriotic Canadian girl should feel the way she did and join up as soon as possible. The advertisement emphasized the importance of the home but also suggested that in some cases, such as the national emergency of war, it could temporarily take second place to the task of helping out the 'boys'.

Women whose husbands were already serving in the armed forces were encouraged to join the armed forces. These advertisements told them that they should do more than just sit and wait for their man's return, they should get actively involved in something that might make that day a reality instead of a distant dream. A CWAC advertisement in the March 1, 1944 issue of Maclean's encouraged those who were waiting for their man to come home to enlist and make their man proud. In this advertisement a woman was pictured reading a letter from her man while sitting beside his photograph. Above her was an image of men involved in combat. The headline read, 'Are you the girl he left behind?' The text went on to ask, "Are you the girl he said he'd come back to, just sitting, dreaming of the day when he'll come back home again? Then, here's the chance to show him that you are made of the same kind of stuff - that you, too, have a sense of obligation and duty... There's a job waiting for you... he'll be proud to know you are filling and it's a job you'll like."<sup>153</sup> Women were also told that they were not just needed, they were urgently needed. At this time it appeared that an end to the war

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ottawa Citizen, Nov. 8, 1943.

and an Allied victory was a distinct probability and all factions of the armed forces were getting involved in an all - out effort to make it happen. Armed forces advertisements at this time were designed to convince those women who had not considered joining up previously and were available to do so, to enlist. The women in these advertisements were portrayed as realizing that it was time they got involved and having important reasons for doing so.

The desire to join a long line of strong women from Canada's past was considered to be another reason to join the armed forces. Canadian pioneer women were used as examples that those who joined the armed forces could consider themselves worthy of being compared to. The Canadian Women's Army Corps compared the women of the 1940s to those from pioneer times in advertisements in both 1943 and 1944. In the August 2, 1943 edition of the Montreal Gazette the Canadian Women's Army Corps proclaimed that a C.W.A.C. woman was 'The Woman of the Year'.

From East... West... North... South... the war calls women to adventure – to a stirring part in the world struggle, beside which even the life of our pioneer mothers must seem drab.

They worked, those women... they faced danger... they even shouldered muskets – but theirs was a world bound to their own hearthsides. The world has changed for women. It is a world of change, of new places... new experiences... new friendships... new responsibilities. That is the world of our Canadian Women's Army Corps today... ready for service anywhere!<sup>154</sup>

This advertisement proclaimed that the world of the 1940s was one where women had many new opportunities open to them, especially if they joined the Canadian Women's

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<sup>153</sup> Maclean's, Mar. 1, 1944.

Army Corps. The message was quite positive, from the claim that women were no longer bound to their hearthsides as pioneer women were, to the assertion that they were ready for service anywhere.

The following year, as the Allies prepared for the invasion of Europe, the Canadian Women's Army Corps once again compared serving in their ranks as an opportunity to serve their country in the same way as a famous Canadian pioneer heroine.

Not since the historic and gallant days of Madeleine de Vercheres have Canadian women been offered such opportunity to serve their country. Now, they may stand 'shoulder to shoulder' with their fathers, husbands and brothers. Thousands of Canadian girls are, today, facing the facts. Thousands are meeting the realism of war in the same gallant manner as did our world famous Canadian heroine. Women can and must relieve 'A' men for front line duty – Women of Canada your Country calls you and needs you – Back the Invasion-.<sup>155</sup>

This June 1, 1944 advertisement that the C.W.A.C. placed in Maclean's magazine claimed that by joining the Canadian Women's Army Corps, women could take part in one of the most exciting experiences and opportunities available to them since the days of Madeleine de Vercheres. Women were needed more than ever at this point to replace men for combat as the Allies prepared to make an assault on German held territory in Europe and they had to be convinced that the Canadian Women's Army Corps was the place for them. The armed forces continued to tell them that they were needed to replace men for combat right up until early 1945. Recruitment advertisements told women that

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<sup>154</sup> Montreal Gazette, Aug. 2, 1943.

<sup>155</sup> Maclean's, June 1, 1944.

the need was urgent and that it was up to them to enlist so that Canada would have enough men to do their part in the European invasion.

Most advertisements of this nature addressed women in a straightforward manner with little or no evidence of the condescension or over - blown romanticism that was present in many of the commercial advertisements directed towards them during this time period. Perhaps this tone can be attributed to the seriousness of what was being advertised. These were not advertisements asking women to buy a particular brand of soap or a new dress. These were advertisements that were asking them to make a very serious commitment to their country, a commitment that would get most of them as close to actually fighting in the war as any Canadian woman would get. Women were portrayed as intelligent individuals who knew what was at stake and wanted to do whatever they could. Many of the reasons given by women in these advertisements for joining up were similar to those given by men. Many enlisted out of patriotism or a desire to defend their country, others were interested in travel or adventure and still others joined up because their fathers and older brothers had served Canada in a previous war or were serving in the present conflict. By taking women seriously and presenting the armed services as a positive experience that could benefit a woman even beyond the war years, recruiters for the three forces hoped to attract the kind of women that would do their country proud. This kind of advertising appeared to be a success in spite of the current of negativity directed at the women's divisions during the war since it attracted nearly 50,000 women in a climate that was quite hostile to the divisions' very existence.

## Thesis Conclusion

When the Second World War began advertisers changed the way that they targeted Canadian women. The time that women saved when they used new household appliances was no longer to be used to pursue her own relaxation and hobbies. Instead women were told that time and labour saving appliances would provide women with more time to fulfill their duty to their country through volunteer work or a war job. However, once these products became unavailable women were encouraged to make do and wait patiently for the day when these products would be available again. Many of the products that advertisers had begun to target women with prior to the war were no longer advertised once the factories that created them were converted to war production. Anytime the companies that produced these products chose to advertise they usually used a recruitment or patriotic message. If a product that had recently begun to target women as well as men was still available, advertisers either marketed it solely to women or in a general manner without referring to either gender.

Advertisements for beauty and fashion products continued to use the desire to look good or to catch and keep a man as the main threads in their sales pitches but patriotism and femininity was added to this type of advertising as well. Women who had joined the armed services or taken a war job were encouraged to purchase this type of product in order to maintain their femininity and often to win the approval of a man. Beauty became something to maintain for 'HIM', the man who was doing his duty in the war. Beauty and femininity were given the status of patriotic duties, duties to be fulfilled for the morale of the men who were fighting for Canada.

The war also brought a change in the way that working women were portrayed. The working woman was often limited to insurance advertisements if she was seen at all during the 1930s. This woman was usually portrayed as only working until she got married or as foregoing marriage in favour of a career. When the war began the working woman became a major character in wartime advertising. This woman was often a factory worker, a mechanic or a member of the armed services when she appeared in advertisements. This was one major difference between 1930s advertising and the advertising that appeared during World War Two.

The use of women as workers made advertisements appear more progressive than they really were. Images of women in their work uniforms suggested that advertisers believed women were strong and just as capable as men were when it came to their new roles. However, a closer look reveals that advertisers believed that this was an unnatural state for women who therefore needed the assistance of products to help them get the job done and maintain their femininity in the process.

Advertisements from the Canadian Government presented, on the whole, a more positive and progressive image of women than those from the commercial sector. This image was common throughout government advertisements because this was the kind of woman that the government needed Canadian women to be. The woman who could not cope without purchasing the products commercial advertisements claimed would solve their problems was a detriment to the government who instead needed women to do without extras and contribute the money that they saved to the war effort. Military advertisements were especially positive in their portrayal of women. They needed women to perform important jobs and free men for battle. Frivolous images of women as less

then capable of the tasks they were required to do had no place under these circumstances, especially when the women's divisions of the armed forces had to struggle to present a positive image of their organization to women and the public in general.

Historiographically this thesis provides a more in depth analysis of the reaction advertisers had toward the new roles women took on during World War Two from a Canadian perspective. Research in this area had been limited previously to short articles or segments of a much larger work. As well, both commercial and government advertisements have been analysed separately instead of being grouped together as a one. What is learned by putting these two approaches together? Commercial messages convey an image of bravery in the face of adversity, against a backdrop of traditional views of women's nature and women's place in society. Government messages convey an image of innate competence – contradicting the popular perception of women in the military as being out of place. The two types of advertisements also send contradictory messages: buy, say the commercial ones; don't buy, say the government ones. Ambiguities and contradictions, within the messages, between the two types of messages, or between message and public opinion gave women room to maneuver. They could define their own roles, because there was justification in the advertisements for a fairly wide range of behaviour. However, this did not apply to all types of behaviour, no matter what one did, one had to be able to justify it in terms of the war effort. The findings of this thesis corroborate the work that has been done by Jeffery Keshen, Deborah Montgomerie, M. Susan Bland and Susan Hartmann more than the work of the other historians. While traditional ideas about women never disappeared even when progressive images were

prominent in advertisements, the fact that images of strong and capable women existed in the conservative medium of advertising, can be seen as Keshen suggests, as reinforcement for women when they demanded more permanent change in their lives.

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