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Common Sense in Buying Equipment

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Forty-eight percent of the Iowa rural homes do not have water piped to the house, yet ninety-seven percent of these same homes use automobiles of their own. The significance of this fact is not so much the high cost of the installation of a water system, but is the low evaluation placed on the human energy of the worker who carries the water to the house. These figures are from the results of the Home Equipment Survey of 1926 made under the direction of the Industrial Survey and Research Service of Washington, D. C.

Why does the average housewife choose the equipment for her home? Because it is cheap? Because her neighbor uses it? Because she has seen it advertised? Or because she really needs and can use it? In buying her equipment the thoughtful woman considers the suitability, care and storage space necessary, as well as the resulting product and initial cost. As a result, equipment in her home fills her particular needs and yields a greater satisfaction.

The best equipment is not necessarily the most expensive on the market nor the most attractive in the window. Mrs. Smith has a new home-constructed shelf made of a board found in the basement, painted to harmonize with the kitchen, fitted with hooks and hung near the sink. The total cost of this convenience is less than a dollar, yet it saves her many more steps than Mrs. Jones’ new, expensive cabinet, which is so large that it must be placed in the far corner of the kitchen, away from the other working units. Tall Mrs. Kelly had the legs of her work table lengthened to suit her height and as a result finds herself far fresher at the end of the day than formerly. This work was done by a member of the family with no added expense.

However, the initial cost of equipment is not the significant factor. This cost is of greater importance when considered in its relationship to the use and the satisfaction the equipment gives to the worker.

Many women select equipment because it is cheap, even though it may be used but once a year, while the more expensive equipment, which would be of daily use, is passed up because of the high purchase cost, even though the expense of the cheaper article is much greater for each period it is used.

A cherry pitter costs 1.25. If in ten years the pitter had been used thirty times, the average cost for each period of use would be about four cents. A $29.00 tea wagon on wheels, which is used three times a day for about five years, with a great saving of time and energy at each meal time, would cost only approximately one-third of a cent for each period of use. In the long run, then, the greatest expenditure is not necessarily for the equipment with the greater initial cost, but more often for those articles of little use or satisfaction.

Regardless of cost, there are several factors which should be seriously considered in the purchasing of equipment for the home. One consideration, often neglected, is that of the height of the working surface. Few people realize the needlessly great expenditure of energy resulting from the use of a working surface which is not suitable to the worker. Whether because it is too high or too low, the expenditure is there. Tests made by the United States Bureau of Home Economics show that while washing dishes on a table too low there was an expenditure of thirty calories per hour; when the table was too high the output was twenty-five calories per hour, and when the table was adjusted to the height of the worker only twenty-one calories were required. In this case a saving of thirty and sixteen percent, respectively, was made in the energy output by providing the proper working height.

When you are considering a new table, sink or cabinet, be sure to adjust the working surface to your height.

The central figure in the accompanying illustration is working at a surface height which has been adjusted to meet her needs. Notice that the hands are in a comfortable working position, while the back remains erect. This position, which is least tiring and most comfortable, may be obtained for processes at which the operator is seated as well as those at which she must stand. The girl to the left illustrates the uncomfortable position necessitated by a working surface that is too high, and the girl at the right illustrates the equally uncomfortable position necessitated by the working surface that is too low.

Another factor in the choice of equipment is that of suitability to your conditions. If the household owned but one rug, it would not be practical to spend a considerable sum of money for a modern vacuum cleaner which could have but very little use. The final test as to the suitability of equipment in any particular situation must, of necessity, be left to the family itself, for no one else can understand the conditions which should determine the choice.

When the equipment is new, clean and shining it is easy to forget the amount of rubbing and scrubbing necessary to keep it in that same condition after it has been used. Perhaps the ironing machine will do the family ironing in one-half the time necessary to do it by hand, but don’t forget the care of the shoe and roll or the watching necessary to keep the motor in good working order. While all elated over the speed of the new dishwasher, remember that dirt and grime must not be allowed to collect in the corners or in the mechanism. The care of any equipment also includes a consideration of repairs. If the vacuum cleaner is run without (Continued on page 14)
Common Sense in Buying Equipment

(Continued from page 2)

investigating the knock in the motor, the chances are that the damage will become worse and worse with each use. For the greatest efficiency, it is necessary that all repairs be made as soon as possible after their need is known.

A storage compartment for storage must be made for all new equipment that comes into the home. This does not merely mean that the equipment must be stored, but that it has a place of the proper size to accommodate the equipment must be provided under the proper conditions. This place of storage should be located so that all articles are easily accessible but out of the way when they are not in use.

Not all the aid for the housewife comes through the purchasing of new equipment, for much may be accomplished by a rearrangement of the articles already in use. A grouping of those units which will be used together and energy for the housewife. In a recently completed experiment at Iowa State College, it was found that the rearrangements of the same working units in kitchens of the same size, the distance traveled in making muffins could be reduced to one-half the original distance.

Before you buy the new home equipment, ask yourselves these questions:

Do I need this?
Will it pay in the long run?
Will it be the right size?
Where will I keep it?
Can I afford it?

A consideration of these questions may save many a backache, and some pennies as well.

Why You Buy What You Buy

(Continued from inside cover)

she's had it drummed into her since early childhood... she's the only kind of baking powder one should buy.

It may have been newspaper advertising, or posters or magazine articles. In every case, you may depend upon it, somebody along the line has done some interesting work on the subject of household money to the "new clothes" column.

That's the simplest classification. Have you decided to which group you belong? Chances are you combine all three. Don't you try to insist on quality. You like your clothes to be new and smart. But I'd be ready to wager that you--yes, even you--have been caught by the line of the bargain "ad." There's only one way for that to be true, unless your husband is capable of taking a hand in the matter. Hie you to the nearest store and buy especially since it is only about 60 miles away.

Thrilling moments were those in which Margaret Culkin Banning spoke on Minnesota writers' night and again when Zona Gale addressed the convention at its formal banquet.

Eunice Thompson, '28, is doing girls' work in Louisiana. She is located in the small town of Houma of which she writes: "The town itself is a lovely old French town with its narrow streets and old French buildings that sit right out on the sidewalk, almost. But the bayous are lovely! They run through and around Houma and are so clear and calm looking, Orchid water hyacinths grow all along the edges and tall trees covered with the graceful Spanish moss border the banks. People use the bayous as means of transportation and it is a lovely picture to see them motoring down the water ways coming into town with their produce for the market, the larger bayous are used for small ships and dredge boats. It is only about 55 miles from New Orleans, and I know you'd love both little Houma and the quaint, old big city of New Orleans."

It is a matter of economy to be happy, to view life and all its conditions from the brightest angle; it enables one to see life in the very best light it expands the soul.—H. W. Dresser.

Forty seven students are enrolled in the summer Falls classes to be held here during the summer. This work counts full credit at the State Teachers College.