

The Homemaker's Committee Report

By MISS AGNES McDONOUGH

The Homemakers' Committee decided to make its chief task for study, the expenditure of time by Iowa housewives. It desired to discover:

- (1) How much time Iowa housewives are spending on housekeeping in general and on different household tasks in particular;
- (2) How are Iowa housewives spending their leisure;
- (3) How much time constitutes a fair standard for the performance of certain tasks.

DATA OBTAINED FOR IOWA

The data for our Iowa Study were obtained from two sources:

(1) It was found that during the last few years 68 housewives had kept records of the expenditure of their time under the direction of Miss Gertrude Lynn, Extension Worker. Miss Lynn, a member of the Committee, turned these over to the Committee for analysis. These 68 farm housewives had average families of 4.3 persons. They spent on an average 7.7 hours per day on household and 1.2 hours per day on farm tasks, or a total of 8.9 hours per day spent working. This is 62.3 hours a week, or, on the basis of a six day week, an average of 10.4 hours a day. These results, together with time spent on separate household tasks, meals, cleaning, etc., are included in Table I.

(2) The Committee made an original investigation on its own account of time spent in household tasks by home economics graduates. It sent requests for cooperation in making a time study to 300 graduates of the Home Economics Division of Iowa State College. Ninety agreed to cooperate, but, as a matter of fact, only twenty-eight returned the desired data. The average family was 3.7. This basis of 28 is too small, of course, from which to draw general conclusions. It is interesting to note, however, that the 22 housewives who reported hours, spent an average of 6.9 hours a day in housework. Five women gave also an average of 1.4 hours a day to poultry and dairy work. The data in detail are presented in Table II.

It will be seen that the time given to housework by the farm housewives was 48 minutes more than that by the home economics graduates. The average family of the farm homemakers, however, was 4.3, as against an average family of 3.7 among the home economics graduates.

It is of considerable significance that only 58.3 of the housewives reporting gave an unqualified affirmative answer to the question, "Is your house planned to eliminate motions and steps?" Seventy and eight-tenths percent of the homes were planned in part to eliminate labor. Ninety-six percent of the women declared that their work was organized, but, in answer to a further question, only 64.4 percent knew what a really good organization should be.

All of these women did their own housework. All reported they did their canning and preserving in whole or in part, and almost all, or 96%, did their own laundry. This figure is rather surprising. About 80% of these women did their general cleaning. Fifteen percent did all their own bread making.

Over 80% did part of their dressmaking. More made their dresses than made their underwear. Less than one-quarter of the women did any of their own millinery and none did all of it.

The women reported that the current rates of pay for general housework in their neighborhoods ranged from six to eighteen dollars per week. General cleaning cost from 25 to 50 cents an hour, laundry from 30 to 65 cents, plain sewing from 20 to 50 cents, and dressmaking from 35 cents to a dollar.

TABLE I.

Average Daily Hours Spent on Household and Other Tasks by 68 Iowa Farm Homemakers.	
(Average size of family, 4.3)	
Meals, preparation and clearing	3.5
Marketing	.3
House Care	1.3
Children	.3
Laundry	.8
Sewing	1.1
Canning, Curing, etc.	.4

Total on Household Tasks	7.7
Total on Farm Tasks	1.2

Average daily time spent on Household and Farm Tasks... 8.9

Of the various kinds of leisure indulged in by the home economics graduates, reading was the most popular, averaging 10 hours a week for the 24 women reporting, and visiting, next most popular, taking 5.3 hours a week.

Music and rest each averaged 5.2 hours a week for those reporting. The least amount of time spent on any of the types of recreation listed was on commercial entertainments, including motion pictures—an average of about an hour and a half for the eighteen women reporting.

When a woman failed to reply, it no doubt meant, in many cases, that she spent no time on that type of leisure. Our averages, which are based only on the number reporting, will therefore tend to be too large.

The full data on this subject are presented in Table III.

TABLE III.

Average Weekly Time Spent in Various Types of Leisure by Twenty-eight Home Economics Graduates Who Are Homemakers in Iowa.

Number giving a reply to question		Ave. hours of those giving a reply to question
16	Rest	5.2
24	Walking and outdoor sports	5.2
22	Automobiling for pleasure	3.5
19	Indoor games	2.0
25	Visits and visitors	5.3
23	Music	5.2
24	Parties and social clubs	3.5
23	Educational clubs and study	2.7
24	Reading	10.0
18	Motion pictures and other commercial entertainments	1.5
22	Church and community work	3.3
11	Fancy work	2.5

Merely to know the amount of time spent in household tasks is only a beginning. (Continued on page 8)

TABLE II.

Statistics Relating to Expenditure of Time of Twenty-eight Home Economics Graduates Who Are Homemakers in Iowa (Average Size of Family, 3.7).

Number giving a reply to question	Number Replying Affirmatively to question		
27	20	Percent of those replying who worked for pay before marriage	74.1
27	20	Average number of years spent by those working	2.8
		Average hours per day by those engaged in:	
22	22	Housework and care of children	6.9
8	5	Poultry and dairy	1.4
11	10	Assisting husband	.7
		Percent doing in whole or in part	
28	28	Housework in general	100.0
27	22	Sweeping and cleaning	81.5
28	27	Laundry	96.4
26	11*	Bread making	42.2*
27	27	Canning and preserving	100.0
27	22	Dress making in general	81.5
27	19	Underwear	70.4
25	20	Dresses	80.0
25	2**	Coats and suits	8.0**
24	18	Children's clothing	66.7
25	6§	Millinery	24.0§
24	17	Percent of homes planned to eliminate steps	70.8
25	24	Percent of women organizing work	96.0
24	24‡	Percent who follow their plans	100.0‡
26	17	Percent knowing how long each task should take	64.0

* Only four, or 15%, did their bread making wholly; ** No one made all her coats and suits; § No one made all her hats; ‡ Only 16, or 66.7%, followed their plans wholly.

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to make a definite plan for increasing the number of subscriptions.

Another item which is mentioned in the program of work for state associations is the successful completion of the Ellen H. Richards fund. Each state is asked to accept full responsibility for its share in this work. The goal set for the Ellen H. Richards Memorial Fund is \$25,000. It is the hope that this can be raised through contributions from state associations, affiliated student clubs, and contributions from individuals. The councillors are asked to bring this before the association so that it can be made a part of the program for Ellen H. Richards Day, which is December 3. Every teacher in the state should take this opportunity to recognize the contribution of Ellen H. Richards to home economics.

The trustees of the Ellen H. Richards Memorial Fund created a scholarship of \$300 to be awarded to a home economics student who wished to do graduate work in research in this field. The first award was made for the school year 1925-26. Miss Lita Bane, who is the incoming president of the American Home Economics Association, received the first award. This year the award was made to Miss Ruth Cowan, who is to do research work in nutrition at the University of Chicago. The council voted to increase the scholarship from \$300 to \$500 for the year 1928. This makes more adequate provision for a person working under the scholarship. Any graduate of a home economics department in a recognized institution who is qualified to do research work is eligible for consideration by the committee on awards.

The national program of work also stresses the importance of student clubs. The statement reads, "The importance of student clubs cannot be over-emphasized at this time. The association must turn its attention to the development of a program and the guidance of this work." Each state as-

sociation has been asked to make a definite plan for development of student club activities. Iowa has a plan under way for student club activities. A state student club committee has been organized and has had one meeting. The report from the executive secretary in regard to the student clubs brings out the fact that there were but fourteen affiliated student clubs in 1922, but that there are 342 affiliated clubs in 1926. Iowa is able to report but eleven, four college clubs and seven high school clubs. This is entirely too small a number for our state, for we have approximately 788 towns and cities where home economics is taught. Texas, Virginia, Illinois and Michigan lead in number of student clubs. What Illinois can do, Iowa can do also.

Dr. Katherine Blunt said, "The chief single event of the year, a great unifying force for us, is the initiation of our work for child study and parental education. We have all been rejoicing in our four year grant from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, and just recently the executive committee has consummated the appointment of Anna E. Richardson as child study field worker. Her ability, her well-known interest in the problem, her work for courses in child study at Iowa State College, her inside knowledge of the administrative machinery necessary for the development of any new venture, her contacts with a great variety of workers in this field, her experience while with the Federal Board for Vocational Education in a nationwide enterprise, all make her a most fortunate choice for the association."

The Iowa Association was fortunate enough to have Miss Richardson with us to tell of her plan for child study and parental education.

For the past two years our national association has sponsored a contest for designs for an association seal. At the annual convention this year the best design was chosen, and it is to be used for the association's seal and pin. The

motif used is the Betty lamp. "This was considered a happy choice, for it is the lamp which in Colonial days gave light for all household industries." Two styles of pins are to be adopted: one for association members, and one for members of affiliated student clubs.

One of the interesting features of the meeting this year was the commercial exhibits. It was not only a source of income for the association, but it was very profitable for the members who were present.

The American Home Economics Association has many other interesting activities. Its international relationships, such as its affiliation with the international office of Home Economics Instruction in Switzerland, the affiliation of the New Zealand Home Economics Association, the affiliation of the Edmonton Home Economics Association, its connection with the Constantinople Women's College, and others are of interest. Its activity in matters of legislation, such as the Child Labor Amendment, the Mis-branding Bill, and the Fess Amendment to the Smith-Hughes Bill is of vital importance to us. Its provision for the census study of American families will, no doubt, bring a valuable contribution to her field of study. Its provisions for the work of the eight sections and the three committees makes it possible to provide for all home economists no matter what phase of the subject they have chosen. Its cooperation with such organizations as the Federation of Women's Clubs, Better Homes in America, the National Child Health Association, American Red Cross, Division of Simplified Practice of the U. S. Department of Commerce, Women's Joint Congressional Committee, the National Restaurant Association, and innumerable others are of interest to all home economists.

The 1927 annual convention of the American Home Economics Association will be held the latter part of June in Asheville, North Carolina.

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ginning, however. By what standard are we to judge whether the time spent is or is not excessive? We need carefully worked out standards of performance of various tasks under various conditions of living. A beginning toward such standardization was made by Miss Elizabeth E. Hoyt, a member of the Committee, this summer, as a part of her work in Household Administration at Iowa State College. Miss Hoyt started with a specified menu for one week and a specified standard of the number of times cleaning and other tasks should be performed in one week, and on this basis went through the household work with a family of two adults and two children for two weeks on a farm without modern conveniences, and for two weeks in one of the home management houses on the Iowa State College campus. The full

results of this experiment will be presented in a forthcoming number of the Journal of Home Economics. She found that on the farm where she drew water from a well, cooked in a kitchen range, used kerosene lamps, and had no modern conveniences, her average time per day, including laundry, was 4.3 hours.

It is impossible to compare satisfactorily the results of such an experiment with the average results of such a small group of housewives as the home economics graduates or with the reports of the farm housewives. The housewives were reporting only everyday conditions, whereas the experimenter was working under unusual conditions—a very definite stimulus to help to establish standards. Further, of course, the experimenter worked with a definitely planned menu and

definite specifications as to cleaning, while the Iowa housewives in both groups used many menus and had varying practices with regard to cleaning, and a few of them spent considerable time on their children.

Nevertheless, the Iowa State College experiment is very suggestive. The standards in this college experiment were in conformity with hygienic requirements and good standard practice, and the menu, though simple, was excellent from the nutritional viewpoint. The fact that the number of hours for all tasks, including laundry, was only 4.3 for a family of four, even in the old-fashioned farm house, leads us to believe that the organization of work and the incentive of leisure can yet do much for our Iowa homemakers. Further work and experiments along this line are greatly needed.