

A STUDY OF THE CONSUMERS' KNOWLEDGE
OF YARDAGE FABRIC INFORMATION

by

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A THESIS

submitted to

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

June 1962

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Date thesis is presented June 21, 1961

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer expresses her sincere appreciation to Mrs. Clara W. Edaburn, Associate Professor of Clothing, Textiles and Related Arts, for her valued guidance and encouragement during the preparation of this thesis.

The advice and directions given by Dr. Florence E. Petzel, especially during the preparatory and final stages of writing, are gratefully acknowledged.

The writer also wishes to thank Dr. Lyle Calvin for his help in the preparation of the questionnaires and the tabulation of the data.

Sincere thanks are extended to the residents of Hawley Hall, Corvallis and to the fabric sales personnel in the Corvallis stores for their assistance by answering the initial drafts of the questionnaires.

Special thanks must go to Miss Riek Huttar of Breda, The Netherlands, who so kindly provided the information on the Dutch system of labeling, and to Mr. Willem D. Van Zoest for his translation of this literature.

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INTRODUCTION

The homemaker of yesteryear had a difficult role to play, for she was both consumer and producer. It was her task to buy market goods for her family and home, but often these had to be converted from the basic materials before they could be utilized as an end product. Today's homemaker lives in a very different situation. In many ways her job is less arduous for she can select, if she wishes, practically all her household and family requirements in a useable form, and for those which she wishes to make herself there are available many labor saving devices. Perhaps the most significant difference, however, between the homemaker of a few years ago and the one of today is in the area of available goods from which can be chosen one's needs and wants. Today's markets are filled to overflowing with many new products and with many old products in new forms. The complexity of choice that confronts the consumer often can be quite overpowering.

The importance of this situation is recognized in a recent article in The Journal of Home Economics which states, "As goods become more complex and become available in increasingly greater variety, the problem of knowing

what one can expect in performance from the product is fantastically difficult." (26, p. 81)

Foods, fabrics and furnishings are all presented in manifold types, qualities and prices so that the luxury of choice presents many problems formerly not dreamed-of. Nowhere is this more evident than in the field of textiles.

"Life is easier. But it is more confusing. While grandmother had only four textile fibers - wool, cotton, silk and flax - today's homemaker has in addition rayon, acetate, nylon, Orlon, Dacron, Arnel, Dynel, Acrilan, Vicara, Saran, Fiberglas and an increasing number of others." (42, p. 2)

In Canada the confusion over the ever increasing number of fibers and fabrics is mounting. At the present time the writer is a teacher of Clothing and Textiles at The University of British Columbia at Vancouver, B.C., Canada. As such, she is constantly aware of the many questions that have been arising in this field. Although difficulties are presenting themselves to the retailers of the new fabrics and the garment manufacturers, the writer is most directly concerned with the problems of the Canadian consumer; what yardage fabrics are available to her, how should she use them and care for them, and where can she find valid answers to her questions concerning them.

As a home economist in the field of clothing and textiles, the writer has been for some time personally concerned with the constant appearance of new fibers, fabrics and finishes and has found it a continual challenge to keep abreast of the latest developments. Students in her classes are often overwhelmed by the diversity and complexity of the study of textiles. Is it any wonder, then, that the average homemaker, with little or no real training in the subject, is confused and bewildered when she wishes to select a fabric from the myriads displayed and advertised? Even those fabrics which have stood the test of time and with whose names she is familiar can no longer be relied upon to give the same performance that they did a few years ago. New treatments and new finishes are designed to improve fabrics, but often these require special care. If the consumer, not knowing this, relies completely on knowledge passed on to her from preceding years then disappointment in the old is added to the confusion and uncertainty of the new.

It is evident, however, that women are still very much interested in buying fabrics for use in household furnishings and family clothing. An article in Time magazine estimates that 4 million dollars are spent annually in the United States for the purchase of fabric and that 20 per cent of all feminine garments are made at home by

women who sew an average of 4 to 6 garments a year (30, p. 78). It is also apparent that fabric users all over the world are becoming more aware of and are using more of the new man-made fibers. The one exception to this is the continuous use of silk. Although produced and used in small quantities, the trade volume of this fiber has remained relatively constant during the last fifty years, with the exception of the war years during which it was not readily available. In the consideration of many, the luxurious hand and elegant beauty of this fabric has not yet been surpassed or even equalled by man-made fibers and hence it retains its place in the textile market.

In 1890, 78.6 per cent of the world's production of textile fibers was cotton, 21 per cent wool and 0.3 per cent silk. No man-made fibers were as yet on the market. By 1959, however, cotton production had dropped to 68.2 per cent, wool to 9.9 per cent, silk remained constant at 0.3 per cent while man-made fibers accounted for 21.6 per cent of textile production (31, p. 3). The use of these fibers by the consumer closely paralleled their production. According to a study made by the Textile Economics Bureau and reported in Textile World, "Man-made fiber use continues to grow. Their share of the total fiber consumption increased from 20 per cent in 1949 to 26.5 per cent in 1957." (20, p. 8)

In Canada the trend has been the same as for the world as a whole. Statistics regarding usage of the basic textiles in Canada show decreases in the per capita consumption of cotton and wool during the last decade, while per capita consumption of the test tube textiles has increased proportionately (22, p. 6).

This widespread increase in the production of the man-made fibers and fabrics, which must be considered as technological progress, has, however, been responsible for instigating problems within the industry itself, and these, in due course, ultimately affect the consumer. With over 70 companies in Canada alone producing synthetic and semi-synthetic textiles (21, p. 227-316), not to mention the many foreign countries from which Canada imports, the field had become highly competitive (15, p. 101). As a result, extensive and varied claims are being used by the producer to insure that his product will be fixed in the consumer's mind. Too often, instead of being valid and informative, these claims are based on fanciful and appealing names and involved merchandising techniques. It would seem that profit in business is more important than service to the consumer. Apparently there is a program of planned obsolescence underway in which new synthetic fabrics are brought out every year to replace the ones already on the shelves (28, p. 100). According to Harold

Blancke, President of the Celanese Corporation of America, "There is a host of materials on the market not aimed at any specific thing." (15, p. 102) If the manufacturers themselves do not have a specific end use in mind, how, then, can the consumer be expected to shop for, and use, them wisely? In addition, many are advertised as miracle fibers, intimating that their performance and hence their use are practically unlimited. This is far from the truth, for as Edmund I. Van Deusen points out, "In fact, there is no single fiber that performs all the miracles you have heard about. Each has some shortcomings as well as many outstanding qualities." (38, p. 19) Knowledge of both is necessary for wise shopping. However, before a shopper can evaluate comparable properties of fabrics she must be familiar with at least the names of the available materials. This in itself is a difficult undertaking. For the 16 major types of fibers produced in the United States over 240 brand names are in use (43, p. 2-16). From the manufacturers' viewpoint this is entirely necessary because the chemical names of the new synthetics are complex and unwieldy. Furthermore, several companies are producing the same type of fiber or fabric and, of course, each wishes to have his own identified as such (13, p. 10).

To the uninformed consumer, this plethora of names can not only be confusing but also can erroneously imply

that an infinite variety of different textiles is now available (33, p. 119). All in all, the problem is a most perplexing one, especially to the consumer who is attempting to buy wisely according to her specific needs. It is well to agree with Mrs. Mary Humphries, Chairman of the Canadian Association of Consumers National Textile Committee, when she reminds homemakers that they have a responsibility to become reasonably well informed about today's fabrics. She admits, however, that, "More and more buyers need guidance in selecting and using textiles presented to them today." (16, p. 1)

Many women are aware, too, that the information passed on to them by their mothers is not enough to cope with the present day problems, nor is experience an infallible guide, useful as it may be at some times (31, p. 348). In a survey conducted by Mrs. Helen Mohr Reynolds of Heidelberg College, the information most wanted by home sewers was how to recognize quality in fabrics, how to care for fabrics and how to construct garments (29, p. 64).

Evidence that information is needed imperatively is indicated in the study conducted by Elaine Carlson at Oregon State College. This study revealed that homemakers without training in home economics, and even those with such training, did not have a broad understanding of the common man-made fibers, textile terminology or undefined

trade-marks and finishing terms (11, p. 51-63). Perhaps such findings are not surprising when the myriad of textile products that are available on the present market are duly considered. "The modern fibers may be so spun, dyed, bulked, combined, woven, knitted and finished as to produce any type of fabric - and nobody, not even a textile expert, can identify them without a laboratory test." (4, p. 3) If such is the case, then certainly no consumer can be considered expert enough to be sufficiently well informed about her potential purchase, for in not knowing the fiber content and the construction processes of the fabric she has little to guide her in its use and care. Furthermore, it seems safe to assume that this situation will become even more complex in the coming years as theoretical and technological knowledge advances. Somehow the buyer must be told what she can expect from a particular fabric and, equally important, how she must care for it (17, p. 8).

In this regard, the writer was interested in determining what sources of information are readily available to and used by the consumer and of how much real value these are to her. To what extent does she rely on her own experience and to what extent on the advice of the salesperson? Does she refer to labels on the fabrics or to the display signs in the stores? Does she utilize newspaper

and magazine advertisements? How much useful information can be obtained from such sources?

Studies have been undertaken to determine the consumer's knowledge of textiles and her ability to shop according to her needs (16). Other surveys have indicated what media provided her with information (18, p. 1). The writer has been unable to find, however, any reports that evaluate information sources in terms of the consumer's knowledge and needs.

This study was undertaken in order to investigate the scope and source of the consumer's knowledge of yardage fabrics presently on the market and to determine how satisfactory salespersons, display signs, labels and advertisements in publications are for enriching the consumer's knowledge and answering her questions. Ultimately, the results could be brought to the attention of the fabric manufacturers and retailers and to the firms advertising textile products in an effort to encourage the presentation and distribution of valid and usable information.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

In order to investigate the scope and source of the consumers' knowledge of yardage fabrics and to evaluate the media through which they receive this information a number of projects were developed. These were designed for use in Vancouver, B.C., the city in which this investigation was made. One questionnaire was devised by the writer to gain an understanding of the fabric buyers' knowledge, problems and viewpoints. Another was used to determine the ability of the salespersons as advisors and to gain an insight into the questions brought to them by the customers. The local stores, both fabric sections within the department stores and the specialty shops, were surveyed to find out what selection of fabrics they offered and what method was used for its presentation. All local newspapers and magazines and selected national and international magazines were also checked to determine the extent and the value of the information presented through these advertising media.

The questions for the consumers were developed based on information in Evelyn E. Stout's book, Introduction to Textiles (31) and were related to fabrics locally obtainable.

In the preparation of both questionnaires care was taken to keep the length to a minimum, to devise questions that required only a check mark to indicate the answer, and to avoid questions that would be difficult, time consuming or intimidating to answer. This was done in the hope of increasing probable returns of the questionnaires.

In their preliminary form, both questionnaires were evaluated by two faculty members in Clothing and Textiles, one in Foods and Nutrition and one statistician. Following their advice, revisions were made. The questionnaire for the consumer was then distributed to the residents in a women's dormitory in Corvallis, Oregon for a trial run. This group represented both undergraduate and graduate students, some with varying degrees of training in home economics and others with none. The questionnaire for the sales personnel was sent to the managers of fabric stores and departments in Corvallis who distributed these to their clerks for completion. Several revisions were then made and the questionnaires prepared in their final form. These were enclosed, along with an accompanying letter and a stamped, self-addressed envelope, in a larger envelope bearing the words, "Your Opinion, Please" (Appendix B and C).

Since it was the intent of the writer to reach only consumers concerned with purchasing fabric and salespersons

who sell fabrics it was necessary to seek the co-operation of the managers of appropriate retail outlets. To do this, an introductory letter explaining the problem and the intentions of the writer was sent to the heads of all the fabric stores and departments in Vancouver, B.C. (Appendix A). Ten out of the 14 managers contacted indicated a willingness to co-operate.

The questionnaires were delivered to these stores; the ones for the consumer to be enclosed in the parcel containing the fabric purchase, the ones for the salespersons to be given to, and filled out by, the members of the sales staff.

In order to determine the quantity and quality of information dispensed through stores and by advertising media, a survey of these outlets was made over a 3-month period. All the stores and selected local, national and international magazines were checked once a month and local newspapers were checked daily. A record was kept on the method of advertisement, the number of fabrics advertised and the content of the advertisement in terms of information. The latter was concerned with determining whether the advertisement provided information regarding fiber content, cleaning directions, pressing instructions and use or whether it was merely a promotional device.

One thousand questionnaires were distributed through the stores to the consumers. Of these, 169 or 16.9 per cent were returned. The poor rate of return can probably be accounted for by the following reasons:

- 1) the return of the questionnaires was entirely voluntary
- 2) the residents of Vancouver, B.C. have recently been inundated via the mails with advertising literature which, in most cases, is promptly discarded with little, if any, perusal, and many consumers may have formed a quick assumption that the questionnaire envelope contained similar material
- 3) general public apathy.

One hundred questionnaires were distributed to the fabric sales personnel. Seventy, or 70 per cent, were returned. The higher rate of return for this questionnaire probably resulted because these were returned to the writer by way of the store manager to whom the sales clerks gave the completed form. Because of this, and because of reminders from the manager, a certain compulsion was probably felt.

The questionnaires were designed to categorize the findings into the following divisions: the consumers' knowledge of yardage fabrics, fabric information requested by consumers and the consumers' sources of fabric information. Records of fabric information from advertisements

in publications and display signs in stores were kept and tabulated. The data were organized and analyzed according to these groupings.

The number of persons answering each question is reported in percentages calculated on the basis of the 169 consumers and 70 salespersons who replied to the questionnaires. Informational material from the advertisements and display signs is also presented in percentages calculated on their total number during the 3-month recording period.

On the advice of a statistician, data representing those individuals who did not respond to a particular question were omitted from the tables as their totals, between 1 and 3 per cent, were sufficiently small as to be of negligible significance. The one exception to this low rate of no response occurred when nearly 30 per cent of the salespersons failed to respond to a question concerning their managers' ability to answer questions. This will be discussed at a later point in the writing.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the year 1889 the results of Count Hilaire de Chardonnet's successful experimentation to produce an artificial silk finally reached the commercial market (31, p. 117). From this time on consumers have been presented with an ever growing variety of man-made fibers from which to choose. From this time, too, consumers have had to face many new perplexing problems concerned with these fibers and the fabrics made from them. Experience and advice handed down through the generations formerly taught the homemaker what to expect from and how to care for the natural fiber fabrics but neither experience nor information of this kind can answer the questions raised as each new synthetic fiber appears. Trial and error can be an expensive way to learn as is pointed out in an article in Consumer Report, and once a costly mistake has been made a consumer will likely hesitate before selecting that fabric again (35, p. 149). Dr. Jules Labarthe, representative of the National Retailers Merchandising Association and senior fellow at Mellon Institute, Pittsburgh, noted that one of the most common causes of consumers returning unsatisfactory merchandise to stores was damage resulting from washing or ironing methods too severe for the fiber in the fabric (23, p. 32). What the shoppers need to know

about the contemporary textiles is what they have always wanted to know about any fabric. Is it machine washable? Is it colorfast? Will it shrink? Will it require much or little ironing? Will it wrinkle easily? Will it retain pleats? Must it be dry-cleaned? (34, p. 43) It is this information that must be given to the consumer by the manufacturer or finisher for, as mentioned earlier by the writer, evidence has been presented indicating that homemakers do not have a thorough knowledge of today's textiles (11, p. 51).

According to one source, when homemakers were asked which sources of homemaking information were of most value to them the majority selected magazines and newspapers as first choice, with radio, television and short courses following in that order (18, p. 1). In another similar study surveying the opinions of students and business women as well as homemakers, students were found to rely on the advice of friends while 60 per cent of the other two groups selected labels as their most valuable source of information. This report also pointed out that many helpful sources were little utilized. Of the entire group only 26 per cent used texts, 12 per cent government bulletins, 15 per cent home demonstrations while 55 per cent relied on popular magazines and 25 per cent on newspaper articles (29, p. 29).

The Canadian Association of Consumers, a national organization which promotes better buymanship and presents the consumers' problems and opinions to the manufacturers, has for some time been concerned with informing the shopper. Published in a recent issue of their bulletin was a list of reliable sources of information regarding all consumer goods (9, p. 2). Fabrics were, of course, included. These sources were not in the form of publications but were independent testing agencies, recognized consumers' committees and research councils which were willing to supply unbiased information on request.

This does serve a good purpose but it is not sufficiently far reaching as Canadian Association of Consumers membership totals only 15 thousand, a small proportion of the Canadian homemakers (10, p. 2).

Since some magazines and newspapers are sure to enter almost every home it is not surprising that they were the references most often used. Advertising is now big business. Moreover, according to a Gallup Poll, 75 per cent of the people questioned were in complete favor of advertising while 65 per cent said that problems of selection would be more difficult if advertising were discontinued (1, p. 96). Basically, however, advertising is used to promote the sale of a particular product. Some companies

base their advertisements solely on appeal while others make some effort to inform the buyer about his potential purchase. In the final analysis, it should be the consumer who specifies which type is used. Madame Renée Vautelet, former National President of the Canadian Association of Consumers, made this very clear when she said,

"In promoting this partnership (advertiser and consumer), consumers have a responsibility. This is to encourage those industries who try when they can, through their advertisements, to make us not merely hungrier consumers, but also better informed ones. There are already many such responsible advertisements. If we choose, there can be more and more of them." (39, p. 1)

When advertisements fail to provide the necessary information, and labeling is inadequate, homemakers rely upon their past experience augmented by additional advice from the sales clerks (11, p. 63). However, printed information either along the selvage, or on a hang tag, a display card or in a leaflet is preferred (11, p. 62). The latter, in take-home form, could not only tell the consumer what she wanted to know but also be filed at home by her for future reference.

On March 3, 1960, the United States took an important step toward solving consumers' textile problems when their

Textile Fiber Products Identification Act came into effect. This law requires that all textiles must bear a label stating the generic name of component fibers that are present in amounts of 5 per cent or more. Those present in amounts less than 5 per cent must be designated as "other fiber" or "other fibers" (37, p. 3). This law was designed to clarify much of the confusion over present day textiles and to safeguard the consumer against misrepresentation of fabrics by unscrupulous manufacturers. While it has done much to discourage fraud there is still cause for some perplexity on the part of the consumer when she comes to select a fabric for a specific purpose. Generic names may be completely new to her and in themselves tell the layman little about the fabric. An article in Consumer Bulletin points out, "the consumer may find some very confusing and hardly informative labels, unless she is acquainted with the terms azlon, modacrylic, spandex and vinyon, for example, as well as nylon, acetate, rayon and, of course, cotton (41, p. 9). Another source agrees that it is not surprising that homemakers are bewildered. They must still identify and understand this new nomenclature that is required on the labels (3, p. 5). The Textile Fiber Products Identification Act, although requiring fiber names to be presented (on the bolt only, not on each few yards of cloth (6, p. 28)), makes no attempt to tell

the consumer what performance standards she may reasonably expect from the fabric. No advice need be given regarding how the fabric will act or how it must be cared for. It makes no provision to "clarify the effects of blending, fabric construction and dyeing and finishing, any of which may make a particular fiber practical for certain uses and disastrously impractical for others." (35, p. 151) It gives no guidance about necessary care so that unless the consumer has made a conscientious effort to inform herself she will probably learn by sad experience that modacrylics are more heat sensitive than acrylics (35, p. 149). The generic names of the fibers should be supplementary information but the customer needs facts for fabric appraisal and for satisfactory use and care. This does not mean that statistics of technical laboratory testing be given. The homemaker does not want to know tear strength of a fabric or twists per inch of a yarn. She is more concerned with the performance of the fabric during repeated cycles of washing and cleaning in actual consumer use (19, p. 421). The worth of the new law is appraised summarily by an article in Consumer Report that states, "He (the consumer) gets something more to help him identify what is being sold to him, but nothing, of course, to help him evaluate it." (35, p. 151) In the House Hearing, representative

Frank E. Smith from Mississippi agreed that homemakers would appreciate performance labeling but he felt that such was only a dream of the future (23, p. 32). Others in the textile industry are not quite so pessimistic.

E. R. Lehmann, Vice-president of West Point Manufacturing Company, supports the idea that consumers must be informed. "It's a lot of trouble," he says, "but we're willing to go along." (5, p. 84)

For such interested fabric manufacturers the revised American Standard L22, The American Standard for all Textiles L22, provides standard specification and test methods for evaluating domestic textiles. Consumers who buy fabrics bearing the L22 label can be assured that their purchase will realize the properties indicated on the label (36, p. 32). As yet, conformity to the L22 standards is on a purely voluntary basis. It would be advantageous, indeed, if many more manufacturers and finishers would evaluate and label their products accordingly. Unfortunately, as Kenneth Collins points out in the New York Times, since the Textile Fiber Products Identification Act came into effect making fiber identification compulsory, there has been a decline in the provision of labels giving useful information (34, p. 43). However, the textile industry and the consumers should realize that the present rules and regulations are merely inchoate and, rather than

abandoning them completely, should they prove unsatisfactory, steps should be taken to continue efforts in this line until a remedy to the present problem is found (14, p. 221).

It has been suggested, not as a solution but as an aid to one, that the fiber producing plants that to date have been keeping almost abreast of the latest discoveries from the chemistry laboratories, temporarily delay their production of new products. This would allow the fabric manufacturers, finishers, retailers and consumers to have a much needed interval in which to recognize fully the properties of, and become familiar with, the presently available fibers (2, p. 85).

A more realistic plan, perhaps, has been promulgated by the Technical Committee of the National Retail Merchants Association under the direction of Ephraim Freedman, committee chairman and director of Macy's Bureau of Standards. This group has designed what they call "Sure Care Symbols" that are intended to be permanently attached to textile products to provide consumers with a convenient reference on suitable care. Small, diagrammatic illustrations of a washing machine, a hand, a dry-cleaning vat and a hand iron indicate, respectively, that the fabric may be washed by either hand or machine, by hand alone, may be

dry-cleaned and may be ironed. A large B indicates that bleach may be used with care. These same symbols with an X through them warn the consumer that the fabrics may not be treated as the unmarked illustration would suggest (25, p. 87).

Another country that has considered the contemporary textile problem a serious one and has taken steps to rectify it is The Netherlands. In 1957 an organization was set up, the Vereniging Textieletikettering Voor Was-En Strijkbehandeling, or V.T.W.S., whose goal it was to develop a method of labeling textiles in such a way as would indicate to the consumer the most suitable cleaning and pressing method for a particular fabric (24, p. 8). Although the labeling method specified by this association has not yet been made compulsory by government ruling it has received widespread approval and is extensively used. Participating members include national organizations in both the textile and clothing industries, laundries, dry-cleaners and dyers, soap, detergent and bleach manufacturers and the Nijverheidsorganisatie Toegepast Natuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek, the home economics branch of a national research organization for investigating problems in applied science.

The system of labeling uses color coded symbols to indicate suitable and safe laundering, bleaching, ironing



































and dry-cleaning techniques. A wash tub, triangle, hand iron and circled letter are used to signify these, respectively. The colors used are the colors of traffic lights: green, yellow and red. To the consumer, these colors give the same meaning, in general, as they do to the motorist: green indicates safety, yellow shows the necessity for taking some precautions, and red means that extra care and special handling methods are required. When the symbols and colors are combined, very specific information on care can be indicated economically and conveniently. A handy, plastic coated washing card, designed to be hung in the laundry area of the home, is available to consumers for use as a quick reference for explaining the symbols (Plate I). Use of the fabric marking and this washing chart leaves room for little doubt in the mind of the homemaker as the following explanation of the symbols used will show.

- a) Green tub: machine washable in hot water, no precautions necessary.
- b) Yellow and green tub: use moderate washing action only and a maximum water temperature of 140°F. (just too warm for the hands).
- c) Yellow tub: use only lukewarm water with a maximum temperature of 104°F. and wash as wool.
- d) Red tub: do not wash.

WASKAART

Prijs 20 cent

Samenvatting van de betekenis der wasmerken

	WASSEN	BLEKEN	STRIJKEN	CHEMISCH REINIGEN
   	Tobbe groen Dus: Geen bijzondere voorzorgsmaatregelen bij het wassen (heet wassen geoorloofd).	Driehoek groen Bleken met bleekwater geoorloofd.	Strijkijzer groen Heet strijken geoorloofd.	Letter P geel Gebruik van perchlooraethyleen of benzine geoorloofd.
   	Tobbe groen Dus: Geen bijzondere voorzorgsmaatregelen bij het wassen (heet wassen geoorloofd).	Driehoek rood Niet bleken met bleekwater.	Strijkijzer groen Heet strijken geoorloofd.	Letter P geel Gebruik van perchlooraethyleen of benzine geoorloofd.
   	Tobbe geel en groen Dus: Niet meer dan matig warm wassen (niet boven 60° C; dit is juist te warm voor de handen).	Driehoek rood Niet bleken met bleekwater.	Strijkijzer groen Heet strijken geoorloofd.	Letter P geel Gebruik van perchlooraethyleen of benzine geoorloofd.
   	Tobbe geel en groen Dus: Niet meer dan matig warm wassen (niet boven 60° C; dit is juist te warm voor de handen).	Driehoek groen Bleken met bleekwater geoorloofd.	Strijkijzer geel Niet heet strijken.	Letter P geel Gebruik van perchlooraethyleen of benzine geoorloofd.
   	Tobbe geel Dus: Lauw wassen als wol (max. 40° C).	Driehoek rood Niet bleken met bleekwater.	Strijkijzer geel Niet heet strijken.	Letter P geel Gebruik van perchlooraethyleen of benzine geoorloofd.
   	Tobbe geel Dus: Lauw wassen als wol (max. 40° C).	Driehoek groen Bleken met bleekwater geoorloofd.	Strijkijzer rood Niet strijken.	Letter F geel Alleen gebruik van benzine geoorloofd.
   	Tobbe geel Dus: Lauw wassen als wol (max. 40° C).	Driehoek rood Niet bleken met bleekwater.	Strijkijzer rood Niet strijken.	Letter F geel Alleen gebruik van benzine geoorloofd.
  	Tobbe rood Dus: Kan niet gewassen worden.		Strijkijzer geel Niet heet strijken.	Letter P geel Gebruik van perchlooraethyleen of benzine geoorloofd.
  	Tobbe rood Dus: Kan niet gewassen worden.		Strijkijzer rood Niet strijken.	Letter F geel Alleen gebruik van benzine geoorloofd.

De letters **P** en **F** zijn niet bestemd voor de huisvrouw.
De letter **N** op toekomstige etiketten betekent niet chemisch reinigen.

Voor meer uitvoerige inlichtingen:
zie ook het wasboekje „Het Wasverkeer veilig geregeld”.

VERENIGING TEXTIELETIKETTERING VOOR WAS- EN STRIJKBEHANDELING

Auteursrechten voorbehouden.

TELEFOON 430785 — 'S-GRAVENHAGE

Nadruk verboden.

PLATE I. Wash Chart Supplied to Dutch Homemakers.

- e) Green triangle: safe to bleach.
- f) Red triangle: do not bleach.
- g) Green iron: iron with a hot iron.
- h) Yellow iron: iron with a moderate iron.
- i) Red iron: do not iron.
- j) Yellow P: dry-clean only with white gas or perchloroethylene.
- k) Yellow F: dry-clean only with white gas.
- l) Green A: all standard dry-cleaning solutions can be safely used.
- m) Red N: do not dry-clean. (40, p. 7)

Not only does this system of labeling aid the consumer in her choice of methods at home but also helps the dry-cleaner select a suitable cleaning solvent for use when the garment is brought to him. Much disappointment and expense can often be circumvented in this way.

Apart from the small reference chart, a companion booklet has also been prepared that gives information regarding the association, a detailed explanation of the symbols and also specific direction for all laundry procedures such as sorting, pre-treatment, soaking, washing, bleaching and ironing. There is also a section devoted to special washing problems and one to analysis of local (Dutch) washing products in which the brand name products

are categorized according to their action (40, p. 24).

The chart and booklet are available to homemakers wherever labeled textiles are sold. Laundries are distributing them as bundle inserts as well. Manufacturers, wholesalers, women's organizations, household information services, newspapers, radio and television are all active in disseminating the symbol information.

Another label that is extensively used in The Netherlands is the Felisol label (Plate II). This is found in the form of an emblem sewn into the garment or as a hang tag on the fabric bolt. It guarantees that the dyes used on the fabric are as fast to light, washing and wear as the dye industry can possibly make them. This distinctive blue and yellow design is the established trademark of a world wide organization whose headquarters are in Zurich, Switzerland. Every textile manufacturer and dyer throughout the world is eligible to participate in this organization, providing they are willing to abide by its very strict rules and regulations. Because this organization is international, checking and control of standards is done by local independent laboratories under the auspices of the Zurich center (40, inside back cover).

When purchasing yardage fabrics, Canadian consumers are faced with problems similar to those confronting buyers in other countries. For many years the Canadian

FELISOL: een kenteken voor kleurechte textiel

Kleuren van stoffen die verschieten, verbleken, doorlopen of afgeven vormen een probleem, dat iedere huisvrouw kent. Daarin komt **FELISOL** te hulp. **FELISOL** is het internationale kleurechtheidsmerk voor textielgoederen, waarvan de kleuren de hoogste lichtechtheid, wasechtheid en weerechtheid bezitten, die de industrie kan leveren.

Dank zij **FELISOL** kunt U bij aankoop vaststellen dat U met een buitengewoon bestendige kleur te doen hebt.

Het **FELISOL**-etiket is het bewijs dat U op kleurgebied de beste waar voor Uw geld krijgt die er is.



Het **FELISOL**-etiket mag alleen gebruikt worden op katoen, rayon en linnen, dus niet op wol en synthetische stoffen. Het heeft een andere taak dan de ingenaaide merken, die de was- en strijkbehandeling aangeven en het mag daarmee niet verward worden.

FELISOL is het gedeponeerde handelsmerk van een wereldorganisatie die gevestigd is in de Zwitserse stad Zürich. Iedere kleurstoffabriek en iedere textielfabriek kan zich hierbij op gelijke voorwaarden aansluiten. De voorschriften zijn zeer streng en bij de controle worden onafhankelijke laboratoria ingeschakeld, zoals in Nederland het Vezelinstituut T.N.O.

Het handelsmerk **FELISOL** kan voorkomen als beeldmerk in kleuren (zie nevenstaande afbeelding) of als zgn. woordmerk, dus alleen de naam **FELISOL**, en het kan zijn uitgevoerd als plak-etiket, hang-kaartje of innaai-etiket, al dan niet in combinatie met bekend textielmerk.

FELISOL
écht
kleurecht



PLATE II. Reverse Side of Wash Chart Showing Felisol Label.

Association of Consumers had been urging the government to draw up regulations to control textile labeling. Not until January 1, 1956 were any actualized. Those that went into effect at that date were formulated by manufacturers, retailers and members of the Canadian Association of Consumers under the guidance of the government's Standards Division of the Department of Trade and Commerce (8, p. 1). According to this legislation, labeling is not compulsory but if a label does identify fiber content then these fibers must be listed in predominance by weight. No mention can be made of any present in amounts less than 5 per cent (7, p. 2).

This initial step prevents misrepresentation but is by no means fully satisfactory. The next step, which is at present under consideration, is to promote performance labeling, perhaps similar to The Netherlands' method, and to develop some uniformity of labels. Canada Standard performance labels, well worded and uniform, would be advantageous to buyer, seller and manufacturer alike. The benefit to the buyer or consumer is obvious, and as Mrs. Mary Humphries, Chairman of the Canadian Association of Consumers National Textile Committee points out,

"For the Canadian manufacturer there could be no more powerful tool for selling his goods to the

Canadian public than really superior labels, bearing a "Canada Standard" identification, which would indicate that the maker was interested in telling the public how his material would serve his needs." (17, p. 10)

At present, Canadian labeling of fabrics is more or less haphazard. Those companies that do indicate fiber content of their goods are, of course, compelled to abide by the regulations but more and more tagging is done with purely promotional intent. The Canadian Textile Journal remarks on this in an article indicating that many textile mills, in an attempt to feature their fabrics by use of eye-catching tags, have forgotten the basic and original purpose of these tags, that is: to give fiber content, provide washing and cleaning instructions and to identify the manufacturer. Essential information has often given way to meaningless slogans on many of the labels found on today's market goods (32, p. 41).

It is encouraging, then, to find the occasional retailer who is willing to spend the time and money necessary to provide his customers with additional information. One such firm labels each bolt with a hang tag giving width of the fabric, country of its origin, manufacturer's name, fiber content, type of shrinkage control that has

been applied and suitable cleaning procedures(12). It is interesting to note that the owner of this store is a graduate home economist whose concern over the consumers' confusion caused her to design performance labels for use in her own shop. If such labeling were compulsory, or the policy more widespread, then the consumers' problems would be substantially reduced.

DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

The Consumers' Knowledge of Yardage Fabrics

Since one of the desired outcomes of this thesis was to find a suitable way in which consumers could receive adequate and valid information regarding the yardage fabrics they wished to purchase, it was important to obtain first some idea of their general knowledge of present day textiles. A section of the questionnaire sent to them was devoted to this, the results of which are tabulated in Tables I and II.

In general, the consumers seemed to know less about the synthetic fiber fabrics than they did about the natural fiber fabrics of cotton, linen, silk and wool. The one exception to this, as shown in Table I, was knowledge related to strength.

For the natural fiber fabrics a greater percentage of incorrect responses than "don't know" responses and the reverse for the synthetic fiber fabrics indicates that the consumers assumed they knew more about the natural fabrics than the synthetics, even though much of their knowledge was incorrect.

Correct answers regarding strength were about equal for both the natural and synthetic fiber fabrics; 34 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively, when the fabrics were

TABLE I
Per Cent of 169 Consumers Indicating Knowledge of Natural and Synthetic
Yardage Fabrics

Response	Natural Fibers			Synthetic Fibers		
	Strength	Cleaning	Ironing	Strength	Cleaning	Ironing
Correct	34	*69	51	36	30	39
Incorrect	53	19	34	24	37	20
Don't Know	13	12	15	40	33	41

* Based on data showing wool to be dry-cleanable. Both dry-cleaning and hand washing were considered correct responses.

TABLE II
Per Cent of 169 Consumers Indicating Knowledge of
Individual Yardage Fabrics

Fiber composition	Strength				Cleaning				Ironing			
	Weak	Medium	Strong	Don't Know	Hand Washable	Machine Washable	Dry-clean	Don't Know	Little or None	Easy	Difficult	Don't Know
Acetate	<u>*14</u>	27	9	50	<u>31</u>	10	19	40	10	20	<u>20</u>	50
Acrilan	1	11	<u>23</u>	65	15	<u>15</u>	8	62	<u>20</u>	11	3	66
Arnel	<u>2</u>	13	33	52	22	<u>24</u>	4	50	29	<u>16</u>	3	51
Cotton	2	<u>25</u>	63	10	9	<u>84</u>	1	6	4	<u>81</u>	5	10
Dacron	2	13	<u>52</u>	33	31	<u>39</u>	2	28	<u>56</u>	12	2	30
Linen	1	12	<u>77</u>	10	18	<u>62</u>	11	9	4	33	<u>49</u>	14
Nylon	4	13	<u>69</u>	14	48	<u>42</u>	2	8	<u>68</u>	11	5	16
Orlon	1	15	<u>59</u>	25	38	<u>42</u>	1	19	<u>63</u>	12	4	21
Rayon	33	<u>36</u>	10	<u>21</u>	44	21	16	19	5	<u>42</u>	27	26
Silk	12	43	<u>30</u>	15	<u>62</u>	2	26	10	6	<u>52</u>	25	17
Terylene	2	13	<u>51</u>	34	30	<u>40</u>	4	26	<u>52</u>	12	2	34
Viscose	9	<u>14</u>	11	66	16	<u>7</u>	16	61	9	<u>13</u>	8	70
Wool	<u>8</u>	43	39	10	<u>43</u>	0	<u>60</u>	5	8	53	<u>24</u>	15

* Underlining denotes correct response.

grouped together as in Table I. However, when studied individually the responses for each fabric presented a somewhat different picture. This is shown in Table II.

Most of the women questioned regarded linen as a strong fabric as indicated by 77 per cent of them giving this answer. This high percentage of correct response probably resulted because linen is recognized as the fabric of heirloom table covering and, as such, is associated with durability and long life.

Correct knowledge about the strength of silk and cotton were approximately equal but considerably less than that of linen. Only 30 per cent of the consumers knew that silk was strong. Most of the consumers indicated that they thought silk to be of medium strength rather than strong, probably because silk is light in weight and is usually woven in fine fabrics that give the appearance of fragility. Furthermore, because of its beauty and luxurious hand, silk is rarely used as a utility fabric. This, too, may have influenced the thinking of the consumer as it seems quite natural to the untrained to regard only the utility fabrics as the strong ones.

Cotton was thought to be a strong fabric by over half of the consumers while only 25 per cent replied correctly that it was of medium strength. This can possibly be explained by considering that before the advent of so many

man-made fabrics cotton was considered to be strong and sturdy. Furthermore, it has been used extensively as a utility fabric and is usually woven in a form that can be safely machine washed, hence the connotation of strength.

Of all the natural fabrics wool received the lowest percentage of correct answers regarding its strength. Only 8 per cent recognized it as a weak fabric. Since wool's inherent fiber properties of resilience and elasticity often make wool appear stronger than it is and since spinning, weaving and finishing processes can make wool fabric durable and suitable for use in utility garments such as men's suits, it is probably reasonable to find that most women thought it to be of either medium or high strength.

Correct knowledge about the strength of the synthetic fabrics varied as well. Most of the consumers realized that nylon, Orlon, Dacron and Terylene were all strong fabrics. The highest percentage of correct answers for the synthetics was obtained on the question concerning nylon. Not only is nylon one of the earliest synthetics but also it has been widely advertised as the strongest of all fibers. Consumers are familiar with nylon in stockings, lingerie and other garments and are aware of its durability. These facts could account for the consumers' knowledge of this fabric. The others mentioned

above have often been referred to as "miracle" fabrics, especially during the time of their introduction, thus implying that they have extra strength. It is interesting to note the similarity of responses for Dacron and Terylene, the American and British version, respectively, of basically the same fiber.

Just over one-third of the consumers replied correctly that rayon was a medium strength fabric. Approximately the same number thought it to be weak while over 20 per cent admitted that they did not know. These results for rayon seem to indicate some confusion in the minds of the consumers and probably occurred because of inconsistent, and often incorrect, labels referring to rayon as such, as acetate, and as viscose.

Nearly two-thirds of the women questioned indicated that they did not know anything about the strength of Acrilan. Only 23 per cent replied correctly that it was a strong fabric. Although Acrilan has been available since 1954 little has been seen or heard of it on the Canadian market, especially in yardage form, until fairly recently.

It was not surprising to find that nearly half of the consumers were not familiar with the strength of acetate. Only 14 per cent agreed correctly that it was a weak fabric. Although acetate is a fabric of fairly long standing

on the Canadian market it is better known, erroneously, by the name of rayon. Even though the Standards Division of the Canadian Department of Trade and Commerce calls for a differentiation between rayon and acetate this law is seldom enforced and the two fabrics are consequently associated in the consumers' mind.

Much the same problem arises for viscose. Very few of the consumers were able to identify it as a medium strength fabric while 66 per cent gave a "don't know" response. Again, the term rayon is more often used as is indicated by the higher percentage of correct responses under this name. The word viscose is seldom used in conjunction with yardage fabrics although it does appear occasionally in connection with carpeting and other home furnishings. The lack of similarity between responses for viscose and rayon seems to indicate a lack of understanding of their relationship.

The strength of Arnel was practically unknown as only 2 per cent of the consumers indicated correctly that it was a weak fabric. Like Acrilan, Arnel has been available since October, 1954 but as yet the amount produced is small in relation to the established fabrics. Very little has appeared on Canadian shelves as yardage fabric although some has been presented as ready-to-wear goods.

Correct knowledge regarding cleaning methods seems to

be considerably more prevalent for natural fiber fabrics than for the synthetic fiber fabrics as is shown in Table I.

The majority of the consumers gave the correct response for cotton and linen, 84 and 62 per cent respectively, as machine washable fabrics. Cotton has been in use a long time and homemakers are familiar with it especially in the form of utility fabrics and garments that can withstand rigorous treatment. The same is true for linen as it appears frequently in homes as machine washable table coverings and napkins.

Correct responses for silk as a hand washable fabric were also given by most of the consumers. This is another fabric with which the homemaker is well acquainted, for, with the exception of the war years when the importation of silk for non-military use was not feasible, it has been widely used in special occasion garments. Its connotation as a luxury fabric, its light weight and customary fineness could all indicate that hand washing is advisable.

Both hand washing and dry-cleaning were considered by the writer to be suitable methods for cleaning wool fabrics. Forty-three per cent of the consumers gave the first response probably because of the association of hand washing wool sweaters while 60 per cent agreed that wool should be dry-cleaned. The latter could result from the

practice of dry-cleaning ladies' wool dresses and men's suits. It is interesting to note that a greater number considered wool to be dry-cleanable rather than washable. The results of careless washing techniques could be responsible for this.

Nylon, Orlon, Dacron and Terylene were all considered correctly to be machine washable by approximately 40 per cent of the consumers. These four textiles have all been extensively promoted as drip-dry, easy care fabrics. Connotations as "miracle" fabrics may further indicate an ability to be washed by machine. Nylon has been proven by long term use and the consumer is familiar with machine washing nylon lingerie. However, 48 per cent of the responses indicated that nylon should be washed by hand. This slightly higher percentage may be caused by the consumer thinking in terms of nylon stockings, fine, lace trimmed lingerie and other dainty garments which would be hand washed because of the delicacy of their construction.

For cleaning methods, as for strength, a close relationship can be noted between the responses for Dacron and Terylene, the American and British counterparts.

The low percentage of correct answers for suitable cleaning methods for Acrilan, Arnel and acetate plus the high percentage of "don't know" responses for these three fabrics would seem to show that the consumer is not at all

sure of how these fabrics should be cleaned.

About one-fifth of the responses were correct in indicating rayon to be machine washable while nearly half showed it to be hand washable. This is probably a result of the consumers' experience with the earlier rayons which lost much of their strength when wet and consequently required more careful treatment than most of the present day resin treated rayons.

Very few of the consumers recognized viscose to be machine washable. This low percentage of correct responses coupled with over 60 per cent who gave a "don't know" response gives further indication that consumers are not used to, and do not fully understand, this term.

As is shown in Table I, correct knowledge regarding ironing was superior for natural fiber fabrics when compared to that for the synthetics, if these are grouped as a whole. However, Table II shows the range that occurs when the fabrics are studied individually.

Over three-quarters of the consumers' responses indicated correctly that cotton is a fabric that is easily ironed. Although it must usually be dampened, wrinkles are easily removed with only moderate heat and pressure. This high percentage of correct response for cotton could be expected because most consumers have had experience in ironing cottons.

Nearly one-half of the women questioned thought linen difficult to iron. This was considered as the correct response because linen must always be thoroughly dampened and considerable heat and pressure are usually required to obtain a smooth finish. Thirty-three per cent regarded linen as an easily ironed fabric perhaps because they are accustomed to the necessary ironing techniques.

Silk was considered to be easily ironed by 52 per cent who gave this correct response. Wrinkles are easily removed without dampening and with a minimum of heat and pressure. However, nearly one-quarter of the responses indicated that silk was difficult to iron. This opinion probably arose because most silks are woven into fine fabrics for luxury use. These are made into garments which are commonly dry-cleaned thereby limiting the consumers' experience of ironing this fabric.

Less than one-quarter of the consumers claimed wool to be difficult to iron. This was considered as the correct response because the temperature used for ironing wool must be carefully controlled and a press cloth and/or steam iron must be used at all times. Wool can easily be made shiny, can be scorched, stretched, shrunk or felted with improper pressing techniques.

Approximately half of the consumers indicated that

wool was easy to iron probably because they are very familiar with the above techniques and because wrinkles are easily removed by steaming alone or by proper pressing.

Nylon, Orlon, Dacron and Terylene were considered by the majority of the consumers to be fabrics requiring little or no ironing. Extensive advertising as drip-dry, no-iron fabrics and familiarity with the fact that nylon stockings and lingerie dry smoothly without ironing probably accounts for this.

Forty-two per cent of the consumers agreed that rayon was easy to iron. It can be ironed as cotton although a slightly lower temperature should be used. Furthermore, it does not have to be ironed until it is completely dry as residual steam does not cause wrinkles in this fabric.

Acetate was considered by the writer to be a difficult fabric to iron as the temperature of the iron must be very carefully controlled to prevent glazing or melting of the fabric. Less than one-fifth of the consumers knew this. Nearly half admitted that they did not know about ironing acetate, probably because garments made from acetate are of the type which most homemakers have dry-cleaned, hence their lack of knowledge of ironing this fabric.

Low percentages of correct responses for Acrilan and Arnel as fabrics requiring little or no ironing together with a fairly high percentage of "don't know" responses

seem to indicate that consumers are not familiar with the ironing techniques for these two fabrics.

The fact that only 13 per cent gave correct responses for viscose as an easy to iron fabric coupled with over 70 per cent "don't know" replies gives further evidence that the fabric buyers were not as well acquainted with this term as they were with rayon.

An overall study of the data in Tables I and II gives evidence that consumers did not have a sound basic knowledge of yardage fabrics. This was especially true for the man-made textiles. These fabrics are being found in increasing quantities and varieties on the retailers' shelves, hence the dissemination, to the consumer, of improved information would seem advisable.

Fabric Information Requested by Consumers

In order to ameliorate the situation that has arisen as a result of the production of so many new fibers and fabrics it is not only necessary to ascertain what the consumer knows at present but also what she would like to know. Table III shows those questions that consumers ask most often when they are shopping for fabrics.

In estimating the information about fabrics that is most often requested the consumers and the salespersons agreed quite closely. Nearly four-fifths of both groups

TABLE III
Information Most Often Requested by Consumers
Expressed in Per Cent

Fabric information requested	Consumers' estimate	Salespersons' estimate
Should it be washed or cleaned?	78	80
Will it shrink?	75	72
Will it be suitable for my purpose?	65	61
Will it fade?	40	37
Is ironing necessary?	31	26
Other	18	0
At what temperature should it be ironed?	11	7

indicated that the information sought most frequently was how the fabric should be cleaned. Should it be washed or dry-cleaned? It is not surprising to find this question paramount since service and continuing attractive appearance are often related to this aspect of fabric care.

Approximately three-quarters of both groups were concerned secondly with dimensional stability as there are few uses to which a fabric can be put if it cannot be relied upon to maintain its size and shape reasonably well.

Over 60 per cent of both the consumers and the salespersons agreed that advice was wanted on the suitability of a particular fabric for a specific use. When the homemaker's choice was limited to cotton, linen, silk, and wool it was not difficult for her to decide which would best suit her needs. The contemporary textiles, however, offer such a diversity of properties that resultant confusion is not uncommon.

Color-fastness also ranked fairly high as an important question with nearly 40 per cent of the consumers showing concern over this factor. With so many new fibers being created that require special dyestuffs and specific treatment it is of small wonder that consumers wish reassurance of long lasting or permanent color.

Less than one-third were concerned with whether or not ironing would be necessary and only about one in ten

questioned ironing temperature. Since most women claim that ironing is one of the homemaking tasks they enjoy the least it is somewhat surprising to find that so few were interested in finding out whether it would be required for a particular fabric and, if so, what temperature should be used to obtain satisfactory results with ease and safety. Perhaps this is one factor which the fabric users feel that they can experiment upon at home without undue worry providing reasonable precautions of temperature control are taken.

Eighteen per cent of the consumers reported that they asked questions other than those outlined on the questionnaire. Some specified that they wished information on fiber composition, crease resistance and the advisability of using an automatic dryer while others gave no indication of the subject of their queries.

The Consumers' Sources of Fabric Information

There are many sources from which the consumer could gain needed information about fabrics. Some of these, such as textbooks and government bulletins, are little used, probably because the consumers are not aware of them or else because they are neither conveniently available nor easily read and understood by the layman. Sources other than those mentioned have been suggested as possible

means of augmenting the consumers' knowledge. The most common of these, together with an estimate of the frequency with which they are used, are listed in Tables IV and V.

Among the kinds of training listed by the consumers as being a source of fabric information, practical experience in sewing was reported by the majority with 71 per cent making this response. This high rate of response for practical sewing experience is not surprising because the questionnaires were distributed through the stores to consumers and it is thought likely that the one who made the purchase would be, most often, the one who ultimately worked with it.

Much lower percentages were recorded for the other sources of training. High school home economics classes were reported as responsible for their knowledge by only 27 per cent of the consumers. Though home economics has been a compulsory subject in grades seven and eight, many of the consumers may not have attended or completed high school, hence this lower rate of response could well be expected.

Classes sponsored by sewing machine companies were reported by 10 per cent of the consumers. Lack of interest, time or money could be factors in preventing more from taking advantage of such courses.

Another 10 per cent of the consumers indicated that

TABLE IV
Training and Publications as Consumers' Sources of
Fabric Information Expressed in Per Cent

Source	Per cent
<u>Training</u>	
Practical experience in sewing	71
High school home economics	27
Sewing machine company classes	10
Other	10
University home economics	8
None	8
<u>Newspapers</u>	
The Sun	69
The Province	41
Other	11
<u>Magazines</u>	
McCall's	62
Ladies' Home Journal	49
Vogue	44
Good Housekeeping	40
Other	21
Better Homes and Gardens	20
Western Homes and Living	18
Glamour	13
Mademoiselle	11
Harper's	6
House Beautiful	5

TABLE V
Salespersons, Display Signs and Labels as Consumers' Sources
of Fabric Information Expressed in Per Cent

Source	Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
<u>Salespersons</u>				
As estimated by consumers	2	29	47	22
As estimated by salespersons	0	8	48	44
<u>Display Signs</u>				
Frequency of reading	5	22	31	42
Frequency of obtaining satisfactory information	5	54	30	7
<u>Labels</u>				
Frequency of looking for them	10	14	24	52
Frequency of finding them	5	69	25	1
Frequency of salespersons keeping them	10	44	24	22
Frequency of labels supplying satisfactory information	32	54	13	1

they had received their training from other sources, some of whom specified night school.

Only 8 per cent claimed that they had attended university home economics courses. Since a small percentage of the population usually attain university level in their education this result can be understood.

The 8 per cent who admitted that they had no training whatsoever could probably be accounted for by the beginning sewers who were purchasing fabric and by those who were buying for use by another.

Newspapers were considered by many to be a source of information. The fact that The Sun has the greatest circulation could account for the high rate of response for this paper when compared to that of the other.

In addition to providing the information tabulated in Table IV the consumers were asked to evaluate several of their sources of information.

When asked if newspapers aided them in making a fabric purchase suited to their needs and wants, only 1 per cent said that they were always of assistance while 17 per cent admitted finding them frequently useful and over 70 per cent occasionally helpful. About one-tenth of the consumers said that they were never of value.

General homemaking magazines with diversified subject matter accounted for most of the responses concerned with

this source. McCall's was used by the majority, or 62 per cent, of the consumers. Fashion magazines such as Glamour, Mademoiselle and Harper's were read less frequently as a source of fabric information except for Vogue which was reported to be read by nearly half of the consumers. Magazines dealing with homes, their furnishings and gardens were seldom sought as fabric reference material. Twenty-one per cent noted reading other, unspecified magazines for this purpose.

When asked if magazines were of value to them in making a satisfactory fabric purchase the consumers' evaluation of this source was almost identical to their evaluation of newspapers. Only 3 per cent said they were always useful while 17 per cent said they were frequently of assistance. Seventy-one per cent and 7 per cent reported that they were of value occasionally and not at all, respectively.

Table V shows the consumers' use of salespersons, display signs and labels as sources of information of yardage fabrics.

Both the consumers and the salespersons were asked to estimate the frequency with which the person considering a fabric purchase sought information or advice from the clerks. Nearly half of both groups agreed closely that questions were asked frequently. This similarity of

response seems to indicate that most of the consumers will seek assistance most of the time. Forty-four per cent of the salespersons noted that inquiries were always made, however only 22 per cent of the consumers were in agreement on this point. Since a potential purchaser is not likely to request the services of a salesperson unless she is seriously considering buying, it is assumed that the purchaser would be the one most in contact with the clerks and hence be responsible for the salespersons' higher estimate. However, there would be some shoppers who are non-purchasers who would also ask questions. This same trend could also be responsible for the consumers indicating that they asked questions only occasionally or not at all while, in general, the salespersons felt that they were queried more often.

Only 8 per cent of the consumers felt that, when asked for advice, salespersons could always give helpful and reliable information. Thirty-nine per cent agreed that such aid was of value frequently while the majority of 47 per cent thought that only occasionally could salespersons be of real assistance to them. Less than 5 per cent noted that the sales clerks could never supply adequate information. These data, and the following, are not included in the tables but are discussed here because of their relationship.

It is interesting to note that over 60 per cent of the salespersons had received their knowledge of fabrics by practical experience in sewing. The type and amount of such experience were not specified so it seems safe to assume that the knowledge obtained thereby would be extremely variable. Nearly 40 per cent claimed practical experience in selling to be the source of their training. It seems unlikely to the writer that the consequence of selling a product would necessarily be a knowledge of that product and, unless other forms of instruction were undertaken, would be of little actual value. Furthermore, whether or not a fabric will provide satisfaction cannot be judged by the salesperson at the time of the sale but must be determined by the consumer at a later date when the fabric has been put to use.

Less than 20 per cent had taken high school home economics courses and only 2 per cent had attended employer sponsored classes. A very few, less than 2 per cent, claimed to have received training from other, unspecified sources. None had attended university home economics courses or participated in educational groups sponsored by sewing machine companies. Over 5 per cent admitted having no training whatsoever.

In order to evaluate further the salespeople as a source of valid information they were asked to state how

they would answer a consumer's question when they really did not know the correct solution to the problem. Only 4 per cent said that they would admit that they did not know. The low percentage for this response could, perhaps, be expected since few people will readily admit their ignorance of a subject in which they are expected to be well versed. Secondly, store policy will occasionally forbid salespeople from conceding their lack of knowledge. Nearly one-third of the salespersons stated that they would guess the answer. The degree to which this would be satisfactory would be largely dependent upon the amount and kind of their training and experience. Furthermore, in the field of modern textiles guessing is not a wise procedure because the variables upon which a guess might be based are extensive. Over 65 per cent reported that they would go to the manager of the department or store to obtain advice, this being the most advisable course of action. This last group was also questioned as to the ability of the manager to give them the necessary, correct information, although how they determined the validity of his answer was not ascertained. Nearly 20 per cent of the sales clerks agreed that the manager could always be of assistance while twice this number said he was frequently helpful. Fourteen per cent reported that he could give the answers to their questions only occasionally. Not one

of the salespersons said that the manager was never able to provide the wanted information, but nearly 30 per cent failed to give any reply to this question. Since this percentage of no response is much higher than for any other question it is perhaps indicative of a reluctant attitude on the part of the sales clerk to put an answer that would in any way be incriminating should the manager see it before it was forwarded to the writer.

When asked whether a fabric reference book which they could use was kept in the department nearly 80 per cent of the salespersons admitted that there was none. Of the 21 per cent who reported that a reference book was kept only one in ten could name either its title or author thus giving an indication that it was little used.

Display signs used in the stores or fabric departments were also considered as possible sources of information for the consumer. Table V shows that the majority of the homemakers' responses indicated that they always read the display signs accompanying the fabrics thus giving evidence that these are regarded as a possible reference. Less than one-third reported that they read them frequently. The same proportion read them occasionally while very few indicated that they were never concerned with display material. In all probability, the stores use these signs for primarily promotional reasons but the fact that many

women read them gives reason to believe that they could be of considerable assistance to the consumer.

However, very few of the consumers felt that they were always useful. Nearly one-third said that they were frequently of help but the majority of 54 per cent agreed that only occasionally did they supply useful information. Only 5 per cent said that they were never of any value.

According to the data tabulated in Table V, over one-half of the consumers made it a point always to look for labels when they were selecting a fabric. Conceivably, labels could be expected to supply the customer with additional data, the use of which could help her in making a better evaluation of the fabric in terms of her personal needs. It is not surprising, then, to find that the majority of shoppers attempt at all times to avail themselves of this information. Approximately one-quarter of the women questioned noted that they looked for labels frequently rather than always. This group might include the interested but less careful shopper or else the one who considered her present knowledge of the fabric to be sufficient. The number who claimed that they looked for labels only occasionally, or not at all, was small.

Following the consumer's estimate of how often she looked for labels an attempt was made to determine how often they could be found, how frequently they were kept

by salespeople and, for those tags that were available, how often they provided adequate and meaningful information. The data for this part of the investigation are shown in Table V.

In general, when they were sought, labels could be found only occasionally by nearly three-quarters of the shoppers. Another 25 per cent indicated that they were able to find them frequently. Few said that labels could never be found but even less admitted the other extreme that they could always be located. These data tie in fairly closely with those given by the salespersons as to the frequency with which labels were kept, although, on the whole, the latter estimated that they were retained more often than not. The fact that the consumers could not find the labels with quite as high a frequency as suggested by the number of times they were kept may be explainable in that the labels are often attached to the bolt of cloth in inconvenient or nearly inaccessible places, such as the inside of the roll, where shoppers would have difficulty in locating them. Furthermore, as the place of keeping the labels was not specified it may be that these were filed behind the counter or in the managers' desks and hence would not be readily available to the shoppers in search of them.

The frequency with which labels were found to be adequate in the kind and amount of information they supplied indicates that these are not a particularly satisfactory means of supplying the shopper with the facts she wishes to have. One-third of the consumers claimed that labels were never adequate while over half said that only occasionally did they meet their needs. These findings give further evidence to the thinking that manufacturers' textile labels are becoming primarily promotional and are failing to fulfill their original purpose (32, p. 41; 34, p. 43).

Information Provided by Advertisements in Publications and Display Signs in Stores

As well as having the consumer express her opinion as to the value of certain sources of fabric information the writer was interested in determining more objectively the amount and kind of advisory material available through newspapers, magazines and display signs. The data concerned with publications are shown in Table VI. Table VII contains the information from the investigation of the display signs.

Over the 3-month period during which records were kept nearly one-third more fabric advertisements appeared in The Province newspaper than in The Sun. It is

TABLE VI

Information Provided by Fabric Advertisements in Publications Over a 3-Month Period

Publication	Number of advertisements	Per cent of advertisements providing information on				
		Fiber content	Cleaning	Ironing	Uses	None
<u>Newspapers</u>						
The Province	276	67	18	10	42	40
The Sun	204	68	23	11	80	27
Total	480	67	20	10	58	31
<u>Magazines</u>						
Vogue	93	78	13	8	68	23
McCall's	74	76	9	9	100	0
Harper's	59	95	17	15	92	5
Mademoiselle	48	75	21	6	67	33
House Beautiful	45	76	38	16	98	2
Good Housekeeping	23	57	57	26	70	30
Glamour	22	68	32	14	68	32
Ladies' Home Journal	10	50	30	30	90	10
Better Homes and Gardens	7	57	0	0	100	0
Western Homes and Living	6	17	0	0	100	0
Total	387	75	20	12	83	26

TABLE VII
Information Provided by Display Signs
in Local Stores Over a 3-Month Period

Store	Number of display signs	Per Cent of signs providing information on				
		Fiber content	Cleaning	Ironing	Uses	None
A	98	53	17	3	20	37
*B	69	33	10	3	0	38
C	62	84	32	2	32	32
*D	57	28	7	0	0	72
E	53	72	53	19	51	36
*F	52	0	0	0	0	100
G	49	76	65	18	33	24
*H	44	77	23	5	20	23
I	42	66	50	14	26	21
Total	526	53	26	6	20	43

* Denotes fabric specialty shops.

interesting to note, however, that 40 per cent of the former's advertisements supplied no useful information whatsoever while only 27 per cent of the latter's fell into this category. For those that did provide some helpful material the informational content of advertisements in both papers was comparatively equal. Facts concerning the fiber content of the fabrics were furnished most frequently except for The Sun in which suggestions for use were predominant. Neither paper gave much advice on the care of the fabrics. When directions appeared, advice for cleaning was twice as prevalent as that for ironing.

As can be ascertained from Table VI the fashion magazines, Vogue, Harper's, Mademoiselle and Glamour, contained more fabric advertisements than either the general homemaking magazines or the more specific house-and-garden type. It must also be noted, however, that, on the average, fashion magazines had the highest percentage of advertisements supplying no usable information. All of the magazines provided facts about fiber content in 50 to 75 per cent of their advertisements with the one exception of Western Homes and Living, a small, local publication devoted primarily to architectural features of homes rather than to the textiles that help furnish them. Only Good Housekeeping, a magazine dealing with all aspects of better homemaking and buymanship, had directions for

cleaning in over 50 per cent of its fabric advertisements. The range of presentation of such information in the other magazines was considerable. As could probably be expected as a result of their very nature, house-and-garden magazine advertisements contained an especially low percentage of cleaning directions except for House Beautiful, a magazine which appears to present its material in a rather thorough manner. Except in Good Housekeeping and Ladies' Home Journal, information on pressing was negligible in all magazines. On the other extreme, however, all magazines contained suggested uses for the fabrics in the majority of their advertisements. This information was supplied more often than any other probably in the hope that if a use were suggested the reader would be more apt to purchase that fabric.

Summarily, the newspapers and magazines checked gave about the same proportion of information in their advertisements. The newspapers, however, contained a much greater number of advertisements within the given period thereby making them a richer source of fabric information. Furthermore, the fabrics advertised therein were all available locally, making, in all probability, the information presented more meaningful to the consumers of Vancouver.

On the average over the 3-month investigational period more display signs were utilized in the department store fabric sections than in the fabric specialty shops. Furthermore, of the display signs that were presented a lower percentage of the signs in the department stores were of the type that gave no usable information. It may be that this type of retail outlet relies more heavily upon such signs as an aid to selling their products than do the specialty shops. The latter probably hope to achieve the same results by giving more individual attention to their customers.

As was true for the newspaper and magazine advertisement, fiber content of the fabric was the information provided most frequently with the signs in the department stores presenting more than those in the specialty shops.

Three of the five department stores checked provided some directions for cleaning the fabric in the majority of their display signs. In all other stores little or none was given.

On the whole, a minimum of ironing information was available through this medium. The same three department stores that most often provided cleaning advice were the only ones to give an appreciable number of suggestions for pressing, though these were comparatively few.

Generally, the kind and amount of information

available through store display signs was relatively the same as that provided by newspapers and magazines although the publications gave a higher percentage of suggested uses for the fabrics. It was also noted that fewer of the advertisements, both in magazines and newspapers, were of the type that was purely promotional.

Consumers' Expressed Reactions to the Provision of More and Better Fabric Information

In addition to studying and evaluating the various sources of fabric information used by the consumer, the writer was interested in ascertaining how the consumer would react if more and better information were made available. This aspect of the study was included in the hope of ultimately being able to show the manufacturers and retailers that it would be to their advantage if they would improve their systems of labeling and advertising. During the last 12 years there has been a steady decline in the proportion of the consumers' personal expenditures dollar spent on fabrics and many members of the textile industry, being concerned about this fact, are already considering making industry-wide changes and improvements in advertising and promotion in order to counteract this trend (27, p. 787). If retailers as well would take this into consideration and improve their methods of marketing

the situation would, no doubt, improve for all, manufacturers, retailers and consumers, alike.

The overall data of Table VIII show clearly that a large majority of the consumers would be influenced by the provision of adequate information in such a way as would benefit both the fabric manufacturers and retailers. Eighty per cent of the consumers indicated that they would definitely, or at least probably, buy a greater quantity of yardage fabric. Less than one-fifth noted that such information would make no difference in the amount they purchased. Several of the latter group, however, pointed out that the quantity of fabric that they purchased was controlled solely by the limitations of their budget. Eight per cent said that they did not know whether or not they would buy more. No doubt many of this group could be influenced by skillful, attractive and informative advertising and labeling, thus increasing total sales.

Nearly 90 per cent of the consumers agreed that they would prefer to shop in those stores where they would be assured of obtaining extra information about the fabric they wished to buy. This opinion expressed by so many is not surprising. When they go to shop consumers are often confused by the many new fibers, their trade names and meaningless promotional terms attached to them. A retailer might well make use of the consumers' willingness to buy

TABLE VIII
Percentage of Consumers Who Expressed
Reaction to More and Better Fabric Information

Consumer Reaction	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Probably No	Definitely No	Don't Know
Would buy more fabric	35	45	11	1	8
Would shop where information available	58	31	5	1	5

more yardage fabrics from the stores where improved information could be had. Relatively simple changes in advertising and display techniques could well be beneficial to all concerned.

CONCLUSIONS

Because the discerning and judicious selection of domestic textiles presents one of the most perplexing problems faced by the homemaker of today this study was undertaken to determine functional and convenient means of simplifying the matter and/or of rendering assistance.

Before this objective could be achieved it was necessary to ascertain:

- 1) the extent of the consumers' basic knowledge of contemporary textiles
- 2) what the consumers want and need to know about these fabrics
- 3) what sources of information are at present readily available to them
- 4) of what actual value these sources are in providing the needed information.

In studying the results of the investigation it was found, in general, that the consumers did not have sufficient knowledge of either the natural or the synthetic fiber fabrics to enable them to evaluate these textiles in terms of strength and necessary care. Knowledge of the former is one factor that can guide the homemaker in selecting a fabric that will be suitable for a specific purpose. She can assume safely that the strong fabrics

will be appropriate for articles that must withstand hard usage whereas the weaker fabrics should be utilized for those items whose purpose is less functional. The importance of knowing proper methods of care is paramount since this factor often affects serviceability and attractiveness of fabrics.

The consumers knew more about the natural fiber fabrics of cotton, linen, silk and wool than they did about the man-made textiles but this knowledge was still insufficient, in most cases, to allow them to buy wisely.

More often than not, consumers would request information from the salesperson. What they sought to find out was: whether the fabric should be washed or dry-cleaned, whether it would shrink, for what purposes it would be suitable, its degree of color-fastness and the type of pressing that would be required. The above order indicated the importance of these factors to the shopper.

Although questioned frequently, the salespeople are not considered by the writer to be competent advisors since they themselves have insufficient training in the field of textiles and lack resources from which they can readily draw valid information with which to assist the customer. The majority of the consumers agreed with this opinion.

Previous training, newspapers, magazines, display

signs in stores and labels attached to the fabric were also utilized by the consumer as sources of information. Practical experience in sewing was the type of training recorded by the majority. It is possible that varied and extensive use of fabrics could augment the sewers knowledge but during this time when new fabrics are appearing on the market in increasing numbers it is doubtful if many homemakers could keep abreast of them by this method.

Advertisements in publications and display signs in stores were read but not highly valued by most of the consumers and did not prove to be adequate sources of fabric information. Approximately one-third of the advertisements, and a slightly higher number of display signs, were entirely promotional. Those that did supply some information mentioned fiber content, possible uses, appropriate cleaning techniques and pressing requirements, in that order of frequency.

Of the publications, newspapers proved to be superior to magazines only because they contained, within the given period, a greater number of advertisements. The newspapers studied were approximately equal in the amount and kind of information that they supplied whereas the general home-making magazines and the fashion magazines were superior to the house-and-garden type. Since individual magazines varied considerably it would be difficult to recommend a

specific one for use as a reference although Good House-keeping, because it maintains its own Bureau of Standards, may be more satisfactory than others.

Display signs were always read by the majority of the consumers although few thought them to be of consistent help. On the whole, display signs in stores approximately equalled advertisements in publications in their presentation of material. However, the signs in department stores were markedly superior to those of the specialty shops when studied according to this classification.

Most of the consumers sought labels to assist them in making a fabric selection, but these were not deemed satisfactory because they could not always be found nor relied upon to give the needed information.

As so few of the available sources of fabric information were in any way adequate it was not surprising to find that the consumers were buying less than they might otherwise buy. The majority agreed that they would purchase a greater quantity of yardage fabric if more and better information were provided. It was also ascertained that consumers would prefer to shop where they could be assured of receiving information to meet their needs.

Summarily, the findings reported herein give evidence upon which to base the following conclusions:

- 1) the consumers studied in Vancouver, B.C. needed and wished to be informed about the contemporary textiles, especially the man-made ones, in order that they might buy wisely according to their needs and wants
- 2) the consumers required additional and specific information on satisfactory cleaning and pressing techniques, dimensional stability, degree of color-fastness and appropriate uses
- 3) none of the sources available at present are adequate to supply this information
- 4) if more and better information were made available consumers might buy a greater quantity of yardage fabric, especially from those stores in which such information was readily obtainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The aforementioned conclusions lead the writer to present the following recommendations.

1. The findings of this study should be made available to:
 - a) the Standards Division of the Department of Trade and Commerce of Canada as encouragement to develop a nation-wide system of labeling
 - b) Mrs. Mary Humphries, Chairman of the Canadian Association of Consumers National Textile Committee, as support to her advocacy of performance labeling to the above Standards Division
 - c) the members of the textile industry of Canada as an indication of the advisability of participating in such plans as may be drawn up by the Standards Division since improvements in the labeling of their products and in their advertising would probably be of ultimate benefit to textile manufacturers
 - d) the fabric retailers of Vancouver, B.C., because of their interest in the textile problem and their willingness to make reasonable changes to rectify it.
2. Advisable suggestions for improving the information provided by retail outlets should be made available

to interested store managers. Such suggestions should include:

- a) require salespersons to have had at least some training in home economics or else to participate in a program of in-service training
- b) provide source books suitable for quick reference by the salesperson
- c) maintain in the department or store a large chart giving the main properties of, and suitable care for, the most important fabrics
- d) provide customers with a small, economical, take-home pamphlet supplying the above information
- e) improve the layout of the display signs used in connection with the specific fabrics so that these signs could include the most pertinent information
- f) alter the type of newspaper advertisements so that they might include the information most wanted by the customer.

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A P P E N D I C E S

APPENDIX A

22nd August, 1960.

Mr. _____,
Manager, Fabric Department,
_____ Company,
_____ Street,
Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Sir:

With the ever continuing flow of new fibres and fabrics appearing on the market, it is becoming increasingly confusing to all of us who, for one reason or another, are concerned with them. As manager of fabric sales you will be as aware of this problem as we are in the field of teaching clothing and textiles.

In the hope of helping the consumer become better acquainted with the new array of products, and so become a more knowledgeable customer, I am undertaking a study of the sources of her information and the kind of problems important to her.

In this regard, I would very much appreciate your co-operation and help in reaching the fabric buyer and in finding out from your sales personnel the kind of questions with which they are confronted. Would it be possible for me to have a few minutes of your time so that I might explain the problem more fully? If you will let me know a day and time that is convenient for you I will be happy to do so. I can be reached at the above address, or by telephoning WA 2-1958. I would appreciate hearing from you within the week.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Yours sincerely,

(Miss) Ailsa McEachran,
Instructor,
Textiles and Clothing,
School of Home Economics.

AM/MM

APPENDIX B

Dear Fabric Buyer,

While you were looking at all the fabrics today I wonder if you were amazed at the variety of new and different kinds that are available? And, I wonder, too, if you are sometimes a bit confused by them all, for with so many new fibres and so many new names it would not be surprising if you were.

In the hopes that a handy but reliable way can be found to help you become more familiar with the fabrics of today, and so make your buying easier, the School of Home Economics at The University of British Columbia is trying to find out how much value the labels, ads, sales-people and other sources of information are to you.

Will you help by filling out the enclosed questionnaire? It will take only a few minutes but will give you an opportunity to suggest improvements. Completed questionnaires should be sent to:

Miss Ailsa E. McEachran,
School of Home Economics,
The University of British Columbia,
Vancouver 8.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Ailsa E. McEachran,
Instructor in Clothing and
Textiles.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CONSUMER

Please place a check (✓) following the most appropriate answer.

1. Where did you receive your training regarding buying of fabrics?

Practical experience in sewing _____ Sewing machine
company sponsored class _____ High School Home Econ-
omics Class _____ University Home Economics Class _____
I have none _____ Other _____.

2. What local newspapers and magazines containing fabric advertisements and information do you read? Check more than one if necessary.

The Province _____ The Sun _____ Western Homes and
Living _____ Other _____.

3. Do you consider any of the above helpful to you in making a fabric purchase suited to your needs and wants?

Never _____ Occasionally _____ Frequently _____
Always _____.

4. What national magazines containing fabric advertisements and information do you read? Check more than one if necessary.

Harpers _____ Vogue _____ Glamour _____ Mademoiselle _____
McCall's _____ Ladies Home Journal _____ Better Homes
and Gardens _____ House Beautiful _____ Good
Housekeeping _____ Other _____.

5. Do you consider any of these advertisements helpful to you in making a fabric purchase suited to your needs and wants?

Never _____ Occasionally _____ Frequently _____ Always _____.

6. Approximately how often do you request information about a fabric from a sales person?

Never ___ Occasionally ___ Frequently ___ Always ___

7. What type of information do you request the most often? Check more than one if necessary.

How should the fabric be washed or cleaned ___ Will it shrink ___ Will it fade ___ Is ironing necessary ___ At what temperature should it be ironed ___ Will it be suitable for my purpose ___

Other _____.

8. Do you feel that the sales people give you reliable and helpful information?

Never ___ Occasionally ___ Frequently ___ Always ___

9. Do you read carefully the display signs in the fabric department?

Never ___ Occasionally ___ Frequently ___ Always ___

10. Do you feel that the display signs give you reliable and helpful information?

Never ___ Occasionally ___ Frequently ___ Always ___

11. Do you look for labels on the fabric bolt?

Never ___ Occasionally ___ Frequently ___ Always ___

12. How often do you find labels on the fabric bolt when you do look for them?

Never ___ Occasionally ___ Frequently ___ Always ___

13. Do the labels give you enough clearly worded information?

Never ___ Occasionally ___ Frequently ___ Always ___

14. If better information were available would you be inclined to purchase fabric more frequently?

Definitely yes ____ Probably yes ____ Definitely no ____

Probably no ____ I don't know ____.

15. If better information were available at some stores would you prefer to shop there?

Definitely yes ____ Probably yes ____ Definitely

no ____ Probably no ____ I don't know ____.

16. Considering fabric alone, not garment design, please place a check (✓) in the most appropriate column for each fabric.

Fabric	Strength				Cleaning				Ironing			
	Weak	Medium	Strong	Don't Know	Hand Washable	Machine Washable	Dry Clean	Don't Know	Little or None	Easy	Difficult	Don't Know
Acetate												
Acrilan												
Arnel												
Cotton												
Dacron												
Linen												
Nylon												
Orlon												
Rayon												
Silk												
Terylene												
Viscose												
Wool												

17. Have you any comments or suggestions regarding buying fabrics?

APPENDIX C

Dear Sales Lady,

May I take advantage of your experience in dealing with both fabrics and customers? In this present day, when there are so many new textiles appearing on the market it is getting increasingly confusing for the consumer to choose what she wants and needs. I suspect, too, that she brings a lot of her problems to you.

For these two reasons, the School of Home Economics at The University of British Columbia is trying to find the best way to help the consumer become more familiar with all the new fabrics and so become a better customer.

Will you help by filling out the enclosed questionnaire? Your answers will be of value by letting us know what kind of questions your customers ask.

Completed questionnaires should be sealed in the accompanying envelope and returned to your department manager so that all may be picked up at one time.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Ailsa E. McEachran,

Instructor in Clothing and
Textiles.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SALES PEOPLE

Please place a check (✓) following the most appropriate answer.

1. Where did you receive your training regarding fabrics?
 By practical experience in sewing ____ By practical
 experience in selling ____ High school home economics
 classes ____ University home economics classes ____
 Sewing machine company sponsored classes ____ Employer
 sponsored classes ____ I have none ____
 Other ____.
2. In what section of the fabric department do you work?
 Check more than one if necessary.
 Wools ____ Fine dress fabrics ____ Cottons ____
 Fabrics for Interiors ____ Other ____.
3. Approximately how often do you have customers request-
 ing information about the fabrics they are considering
 buying?
 Never ____ Occasionally ____ Frequently ____ Always ____
4. What type of information do the customers request most
 frequently? Check more than one if necessary.
 How should the fabric be washed or cleaned ____ Will
 it shrink ____ Will it fade ____ Is ironing neces-
 sary ____ At what temperature should it be ironed ____
 Will it be suitable for my purpose ____ Other ____.
5. What do you do if you really do not know the answer to
 a customer's question?
 Tell the customer that you do not know ____ Guess on
 the basis of your experience ____ Attempt to find the

answer for her asking the manager, supervisor or buyer of your department ____.

If you do ask them, can they give you the answer?

Never ____ Occasionally ____ Frequently ____ Always ____.

6. Do you keep any labels or information provided by the manufacturer, for your own and the customers reference?

Never ____ Occasionally ____ Frequently ____ Always ____.

7. Is there a reference book on fabrics kept handy in your department so that you might look up quickly information for a customer?

No ____ Yes ____

8. If you have a reference book, who is the author and what is its title?

_____.