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LIQUOR VOTE
SEPTEMBER 12
The necessary by-law was
passed last week to hold a vote
on liquor licences in Markham
Village on September 12.
There will be two questions:
Are you in favour of dining
licences (liquor with meals); are
you in favour of Lounge licences
(liquor without meals).
A recount in Richmond Hill
gave a majority for both
licences. The same two ques-
tions were recently turned down
in Woodbridge.

A Farmer's Wife Is a Business Partner Claims Helen Abell

What is in store for Canadian farm homemakers in the years ahead? Will life be leisurely and restful? Not a chance, say the experts, in spite of labor-saving devices, but, they add, it can be interesting and challeng-

ing. As a matter of fact, if the farm homemaker is not right in there pitching, the farm couple is not apt to be in the farming business long—at least not successfully. What do rural sociologists have to say about this? Dr. Helen C. Abell, head of the Rural Sociology Unit, Economics Division of the Canada Department of Agriculture and a former Stouffville resident, ventures to prophesy thus:

"In order to maintain or to expand the size of farm business on many family farms, more farm women will help their husbands and families by either sharing more and more in the farm work and keeping of business records or by taking paid employment."
Dr. Abell isn't just guessing. Three years ago she organized a survey in which she asked 352 Ontario farm homemakers, "Do you do more or less work around the farm than when you first became a farmer's wife?"

The women Dr. Abell queried ranged in age from 21 to 81 years (average 44). They had been farmers' wives for about 16 years.

About half of these women told her they do less work now than when they first became farmers' wives. It is significant that several in this group said they did less work on the farm because they had taken on paid jobs elsewhere to help out with the family income! A quarter of them said they do just as much now as formerly and almost as many said they now do even more farm work.

A survey of a group of farm women in New Brunswick showed that 71 per cent of them did some work on the farm in addition to housekeeping duties. In Prince Edward Island 80 per cent of the group surveyed helped their husbands with chores. In the Ontario group, it was 98 per cent.

What farm work do these Ontario women do? Out of every 100, 89 do gardening; 61 either clean milkers or pails or help with the milking or feeding of cattle; 53 help with the poultry, feeding hens, cleaning eggs; 42 keep farm accounts; 26 do some field work and 13 do some other type of farm work, for example driving a tractor or other machine or marketing produce.

Western Helpmates
And on the grain farm of the prairies, the women help with the gardening, they keep farm accounts and many work in the fields. When the children have reached school age, many a farmer and his wife decide that if mother can help with the field work, it will not be necessary to hire a man. Good farm help is scarce and a farmer hates to trust his shiny and expensive tractors to careless or incompetent help. Mother may be inexperienced, but she is vitally interested in the farm operation. Of course, it may be necessary to change the grain auger for a lighter type more easily moved or to get an electric stove for the farm kitchen, but the farm couple often decide this is preferable to paying, housing and feeding farm help.

On the larger grain-producing unit, women tend to do less work in the fields, but the wife of the owner of one such farm, when asked how she spent her time, said "On the road." She took meals to men working in fields at a distance; dashed to

town for repairs, picked up chemicals to treat seed, spray weeds or kill grasshoppers; took grain samples to the elevator for moisture tests, and so on.

To quote our sociologist again: "It is common experience to hear a farm woman say modestly that she really doesn't do any farm work. Yet in a single day—and in addition to her normal household duties—she may have weeded a garden, washed and sterilized milking equipment, fed and watered a flock of fowl, gathered and cleaned several dozen eggs and made a trip to town in the family truck to obtain a needed part for a farm machine."

Farm women have always helped in rush periods. The pioneer woman often stooked, her long skirts and heavy stockings protecting her legs from the sharp stubble. Her modern counterpart, clad in jeans, drives the grain truck or takes the baler round the field.

Is the farm wife important to the farm business? Dr. Abell conducted another study in two mixed farming areas of Central Alberta in 1952. Of some 200 farm businesses studied, the majority of operators were married men; a few employed housekeepers and on a few farms there was neither housekeeper nor farm wife. A low level of labor efficiency was found on almost half the farms where there was no farm wife, and on less than one-third of the farms where there was a farm wife.

Dr. Abell's second prediction began thus: "Farm women will increasingly realize the extent to which they and their husbands are jointly involved in decision-making concerning both the home and the farm and particularly the plan of farm finance. With this realization they will seek knowledge and understanding of such matters as the principles of farm management, the keeping of business records; the use of farm credit."

Nowadays farmers talk to their wives before making a large machine purchase, asserts one implement dealer. The farm wife is apt to be realistic and not as influenced by the thought of owning a shiny new combine and asks, "Can the old one be repaired well enough to last this fall? Perhaps it would pay to repair it rather than pay interest on a loan for a new one."

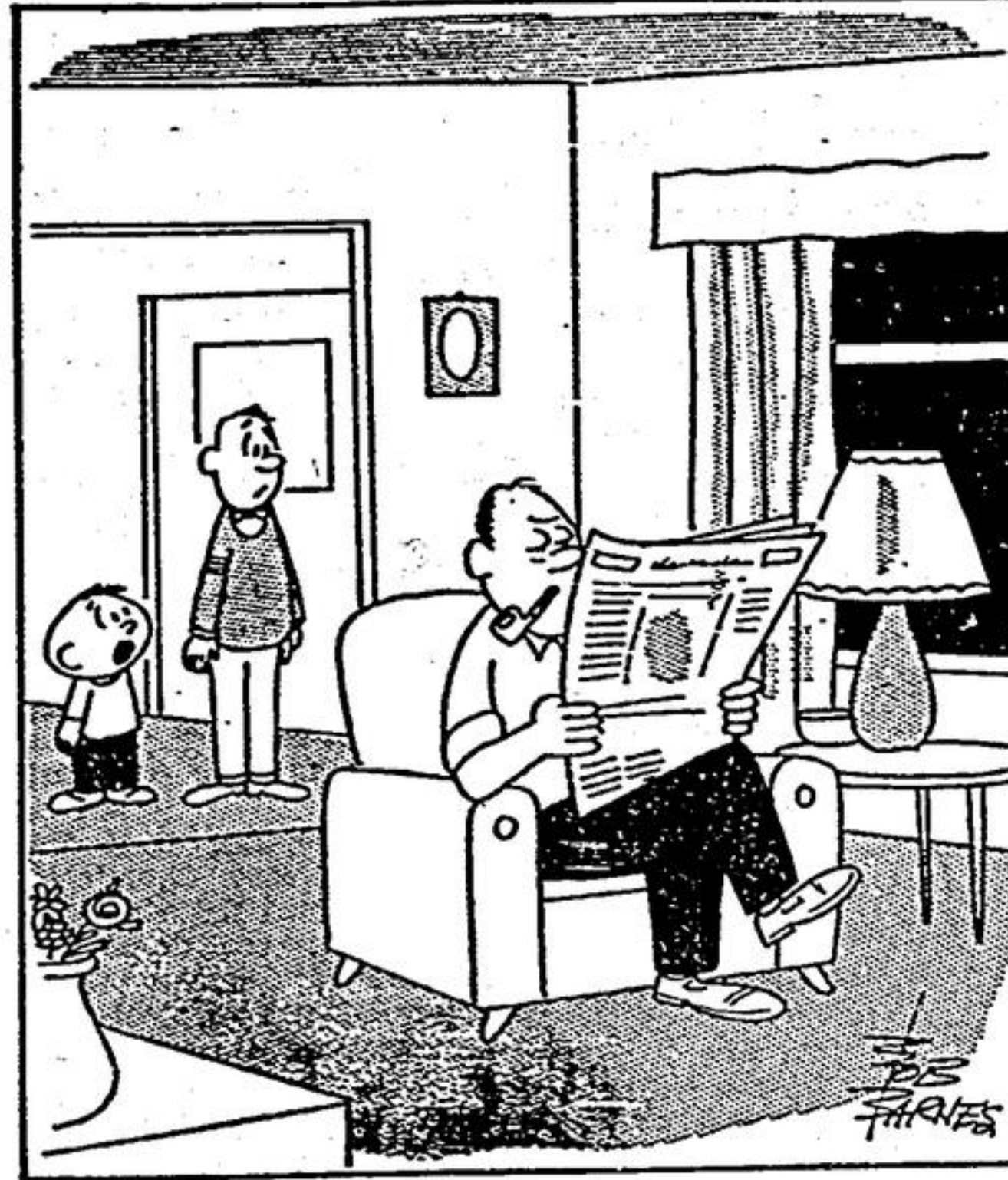
She knows all too well that the price of what the farmer sells seldom goes up, while the price of what he buys seldom stops going up.

The trend is to fewer farms of a larger size. Increased production is necessary to bring in the income generally desired and needed by farm families. The farmer and his wife must decide if the farm business can be expanded, if it can survive without expanding, and how to cut costs.

If the farm is small, they may decide that one of them must take a full-time or part-time job off the farm, either to improve the standard of living or to build up a bit of capital. So the farm wife may get a part-time job in a cannery or in the tobacco fields, she may go back to teaching or nursing, and in order to manage it she must streamline her housekeeping. Or it may be that the wife will keep the farm going while her husband finds off-the-farm employment.

If they decide to build up the farm and the wife is going to be a full partner in the enterprise, she will have to be keen about keeping up with new developments in the farm field, listening to the radio and checking farm magazines for new methods, new grains and the

Laugh Of The Week



"You ask him for the movie money—you've known him longer than I have!"

findings of agricultural research workers, and calling her husband's attention to them. When classes and discussion groups on farm management are held, she will be there.

Dr. Abell also suggests that she must attempt to understand the broader aspects of farming as part of the national economy.

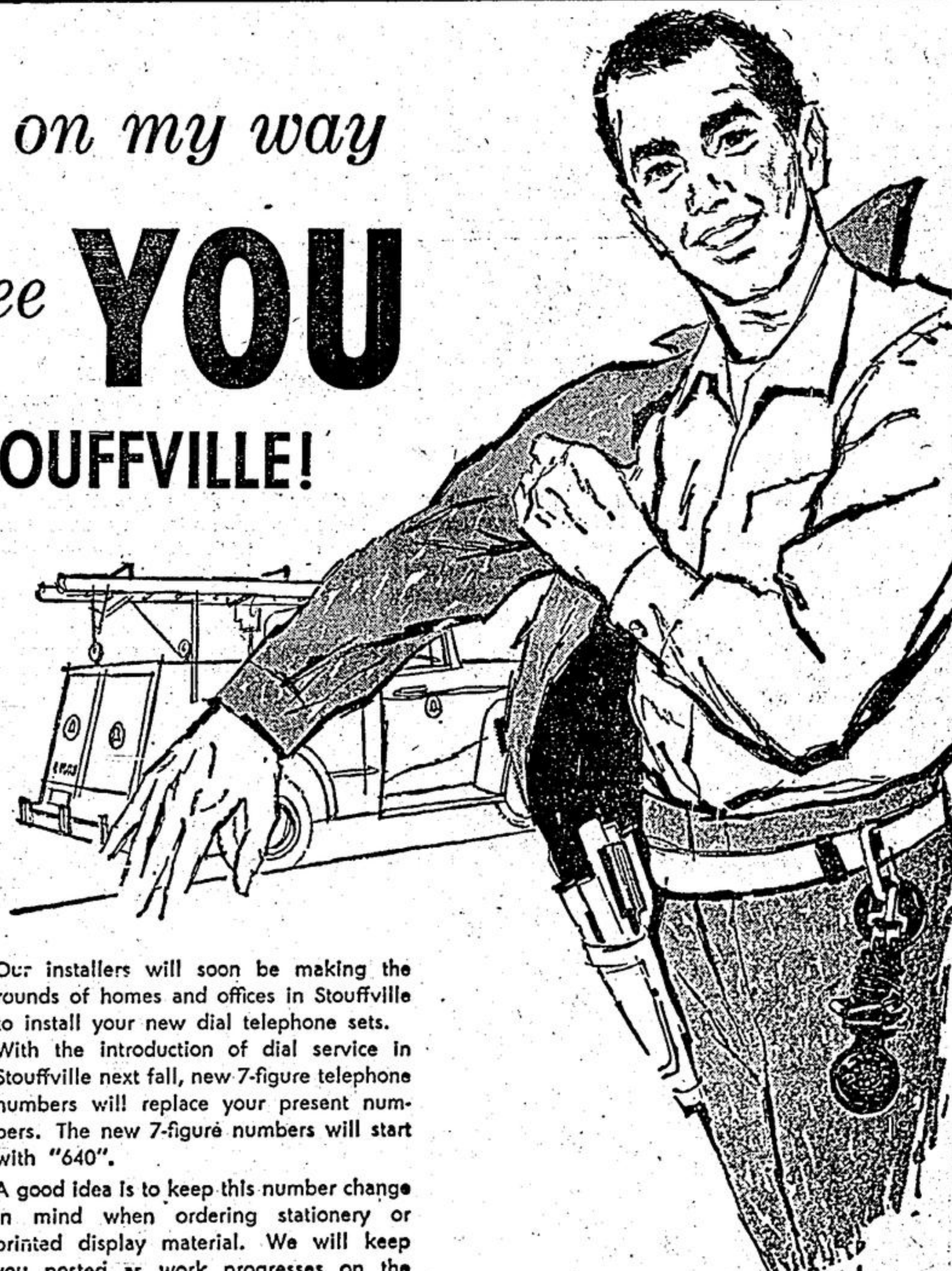
There is one more logical step, says this sociologist. This will be the active participation of farm women, working right beside their husbands "in formulating and carrying out policies and programs of concern to themselves and all farmers through farm organizations."

"The challenge for those who wish to remain as farmers' wives is to help their husbands survive as successful farmers. This requires constant and in-

creasing knowledge and application of agricultural technology and of business methods. It requires a recognition of the vital need for farmers to co-operate and not compete with one another in marketing their produce. It requires an awareness of the need for farmers in all parts of Canada to recognize their common interests and to present their point of view clearly and constantly to the 83 percent of the population who depend on farmers to produce the food they eat."

As mother and homemaker, the farmer's wife has the role of mothers and homemakers everywhere. She is concerned with rearing her children, seeing that they are educated, that the family has a full and happy life, and with the welfare of her community.

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to see **YOU**
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