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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Monday, August 21, 1944

Subject: "Make-Overs From Coats and Suits." Information from Extension
Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Now we've come to the time of the year when feminine fancy just naturally turns to fall fashions!

As all women are aware--a world at war has contributed a few more wardrobe worries to the perennial clothing problem. Rising costs of ready-made garments and a famine of fabrics threaten to crimp the style of the world's best-dressed women. But ONLY of those who have NOT discovered that their own clothes closet may be better than a bargain basement for balancing budgets and dressing becomingly.

A smart set that has already reduced this dollar-stretching practice to a fine art includes the home demonstration and 4-H Club members who make up some 2 million of the Nation's feminine population.

Although these two groups have been doing much of their own sewing as a matter of course for many years, they are doing it now for a CAUSE! Remodeling, in particular, has become a patriotic effort because it frees raw material, labor, and machinery for war production, AND--helps pile up pennies for bond purchases.

"MAKE-OVERS" they may be--these remodeled garments--but "make-overs" with a professional touch! And for a reason! More than the efforts of "loving hands at home" are responsible for the style and precise tailoring of the fall suits and coats which are the pride of many a mother's or maiden's heart. You see, the natural knack with a needle and eye for design of these rural mothers and daughters have been developed by the annual clothing clinics and tailoring schools conducted by specialists and home demonstration agents of State extension services throughout the Nation.

In the 3 years of war, sewing bees and "make-over" meetings conducted with the help of extension workers have resulted in the collection or exchange of enough ideas for quite an imposing manual of "make-overs."

A leaf for such a manual could well be contributed by Mrs. R. B. Hedrick of Wythe County, Va., in the opinion of Alice Sundquist, clothing specialist of the Federal Extension Service. Mrs. Hedrick, who is clothing leader for the Petunia Home Demonstration Club, converted a beautiful chesterfield coat which had belonged to her grandfather into one for herself. And that meant a transfer from a nail in the woodshed where it had hung for the past 30 years to a proud position in Mrs. Hedrick's wardrobe.

And while we're on the subject of coats, another story for the same section of that manual could well be contributed by Mrs. Robert Waller of Horton, Kans. When Mrs. Waller enrolled in a tailoring school conducted by her county home demonstration agent, a tour of the stores turned up no material suitable for a new coat. At least she could find no material that was as good as that in the 15-year-old coat her mother had given her. You can guess the rest, of course! She remodeled the OLD coat! That called for darning moth holes. AND, her invisible darns were so cunningly concealed that her classmates could not spot a one of the round dozen when the coat was finished. Incidentally, Mrs. Waller and her 15 fellow tailoring students had their buttonholes made by the town tailor. You can imagine their elation when he examined their coats and suits carefully and pronounced the tailoring nothing short of professional!

And that same description, according to Miss Sundquist, could be applied to most of the made-over suits that rural women and girls will be modeling this fall. Typical example of these suit remodelers is Mrs. Eulene Lee, member of the Rose Hill Home Demonstration Club in Alabama. After attending a school on clothing renovation, Mrs. Lee dug her husband's wedding suit out of the rag bag and proceeded to make a suit for herself out of the material. Of course she ripped up the old suit, washed

and pressed the material carefully, and then used a pattern to cut out the pieces for her own suit. The new addition to her fall wardrobe cost only 30 cents.

But speaking of saving money and cutting down unnecessary buying, one home demonstration club member in Massachusetts figures she saved \$12 by cutting down her son's jacket to fit herself. She saved \$3 by making a stunning hat out of one of her husband's old felts. Then she had an old pair of shoes dyed and resoled. She saved \$3.75 on that item. Just add it up!--\$12, \$3, and \$3.75--\$18.75--enough to buy a war bond--and SHE DID!

Then there is Mrs. Milton Rose of the McCormick Club in Arkansas who estimates that she saved \$21.50 by remodeling three garments. She made a suit from 2 pairs of trousers and a child's coat and suit from a suit and coat of her own. The entire cost of the remodeling was \$1.88 for buttons and linings.

AND, speaking of budget balancing, the home demonstration agent in Montgomery County, Ark., estimates that the farm families in her county save an annual total of \$4,500 by remodeling. In addition they are conserving clothing that is difficult to replace.

This, of course, all adds up to a suggestion for refurbishing your own fall wardrobe without a bunion derby or a bent budget! Just take a look in your own clothes closet or in the attic trunk! Then take stock of what you have on hand.

If the material is good but the style is bad--reclassify the garments with a little remodeling and put them into One-A condition for active service.

If you need any ideas, just write for a free copy of the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Miscellaneous Publication No. 545. The name of the leaflet is "Make-Overs from Coats and Suits." Address your request to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

