

To: News Editor

For Immediate Release

Canadians Used Heavy Appliances to Win War Effort

(WINNIPEG- March 23, 2005) Canada's consumer spending splurge started not after the Second World War, but during it, says the new issue of *The Beaver, Canada's History Magazine*.

The article's author, Graham Broad, a professor at King's University College at the University of Western Ontario, says: "Even as Canadian war production soared to levels that no one in 1939 could ever have imagined, Canadians found plenty of reasons to spend as well as save.

"Retail spending increased in 1942, as it had every year since the war began. It rose again in 1943 and in 1944. By the time the war ended in 1945, Canadian consumers were spending 50 percent more than they had been six years earlier, even after accounting for inflation."

The year after France fell in 1940, says Mr. Broad, "was one of the best ever for sales of washing machines, stoves, refrigerators, toasters and other appliances."

But the consumer got hit in 1941, after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Production of electric refrigerators plummeted from a high of 64,000 in 1941 to 350 in 1943. Canadians brought 300,000 new cars in the first three years of the war, but only 900 in 1943.

At the same time, the Wartime Prices and Trade Board, headed by Donald Gordon, told Canadians that "every yard of fabric that made dresses rather than uniforms, every gallon of gasoline pumped into a passenger car rather than a military truck, materially aided the Axis."

Some advertisers had a different advertising message: Sane conservation was "useful patriotism."

"Over the course of the war," says Mr. Broad, "restaurant business tripled; jewelry, women's clothing, shoe and drugstore sales doubled; and paid admission in movie theatres leapt to 208 million in 1944 from 138 million 1939."

Mr. Broad concludes; Perhaps it should not surprise us that for many people on the home front much of the war, and much of their war effort, seemed to have a great deal to do with being a consumer."

The new issue of *The Beaver*, published by Canada's National History Society, hits newsstands April 1.

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Canada's National History Society is a Winnipeg-based, charitable organization devoted to popularizing Canadian history through its publishing and award recognition programs. In addition to publishing The Beaver magazine and Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids, History Society activities include the Pierre Berton Award, and the Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History.

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