

Magic Fabric Liberates the Feminine Figure

Perfection of Foundation Garment Saves Corset Industry from Ruin

ONE of the vital gestures of feminine emancipation ushered in by the World war was the rebellion against the old corset—that terrifying garment of heavy fabric, ribs of steel or whalebone, and laces with the tensile strength of clothesline—which for centuries had molded the silhouette of women to the currently fashionable outline.

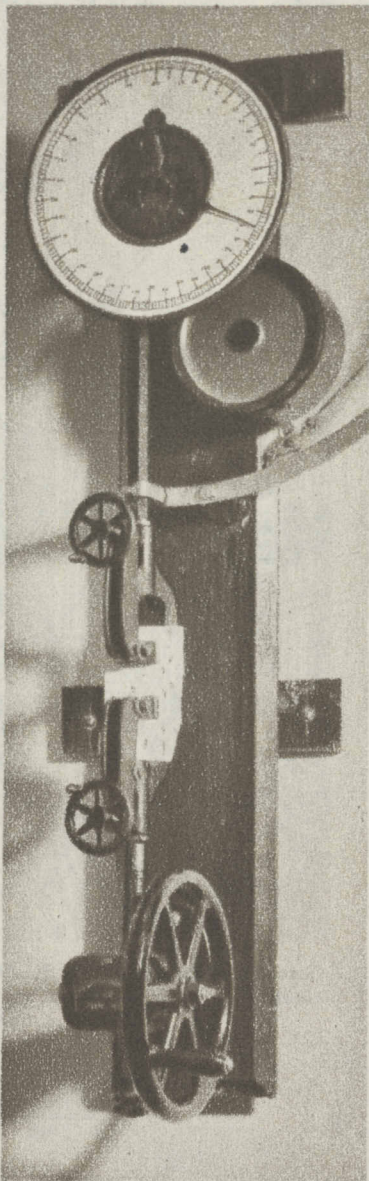
● The mass decision that the feminine frame had been punished enough almost wrecked a flourishing industry. Manufacturers, however, rose to the challenge. While the corset was being tossed out they worked on and perfected the elastic girdle, which was to save their business and at the same time be a great help to lovely woman, whose structural formation, unfortunately, isn't always so lovely.

● Within a few years of the uprising against the literal hoops of steel, progressive manufacturers learned how to make lightweight, unobtrusive foundation garments that confined the hips to youthful firmness and brassieres that beautified the bust line. The "two-way stretch" knit garments, launched in 1927, were triumphs of modern ingenuity in meeting a modern problem.

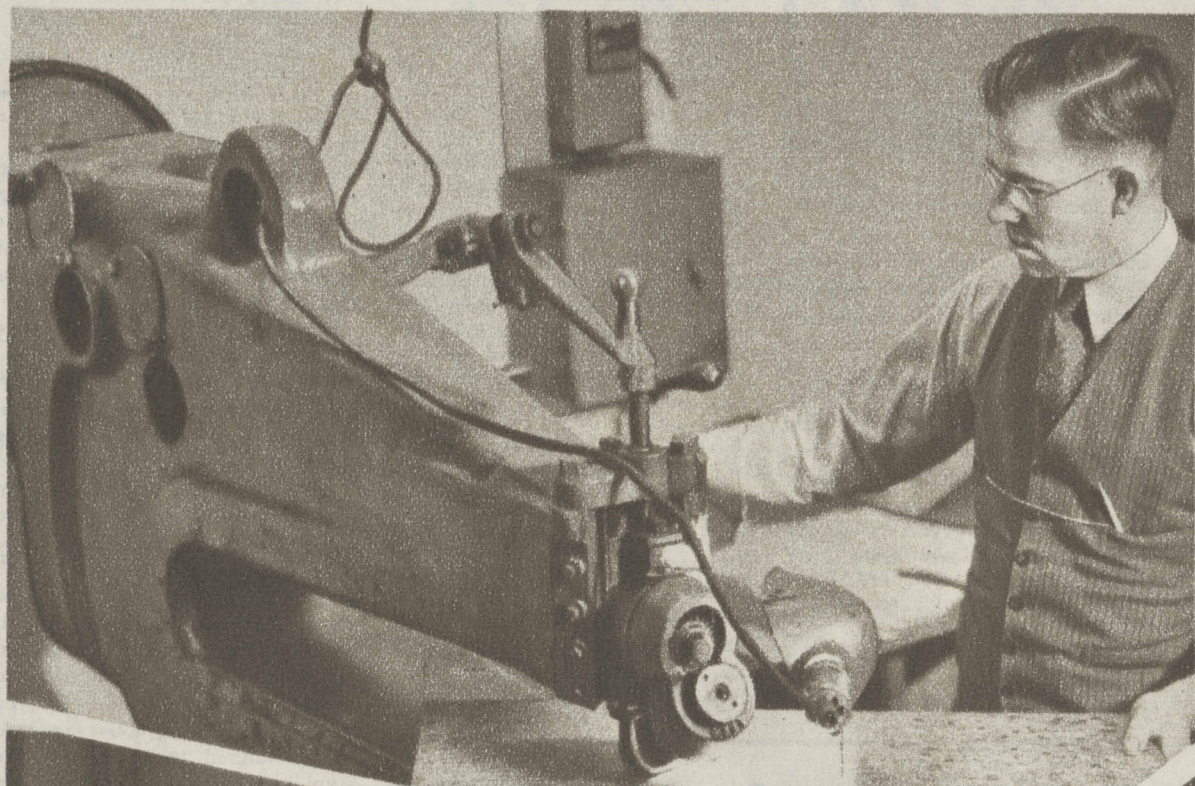
● But just to show you how fast an industry jumps when women decide it should, there is now news of a still further improvement in the foundation garment. Two years ago a new kind of girdle fabric was invented: elastic net—cool, featherweight, washable, AND efficient in molding the silhouette in the lovely lines in which it should stream. It already is replacing the older materials in making girdles, brassieres, and combinations of the two.

● The overweight woman, of course, must cling to nonstretch materials, but for the average slender woman who watches her weight and takes her exercise the new elastic net is a girdle material that solves all problems. Her garment of this miracle material might be expertly reinforced with strips of satin, perhaps garnished with the zipper that has replaced the laces of old, but it enhances her figure more attractively, more comfortably than any substitute for the old corset presented heretofore by a harassed industry.

Below: Here the pattern for a new style of foundation garment is being cut in galvanized iron. From it paper patterns are made and used to shape the elastic material.



Machine for testing the stretching strength of the material used in foundation garments. Seventy pounds is the usual minimum strength required for elastic fabric of this type.



A designer makes final adjustments in her latest foundation style. This one contains a relatively narrow strip of elastic material, because it is intended for holding the flesh firmly. The nonstretch material, however, is relatively light in weight.



These foundations are mostly elastic, because they are for thin figures which need little shaping.

Foundation garments are designed for seven basic types of figure, each of which may vary widely in fatness, thinness, and breast development. Corset fitters are called corsetieres and go to a corsetiere school to learn their job. (Tribune Studio photos.)



(Tribune Color Studio photo.)