

Magazine

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Meccano Quality Toys paper catalog. The cover page is in color and features the Dupuis Frères department store logo. The inside of the catalog, in black and white, promotes Meccano Magazine.

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Marchand Meccano Quality Toys

Date 1938

Materials ink, paper

Measurements 14 x 22 cm

Historical context

Dating from 1938, this catalog of Meccano construction toys bears the logo of the Montreal department store Dupuis frères: Meccano products were most likely offered within the chain. In fact, the two entities share similar commercial values. Meccano Magazine began publication in 1916 to promote Meccano building sets.

From the 1920s onwards, Meccano Magazine became a more comprehensive monthly publication. Half its pages were devoted to new technologies and the natural sciences. It became a very popular science magazine, aimed mainly at young boys. As can be seen from this advertisement, Meccano exploited the interest in construction to interest its readership in scientific subjects.

The magazine also appears to be more popular than some science magazines aimed at adults. Despite this widespread success, Meccano Magazine is aimed at a specific audience: well-educated, affluent young men with an interest in a “sophisticated” world.

This made it essential for Montreal retailer Dupuis Frères to offer Meccano products. In fact, between 1920 and 1960, the French-Canadian company experienced considerable growth. Innovation was at the heart of its evolution: the store was modern and contemporary.

Although popular with the general public, department stores were seen as places of elegance and wealth, offering top-of-the-range products.

The existence of the British brand at Dupuis Frères, a defender of French-Canadian values, underlines the presence of English speakers on its shelves. In fact, the store does not neglect this segment of its clientele: its advertising appears in English-language publications such

as this Meccano catalog.

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