One alert woman told a large New York department store credit clerk, "I want to pay my bills monthly. I don't want a revolving charge account." The clerk responded, "It's a good thing you told me, because we automatically put you on revolving credit unless you ask for a regular charge account."

In another case, a woman bought a $9 bedspread from one of the large mail-order houses. When the bill arrived it gave her a choice of paying the $9 in 20 days or paying it on revolving credit—$5 now and $4 the next month.

An Akron family who had made purchases of a number of small items on a revolving credit account from Alden's found themselves behind in payments because of a work cutback. One day a letter arrived from the mail-order house warning that they would have to go to the man's employer. While the family was worrying because they knew that the employer fires for a garnishee, in the next mail another letter arrived from the same retailer urging them to make more purchases on their revolving credit account.

Now I would like to mention just a few incidents to show the effect of this heavy promotion of revolving credit on American families.

A college-educated Atlanta housewife wrote me: "As we added up the interest we paid last year we found we were paying 18 per cent, and had been persuaded into extended payments by phrases in the catalog like 'No lump sum interest charge, only a small 1½ per cent a month service charge with each payment.' "

A Portland mother of 26, who has three little girls, wrote that she has gone back to work to help pay off accumulated debts of $4721. Her husband's take-home pay is $420 a month. They have 20 debts, including to six department stores.

A Haverhill, Massachusetts couple with only $300 a month income obligated themselves for monthly payments of $224 for bank notes and a revolving charge account, bank loans, plus accumulated bills for oil, insurance and other needs. "The creditors are getting hard to handle," the wife wrote me. "I am ready to jump in the river if I don't find a solution soon."

For the many young families who are led into serious overindebtedness, the effect often is a sense of despair and a shattering loss of self-confidence.

"Panic accompanies the writing of every check," the wife of a Lansing, Michigan, school teacher wrote me. "After two and a half years of marriage and two babies, we are paying 20 per cent of our income on our debts. But what happens when the house needs repair, the transmission in your car collapses and your child is hospitalized—all in one month?"

A young wife in Phoenix with two small children, still in her early twenties looks forward only to a lifetime of debt: "It has finally hit us hard enough so that we have to face the fact that no matter what, we will never get out of debt."

She and her husband married right out of high school. They were active and confident consumers. They bought so much on credit that she ended up going to work as a secretary, for a finance company, appropriately enough. "With my working, we decided we could get out of debt easily. But due to always seeing things we wanted, and with our 'good' credit, we got in deeper. With the second baby I lost my job. Now my husband is working only part time. We are constantly hounded by bill collectors."

Now there are additional pressures to buy on revolving credit through the bank credit-card plans being promoted extensively. Obviously, excusing revolving credit from disclosing the true annual interest rate would leave a very large loophole.

Of course young families will still buy on credit, and some will overbuy. But at least the Atlanta housewife and others would know beforehand what annual interest rate they will have to pay, and decide whether it is better to leave funds in a bank earning 4 or 5 per cent while they pay a presumed 18 per cent for revolving credit; whether it is preferable to pay 18 per cent for a credit card plan when they could take out a personal loan from the same bank for a true annual 10 or 12 per cent, or put more down, or pay moderate balances immediately, or use cash to buy small items instead of coupons "which you spend like cash,"—almost like play money.

Many excuses are being advanced for seeking exemption of revolving credit. Some of these seem to be a little academic. There would be nothing wrong with stating that there are free days and variations in billing as long as the seller complies with the requirement to state that when he does start charging for the credit, the rate is 1½ per cent a month or *approximately* 18 per cent a year.