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**Safeguarding the "Springs of Life": Women's Contributions to Social and Moral Reform in Fort William and Port Arthur, Ontario, 1900-1930**

by  
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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters of Arts Degree, August 1998



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## Abstract

This thesis examines women's involvement in the moral and social reform movement under the umbrella of social purity, as it occurred in Fort William and Port Arthur, Ontario, between 1900-1930. I analyze the role of two key women's organizations, the West Algoma Local Council of Women (WALCW) and the Women's Institutes (WI's) in the local social purity movement and the ways in which their ideals were legitimated through public health initiatives. I argue that the social purity movement influenced the direction of local civic and health policy, and regulated the spaces within which those deemed socially inferior, in particular immigrants, women and working-class individuals, could live and work. This thesis is based on archival research on local and national women's organizations, and civic and public health initiatives in Fort William and Port Arthur between 1900-1930.

Using a social movement framework, and drawing on feminist and sociological writings on the social construction of the body, women's history, and historical sociology, I discuss the role of middle- and upper-class women (primarily of British descent) in the promotion and monitoring of education and public health initiatives aimed at re-shaping the moral and social fibre of the local community and the nation as a whole. Local women's organizations are discussed in relation to their national affiliates and to the activities of social purity advocates in a broader national context.

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### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Pam Wakewich and the rest of my committee, Dr. Jim Stafford and Dr. Helen Smith (History), for sharing their knowledge and time with me over the last three years.

I would also like to thank my parents for their encouragement throughout this degree. My friends both inside and outside the program have been my family for many years and have given me invaluable support throughout the last nine years. They have always been generous with their time, energy, tea and laughter which is an essential part of my life. During this degree they were often called upon to be walking thesauri and were summoned for footnote duty and willingly did so. I am also indebted to the staff of Computers in Education (past and present) for their technical support and always abundant humour.

The knowledgeable staff at the City of Thunder Bay Archives, the Thunder Bay Historical Museum (especially Dr. Tronrud and Jeff Sumner) and the Northern Studies Research Centre and Archives (especially Louise Wourinen, Kathy Krewdson and Vivian Nysson) at Lakehead University and the staff at the Provincial Archives of Ontario were all very helpful in locating materials needed to complete this thesis. They were resourceful about their areas of speciality and even areas they weren't entirely sure about. The reference staff at the Lakehead University Library were also able to help me locate some very obscure materials which would have otherwise left some large gaps in my research.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Chief Librarian, Anne Deighton, for the financial assistance provided through *A Vast and Magnificent Land* Historical Research Grant and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for their financial assistance through an R. Howard Webster Foundation Bursary.



## Chapter One: *Social Purity, Bodily Regulation and Public Health*

### Introduction

The focus of this thesis is an examination of women's participation in the social purity movement in Fort William and Port Arthur, Ontario between the years 1900 and 1930. The dramatic social, economic and political changes occurring both nationally and regionally at this time, generated responding social movements reflecting different interests and levels of influence among the social body. As one such social movement, social purity was concerned with the regulation of certain individuals and groups, in particular working-class women, recent immigrants, and the feeble-minded, who were deemed "unsavoury" and a threat to the moral and social well-being of the nation because of their inability, or unwillingness to conform to middle- and upper-class ideals.

I examine the involvement of Fort William and Port Arthur's more prominent women's organizations, the West Algoma Local Council of Women and the Women's Institute, in the local social purity movement through public health, and educational initiatives aimed at regulating and improving the "social body". I discuss how the growing public health movement served to legitimate the actions and ideas of the social purity reformers and elaborate the interconnections between local women's organizations and prominent public health officials. I argue that women's organizations, both locally and nationally, acted as both benefactors with genuine social and public health concerns, especially for women, and as "social agents" for the monitoring and regulation of less advantaged groups.

The urban-based women's organizations, such as the West Algoma Local Council of Women (WALCW) and their national affiliate, the National Council of Women of Canada, were more concerned with issues occurring in the cities. To address rural women's concerns, organizations such as the Women's Institutes

(WI), as well as their national leaders, the Federated Women's Institutes were formed. While women in Port Arthur and Fort William were geographically isolated from the rest of the province and nation and were subsequently thought of as being rural, they also shared the perceived and often real social problems of the cities. Both the national and local reform movements allowed for women's increased participation in the public sphere with the goal of shaping social policies, ranging from immigration to education and public health, in order to project particular moral and social standards on society.

### Social Purity and Public Health

"Social purity" was a movement at the turn of the twentieth century aimed at alleviating with medical solutions, the rising social problems associated primarily with rapid industrialization, immigration and urbanization. Fearful of changes to the status quo, typically white, middle-class social purity reformers organized to document, define, and publicize the root of social problems and to call upon the state to "save the family" from the perceived negative impacts of industrialization and related threats to the Canadian way of life.<sup>1</sup> Understanding the underlying or foundational values of the social purity movement as a whole is necessary in order to understand its component parts.

Angus McLaren<sup>2</sup> and Mariana Valverde<sup>3</sup> provide two of the few analyzes specifically relating to the Canadian social purity movement within a broader national context. McLaren's work focuses on the rise of eugenics and public health in Canada from 1885 to 1945 as part of a regulating ideology that was used to explain

<sup>1</sup> Jane Ursel, Private Lives, Public Policy: 100 Years of State Intervention in the Family (Toronto: Women's Press, 1992) p. 61; Kathleen McConnachie, Science and Ideology: The Mental Hygiene and Eugenics Movements in the Inter-War Years, 1919-1939 (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1987) p. i; Suzann Buckley and Janice Dickin McGinnis, "Venereal Disease and Public Health Reform in Canada" Canadian Historical Review 63, 3, 1982, p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> Angus McLaren, Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991).

growing social problems such as poverty, prostitution, and immigration. Valverde's work concentrates on the aspects of moral and social reform as framed by Protestant reformers in English Canada between 1885 and 1925.

According to Valverde, social purity was a campaign to regulate morality, in order to protect and enhance a certain type of human life.<sup>4</sup> As she notes, "it was not merely a campaign to punish and repress",<sup>5</sup> but a campaign determined to develop and enforce new social values regarding human life. Through the growth of the public health movement, social purity concerns were given a forum in which to be heard. Women's entrance into the public realm through the social purity movement, to perform "civic housekeeping" duties as an extension of their role prescribed in the private domestic world, provided the justification for their position in regulating morality and behaviour. This was carried out through formal political, social and medical channels in the instituting of public health measures to control seemingly "deviant" behaviours. Public health was concerned with not only the increase of physical illnesses due to poor sanitation, but also the social diseases manifested by urbanization, thus making a distinct correlation between social class and disease.<sup>6</sup> This concern for the link between social class and disease would not only aid in regulating the living and working conditions of the lower classes, women and immigrants, but would shape their moral and social lives according to the rising dominant middle-class ideology. To this end, legislation was created and enforced at all levels of government resulting in the restriction of marriage and immigration, and the punishment of those who were not able to

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<sup>4</sup> Valverde, *The Age of Light...* p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> McConnachie, *Science and Ideology...* p. ii.

maintain the standard of living accorded the upper- and middle-classes.<sup>7</sup>

### Social Purity as a Social Movement

Social movements are created as a response to social change. Collective behaviour becomes one way of dealing with changes or shifts in social norms, values and structures of society.<sup>8</sup> Following Wilkinson, a social movement is defined here as “a deliberate collective endeavour to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal into ‘utopian’ community.”<sup>9</sup> Actions by groups can be aimed at resisting and preventing changes as a reaction to stressful behaviours and structural change. They also establish an effective organizational structure that develops, plans and carries out their solutions to undesirable or desirable changes in their community.<sup>10</sup> Such value-oriented movements are concerned with the improvement or maintenance of the position of some segment of society.<sup>11</sup> The social purity movement between 1900 and 1930, in both its national and local manifestations is one example of this kind of value-oriented social movement.

The process of modernity, according to Eyerman and Jamison, “has been based on a strategy of institution building, in which knowledge has come to be produced by certified professional experts in primarily state-supported institutions.”<sup>12</sup> This has resulted in the generation of various social movements, such as the suffrage and labour movements, from the turn of the twentieth century

<sup>7</sup> James G. Snell and Cynthia Comacchio Abeele, “Regulating Nuptuality: Restricting Access to Marriage in Early Twentieth-Century English-Speaking Canada” Canadian Historical Review 69, 1988, p. 469; see also Mary Louise Adams, “In Sickness and in Health: State Formation, Moral Regulation and Early V.D. Initiatives in Ontario” Journal of Canadian Studies 28, 4, 1993-1994, p. 117-30.

<sup>8</sup> H. Paul Chalfant and Emily LaBeff, Understanding People and Social Life: Introduction to Sociology Second Edition (St. Paul: West Publishing Company, 1991) p. 223.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Wilkinson, Social Movements (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971) p. 27.

<sup>10</sup> Chalfant and LaBeff, Understanding People and Social Life:..., p. 243.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.* p. 243.

<sup>12</sup> Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 1991) p. 147.

onward. These social movements have since been characterized by several features viewed as interrelated processes in the project of modernity: centralization, institutionalization, secularization, and professionalization.<sup>13</sup> The social movements of this era “were seen as the necessary means toward realizing a project, toward either renewing or replacing established patterns of social life along qualitatively different lines.”<sup>14</sup> Through the expansion and centralization of the powers of the new state, the redefinition of public interests gave both the elected officials and particular segments of the public new visions and new ways to assert power to enhance their lives.

In the process of secularization, the increasing separation of church and state allowed for greater political autonomy for both rural and urban dwellers. This new sense of national order and culture provided a forum for interests that competed with each other for public consumption.<sup>15</sup> The institutionalization of work and new professions allowed for a greater range of specialization and the development of a hierarchy among those professions that would be translated into a social hierarchy.<sup>16</sup> The ability of newly urbanized families to share in the concern for the public world of politics led them to become increasingly concerned with the decisions made by those in power leading to their greater involvement in the political process.<sup>17</sup> Examples of this are the number of women who became involved in creating social change, and the increasing number of social movements which arose at this time.

All of these modernizing processes can be seen as having a direct effect on the growth and influence of the social purity movement from 1900-1930. Within this movement assumptions regarding the state of health, society, politics, and the

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<sup>13</sup> Eyerman and Jamison, Social Movements... p. 150-151; Peter Burke, Sociology and History (London: Allen and Unwin, 1980)p. 83.

<sup>14</sup> Eyerman and Jamison, Social Movements:... p. 151.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.* p. 152.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.* p. 152.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.* p. 152.

economy were intermeshed.<sup>18</sup> While the shift from a strictly religious-based society to a secular one allowed for the development of social purity, the force of industrialization and the social problems (both real and perceived) arising from these changes, became the driving force for social reformers to respond to. In their drive to create stability through the new social order, reformers responded to the very visible processes occurring in their communities in a variety of ways.

### Maternal/Social Feminism as Social Reform

The method of social activism chosen by women social reformers at this time was consistent with a maternal or social feminist stance whose aim was to extend maternal white middle-class values to the public world while supporting “the public view of a woman’s rightful place being in the home.”<sup>19</sup> The adoption of this type of political stance allowed women to be “...propelled out of the isolation of their homes by a sense of religious duty and a spirit of expanding opportunity, which was combined with their growing apprehension about the state of Canadian society and their special place within it.”<sup>20</sup> Women were quietly (and in some cases vociferously) attempting to carve out a place for themselves in the public world that would allow them to influence the world of politics and yet maintain their connection to family and prescribed ideals of femininity. This extension into the public world through “civic housekeeping” placed middle-class women in a dual position of helplessness and helpfulness. They were helpless due to the constraints of the home, but used those constraints to claim a sense of moral superiority and to establish the authority to help other women who, by their standards, were regarded as less fortunate, and not able to live up to prescribed social and moral ideals.

<sup>18</sup> Greta Jones, Social Hygiene in Twentieth Century Britain (London: Croom & Helm, 1986) p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Jane Errington “Pioneers and Suffragists” in Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code, and Lindsay Dorney (Eds) Changing Patterns: Women in Canada (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1998, 2nd Ed) p. 67, 75; Mariana Valverde “ ‘When the Mother of the Race is Free’: Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism” in Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (Eds) Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women’s History (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1992) p. 20.

<sup>20</sup> Errington, “Pioneers and Suffragists” ... p. 73

Until the full force of the social purity movement had been felt, the public status of women had been raised primarily through religious means and it was through religion that women were able to have their first experiences with leadership and organization in a public forum without seeming to break traditional gender boundaries.<sup>21</sup> These activities took the form of Evangelical domesticity which went beyond the role of women as moral housekeepers and “attached spiritual significance to women and bourgeois family life and attributed redemptive powers to the Christian family home...”.<sup>22</sup> The influence of the church can be seen as women’s groups organized around issues of family and community, and promoted their ties to religion as the moral basis for a good and healthy society.

In addition, the reform movement was held together by a common vision of Anglo-Saxon “whiteness” that would provide an example of the pure life that individuals, families, and the nation would and should lead in the near future.<sup>23</sup> By relying on the existing structural and social relations of class, gender, and ethnicity, and actively contributing to the shaping of those relations in specific ways, social reformers were able to influence the life course of individuals who would have otherwise been “lost” without their guidance. As Valverde points out, the state could not have carried out these reforms on its own. Instead, in support of nation building, voluntary organizations were utilized and encouraged to reconstruct the inner selves and the sexual and moral identity of Canadians.<sup>24</sup> In order to accomplish this, predominantly white middle-class women involved in social reform accepted the view that they were the moral saviours of the nation and were

<sup>21</sup> Ramsey Cook, The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985) p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Diana Pedersen, “Providing a Woman’s Conscience: The YWCA, Female Evangelicalism, and the Girl in the City, 1870-1930” In Wendy Mitchinson, Paula Bourne, Alison Prentice, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Beth Light and Naomi Black, Canadian Women: A Reader 2nd Ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996) p. 197.

<sup>23</sup> Valverde, The Age of Light... p. 33. Following Valverde and others I am using the concept of “whiteness” here as a social construct.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.* p. 32.

the ones most capable of this because of their demonstrated roles as successful nurturers and moral guardians of their families.

As a result of the onset of the social reform movement, many women's organizations that were in the development stages by 1900 had diversified in their interests and often fostered different political aims. Some were distinctly religious and conservative in their political aims, such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union with their focus on universal temperance, or the Young Women's Christian Association and their focus on saving the urban working girl. Others were nonreligious and used liberal-leaning politics to implement reform such as the National Council of Women of Canada who focused on the status of women in society in general with specific attention to issues of employment and suffrage.<sup>25</sup> However, all of these groups were interested in changing their community and community members for what they defined as "the better" though diverse methods.

It is beneficial to use a social movement analysis of the local and national social purity campaigns because this approach facilitates the analysis of social structures in relation to other social processes. By viewing social movements as processes of formation, women's participation in social movements can be seen as activities through which individuals create and recreate their social identities.<sup>26</sup> Eyerman and Jamison regard social movements as "temporary public spaces, as moments of collective creation that provide societies with ideas, identities and even ideals that are shaped by internal and external political processes."<sup>27</sup> As they point out, social movements are a result of "an interactional process which centers around the articulation of a collective identity and which occurs within the

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<sup>25</sup> See for example, Wendy Mitchinson, *Aspects of Reform: Four Women's Organizations in Nineteenth Century Canada* (PhD Dissertation York University, 1977).

<sup>26</sup> Eyerman and Jamison, *Social Movements*:... p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.* p. 4.



boundaries of a particular society."<sup>28</sup> As will be discussed throughout this thesis, the identities of these women social reformers were effectively constructed around and through the recognition and establishment of distinct gender, race and class ideals.

### Constructing Social Purity and Regulating the Social Body

The social purity movement was concerned not only with influencing the morality of the nation but also with defining ideas of physical and moral "worth" and reshaping those whom reformers deemed as not as capable of living up to middle-class standards. Disciplinary practices of the individual body, in particular women's bodies, became the site of moral reform through directives on hygiene, sexual morality and appropriate methods of rearing of children. To understand how and why such initiatives were oriented toward the regulation of certain sections of the social body, it is instructive to reflect on insights from recent feminist and sociological writings on the social construction of the body. Acknowledging the importance of the social construction of the body and bodily practices, as Shilling notes, provides the ability for social theory to examine the idealized values of the social and collective body and their influence in regulating and shaping individual bodies.<sup>29</sup> As Shilling notes, we are not only the consumers but the consumed, of social ideology and this ideology is both embodied and enacted through the physical body.

The social purity reformers needed to create a framework that would define not only a proper sort of morality but a proper lifestyle and indeed proper bodily practices. The movement's prescription for the regulation of social and moral life extended to the spaces occupied by specific members of society. The social body refers "to the representational uses of the body as a natural symbol with which to

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<sup>28</sup> *ibid.* p. 4-5.

<sup>29</sup> Chris Shilling, The Body and Social Theory (London: Sage Publications, 1993) p. 71.

think about nature, society and culture..."<sup>30</sup> which in turn become part of the regulatory practices for what comprises specific populations who make up society. The individual body for Lock and Scheper-Hughes, is "understood in the phenomenological sense of the lived experience of the body-self"<sup>31</sup> through which the disciplinary actions of social norms on individuals are effected. They argue that it is important to analyze how and why certain kinds of bodies are produced through both social interpretations and values that are a part of a cultural system.<sup>32</sup> The physical body provides not only an example of morality and proper behaviour, but a visual medium for symbolic representation through which to present and replicate social values and ideology. The social body, or population is the vehicle for the presenting and promoting of the symbolic representations of the individual body.

Lock and Scheper-Hughes argue that cultures act as "disciplines that provide codes and social scripts for the domestication of the individual body in conformity to the needs of the social and political order."<sup>33</sup> The social practices that inform the cultural system take on different forms as society changes but still perform a regulatory function through the use of symbolism and various social relations. This allows for the analysis of social, cultural, political and economic impacts on the physical body and the environment that the body inhabits.

The body politic refers to "...the regulation, surveillance, and control of bodies (individual and collective) in reproduction and sexuality, in work and in leisure, in sickness and other forms of deviance and human difference."<sup>34</sup> Attention to this dimension allows for the analysis of the embodiment of relationships of power and

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<sup>30</sup> Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret M. Lock, "The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology" *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1 (1) 1987, p.7.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.* p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.* p. 26.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.* p. 7-8.

control.<sup>35</sup> They argue that "...the stability of the body politic rests on its ability to regulate populations and to discipline individual bodies."<sup>36</sup> When social change occurs in the form of crises, "the body politic under threat of attack is cast as vulnerable, leading to purges of traitors and social deviants, while individual hygiene may focus on the maintenance of ritual purity or on fears of losing blood, semen, tears, or milk."<sup>37</sup> In times of crisis or intense social, cultural, political or economic change, the symbolism associated with social control becomes more intensified upon individual physical bodies through cultural and social values as well as through political and economic policies. The perceived need or desire for states or organizations to regulate and control not only individuals but entire populations extends itself into creating and recreating social and cultural values and norms in times of social change.<sup>38</sup> This relationship to time and space is important for delineating the types of social forces that will or will not impact upon these bodies. When social, political and economic changes occur, there are shifts in social and cultural values expressed in different forms through regulating or deregulating social and bodily practices.

The social purity movement gave rise to a new method of governing bodies. With urban industrialization and the proliferation of class divisions and social ills associated with it, people were now more visible than ever, and easily categorized into those who conformed to idealized white middle-class standards and those who needed to reform their habits and living conditions.

Sociologist Bryan Turner's analysis of the ways in which societies regulate and control both collective and individual bodies is instructive here in analysing the social purity movement's interest in governing particular groups and

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<sup>35</sup> *ibid.* p. 23.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.* p. 8.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.* p. 24.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.* p. 24-25.

individuals. Reviewing changing social constructions of the body in Europe and North America from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, Turner identifies four related dimensions of bodily order of concern to all societies, “the reproduction of populations through time and their regulation in space, the representation of bodies in social space, [and] as an issue concerning the government of the body.”<sup>39</sup> Turner points out that as the government of the body is ultimately the government of sexuality, regulation is in practice the regulation of female sexuality and this is usually accomplished through a system of patriarchal power.

Reproduction refers not only to physical reproduction, but the replication of the ideals and values of a society. As Turner points out, reproduction is a socially-regulated phenomenon. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe and North America, Malthusian-based ideas of reproduction and concerns about the ill effects of over-population were influential. Malthus postulated that reproduction, specifically sexual intercourse and the production of food, was a part of any basic survival mechanism of a society. The “success” of any society could, he argued, be reflected in the succeeding generations in many ways, through the marriage and birth patterns, labour patterns, and disease and disability incidences.

Concerns about reproduction lead to the regulation of bodies which occurs not only in terms of space, but also in terms of population (or certain problematic dimensions of it) and the control of reproduction through either natural or moral restraints.<sup>40</sup> For example, Turner discusses the control of sexuality in terms of growing efforts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to police female sexuality in the growing urban space.<sup>41</sup> Within this context, it was assumed that moral checks were lacking due to changing circumstances and social practices and

<sup>39</sup> Bryan Turner, *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Pub. Ltd. 1996, 2nd Ed.) p. 107; see also Bryan Turner, *Regulating Bodies: Essays in Medical Sociology* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>40</sup> Turner, *The Body and Society*:... p. 108.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.* p. 119.

that individuals needed to be monitored through various institutional and professional means. "The surveillance and supervision of urban populations, [in particular women, was] achieved through regulation and classification, which made possible the registration of bodies for policing under a system of panopticism."<sup>42</sup> As will be discussed later, in the Canadian context this surveillance was to take the form of public health inspections and interventions largely focusing on the poor, the immigrant populations and women.

Turner's notion of restraint focuses on the link between protestant beliefs in asceticism or self denial and Malthusian concepts which demonstrate a link between work and reproduction. Malthus argues that "where workers fail to exercise 'moral restraint' over their reproductive potential, they will be driven by poverty and misery to restrain their reproduction."<sup>43</sup> Malthus saw self denial as a necessary component of successful capitalist practice.<sup>44</sup> While Malthus primarily discussed the work and reproduction link in relationship to men, he also extended his concept of restraint to women. Restraint for women meant sexual restraint; "the social restraints of marriage were required to promote the mental stability and personal happiness of women."<sup>45</sup> Marriage was the only acceptable outlet for sexuality at the turn of the twentieth century for women. Turner explains this as being the only means for securing the patriarchal system of property distribution.<sup>46</sup> This legally reinforced not only male superiority but the sexual asceticism of both men and women of the middle class. This in turn made middle-class reformers feel inherently more morally superior than the working-class populations who they viewed as being unable to restrain themselves and therefore in need of reform.

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<sup>42</sup> *ibid.* p. 120.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* p. 114.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.* p. 114.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.* p. 117.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.* p. 120.

Turner's notion of representation is related to the creation and presentation of the social self. The presentation of the social self is intimately related to status and consumerism. The items being consumed take on various symbols that are recognized within the various status groups. In addition, these symbols can denote personal and moral worth.<sup>47</sup> Thus, "...successful images require successful bodies, which have been trained, disciplined and orchestrated to enhance our personal value."<sup>48</sup> The management of sexuality through the social self was deemed an important part of sexual asceticism which involved the regulation of bodies within the set social space.

The applicability of Turner's framework to the Canadian context can be seen in the declaration of the lower-class female body as morally and ethically deficient, by not only social reformers but also the growing public health profession. Public health officials were able to effectively compel women into wishing to rear and raise socially acceptable children. Proper and true motherhood connoted frail virtue, the need and want of protection, and yet women were to be strong, enduring, and independent while carrying out their motherly duties.<sup>49</sup> The greatest anti-social act that a "better type" woman could commit was the avoidance of pregnancy.<sup>50</sup>

The dominant ideology of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century placed strict constraints on the gender roles available to men and women. The ideals of motherhood at this time did not distinguish between biological and social motherhood because they considered the work of motherhood to be dictated by biological instinct.<sup>51</sup> The desire to create a strong and healthy race placed an

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.* p. 122. See Figure A, p. 15, as an example of the regulation of bodily representation and female sexuality.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.* p. 124.

<sup>49</sup> Linda Gordon, Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control in America (New York: Penguin Books USA Inc, 1990) p. 133.

<sup>50</sup> Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1986) p. 21.

<sup>51</sup> Gordon, Woman's Body,... p. 128.



43 (C. J. Culliford), *Scene in Regent Street. Philanthropic Divine: 'May I beg you to accept this good little book. Take it home and read it attentively. I am sure it will benefit you.'* *Lady: 'Bless me, Sir, you're mistaken. I am not a social evil, I am only waiting for a bus.'* Coloured lithograph c. 1865.

Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain*, (Oxford: New York, 1988).

Figure A.

emphasis on white women's socially prescribed roles as procreators and nurturers. The emphasis on maternal instinct and its realization, motherhood, reflected a new female politic which would shape the direction of maternal feminism. As "mothers of the race", women had to be taught to "save the children and mould the nation" which provided a vital link to imperialist ideology and was reflected in the charity work of the various public agencies that were coming into prominence.<sup>52</sup>

The mechanisms used to promote social and physical worth ranged from the provision of specific consumer products to the development of health and social policy. Social purity advocates took inanimate objects like soap, snow and matches and gave them a life of abstract symbolism that was infused with imperial and nativist values. An example of this is provided by Valverde which includes an advertisement for Salvation Army matches (Figure B) which uses the metaphor of light to symbolise the hope that the match girls who make the matches under dark and harmful conditions will be somehow socially and morally redeemed.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, an advertisement for Pears Soap (Figure C) describes the "White Man's Burden" in relation to the civilized use of soap using the visual metaphor depicting the active colonization of native populations through missionary work which was also thought to be a "civilizing" influence.<sup>54</sup> Not only are these items imbued with the symbolism of imperialism and colonialism but also with value judgments as well regarding the need to construct civilized societies and lives. By using the right product for the right occasion, people were able to be categorized accordingly.

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<sup>52</sup> Valverde, *The Age of Light...* p. 60.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid* p. 39, see page 17 (Figure B).

<sup>54</sup> Laurel Bradley, "From Eden to Empire: John Everett Millais's *Cherry Ripe*" *Victorian Studies*, 1991 34, 21, p. 199, see page 18 (Figure C).



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## MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS!

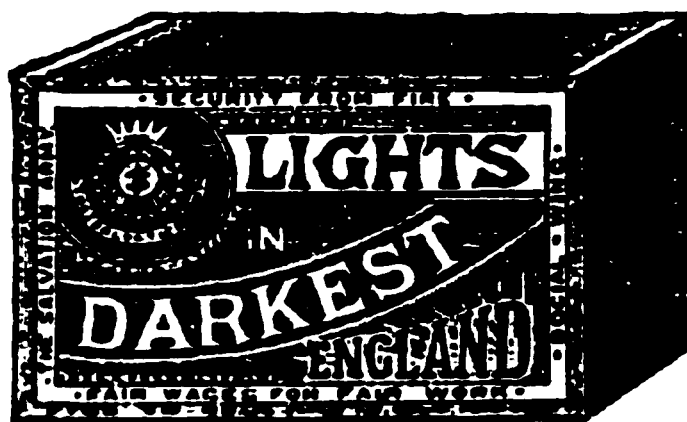
Help the poor sweated Match Girls to healthier and happier conditions of life and labor, by using only

**SALVATION ARMY**

## Improved Safety Matches.

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**Burn Like Wax. Anti-Sweaters. Health Preservers. Best, Therefore the Cheapest.**



If you cannot obtain of your Local Agent or Tradesman, send post card for name of nearest Agent or Shopkeeper to Commissioner CADMAN, 101, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.

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Figure B.



The first step towards lightening

## The White Man's Burden

is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness.

# Pears' Soap

is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilization advances, while amongst the cultured of all nations it holds the highest place—it is the ideal toilet soap.

Figure C.

According to Valverde,

[t]he symbolic universe of social purity is not a static one in which one object or phrase stands for an abstraction, but rather a fluid one directed not at teaching people step by step but at producing in them, through inspiring imagery, the right type of consciousness as either rescuers or penitent fallen people. The discourse is both practice-oriented and concrete: once having been told that evangelism is like turning garbage into compost, the audience can be entrusted to know exactly how to put this in practice, whether or not they could produce an account of the abstract similarities between one level of social reality and another.<sup>55</sup>

While Valverde argues that the symbolism associated with the moral and social reform movement was not aimed at social control but at creating a new social subjectivity, she does argue that,

[i]n particular, the apparent surplus of metaphors and allegories characteristic of social purity reformers of the turn of the century helped them to construct not only ideas or myths but, more importantly, practical subjectivities. The work of moral reform was at least partially organized through rhetorical means; in this sense the metaphors of moral reform functioned precisely as a species of power/knowledge rather than as 'words'.<sup>56</sup>

The ability of reformers to control and often create the signifiers that were used to create the categories of good and bad morality that were most often based on economics, race and gender, provided them with the additional power to claim not only a sense of moral superiority but a sense of social superiority as well. The effect of this on lower-class and immigrant women was very directly in the form of social control as reformers and public health workers were able to monitor and evaluate the way that women raised their families and worked in the community.

With reference to the British social purity movement and their focus on women, Greta Jones remarks,

<sup>55</sup> Valverde, *The Age of Light...* p. 41.

<sup>56</sup> Mariana Valverde, "The Rhetoric of Reform: Tropes and the Moral Subject" *International Journal of the Sociology of Law* 18 (1) 1990, p. 67.

[w]omen in families were the target of a great deal of social hygiene propaganda in regard to reproduction, diet and maternal inefficiency. The objective of social hygiene was quite explicitly to convert the mother into the transmission belt for the kind of domestic and child management it thought necessary and virtuous.<sup>57</sup>

The emphasis on producing the acceptably rescued individual is the aim of most of the advertising; the secondary emphasis is on the establishment of class roles and social relations. By defining certain consumer products as better for certain classes, those within the social purity movement were able to symbolically and more importantly visually define and assess the standards for all classes and all races.

Social purity advocates from both women's organizations and professional spheres were not just focused on the arenas of politics and social welfare. Advocates were also concerned with temperance, education and public health. The most potent purity policies came from the health care field. Primary support for social purity in health care came from those who believed that an understanding of heredity could improve public health.<sup>58</sup> There was a dramatic shift in the doctor/patient relationship which made it possible for such policies to be successfully implemented. Doctors were becoming a dominant professional class and as such had the authority required to access "inside" knowledge of the patient and their families not previously within their domain.<sup>59</sup> Social purity advocates held the notion that there were limits to what could be accomplished by social policy improvements and that only doctors were in a position to judge the relative impact on public health of environmental and hereditary forces; hence the rising control of physicians over women's domestic realm was justified.<sup>60</sup> Physicians were viewed as authorities who could provide efficient methods of social and bodily management.

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<sup>57</sup> Jones, *Social Hygiene*...p. 104.

<sup>58</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*:... p. 28; Jones, *Social Hygiene*... p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> Deborah Lupton, *The Imperative of Health: Public Health and the Regulated Body* (London: Sage Publications, 1995) p. 25.

<sup>60</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*:... p. 29.

The successful establishment of public health was built around defining the expert roles of the physicians, sanitary inspectors and public health nurses. Their initial focus was with sanitation as a means of protecting and improving the health of Canadians as a whole. However, as it became clear that it was too expensive to focus on entire populations, the focus changed to identify high risk populations for whom specialized public health measures needed to be developed.<sup>61</sup> Public health became a mechanism through which the behaviour and moral regulation of women and other minority groups such as immigrants and working-class families could be accomplished.

### Public Health: Morality vs. Virtue

In its early form, public health took on a moralistic purpose in its design to regulate populations and their environments, in addition to actually improving the lives of those affected by adverse conditions. Deborah Lupton describes the growth of public health and the ways in which it has taken part in the regulating of people's lives. Lupton's work is important in this context as she elaborates upon the relationship of public health and defining morality. This connection between morality and public health in its formative years is important for demonstrating how public health impacted not only on individuals, but particularly on those who were defined as "deviant" and needing to be contained within the social and political body. This discussion provides an important backdrop for my discussion of the case study examples of Fort William and Port Arthur in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis.

Lupton defines public health as,

...a form of medicine, social medicine, which directs its professional attention towards the health of populations, aggregated bodies, instead of individual bodies ... [she also] emphasizes that the practices and

<sup>61</sup> Neil Sutherland, " 'To Create a Strong and Healthy Race': School Children in the Public Health Movement, 1880-1914" In Michael Katz and Paul Mattingly (Eds), Education and Social Change: Themes from Ontario's Past (New York: New York University Press, 1975) p. 135.

discourses of public health are not value-free or neutral, but rather are highly political and socially contextual, changing in time and space.<sup>62</sup>

She describes the turn-of-the-century public health measures in Britain as rising out of the “ideology of post-Enlightenment humanism in their quest to measure, order and contain illness and disease at the population level.”<sup>63</sup> The scientific measurement of the health of the community was part of the mandate of the emerging public health department combined with the need to physically contain illnesses within the community. More importantly, she notes that public health contributes,

...to the moral regulation of society, focusing as they do upon ethical and moral practices of the self ... while the rise of public health and health promotion in western countries has been associated with improvements in health status at the population level, the discourses and practices of these institutions have also worked to produce certain limited kinds of subjects and bodies, drawing upon binary oppositions associated with discriminatory moral judgments.<sup>64</sup>

Lupton’s discussion of changing public health initiatives in the twentieth century emphasizes the growing role of social hygiene or social medicine. This included an “emphasis on progress, rational reform, education, social order, humanitarianism and scientific method.”<sup>65</sup> The ability to empirically define the underlying causes of disease and subsequently discern a proper method of treatment to eradicate disease, was important in this phase of public health work. Also rising out of this new vision of public health is the professionalization of all manner of occupations and services ranging from physicians as Medical Health Officers to those involved in the epidemiology of disease and the formulation of various cures.

<sup>62</sup> Lupton, The Imperative of Health:...p. 2 For contemporary perspectives see Robin Bunton, “More than a woolly jumper: Health promotion as social regulation” Critical Public Health 3 (2) 1992, pp. 4-11; see also David Armstrong, “Public Health Spaces and the Fabrication of Identity” Sociology 27, 3, 1993, pp. 393-410; Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter, “What Was Social Medicine? An Historiographical Essay” Journal of Historical Sociology 1 (1) 1988, pp. 90-106.

<sup>63</sup> Lupton, The Imperative of Health:..., p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.* p. 4-5.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.* p. 21.

Not only did professionalization create a new class of occupations but it also lent legitimacy and authority to public health reforms, created new political and bureaucratic organizations to maintain this new information as well as the information accruing from the populations they were serving.

From this point on, the influence of science as the vanguard of progress upon the health of populations became central to policy development. The combination of “medicalization and moralization [was] directed at preventing and containing the feared social disorder looming as a result of industrialization and urbanization.”<sup>66</sup> Industrialization and urbanization helped to create new “boundaries and circumscribing spaces: between geographical places, between the body and the external environment, between one body and another body.”<sup>67</sup> Subsequently it was not only the processes of industrialization and urbanization that outlined the need for public health measures but the new social problems and the actual populations being surveyed that warranted concern from groups and agencies.

Certain social groups were set apart as those most susceptible to lack of hygiene and therefore needful of public health interventions; in particular, the poor, members of the working class and immigrant groups were constituted as sanitary problems, as sites for the breeding of disease and contagion that continually threatened to spill out into other respectably ‘clean’ groups in society.<sup>68</sup>

The need for analysis of disease among specific populations and the subsequent interventions made, sometimes in the form of creating physical boundaries between bodies, formed the basis for regulating populations that ran the risk of infecting and contaminating the greater social and political body. This shift from analysing and changing the environment in which people lived and worked to observing and commenting on the social life of various populations, marked another shift in public health in which health became a public and social goal rather than a private

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<sup>66</sup> *ibid.* p. 22.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.* p. 16.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.* p. 35.

possession focused on the individual.<sup>69</sup> As moral reform came to have a greater influence upon public health measures, “bodies became bearers of new values relating to their productivity, use and general state of health.”<sup>70</sup> In the Canadian context these new values were in part created by women’s roles in social and moral reform. This new role meant a state sanctioned reliance on women’s organizations to help disseminate and monitor seemingly deviant populations and provide much needed information about communities and their members. As such, women’s new roles as social guardians, allowed them intimate knowledge of “deviant” populations. Through intervention in the home, the workplace and in public social spaces, these women were able to regulate the seemingly harmful lifestyle practices of those defined socially and mentally deficient.

### The Focus of the Study

This study is intended to contribute to existing scholarship on the social purity movement in Canada, and the role of women’s organizations within that movement in three unique ways. The primary goal is to provide a detailed analysis of women’s involvement in the social purity movement in a specific local context, that of Fort William and Port Arthur, Ontario between 1900 and 1930. Examining original archival material on local women’s organizations and activity, and comparing it with secondary source data on women’s organizations and social purity activism in the national context has provided the opportunity to compare the concerns addressed by the two groups and their relative influence on one another. Second, by using a social movement framework to analyze local women’s social purity activism I document the ways in which white middle-class women drawing on maternal feminist ideals were active social agents in shaping the social and moral values of their communities and in regulating the lives of those deemed less

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<sup>69</sup> *ibid.* p. 38.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.* p. 23.



worthy than themselves. Finally, by drawing on recent feminist and sociological analyzes of the role of public health in the social construction and regulation of the body politic, I detail the ways in which within this local setting public health initiatives legitimated the social purity movement and worked in tandem with women's organizations to promote particular social and moral ideals through the education and regulation of immigrants, working-class women, and those labelled feebleminded.

### Methodology

According to John Scott, "the aim of social research is to describe and explain the actions of agents and the structures that they produce and reproduce in the course of their lives."<sup>71</sup> In this instance, the values of the social purity movement are the structures being investigated and the agents are the philanthropic women's organizations that either directly or indirectly regulated so many lives. As Burke writes, historical sociology "would be concerned with both understanding from within and explaining from without; with the general and with the particular, which would combine the sociologist's acute sense of structure with the historian's equally sharp sense of change."<sup>72</sup>

Historical sociology employs a methodology similar to traditional historical investigation. Because historical sociology draws on many traditions and disciplines, it is best "understood as an ongoing tradition of research into the nature and effects of large scale structures and long term processes of change."<sup>73</sup> History and sociology have similar goals: "to unravel the relationships between structure and agency in processes of social change."<sup>74</sup> As Skocpol notes, "methodologically sociologists may borrow archival methods from historians, or they may use

<sup>71</sup> John Scott, A Matter of Record (London: Polity Press, 1990) p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> Peter Burke, Sociology and History (London: Allen and Unwin, 1980), p. 80.

<sup>73</sup> Theda Skocpol, Vision and Method in Historical Sociology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) p. 359.

<sup>74</sup> Philip Abrams, Historical Sociology (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982) p. 4.

historians' works as "secondary sources" of evidence."<sup>75</sup> The use of primary sources such as meeting minutes and newspapers from 1900-1930 and secondary sources such as histories of organizations, cities and public health structures, in this instance, lent themselves to uncovering the nature and reasoning behind public health measures under the umbrella of social purity as well as the role of women's organizations in promoting that agenda.

### Archiving

Since asked to write on this subject [her *Girlhood Days in Port Arthur*], there are two lessons, at least, I have learned - one on the destruction of anything that might be of use in the way of letters for reference; another, the need of keeping a diary - that alone would have simplified the whole thing.<sup>76</sup>

Belle Dobie, who wrote this in 1909-1910 with reference to her own inability to describe her own past because of a lack of recorded information and a lack of memories, could not have known that others coming after her would have the same problems and share her wish for more recorded information. When conducting archival research, the most difficult problem to come to terms with is why there is a general lack of material in one area and a plethora in another. The answer is never simple or satisfactory: usually it is because the material is destroyed or is passed from generation to generation without anyone ever considering its historical value.

The research for this thesis was carried out by examining the available archival material at the Thunder Bay Historical Museum and the Thunder Bay City Archives for examples of local women's groups, and the Provincial Archives for material relating to public health initiatives (for a detailed listing of material obtained see Appendix 1). The primary source material includes the meeting minutes of groups such as the West Algoma Local Council of Women (1894-1930),

<sup>75</sup> Skocpol, *Vision and Method...* p. 360.

<sup>76</sup> Miss Belle Dobie, "Girlhood Days of Earlier Port Arthur" Papers and Records 1909-1910, p. 17.

the Westfort, Fort William and Port Arthur Women's Institute (1914-1930, 1911-1930), the Moral and Social Reform Council of Fort William (1912-1913), the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire (1914-1930) and the Women's Branch of the Canadian Club (1907-1930). Additionally, in order to discern the dialogue between these groups and the City Council, minutes of both Fort William and Port Arthur City Councils were surveyed in addition to the City Clerk's files and the reports of the Medical Health Officer for both cities (1900-1930). Other primary source material included Bryce Stewart's social surveys conducted in Fort William and Port Arthur during March of 1913 as well as the local newspapers, the Port Arthur Daily News (1907-1930) and the Fort William Daily Times Journal (1900-1930).

At the Thunder Bay Historical Museum, I was able to find the meeting minutes, ledgers and books pertaining to women's groups active in the two towns during 1900-1930. At the City of Thunder Bay Archives, I was able to find information that demonstrated the official requests made by the women's groups, whether for funding, to request recognition of social problems and to act on these, or to ask for services to be implemented that would enhance the life of the community through social purity ideals. In addition I was able to access information from other sources such as the City Clerks Files which contained among other items, official memos and letters to provincial officials that made clear the position of the City on immigration, education and employment of specific populations. In the area of Public Health, I was able to look at the local Board of Health's meeting synopses. These were not always helpful because they frequently did not discuss current initiatives; instead they reported on vital statistics or simply reported that they had met without providing additional details of the discussion or focus of the meetings.

At the Provincial Archives of Ontario, I was able to find some documentation on the role of public health nurses in the region and occasionally the physicians who travelled the district. Their files were not always useful as what was submitted was primarily receipts and requests for medical supplies. Other records that may have proven more useful regarding the activities of the nurses and physicians and the problems they may have faced in meeting the City officials and other groups who may have resisted their intervention such as the notes of the Medical Officer of Health were unavailable to me.

At the Lakehead University Library Archives, I located documents relating to specific ethnic groups within the cities of Fort William and Port Arthur and some of the Ontario Women's Institute Port Arthur Branch minute books as well as ledgers for some of the other Institutes in the region. As I am not fluent in Finnish, Ukrainian, Italian or any of the other languages of the dominant non-English ethnic groups in the cities during the 1900-1930 time period, I could not properly examine their available primary source material. This would have been useful in determining the response of these various groups to the types of interventions made by the dominant women's organizations. Ultimately, I had to rely on limited secondary sources for these inferences as well as secondary source descriptions of the life of minority groups in the region.

In the Northern Studies Resource Centre at Lakehead University, I was able to locate sporadic issues of the newspapers for both cities and some secondary source material regarding the ethnic groups of the cities. Additional secondary source material that was relevant to the local context was found in the work carried out by among others, Project Bay Street<sup>77</sup>, which studied the development of the Finnish

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<sup>77</sup> Marc Metsaranta (Ed), Project Bay Street: Activities of Finnish Canadians in Thunder Bay Before 1915 (Thunder Bay Finnish - Canadian Historical Society: 1989)

community and other works such as the Italian Immigrant Experience<sup>78</sup> which describes the formation of the Italian community in the two cities. In addition, other primary and secondary source works were surveyed that pertained to issues of labour and politics as well as the economic and social development of Port Arthur and Fort William during the era under analysis. They provided me with a much greater understanding of the importance of these groups within the community, and the development of Fort William and Port Arthur in the broader Canadian context.

### Limitations of Study

In addition to the drawbacks regarding language already noted, the limitations of conducting a study such as this, centre primarily around the limited availability and accessibility of data. For example, the meeting minutes of the Women's Institutes and the Local Council of Women are often not detailed and include only a brief one-line statement about what occurred during the meeting regarding a presentation or paper that was "heatedly discussed" and which may have been pertinent to this study. Access to information was sometimes problematic. Access to some of the more relevant nursing files at the Provincial Archives or even some of the physician's files was restricted, despite the Freedom of Information Act, due to concerns about the violation of patients' privacy. Even though I was not interested in the individual patients who may have been mentioned within those files, but rather in the attitudes and perceptions of the physicians and their excursions into the northern regions, the correspondence even between physicians or nurses was unavailable to me. Sometimes the complete lack of information concerning some of the more relevant groups (outside of brief meeting records), such as the Moral and Social Reform Council of Fort William, was

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<sup>78</sup> John Potestio and Antonio Pucci (Ed) The Italian Immigrant Experience (Thunder Bay: Canadian Italian Historical Association, 1988)

frustrating. In addition, the newspapers did not always effectively report on the events of women's organizations even though the social pages were written over the years by members of some of the primary women's organizations in the cities. While meeting minutes provide a glimpse to what occurred at the meetings or document the changes in society, they are highly subjective in their accounts and written according to the whims of the recording secretary, whose own biases can be seen through the emphasis placed on various issues primarily through the length of the notation or the type of language used. With these provisos in mind, what follows in the remainder of the thesis is the material that I was able to collect and analyze with the aim of exploring the social processes and development of the social purity movement in Fort William and Port Arthur from 1900-1930.

#### Plan of the Thesis

In Chapter Two, *A New Century...Old Ideas?*, the national picture will be explored. The women's reform groups active at the provincial and national levels between 1900 and 1930 and their objectives and initiatives will be discussed. This will allow for a further analysis of the relationship between the national organizations and their local representatives and their influence on one another. The growing public health movement in urban areas and the proposed public health initiatives and their interconnection with women's organizations will also be detailed. A discussion of public health initiatives undertaken at the national level, will provide a basis for understanding the differences and similarities in the North and women's participation within those initiatives in later chapters.

Chapter Three, *Years of Progress, Years of Change*, examines the living conditions of Northwestern Ontario and how the social, political and economic environment was favourable for the development and presentation of social purity ideals. The need for public health measures and the response by the City Councils to

the health of their cities and their inhabitants will also be discussed. This will provide a context for my discussion of local social purity initiatives in the subsequent chapter.

In Chapter Four, *Defining Women's Roles in the Aurora*, I identify the local women's groups and their membership and discuss their roles in the local social purity movement. I elaborate the core concerns of these organizations including immigration policies and practices, education and employment for immigrant women and children, and monitoring of the feebleminded. I discuss how public health officials were able to enforce the regulation of particular members of the community with the aid of these women's organizations.

In Chapter Five, conclusions will be drawn concerning the link between local and national women's groups and the similarities of their social purity initiatives. I will summarize the impact of the social purity and public health movements on specific sectors of the social body from 1900-1930. The endurance of the social purity movement beyond the Depression Era and World War II will be briefly discussed. In addition, I will outline possibilities for further research on social purity in Canada.

## Chapter Two: A New Century...Old Ideas?

### Introduction

This chapter outlines the changing social, political and economic conditions that fostered the development of the social purity movement in Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century. Within this environment, the beginnings of women's organizations and their involvement in the public world can also be seen through new avenues such as medicine and social work. The organizations that will be presented in this chapter, the National Council of Women of Canada and the Women's Institutes, will be discussed in relation to their pre- and post- World War I activities and initiatives. The areas that these organizations primarily wished to influence were education, immigration and public health. The influence of the national groups on their local representatives, in this instance the West Algoma Local Council of Women and the Women's Institutes of Westfort, Port Arthur and Fort William, will be detailed later in Chapter Four through an analysis of the local women's activities in the social purity movement. Finally, in this chapter, the legitimization of reformers ideas and activities through an official body in the form of public health and its primary champion, Dr. Helen MacMurchy will be explored. MacMurchy's influence on public health initiatives for mothers and children was significant for both social purity advocates and for those involved in creating health care policy.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, Canada experienced major structural changes in population, economy and nation which continued well into the twentieth century. These changes made Canada's transition from a frontier to an industrial society difficult.<sup>79</sup> At the time of Confederation in 1867, Canada was a sparsely populated, barely post-colonial state where farm and staples production

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<sup>79</sup> Ursel, Private Lives, Public Policy... p. 61.; McConnachie, Science and Ideology... p.1.



predominated.<sup>80</sup> One of the major changes that caused significant concern for middle-and upper-class citizens, occurred between 1896-1914 when approximately three million immigrants came to Canada. Massive immigration of non-British citizens, coupled with a declining birth rate of native-born children of British heritage, provided an impetus for social reformers to mobilize to actively reshape the changing urban environment.<sup>81</sup> The decline in the birth rate symbolised a problem which the English middle classes referred to as “race” suicide, a term which meant that the “unfit” (those who were defined as mentally subnormal, the chronically sick, and the long term unemployed) were being protected by social welfare laws which perpetuated the disintegration of society and allowed them to propagate without restriction.<sup>82</sup> Married people of the “right” class and status were having fewer children, and apparently taking some measures to prevent conception, while the rate of illegitimate and immigrant births was rising. “If a healthy demographic balance were to be maintained, they [the eugenicists] claimed, it would be necessary to entice the “fit” to breed or take measures to restrict the births of the ‘unfit’”.<sup>83</sup> Coupled with this demographic change, the movement of people from a rural to an urban environment created new social problems which disrupted the social stability of the nation.

The desire to influence the direction of Canadian society for the new century was taken on by many groups of people predominantly from the upper echelons of society. These groups proclaimed themselves to be the enlightened ones capable of

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<sup>80</sup> Valverde, The Age of Light... p. 15; Carolyn Strange, “From Modern Babylon to a City Upon a Hill: The Toronto Social Survey Commission of 1915 and the Search for Sexual Order in the City” In Hall, Westfall, Sefton MacDowell (Eds), Patterns of the Past: Interpreting Ontario’s History (Toronto: Durnford Press, 1988) p. 255; Strange elaborates on this in her full length work, Toronto’s Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

<sup>81</sup> Angus McLaren, Our Own Master Race: ... p. 39.

<sup>82</sup> Ian Brown, “Who were the Eugenicists? A study of the Formation of an Early 20th Century Pressure Group” History of Education (Great Britain) 17 (4) 1988, p 297.

<sup>83</sup> McLaren, Our Own Master Race:... p. 15.

leading the way to a better Canadian society. While the problems of “race suicide”, employment and massive immigration were seemingly overwhelming, there was an optimism for the future that meant that change was possible. There was a desire to restore a degree of control over society and chiefly over the “deviants” who were suspected of undermining social progress.<sup>64</sup> A perceived lack of control over social progress was responsible in part for generating women’s involvement in social reform movements.

The women of the nineteenth century shifted their previous attempts at social change by moving from meeting in local groups to meeting in larger, more organized groups that were ready to deal with the larger social picture.<sup>65</sup> According to Wendy Mitchinson, with the development of better transportation and communication networks, women were better able to discuss the situations in their communities and develop solutions that could be implemented locally and nationally.<sup>66</sup> Solutions for social change also shifted from being purely charitable and benevolent works to attempts to impact change with solutions from a growing range of professionals including the medical profession. However, because women were just beginning to be accepted into the medical profession, they still had to rely on their tried and true methods of philanthropic charity to identify the problems they saw occurring in their society, and then implement solutions that would eradicate those problems. Eventually, a combination of both charity work and the influence of medical professionals shaped the direction that social purity ideals and methods took over the thirty-year time period that is discussed here.

<sup>64</sup> Carol Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983) p. 9.

<sup>65</sup> Gail Cuthbert Brandt, “Organizations in Canada: The English Protestant Tradition” in Paula Bourne (Ed) Women’s Paid and Unpaid Work: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1985) p. 80.

<sup>66</sup> Mitchinson, Aspects of Reform: ... p. 11, 33.

Bacchi proposes two models for categorizing women's activism, the first being the more overtly coercive attempt to impose their own values on society, which found expression chiefly in anti-drink and anti-prostitution campaigns. The second was a more sophisticated approach which viewed social and moral reformers as a secular, "competent ruling elite who could create a cradle-to-grave blueprint for a new, better-ordered society."<sup>87</sup> While both models retained the family as the most important structure in society, the second group was more willing to replace the family as the primary social structure with schools as influential institutions for socialization purposes which would lead to a reinforcement of already entrenched sex and gender roles.<sup>88</sup> Both the National Council of Women of Canada and the Women's Institutes are examples of the second framework.

### The Feminine Reformers

The women involved in the social purity movement were typically of middle-class British origin, most often lived in the city, and belonged to some form of evangelical organization.<sup>89</sup> By identifying the city "with crime, intemperance, poverty, atheism, socialism, and materialism, as well as the disappearance of the traditional rural virtues of industry, piety, thrift and self dependence, evangelicals responded with an optimistic and aggressive fervour to the call to save the cities for Christ."<sup>90</sup> Beginning in the late nineteenth century, women's groups began sprouting up all over the country to fight what they perceived as the evils of the city and the loosening of the gender divisions which they attributed to women working

<sup>87</sup> Bacchi, Liberation Deferred?... p. 11.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.* p. 11.

<sup>89</sup> Carol Bacchi, "Race Regeneration and Social Purity. A Study of the Social Attitudes of Canada's English-Speaking Suffragists" Histoire Sociale/ Social History 11 (22) 1978, p. 460; Sharon Cook, "Continued and Persevering Combat": The Ontario WCTU Evangelicalism and Social Reform, 1874-1916 (PhD Dissertation Carleton University, 1990); Pedersen, "Providing a Woman's Conscience: ..." p. 196; Brown, "Who were the Eugenacists?..." p. 297; Veronica Strong-Boag, " 'Setting the Stage': National Organization and the Women's Movement in the Late 19th Century" in Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice (Eds), The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977) p. 88.

<sup>90</sup> Pedersen, "Providing a Woman's Conscience:..." p. 196.

outside of the home and neglecting their family duties. They recognized that the men of business and industry were concerned with the economic development of the young country and not with the social problems created by such thriving development. According to Gail Cuthbert Brandt, women were "...following an agenda similar to that set by the male political and business leaders who were also actively promoting provincial and national organizations."<sup>91</sup> The capacity of "male alliances such as the Canadian Manufacturers Association, the Canadian Labour Union, and the Methodist Church of Canada, to organize on a national basis with a blueprint of their own for Canada's future" provided newly formed women's groups with an inspiration for action and change.<sup>92</sup>

The Dominion-wide woman's movement was one with the social gospel in reflecting and encouraging a stronger awareness of national issues. In a world of transcontinental railways, telegrams, automobiles, and telephones, regional isolation, although not necessarily regional antagonism, was breaking down.<sup>93</sup>

The creation of a national consciousness helped with the spawning of the women's club movement and had a significant impact as women began to organize around issues of education, culture, philanthropy, reform, politics, professions and religion.<sup>94</sup> While industrialization caused social problems, it also changed the role and position of women in the middle and upper classes. Through technological

<sup>91</sup> Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "Organizations in Canada: ..." p. 80; Diana Pedersen, " 'Building Today for the Womanhood of Tomorrow': Businessmen, Boosters, and the YWCA, 1890-1930" Urban History Review 15, 3, 1987, p. 227.

<sup>92</sup> Pedersen, "Providing a Woman's Conscience:..." p. 198.

<sup>93</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women: The NCW Canada, 1893-1929 (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1976) p. 34.

<sup>94</sup> There are a variety of sources that discuss the rise of the Clubwoman as a vocal, political and public woman. See for example, Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women:... p. 2; Cuthbert Brandt, "Organizations in Canada:..." ; Wendy Mitchinson, Aspects of Reform:... (PhD Dissertation. York University: 1977); Diana Pedersen, The Young Women's Christian Association in Canada, 1870-1920: 'A Movement to Meet a Spiritual, Civic and National Need' (PhD Dissertation: Carleton University, 1987) Bacchi, Liberation Deferred?; Gillian Weiss, "The Brightest Women of Our Land: Vancouver Clubwomen 1910-1928" in Latham and Pazdro (Eds), Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984) pp. 199-209.

advances, such as the washing machine, vacuum cleaner, and the gasoline stove, women had an increased amount of leisure time and became an active part of a new and growing consumer culture.<sup>95</sup> The introduction of technology into the home did two contradictory things: it reduced the importance of women's domestic functions through a loss of "status with the progress of industrialization",<sup>96</sup> and at the same time, opened the door for a newly educated professional and scientifically trained class of domestic servants who were required to perform household tasks for the new class of leisured ladies who worked alongside the previously existing untrained servant class. The continued use of "untrained workers kept down the wages of trained servants, and the demand for skills undermined job security for the untrained. Employers, however, won either way."<sup>97</sup>

As a social movement, social purity became a campaign to fight many "social evils": divorce, illegitimacy, the prevention of prostitution and the rescue of fallen women, public education regarding personal cleanliness and mental health, the suppression of obscene literature, concerns with migration and the increasing ethnic diversity in both the city and country, and the provision of shelters for women and children.<sup>98</sup> Women reformers were also concerned with the improvement of the status of women and consequently saw themselves as benefactors primarily for women living in, or coming to, the city. The implementation of specific initiatives such as the creation of the Young Women's Christian Association show that the social reformers were not only concerned with the "seedier" side of urbanization; they also wanted to help the growing numbers of women who had come to the city

<sup>95</sup> Bacchi, Liberation Deferred?... p. 15; see also Ruth Schwartz Cowan "The "Industrial Revolution" in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change in the 20th Century" Technology and Culture 17, 1, 1976, pp. 1-23.

<sup>96</sup> Genevieve Leslie, "Domestic Service in Canada, 1880-1920" in Janice Acton, Penny Goldsmith and Bonnie Shepard (Eds) Women at Work 1850-1930 (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974) p. 73.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.* p. 92.

<sup>98</sup> Valverde, The Age of Light... p. 81; Jones, Social Hygiene... p. 1-8.

to find work, by providing them with safe and moral living quarters.<sup>99</sup>

According to Carolyn Strange, the young girl in the city was not viewed as a worker, but as an index of immorality: her leisure patterns received more attention than her work because the commissioners [of the social surveys] believed it was in leisure pursuits that moral choices were made rather than the occupations which women chose to work in.<sup>100</sup> It was the evils of the public world that women sought to reform in the realm “where decisions were daily made that could reinforce or destroy Christian harmony and morality.”<sup>101</sup> The creation of heterosocial or mixed-sex public spaces in the form of parks, dance halls, and movie theatres was taken as proof that the cities were not going to provide women with good moral character and the proper lifestyles that they once had. The YWCA provided “young women living independently of their family, maternal supervision, a substitute for family life and respectable homosocial recreation in a wholesome Christian setting.”<sup>102</sup> According to Strong-Boag, the National Council of Women of Canada supported recreational facilities as they “represented positive controls of the urban environment: the Council’s censorship endeavours, the negative. On the one hand, the cities’ inhabitants were offered ‘safe’ entertainment; and on the other, their access to morally dangerous amusements was restricted.”<sup>103</sup>

The movement sought to reform and organize gender relations and promote a certain ideology of the family, not merely utilize it to valorize women’s morality. The family as idealized by social reform groups was fictionalized and romanticized

<sup>99</sup> Cathy James describes another example of women’s benevolent charity works in her work on women’s involvement in the settlement movement in Toronto from 1902-1914. In Cathy L. James, *Gender, Class and Ethnicity in the Organization of Neighbourhood and Nation: The Role of Toronto’s Settlement Houses in the Formation of the Canadian State, 1902 to 1914* PhD Dissertation: University of Toronto, 1996.

<sup>100</sup> Strange, “From Modern Babylon to a City Upon a Hill: ...” p. 256. Social surveys were carried out in many cities across Ontario during this time to provide an indication of the social and moral conditions of the cities.

<sup>101</sup> Cuthbert Brandt, “Organizations in Canada:...” p. 84.

<sup>102</sup> Pedersen, “Providing a Woman’s Conscience:...” p. 195.

<sup>103</sup> Strong-Boag, *The Parliament of Women: ...* p. 271.

from a variety of sources such as magazines and the Bible, but predominantly resembled a growing middle-class ideal and Christian Biblical family style.<sup>104</sup> This type of gender reform aimed at promoting family “values”, enabled some women to be given the possibility of acquiring a relatively powerful identity as rescuers, reformers, and even experts, while other women were reduced to being objects of philanthropic concern.<sup>105</sup> While reform groups were interested in the lives of young women they were not motivated to “democratize society, and to erase class differences, but to maintain a non-antagonistic class structure within the capitalist system.”<sup>106</sup>

### The National Council of Women of Canada

By the early years of the twentieth century, there were two major types of reform groups organized along religious lines. Groups like the Women’s Christian Temperance Union<sup>107</sup> (WCTU) and the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) were evangelical organizations with the aim of civilizing society through the fervent use of the Bible. According to Mitchinson, these groups did not view “what they saw as moral and material problems of society as inevitable. Such problems stemmed from causes which could be eliminated.”<sup>108</sup> The idea that there were definite causes for social problems meant that specific solutions were available. The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) was an example of the other type of group. The NCWC was non-denominational and was organized as a cooperative effort among distinctly middle-class and increasingly more often,

<sup>104</sup> Susan McDaniel, “The Changing Canadian Family: Women’s Roles and the Impact of Feminism” in Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code, and Sandra Dorney (Eds) Changing Patterns: Women in Canada (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1988) p. 104.

<sup>105</sup> Valverde, “ ‘When the Mother of the Race is Free’:...”, p. 24.

<sup>106</sup> Margaret Frenette, *The Great War’s Defeats: “Doing Your Bit” on Thunder Bay’s Home Front 1914-1919* (M.A. Thesis, Lakehead University, 1996) p. 18.

<sup>107</sup> The WCTU is often aligned with the more secular of the reform groups. I disagree with this as their organization heavily relied upon the use of Christianity as a means and method for social reform with the aim of civilizing society and because of this I have grouped them with organizations like the YWCA which have a distinct religious orientation.

<sup>108</sup> Mitchinson, *Aspects of Reform:...*, p. vi.

educated women. Mitchinson argues that the fact that more women were becoming university educated was significant to the level and kind of work that the particular women's groups were doing:

Organized groups of any kind demand a certain degree of articulation from their members and confidence in themselves to become active in whatever endeavours the group decides upon. Formal education, while not a necessary prerequisite for this, certainly could provide the foundation.<sup>109</sup>

While these groups were dissimilar in their religious affiliations which inherently influenced their focus, according to Mitchinson, there were also many similarities between them:

1. they attempted to deal with problems outside women's traditional sphere to benefit society;
2. each represented an involvement on the part of Canadian women that was quite singular in the nineteenth century;
3. women's societies revealed concerns of their members and to a limited degree are suggestive of what many Canadian women felt, believed and did.<sup>110</sup>

Subsequently, the NCWC grew as a response to external structural changes occurring in Canadian society. It was preferred that women join the NCWC through an affiliated organization rather than as individuals.<sup>111</sup> Women were encouraged to become part of a group that could help influence change in their community. The mandate for the umbrella organization was defined so that disagreement on policy was difficult and consensus on major issues could be easily established.<sup>112</sup> In discussing the early years of the NCWC, Griffiths writes:

There is no doubt that Council did evolve policies, at the national and local level, which represented a council initiative, a Council voice. On the whole, however, the organization functioned in these early years as a study group, as a clearing house, and as a market-place for information.

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<sup>109</sup> *ibid.* p. 38.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.* p. 5.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.* p. 255.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.* p. 255; N.E.S. Griffiths, *The Splendid Vision: Centennial History of the National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1993* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993) p. 9.



[After suffrage had been obtained, the NCW] ... became a place where women were given priority because of gender. The limits placed on women's actions in the broader society, the particular difficulties they faced in life because of their sex, became the essential subject matter of Council action.<sup>113</sup>

The years between 1900 and 1914 were an intense growth period in both membership and political aspirations for the NCW. The group used this time to identify issues that would ostensibly be of importance to women of all classes and groups and the issues put forth during this time became the platform for action. These standard issues would become the base for lobbying over the thirty-year time period that is being discussed here, and beyond. Social issues such as infant mortality, women working outside the home, urban housing, recreation, immigration, "race" suicide, prison reform, and pernicious literature, were all issues that carried the NCW's agenda through the first fourteen years of the twentieth century.<sup>114</sup> While many of these issues were noble in their focus, it was maintained that "the influence of the 'better classes' should be a major instrument of Council policy. Club women must set the terms of social improvement by favouring the extension of the protection of the factory acts to shop girls and domestics, the restriction of working hours, the provision of seats for shop assistants and a raise in the age of work."<sup>115</sup> This stand would effectively place and maintain women of the middle- and upper-classes in major decision making positions for the NCW. The consensus arising on these morally contentious issues relied upon defining women as sexually and socially different than men, and arguing that women's different and special skills were necessary to help direct the future of the nation. By defining women as inherently distinct from men, the NCW was able to carve out a unique space for women in the political arena.

<sup>113</sup> Griffiths, *The Splendid Vision*:..., p. 93.

<sup>114</sup> Strong-Boag, *The Parliament of Women*:... p. 206-254 (passim).

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.* p. 259.

The NCW's position as a nationally directed lobby group instead of as a motivator for small scale community oriented change frustrated many independent women's organizations looking for solutions to concrete problems in their communities rather than just obscure legislative changes. Although this was not evident as a concern in the Fort William and Port Arthur records, the position of the NCW/LCW as a motivator was one which the Local Councils attempted to emulate. As Valverde writes, "the NCW's encouragement of pure literature and pure thoughts was academic, since unlike the WCTU it did not sponsor mothers' meetings or do other grassroots work."<sup>116</sup> As a lobby group during the early years, the NCW promoted the ideals and ambitions of the middle- and upper-classes in what was presented as "for the greater good," but they were not actually working at the community level unlike their local affiliate in this case, the West Algoma Local Council of Women.

During the war years, Council women increasingly appealed to the "maternal" nature of women to promote peace. The image of woman as the national housekeeper propelled the clubwoman to the fore of Canadian social life. The roles of women's organizations took on a new status with the war. Women

...raised funds, outfitted hospital ships, collected and distributed clothing for service men and their families, made parcels to be sent to the men in trenches, rolled bandages, knitted socks, assisted the Red Cross in its efforts, operated canteens and boarding houses for female munitions workers, and set up and administered camps for young women who worked on farms and in food production during the summer months.<sup>117</sup>

While these activities were heartily endorsed and commended by the NCW, their primary aim was still creating political changes at the level of the federal government. Yet, it was also during this time that the Local Councils were

<sup>116</sup> Valverde, The Age of Light... p. 63. This is contrary to Arnup's evidence in their sponsorship of VON "Little Mother" classes as discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>117</sup> Cuthbert Brandt, "Organizations in Canada:..." p. 87; Carol J. Dennison, "They Also Served:"... p. 211.

encouraged to become more active in municipal affairs. Women were encouraged to push for representation on school boards, boards of health and other public offices so that the voice of the women of the community could be heard. While the issues that occupied the Council previous to the war years were still being actively pursued, (immigration, the vices of the city, and the growing acknowledgement of women's sexuality and pervasiveness of sex crimes) public health issues relating to women's sexuality were now brought to the forefront of the national agenda.<sup>118</sup> This change in agenda reflected a shift in gender roles for women, and a change in their status in society as an ever growing part of the workforce. Women were increasingly performing all manner of jobs from the manual labour occupations of the factories to the professional occupations of teachers and doctors. While these changes were to be applauded, it was also argued that women were beginning to neglect their home duties and blindly accept other institutions into the home to do this work for them. For example, the education system had developed enough to take over not only the education of children, but the formative socialization processes which had previously been the traditional domain of the family, and specifically mothers. Young women were no longer learning how to run a house from their mother, and were having to be taught this through the education system and domestic science courses.<sup>119</sup> The reminder that women held special status while they remained close to home is pervasive in reformers quest for large scale structural change.

<sup>118</sup> Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women:... p. 296-319 (passim).

<sup>119</sup> This is just one point of view regarding the rationalization of domestic science courses which can be evidenced in writings by Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women:...; while authors such as Katherine Arnup, Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1994) p. 19, 138 and Diana Pedersen in "The Scientific Training of Mothers": The Campaign for Domestic Science in Ontario Schools, 1890-1913" in Richard A. Jarrell and Arnold E. Roos Critical Issues in the History of Canadian Science, Technology and Medicine (Thornhill: HSTC Publications, 1983) pp. 178-194 view the domestic science movement as part of a general trend towards scientific management of the home.

With the NCW's support for domestic science programs, the educational benefits for girls and society were according to Riley, fourfold:

- a) the school had a duty to develop the child's habits and character so as to produce a responsible and useful citizen;
- b) girls needed formal training, which the home was not able to provide, to prepare them for their future careers as homemakers, or, in some cases, servants;
- c) education in the household arts would teach girls to apply scientific principles to the management of the home;
- d) domestic science classes would provide a practical education to train the hand and the heart as well as the head.<sup>120</sup>

During the post World War I years, women who had enjoyed the working world and its economic and social benefits were finding it difficult to return to the home and while the Council endorsed the idea of women working to have some sense of economic self-sufficiency, it also wanted to maintain women's separate role and status within the home. The NCW heavily promoted domestic service and nursing as occupations that would maintain women's femininity as well as being the tie that would keep the link between women and traditional home work. Neither the agenda of the executive council nor the solutions they proposed changed drastically enough to reflect the changing attitudes of the time and the dramatic decrease in membership during the 1920s reflected this. All the farming organizations in the western regions including the Women's Institutes of Ontario withdrew and this dealt a serious blow to the effectiveness and solidarity of the NCW.<sup>121</sup> While the NCW did not fade after the granting of women's suffrage, its importance and effectiveness diminished greatly until the upheaval of World War II.

<sup>120</sup> Barbara Riley, "Six Saucepans to One: Domestic Science vs. the Home in British Columbia, 1900-1930" In Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag (Eds) British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women (Vancouver: Press Gang, 1992). p. 120.

<sup>121</sup> Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women:...p. 388-392. This action is not discussed in the meeting minutes of the Women's Institutes in Fort William, Port Arthur and Westfort.

### The Women's Institutes

The Women's Institutes (WI) were formed as the female counterpart to the Farmers' Institutes established by the provincial Department of Agriculture which meant that the agenda was set by the both the Department and the government of the day.<sup>122</sup> The group was originally intended for the wives of the farmers and it was anticipated that the Department's advice would help women augment their husband's work. Meetings would be held at the same time as the Farmers' Institutes meetings and in evenings the men would be able to join in general sessions the topics of which were set, originally by the Department of Agriculture. The Department encouraged women to start local branches and for a time provided both funding and paid organizers to help with this work.

As a part of the official mandate, the Department also encouraged women to take domestic science training led by Department employees from the MacDonald Institute (part of the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph) which would "provide farm women with the tools to run a home economically and train them to be practical, sensible consumers..."<sup>123</sup> While this was a worthy endeavour, women in the Port Arthur, Fort William and Westfort branches were not always able to partake in these training sessions primarily due to geographical constraints. Training sessions were more frequently organized in the more southerly communities of the province. Through these courses, the Department wanted to redefine housework in both scientific terms and as a viable profession for young women, and the domestic science courses reflected this. With the image of a new kind of farmer's wife, the Department of Agriculture attempted to change the image and reality of a typical farm woman "from an overworked, tired, downtrodden,

<sup>122</sup> Margaret Kechnie, *Keeping Things Clean "For Home and Country": The Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, 1897-1919* (PhD Dissertation OISE, 1996) p.68; see also Linda Ambrose, " 'What Are the Good of Those Meetings Anyway?': Early Popularity of the Ontario Women's Institutes" *Ontario History* 87 (1) 1995, p. 1-19.

<sup>123</sup> Kechnie, *Keeping Things Clean...* p. iii, 314.

drudge, to a well-read, articulate, country homemaker who performed tasks thoughtfully, following a schedule that showed an intelligent approach to work in the home [that was] based on the latest scientific principles of housekeeping."<sup>124</sup> The Department also wished to address not only the progressive education of farmers through the activities of the Farmer's Institute but "rural homemakers [who were seen to need] continuing education with regard to their work in the home."<sup>125</sup> As Kechnie remarks, "the WI was never intended to be a vehicle to provide women with agricultural training, even though there was some confusion over this issue in the early years. It appears that some people in the farming community did see the WI as a place where such skills could be developed."<sup>126</sup> The vision of Adelaide Hoodless "was to provide farm women with a place to study subjects related to homemaking, followed by a discussion and an exchange of ideas "giving new zest to every-day affairs".<sup>127</sup> In addition to endorsing domestic science and scientific management training, the Department of Agriculture promoted a program of 'rural betterment' which "meant the modernization of both the farming industry and rural institutions, would keep young people on the farm and attract city folk to rural communities as they became disillusioned with the rush and confusion of urban life."<sup>128</sup> The rural lifestyle and the associated virtues that were idealized by reformers attempted to make farm life more appealing by demonstrating not only the great responsibility and pride associated with maintaining a farm but also by creating an image of the farm woman as an independent and successful entrepreneur. Some of these ideas will be outlined in the meeting minutes of the local Women's Institutes shown later in this thesis. As will be discussed later, in the Fort William context

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<sup>124</sup> *ibid.* p. 81. As cited in Terry Crowley, "The Origins of Continuing Education for Women: The Ontario Women's Institutes" Canadian Woman Studies 7 (3) 1986, p. 80.

<sup>125</sup> Kechnie. p. 58.

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.* p. 204.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.* p. 81-82.

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.* p. 4.

these ideas were reflected in the meeting minutes of the local Women's Institute.

During the early years, the Department also recommended that WIs stress the issues that small town women were interested in even if this meant ignoring the needs of farm women.<sup>129</sup> Evidence from the meeting minutes of the local branches of the Women's Institutes suggests that similar issues such as public health, immigration, household science and rural schools were discussed both locally and nationally in addition to the urban influenced issues of civic improvement, war and life of the city poor.<sup>130</sup>

According to Kechnie [there is]

...little evidence that the organization helped the cause of the agricultural industry or improved farm homes, to some extent the Women's Institute did ameliorate the physical environment of many small towns and villages and improved the social life in those communities for hundreds of rural women.<sup>131</sup>

The influence of urban social reformers meant that the more rural based Women's Institutes became reflective of women's organizations in urban centres and took up issues that were central to the urban reform movement: civic improvement, patriotic endeavours during the war years, and health reform.<sup>132</sup> As the influence of social reformers increased, the emphasis on domestic science skills decreased and issues that were current to the specific region or community were not as frequently addressed. Issues such as employment for women, city beautification, and general business skills were discussed in the local Women's Institute in later years.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> *ibid.* p. 139, 142.

<sup>130</sup> Lakehead University Archives, (hereafter LULA) Ontario Women's Institutes, Minute Books 143aiii-143b.

<sup>131</sup> Kechnie, *Keeping Things Clean*...p. iii.

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.* p. iii.

<sup>133</sup> LULA, Ontario Women's Institutes, Minute Books 143aiii-143b. "Mrs Perry spoke on Womens ability to conduct business meetings and stated that she had attended Womens meetings which were equal to the meetings of our Provincial Parliament and without quarrelling" June 22, 1915.

The WIs were less formal in their structure than the NCW in that while they did have specific committees established after Federation in 1919 to address community and national issues, they were not an integral part of the organization's structure. However, members still presented papers and items of local and national interest to their members the topics of which were often suggested by Department representatives.<sup>134</sup> The structure for the WIs meant reporting to the Department of Agriculture. In their reports to the Department they were required to include descriptions of the meetings as well as keep financial records of fundraising efforts. This task was one that women living on the farm were accustomed to as many women had previous experience with business transactions and "keeping the books". Urban women took these tasks on more slowly as they became more autonomous from their paternalistic beginnings, most often associated with church organizations.

When issues pertaining to suffrage arose, the Women's Institute, according to the mandate set out by the Department, "was not permitted to discuss the suffrage question"<sup>135</sup> because of the controversial and subversive nature of the question and the possibility that funding could be cut if the government of the day were displeased with the function and work of the WIs. The fact that this aspect alone "attracted 30,000 Ontario women"<sup>136</sup> to WIs suggests that the organization's resistance to the Department of Agriculture's mandate influenced the issues addressed over the thirty year time period addressed here. Regardless, suffrage was endorsed by the individual Women's Institutes when the NCW posed the question

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<sup>134</sup> Kechnie, *Keeping Things Clean...* p. 120-122 passim.

<sup>135</sup> *ibid.* p. 10.

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.* p. 10.



to its member groups.<sup>137</sup> This government prescribed lack of involvement in political issues was a direct result of the directives passed down from the Department of Agriculture and it is with the advent of the suffrage question that local community issues were stressed rather than broad urban political issues.

The Department of Agriculture's insistence upon a mandate that emphasised women's work in the home, meant that the ideal of women's place in the home was vigorously pursued and maintained. While this suited the Department's ideals well, the continued influence of urban reformers meant that issues pertaining to women's work outside the home were also placed on the table for discussion. Aside from Department ideals, farm women knew that without their continued contribution to the household economy through either working the farm's primary staple or through selling eggs, preserves, milk and so on, the farm would be bankrupt.<sup>138</sup> While the ongoing threat of the disintegration of farm life was the most important issue to the women of the WIs, the threat of the disintegration of Canadian society was also placed high on the agenda. Disintegration was not only assumed to include racial and physical deterioration. It was also taken to mean the disintegration of a lifestyle rooted in a highly romanticized version of rural life grounded in values such as "honesty, integrity, and self reliance."<sup>139</sup>

As Kechnie has argued, the issues put forth by the Women's Institutes changed during the thirty year time frame being discussed here. An example of this

<sup>137</sup> In the local context, meeting minutes demonstrate that on February 28, 1912 that "The resolution for Municipal Franchise for Women in the same terms as men as sent out by the Local Council of Women was read and discussed to some extent but as the ruling from Mr. Putnam had not arrived, and we would hold another meeting before the necessary time to instruct our delegates it was moved by Mrs. Fraser and seconded by Mrs. Biking [sic] that it be laid on the table until the next meeting." This was later endorsed. Later meeting minutes also indicate that on October 25, 1916 "Communications were read from Equal Franchise Association, British Red Cross and Canadian Home Journal. Ontario Franchise Champion papers were received and endorsed by members present...". The minutes from June 11, 1917 indicate that "Mrs Murray and Mrs McIvor then addressed the meeting and urged every woman to register her vote and to see that every other woman vote too." LULA, OWI, PA, 189a.

<sup>138</sup> Kechnie, *Keeping things Clean*, p. 191.

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.* p. 42.

change can be found in the shift in concerns solely regarding farm life and their efficient maintenance to community based development and change. However, the continued emphasis on home maintenance, farm life and small scale community change, meant that as World War I began, the WI was continuing to perform tasks that it had been doing for many years previously such as making bulk food preserves, dealing with health measures predominantly on the farm, working for the proper education of girls, and working towards the assimilation of the continuous influx of non-English speaking immigrants. While their focus was not intended to be political, according to the mandate established for them by the Department of Agriculture, the Women's Institutes continued to enforce a certain ideal lifestyle which they attempted to impose on other groups which may not have been able to accommodate such a lifestyle. Their involvement in these issues made them politically involved in their communities much to the chagrin of the Department of Agriculture.

From 1900 to 1930, the women of the National Council of Women of Canada and the Women's Institutes were vocal in their attempts to recreate Canadian society for the better. Their concern for the quality and standard of human life was a noble cause in a time when there was great uncertainty generated by the advent of new technology, new occupations, new gender roles and new lifestyles. However, their concerns were aimed at constructing an elite society, and they were determined to pursue these goals regardless of the consequences for those who were to be reformed. During the first thirty years of this century, Canadian society changed dramatically as it grew and faced new challenges and became an established part of the world market. Women's organizations took on the role of keepers of the new nation to try and create a "better-ordered society" but what limited their effectiveness beyond the 1920s was their inability to keep pace with a changing

social, economic and political reality whose changes were being reflected in women's lives.<sup>140</sup>

The ability of social purity reformers to match concerns with public health practitioners came in the form of changing the physical environment of people who were declared to be salvageable. The regulation of space accorded to living, working and playing it could be suggested, was dependent upon a hierarchy firmly established through the categories of race, class, and gender. This can be interpreted through Sears' remarks, "public health also meant keeping disease out of Ontario. The activity of 'keeping disease out' has the political effect of constructing the category of 'others' as a threat to health, 'The Health' of 'The Public'."<sup>141</sup>

### Public Health

Prior to 1860 most towns and cities in Upper Canada devoted little attention to public health matters except when directly threatened by epidemics of cholera or typhus.<sup>142</sup> In 1884 the Public Health Act was drafted and implemented on a sporadic basis. It gave "authority to the Provincial Board to make regulations for the prevention or mitigation of disease and for all matters relating thereto, and outlined the powers and responsibilities of local boards of health."<sup>143</sup> This included administrative functions such as collecting and recording vital statistics such as birth and death records, of creating epidemiology reports. "Local municipalities were presumed sovereign in enforcing quarantine and vaccination, in part because epidemic diseases such as smallpox and cholera were typically confined to small areas, and also because many local politicians resented government influence."<sup>144</sup> By

<sup>140</sup> Cuthbert Brandt, "Organizations in Canada:..." p. 88-89.

<sup>141</sup> cited in Alan Sears, " 'To Teach Them How to Live': The Politics of Public Health from Tuberculosis to AIDS" *Journal of Historical Sociology* 5 (1) 1992, p. 61-83.

<sup>142</sup> Heather MacDougall, "Public Health and the 'Sanitary Idea' in Toronto, 1866-1890" in Wendy Mitchinson and Janice Dickin McGinnis (Eds), *Essays in the History of Canadian Medicine* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1988) p. 62.

<sup>143</sup> J. T. Phair, "Public Health in Ontario" in R.D. Defries (Ed), *The Development of Public Health in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1940) p. 69.

<sup>144</sup> Stuart, "Ideology and Experience..." p. 115.

giving individual powers to the community with minor interference from the provincial or federal governments, the aim was to ensure that "the state should be responsible for the prevention of outbreaks of infectious disease through regulation of the urban environment and provisions of essential amenities such as pure water and waste removal."<sup>145</sup> Subsequently, boards were able to enforce the construction of sewers and water treatment plants, standards for garbage collection and storage and for food growth and preparation as knowledge from the science of bacteriology and the technology of engineering became more rapidly available.

Proponents of the public health movement took two distinct views on the function and focus of a Public Health program. The first group were the Environmentalists as influenced by the ideas of Jean Baptiste de Lamarck.<sup>146</sup> They believed "that a modification in the environment produced in a person visible physical and mental changes which were transmittable to the next generation."<sup>147</sup> They recommended "legislation to improve the living and working conditions of underprivileged groups."<sup>148</sup> The Environmentalists wanted to reduce the infant death rate by upgrading the general standard of living.<sup>149</sup> A representative of the group and the first Chief Public Health Officer of Ontario, Dr. Peter Bryce, in 1914 recommended "stricter government regulation of marriage, the removal of the feebleminded to state supported homes, improved housing, lessening of overcrowding, reduction in local taxation and child labour, and lower food and land costs."<sup>150</sup>

<sup>145</sup> MacDougall, "Public Health ..." p. 62

<sup>146</sup> Bacchi, "Race Regeneration...", pp. 461-466.

<sup>147</sup> *ibid.* p. 461.

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.* p. 462.

<sup>149</sup> *ibid.* p. 461-462.

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.* p. 463; Sears, "To Teach Them How to Live'..." also discusses Bryce's efforts in the area of medical examinations for new immigrants to Canada in the inspection of immigrants for "physical, mental or moral deficiencies" p. 70; see also Snell and Comacchio Abeele, "Regulating Nuptuality:..." p. 466-489.

Environmentalists were viewed as the more philanthropic of the two groups and concentrated on two key issues: "1) improving the health and fitness of women on the grounds that their children would benefit and 2) bettering the home environment in which those children would spend the first crucial formative years."<sup>151</sup> They concentrated on the fitness of women by attempting to change the image of the frail Victorian woman which would have new social ramifications. It became a woman's duty to have a strong constitution and even to be educated to a certain degree in domestic science. The definition of domestic work as a science that could be taught by professionals would give women the "necessary" instruction in physiology, hygiene and nutrition. Educating women in needlework, dancing and languages, would produce "flighty and frivolous" women who would pass on these flighty pastimes to their offspring which demonstrated the need for proper domestic education.<sup>152</sup>

The other group, the eugenicists supported by Francis Galton the founder of eugenics, placed their emphasis on nature through heredity rather than nurture. A crude form of statistical measurement would allow Galton to argue that there were differences among people along racial and class lines. Eugenicists also believed that sex differences were based on biological factors that could not be overridden by appeals to justice because biological flaws were seen to be responsible for the inferiority of certain groups. Eugenicists were convinced that the only way to improve the race was to employ selective breeding techniques and enforce legislation that would provide better breeders.<sup>153</sup> Most of the eugenics policies were aimed at regulating working-class fertility by "legislation that would make the right to marry contingent upon a test of financial solvency, which was to include proofs

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<sup>151</sup> Bacchi, "Race Regeneration..", p. 464.

<sup>152</sup> *ibid.* 465-466.

<sup>153</sup> *ibid.* p. 462; McLaren and McLaren, The Bedroom and the State:... p. 63-64.

of provision, through private insurance for employment, sickness and old age."<sup>154</sup>  
 The eugenicists actually implied that social reformers were in fact contributing to the deterioration of the race by preserving weak specimens through charity measures, hence the need for scientific improvement and intervention.<sup>155</sup>

While this debate ensued, women's organizations were actively solicited to promote public health measures.

Women's organizations took a particular interest in assisting in the distribution of information on maternal health. As well, infant-and child-care literature was distributed at fall fairs, and by public health nurses during the course of their work in well-baby clinics, child-welfare displays, and home visits.<sup>156</sup>

While they were not able to provide treatment for illnesses, they "would give advice on domestic arrangements and 'tender and sympathetic remonstrance' to the temperate...given the widespread belief in the ignorance and fecklessness of working-class mothers and the growing concern about the infant mortality rate."<sup>157</sup>  
 It was also assumed that this group of women would be perceived as less threatening because they were not part of the medical establishment or professional class and would therefore have a greater impact and insight into the working-class and immigrant conditions and would gain easy access to these homes.

The interest in health care was twofold for organizations like the National Council of Women. They were interested in promoting nursing as a respectable profession for women and also in the ways in which "...both bodies and souls would be 'saved' in the poor neighbourhoods of urban Canada"<sup>158</sup> through health care

<sup>154</sup> Dorothy Porter, " 'Enemies of the Race': Biologism, Environmentalism, and Public Health in Edwardian England" *Victorian Studies* 34 (2) p. 162.

<sup>155</sup> Bacchi, "Race Regeneration..." p. 462, 465.

<sup>156</sup> Arnup, *Education for Motherhood*:... p. 56.

<sup>157</sup> Cynthia Davies, "The Health Visitor as Mother's Friend: A Woman's Place in Public Health, 1900-1914" *Social History of Medicine* 1 (1) 1988, p.45.

<sup>158</sup> Beverly Boutilier, "Helpers or Heroines? The National Council of Women, Nursing and "Woman's Work" in Late Victorian Canada" in Dianne Dodd and Deborah Gorham (Eds), *Caring and Curing: Historical Perspectives on Women and Healing in Canada* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1994) p. 18.

interventions. As Griffiths notes,

Through their own associations and through Council machinery, women laboured for change in such diverse areas as hospital construction, the training of nurses, infant mortality in Montreal, and standards of cleanliness for milk, bread and meat. Their interest was in the provision of services and also in the monitoring of services provided.<sup>159</sup>

With the implementation of Better Baby Clinics "in every major city, women congratulated themselves as they weighed in healthier and larger children, living proof of the benefits of regular feedings of pure milk."<sup>160</sup> Perhaps the greatest contribution to public health the NCW made was in the successful lobbying of the the Division of Child Welfare in the newly created federal Department of Health in 1919.<sup>161</sup> This allowed for professional as well as organizational intervention in the name of the child into both home and school life. This involvement allowed NCW members in tandem with the Victorian Order of Nurses, to sponsor and conduct classes for women and young girls in motherhood to help reinforce women's proper role. As Arnup states,

...'Little Mother Classes', which were designed 'to stimulate girls to help with babies in their homes and neighbourhoods, to encourage them to direct their mothers to medical care and to prepare themselves for the eventual career of motherhood.'<sup>162</sup>

Within these classes there were nine different lessons which the girls were supposed to be practising at home with their mothers, with the dual purpose of teaching both mothers and daughters. In addition, there was a final examination and if they were successful in passing the course, they received a badge and a

<sup>159</sup> Griffiths, The Splendid Vision... p. 118.

<sup>160</sup> Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women:... p. 265.

<sup>161</sup> Arnup, Education for Motherhood:... p. 28. See also Heather MacDougall, Activists and Advocates: Toronto's Health Department, 1883-1983 (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1990) p. 17. The Provincial Department of Health was established in 1882, whose services were transferred to the Ministry of Labour and Health in 1919. The federal Department of Health was also formed in 1919 with the Division of Child Welfare being instituted by 1920 with the appointment of Dr. Helen MacMurphy.

<sup>162</sup> *ibid.* p. 46.

certificate.<sup>163</sup> The emphasis in these courses was on the transmission of the motherhood ideal, the transference of new scientific techniques of raising healthy children, and most importantly, the right kind of mothering. This can be seen in Arnup's relating of a 1930 play called "The Pageant of Motherhood" by the Hamilton Local Council of Women, in which "the story was 'constructed along the lines of the morality play' with 'Humanity, Progress and Science' representing the forces of good and 'Selfishness, Apathy, Ignorance and Acceptivity' taking the part of evil."<sup>164</sup> This play was subsequently reviewed in the *Canadian Public Health Journal* which described the play's depictions of motherhood in glowing and romantic terms.

The ideals for motherhood and maternal health were issues that were heatedly discussed by the NCW and which resulted in attempts to regulate and potentially undermine women's autonomy as mothers by promoting the middle-class ideal. These actions were countered by genuine concerns for the welfare of the inhabitants of their communities by lobbying and petitioning for services for the tubercular, for the purification of milk and water, for regulation of the food industry, and so on. The connections between the surveillance of populations and the real need for improved sanitation in both urban and rural areas were made by groups like the National Council of Women and the Department of Health.

#### Public Health and Helen MacMurchy

The public health movement in Canada was motivated and influenced by Dr. Helen MacMurchy who combined both public health initiatives and social purity ideals. She was respected by the reformers and was asked to give advice, lectures and publications to both the national and local affiliates to be distributed among those who were seen to be in need of her advice.

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<sup>163</sup> *ibid.* p. 46-47.

<sup>164</sup> *ibid.* p. 48.



Angus McLaren<sup>165</sup> provides one of the few accounts of eugenics in Canada and its impact on the public health movement. McLaren details the work of Dr. Helen MacMurchy, and her influence on health care policy makers and health care workers in Ontario. MacMurchy's work exemplifies the interconnection of public health measures and the work of social reformers in promoting social purity ideals.

MacMurchy was among the second generation of successfully practising women doctors in Canada. She worked for the Ontario government from 1906 to 1919, and then the federal government 1920 to 1934. She held many positions including Inspector of the Feeble-minded, Medical Inspector for Toronto Schools, and Chief of the Division of Maternal and Child Welfare.<sup>166</sup> As Dianne Dodd notes, "as a woman, a medical doctor, an outspoken eugenicist and a prominent individual who held appropriately conventional views on women's role in society, she reflected a bland but safe consensus among the many groups interested in maternal welfare."<sup>167</sup>

MacMurchy's work focused on three main issues; infant mortality, maternal mortality, and feeble-mindedness. To MacMurchy, rural and ethnic mothers were special risks in need of both good guidance and good services. She described these women as ignorant, indifferent and apathetic to their children's well being. She was motivated more by the threat disease posed the "race" than by empathy for the individual because she felt that individuals and not society were responsible for the nation's ills.<sup>168</sup> It was a comfort for the middle class to think that poverty and criminality could be attributed to individual weakness rather than structural flaws

<sup>165</sup> Angus McLaren, Our Own Master Race:... Ch. 2.

<sup>166</sup> McLaren, Our Own Master Race:... p. 30

<sup>167</sup> Dianne Dodd "Advice to Parents: The Blue Books, Helen MacMurchy, MD and the Federal Department of Health, 1920-34" Canadian Bulletin of Medical History 8, 1991, p. 206.

<sup>168</sup> McLaren, Our Own Master Race:... p. 30.

of the economy.<sup>169</sup>

Feeble-mindedness became a common medical term applied to those previously labelled "improvable idiots". These were mental "defectives" who had responded to institutional care and treatment to the point where they were able to take care of their physical needs, to learn to work and potentially return to the community to do menial work.<sup>170</sup> This provided a new classification between "normal" and "idiots" or "imbeciles". This new category was misleading in its ability to provide a useful or accurate diagnosis however, as the individuals it referred to would be barely distinguishable from the rest of the population.<sup>171</sup> By 1908 MacMurchy asserted that 80% of feeble-mindedness could be eliminated within a generation of segregation but ultimately the most effective and economic method would be sterilization.<sup>172</sup> With reference to a 1915 report by a city official from Maryland regarding their efforts to institutionalize or segregate feeble-minded populations, MacMurchy pondered, " 'it is impossible to calculate what even one feeble-minded woman may cost the public, when her vast possibilities for evil as a producer of paupers and criminals, through an endless line of descendants is considered.' "<sup>173</sup>

Feeble-minded breeders who were deemed undesirable included inmates of prisons, hospitals and asylums.<sup>174</sup> If their breeding capacities were diminished (it was thought that) criminality, alcoholism, and feeble-mindedness could be sufficiently reduced and eventually eliminated from society. This then became the

<sup>169</sup> See Figure D, p. 59, "Catechism" from Helen MacMurchy, Report of Inspectors of Hospitals for Feeble-minded and Epileptics. (Toronto: King's Printer, 1916). p. 32-33; Sears, " 'To Teach Them How to Live':..." p. 68.

<sup>170</sup> Peter Stearns, "Explaining Social Policy: The English Mental Deficiency Act of 1913" Journal of Social History 11 (3) 1978, pp. 387-403; Nikolas Rose, "The Psychological Complex: Mental Measurement and Social Administration" Ideology and Consciousness 5, 1979, pp. 5-68.

<sup>171</sup> Catherine Annau, "Eager Eugenicists: A Reappraisal of the Birth Control Society of Hamilton" Histoire Sociale/Social History 27 (53) 1994, p. 127.

<sup>172</sup> McLaren, Our Own Master Race:..., p. 30.

<sup>173</sup> as quoted in *ibid.* p. 40.

<sup>174</sup> *ibid.* p. 16.

Helen MacMurchy Report of Inspectors of Hospitals for Feeble-minded and Epileptics  
(King's Printer: Toronto, 1916)  
Figure D.

CATECHISM.

1. WHY SHOULD I READ THIS CATECHISM? *Because I am a Canadian and because I pay taxes.*
  2. WHO ARE THE FEEBLE-MINDED? *Those whose minds are the minds of children, no matter how old they may be. They cannot learn properly at school, their minds are always undeveloped, they cannot control themselves, cannot manage their own affairs, cannot earn their living unless continually directed and supervised. They form a large proportion of the unemployed, the unemployable, the dependents, the "ne'er-do-weels," the paupers, the prostitutes, the criminals.*
  3. WHERE ARE THE FEEBLE-MINDED? *In our Public Schools, Separate Schools, Industrial Schools, Homes, Refuges, Orphanages, Hospitals, Houses of Industry, Industrial Farms and all other charitable institutions—in our Gaols, Prisons, Prison Farms and Penitentiaries—and at large in the community.*
  4. What is the number of the feeble-minded in Canada? *About two or three per 1,000 population.*
  5. Is the number of the feeble-minded in Canada increasing, and if so, why? *Yes. Because feeble-minded persons have many children, and because there are some feeble-minded immigrants.*
  6. Could the number of feeble-minded persons in Canada be prevented from increasing? *Yes. Permanent care of the feeble-minded from an early age would prevent the natural increase, and a stricter medical examination of immigrants in the country from which they come as well as at the port of entry would prevent increase by immigration.*
  7. WHO SUPPORTS THE FEEBLE-MINDED? *You do. You pay School taxes and Municipal Taxes. You subscribe to charitable institutions. You belong to some benevolent society. You help with relief work. You pay the cost of the administration of justice, the upkeep of penal institutions and the salaries of school, sanitary, municipal, police and all other officers and officials. It is a big bill.*
  8. CAN THE FEEBLE-MINDED EARN THEIR OWN LIVING? *Many of them can almost or quite earn their own living, if trained, and if cared for and supervised in a suitable institution, the only place where they are ever really happy. Almost all of them can be taught to do something useful.*
  9. What is the cause of feeble-mindedness? *Heredity is the cause in about eighty per cent. or more of all cases. Four out of every five feeble-minded persons had one or more feeble-minded parents, or grandparents, or both. In one out of five cases the cause is accidental or unknown as yet.*
  10. CAN FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS BE CURED? *NO.*
  11. CAN FEEBLE-MINDED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS BE TRAINED, IMPROVED AND MADE USEFUL AND HAPPY? *Yes.*
  12. WHY SHOULD WE CARE FOR THE FEEBLE-MINDED IN CANADA? *Because we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. Because it costs less to care for them than to neglect them. Because if we don't they will leave behind them so many feeble-minded children that it will be bad for Canada. One feeble-minded man and one feeble-minded woman, born in Ontario and married in Ontario, have had ten children, all feeble-minded.*
  13. WHO WILL HELP ME TO CARE FOR THE FEEBLE-MINDED? *Your School Trustee, who has the direction of the Teacher, the School Nurse and the School Medical Inspector.  
Your Warden, Reeve, and Council.  
Your Mayor and Alderman.  
Your Member of the Legislative Assembly.  
Your fellow-citizens, your friends, your neighbors, your family.  
Yourself.*
  14. WHAT SHOULD WE DO FOR THE FEEBLE-MINDED, BOTH FOR THEIR SAKE AND FOR THE SAKE OF THE COUNTRY?
    - Have Medical Inspection of schools so that we may know where our feeble-minded children are.*
    - Have auxiliary classes for all children who are backward, so as to get them forward, if possible, and to find out why they are backward. If it is found that the reason of retardation is feeble-mindedness, then they need special training.*
    - Have Training Schools and Homes for feeble-minded children.*
    - Have Industrial Farm Colonies where adult feeble-minded persons may earn their living and be safe and happy and be prevented from being a source of evil and expense in the community."*
- This Catechism was reprinted in full as above in White Paper No. 4, Bureau of Municipal Research, Toronto, May 28th, 1915. The title of this paper was "Are All Children Alike?" and the whole of the paper was devoted to the question of Backward and Feeble-minded Children.

policy goal for negative eugenics: to restrict the breeding of the “unfit”. The standard to determine an individual’s breeding capacity was measured through social success as a “reliable” indicator of physical and intellectual hereditary fitness.<sup>175</sup>

The fear of the feebleminded was cultivated on the assumption made by social commentators that mental deficiency was a cause of social ills.<sup>176</sup> Poverty, unemployment, illegitimacy, crime, sexually transmitted diseases were all seen to be linked to feeblemindedness.<sup>177</sup> The Department of Health and Heredity was largely responsible for popularizing eugenic ideas among ordinary Canadian women disguising it as what Frances Willard called “ ‘the religion of the body.’ ”<sup>178</sup> The National Council of Women was the first organization to actively campaign for the segregation of the feebleminded. Segregation of the feebleminded in institutions ultimately paid for itself. The propaganda inferred that it was going to be more expensive for the taxpayers if the feebleminded roamed free.<sup>179</sup> Institutionalization would prevent the feebleminded from reproducing and harassing society.<sup>180</sup>

MacMurphy was convinced that innate biological inequality could never be overcome and individuals and physicians needed to accept responsibility for their own fates. Throughout her work there was a reliance on the argument of “individual inadequacy” for which MacMurphy proposed three solutions:

- (1) the minimal standards of public health were to be established,
- (2) the “well intentioned but ignorant” were to be instructed by doctors on the rules of hygiene and sent on their way,
- (3) the “vicious or hopelessly deficient” - those incapable of following instructions were to be segregated and institutionalized.”<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> *ibid.* p. 16.

<sup>176</sup> McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*:..., p. 35.

<sup>177</sup> McConnachie, *Science and Ideology*:... p. 21.

<sup>178</sup> Valverde, *The Age of Light*:... p. 59.

<sup>179</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*: ... p. 39.

<sup>180</sup> *ibid.* p. 39.

<sup>181</sup> *ibid.* p. 31.

According to MacMurchy, "the medical expert had to save the poor from themselves and instruct women on the nature of their 'natural' role."<sup>182</sup> This perspective helped doctors reinforce the message that women's first duty was to remain in the home. In her opinion women were either ignorantly favouring the inadequate services of midwives or were cut off by distance or lack of economic resources from the services of doctors. From this came the necessity to teach women to rely on their doctors. This view was supported by Dr. Atlee, who wrote in his 1931 article "*Are Women Sheep?*", "[W]omen having confided to males the important decision making tasks, should then retreat to their primary role of childbearing and rearing."<sup>183</sup>

The most drastic attempts at social purity and regulating the social body came from the medical profession in the form of sterilization. In Ontario in 1912, Dr. John Godfrey proposed the first of many pieces of legislation that would have allowed a board of surgeons to examine inmates and "to perform operations which would prevent the procreation of children by those who might thus be declared unfit for marriage."<sup>184</sup> Sterilization legislation was never passed in Ontario but it was still carried out under the guise of "medical and scientific progress". The most that the Ontario law would do was require that two doctors sign forms attesting that the sterilization being performed was for the reasons of physical health only.<sup>185</sup> As early as 1928, the medical profession acknowledged that the Ontario government

<sup>182</sup> McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*:... p. 32.

<sup>183</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*:... p. 33.

<sup>184</sup> *ibid.* p. 30. This speech was also reported in the Port Arthur Daily News (hereafter PADN) on the Women's Page, February 14, 1913, "Health Bill Before Wedding".

<sup>185</sup> Annau, "Eager Eugenicists:...", p. 111-133.

unofficially sanctioned sterilization.<sup>186</sup> By 1933 British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba all had sterilization laws in place.

The collaboration of women's organizations and the public health profession was an effective force in defining the appropriate vision of social and moral worth based on gendered, classed and racialized stereotypes. Social and medical reformers used the reports provided by both official and unofficial organizations, of poverty, crime, poor and overcrowded housing and high mortality rates to initiate improvements that would impact on the lives of immigrants, the working class, women and children. Social welfare advocates were able to aid in the maintenance of child welfare clinics, visiting nurse services, and the development of advice literature and effectively distribute these materials to those deemed in need. This allowed reformers to effectively place themselves in instructional and supervisory positions of the programs aimed primarily at mothers who, it was stressed, were raising the next generation of Canadians and needed to be taught how to raise proper children. "By pointing an accusatory finger at mothers, they were able to concentrate on education rather than the development of wide-ranging social welfare programs."<sup>187</sup> The ability to moralize and politicize issues such as poverty and disease provided both the medical profession and women's organizations the authority to visibly define proper lifestyles and aid in the redefinition of the negative lifestyle patterns of certain visible sections of the social body.

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<sup>186</sup> *ibid.* p. 127; This action is also acknowledged in the PADN, April 3, 1928, "Sterilization of the Feeble-minded Given Approval By Judge" "... We view with approbation the legislation in some of the Provinces regarding the sterilization of all the feeble-minded," read the report. "We would recommend that our Provincial Government appoint a competent commission to investigate this matter with a view to applying it not only to the feeble-minded, but also to certain types of vicious characters" ... "It will come all right in time," said His Honor [Judge Coatsworth], "but like all these things, we shall have to keep hammering away at it."

<sup>187</sup> Cynthia Comacchio Abeele, " 'The Mothers of the Land Must Suffer': Child and Maternal Welfare in Rural and Outpost Ontario, 1918-1940" *Ontario History* 80, 3, 1988, p. 184. See also her full work, *Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1993)

The emphasis on regulating women through their social and physical identities as mothers and attempting to mould them into better citizens, was accomplished through public health measures and the growing influence of scientific medicine and domestic science. Middle-class women were not only placed in a morally-superior position but also in a professional position in that they possessed the knowledge of how to create better families. Their attempts to impart new methods of childrearing and domestic skills on those deemed less fortunate was made part of the official mandate for public health nurses with the ability to intervene in situations that were deemed less than desirable or standard. Helen MacMurphy's influence as both a health care promoter and a woman did not go unnoticed by the NCW. Their concerns for public health were made directly to her as she created specific government departments devoted to maternal and child welfare. The growth of social service agencies as an offshoot of women's philanthropic endeavours would mean a change in the focus of the already operational organizations as more of a helping and enforcing entity in tandem with these agencies as well as a vehicle for change.

While the macro structure of Canadian society was changing due to increased urbanization, the processes of centralization, institutionalization, secularization, and professionalization were changing the micro structures that would shape the concerns and aims of the social reform movement. In the local communities women were interested in issues that could be seen occurring nationally and were often directed by those national groups in their efforts to create change. The National Council of Women of Canada was an autonomous group that attempted to unite women to help influence the shape of policy for the nation with issues such as immigration, women's employment and securing the vote. The Women's Institutes on the other hand had very specific aims directed by the Department of

Agriculture as influenced by the Provincial government of the day and tried to be concerned with women in rural areas. The WI's were primarily concerned with the changing face of Canadian society as it would eventually affect people in rural areas. While its origins were not overtly political in its aims, a combination of individual leadership and the politics of the NCWC as part of a larger national movement made their contributions to women's lives political in nature. The consequences of the NCWC's actions as they contributed to the public health movement's initiatives, will be demonstrated in the local context of Chapter Four.

Chapter Three will now outline changes to the cities of Port Arthur and Fort William as they grew and industrialized from frontier outposts to a more urban environment. With increased opportunities for communication and transportation in the north, the women of the cities were better able to receive the ideas of the National Council and the Women's Institutes and implement them in their own communities. The growth pattern of the region differed from the more industrialized centres of commerce in both the east and west because of its predominantly resource-based economies of mining, shipping and forestry. As cities, Fort William and Port Arthur had to cope with isolation from the rest of the province and faced the challenge of maintaining their industrial base which began to fail and disappear. These conditions affected the way in which the local social purity movement under the direction of social reformers and public health officials formed and progressed, in addition to the range of issues which they addressed.



### Chapter Three: *Years of Progress, Years of Change*

#### Introduction

This chapter will discuss the local settings of Port Arthur and Fort William as they were developing from rural to urban locales, in order to provide a context for the discussion of local female reformers and their social organizations between 1900-1930. As the region developed economically, the influx of settlers changed the physical and social setting, providing an ideal local environment for the development of a moral and social reform movement similar to those which had already gained national appeal. Issues such as immigration, education, public health and employment which will be discussed here, were all issues that occupied the women's organizations during this time frame. The drastic influx of immigrants and working-class families to the region provided the impetus for City Council, public health officials and social reformers alike to regulate the social body while attempting to make this region economically viable.

#### The Northern Outpost

Fort William and Port Arthur were facing their own challenges as modernization swept across Canada. The abandonment of Fort William as a major trading post of the Northwest Company by approximately 1821, left the region without any economic base, no means for survival and consequently no reason for its existence, in Eurocentric terms. It was not until the mid 1840's that interest in the region was revitalized. This renewed interest was due to the growing prospects for an abundant mineral extraction industry which necessitated the opening of new shipping routes through Sault Ste. Marie efficiently connecting the Northern outposts with Southern Ontario's commercial interests.<sup>188</sup> By 1860, the extraction of natural resources through mining around Current River (and later on Silver Islet),

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<sup>188</sup> Livio Di Matteo, "The Economic Development of the Lakehead during the Wheat Boom Era: 1900-1914" Ontario History 83 (4) December 1991 p. 301.

and logging, in turn became the economic basis that the region would use to rebuild itself. By 1881, the majority of the railway system connecting the coasts of the Nation was completed and all that remained to be accomplished was establishing the link between Ontario and the East. This meant easier shipping of grain from the west to the east with the Lakehead utilized as a storage and shipping point. The surveying and subsequent construction of the Dawson Road from Prince Arthur's Landing (which later became Port Arthur) through to Fort Frances and on to the Red River Settlement proved to be beneficial in helping to quash the Riel Rebellions of 1869-1870.<sup>189</sup> This link was then used to encourage settlement of the prairies and was again useful in transporting settlers from major immigration ports to the unpopulated regions of the country. The construction of the railway "attracted enormous government subsidies that were used to pay labourers, suppliers and businesses as well as to line the pockets of numerous land speculators."<sup>190</sup>

Due to the rapid railway development, labourers were needed to clear trees and build the components of the railway. During this time there were massive promotional campaigns presented by the Canadian Pacific Railway to recruit workers from cities both within and outside Canada most notably, Finland, Italy, and Britain. Finns especially were portrayed as a "sturdy, honest, hard-working, God-fearing folk, used to hardship and toil, obliged to battle in order to live."<sup>191</sup> Slowly the towns of Port Arthur and Fort William were carved out of bush and rock

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<sup>189</sup> James Stafford, "A Century of Growth at the Lakehead" In Thorold J. Tronrud and A. Ernest Epp (Eds), Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum, 1995) p. 38.

<sup>190</sup> *ibid.* p. 39.

<sup>191</sup> Christine Kouhi, "Labour and Finnish Immigration to Thunder Bay, 1876-1914" Lakehead University Review 9 (1) spring 1976, p.19; Patricia Jasen, Wild Things: Nature, Culture and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) Jasen also cites the promotional material used by the Railway Companies who used the Northern environs to entice workers to come to the region.

into transportation and shipping ports that rivalled Winnipeg and Chicago.<sup>192</sup> As Tronrud points out, the zeal with which the Boards of Trade and the City Councils pursued investors in a desire to become more important in the national economy as the gateway to the west was quite astounding. Manufacturers were offered as much as twelve times the average amount provided by Southern Ontario cities in loans and cash subsidies in return for situating their business in the Lakehead.<sup>193</sup>

The establishment of the railway at the head of Lake Superior meant easier shipping for grain products overseas and this in part, fuelled a wheat boom that would successfully carry Fort William and Port Arthur into the twentieth century. A certain amount of almost manic idealism accompanied the boom in economic and industrial development at the Lakehead. By 1900 there were five grain terminal elevators in Port Arthur. These presented many more opportunities for sustained business development in the region and supported an increase in the mostly immigrant population.

To those who transported them here, immigrants were a source of revenue; to the nation builders, they were a pool of labour that would perform work which no one else would, and for a pittance; to industrial employers, they were an unskilled labour pool that would work long and irregular hours for a similar pittance; to domestic employers, immigrant women were charwomen, cooks and laundresses, although of a quality far inferior to English-speaking domestics.<sup>194</sup>

The population of the Lakehead quadrupled between 1901 and 1911 which provided the ammunition for both social purity and public health advocates and their supporters. The establishment of "colonies" or pockets of ethnic groups in the cities meant that monitoring of particular groups was made easy. The need for public health measures in immigrant areas was taken seriously with the use of municipal

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<sup>192</sup> Thorold J. Tronrud, Guardians of Progress: Boosters and Boosterism in Thunder Bay, 1870-1914 (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum, 1993) p. 9-10.

<sup>193</sup> Thorold J. Tronrud, "Buying Prosperity: The Bonusing of Factories at the Lakehead, 1885-1914" Urban History Review 19, 1990, p.2-3.

<sup>194</sup> Frenette, The Great War's Defeats:... p. 70.

legislation banning the keeping of farm animals in back lanes and back yards as well as the regulation of populations within the home (for example, the number of individuals allowed to live in particular residences).<sup>195</sup> The dramatic population influx allowed both towns to become incorporated as cities by 1911.<sup>196</sup> The establishment of other major industries ranging from lumber and mining to the Canadian Iron and Foundry Works and the Western Drydock and Shipbuilding Company, showed prospective investors that skilled labour-power and resources were available to be used in the region and with the establishment of the Canadian Pacific Railway, their goods could be shipped to markets anywhere in Canada. In 1901 the Canadian Northern Railway created a terminal in Fort William as did the Grand Trunk Pacific in 1905, which attracted industry to that city as well. The railways were still the major employers in the city hiring workers to maintain their own sheds, and work at the freight yards, coal docks and grain elevators. The establishment of all three railroad systems was promoted as a strong selling point to investors as was the extraction of primary resources which could also be carried out through rail and shipping routes.

The income generated through the establishment of these industries meant that much needed infrastructure could also be established. By approximately 1907, both Fort William and Port Arthur, had established their own electric light and telephone system, waterworks, a municipal theatre, and dance hall, and Port Arthur owned an electric street railway system that served both cities.<sup>197</sup> The continued and sustained growth that lasted until approximately 1913, gave rise to an almost arrogant desire to create a New Ontario that would be completely autonomous from the rest of the province which, it was argued, was not representing this region's

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<sup>195</sup> City of Thunder Bay Archives (hereafter CTBA), Series 75, TBA 4099, Fort William Board of Health, April 2, 1906, p. 53.

<sup>196</sup> Di Matteo, "The Economic Development of the Lakehead..." p. 304.

<sup>197</sup> *ibid.* p. 308.

interests thoroughly.<sup>198</sup> This movement did not die out for many years to come even though the impressive “boom” was not to last. While it did though, the cities of Port Arthur and Fort William attempted to carve a place for themselves within the Canadian economy.

A process of social stratification occurred as rapidly as the economic boom did. In the upper echelons of society were “the merchants, real estate speculators, contractors, promoters of railways, mines, shipping and lumbering, and entrepreneurs”<sup>199</sup> who managed to combine several of these enterprises and become the elite and founding families of the two cities. This group was also part of the driving force behind local boosterism. The second group contained the artisans and tradesmen. This group was the most politically radical and was the source of several labour strikes between 1903 and 1910. Ethnically, this group was primarily composed of individuals from eastern Canada, Great Britain, the United States and then secondarily, northern Europeans, and thirdly, south central Europeans.<sup>200</sup> As such, the Finnish and Scandinavians “held the highest rank among the foreigners as their physical characteristics, the similarity of their homeland to New Ontario, and their Protestant traditions facilitated their adaptability and their toleration by the English speaking community.”<sup>201</sup> The third social group was comprised of other foreigners who were tolerated only as the cheap labour imports who were “brought to Canada during the wheat boom era by transportation companies or immigration agencies for work on the hardest, heaviest and most precarious jobs.”<sup>202</sup> These were individuals who were from Italy, Greece, the Austro-Hungarian and Russian

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<sup>198</sup> Max Guennel, *Port Arthur Views Progress: 1900-1913* (HBA Thesis, Lakehead University, 1975). p. 13. New Ontario would become the Province of Algoma and districts of Nipissing, Algoma, Manitoulin, Thunder Bay, Rainy River and Keewatin.

<sup>199</sup> Jean Morrison, *Community and Class Conflict: A Study of the Working Class and its Relationships at the Canadian Lakehead, 1903-1913* (M.A. Thesis, Lakehead University, 1974) p. 8.

<sup>200</sup> *ibid.* p. 9-13.

<sup>201</sup> *ibid.* p. 13.

<sup>202</sup> *ibid.* p. 15.

Empires. They were often labelled incorrectly upon reaching Canada (for example, often Russian, Ruthenian, or Galician was indiscriminantly tagged on the Slavic immigrants, even though most were Ukrainian).<sup>203</sup>

In 1915, the City Council of Fort William endorsed war measures that were becoming common in the rest of the nation,<sup>204</sup> in the desire to restrict immigration due to fears of population degradation and terrorism as the following entry in Fort William's City Council minutes demonstrates:

Moved by Alderman Dennis McCall: -

That this Council is of the opinion that a more severe classification of immigrants entering Canada should be enforced and that such as experienced agriculturalists and artisans be encouraged to locate in Canada, and that the special Committee take this question up with the proper authorities.<sup>205</sup>

Also during 1915, Mayor Young of Fort William wrote a letter directly to Prime Minister Borden pleading to alleviate the alien enemy situation in the city. His concern was for the economic well being of the city and the potential for terrorist acts resulting in the destruction of valuable grain stores which would create definite discomfort with shipping companies and other potential industry speculators.

The presence of these alien enemies in this city creates a grave situation in that it is not only a menace to this city, but to the whole Dominion, and on that account should be taken hold of by the Government and dealt with at once. This being so, for the following specific reasons, we ask that all alien enemies and their families be removed from this city and taken to Upsala, a station on the CPR, 84 miles west of here, as was intended and arranged for during the first part of May last. There they can be properly guarded, kept from overt, malicious or malignant acts, and any who might be secret emissaries be placed where they could give no information to the

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<sup>203</sup> *ibid.* p. 15.

<sup>204</sup> Donald Avery, "Dangerous Foreigners": European Immigrant Workers and Radicalism in Canada, 1869-1932 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1979).

<sup>205</sup> CTBA, TBA 14. Fort William City Council Minutes, July 13, 1915, p. 78. This request would have been submitted to the Immigration Agent for the region. Unfortunately there is no indication that there was any direct action taken.

enemy. Their labor could be used to advantage clearing land, and making it suitable for agriculture. These people on slight provocation, might be aroused and do immense damage that would be far reaching in its effect.<sup>206</sup>

Fostering the fear of aliens and their potential for destruction was a key element for reformers throughout the war years. The groups being referred to in this letter as "enemy aliens" were of Austrian and German origin and radical Finnish individuals who were suspected of being terrorists, socialists and spies in addition to being unemployed which also made them a perceived threat.<sup>207</sup> While there had been many violent strikes previous to the War, and the Riot Act had been read in 1909 during Col. Sam Steele's visit to the cities, it is not conclusive what dangers may have been part of the day-to-day life in the cities. The Fort William City Council was looking to dispense with 2676 people "who are practically under no restraint... [and are] crowding into shacks in such numbers that in case of an epidemic, their presence in the City would be a menace to the health of the City".<sup>208</sup> Subsequently, there were requests made and granted for internment camps to be established across the north in towns such as Kapuskasing and Upsala with the aim of physically containing potentially subversive or dangerous individuals or groups.<sup>209</sup> While the hostility towards immigrant populations did not completely subside with the end of the War, they were once again welcomed into the region as the need for labour grew.

In the post-war era, development in Port Arthur and Fort William was primarily within the areas of shipping, grain elevators and the building of paper mills. As the economic importance of the wheat pools and shipping industries

<sup>206</sup> CTBA, Series 4, TBA 2, Fort William City Clerks Files, June 25, 1915. See also PADN, February 22, 1915, "400 Aliens to be Put to Work Here at Once" and July 15, 1915, "Internment Camp is a Fine Place", March 15, 1917, "To Send the Aliens to Kapuskasing".

<sup>207</sup> For other definitions of "aliens" see Woodsworth, Strangers in our Gates... passim., Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap and Water... Ch. 5., McLaren, Our Own Master Race... Ch.3.

<sup>208</sup> CTBA, Series 4, TBA 2, Fort William City Clerks Files, June 25, 1915.

<sup>209</sup> *ibid.*

grew, the importance of farming to families also shifted from a primary source of income to a personal food source. While this shift in the economic base of the region was occurring, mineral and forestry exploitation created more jobs for immigrants who were not as urgently required for regional infrastructure development as they were in the pre-War era. This shift in the economic base helped change the population from a rural based one to more of an urban one. The process of upward mobility and urbanization created an increase in service sector employment with an over-representation of workers in the primary and manual sectors of employment and an under-representation of workers in the white collar sector.<sup>210</sup> As Ahti Tolvanen notes,

Those who entered the respectable service and white collar professions were likely to find less in common with those who were labourers as years went by. The onset of the depression seems to have brought a final break in the ethnic community as those who had experienced upward mobility formed organizations expressing loyalty to Canada while the other group joined the left-wing movement.<sup>211</sup>

The abrupt halt in the establishment of new manufacturing plants that occurred just before the war was given a brief reprieve in 1918 with an order for cars made by the Canadian Car and Foundry Company.<sup>212</sup> There continued to be, fewer of the original factories in operation from the pre-war era of rapid industrialization. However as Tronrud notes,

on the surface, the Lakehead economy grew in the 1920s. The value of goods produced rose from \$14.5 million to over \$20 million, and the industrial consumption of hydro-electric power skyrocketed. Gone or withering away was the heavy manufacturing economy created in

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<sup>210</sup> Ahti Tolvanen, Port Arthur Finns in the Interwar Period: A Perspective on Urban Integration, (Paper for the Finn Forum, 1979) p. 10-13; see also Tolvanen, "Finntown": A Perspective on Urban Integration: Port Arthur Finns in the Inter-War Period 1918-1939 (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 1985).

<sup>211</sup> *ibid.* p. 18.

<sup>212</sup> Tronrud, "Building the Industrial City" p. 110.



the mad rush to industrialize in the decade before the war and, in its place, emerged a more traditional resource extraction economy based on shipping, grain elevators, and pulp and paper.<sup>213</sup>

The decline in manufacturing had implications for the pulp and paper industry. As an upsurge in pulp mills as the next stage in wood processing occurred, the technology was improved and more people were hired. The added bonus of new hydro-electric plants to speed up the pulping process was also helpful in attracting business to the Lakehead. In 1921 three mills established themselves in Fort William and “by 1923, over \$7,000,000 had been invested in the local industry, primarily by Americans, and it employed as many as 1,200 persons.”<sup>214</sup> By the close of the decade, three mills that had already been established were revitalized, and firms in forestry and related industries became the dominant employers for the two cities. For reformers, the modernization that was occurring meant that the region was prospering in the same manner as more urban cities such as Toronto, but this also meant the likelihood of an increase in social problems. For example, there was an increase in immigration to the region which meant that immigrant communities and traditions would continue to thrive in spite of reformers attempts to change them. The economic health of the region would continue to go through boom and bust swings, while the physical health of the citizens of Port Arthur and Fort William improved by much smaller increments.

#### Public Health In the Twin Cities

To those living outside of the Northwest, the region was portrayed as being healthier due to the wide open spaces, clean water, and the remoteness of being away from the dangers of the city.<sup>215</sup> By contrast, there was also a common belief that the rural, small-town and northern unorganized parts of the province needed the

<sup>213</sup> *ibid.* p. 110.

<sup>214</sup> *ibid.* p. 111.

<sup>215</sup> Meryn Stuart, “Let not the People Perish for Lack of Knowledge”: Public Health Nursing and the Ontario Rural Child Welfare Project, 1916-1930 (PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1987) p. 125; see also Jasen, Wild Things...

most "assistance", yet administrators both inside and outside of these areas were reluctant to spend the money on long term solutions. Concerns for the health of the residents in Northwestern Ontario were exacerbated by the lack of sewers, a lack of safe drinking water, overcrowding in already substandard homes in which mostly immigrant and working-class families lived and a general lack of medical facilities especially for obstetrical care. As in other urban centres, the interest in economic growth for the cities outweighed the concern for public health and sanitation for the residents. As Tronrud points out,

A majority of ratepayers in Fort William, for example, voted in 1900 against the town guaranteeing a \$15,000 loan for the erection of a hospital (the town not having one) and yet, at the same time, endorsed a \$75,000 cash bonus for a smelter. The hospital by-law only passed due to the fact that non-ratepayers were also allowed to vote.<sup>216</sup>

The lack of services in the cities was noted by Bryce Stewart in a 1913 social survey which describes these impoverished sections of Fort William: "there has been no deterioration of values, but in some sections, where the foreigners having encroached, there has really been a deterioration, since they have taken from the general appearance and desirability of these portions of the City [sic]."<sup>217</sup>

The coal docks section in Fort William was an example of the encroachment that Stewart describes. The coal docks were heavily populated with Ruthenians, Italians, Slovaks, Bulgarians and Finns who generally worked for the railways or lumber companies.<sup>218</sup> Disease was common in these pockets or "colonies" as Stewart later defines them, because of the lack of communication and subsequent confusion between the Medical Health Officer and the "foreigners", the poor to

<sup>216</sup> Tronrud, "Building the Industrial City", p. 112.

<sup>217</sup> Bryce Stewart, Report of a Preliminary and General Social Survey of Fort William, 1913 (Toronto: Department of Temperance and Moral Reform of the Methodist and the Board of Service of the Presbyterian Churches) p.6. For another vision of the City see Mary Black, "A Town Survey: In Theory and In Practice" Proceedings of the Ontario Library Association. 16th Annual Meeting, 1917.

<sup>218</sup> *ibid.* p. 6.

nonexistent services and the general lack of interest in improving this area. Weaver describes the Port Arthur Medical Officer's confusion, "with paternalistic dismay, Port Arthur's health officer could not understand why the foreigners should 'look upon the health officials as their natural enemies, whose aim and desire is to interfere and make life unpleasant for them.'" <sup>219</sup>

In order to deal with these colonies, drastic measures were undertaken, as the March 1906 Fort William Daily Times Journal headlines, for example read, "*Would Burn the Shacks at Once: Dr. Douglas Speaks of Conditions in Coal Docks Section*". Dr. Douglas advocated burning the coal docks section because "one of the worst features to be found amongst foreigners is that they will not, as a rule, take sufficient and proper precautions,...It would not be surprising if we soon found it expedient to resort to extreme measures to prevent the spread of the disease [typhoid]." <sup>220</sup> Consequently, in July of 1906 the shacks were ordered burned "as they are in too filthy a condition to allow them to remain" and the residents who had inhabited them were left homeless. <sup>221</sup> This is not the only time that this type of drastic action was taken by the Medical Health Officer as the Board of Health minutes for June 19, 1903 attests:

That whereas the house lately occupied by \_\_\_ \_\_\_ at West Fort has been declared by the Medical Health Officer in a filthy condition, and contents practically saturated with the loathsome germs of cancer, and a menace to public health.

Therefore this Board of Health order that the said building be destroyed by Fire.

That the secretary arrange with the fire brigade to take the necessary precautions against the fire spreading. <sup>222</sup>

<sup>219</sup> John Weaver, " 'Tomorrow's Metropolis' Revisited: A Critical Assessment of Urban Reform in Canada, 1890-1920" in Gilbert Stelter and Alan Artibise (Eds) The Canadian City: Essays in Urban and Social History (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1984) p. 469-70.

<sup>220</sup> Fort William Daily Times Journal (hereafter FWDTJ) March 19, 1906.

<sup>221</sup> FWDTJ, July 6, 1906, "Filthy Shacks are Ordered Burned: Sanitary Inspector Makes a Report that Condemns Them".

<sup>222</sup> CTBA, Series 75, TBA 4099, Fort William Board of Health 1903-1930, June 19, 1903 p. 3.

The efforts of the public health officer did not go unnoticed by those families who the officials tried to change. The moralistic condemnation of immigrant and working-class families who were less inclined to go to the doctors, or lived in the poorer sections of the cities, with many relatives or friends living in one house or room such as the coal docks section, was prevalent in the activities and reports of the public health nurses and doctors. Another section of Stewart's report specifically discusses the immorality that comes of allowing people who are deemed unfit to reproduce and the harm that could come to the rest of society if they are not redeemed. He also makes the regulation of this volatile segment of society a patriotic duty of decent Canadians to support:

As, with due regard to the influences of heredity and environment, the final appeal is to the moral fibre of the individual, we should not neglect so great a factor in child-welfare as that of religious training; nor can we place too much emphasis upon the need of vital religion in the life of every individual in the community. Many of our social problems would be solved if to love God and to love our neighbor were the rule of living.<sup>223</sup>

Bryce Stewart's concern for the children of Port Arthur lay with the physical conditions of the immoral parent. He argued that by "prevent[ing] the marriage and reproduction of the physically and mentally unfit" there was the potential to save children.<sup>224</sup>

The main factors in the development of child life are Parents, Home, Companions, School and Church; each of these having a place in the equipment of a child for the battle of life.

With the records we have regarding the prevalence of Physical Degeneracy, Mental Deficiency, and Moral Perversion as causes, direct or contributory, of youthful delinquency we must recognize the importance of safeguarding the Springs of Life. Our business with the parent then first is to prevent the marriage and reproduction of the

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<sup>223</sup> Bryce Stewart, Report of a Preliminary and General Social Survey of Port Arthur, 1913 (Toronto: Department of Temperance and Moral Reform of the Methodist and the Board of Service of the Presbyterian Churches) p. 24.

<sup>224</sup> *ibid.* p. 23.

physically and mentally unfit; until we have adequately dealt with this problem we will have the delinquent, youthful and adult, to provide for. The strongest human influence brought to bear on child development is that of the home, it is only as the home becomes non-efficient that the influences of the street are paramount in character building. Standards of living as expressed in the home are determining factors in character-development of the children growing up in the home. And with the realization of this comes the sense of responsibility, as individuals and as a community, for conditions as they exist to-day in our District, and elsewhere in our Country Conditions of overcrowding, where a family or in many cases more than one family live in one room, where in addition to the family of the proprietor there are from ten to twenty boarders living in a six-roomed house, under such conditions it is impossible for these living as they are forced to do without privacy, or even the decencies of life to become Canadians in the best meaning of the word.

The expression given to social life, the wear and tear upon the nervous system of individuals by enforced close contact with others, the loss of the quality of delicacy, are perhaps more than we realize entering into the production of petty crime. In addition to this there are questions involving the health and physical well-being of those occupying such houses, one can hardly call them homes.<sup>225</sup>

Stewart's emphasis on "safeguarding the Springs of Life" was directly related to the regulation of the marital relations between man and wife to prevent the reproduction of the physically and mentally unfit in society.<sup>226</sup> This issue of the survival of the fittest and how they would survive in their current conditions was also the concern of Dr. Laurie, a Medical Health Officer from 1902-1931 in the District of Thunder Bay. In 1924 Port Arthur's, "Dr. Laurie told The Star that if the method of the survival of the fittest could be started he would not be surprised if every beggar in the world would soon be exterminated. 'It would be an ideal age,' he remarked hopefully."<sup>227</sup>

The open disdain of social reformers and public health officials can be seen in, for example, the conducting of events such as the Better Baby Contests and in the

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<sup>225</sup> *ibid.* p. 23.

<sup>226</sup> *ibid.* p. 23.

<sup>227</sup> cited in McLaren, Our Own Master Race:... p. 112-113.

information disseminated to the target groups in articles such as the April 17, 1914 article *Guarding the Public Health: Some Facts and Theories about Spread and Prevention of Disease by Dr. Hill.*<sup>228</sup>

The Better Baby Contests were “started with the idea of making the old-fashioned baby show a bit more satisfactory by having babies examined for physical perfection instead of dimples, golden ringlets and peaches and cream skin.”<sup>229</sup> The children were assessed according to the “Better Babies Standard Score Card”, which involved:

...two hundred [points] for mental and developmental tests, which prove whether baby takes proper notice of what goes on around, walks, sits up and speaks properly and shows a mental growth to correspond to age. One hundred points for weight and measurements which prove whether baby is well proportioned for his age. Five hundred for physical development, sturdy bones, firm flesh, smooth skin, good digestion, circulation and respiration. One hundred and fifteen for mouth and teeth. Eighty five for eye, ear, nose and throat tests.<sup>230</sup>

Mothers who did not take the time to participate in these contests were chastised on the Women’s Page of the *Port Arthur Daily News* for not “caring” about the welfare of their child. “To rear better babies must mean conscientious mothers. Conscientious mothers indirectly tend to create endless happiness. Better mothers will be the outcome of the Better Baby campaign.”<sup>231</sup> According to the West Algonia Local Council of Women meeting note of September 25, 1915, the Clinic accomplished what it was supposed to;

Dr. [Clara] Todson [one of the first female physicians in the city] reported for the “Better Baby Contest” that 98 babies had been enrolled in Fort William and 48 in Port Arthur; Clinics were established in both cities in Hospitals, 40 babies were taken to the hospital and 4 kept there.

<sup>228</sup> Port Arthur Daily News, (hereafter PADN) April 17, 1914.

<sup>229</sup> PADN, August 8, 1914, “Something New for Babies a Better Babies Contest”.

<sup>230</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>231</sup> PADN, July 20, 1914, “Better Babies” on the Women’s Page.

Seven physicians had helped in this work which had proved most satisfactory in that it had been the means of alleviating the fears of the foreign born mothers in regard to the Hospitals.<sup>232</sup>

This type of intervention was not an occasional occurrence. As a survey of the newspapers from this time reveals, that certain sections of the social body -- women (specifically mothers), the "foreigner" and children were the targets of social purity reformers. Very infrequently was there any attempt at changing the broader systems or structures in place that would collectively better the living conditions of those the reformers and physicians would be serving. The symbolic connection made between dirt and germs, and the real living situations of areas like the coal docks were made in the editorials of the Women's Pages and in the Board of Health meeting minutes.<sup>233</sup> While both City Councils did make statements about the lack of sewage systems, water and milk treatment facilities, and other concerns such as the keeping of farm animals close to living quarters as a potential health hazard, there was still little done in the way of improving the infrastructure to ameliorate these situations. Judgments about certain groups and individuals were made with a certain amount of moralistic piety by both public health officials and local women's organizations.

In addition to public health interventions, the City Councils for both Fort William and Port Arthur passed bylaws "Respecting Public Morals" in 1904 (which were revisited in 1917) and in 1884 (revisited in 1901) respectively.<sup>234</sup> The Bylaws themselves were similar in content and did not change in scope from their first passage to second revision. The laws prohibit the sale of alcohol to minors and servants without parental permission, the writing of "indecent or immoral words...

<sup>232</sup> Thunder Bay Historical Museum, (hereafter TBHM) WALCW, E 11/1/1, September 25, 1915, p. 80.

<sup>233</sup> see for example Figure E, p. 80, "Kill the Fly and Save the Baby".

<sup>234</sup> CTBA, City Council Bylaws of Fort William Bylaw 352, A Bylaw Respecting Public Morals in the Town of Fort William, 1904, and Bylaw 1827, Respecting Public Morals, 1917; City Council Bylaws of Port Arthur Bylaw 26, 1884, Town of Port Arthur A Bylaw Respecting Public Morals, and Bylaw 592, Respecting Public Morals 1901.

**Kill the Fly and  
Save the Baby**



Fly photo copyright by National Geographic Society.

Summer complaint, which causes the death of many young children every season, is nearly always the result of germs in food. THESE ARE OFTEN CARRIED TO FOODS BY FLIES. **KILL THE FLIES!**

*Port Arthur Daily News, August 1, 1912*

Figure E.



on any wall, board fence, or any other thing, in any place open to public view or exposure of wounds and deformities, as well as to bathing in public places without suitable clothing.

No person shall, within the City limits, bathe in the Kaministiquia River, Neebing River, or other public waters, or, in any place where such person would be open to observation, without wearing sufficient bathing dress or suit covering the body from the neck to the knees, but in the case of boys under fourteen years of age, bathing trunks shall be deemed a sufficient covering.<sup>235</sup>

The offence of begging, was described as,

No person shall go about from door to door soliciting charity or as a common beggar, nor shall any person in the streets or other public places importune others for help or aid in money, nor shall any deformed, malformed, or diseased person expose himself or be exposed in any street or public place in order to excite sympathy or induce help or assistance from general or public charity.<sup>236</sup>

In addition, the bylaws covered drunkenness and vagrancy, grave robbing, gambling houses, and houses of ill-fame for which,

...it shall not be lawful within the said limits for any person or persons to open, establish, keep, manage or maintain, to aid or assist in the opening, establishing, keeping, management or maintenance of, to be a common prostitute or inmate for the purposes of prostitution in, to have carnal connection with or knowledge of another, or to accept or give any money, fee, consideration or reward or promise of such for any act or the consent to any act of prostitution in any disorderly house or house of ill fame...<sup>237</sup>

The police were granted extraordinary powers to circumvent these social evils and were allowed to arrest individuals who were suspected of such indiscretions. They were allowed to search questionable premises to dismantle for example, gaming tables or houses of ill repute. The police were allowed to arrest individuals suspected of any of these offences without a warrant, and to detain them in the nearest police station until the offenders were brought before the magistrate. A fine

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<sup>235</sup> *ibid.* Fort William 1917.

<sup>236</sup> *ibid.* Fort William 1904.

<sup>237</sup> *ibid.* Port Arthur 1901.

of up to \$50.00 could be levied upon those found guilty, or depending upon the crime, "...the offender may be imprisoned in the common jail of the District of Thunder Bay, with or without hard labor, for any period not exceeding six (6) months..."<sup>238</sup> Unfortunately it is not known how many individuals were arrested under these bylaws, but the 1913 social survey conducted by Bryce Stewart does indicate that arrests were made.<sup>239</sup>

The response to these measures by social reform groups is not clear. There did not appear to be any public debate in the newspapers, but with social reformers operating under a primary goal of a new and informed social morality, it can be inferred that there would have been support for these measures by local social reform groups. The regulation of both the healthy and ill members of the social body, and the imposing of a specific type of morality upon individuals can be seen in the aforementioned bylaws, specifically the regulations relating to bathing and the need for the appropriate amount of body covering, in addition to the bylaw pertaining to the regulation of begging in the public spaces. The ability of police to arrest suspects, especially those connected to known houses of ill repute, without providing evidence or an arrest warrant, could be an indication of the determination to eradicate these behaviours as demonstrated in the scarce, but nonetheless revealing minutes of the Moral and Social Reform Council of Fort William.<sup>240</sup>

### Conclusion

The development of Port Arthur and Fort William as frontier societies meant that the concerns of the City Council and business leaders in the communities were current with the concerns of their counterparts in more urbanized regions of the

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<sup>238</sup> *ibid.* Fort William, 1917.

<sup>239</sup> Bryce Stewart, Report of a Preliminary and General Social Survey of Port Arthur, 1913 p. 13.

<sup>240</sup> TBHM, The Moral and Social Reform Council of Fort William, E 21/1/1 (1912-1913). Their quest was to promote social and moral reform through education, legislation, and administrative action.

province. City planners were still trying to build the infrastructure that would not only urbanize the region, but “civilize” it in a particular fashion. Competition between the two cities to attract business and prosper was intense which meant that a stable and steady workforce was required, as well as the business knowledge that could keep the region booming. The influx of a primarily immigrant and working-class population which did not share British middle-class values and practices, meant that the social body needed to be regulated. With the institution of public health measures, not only could surveillance and regulation of this population be achieved, but it was believed, a better society would result. In the following chapter, I will detail specific social purity ideas and activities of the women’s organizations of Port Arthur and Fort William. I will also discuss these ideas in relation to the moral and social reform ideals promoted by their national affiliates.

## Chapter Four: Defining Women's Roles in the Aurora

### Introduction

There were many women's groups active in Port Arthur and Fort William between 1900 and 1930. Groups such as the Canadian Club Women's Branch, the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire (IODE), the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Moral and Social Reform Council of Fort William, the Lord's Day Alliance,<sup>241</sup> the West Algoma Local Council of Women (WALCW) and the Women's Institute (WI) were all active in the local social reform movement. All of the groups had national ties, reported to their national affiliates, and to varying degrees looked toward their national executives to set the agenda for action. Of these, the West Algoma Local Council of Women and the Women's Institute were the most prominent women's groups in Port Arthur and Fort William. These groups received frequent coverage in the newspapers and their members were active in a range of community organizations which were influential at the time.

While the goals of and levels of intervention in social reform of the West Algoma Local Council of Women and the Women's Institute differed, both were ultimately concerned with shaping the future of their community and the nation. As shall be shown later in this chapter, the aims of the social purity and public health movement were similar. At times they acted together as enforcers of public morals and promoters of social policies that would both benefit particular groups and individuals, and yet regulate and restrict lifestyles not deemed acceptable.

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<sup>241</sup> While neither of these groups were exclusively women's organizations, the groups were still influential in the moral and social reform movement at the national level and women were featured predominantly in the membership lists.

## The West Algoma Local Council of Women (WALCW)

### Aims and Objects of the WALC of W

We, the women of Canada, sincerely believing that the best good of our homes and nations will be advanced by our greater unity of thought, sympathy and purpose, and that an organized non-sectarian and non-partisan movement of women will best conserve the highest good of the family and the state, do hereby band ourselves together to further the application of the Golden Rule to Society, Custom and Law.<sup>242</sup>

In 1894 the West Algoma Local Council of Women (WALCW) was formed as a branch of the National Council of Women of Canada. The WALCW functioned as the National branch did; as an umbrella group that carried the agenda for the rest of the clubs in the region and attempted to unite them under a single voice. Part of the President's 1920 address stated that "The LC[W] is not a body to do specific work, but a source for the expression of united opinion on such subjects and needs as seem most pressing,"<sup>243</sup> yet women of the WALCW did address specific issues both in their communities and nationally and took specific actions to create the changes they deemed necessary in their communities.

By surveying the membership rolls of the Council, it can be observed that the Presidents were quite frequently the members of local founding families, or wives of the past or present City Mayors, while the remainder of the executive committee was frequently made up of the wives of the captains of local industry or other prominent citizens. An example of this patronage is Mrs J.J. Carrick, whose husband was a real estate entrepreneur. Mr Carrick also owned the Port Arthur Daily News as well as other enterprises within both cities. Mr. Carrick became Member of Parliament for the District.<sup>244</sup> His position, both locally and provincially, was used to promote or gain access to services for the city. This type of influential connection was consistently evident on the LCW's working committees. Another

<sup>242</sup> TBHM WALCW meeting minutes E 11/4/1 n.p., n.d.

<sup>243</sup> TBHM WALCW meeting minutes E 11/4/1 n.p., n.d.

<sup>244</sup> Tronrud, "Building the Industrial City", p. 108.

example is Mrs Frank Blain whose husband helped in the establishment of the Children's Aid Society in Fort William.<sup>245</sup> The social influence of women such as Carrick and Blain, along with their socially acquired knowledge of business helped shape the focus of the work undertaken by the Local Council and enhanced their capacity to secure funds from City Council and business groups when the need arose. An example of this is in the case of a petition to City Council attempting to secure funding for a Travellers Aid Matron whose function would typically be to help young women newly arrived to the city to find safe and morally appropriate living conditions. Another example was the efforts made to secure funding for delegates to attend national meetings, or to bring public health exhibits to the cities.<sup>246</sup>

The WALCW membership was organized into many committees that dealt with almost every aspect of daily living; for example "Citizenship, Taxation, Education, Equal Moral Standards, Immigration, Public Health, Mentally Deficient, Objectionable Printed Matter, Fine Arts, Finance, Household Economics, Agriculture, Organized Labour, and Supervised Playgrounds."<sup>247</sup> Two members sat on each committee one from each city, and they reported to Council. As both national and local issues and policies changed, committees and individuals presented papers and conducted debates on the topic at hand. The minutes of meetings and newspaper clippings from this time period show that the women of the WALCW were active in the community and concerned with a variety of issues ranging from censorship, women's work both inside and outside the home, the care

<sup>245</sup> For a social profile see also M.A. Slipper, "The Women of the Twin Cities" Canada West 6, 1909, pp. 241-249 for more detail as to the prominent women of the cities.

<sup>246</sup> Instances of this can be seen in the City Council minutes of both cities during this time period. CTBA, Port Arthur, Series 17, TBA 65-77, Fort William, Series 71, TBA 1-27. See example Figure F, p. 87.

<sup>247</sup> The names of these committees changed over the years as did the number of committees. The themes however, remain the same. This list is from 1919. TBHM, WALCW, meeting minutes E 11/1/2, p. 100.

**NEW CORONA**  
**THEATRE**  
**FORT WILLIAM**

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**WEEK COMMENCING MONDAY**  
**MATINEE NOVEMBER 12**  
 Matinees Every Day for Ladies Only  
 Special Engagement of the Play of the Hour

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**HER UNBORN CHILD**  
 THE TRUTH ABOUT  
 BIRTH CONTROL

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Not a Picture

<p>Hear the Address              on Motherhood at              the Ladies' Matinee</p>	<p>Introductory Matinee on Monday,              November 12.              All Seats 25c</p>
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**WHAT THE WESTERN CANADIAN PRESS SAYS OF THE GREAT PLAY**

<p>WINNIPEG FREE PRESS —              "Play is absorbing from beginning to end."              CALGARY HERALD —              "A message of importance to every mother."              CALGARY ALBERTAN —              "Thoroughly competent company in a real play."</p>	<p>WINNIPEG TELEGRAM —              "Provides food for thought and is an entertaining play."              CALGARY NEWS-TELEGRAM —              "It's a story of life, of me, you and the other fellow."              VICTORIA COLONIST —              "A purposeful drama with a punch."</p>
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**This Attraction played to 14,937 paid admissions in six days at the Walker Theater, Winnipeg, Week September 10.**

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**PRICES: Matinees 50c and 25c.**  
**Nights: \$1, 75c, 50c**  
 SEATS NOW SELLING.

Port Arthur Daily News, November 9, 1917  
 Figure F.

concerns, schools (rural schools, curriculum and medical inspection), and the leisure practices of women and children.<sup>248</sup> Their initiatives were directed by their national affiliate, the NCWC, and representation from the local region was made at Annual Meetings.<sup>249</sup> While their presence at annual meetings is not necessarily an indicator of the focus of their contributions to the rest of the nation or their effectiveness as northern representatives, it does suggest nonetheless, that they felt the importance of maintaining a regional presence and voice at the national level.

### The Women's Institute: "For Home and Country"

The Women's Institute operated as the other dominant group in the Northwest. Records indicate that there were WI branches in both Fort William and Port Arthur in existence by 1912.<sup>250</sup> The structure of the Women's Institutes meetings was less formal than the WALCW. After Federation of the Women's Institutes in 1919, formal committees were established to investigate social problems, present papers, hold debates and present other items of interest to their members. However, the influence of the committees in shaping the direction of the specific issues that were explored appears to have been minimal. Those who presented papers received more direction from the Department of Agriculture representatives in the form of topic suggestions and in the provision of resources for researching the topics, than the committee heads. As Kechnie remarks regarding the level of involvement for local branches, "the local branches ranged from being dynamic fund-raising groups which provided health and social services in many small towns to being little more than tea circles in other areas."<sup>251</sup> Because of the

<sup>248</sup> WALCW meeting minutes TBHM E 11/1/1-7.

<sup>249</sup> see for example, NCWC Yearbook 1918, p. 8 Mabel L. Hannah, "Immigration Committee, WALCW" as cited in Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women... p. 299. For another perspective, see Linda M. Ambrose "The Women's Institutes in Northern Ontario, 1905-1930: Imitators or Innovators?" in Margaret Kechnie and Marge Reitsma-Street (Eds) Changing Lives: Women in Northern Ontario (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1996) p. 263-274.

<sup>250</sup> LULA, Ontario Women's Institute Minute Books (OWI), 143aiii-143b. There may have been branches in existence earlier than 1912 but the minute books are not available until then.

<sup>251</sup> Kechnie, Keeping Things Clean... p. 14.



relationship between the WIs and the provincial government, the agenda for action was different than the WALCW. This type of rural organization was governed by the *Agriculture and Arts Act, 1895* in order to maintain its operational funding from the government, with the “purpose of education and improvement of rural life.”<sup>252</sup> As Linda Ambrose writes, “it is no coincidence then that the objects of the WI were officially recorded as “the dissemination of knowledge” with “a view to raising the general standards of the health and morals of our people.”<sup>253</sup> Subsequently, when standing committees were formed after Federation to examine social issues such as “education and better schools, health, agriculture, home economics, immigration, community activities, legislation, and historical research and current events”<sup>254</sup> the topic areas loosely fit the guidelines of the 1895 Act. They investigated social problems in later years (especially through the 1920s) and did present papers and hold discussions regarding the social problems of the day and what they might do to improve things. These committees are not frequently referred to within the meeting minutes suggesting that the influence of committees was nominal. Some of the issues that were frequently on the agenda for the Port Arthur branch pertained to public health and the maintenance of education classes, particularly domestic science and manual training for both boys and girls.<sup>255</sup> While the committees were not given the utmost attention in the individual branches, there was advice given in selecting their leadership -

Choose officers/candidates wisely, sympathy or friendship should not influence anyone to select weak, inexperienced, spineless women mere rubber stamps for office.

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<sup>252</sup> Linda Ambrose *For Home and Country: The Centennial History of the Women's Institutes in Ontario* (Guelph: Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, 1996) p. 28; see also Port Arthur WI, meeting minutes, October 30, 1930, LULA, OWI, 266 j.

<sup>253</sup> *ibid.* p. 28.

<sup>254</sup> *ibid.* p. 99.

<sup>255</sup> LULA, Port Arthur Women's Institute Minutes, OWI 189a.

Everytime such a woman is put forward she does inestimable harm to the capable women who should be in the front ranks of leadership. Once the right sort of woman is selected her cohorts must join forces to support her.<sup>256</sup>

This advice challenges the prevailing Victorian view of women. Women who are seen to be incapable of putting forth opinions and working outside the home, are not to be selected as candidates, whereas the “modern” woman who is able to articulate an opinion about an issue and demonstrably act in a position of leadership is given the opportunity to hold office.

The women of the LCW and the WI in Port Arthur and Fort William, were most concerned with public health, immigration, care and control of the feeble-minded and education. These concerns were very real in a time when disease and bacteria were a threat to human life, immigration to the region was extensive and there needed to be some explanation for the rise in poverty and the other seemingly inexplicable negative characteristics of specific populations. All of these issues were dependent upon the establishment of a racial and class identity that placed white, middle and upper class “citizens” in a position of moral superiority, if not by birth, then by economics. By placing those who were declared inferior (usually immigrants and the working classes) in a position of helplessness and dependency, women’s groups were able to influence policy by pointing to the problems of specific segments of the social body that needed to be “fixed” in order to fully assimilate these groups into the Canadian social order. This hierarchy also provided club women with a legitimized “right” to create a visible public space for their own ideas about the future.

### Public Health

The women of the Local Council and the Women’s Institute took an equally strong stand on issues relating to public health. Their desire to be able to act in an

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<sup>256</sup> LULA, Port Arthur Women’s Institute, OWI 255, n.d., n.p.

official capacity led to their various petitions and lobbying of City Council in addition to other levels of government. In 1921 the WALCW organized a Special Committee for the revision of the Criminal Code to be headed by Dr. Grace Ritchie and influenced by the report of the Committees of Citizenship and Equal Moral Standards. Subsequently, the WALCW petitioned the federal government in 1921 for changes to the Criminal Code to reflect dangers that the local community faced through the import of disease into the community --

**Resolve: that the amendments proposed to the Criminal Code of Canada contained in the report of the Special Com[mittee] on the revision of the Criminal Code - (Dr. Grace Ritchie - Convenor) should be placed upon the Statute Book by the Federal Government of Canada in the interests of morality and to safeguard the health of the Community from the contagion of loathsome diseases and in the best interests of the individual suffering from these diseases substituting as the amendments to proper medical treatment and inspection under detention, instead of the present system of Fines and Imprisonment which do nothing to cure the individual or safeguard the health of the Community...<sup>257</sup>**

Petitions for amendments to existing public health legislation demanded the protection of the greater social body against an individual who was a carrier of disease, or reflected an inappropriate social standing. Detention of individuals until deemed cured was already occurring in situations for new immigrants, but this new amendment would also include those within the community who were ill. They too would be quarantined until declared cured.

The women of the WALCW were adamant during the 1920s, that there be women sitting on the Board of Health and that they be part of the discussion concerning the future health programs of the city. They also wished women's health issues to be more completely and consistently addressed. They made numerous requests and petitions to both the City Council and the Board of Health regarding specific initiatives for women, namely the continuance of funding for baby clinics,

<sup>257</sup> TBHM, WALCW E 11/1/2 p. 198.

new mother classes and home and school inspections. There were also many appeals to allow women from the Local Council to be represented on the Board. In January of 1924, they were formally denied admittance to the Board through the following announcement --

That the Clerk be instructed to inform Mrs Cronk, Sec'y of the Women's Citizens League and Mrs Heslop, Sec'y of the West Algoma Local Council of Women that in view of the fact that certain ladies of the City have waited on the Mayor and informed him that it was not the unanimous wish of the women of the City to have ladies appointed in an advisory capacity to the City Board of Health, but that they wanted them appointed as regular members of the Board; but as the Board has been appointed by Council, they did not wish to have the appointments interfered with and were most emphatic that they did not want anyone appointed in an advisory capacity.<sup>258</sup>

In what would appear to be a moderate step of allowing women onto the Board of Health in an advisory capacity, some women petitioned the Mayor to have women appointed as regular members of the Board. This more radical step was denied because of the previous appointment of others (specifically men) to the Board, but as Strong-Boag remarks with reference to suffrage, but with equal applicability to municipal affairs, "women were suggesting that they should have a direct relationship to the state as individuals rather than one mediated through their fathers or husbands."<sup>259</sup>

Subsequently, further appeals were made and two women were able to officially aid in setting the direction of public health measures until after 1930.

<sup>258</sup> CTBA, Fort William Board of Health Minutes, Series 75, TBA 4099, Book 3, January 25, 1924, p. 52. While this contradicts the meeting note of the WALCW, TBHM, E 1/11/3, January 25, 1924, p. 47, "Letters from P.A. City Council stated that Mrs Ardele, Mrs Vigars and Mrs Podd had been appointed to co-operate with the board of health." The letter from City Council arrived February 29, 1924 and there is no indication as to the LCW's official response other than continued attempts at placing women on the Board. There is also no indication who petitioned the Mayor and Council to stop this action.

<sup>259</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag, "Ever a Crusader": Nellie McClung, First Wave Feminist" In Veronica Strong-Boag & Anita Clair Fellman *ReThinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1991) p. 311. A similar comparison has been made by Kathleen McConnachie, "Methodology and Study of Women in History: A Case Study of Helen MacMurphy, M.D." *Ontario History* 75, 1983, p. 61-70.

Unfortunately, their contributions are not consistently detailed in meeting minutes. A December 28, 1923 resolution from the Local Council of Women shows the persistence of these groups in their desire to have women speaking for women's health issues;

Mrs. Valentine convenor of the Committee on Mental Hygiene brought in the following resolution which was adopted. Resolution that all Local Councils be urged to consider the advisability of seeking to secure the appointment of women on the boards of Management of all Mental Hospitals and training schools and houses for the mentally deficient.<sup>260</sup>

While the WIs did not appear to be as interested in official representation, (nor was it part of their mandate) they were still active in discussing rural health measures especially issues concerning the nursing of invalids and the treatment of injuries incurred on the farm, in addition to other community health projects.

The WALCW and WIs were concerned not only with the living conditions of labourers, but also with the mothers and children of these populations and how they were raising their families. Both organizations recognized that the purpose of the public health program "was to lower infant mortality rates, as well as 'to promote a greater sense of moral responsibility on the part of the mothers', rather than to change the larger social, economic and environmental context within which women bore their children."<sup>261</sup> An example of their expectations for motherhood can be seen in an address by Mrs Mary Peltier, the wife of the future Mayor of Fort William, entitled "*The Ideal Home*", which greatly romanticizes the home and the family, and woman's role as wife. The image of the middle-class homemaker and her duties are highly moralized and religious in tone.

A most palatial residence equipped throughout with the most luxurious furnishings, and with the most exquisite taste displayed therein, including all the works of art which the skill and the ingenuity of man can devise - all this is of no avail, as it cannot create or make a

<sup>260</sup> TBHM, WALCW, E 11/1/3, December 28, 1923, p. 44.

<sup>261</sup> Stuart, "Let not the People Perish...", p. 9.

happy home, unless two loving hearts entwine as one, thus making a harmonious home, fulfilling their lives with the spirit of self-sacrifice. ... The woman who takes upon herself the solemn obligations of a wife at God's altar, and fulfils her duties lovingly, faithfully and conscientiously, to the best of her ability, becomes to her husband and home a great source of hidden wealth, like unto a gold mine; and as time flies on, the daily trials and troubles of a busy life only tends to unfold and develop some beautiful traits in her character, heretofore not revealed.<sup>262</sup>

This selection praises the socially prescribed feminine qualities, specifically women's involvement in the arts and their ability to create the perfect home. The return of the Victorian ideal of the 'angel in the house' creating the "haven in a heartless world" in which "motherhood was to be made in every way desirable: its status raised, its supremacy acknowledged, ..." <sup>263</sup> is portrayed here in a romanticized and socially desirable light.

The full address was subsequently printed in the local newspaper and praised as a fine example of the expectations of womanhood. This image of helpful domesticity was presented as something all women should strive for.<sup>264</sup> The education of mothers of all social classes in order to achieve this ideal, was carried out through public health initiatives such as the Better Baby Clinics, home visits by members of the organizations in addition to the public health nurse, and at public health fairs.

The women of the WI spoke very highly of the role of women in the home from the standpoint and value of being a farmer's wife. They linked their notion of womanhood and the perpetuation of a healthy and moral nation, with a return to an agriculturally based society and economy. The presumption that all farm wives possessed knowledge about the plant and animal life that surrounded them, indicated an attempt to romanticize the farming life, and yet ironically blamed that

<sup>262</sup> TBHM, WALCW E 11/3/1-8 April 17, 1908.

<sup>263</sup> Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood" History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist Historians 5, 1978, p. 14.

<sup>264</sup> TBHM, WALCW E 11/3/1-8 April 17, 1908.

life for driving the next generation away, in turn creating a diminished rural population base. An address by, Mrs Carver to WI members strongly supports the need for educational facilities not just locally, but for the country.

Mrs. Carver stated that although the lot of the Farmer's Wife was a hard one still they had their compensation. One of which was the Beauty of Nature which they enjoyed with all the Knowledge of Animal and Plant Life that was to be found right at their doors. Another was that they could live their lives in their own way.

Mrs. Carver stated that children always enjoy the life on a farm and that it is often the fault of the farmers themselves that the young people leave the farm and come into the city. Mrs Carver also spoke about the great need of educational facilities for the country and also a need of an [sic] High School for the District.<sup>265</sup>

Issues surrounding immigration were dealt with through the initiatives of citizenship courses, the promotion of domestic science and the emphasis on a woman's responsibility to her country and her family.<sup>266</sup> Adults were viewed as more difficult to Canadianize as they were already too permanently rooted in their own traditions, but children were thought to be more malleable, and subsequently there were many appeals for a public health nurse and for classes for mothers and children who were still able to be "rescued". Both women's groups were recognized as the best means for distributing public health literature and organizing local child welfare organizations. As Stuart writes,

Women and women's organizations, such as the ubiquitous WI, proved to be among the most enthusiastic and helpful elements in the town. The members of the WI were earnest and "zealous" and wanted to be told what they could do to help. Carr-Harris (the District public health nurse) recommended books to read and gave out copies of Dr. McCullough's writing on public health. She believed that the women "would be good centres radiating the wide view of public health" and would "pass on their inspiration to the men who are too busy to read of such things."<sup>267</sup>

<sup>265</sup> TBHM, OWI, E 6/1/1, February 10, 1921, n.p.

<sup>266</sup> LULA, OWI, Minute Books, 143aiii-143b.

<sup>267</sup> Stuart, "Let not the People Perish" ... p. 101.

When a public health nurse position was secured, the nurse's agenda, as stipulated by the Department of Health, fit quite nicely with the program of intervention that the women's organizations espoused in the form of visits to the homes of new mothers, and the establishment of dietary clinics, and baby clinics.<sup>268</sup> The public health nurse was invited on many occasions to give talks to the women's groups not only to disseminate information but also with the intent of working together to implement various initiatives. The women's groups were more often than not the initial contact point for new public health nurses when they first arrived in the region. These groups were also viewed as the ones who would be able to persuade City Council to support public health programmes and measures when permanent municipal acts or medical structures were to be put into effect.<sup>269</sup> While the sincerity of these initiatives cannot be doubted, what is interesting to note is the widespread concern about, and subsequent actions that were taken to improve slum conditions in the cities and how the continued existence of slums at the same time encouraged and allowed for the surveillance of the seemingly deviant populations who inhabited these areas. As Frenette writes, "reforms that were intended to ameliorate slum conditions, such as tenement acts and public health acts, stemmed as much from prejudice, and self interest, and often resulted in working against the poorer inhabitant."<sup>270</sup>

The response of reformers to the need for public health measures that would benefit their community was very positive for both the women's groups and the medical community. Not only were women's groups given a new and influential public role, they were also helping to shape the future of the nation. Public health

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<sup>268</sup> *ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>269</sup> See for example LULA, Port Arthur WI Minutes, OWI 189a; TBHM, WALCW E 11/1/1-7; Public Archives of Ontario, RG 62, Series B1-j, Box 450 a, 1913-1926, Office of the Secretary of the Board of Health and the Chief Medical Officer of Health Correspondence "Memo for the Provincial Secretary re: Maternal and Child Welfare"

<sup>270</sup> Frenette, *The Great War's Defeats...* p. 17.



officials enlisted women's groups to help disseminate information and report on situations that may need attending to. For example, in 1919, a report was made by Mrs B.O. Allen regarding the "Mentally Deficient" in the district and the need for an institution to house such individuals. In order to justify the erection of a "home" for the District, specific figures were requested by the government. The minutes subsequently report, "Mrs Allen is collecting the desired information and asks the cooperation of every member of the community in making out her report for the Government."<sup>271</sup> Another example of official intervention in the lives of the "less fortunate" by the WALCW can be seen in a 1916 request from Dr. Oliver, the Medical Health Officer for the region:

Mrs Smellie, con[venor] of Public Health read a report prepared by Dr. Oliver on the subject of "The Province as the Guardian of Childhood, in Home, School and on the Street". He advocated personal visits to young, inexperienced mothers who are being helped by the district nurse: but who need more sympathy and assistance than she has time to give them.<sup>272</sup>

The request for help by the Medical Health Officer and the public health nurse was not uncommon and the women of the WALCW responded to such requests seriously. They were more than happy to add intervention to their list of accomplishments so long as the intervention would help those in genuine need of assistance. In a letter to the convenor of Equal Moral Standards in the early 1920s, information regarding rooming houses and the number of their occupants, as well as questions regarding their moral status were requested.<sup>273</sup> These moral issues were also put forth as public health issues for the LCW to work on if they were not already doing so.

<sup>271</sup> TBHM, WALCW meeting minutes, February 22, 1919, p. 93 E 11/1/2. See for example the 1910 advertisement for the Thunder Bay Sanitarium, Figure G, page 98.

<sup>272</sup> TBHM, WALCW meeting minutes, June 20, 1916, p. 118 E 11/1/1.

<sup>273</sup> TBHM, WALCW meeting minutes, n.d. (approx. 1920s) E 11/3/3 (see Appendix 3).

# **THUNDER BAY SANITARIUM**

Conducted in a strictly confidential manner for the positive cure of the Liquor Disease

140 Nelson Street, Port Arthur



## **IT IS NO DISGRACE**

to be treated for the cure of the Liquor Disease or Drug Habit. In fact, the disgrace is in remaining a slave to the disease — Many of the most prominent men throughout America were once slaves to the Liquor Disease. Today they are cured because of their self-pride in allowing themselves to be treated from a medicinal standpoint in some Sanitarium.

## **WHAT OUR TREATMENT MEANS**

It cures the drunkard of his appetite for liquor and restores him to his home, kindred and friends a sober man.

It puts the bloom of youth on the cheeks of the patient and long-suffering wife, and brushes from her eyes the tears of suffering and sorrow.

It puts clothes on the backs of innocent suffering little ones, and relieves their name of the stigma of "drunkard's children." —For terms and other information, write, phone or call

## **THE THUNDER BAY SANITARIUM**

Frank J. Robinson, Manager.

Port Arthur, Ont.

Fort William Daily Times Journal, August 25, 1910

Figure G.

### The Feeble-minded in the North

Feeble-mindedness was reported to be a condition that was unstable and uneasily diagnosed and therefore potentially very threatening to Canadian society. Problems that could be comprised by the label ranged from mental and physical "defects" to prostitution and poverty. Most of these conditions were believed to be the fault of the individual, or a genetic defect of their racial background. In the instances where "race" was the problem and individuals could not be held personally accountable, immigration sanctions were consequently placed on them. Where the individual could be blamed for possessing a defect, he or she could be placed in a sanitarium to be segregated from the rest of society until proclaimed cured.

An example of this comes in the form of a declaration of support for a City Council resolution from the West Algoma Local Council of Women February 5, 1903. Unfortunately there are no accompanying documents that definitively outline what the "Evil" is that is being referred to in the resolution but the language and terminology used suggest that it refers to prostitution, which Council members wish to see eliminated from their society.

Believing that all the women composing this L.C. rejoices over the stand taken by the Mayor and Lower Council of P. A. [Port Arthur] upon the Social Purity question:

Be it resolved:

That the WLC of WA at their annual meeting places on record their hearty appreciation of the steps being taken by P.A.'s town Council to exterminate this Evil that has become so openly offensive to all decency.

Furthermore, we, as Mothers, Wives and Sisters, do protest that the existence of such an Evil in either of our towns, or between the towns, is an insult to our womanhood and a source of contamination to our boys and girls.

Therefore We do earnestly urge our civic governments not to halt or waver in their work of reform, to use every method within their power to banish all such resorts from our midst.

Further Resolved - that a copy of this resolution be sent to P.A.'s Town Council.<sup>274</sup>

Women in Port Arthur and Fort William as well as in urban centres, were continually asking both the federal and provincial governments for a sanitarium and a home of refuge for defective and destitute people. Port Arthur was denied a sanitarium in 1906 but advertisements and lobbying pleas did not stop at this point. Women in urban centres, however, were able to bring together both monetary and public support, for a home and were more often the recipients of these benefits. It was not until 1935 that the Lakehead received funding for a sanitarium. Prior to this time "defectives" were sent to institutions in Mimico, Woodstock, Belleville and Orillia.<sup>275</sup>

A 1909 article in the *Fort William Daily Times Journal* provides a good example of the subjectivity of the diagnosis of feeblemindedness as presented in Fort William's appeal for an institution. "He [Dr. Smellie, MPP for Fort William] referred to the fact that at one time a large percentage of the population of the north-shore cities were supposed to be feeble minded [sic], but it was because of their energy in opening up new territory that developed this talk."<sup>276</sup> In agreement with Dr. Smellie, the president of the LCW "pointed out that an institution such as that described, would have important resources in the work which could be done by the

<sup>274</sup> TBHM, WALCW, E 11/3/1, February 5, 1903. There are no newspaper clippings to indicate what is officially being referred to nor is there any mention of the issue this early in the City Council minutes.

<sup>275</sup> See Helen MacMurphy's Reports of Inspectors of Hospitals for Feebleminded and Epileptics (Toronto: King's Printers, 1916) where statistics are provided for various cities and towns as well as their backgrounds and reasons for being admitted. In addition the Fort William City Clerk's files contain letters from various institutions asking for payment from either the relatives or the City for the care of patients.

<sup>276</sup> FWDTJ, March 17, 1909, "Want Institutions for Feeble Minded: Dr. Smellie, Mrs. Smellie and Mrs McKellar in Body that Waits upon Hon. Mr. Hannah".

inmates, and that the guardians and parents of the unfortunate girls and women [who would inhabit it] would pay for their maintenance."<sup>277</sup> This direct appeal to the government is one instance of the attempt for groups of northern regions to make themselves heard.

The sympathy of the women's groups for the sufferers of mental deficiency was inherently part of the social gospel and its paternalistic orientation. While taking care of those in need, it also enabled the regulation of the "unfit" by monitoring their reproductive and marriage patterns. A 1911 article entitled "*Farm Life A Cure for Madness: A Wonderful but Rational System of Treating the Mentally Deficient as Practised in Ontario*" described, for example, all the benefits that can be accrued from institutionalized farm living for the feeble-minded. While living on the farms, patients worked on the land as a form of therapy and helped to produce revenue for the institution.

But the object is not the production of a revenue; it is the treatment of the patients, and in this it has been eminently successful. The farm life and work conduce [sic] to a healthy body; the patients have their attention diverted a great deal from their ailments, real and imaginary, and are thus on the high road to the recovery of a sound mind.<sup>278</sup>

The desire to contain the feeble-minded was pervasive throughout the region and the rest of the nation. Their unpredictable potential was seen as a threat to the social order. In addition, the provision of linens to families, and medical services to mothers and infants through Better Baby Contests and other exhibitions, allowed women's groups to help to keep these seemingly volatile segments of the population under observation.

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<sup>277</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>278</sup> FWDTJ, February 11, 1921. See Figure H, p. 102.

**ADMIT LIFE A CURE FOR MADNESS**

*A Wonderful but Rational System of Treating the Mentally Deficient as Practised in, ONTARIO.*

*Originated by the Provincial Secretary*  
**W.J. HANNA**

Fort William Daily Times Journal, February 11, 1911  
Figure H.

## Immigration

Immigration to this region was actively pursued because of the need for manual labour and families to settle farming communities, and to help boost the population of the region. As an article in the *Fort William Daily Times Journal* comments with reference to immigration statistics from New York for example:

There are very few of this great number [85, 000] Anglo-Saxons, the bulk of them coming from Southern Russia, Italy and other continental countries of Europe. This is not the class of population which it is desirable to have come to Canada, for these people are not and never will become an agricultural class.<sup>279</sup>

In the more urbanized regions of the country, however, immigration posed new sets of problems. In addition to the old problems of labour relations, working and living conditions, solutions now had to be sought in relation to education and religious diversity. It was assumed that if the beliefs and behaviours of foreigners could be changed then the structural problems of the economy and labour markets for example, would be solved. The ranking of appropriate immigrants was only the beginning for most social and moral reform groups who often looked to the ideas and policies of J. S. Woodsworth for direction.<sup>280</sup> If the right immigrants were attracted to Canada (and the northern regions) and selected after a thorough physical and mental examination (in addition to a scrutiny of the country of origin), then those in dominant social positions could be saved and the threat of "race suicide" would be diminished. Because rural regions were settled primarily by immigrants,

<sup>279</sup> FWDTJ, June 4, 1902, "Undesirable Immigration", PADN April 10, 1911 "How Aliens Creep in", PADN, December 12, 1912, "Port Arthur's Foreign Problem Discussed by Mr. Lee".

<sup>280</sup> James S. Woodsworth, Strangers Within Our Gates: Or Coming Canadians (Toronto: F.C. Stephenson, Methodist Mission Rooms, 1909). Woodsworth was a Winnipeg journalist and politician who theorized and supported an immigration taxonomy for Canada that is fully explored in Strangers Within Our Gates:... Each chapter in the book follows the taxonomy detailing from the most favoured immigrants to the least. The most favoured immigrants were from Great Britain, followed by the United States, Scandinavia, Germans, French. The "non-preferred" immigrant categories: Austria-Hungary, the Balkan states, "the Jews", the Italians, the Levantine races (composed of Greeks, Turks, Armenians, Syrians, and Persians), and finally, the Orientals, the Negro and the [East] Indian. Valverde, The Age of Light... p. 110., Woodsworth, Strangers Within Our Gates:... passim.

the tolerance for tradition was slightly greater and yet the process of assimilation or Canadianization was pursued just as vigorously.

Woodsworth's influence can be seen specifically in an address by Miss Hannah of the Wesley Institute (a local missionary society which was also prominent in the cities during this time) who delivered an address to the WALCW entitled "*Contact: An Important Factor in the Immigration Problem*".<sup>281</sup> Throughout this address, she discusses the importance of knowing and understanding the "foreigner" and the conditions that they are forced to live and work in upon immigration to Canada. The ideal life that she espouses for all requires the intervention of officially sanctioned services through which the alleviation of economic and social hardships in turn becomes the "true Canadian home life". Miss Hannah encourages the women she is addressing to set the example of the desired Canadian lifestyle to the new immigrant, as well as to those who are already seemingly established.

The dominant theme of assimilation upon immigration is very apparent for social reform groups throughout the thirty-year time frame being discussed here. The use of labour, schools and medical structures to enforce both Canadian norms and social mores are the most common examples. What is interesting to note in Hannah's address, is that while she supports the acceptance and "integration" of immigrant communities into the dominant social groups, she is still opposed to giving immigrant men the vote. This opposition remains another common theme during the war years, especially in Ontario. Miss Hannah presented this same address to other groups during 1915 which suggests the importance attached to immigration by these groups and their concern to learn from professionals on this issue.

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<sup>281</sup> TBHM, WALCW, E 11/1/1, p. 85, October 30, 1915.



...think of giving an uneducated immigrant the ballot, then turning him to the influence of the political "toss"! [sic] This to say the least "looks peculiar". We strive to help by Public Relief these families, yet they are pauperized still. We cause them to lose self-respect, by making conditions wherein they are almost helpless and the country has to support them. The foreigner cannot be disassociated from any of our social problems. We can never correct such conditions until we as a nation, look at things in a pure and unbiased manner. ... The best of immigrants, as best of their race, correspond to the best of us. We should learn to study the strangers within our gates.<sup>282</sup>

Helping the foreigner to become part of Canadian society is a common theme for the LCW. The attempts made at assimilation through various language, life skills and domestic science and manual training education programs for working class and immigrant groups is carried on through the school boards and the public health programs as will be detailed later in this chapter.

At Women's Institute meetings, presenters tended to be officials from the government or from other professional classes as well as various church officials. With regard to immigration, the Women's Institutes were given an implicitly interventionist mandate by the provincial government. As Ambrose writes,

Under this scheme, the Institutes served as an extension of the government: "[T]he local [WI] branches are notified [by the Immigration Department] when a new settler is to arrive, with the request that they make the newcomers welcome and invite the womenfolk to join the Institute and take their place in community activities."<sup>283</sup>

This type of mandate served two functions. First, it provided the opportunity to directly influence the assimilation process of new immigrants, and second, it replenished membership rolls for the Women's Institutes. This kind of implicit direction from an official government body is something that the LCW did not

<sup>282</sup> *ibid.* p. 85. The allusion to *Strangers Within Our Gates* (1909) in the last sentence of this selection could suggest the continued importance of this work regarding the study of immigrants beyond 1915. Another example of this is in the Women's Institute minutes dated May 26, 1915 "Dr. Clara Todson then gave an interesting paper "The Strangers Within Our Gate" which was very interesting and enjoyed by all." LULA, Ontario Women's Institute meeting minutes, Port Arthur, 189a.

<sup>283</sup> cited in Ambrose, *For Home and Country*:...p. 103.

have, but the organization actively pursued similar issues.

Other frequent speakers for the WI included individuals from the religious community as this report demonstrates:

Rev. Mr. Salton then gave a very interesting address on Women's place in the future in the upbuilding of the nation. Mr Salton said it was up to the woman to see that only the highest type of emigrant (sic) was admitted into this dominion and that it was not right to expect these people to be assimilated entirely into our National Life but it was for us to take the best of their ideals and incorporate them with our own so as to raise up our own standards as well as theirs. The speaker predicted quite a change in education, social reform, labour and other things before the world again reached a period of peace and stability.<sup>284</sup>

The emphasis in this address is on women as nation builders and as "national guardians" who have the power to select those who are suitable for entrance into the country, and the type of skills that should be exchanged between the immigrant and their new country. The idea of creating a social identity for women as the keepers of the nation was commonly used by the reform movement. It was also effectively used by others to encourage women's activities that corresponded with business interests. The admission that immigrants could not be expected to "entirely" adopt a Canadian lifestyle is relatively progressive for this time period. This does not mean, however, that the drive for assimilation was discontinued. According to this address women were still supposed to be able to select the entrance criteria, making women the moral guardians and gatekeepers of Canada who would safeguard the "Springs of Life".

In addition to groups such as the Women's Institute and the West Algoma Local Council of Women who were concerned with the direction of Canada under the umbrella of social purity, one of the other groups active in Port Arthur and Fort William was the Canadian Club. The Canadian Club was organized as a patriotic endeavour, with strong allegiances to Britain. Within its rhetoric, "whiteness" is

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<sup>284</sup> TBHM, Women's Institute of Westfort, E 6/1/1, n.p. February 17, 1925.

presumed to be the social ideal and is associated with British conquest and settlement of agricultural areas as the following example from the minutes of the Women's Canadian Club (Fort William branch).

In the First Annual [report] of 1910, in which Agnes Dean Cameron was recorded as remarking, "First there was the great wheat belt of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. "Wheat growing," she said, "means a white race; where wheat will grow, a white man can thrive."<sup>285</sup>

The colonial and imperialist agenda which included the survival of British citizens by any means, includes the exclusion of those of non-British heritage. What is interesting to note is the contradiction between the government agenda to settle the prairies with immigrants, when already established citizens were moving to the city, and abandoning rural life, and this selection which associates wheat production with a continued and prosperous white race. In this example, wheat holds great symbolic value of hard work and endurance, another more visual metaphor of the social purity movement.

In a speech entitled "Women's Relation to Education", presented also to the Canadian Club, Dr. Crummy [sic] addressed many issues, one of which was the "masses" of immigrants who were arriving at Canada's ports,

... See the type of them, for bear in mind I don't even fear the Galicians. There is a savage grace about them. ... Everyone has stamped upon him something out of the generations of a history of his own nation, and they bring to us in their own personality a great contribution which, moulded [sic] and blended with that of the Anglo Saxon already here, should make it one of the best we have ever seen.<sup>286</sup>

While this quote demonstrates the fear of the "Other", it also demonstrates a willingness to accept some level of diversity associated with immigration as well as an openness to learning more about foreigners and their traditions. It points to the need or responsibility of patriotic women, with a middle- or upper-class standing to

<sup>285</sup> TBHM, Canadian Club, Fort William, E 18/3/1, 1910, n.p..

<sup>286</sup> TBHM, Canadian Club, Fort William, E 18/3/1, n.d., p. 20.

educate the foreigner to accept and adopt Canadian ways. The rest of Crummy's address centres on the responsibility of his audience to continue to be involved in the feminization of the education process, and the effective teaching of students. He frames his address within the new scientific rhetoric of motherhood aimed at helping women to more effectively raise and teach children. He describes the new scientific system as being modelled on factory efficiency and the need for the teacher to encourage development of knowledge about the associated feminine subjects of nature and the fine arts. His final concern resides in the type of learning skills that are apparently being slowly taught in the middle-class environment of the formal school as opposed to the skills that are being taught more efficiently in the working-class environment of the commercial or technical schools. With the possibility that the leaders of the future would come from working-class backgrounds, the influence of women on the education system was viewed as a necessary addition:

It is true that we teach our boys and girls to read and write and add and subtract, but it has been proven in many cases where men and women have not had advantages of education in their youth, that when the time came that it was necessary for them to read and figure, they have learned in a commercial school in six months all that the little boy and girl learned in ten years of his schooling (in public school).<sup>287</sup>

The contradictions in this address lie in two areas. The first is, the notion that women are needed to humanize or feminize the education system to save the system from becoming more like a factory. In addition concerns are raised with the more efficient type of learning that is being carried out in the commercial schools (in which the efficient factory analogy is being used) rather than the public schools. The second contradiction, is placing women in the public forum of education reform and yet defining them as mothers and nurturers rather than as accredited professional educators like their male counterparts. While motherhood was often declared as being their sole strength, the idea that women could be political and

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<sup>287</sup> *ibid.* p. 20.

have influence is a notion that first wave feminists popularized and used to their political advantage.<sup>288</sup>

Immigration remained a prominent issue with both the Local Council of Women and the Women's Institute. They continued to be concerned with assimilating the immigrant and weeding out the characteristics or traditions that did not resemble or fit with dominant British middle-class values.

### Employing the Immigrant

Finding suitable and appropriate employment for immigrant women was a concern for women's organizations across the nation. Many of these women found positions as domestic servants in the homes of middle-class women who now spent their leisure time as social activists. Their training and work ethic was developed through domestic science classes in the high schools thus girls and women who were previously inferior became useful and were potentially "saved".<sup>289</sup> In 1903 there was a "servant girl famine" declared and discussions ensued with the National Council of Women regarding how to help improve the situation in tandem with the British Women's Emigration Association, which helped place immigrant women as domestic servants.<sup>290</sup> This project was constructed to help women from the British empire with both immigration and employment demands, providing them with the opportunity to "alleviate" the problems of other countries.

<sup>288</sup> Strong-Boag, "Ever a Crusader..." p. 310.

<sup>289</sup> While there is no indication in the newspapers or meeting minutes during this time that classes were actually being developed, an April 1, 1914 article in the Port Arthur Daily News, discusses the 45 girls of varying nationalities ("Greek, Italian, Slovak, Ruthenian, Syrian, German, Finnish, Hebrew and English") that are enrolled in sewing classes. Other classes that were developed for both men and women living in the coal docks section include English language classes, stenography lessons, civics, cooking and kitchen maintenance. Another article from January 24, 1920 outlines the contents for a course in "Home Hygiene and Physical Culture". Topics covered included "heredity, functions of the body, habits, surroundings, ventilation; contamination of water, food, clothing; position, heating, lighting and sanitation of homes; prevention of ill-health and spread of infectious diseases." After these lessons, participants were expected to partake in twenty minutes of physical work. These courses were endorsed, developed and in some instances taught by both the WI and WALCW members.

<sup>290</sup> FWDTJ, November 14, 1903; PADN, June 14, 1911, "Would Solve the Servant Girl Problem for this City".

In 1908 Mrs. J. Dyke declared there to be a "... *Domestic Servant Problem*" in Fort William and discussed the shortage of not only domestic servants but also the falling quality of the existing pool of domestic servant workers and their training. She stated that "as to the inefficiency of service given, it is probably due to the fact that while girls are trained for almost every other duty under the sun, housekeeping is left out."<sup>291</sup> This report and other articles in the same edition of the *Fort William Daily Times Journal* discussed solutions to the domestic servant shortage and poor training. They contended that the teaching of domestic science was necessary for safeguarding the homes of the nation.

The lack of desire expressed by young Anglo girls to fulfil their predestined roles as either mothers or domestic servants, created its own set of problems. The solution to this problem lay in the large numbers of unemployed immigrant women who, it was thought, would be willing to fill the domestic role as servants and willingly be paid less than Anglo servants due to their heritage and lack of education. However, most of the discussion on this issue focused on the appropriateness of women's work outside the home and whether women should continue to work after taking the natural course of marriage. A potential solution was proposed by the WALCW in the form of a resolution which would enable immigrant girls to become domestic servants after taking a compulsory course upon arrival in Canada and would also further enhance the assimilation process.

Be it resolved that the Government be requested to establish a compulsory short training course for Immigrant girls who come here under assisted passage regulations which upon completion would enable them to be more readily assimilated into Canadian Home Life.<sup>292</sup>

The increased use of immigrant women as domestics was influenced by the federal government policy of making the domestic servant "the only category, in addition

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<sup>291</sup> FWDTJ, April 17, 1908.

<sup>292</sup> TBHM, WALCW, E 11/1/3, p. 58, March 28, 1924.

to farm worker, in which a single woman from Finland during the 1920's was allowed to enter the country."<sup>293</sup>

The need to control or restrain the immigrant within the areas of housing and employment was viewed as part of the assimilation process employed by both the women's organizations and by the Department of Health. Upholding desirable standards of living may have appeared attainable in established cities but attempting to apply these methods to the rural regions of the Northwest was more difficult. For example, Meryn Stuart writes about the experience of Miss Douglas one of the public health nurses, who comparing her visit to one of the outlying lumber camps with her visits to other English speaking communities,

Douglas was frank in stating that "one may spend much longer visiting in an English speaking community than in a foreign one." This she attributed to feeling "of more practical use" when she could discuss health concerns easily, rather than "laboriously" explaining the purpose of her visit through interpreters or "sign language."<sup>294</sup>

Another example from Dr. Wodehouse, the Medical Officer of Health for the District during 1913 shows similar difficulties in communication and treatment to Miss Douglas,

... is a very crude fellow, being a FRENCH CANADIAN TRAPPER [sic].  
... The entire settlement here is a very troublesome one, I learn, from a GOVERNMENTAL point of view, in all departments. They are poor, not over inclined to work and are slightly SOCIALISTIC in tendencies.<sup>295</sup>

<sup>293</sup> Varpu Lindstrom-Best, " 'I Won't be a Slave!' - Finnish Domestic in Canada, 1911-30" In Jean Burnet (Ed), Looking into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986) p. 34. Marilyn Barber, "The Women Ontario Welcomed: Immigrant Domestic for Ontario Homes, 1870-1930" in Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice (Eds), The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977) p. 102-121. For an examination of alternative employment opportunities for Finnish women, see Varpu Lindstrom, "Finnish Women's Experience in Northern Ontario Lumber Camps, 1920-1939" in Margaret Kechnie and Marge Reitsma-Street (Eds) Changing Lives: Women in Northern Ontario (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1996) p. 107-122.

<sup>294</sup> Stuart, "Let not the People Perish...." p. 115.

<sup>295</sup> PAO, Office of the Secretary of the Board of Health and the Chief Medical Officer of Health - Correspondence 1912-1920. Series B1d, 447.2, District VII, Jan-June 1913. This letter is dated April 28, 1913.

The Local Council of Women was not much different in their interventionist approach to aiding foreign settlers in their region;

Mrs Hannah F. W. [Fort William] Convenor for Immigration reports Immigration from Italy and Poland is noticeable (and) should be placed in suitable homes and the subject of Mother's pensions and handbooks for new Canadians were referred to.<sup>296</sup>

The intent to help settlers and the desire and need to control their physical living and working spaces can also be seen in this selection. Concern for the "foreigner" and her children is also addressed when discussing the education program as is the concern for the education of young girls who are facing a decidedly different future than their mothers did. The quest to find suitable employment for young girls is highlighted in a November 30, 1923 address by Mrs Jones of Fort William who was the Convenor of Professions and Employment for Women;

...[she] gave a most interesting address outlining the work of her Committee. She advocated a study on Employment conditions as they effect [sic] the girl at the beginning of her career to enable her to choose the vocation in life most suited to her. With the return of men into civil life there has been a gradual overcrowding in the employment world in professions such as nursing and clerical life work: this condition will increase rather than decrease.

A great need exists for a vocational bureau for trained experienced and educated women similar to a gov't employment bureau whose work is confined largely to to the placing of women in domestic and factory work. The bureau should exist for two classes. First the girl or woman starting out to help her select the vocation most suitable and secondly for the girl or woman anxious to leave a position for which she has no liking.<sup>297</sup>

While the women of the Local Council were anxious to promote proper work for women who had temporarily set aside their natural womanly duties, the only two occupations outside of the naturally maternal occupations of nursing, teaching and clerical, or secretarial work remaining open to women included domestic labour, and factory work. While the emphasis for the LCW changed over the years from

<sup>296</sup> TBHM, WALCW, E 11/1/1, September 25, 1920, p. 170.

<sup>297</sup> TBHM, WALCW, E 11/1/3, November 30, 1923, p. 40.



solely promoting women's work and related "domestic matters" as an adjunct to their maternal functions, to promoting the "150 different occupations for women", belief in the primacy of domestic work was retained, as illustrated in the following selection, and reported in many subsequent meeting minutes.

An interesting letter from Miss Alice Ravenhill [the local domestic science teacher] was well worth discussion. Miss Ravenhill believes in thorough training for women. Their efficiency should be of some marked degree as to make them self supporting. Women should be taught about and study their own anatomy in order to most truly help to build up physical health. There is a choice of no less than 150 different occupations for women. All girls should be thoroughly trained in domestic matters, especially in the rearing of young children; the years 16 to 18 are the best for such training. In this country, as in England there should be training schools, also employers guilds.<sup>298</sup>

### Education

One aspect of the education debate was whether or not immigrant children should be attending school, and if so, what their education should consist of. Labouring and immigrant families alike came under fierce scrutiny and surveillance when the medical inspection of school children was initiated. Inspection was a public health measure aimed at curbing childhood diseases, but it also became an effective surveillance technique. Health inspectors could identify diseases and defects so as to prevent their spread to other children which reinforced the belief that the larger community had a right to survey particular social groups in order to protect itself from the spread of contagious diseases.<sup>299</sup> The creation of the category feeble-mindedness enabled women's organizations to address a whole range of health and social problems placing the blame on genetics and bad habits. There is a presumption being made by these organizations and their members that the ideals

<sup>298</sup> TBHM, WALCW, E 11/1/1, April 24, 1915, p. 50-51.

<sup>299</sup> Kari Delhi, "Health Scouts for the State: School and Public Health Nurses in Early Twentieth Century Toronto" *Historical Studies in Education* 2 (2) 1990, p. 249; Neil Sutherland, "Social Policy, 'Deviant' Children, and the Public Health Apparatus in British Columbia Between the Wars" *The Journal of Educational Thought* 14 (2) 1980, p. 80.

of the British middle- and upper-class were applicable to those who did not possess the same socio-economic status either upon arrival to Canada, or through years of hard work, and education.

The introduction of public health initiatives into the school system allowed for greater control over students with the hope or expectation that what was learned in the school would be transferred to the home. What is not known is who, other than the public health nurses and Medical Health Officer for the district, actually went into the schools, and secondly, what was being used as a measurement of health or ill health. Despite several references to the identification of problems such as mental and physical deficiency, the characteristics of such conditions are not defined as the following example shows: "Mrs. Harvey reported having visited rural schools and stated a few of the conditions, examined 151 pupils and found one mentally deficient case also several cases which should be looked into."<sup>300</sup> The search for mental defectives was carried out more often in rural schools, than in urban schools which is where the work of Helen MacMurchy and C.K. Clarke were influential in providing guidance not only to public health officials but to educators as well. This contradicts the idea that rural regions were more healthy than urban slums that were associated with "babylons."<sup>301</sup> The eradication of mental defectives was to be accomplished primarily through the establishment of Houses of Refuge and Sanitariums whose approval by government and business officials seemed to continually elude this region.

The involvement of the Women's Institute in the promotion of Domestic Science programs in high schools and technical schools was not at the time. Support of WI's for the Ontario Agricultural College and the Department of Agriculture whose mandate included educating young girls and subsequently their

<sup>300</sup> TBHM, WALCW, E 11/1/2, February 29, 1920, p. 140.

<sup>301</sup> Strange, "From Modern Babylon...", p. 255, "... 'Modern Babylon,' it was a mythical representation of cravings, temptations and desires."

mothers about the advances in home technology and household efficiency followed some of the more popular themes of the WI over the thirty year time period discussed here. The rationale for the support of domestic science education by the WALCW was different. They were supportive of the programs because girls were no longer learning homemaking skills from their mothers who were often now employed outside the home. The other reason for the WALCW's support of this program is related to the decrease in the number of suitable and employable girls for domestic service positions. Girls were indicating that they wished to work in jobs and careers that provided them with more free time and more money than domestic service.

Along with this support for domestic science education by the WI, it might be suggested that the assimilation process is also being promoted by sponsoring immigrant girls to go to school to learn about the farming life as is shown in the following example.

Miss Mitchell read a suggestion of Miss Gowsell's that the Institute get the names of the girls in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th forms at the Collegiate and have them join the Institute. Have the Women's Institute have a sale of cooking as the girls had before. She would give 1st prize for the best soft custard made by the girls in 1st form and Senior IV classes in House Hold Science. To a pupil of foreign parentage it will be tuition for one term in O.A.C. [Ontario Agricultural College] for home makers course, to be taken anytime in 7 years, but not transferable to a pupil of English birth some book will be given. [sic]  
Applications will have to be made for the foreign girl to OAC one or two years before she goes to college.<sup>302</sup>

In this example, two initiatives are apparent. The first describes the move from the traditional recruitment process of word of mouth or generational recruitment for new WI members and the shift in their overall focus to young girls<sup>303</sup> who

<sup>302</sup> LULA, OWI (P.A.), , 189a, April 29, 1914 .

<sup>303</sup> "This branch [F.W.] showed good work accomplished along educational, social, and child welfare lines. Great interest is taken in the work of the Wayside House, the members assisting in the Baby Clinic, they are also endeavouring to organize a girls branch of the W.I. amongst the girls in this foreign section of the city." LULA, OWI (P.A.), 143aiii-143b, July 6, 1922.

represented potentially, the next generation of modern and educated farm wives. This was undertaken in the hope of replenishing the farms that were being increasingly deserted which would in turn, then lead to the reestablishment of rural life or virtues. The second, is an acknowledgement of the value of immigrant girls to the farming industry and the potential lack of money in the immigrant or working-class family to send a female child to a post-secondary school. The support for immigrant girls and the education process denoted here, is relatively new for the Women's Institutes.

Another concern was the often visible absence of immigrant children in the classroom even though compulsory schooling had been introduced through the School Act of 1871.<sup>304</sup> The reporting of these absences to such officials as the truancy officer or to City Council was frequent;

After some discussion it was moved by Mrs. Speers sec[onded] by Mrs. B.O. Allen that the cor[responding] sec[retary] write the Boards of Education of both cities notifying them of the fact that Ruthenian Children in Westfort are neglecting their English studies to attend a Ruthenian school.

Resolution as follows:

That as there are a great many Foreign Settlements in our District and a number of these have no schools in their respective settlements. Consequently their children are growing up without any Education whatever. We petition the Government through the WALC of W, to compel these districts to build schools and that the English Language be taught in the schools and that the grade limit instead of age limit be introduced in our rural schools.<sup>305</sup>

The motivation behind the concern for students not attending English public schools can be read in two ways; either as a push for assimilation, or as an expression of concern for the lack of educational opportunities in some of these districts. There is no indication from City Council or other official bodies for these districts or communities that monetary aid was provided to build and maintain

<sup>304</sup> Alison Prentice, Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada: The School Promoters (McClelland & Stewart: Toronto, 1977) p. 16.

<sup>305</sup> TBHM, WALCW, November 30, 1918, E 11/1/2, p. 76-77.

schools and programs. The communities may have allocated money to other aspects of daily living and survival. Burnet asserts, families were not always passive in their acceptance of the norms being imposed upon them by the education system:

However, the maintenance of language and culture within the family became of greater concern as the problems of livelihood became less pressing. The "Little White Schoolhouse on the Prairie" became the agent of Canadianization and the enemy of ancestral languages and familial values. To counteract this outside influence, mothers frequently regarded it as part of their special mission to transmit the mother tongue to their children, to maintain old-country ways of cooking and old-country crafts, and to observe important feasts and holy days in traditional fashion. But with the passage of time and with contact with neighbours who had different customs, they became less rigidly retentive of their culture.<sup>306</sup>

The surveillance of children made sense to reformers and public health workers because of the direct association connecting children with the future. The relationship between immigration, education and employment was intertwined as areas of concern for future generations who would replace Canadian born citizens in social, political and economic realms and potentially replace the existing elite society. The school as a site of surveillance for feeble-mindedness and other physically manifested social diseases, became a reality with the introduction of compulsory schooling for children. The diagnosis of feeble-mindedness was very subjective.<sup>307</sup> It lacked any real clinical definition and could thus be applied at will to particular dimensions of the social body. Subsequently, the surveillance of women, "foreigners", and the lower class became increasingly tighter and was endorsed and enhanced by the public health movement.

Another concern was the content of education. The emphasis was on teaching a Christian-based curriculum which would not only encourage values of compassion and caring, but would also perform the dual task of Christianizing those

<sup>306</sup> Jean R. Burnet with Howard Palmer, "Coming Canadians": An Introduction to a History of Canada's Peoples (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1988) p. 89.

<sup>307</sup> For the WI's involvement in the issue of feeble-mindedness see meeting minutes dated, LULA, OWI, PA, January 20, 1915, November 27, 1918, January 26, 1921

students from families whose religious backgrounds differed. As pointed out in the meeting records for the West Algoma Local Council of Women, September 27, 1919;

Mrs Carrick prov[incial] vice pres. wrote for an expression of opinion from every affiliated society upon the following public school questions,

- (1) Is it desirable that a course on "Citizenship" be included in the curriculum for the final year of compulsory school attendance?
- (2) Is it desirable in the interests of our National and Individual Life that the people of Ontario should be familiar with the story and teaching of the Bible?
- (3) Is it desirable for an understanding and for the preservation of the distinctive ideals of our democratic civilization that the four Gospels should be used as text books in our Public Schools?<sup>308</sup>

Women's organizations actively supported women teachers through lobbying and petitioning for women to become a respected part of the teaching profession and through the solicitation of women teachers' advice regarding suitable and practical education programs for both themselves and the young girls of the community. While women considered life skills to be of importance in the safeguarding of their futures as well as the futures of their families, these skills were largely defined in relation to women's domestic roles. While educating both foreign and native-born children for the future, there still remained a deep division along the lines of race and class in terms of who was taught and what values predominated in the schooling environment.

### Conclusion

Issues such as public health, immigration and general questions of women's status in society, were all intertwined with questions of moral and social reform. As society changed, traditionally held norms and gender roles also underwent transformation. The actions of various reform-minded women's groups were aimed at changing society, in their view, for the better. Women as caretakers of the family and home, took on the identity of moral rescuers and were able to influence

<sup>308</sup> TBHM, WALCW, E 11/1/2, September 27, 1919, p. 118.

the course of social change. While the Lakehead was geographically isolated from the rest of the province and nation it had the same perceived and often real social problems of the rest of the country. For example, while public health issues were valid both during this time frame and in the region, they were also influenced by assumptions about race, class and gender and the quality of life afforded labourers and immigrants. As an issue framed by nationalist concerns, immigration posed new problems as "foreigners" were thought to be unwilling or incapable of adapting to a "Canadian way of life". The persistent nature of the rural reformers campaigns to create a society that resembled the urban regions of the province without the same resources for their development appeared to be a significant challenge but one that local reformers were determined to take up. Women were able to unite under the major themes of immigration, education and public health and enter into the public forum drawing on spheres of influence and knowledge best known to them, those of maternal instinct and domesticity.

The West Algoma Local Council of Women provided the local forum for women to unite and be heard. Through their resolutions and subsequent interventions in the the lives of those deemed salvageable through Better Baby Contests, housing and school ordinances presented to the City Councils, public health initiatives aimed at mothers and young children, and so on, it can be suggested that this organization did have an impact on shaping the social and moral life of the cities. While it is difficult to assess the extent of their effectiveness in implementing the proposed reforms, their ability to bring in speakers to the region on various issues ranging from public health to gambling and morality, and to have women placed on various municipal boards, and lobby successfully for various services would indicate that the Local Council's initiatives were not treated as mere flights of fancy by business leaders and other officials such as City Council members.

Their initiatives corresponded with the National Council's directives which can be seen in their compliance with official government structures through public health and immigration department initiatives.

The Women's Institute was given the mandate from the Provincial government of raising the standards of health and morals of the population and acted accordingly. The provision of a mandate from the government attempted to provide boundaries for this group to operate within which should have limited their participation in the public realm, but actually gave them the power to act in new ways. For example, the recognition that farm women were actively contributing to the household economy, and the provision of instruction on marketing farm products and teaching basic bookkeeping skills allowed farm women access to new realms of business and finance. In addition to the introduction of courses to teach women about household technology and efficiency, which ultimately complemented to the introduction of domestic science courses in the school system as well as the development of courses at the Ontario Agricultural College at the University of Guelph, women were encouraged to create better communities and share their knowledge with others.

Issues of class bias were evident within these groups as well as in defining which women would become the targets of social purity advocates. It would appear that middle- and upper-class women were not just attempting to reestablish a social hierarchy through aid to the poor and working classes, but within their own organizations class disparities are evident. According to Kechnie,

[w]hile finding examples for farm women to emulate may have been a motivating factor that caused the organization to look to town women, the fact that the organization would have failed without an influx of members must also be considered as a reason the organization expanded



into small town Ontario...it was not unusual to find the wives of professional men from small towns serving either as the president or secretary of local branches [of the Women's Institutes].<sup>309</sup>

The importation of influential city women to run the supposedly rural-based Women's Institutes demonstrates the influence of urban reformers' ideals on the rural communities' initiatives and ambitions.

While 1900 to 1930 was part of a learning process for both groups, they still effectively influenced change within their communities. The effect of the social purity movement on the cities can be seen in the reforms that were undertaken as well as the seriousness of particular issues that were being promoted. While the groups themselves and other "enlightened" individuals within the community may not have readily discussed social purity as a specific topic on many occasions, many of the concerns that were raised fall under the umbrella of social purity. The targeting of lower-class and immigrant populations can be viewed in a geographical analysis of the cities, by looking at where the "colonies" were, and the reaction of the city fathers and mothers to their existence.<sup>310</sup> Educational reforms that were sponsored promoted a distinct vision of middle-class British whiteness and attempted to regulate living standards. The type of employment offered to marginalized groups was informed by a "racialized" hierarchy that allowed for the more appropriate groups (white, Anglo, with middle- to upper-class standings) to define the type of individual able to be employed within any one profession. Public health measures reinforced the social and moral reforms by entering the homes of new mothers to change traditional mothering skills, and by entry into classrooms to examine students and to assess "mental defectives". While local women were becoming increasingly vocal and visible in the public sphere, they were taking on

<sup>309</sup> Kechnie, *Keeping Things Clean*...p. 135, 137.

<sup>310</sup> Brian J. Lorch and David A. Jordan, "The Geography of Residential Development" in Thorold J. Tronrud and A. Ernest Epp (Eds), *Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity* (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum, 1995) p. 57-74.

the problems of modernity in ways that were most familiar to them, namely through "housekeeping" for the Nation.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

### Introduction

In this thesis I have examined, through the analysis of primary and secondary source material, the social purity campaign in Northwestern Ontario from 1900-1930 as an initiative that united a specific group of people under a common cause. Using a social movement framework, I have explored the role of women within the local movement through an analysis of their activities in two core women's organizations -- the West Algoma Local Council of Women and the Women's Institutes. I have argued that under the guise of creating a better social and moral environment in Canada, middle-class women primarily of British descent were active agents in the labelling, monitoring and regulation of immigrant and working-class women and their families -- people who they defined as inferior to themselves. And through their participation in social purity and public health initiatives, these women were also actively pursuing an expanded role for middle-class women like themselves in the public arena. Their ability to influence local policy, and to secure funding to support educational and public health programs in the region attests to their success in helping shape the social and moral climate of the community.

This research demonstrates that the promotion of social purity was not solely a phenomenon of the larger urban areas of the country, but also a central concern for small and rural communities even in relatively isolated areas such as Northwestern Ontario. Additionally, it points out that local affiliates of larger national women's organizations were active agents in shaping local social policy and public health initiatives. They were supported in their efforts by civic and public health officials who saw women's contributions as necessary for the efficacy of educational programs for immigrants, and for the monitoring and regulation of

those deemed unfit and feebleminded.

While the social, economic and political environment of Canadian society was changing rapidly due to increased immigration and urbanization, the concurrent processes of centralization, institutionalization, secularization, and professionalization were reframing the community structures that would help generate and shape the concerns and aims of the social reform movement from 1900-1930 and beyond. The moral and social reform movement, under the umbrella of social purity, was led by many groups and individuals, including middle- and upper-class women who were given power by church and business leaders to tackle the real and perceived social problems of the day. The social purity movement provided middle- and upper-class women with a new opportunity to extend their maternal feminist values beyond home and hearth in an effort to regulate and reform their local communities. This change in social roles allowed women to come into the public sphere and demand rights that they felt were necessary to enable them to influence and shape the appropriate direction of their changing society.

Dimensions of the social body that did not share, or live up to, these ideals, such as immigrants, the feebleminded and so on, were identified as problematic and targeted for social reform. Early public health initiatives closely matched the social purity concerns with their emphasis on labelling “deviants” in society and the strong desire to mould them into proper Canadian citizens through medical and educational interventions. Public health directives and policies provided an important support for the social purity movement.

### The National Picture

The National Council of Women of Canada attempted to unite women’s groups at both a national and local level to help influence the shape of policy for the

nation around issues such as immigration, women's employment, education and public health. Using a maternal outlook on the world as a rationale for their entrance into the public world, women reformers were able to successfully influence the shape and direction, socially and politically, which Canada took from 1900-1930.

The National Council's stand on public health issues did not change radically throughout this time period. It was consistent in its direction and methods pre- and post-World War I by attempting to influence all levels of government through petitions and lobbies. Its emphasis on specific reforms for the growing numbers of new urban working women, immigration and health concerns provided a stable and enduring platform with which to lobby provincial and municipal governments for support and legislation. Women were substantially encouraged by the National Council to become vocal in their rural or urban communities as representatives on school and health boards. This activism would fulfil a dual purpose -- it would provide the National Council with information about the cities and towns which it was attempting to represent, and it would involve local women in fulfilling the overriding objective: of a "better" social and moral environment.

The Women's Institutes under the direction of the Provincial government were concerned with women's lives in rural areas although they remained heavily influenced by more urban-based groups. The WI's were primarily concerned with the changing face of Canadian society and its impact in rural areas. Specifically, their concerns rested with defining the appropriate role for women on the farm. In addition, they discussed issues pertaining to the increasing technologization of the farm, and also how to manage farms within a diminishing agricultural economy. The agricultural economy was diminishing due to a general shift in population patterns and the changing economic centers from towns to cities as the focal point of commerce. Additional concerns included immigration, the health of children in

schools, and the employment of youth as they left their families on the farm. In order to recreate the idyllic farm life, women of this group attempted and in some instances succeeded, in creating educational reforms through the promotion of domestic science, in particular through the promotion of domestic science programs at the MacDonald Institute as part of the Ontario Agricultural College.

The Women's Institute's concerns for the local community were at times overshadowed by the isolation of rural areas and the influence of the urban women who were members of both the Women's Institutes and the National Council of Women affiliates. This was another purpose of the WI: to lessen the isolation of farm wives who may face isolation for example, through the geography of the farming community or through their workday chores. While not overtly political in its aims, the Women's Institute was still influenced by the politics of the National Council as part of a national movement. This is evident from their endorsement of various council resolutions such as their endorsement of suffrage.

The public health movement legitimated many social purity reforms and created new arenas for the reformers to address. For the members of the Women's Institutes, public health initiatives were important both in the school and on the farm. For the National Council of Women, public health issues were important in the city slums, schools, homes and workplace. Both organizations shared a concern not only for the physical environment that people inhabited but also with the moral character of that environment and the various populations who made up the social body.

### The Social Body and Public Health

The regulation of the social and political body was carried out through both social reform and public health avenues and impacted differently on different parts of the population. By attributing the social problems related to immigration, and

rapid urbanization and social change, to race, class and gender differences in the population, restrictions of certain sectors of social body were validated. The adoption of immigration laws based on country of origin and the perceived capacity of immigrants to be quickly assimilated into Canadian society, meant that specific immigrant groups were placed into living, working and playing spaces that could be easily “policed” to ensure that the assimilation of Canadian ideals was taking place. Working-class women were regulated according to maternal and employment practices and were placed under the watchful eye of both the public health nurse and reformers. Reformers used many different mediums to enforce the aims of the social purity movement, ranging from political lobbying tactics, to the rhetoric of a new consumerism which required that messages be explicit in nature so as to be easily grasped by mass audiences.

The public health movement helped regulate specific sectors of the social body by coming into people’s homes and regulating individual health and social behaviours without taking into account broader social and economic concerns. For example, overcrowding in lower-class homes was seen as a moral and social problem and also a public health risk, yet the solutions that were proposed such as eviction or demolishing the homes, did not address the economic concerns which generated the problems in the first place. The interventions of public health nurses in the lives of young girls and new mothers in the form of Mother’s Classes and Better Baby Clinics provided a forum for “Canadianizing” new immigrants, as well as reforming what were perceived as dangerous habits of lower-class mothers. While many important initiatives and policies were created such as better water and milk distribution and purification, as well as sewage disposal, the public health movement also regulated and monitored the moral and social lives of specific populations and at the same time, legitimated the work of social purity reformers.

### The Local Context

At a local level, the women of Port Arthur and Fort William attempted to mimic the initiatives of their more urban counterparts and succeeded in bringing about new restrictions for ports of entry, the confining of "enemy aliens" during World War I, and introducing new curriculum ideas into the classrooms that would aid in the process of monitoring and assimilating immigrant populations. The desire to unite women in the region received its impetus from the national example. The organizations in the north subsequently identified with national directives when addressing issues not only of local significance, but of national significance as well. The regional isolation not only served to bring women together in a sense of community but also brought them together to create a rural ideal image of tradition and morality that was viewed as lacking in a quickly modernizing society. As communication methods improved, the region was drawn into national action in the form of attendance at national conferences and exhibitions, as well as through efforts to bring prominent speakers and exhibitions that reinforced their message to the cities. There were very few differences in the way that issues were addressed for the WALCW and WI and the methods of change proposed remained the same. For example, there was support for domestic science programs from both groups and they effectively lobbied the school boards and municipal government to have these programs established, funded and continued.

Public health measures were aggressively addressed in the north. While the region was seen as beautiful, and settled primarily by industrious working-class men and women, there were concerns about the continued mental stability of the inhabitants, the negative effects of rapid immigration, and access to adequate medical services. Many of these were genuine concerns as the north appeared to be lagging behind in services just as many slum areas in the larger, more urban cities



were. Public health reforms were carried out through Better Baby Contests and the condemning of various homes and properties throughout the cities. While it is difficult to ascertain how effective and consistent specific public health initiatives were, the Board minutes overall indicate that there were specific situations that were addressed as the cities grew and became more industrial in nature.

Public health officials depended upon women's organizations to help institute health reforms for two primary reasons; first, they were influential in their own communities because of the racial, social and economic position they held and could help secure funding and legitimate their programs. Second, because of this influence, they were able to help facilitate home-based programs such as maternal care programs that would not have been as effective if left to the one, or two public health nurses who administered to quite a large territory and were unfamiliar to the residents of the cities. The other aims of public health officials remained within the realm of moral and social reform and because women were active within this sphere, they were able to work together to try and change attitudes and behaviours that were deemed improper according to a middle-class Canadian lifestyle.

The moral and social reform movement did not end in 1930. Social purity took on a more direct focus with the advent of the Depression and World War II. The proposed legislation (in some provinces such as Ontario) pertaining to the forced sterilization of those deemed mentally deficient grew in support. For those provinces that did have sterilization policies already in existence, the numbers of people who were sterilized grew.<sup>311</sup> The increase in individuals who were sent to

<sup>311</sup> Diane B. Paul, Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to the Present (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995) Ch. 6 & 7; Fiona Miller, Population Control and the Perseverance of Eugenics: A Case Study of the Politics of Fertility Control, Alvin Ratz Kaufman, 1930-1979 (M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1993), "Kaufman claimed that between 1930-1935 a local Doctor or Doctors had sterilized approximately 400 women in hospitals" p. 126. Kaufman remained a virulent advocate for sterilization of the "unfit" until his death in 1979 stating in 1976 "with evident paranoia, that, 'At the present I think we are heading for a time when the N.D.P., the Communists, and those on welfare will combine to get the balance of power in the Federal Government and perhaps even the control. The Lord help us when the social liabilities control the country.'" cited in Miller, p. 141.

sanitariums also grew as the number of destitute individuals grew. With the onset of World War II, immigration restrictions also increased as did the moral and social regulation of new and established Canadian citizens. Women's role in social purity did not diminish during this time and their concerns for the next twenty years at least, were forced to change if only in a minor way, due to the increase of women involved in the labour market as well as the increased dependence of many destitute families on the government to provide for them. Women were taking on new responsibilities in the health profession that allowed them to have an increased voice in the future of Canada. The professionalization of social work from its beginnings through charity organizations as well as other newly established occupations such as, diet and nutrition counsellors, domestic science teachers, and so on, allowed women to maintain their public role as moral and social reformers. From 1900-1930 however, women were part of a movement to create a new vision of Canada in a time of great social, economic and political upheaval.

#### Directions for Future Research

This research could be expanded upon in a number of different directions. As previously noted in Chapter Two, my analysis of the local social purity movement was limited by language skills and the lack of secondary source literature on the immigrant and working-class women who were the subjects of social purity reforms and programs. Research on these populations would provide valuable insights into their response to the middle-class women reformers and potentially document forms of resistance to the monitoring and regulation of their communities. It would also be of interest to examine the shaping and evolution of social purity rhetoric and initiatives through the tumultuous social and economic changes associated with the Depression Era and World War II, and whether the related changes to women's roles and their greater participation in the paid labour force

affected their interest and activity in social purity. Finally, research on the ways in which medical advances and technology reshaped the public health movement, and whether women's voluntary organizations continued to be active in disseminating information about public health, and regulating the social body, would be informative.

Appendix 1Primary Source Materials Locally AvailableThunder Bay Museum

- A 35/1/1-2 Anne J. Barrie Papers - papers available from 1913-1914
- A 47/8/1-6, A 47/9/1-4 Blake-McNaughton Collection papers available from 1890-1964
- E 18/3/1 Canadian Club - Women's Branch - minutes available from 1907-1982
- A 60/1/1, A 60/4/1-5, A 60/2/1-13 Gertrude Dyke Papers - papers available from 1920-1973
- E 5/1/1, E 5/2/1-7, E 5/3/1 Lord's Day Alliance - minutes available from 1896-1913
- E 6/1/1-13 Ontario Women's Institute of Westfort - minutes available from 1919-1958
- E 11/1/1-7, E 11/2/1-3, E 11/3/1-8, E 11/4/1-6, E/11/5/1 West Algoma Local Council of Women - minutes available from 1894-1973
- E 16/1/1-7 Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire - Lady Grey Chapter- minutes available from 1914- 1979
- E 21/1/1 The Moral and Social Reform Council of Fort William - minutes available from 1912-1913
- A 40/1/1, A 47/9/1-4 Fred Stephenson Papers/ Fort William Playground Movement - papers available from 1913-1920
- A 48/6/1-16, A 48/9/1-17 Carson Piper Historical Papers - papers available from 1883-1948
- G 7/1/1-4, G 7/2/1 Thunder Bay District Liquor Licence Inspector's Records minutes available from 1887-1917
- E 24/1/1-2, E 24/2/1, E 24/3/1-8, E 24/4/1-2, E 24/5/1-2 The Fort William Patriotic Society Records
- G 2/2/1-5 Government of Canada Records

G3/7/2 City of Fort William Records

E28/1/1 Records of the Citizen's League of West Fort William

### **Biographical Information**

Mary J.L. Black  
 Dr. T.S.T. Smellie  
 Mrs Smellie  
 Dr. C.N. Laurie

### **Thunder Bay City Archives**

#### **City of Fort William -**

Series 75, TBA 4099 Board of Health Minutes (1903-1912, 1913-1922, 1922-1931)  
 Series 71, TBA 4067 Board of Works Minutes (1903-1908, 1908-1911, 1912-1914,  
 1915-1919, 1920-1923, 1924-1927, 1928-1930)  
 Series 1, TBA 7-29 City Council Minutes (1898-1902, 1903-1906, 1907-1909,  
 1910-1911, 1912-1912, 1913-1913, 1914-1914, 1915-1915, 1916-1916, 1917-1917,  
 1918-1918, 1919-1919, 1920-1920, 1921-1921, 1922-1922, 1923-1923, 1924-1924,  
 1925-1925, 1926-1926, 1927-1927, 1928-1928, 1929-1929, 1930-1930)  
 Series 121, TBA 4798 Parks and Recreation/Civic Recreation Notes (1909-1972)

#### **Fort William City Clerk's Files - Series 4,**

Contains information pertaining to:

TBA 1	General correspondence files #66-80
TBA 2	Aliens (1913-1915)
TBA 2, File 22	Board of Education 1904-1919
TBA 2, File 36	Colonization 1914-1915
TBA 3, File 81	Deaf and Dumb Institution (1910-1919)
TBA 3, File 82	Department of Immigration (1907-1919),
TBA 3, File 83	Department of Interior (1909-1916)
TBA 3, File 83	Department of Justice (1908-1912)
TBA 3, File 93	Doukhobors (1908)
TBA 3, File 102	McKellar Hospital (1910)
TBA 123, File 162	McKellar Hospital (1921-1929)
TBA 123, File 162	Sanitarium (1919-1931)
TBA 123, File 162	Isolation Hospital (1921-1932)
TBA 4, File 135	Prisoner's Aid Society (1917)
TBA 4, File 136	Prisons and Public Charity (1905-1919)
TBA 163, File 308	Relief - House of Refuge (1925-1946)
TBA 5, File 146	Salvation Army (1907-1920)
TBA 89, File 727	Lord's Day Alliance (1914-1917)

TBA 5, File 163	Wesley Institute (1914-1920)
TBA 5, File 149	Temperance - Beer (1920)
TBA 5, File 164	Woman Suffrage (1912-1917)
TBA 5, File 165	WCTU (1912-1920)
TBA 88, File 632	Daughters of the Empire (1915-1919)
TBA 85, File 503	Agricultural Association (1903-1920)
TBA 124, File 209	Labour Situation (1921-1924, 1925-1929, 1929-1930)
TBA 121, File 1034	YMCA (1911-1917)
TBA 123, File 183	City - Immigration (1927)
TBA 86, File 508	Provincial Board of Health Vital Statistics

### **City of Port Arthur -**

Series 49, TBA 3927-3929	Board of Health Minutes (1884-1907, 1907-1916, 1926-1956)
Series 17, TBA 65-77	City Council Minutes (1898-1902, 1902-1904, 1904-1906, 1906-1908, 1908-1909, 1909, 1910-1911, 1911-1911, 1911-1912, 1912-1913, 1913-1917, 1918-1925, 1926-1934)
Series 29 & 127, TBA 4827	City Clerk's Files (1914-1953)
Series 29, TBA 2682	Category Health "S" Hospital - St. Joseph's (1906-1952)
Series 21, TBA 133-138	By-Laws (1889-1904, 1904-1907, 1907-1909, 1909-1911, 1911-1913, 1913-1914, 1914-1931)
Series 63, TBA 3986	Miscellaneous Records - Health Records 1914-1954

\*The files for Fort William are more complete than the Port Arthur files

### **Lakehead University Archives**

Series	Project	Box	Folder	Item	Description
A	I	1	6	I, 1-6	"Outline of Early History", Finnish Organizations 1887- 1949
A	I	1	9	I, 1	The Socialist Party of Canada and the Finnish Connections, 1905-1911
A	I	2	3	I, 1-2	"Report of a Preliminary and General Social Survey of Fort William, March, 1913"
A	I	2	4	I, 1	Report on European Emigration (1900)
A	I	2	9	I, 1-5	Immigration rates to the District *n.d.
A	I	2	12	I, 1-2	"The Social Problems of the Finns in America"*n.d.
A	I	4	6	I, 1-5	Finnish Immigration Reports 1899-1930
A	II	1	1	I, 1	"Bay Street Project II: A Chronicle of Finnish Settlements in Rural Thunder Bay"
C		1	1	I, 1-17	Miscellaneous information: Emigration Map 1905, Immigration Statistics 1900-1973, list of Finnish Workers

- MG 8, B, 3, 13, I2 "Is Port Arthur Threatened With Fire Brand Socialism?" 1908  
 MG 8, A, I, 2, 11, I9 Mayor Oliver's letter to the Deputy Minister of Justice regarding  
 social unrest and labour strikes in the city 1913  
 143aiii-143b Ontario Women's Institutes District of Thunder Bay - 1915-1959  
 189a-l Ontario Women's Institutes Port Arthur Branch - Minute Books  
 1911-1927  
 255y Speech regarding the founding of Women's Institutes 1933  
 266j Ontario Women's Institutes - Scrap Books

### **Provincial Archives of Ontario**

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|--|---|
| RG 62, Series A-1 Box 249-254  | Central Files, General Correspondence,<br>1907-1926   |
| RG 62, Series B-1-d Boxes 440-448<br>(specifically Box/File 447.1-448.5) | Office of the Secretary to the Board of<br>Health and the Chief Medical Officer<br>of Health, 1912-1920, Correspondence<br>with District Officers of Health |
| RG 62 Series B-1-e Box 449, File 449.8                                   | Office of the Secretary to the Board of<br>Health and the Chief Medical Officer<br>of Health, 1913-1920, Correspondence<br>with Sanitary Inspectors         |
| RG 62 Series B-2-a Boxes 451-461<br>(specifically Box/File 457.5-461.3)  | Office of the Secretary to the Board of<br>Health and the Chief Medical Officer<br>of Health, 1912-1926, District Officers of<br>Health Reports             |
| RG 62 Series B-1-j Box 450a  | Office of the Secretary of the Board of<br>Health, 1913-1926, Correspondence  |
| RG 62 Series F-1-b Boxes 478-480   | Division of Maternal and Child<br>Welfare and Public Health Nursing,<br>1920-1926   |
| RG 62 Series D1 Box 468  | Division of Public Health Education<br>Correspondence and Memoranda,<br>1925-1926   |

Appendix 2

To the Convenor of Moral Standards, Port Arthur

1. The question of the supervision of Rooming Houses is not yet solved, if you have not yet reported find out how many women and girls are employed in your locality: "How many live at home?" "How many live in Rooming Houses?" "Are they licensed?" "What are the special problems of the Landlady?" "Of the Roomer?" The YWCA have been doing here some good work along this line.
2. Keep in close touch with your Hygiene Convenor and do all you can to aid in getting more and better care for the feebleminded, this is serious for on it depends many of our problems with delinquents.
3. "How many children were born out of wedlock this year in your locality?" "How many of these children are adopted?" "How many kept by the Mother?" "How many received aid from the Putative Father?"
4. Try and have the Mother examined for Mental Defects and Venereal Diseases.
5. "What are you doing to have the woman's viewpoint expressed in domestic and police courts?" "Have you a Juvenile Court?"
6. "What is being done in a preventative way to help children who are tending to become delinquents?"
7. "What is being done to counteract the Dance Halls?" "The Taxi Cabs?"
8. Find list of Books available and last year's report.

Yours sincerely,  
C.H. Edwards

Unfortunately, this document does not indicate who C.H. Edwards is and their relationship to this memo. It also does not give a date which would indicate either a shift or a maintenance in the moral and sexual codes of pre war and post war times.



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\* Primary Source material is cited in Appendix 1

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