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UNDER RECONSTRUCTION:
THE FAMILY AND THE PUBLIC IN POSTWAR MONTRÉAL, 1944-1949

MAGDA FAHRNI

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Programme in History
York University
North York, Ontario

January 2001



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**Under Reconstruction: The Family and the
Public in Postwar Montreal, 1944-49**

by **Magda Fahrni**

a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of York
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

This dissertation approaches post-Second World War reconstruction from the ground up. Using Montréal as a case study, it explores the place of family in postwar reconstruction efforts. In particular, it focuses on the political economy of family life. Canadians took promises of social security and 'Freedom from Want' seriously in the wake of the war. Each chapter in this dissertation examines a different aspect of attempts by working- and middle-class Montréalers (French- and English-speaking, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish) to realize their visions of family. Consumer activism, strikes, and calls for social welfare measures all demonstrated their determination to secure freedom from want.

The state was an important target in all of these campaigns. Postwar Montréalers, like citizens elsewhere in Canada, were developing new senses of entitlement and were expanding their visions of citizenship to include social and economic, as well as political, rights. Struggles to achieve a fuller citizenship involved pushing at the boundaries of 'the public' in order to increase the range of public provisions, the number of people who would have access to these provisions, and the number and kind of claims that could be made in public. Montréalers made family matters public in an attempt to legitimate demands for new kinds of citizenship rights. Their efforts suggest that boundaries between the private and the public in the past were both fluid and permeable.

Amid demands for a broader and more accessible public, however, appeals for privacy persisted. There was some resistance to an expanding public, and to the specific

ways in which the public was expanding. In particular, some Montréalers resisted a 'public sphere' dominated by Ottawa. Federal-provincial conflict was one of the factors that contributed to the defeat, by the 1950s, of some of the far-reaching proposals for social change that had emerged in the years of war and reconstruction. Throughout, this dissertation considers the relative distinctiveness of Montréal and of the province of Québec, and the ways in which this shaped campaigns for freedom from want.

Acknowledgments

It is a pleasure to acknowledge those who have contributed in some way to this dissertation. I would like to thank, first, the members of my thesis committee. I was an undergraduate at McGill University when I met Craig Heron over a decade ago. He was the first person to suggest that I consider graduate work in History, and he has suffered the consequences of that suggestion in the form of numerous and lengthy drafts of chapters. As committee members, both Craig and Susan Houston gave generously of their time and knowledge and both remain, for me, models of good teaching. Bettina Bradbury supervised the dissertation with wisdom and warmth in equal measure. Her high standards and gentle prodding have made the final product much better than it would otherwise have been.

I would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for essential financial support in the form of a Doctoral Fellowship, and York University's Department of History for teaching assistantships and for the Ramsay Cook Fellowship in Canadian History. Equally practical assistance came from Andrée Lévesque, Julie Perreault, and Deryn Collier, all of whom gave me places to stay on research trips to Montréal and Ottawa.

Members of the York Women's History Group and the Toronto Labour Studies Group offered thoughtful and incisive comments on early versions of some of these chapters. The thesis also benefited from informal discussions with fellow graduate students: for their encouragement and friendship, I would like especially to thank

Dimitry Anastakis, Lisa Chilton, Sarah Elvins, Alexandra Mosquin, Carolyn Podruchny, Camille Soucie, and Joseph Tohill. My parents, who raised me in a household where history was important, have always shown enthusiasm for my projects.

Heartfelt thanks go, finally, to Jake Estok, for his steadfast support and for sharing with me his good humour and healthy sense of perspective.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgments	vi
Table of Contents	viii
List of Maps	ix
Introduction: Postwar Reconstruction and Families in Public	1
Chapter 1: City at Peace: Reconstructing Families in Postwar Montréal	51
Chapter 2: The Romance of Reunion: War, Demobilization, Family, and Citizenship	128
Chapter 3: Commemorating the Cent-Mariés: the Mass Marriage, the <i>Mouvement familial</i> , and the Politics of Postwar Reconstruction	192
Chapter 4: ‘Purses on Legs’: Economic Citizenship, Gender, and a Politics of Prices	247
Chapter 5: Creating the Breadwinner-Citizen: Family, the Labour Movement, and the State	298
Chapter 6: ‘City Unique’? Assessing the Family and the Public in Postwar Montréal	367
Bibliography	400

List of Maps

Map 1:	The Distribution of French-Canadians in Montréal, 1941	62
Map 2:	Neighbourhoods and Municipalities in which Anglo-Canadians are in the Majority, 1941	63
Map 3:	The Distribution of Jewish Montréalers in the City, 1941	64

Introduction: Postwar Reconstruction and Families in Public

“...[E]verything our men overseas hold dear is bound up in the bundle of life, represented by their wives and children back home.”¹

“... J’ai bonne espoir que tout cela sera fini bientôt et que je pourrai enfin reprendre la vie tranquille que je menais avec ma chère épouse avant la guerre.”²

No one could have accused Montréal Liberals of failing to grasp the end-of-war *Zeitgeist*. On 1 June 1945, an advertisement appeared in the city’s widely read daily, *La Presse*, urging readers to vote Liberal in the upcoming federal election. Sponsored by Le Comité Central Libéral, Montréal, the advertisement featured a photograph of Prime Minister Mackenzie King and was headlined “King, ET LA FAMILLE CANADIENNE.” This astute piece of electoral propaganda captured both the self-fashioning of King and the federal Liberal Party, and the ways in which visions of family were central to reconstruction and the postwar public realm.

The advertisement positioned the bachelor prime minister as the father of “la FAMILLE de son pays.” It emphasized the progressive social legislation that King had

¹ National Archives of Canada (NA), Dependents’ Allowance Board (DAB), RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 29, File: DAB 5-6, Vol. 1. Mrs. T.G. Hodge, Chairman, Welfare Committee, Royal Canadian Army Service Corps (A.C.A.) Women’s Auxiliary, Montréal, to Hon. J.L. Ralston, Minister of Defence, Ottawa, 21 July 1941.

² “I am hopeful that all this will be over soon and that I will finally be able to take up the calm life I led with my dear wife before the war.” Archives Nationales du Québec à Montréal (ANQM), Mouvement des Travailleurs Chrétiens (MTC), P257, Vol. 11, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 92. Sgt. [Husband] to Rév. Père Victor-M. Villeneuve, 11 septembre 1944.

enacted for his 'family,' and reminded readers that, like a good father, "KING EST VOTRE SÉCURITÉ." King's "Belle Famille Canadienne" was a harmonious entity that transcended the bitter divisions of politics, ethnicity, and class that had fractured the country in wartime. Not only did the advertisement conceive of the nation's citizens as a 'family,' it explicitly spelled out postwar roles for individual members of Canadian families. Fathers were to be breadwinners, mothers the "queens of the home," children "the hope of tomorrow." Liberal policy-makers assumed, quite rightly, that the Canadians who went to the polls on June 11th would be voting with their families, and social security, in mind.³

Families were important to a nation under reconstruction. A wide range of observers -- including politicians and social workers, medical doctors and social scientists, journalists and purveyors of popular culture -- perceived families to have been damaged by experiences of privation and separation during the Depression and the Second World War. They saw the physical and emotional health of families as linked to the fortunes of the nation in a period of postwar reconstruction; stable families, they argued, were integral to the strength of a postwar democracy.⁴ Commentators suggested that family would absorb and heal wartime wounds: those of individuals, suffering from the absence of loved ones or months in the trenches, and those of a nation scarred by depression-era poverty and divided by wartime politics. Only 'family' could overcome acrimonious cleavages of class, language, and ethnicity: to many, a domesticated nation

³ *La Presse*, 1 juin 1945, "King, ET LA FAMILLE CANADIENNE," 14.

⁴ Annalee Götz, "Family Matters: The Canadian Family and the State in the Postwar Period," *left history* 1 (Fall 1993): 9-50.

of families was a safe basis for peace and prosperity.⁵ Family was thus essential to plans for postwar reconstruction. But reconstruction itself was more than a matter of federal policy. Other levels of government, and institutions of civil society such as churches and private welfare agencies, had their own ideas of reconstruction, and of the place of family within it. Ordinary men and women – family members themselves – also thought hard about what family meant in a victorious postwar democracy.

This thesis approaches postwar reconstruction from the ground up. Using Montréal as a case study, it examines various sites where working- and middle-class citizens articulated their visions of postwar family in the last days of war and the early days of peace. In particular, it explores the political economy of family life. The reconstruction projects of Montréalers (French- and English-speaking, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish) spoke to the resonance of “social security” in these years. Montréalers took the promise of “freedom from want” seriously, and what we see in the chapters that follow are their demands that this promise be realized. Their conceptions of the rights and obligations of ordinary people in a postwar democracy point to the ways in which contemporary definitions of citizenship were expanding to include welfare-state measures, a reasonable cost-of-living, and union security.

More expansive visions of citizenship demanded an enlarged, more accessible public. If, as British sociologist T.H. Marshall declared in 1949, the meaning of social

⁵ Montréal liberal reformer Renée Vautelet, for instance, claimed that “la famille – c’est l’unité qui ... multiplié ... représente le Canada même.” NA, Renée Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1, File: L’Association Canadienne des Consommateurs. St-Vincent-de-Paul [n.d.]. And see Liz Heron, Introduction, in Truth, Dare, or Promise: Girls Growing Up in the Fifties (London: Virago, 1985), 5.

citizenship included not only “the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security” but also “the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being.” then it included, as Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon argue, “a common set of institutions and services designed for *all* citizens, the use of which constitutes the *practice* of social citizenship: for example, public schools, public parks, universal social insurance, public health services.”⁶ Moreover, the voicing of private needs in a public forum was seen as one way of securing improved citizenship rights. The fact that Montréal residents exposed family needs to public view and called for state-funded solutions to private troubles bears out the argument that the private and the public have historically been linked in innumerable ways. Family matters, of course, had long been discussed in public. Yet nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century analyses of temperance, domestic violence, or child-saving tended to frame domesticity in moral terms, and frequently positioned working-class families as ‘problems.’ Moral judgments were not absent from post-Second World War discussions of family: witness, for instance, panics over juvenile delinquency and ‘abnormal’ sexuality.⁷ What made the 1940s different, however, was the widespread concern with the material bases of family life, as matters of

⁶ T.H. Marshall, “Citizenship and Social Class,” in Class, Citizenship, and Social Development (New York: Anchor Books, 1965), 78-79; Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, “Contract versus Charity: Why Is There No Social Citizenship in the United States?,” Socialist Review 22, 3 (1992), 46. Emphases in the original. T.H. Marshall is generally cited as the first scholar to elaborate a concept of “social” citizenship.

⁷ Jeff Keshen, “Wartime Jitters over Juveniles: Canada’s Delinquency Scare and Its Consequences, 1939-1945,” in Age of Contention: Readings in Canadian Social History, 1900-1945 (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1997); Mary Louise Adams, The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality (Toronto: UTP, 1997); Mona Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada (Toronto: UTP, 1999).

national and public interest and not simply individual responsibility. Moreover, as we see in this thesis, ‘ordinary’ families themselves frequently set the agenda for public discussion of family by writing to their governments, by exposing their fragile household budgets to the advice columns of the daily press, and by staging consumer boycotts, protesting food rationing, and asking their children’s striking teachers to return to work. ‘The public’ appeared poised for expansion at the end of the Second World War, as citizens demanded a say in public matters and a broader range of public provisions. At the same time, however, private welfare remained indispensable, and calls for privacy persisted, in this nation under reconstruction. Moments of resistance to, or ambivalence about, state intervention in private lives in fact help to explain why the potential for truly progressive reform at the end of the war was defused into something less radical by the beginning of the new decade.

I. War, Reconstruction, and Citizenship

“... [T]here are times in history that hold all the possibility of new beginnings. One of them was 1945.”⁸

‘Postwar Canada’ is becoming crowded terrain for scholars, and particularly for social historians interested in such topics as family, gender, sexuality, and consumerism. In too many recent histories, however, the ‘postwar period’ remains relatively

⁸ Heron, Introduction, in Truth, Dare, or Promise, 1.

undifferentiated, the years between 1945 and 1960 assumed to be of a piece.⁹ This dissertation takes as its explicit focus the years of reconstruction after the Second World War. It begins in 1944, before the war had ended but when thoughts of life after the war were on everyone's mind. By 1944, the demobilization of Canadian troops was underway. That year marked Maurice Duplessis's return to power as Québec's premier; the provincial election of 1944 was also the first in which Québec women voted. The thesis ends in 1949, a convenient chronological marker but also a point by which reconstruction no longer seemed a pressing concern. The 1940s, I argue, were different than the 1950s. The abiding concern with reconstruction, with planning the postwar world, set them off from what followed.¹⁰ There was more up for question in the late 1940s; the 'postwar period' was still up for grabs. No Cold War consensus had yet been imposed; no "postwar compromise" had yet been negotiated. The 1940s witnessed ideological differences and debates at all levels of society. Would the Soviet Union remain a tentative ally, or would longstanding North American suspicions of communism resurface? Would the federal government maintain its activist role, or would it withdraw its tentacles and allow the provinces to reassert their autonomy? Would Canada remain a

⁹ Mona Gleason, for instance, claims to be studying "postwar Canada," but slips easily into discussions of "the 1950s." Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal, 6. See also Doug Owsram, Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation (Toronto: UTP, 1996). For an analysis of recent historical work on postwar Canada, see Alvin Finkel, "Competing Master Narratives on Post-War Canada," Acadiensis 29. 2 (Spring 2000): 188-204.

¹⁰ In Britain, the immediate postwar period is generally considered separately from what followed. See, e.g., Michael Sissons and Philip French, eds., Age of Austerity 1945-51 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963); Stephen Brooke, ed., Reform and Reconstruction: Britain After the War, 1945-51 (Manchester; New York: Manchester

relatively 'planned' society, or would free-market forces have their way? Would married women remain in paid employment, or would they seek satisfaction in home and family?

Federal policymakers were not the only Canadians who thought about postwar reconstruction. Provincial planners and politicians drew up blueprints for the provinces in the postwar world. Local governments, as Kevin Brushett has recently argued, were also concerned with reconstruction.¹¹ Unions and other social movements, ranging from consumer groups to Québec's Catholic Action, lobbied governments and established resources for their constituents in the hope that the postwar period could be different from what had come before. Planning was the hallmark of the late 1940s, and planning was identified with progress, however that progress was defined. Reconstruction was seized as an opportunity for reform, especially in light of the Allied victory.¹² A triumphant nation was seen to deserve certain benefits, such as welfare-state measures.¹³ If a victorious nation couldn't provide for its citizens, what nation could? This dissertation

UP, 1995). These dates corresponded, of course, with the Labour governments of 1945-51.

¹¹ Kevin Brushett, "'People and Government Travelling Together': Community Organization, Urban Planning and the Politics of Post-War Reconstruction in Toronto 1943-1953," Urban History Review 27, 2 (March 1999): 44-58.

¹² Doug Owram, The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900-1945 (Toronto: UTP, 1986); Peter S. McInnis, "Planning Prosperity: Canadians Debate Postwar Reconstruction," in Greg Donaghy, ed., Uncertain Horizons: Canadians and their World in 1945 (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1997); Brushett, "'People and Government Travelling Together'." For a contemporary example, see Harry M. Cassidy, Social Security and Reconstruction in Canada (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1943).

¹³ Harry Cassidy, for instance, claimed in 1943 that "only a strong and diversified system of social services will be able to meet the legitimate demands of the people for security in a manner that does not affront seriously the self-esteem of men and women who come victorious from the harsh and bloody business of war." Social Security and Reconstruction in Canada, 11.

looks at the ways in which Montréalers, singly or with other like-minded individuals, joined with the Canadian government in planning for the postwar period. It seeks out the instances when they contested federal visions of reconstruction, and it probes the moments when they incorporated them into their own, slightly or substantially different, dreams.

1945 was, as the quotation from Liz Heron above intimates, full of promise. In the United States, this was the promise of capitalism and of private abundance. In Britain, it was the promise of the Welfare State and of the Labour Party's accession to power.¹⁴ There exist numerous testimonials by men and women reared in Britain in the immediate postwar years of state-provided orange juice, education, and medical care, and the effects these had on the collective psyche of a generation.¹⁵ Canada's choices in the wake of the war were perhaps typically mid-Atlantic. In contrast to the United States and Britain, this nation chose a cautious middle ground: restrained private enterprise, a modest welfare state. Joy Parr may be correct to insist upon the prudence of postwar Canadians, on things writ small.¹⁶ This was not inevitable: the federal government, for instance, unveiled grand plans for postwar social security in the election campaign of

¹⁴ Marshall, Class, Citizenship, and Social Development; Brooke, ed., Reform and Reconstruction.

¹⁵ Heron, ed., Truth, Dare, or Promise; Carolyn Steedman, Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives (London: Virago, 1986).

¹⁶ Joy Parr, Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years (Toronto: UTP, 1999). On Canada's "mid-Atlantic" choices in another time and realm, see Christopher Armstrong and H.V. Nelles, Monopoly's Moment: The Organization and Regulation of Canadian Utilities, 1830-1930 (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1986). On the modest nature of the Canadian welfare state, see, e.g., Keith G. Banting, The Welfare State and Canadian Federalism, 2nd ed. (Kingston; Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1987).

1945 and the Dominion-Provincial Conference on Reconstruction that same year. Yet for reasons related to ideological divisions within the federal Liberal party, provincial opposition, and the Government Party's reading of the 'Québec fact,' Canadian planners and politicians made relatively timid choices in the years after the Second World War.¹⁷

Many ordinary Canadians, however, spoke with confidence in the reconstruction years, and asserted their right to participate in postwar decision-making. In part, this was because the concept of citizenship had been so heavily emphasized during the war. As never before, ordinary people were told that their actions affected the nation's future. What they bought, what they ate, whether they went on strike, what kind of wages they demanded, whether they wrote to their spouses overseas: all of these private decisions were seen to have implications for the nation more broadly. Self-interest was to be sacrificed to the public interest. Private decisions were said to have public ramifications during the war, and ordinary people were cast as significant players in the public sphere. With the expansion of the federal state, and with its increased role in people's lives as a welfare-provider after the war, the people who had been told that they were part of this 'public' continued to claim a role in, and demanded greater access to, the public.

During the war, the duties of citizenship had been emphasized, ranging from military service to purchasing Victory Bonds to accepting wage controls and rationing to

¹⁷ For a classic view that emphasizes the opposition of Premiers George Drew, Maurice Duplessis, and Angus L. Macdonald to federal plans, see Donald Creighton, The Forked Road: Canada 1939-1957 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1976), 113-115. For a revisionist view arguing that Mackenzie King had no real desire to implement costly social welfare plans, and was happy to blame uncooperative premiers for the collapse of the reform programme, see Alvin Finkel, "Paradise Postponed: A Re-examination of the

participating in recycling drives. Many of the duties of citizenship, such as compulsory schooling, higher taxes, and military service, were new in Québec in the wartime period, or at least, had not been seen since the last war. After the war, Canadians responded by emphasizing the rights of citizenship, placing great hope in the potential of citizenship in their brave new world. At a time when nationalism lay in some disrepute, citizenship was seen to be a more tolerant, progressive cause. Discussions of citizenship had a special resonance in the context of the Canadian Citizenship Act of 1946. Henceforth, Canadians were Canadian citizens first and foremost, and only secondly British subjects.¹⁸ The Act, which established a citizenship tied to allegiance and less dependent upon 'race,' was in part a response to recent excesses of ethnic nationalism, both at home and abroad. Public debate about the gendered components of citizenship was also current in Québec, as women had obtained the provincial vote in 1940 and had exercised it for the first time in the election of August 1944.¹⁹ Finally, as T.H. Marshall declared a few years after the Second World War had ended, the claims of citizenship could temper the inequalities of class. Yet as Marshall understood, while the benefits of citizenship could soften what Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb have called the "injuries" of class, they

Green Book Proposals of 1945," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association 4 (1993): 120-142.

¹⁸ For one discussion of the Citizenship Act, see Creighton, The Forked Road, 129-131.

¹⁹ Many Quebecers must also have been aware that women in France were granted the right to vote in 1944. See, e.g., Joan Wallach Scott, Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1996), Ch. 6. For a perceptive analysis of the ways in which the Citizenship Act was couched in familial metaphors, see Götz, "Family Matters," 29-31, 48-49.

could not dismantle class itself.²⁰ This was, as James Struthers has argued, the fundamental conflict “at the heart of the welfare state”: the “inherent contradiction between expanding citizenship rights and enduring market-based inequalities”²¹

This is not to say, however, that the Montréalers who sought to broaden the categories and benefits of citizenship were duped; it is worth paying close attention to their efforts. This thesis looks beyond political citizenship to examine the claims of Canadians to other kinds of citizenship: social, economic, industrial.²² These claims -- the claims of working- and middle-class Canadians to social welfare measures and to full participation in democratic capitalism, and the claims of unions to participation in policy-making -- were at one and the same time broader than traditional definitions of political citizenship and also sometimes narrower than the boundaries of federal citizenship. In illustrating the ways in which Montréalers worked out the assorted meanings of various kinds of citizenship, this dissertation explores the significance of a relatively abstract concept for real people.

²⁰ Marshall, “Citizenship and Social Class”; Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, The Hidden Injuries of Class (New York: Knopf, 1972). Kevin Brushett hints at the class dimensions of citizenship when he argues that social service organizations in 1940s Toronto “generated a great deal of suspicion among neighbourhood residents who felt that they were out to ‘make good [citizens] of us’.” Brushett, “‘People and Government Travelling Together’,” 55.

²¹ James Struthers, The Limits of Affluence: Welfare in Ontario, 1920-1970 (Toronto: UTP, 1994), 275.

²² Marshall, “Citizenship and Social Class.” See also Suzanne Mettler, “Dividing Social Citizenship by Gender: The Implementation of Unemployment Insurance and Aid to Dependent Children, 1935-1950,” Studies in American Political Development 12 (Fall 1998): 303-342; Susan Pedersen, “Gender, Welfare, and Citizenship in Britain during the Great War,” American Historical Review 95, 4 (1990): 983-1006; Ann Shola Orloff, “Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender

'The family,' 'the public,' and conceptions of citizenship met most explicitly in the new welfare state. War and welfare have an intimate history in many countries. In Canada, early state welfare measures, such as means-tested mothers' allowances and old-age pensions, were implemented in the wake of the First World War, in part because of the new visibility of war widows and elderly mothers bereft of the support of their sons.²³ The bulk of Canada's welfare state, however, was delivered during and after the Second World War. The war itself inspired measures such as federal Dependents' Allowances and provisions for veterans, the latter consolidated under the rubric of "the Veterans Charter."²⁴ These measures, directed specifically at enlisted men and women and their families, joined new social provisions such as unemployment insurance, legislated in 1940, and universal family allowances, adopted in 1944. "By 1943," Canadian social scientist Leonard Marsh recalled some years later, "social security was in the air as never

Relations and Welfare States," American Sociological Review 58 (June 1993): 303-328; McInnis, "Planning Prosperity," 253.

²³ A federal Department of Health was also established in 1919. Cassidy, Social Security and Reconstruction in Canada, 26; Harry M. Cassidy, Public Health and Welfare Reorganization (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1945), 8. On mothers' allowances, see Veronica Strong-Boag, "Wages for Housework: Mothers' Allowances and the Beginnings of Social Security in Canada," Journal of Canadian Studies 14 (1979): 21-34; Margaret Little, No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997 (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1998); Allan Moscovitch and Glenn Drover, "Social Expenditures and the Welfare State: The Canadian Experience in Historical Perspective," in The 'Benevolent' State: The Growth of Welfare in Canada, eds. Allan Moscovitch and Jim Albert (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1987); Struthers, The Limits of Affluence.

²⁴ Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein, eds., The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP), 1998. On the close historical relationship between war and welfare in Canada, see Dennis Guest, "World War II and the Welfare State in Canada," in Moscovitch and Albert, eds., The 'Benevolent' State; Andrée Lévesque, "Les Québécoises et les débuts de l'État providence," in Brigitte

before.”²⁵ The pervasiveness of ‘welfare-state thinking’ in the later years of war and the early years of peace drew in part on international currents. The popularity of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal measures during the 1930s; the ideas of British economist John Maynard Keynes; the ‘four freedoms’ proclaimed by Roosevelt and incorporated into the 1941 Atlantic Charter; England’s Beveridge Report of 1942, which promised social security “from cradle to grave”: all of these found advocates among Canadian citizens, civil servants, politicians, and intellectuals, and sparked support for government intervention in the economy and social welfare.²⁶ But the development of a Canadian welfare state was also shaped by indigenous experiences of depression and war. Domestic factors such as the intricacies of federalism, regional economic disparities, provincial opposition, the federal Liberals’ desire to retain the political support of Québec, and (perhaps most important) an allegiance to free-market thinking on the part of

Studer et al., eds., Frauen und Staat/ Les Femmes et l’État (Basel: Schwabe & Co., 1998), 175.

²⁵ Leonard Marsh, “An Introduction,” in Report on Social Security for Canada (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975 [1943]), xvii. Harry Cassidy noted in 1945 that 1943 had seen the publication in Canada of the Marsh Report, the Heagerty Report on health insurance and public health, Charlotte Whitton’s The Dawn of Ampler Life, and Cassidy’s own Social Security and Reconstruction in Canada. See Cassidy, Public Health and Welfare Reorganization, Ch. 1. On the introduction of unemployment insurance, see James Struthers, No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State 1914-1941 (Toronto: UTP, 1983). On family allowances, see Dominique Marshall, Aux origines sociales de l’État-providence: Familles québécoises, obligation scolaire et allocations familiales 1940-1955 (Montréal: Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 1998); Brigitte Kitchen, “The Introduction of Family Allowances in Canada,” in Moscovitch and Albert, eds., The ‘Benevolent’ State.

²⁶ Cassidy, Social Security and Reconstruction in Canada, p. 6 and Ch. 6; Owram, The Government Generation; J.L. Granatstein, The Ottawa Men: The Civil Service Mandarins 1935-1957 (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1982). Canada’s Leonard Marsh had in fact attended the London School of Economics in the 1920s when William Beveridge directed the School. Guest, “World War II and the Welfare State in Canada,” 211.

some powerful federal Liberals, all dictated the particular structure of the emerging Canadian welfare state.

Historians agree that a variety of actors pushed for a federally directed welfare state. Federal civil servants seduced by the promise of Keynesianism and state intervention were key, as were Liberal politicians feeling the heat of CCF pressure on the left and cognizant of the electorate's increasingly vocal desire for measures of social security. In fact, as Harry Cassidy noted in 1945, "Spokesmen for all three of the leading political parties, Liberals, Conservatives, and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, reiterated and amplified earlier statements in favour of broad measures of social security after the war. In principle there was agreement on the political front, however differently the various parties might propose to implement the principle."²⁷ Ordinary citizens pushed for social welfare, through writing to their political leaders,²⁸ through attending unemployment rallies in the 1930s and cost-of-living rallies in the late 1940s, and through their unions. Wartime exigencies provided an additional spur: family allowances, for instance, were seen by the federal government as a way of satisfying workers' demands for wage increases without having to lift wartime wage controls.²⁹ The fear of another postwar depression sparked the desire to maintain the purchasing power of ordinary Canadians: unemployment insurance, family allowances,

²⁷ Cassidy, Public Health and Welfare Reorganization, 1.

²⁸ Lara Campbell, "'A Barren Cupboard at Home': Ontario Families Confront the Premiers during the Great Depression," in Edgar-André Montigny and Lori Chambers, eds., Ontario Since Confederation: A Reader (Toronto: UTP, 2000).

²⁹ Jane Ursel, Private Lives, Public Policy: 100 Years of State Intervention in the Family (Toronto: Women's Press, 1992); Marshall, Aux origines sociales; Dennis Guest, The Emergence of Social Security in Canada, 3rd ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

and veterans' benefits were intended to encourage workers to spend, rather than hoard, in the wake of the war. But despite the fact that the push for social security measures sometimes came from those other than workers, working-class citizens soon came to view the welfare state as their own, and as something to which they were entitled. Over the course of the late 1940s and the 1950s, for instance, unions lobbied for family allowances to be indexed to the increased cost-of-living.³⁰ The welfare state, then, was shaped at least in part by the recipients of its largesse.³¹

Welfare-state history has become a growth industry in recent years. Scholars compare the size and nature of various welfare states, tagging them with labels such as paternalist or maternalist, semi-welfare states or two-tier welfare states.³² In contrast to the British example, the mid-twentieth-century Canadian welfare state was relatively restrained -- a truncated welfare state. As we shall see below, it had its limits, and its limitations. But the new measures of the 1940s were nonetheless a huge departure from what had come before: from the local, the private, and the parsimonious. Moreover, as Carolyn Steedman reminds us in her evocative description of growing up in Britain in the early years of the Welfare State, there could be an enormous difference between the

³⁰ Marshall, Aux origines sociales.

³¹ For a cautionary tale about the limits to citizens' ability to shape the welfare state in a particular time and place, see Shirley Tillotson, "Citizen Participation in the Welfare State: An Experiment, 1945-57," Canadian Historical Review 75, 4 (1994): 511-542.

³² Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds., Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States (New York; London: Routledge, 1993); Pedersen, "Gender, Welfare, and Citizenship"; Theda Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: the Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1992); Moscovitch and Albert, eds., The 'Benevolent' State; Guest, Emergence of Social Security in Canada; Struthers, The Limits of Affluence; Mettler,

intentions of planners or the 'objective' nature of a welfare state and the way in which it was experienced by recipients. As Steedman recalls,

The calculated, dictated fairness that the ration book represented went on into the new decade, and when we moved from Hammersmith to Streatham Hill in 1951 there were medicine bottles of orange juice and jars of Virol to pick up from the baby clinic for my sister. This overt intervention in our lives was experienced by me as entirely beneficent, so I find it difficult to match an analysis of the welfare policies of the late forties which calls 'the post-war Labour government ... the last and most glorious flowering of late Victorian liberal philanthropy,' which I know to be correct, with the sense of self that these policies imparted. If it had been only philanthropy, would it have felt like it did? I think I would be a very different person now if orange juice and milk and dinners at school hadn't told me, in a covert way, that I had a right to exist, was worth something.³³

Many Canadians must also have experienced the emerging welfare state of the 1940s as benign and more, as giving hope and a sense of precarious security.

Assured monthly sums such as family allowances, or the knowledge that the unemployment of husbands, at least, might be weathered through unemployment insurance payments, permitted both middle- and working-class Canadians to participate in a slowly growing consumer economy in the late 1940s.³⁴ This was not, by and large, the glorious postwar consumption of automobiles and television sets celebrated in American popular culture and in some American scholarly literature.³⁵ It was, rather, a

"Dividing Social Citizenship by Gender"; Orloff, "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship."

³³ Carolyn Steedman, "Landscape for a Good Woman," 118-119, in Heron, ed., Truth, Dare or Promise; Steedman, Landscape for a Good Woman, 121-122.

³⁴ On the peculiarly Canadian features of this consumer economy, see Parr, Domestic Goods.

³⁵ Elaine Tyler May, Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era (New York: Basic Books, 1988); William L. O'Neill, American High: the Years of Confidence, 1945-1960 (New York: Free Press, 1986).

restrained consumption that involved the purchase of more and better necessities such as food and clothing. The fact that these purchases were enabled in part by new welfare-state money was evidence of Keynesianism working as it was intended to.³⁶

If most Canadians experienced the welfare state as a positive good, others recognized or suffered the more coercive aspects to new state developments. Canada's welfare state was implemented by a Liberal, not a Labour, government; most prominent federal policymakers in the 1940s were liberals, not social democrats. As Allan Moscovitch and Glenn Drover note, capitalist nation-states have historically implemented social welfare programmes in order to make capitalism run more smoothly -- that is, to facilitate the reproduction of a healthy, "appropriately educated" labour force.³⁷ Thus the welfare state had its limits. Older ideas of "less eligibility," of distinctions between the deserving and the undeserving poor, persisted amid new senses of entitlement and democracy. Distinctions along the lines of gender and familial roles, moreover, were instrumental in shaping the structure and delivery of welfare-state measures. Economic need was not the only criterion for state assistance in the 1940s; questions of morality and respectability, for instance, continued to determine who would be eligible for dependents' allowances. Moreover, there was no rapid, straightforward, or wholesale move from private charity to a full-blown welfare state in the 1940s. As we shall see, private and public welfare co-existed in these years, across the country but perhaps especially in

³⁶ On Québec families' use of family allowances to purchase food, milk, clothing, shoes, etc., see Marshall, Aux origines sociales. On restrained Canadian consumption in the postwar period, see Parr, Domestic Goods.

³⁷ Moscovitch and Drover, "Social Expenditures and the Welfare State," 29, 13-14.

Québec.³⁸ In many ways, the construction of a Canadian welfare state in the wake of the Second World War was an exercise in nation-building as much as it was an attempt to alleviate real need.

State involvement in social welfare was seen as modern, democratic, and progressive in the 1940s. Many viewed private welfare as retrograde and parochial. Yet private social agencies and welfare services were themselves attempting to ‘modernize’ and professionalize in this period, so as to distinguish themselves from old-fashioned “charity” and so as not to let history pass them by.³⁹ Moreover, although the public was seen as a good thing in the postwar years, and participation in the “cité” was invoked as a democratic ideal,⁴⁰ the federal government’s dominance of the Canadian public did not go unquestioned. Provincial governments and, in Québec, the Catholic Church, also claimed dominant roles in the public. They faced a difficult task, however, in a context where the federal government was intent on maintaining the pre-eminent role it had established during the war. Historians Vernon Fowke and Michael Behiels have carefully delineated Ottawa’s attempts to craft a “new national policy” or, more broadly,

³⁸ Yves Vaillancourt, L’Évolution des politiques sociales au Québec 1940-1960 (Montréal: Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 1988). On “the mixed social economy” as a longstanding institution in Canada, see Mariana Valverde, “The Mixed Social Economy as a Canadian Tradition,” Studies in Political Economy 47 (Summer 1995): 33-60; and in the same issue: Lynne Marks, “Indigent Committees and Ladies Benevolent Societies: Intersections of Public and Private Poor Relief in Late Nineteenth Century Small Town Ontario”; Margaret Little, “The Blurring of Boundaries: Private and Public Welfare for Single Mothers in Ontario.” The findings of these three scholars suggest that the Québec government was not unique in its funding of private charities.

³⁹ Vaillancourt, L’Évolution des politiques sociales au Québec, 230.

⁴⁰ For example, André Laurendeau’s columns in Le Devoir: 18 janvier 1949, “Et les parents?”, 1; 24 janvier 1949, “Les instituteurs ont entendu l’appel des parents,” 1.

a “new federalism.” from the late 1930s on.⁴¹ Unlike the period of reconstruction after the First World War, and in response to the extensive labour protest and economic turmoil that had followed that conflict, the federal government intended to act boldly and to plan for this postwar period. Its plans for “high and stable employment” and for the building of a welfare state (its “revanche administrative,” to use Dominique Marshall’s apt phrase) had significant implications for federal-provincial relations and, in particular, for relations between Ottawa and Québec City. Already resentful of federal wartime incursions into territory declared rightfully provincial by the BNA Act, Québec’s Duplessis, like Ontario’s George Drew, was wary of further attempts by Ottawa to expand its sphere of influence.⁴² An expanding public was viewed with suspicion, if that ‘public’ meant Ottawa.

The defensive nationalism of Québec premier Maurice Duplessis in the postwar years was central to what has come to be known as the province’s *grande noirceur*, or Great Darkness. Duplessis defended provincial autonomy through a conservative, clerical nationalism that made the Church a kind of junior partner in the governing of the

⁴¹ V.C. Fowke, “The National Policy – Old and New,” The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science 18, 3 (August 1952): 271-286; Michael D. Behiels, Prelude to Quebec’s Quiet Revolution: Liberalism versus Neo-Nationalism, 1945-1960 (Kingston; Montreal: McGill-Queen’s UP, 1985). See also Marshall, Aux origines sociales.

⁴² Marshall, Aux origines sociales; Banting, Welfare State and Canadian Federalism. Harry Cassidy notes that even by the end of the 1930s, “Notwithstanding the division of responsibilities contemplated in the British North America Act, which in effect classified the social services with ‘all matters of a merely local . . . nature’ which were to be left to the provinces and their creatures, the municipalities, there had emerged by the beginning of the war a loose and imperfect partnership between the three levels of government.” Public Health and Welfare Reorganization, 9. On George Drew, see Finkel, “Paradise Postponed”; Creighton, The Forked Road, 114-115.

province.⁴³ The bishops, Duplessis is reputed to have said, ate out of his hand.⁴⁴ Yet while paying lip service to a traditional vision of Québec that highlighted its rural, pastoral, and Catholic dimensions, Duplessis encouraged the rapid postwar industrialization of the province at the hands of English-Canadian and American capital. This was only one disjuncture in postwar Québec, and should alert us to the possibility of other contradictions and complexities. Recent works within Québec historiography have argued that the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s was not as fundamental a break with the province's past as participants in that Revolution (such as Pierre Trudeau and Gérard Pelletier) had argued. Historians have begun to seek the roots of the Revolution in previous decades, and have pointed to ideological diversity and debate, and currents of liberalism and materialism, before the 1960s.⁴⁵ As Fernande Roy argues, the fact that the Catholic Church was a significant presence in Québec society “n'est cependant pas une

⁴³ Jean-Pierre Collin, La Ligue ouvrière catholique canadienne, 1938-1954 (Montréal: Boréal, 1996).

⁴⁴ Lucia Ferretti, Brève histoire de l'Église catholique au Québec (Montréal: Boréal, 1999), 145.

⁴⁵ Fernande Roy, Progrès, harmonie, liberté: Le libéralisme des milieux d'affaires francophones à Montréal au tournant du siècle (Montréal: Boréal, 1988); Behiels, Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution; Paul-André Linteau et al., Quebec Since 1930, trans. Robert Chodos and Ellen Garmaise (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1991); Collin, Ligue ouvrière catholique; Gaston Desjardins, L'Amour en patience: la sexualité adolescente au Québec, 1940-1960 (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1995). Michèle Dagenais has recently argued that a parallel 'great darkness/ Quiet Revolution' narrative has been told about Montréal's municipal government, whereby corruption and anachronistic modes of governance were swept away by Jean Drapeau in the 1960s. Her work argues that the 'modernization' of the city's administration in fact began in the early twentieth century. See Des pouvoirs et des hommes: l'administration municipale de Montréal, 1900-1950 (Montréal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP and The Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 2000).

raison pour lui laisser toute la place dans le paysage idéologique.”⁴⁶ The degree to which the province was ideologically homogeneous is one element of what has come to be known among Québec historians as the debate about a ‘normal society.’⁴⁷ This debate has sparked questions for this thesis, including: How different were Québec families from families elsewhere in Canada? Was the province swept up in North America’s postwar obsession with domesticity, and for the same reasons? Have historians overstated the degree to which Québec was a province steeped in Catholicism in the years preceding the Quiet Revolution?

The postwar battle between Ottawa and Québec City took place in the context of a larger, global conflict: that between the United States and the Soviet Union. While Canada was not one of the two great antagonists in the international Cold War that followed closely on the heels of the Second World War, it was difficult to avoid taking sides in a conflict of such magnitude. As the world’s nations lined up on one side or the other, there was never any question where Canada’s allegiances would lie. The questions for historians, rather, have to do with when Canada’s Cold War began, the degree of its virulence, and its pervasiveness. The definitive work on the Canadian Cold War, Reg

⁴⁶ Roy, *Progrès, harmonie, liberté*, 278. Recent works have, moreover, pointed to ideological diversity *within* the Catholic Church, and have been careful to place the Church within its social and historical context. See, e.g., Ferretti, *Brève histoire de l’Église catholique au Québec*.

⁴⁷ Ronald Rudin, “Revisionism and the Search for a Normal Society: A Critique of Recent Quebec Historical Writing,” *Canadian Historical Review* 73, 1 (1992): 30-61; the responses to Rudin’s “Search for a Normal Society” in *Bulletin d’histoire politique* 4 (1995): 3-74; Rudin, *Making History in Twentieth-Century Quebec* (Toronto: UTP, 1997); Fernand Harvey et Paul-André Linteau, “Les étranges lunettes de Ronald Rudin,” *Revue d’Histoire de l’Amérique Française* 51, 3 (Hiver 1998): 425-428; and Michael D.

Whitaker's and Gary Marcuse's Cold War Canada, points to the Gouzenko revelations of 1945 as the starting-point for this episode in Canadian history.⁴⁸ I would argue, however, that in Canada, the chill of the Cold War had not yet reached its nadir in the 1940s. This thesis supports Joy Parr's recent contention that, in the 1940s at least, the experiences of the Depression and the Second World War were more important than the Cold War in shaping Canadian values.⁴⁹ There was still considerable room for questioning and ideological wrestling in these years, or at any rate, more than there would be in subsequent years. Canadians were still receptive to planning, albeit unevenly and with varying degrees of enthusiasm. A tradition of a social democratic current, embodied in the CCF (whose support in national opinion polls peaked in 1943),⁵⁰ plus a tendency to look to Britain as well as to the United States for viable political options, ensured that Canada did not buy into American examples unquestioningly or wholeheartedly.

On the whole, Canada did not experience the same degree of McCarthyite hysteria as the United States. Instead, the Canadian government practised, in the words of Whitaker and Marcuse, "restricted witch-hunting" and an "enlightened anti-Communism." The effects of this Canadian variant of the Cold War were felt largely in two ways. First, it produced a cautious timidity, a restricted range of possibilities, a wariness of planning among some, and a reluctance to risk bold ventures in government and statecraft. It attacked Canada's social democratic current, and social democrats

Behiels, "Normalizing' the Writing of Quebec History," Left History 6, 1 (Spring 1999): 91-99.

⁴⁸ Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-57 (Toronto: UTP, 1994).

⁴⁹ Parr, Domestic Goods, 169, 170.

themselves complied (indeed, collaborated) with Cold War thinking in an effort at self-preservation. The CCF rushed to distinguish itself from Communist ideology and set about rooting out Communists in its midst.⁵¹ Second, the Cold War demoralized and badly damaged Canadian unionism. As Whitaker and Marcuse note, the Cold War was waged within the trade union movement in the late 1940s. Unions purged their memberships; unions' foes practised red-baiting in order to discredit the nation's labour movement.⁵² Anti-communism and Cold War thinking were easily reconciled with the labour movement's "postwar compromise"; indeed, they helped to both shape and consolidate this compromise.⁵³

Whitaker and Marcuse claim that the willingness of Ottawa Liberals to adopt Cold War rhetoric rested in part on the Government Party's desire to retain the support of Québec. Québec, the authors of Cold War Canada argue, embraced the Cold War like no other province. It is certainly true that anticommunism in Québec was longstanding (Duplessis's infamous Padlock Law, for instance, had been passed in 1937), especially within the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Premier Duplessis regularly played the anti-

⁵⁰ Robert Bothwell et al., Canada 1900-1945 (Toronto: UTP, 1987), 329-330.

⁵¹ Whitaker and Marcuse, Cold War Canada, Ch. 12; Olenka Melnyk, No Bankers in Heaven: Remembering the CCF (Toronto; Montreal: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1989), 131.

⁵² Whitaker and Marcuse, Cold War Canada, Chapters 14 and 15; Jacques Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme québécois (Montréal: Boréal, 1989), Ch. 4; Bryan D. Palmer, Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991, 2nd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991), Ch. 6; Merrily Weisbord, The Strangest Dream: Canadian Communists, The Spy Trials, and the Cold War (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1994 [1983]), Ch. 17.

⁵³ Don Wells, "The Impact of the Postwar Compromise on Canadian Unionism: The Formation of an Auto Worker Local in the 1950s," Labour/ Le Travail 36 (Fall 1995): 147-173; Donald M. Wells, "Origins of Canada's Wagner Model of Industrial Relations:

communist card in the postwar years, often (deliberately) conflating communism with Ottawa's "centralizing" tendency.⁵⁴ Yet Cold War Canada draws on an older, perhaps outdated, historiography of Québec, one that insisted upon a province "dominated by conservative Catholic nationalism," a conservatism that "seemingly pervaded all levels of society."⁵⁵ If, as recent work suggests, Quebec was more ideologically diverse than historians have traditionally thought, can we still assume that the province bought into the Cold War as wholeheartedly as Whitaker and Marcuse argue?

This thesis's emphasis on reconstruction and on planning is an argument that Canadian society was not simply 'reconstituted' after the war. Rather, it joins with historian Elaine Tyler May in arguing that the postwar period was something new.⁵⁶ Canadian labour historians have written for some time about the "postwar settlement" among labour, capital, and the state, whereby unions opted for higher wages and security at the cost of the bureaucratization of collective action and the agreement that union leaders would discipline their own memberships.⁵⁷ Similar postwar compromises, I argue in the pages that follow, were negotiated in family life, in politics, and in the realm of consumption. In many ways, the results were, as historians have long argued,

The United Auto Workers in Canada and the Suppression of 'Rank and File' Unionism, 1936-1953," Canadian Journal of Sociology 20 (Spring 1995): 193-225.

⁵⁴ La Presse, 22 juillet 1948, "Alliance conclue pour l'autonomie," 3; Ramsay Cook, Canada, Quebec, and the Uses of Nationalism, 2nd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986), 111. On the impact of the Cold War on Communists in Québec, see Weisbord, The Strangest Dream.

⁵⁵ Whitaker and Marcuse, Cold War Canada, 298, 299.

⁵⁶ May, Homeward Bound, 9.

⁵⁷ Wells, "Impact of the Postwar Compromise"; Wells, "Origins of Canada's Wagner Model"; Peter S. McInnis, "Teamwork for Harmony: Labour-Management Production

conservative, cautious, and sometimes stifling. But these were not simply a return to old ways. Rather, they were the result of conscious planning, struggling, and thinking through the years of war and reconstruction. Postwar Canadians fought for security; they consciously chose security in any number of areas, ranging from family relations to labour relations.⁵⁸ This explains, in part, how the moment of reform that was the mid-1940s could lead to something as cautious and contented as the 1950s: many Canadians had achieved what they had wanted. The combination of economic improvement, welfare-state measures, and union victories served to alleviate much of the material distress of the early twentieth century; many Canadians had “never had it so good.”⁵⁹

II. Reconstruction, the Family, and the Public

In many ways, the new claims of citizenship in postwar Canada reinforced older gendered expectations and, especially, familial roles. People claimed access to the public sphere as citizens, but also as family members: fathers, breadwinners, wives, mothers –

Committees and the Postwar Settlement in Canada,” CHR 77, 3 (September 1996): 317-352.

⁵⁸ It is no accident, I think, that “social security” became the buzzword of the 1940s, more than “social welfare.” The American Democratic Party anticipated this development with the U.S. Social Security Act of 1935. For contemporary definitions of social security, see Cassidy, Social Security and Reconstruction in Canada, 16, 47; Cassidy, Public Health and Welfare Reorganization, 7.

⁵⁹ British Conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan is said to have commented in 1957, “Indeed, let’s be frank about it; most of our people have never had it so good.” Quoted in David Childs, Britain Since 1945: A Political History, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 1992), 106.

even children.⁶⁰ Family was thus a key concept in postwar reconstruction, and reconstruction was implemented in gendered ways.⁶¹ Scholars of war typically argue that reconstruction involves attempts to restore some idealized version of 'normal' gender roles and family relations.⁶² In Canada, the debate over the effects of the Second World War on gender roles was even livelier at the time than it is today in the pages of historical

⁶⁰ Orloff, "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship"; Mettler, "Dividing Social Citizenship by Gender"; Little, No Car, No Radio; Campbell, "'A Barren Cupboard at Home'." On the rights of children, see Dominique Marshall, "The Language of Children's Rights, the Formation of the Welfare State, and the Democratic Experience of Poor Families in Quebec, 1940-55," CHR 78, 3 (September 1997): 409-441; Susan Pedersen, Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914-1945 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993).

⁶¹ On the gendered nature of post-American Civil War Reconstruction, see Nancy A. Hewitt, "Did Women Have a Reconstruction? Gender in the Rewriting of Southern History," Proceedings and Papers of the Georgia Association of Historians 14 (1993): 1-11.

⁶² For Canada, see Ruth Roach Pierson. 'They're Still Women After All': The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986). The international literature includes Margaret Randolph Higonnet et al., eds., Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987); Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake, eds., Gender and War: Australians at War in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995); Susan Jeffords, The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1989); Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson, eds., Nationalising Femininity: Culture, Sexuality and British Cinema in the Second World War (Manchester; New York: Manchester UP, 1996); Ruth Jamieson, "The Man of Hobbes: Masculinity and Wartime Necessity," Journal of Historical Sociology 9, 1 (March 1996): 19-42; Linda K. Kerber, "'I Hav Don ... much to Carrey on the Warr': Women and the Shaping of Republican Ideology after the American Revolution" in Harriet B. Applewhite and Darline G. Levy, eds., Women and Politics in the Age of the Democratic Revolution (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990); Nancy Hewitt, "Did Women Have a Reconstruction?"; Susan M. Hartmann, "Prescriptions for Penelope: Literature on Women's Obligations to Returning World War II Veterans," Women's Studies 5 (1978): 223-239; Sonya Michel, "Danger on the Home Front: Motherhood, Sexuality, and Disabled Veterans in American Postwar Films," Journal of the History of Sexuality 3, 1 (July 1992): 109-128.

journals.⁶³ But in the wake of the war, I would argue, most Canadians had no desire to recreate the 'normal' relations of the 1930s; new meanings, it is clear, were invested in family in the postwar years.

The considerable attention paid to family after the Second World War and to a house-bound wife as the linchpin of that family has inspired an extensive international literature on the effects of the war on women. Did war 'liberate' women? Did it sow the seeds of 'second-wave' feminism? Or was this liberation only for the duration? How liberating could women's war experiences have possibly been if they returned in such large numbers to their newly furnished homes after their men returned? Did they go willingly?⁶⁴ North American popular culture and collective memory echoed wartime propaganda and lauded the impact of war work and voluntary activity on women's psyches and on the recognition accorded them by others. Rosie the Riveter, clad in overalls and a kerchief, embodied the new wartime woman, parachuted into the public sphere and the paid workplace, willingly undertaking her patriotic duty, conscious of her

⁶³ e.g. Renée Morin, "Women After the War," Canadian Affairs, Canadian Edition, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1 March 1945.

⁶⁴ Pierson, 'They're Still Women After All'; Deidre Rowe Brown, "Public Attitudes Towards Canadian Women During and Immediately After World War Two (M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1992); Penny Summerfield, Women Workers in the Second World War: Production and Patriarchy in Conflict (London: Croom Helm, 1984); Susan M. Hartmann, The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982); May, Homeward Bound. Denise Riley also addresses these questions, although with greater scepticism about the possibility of finding answers. See "'The Free Mothers': Pronatalism and Working Women in Industry at the End of the Last War in Britain," History Workshop 11 (Spring 1981): 59-118. Scholarly interpretations of these issues have been written in the shadow of American popular culture's views of postwar women; I am thinking, for instance, of the television programmes "Leave it to Beaver," "Ozzie and Harriet," and "The Donna Reed Show,"

new importance to society, whether that society was the United States, England, or one of the latter's dominions.⁶⁵ Feminist historians, however, noted the limitations to this new public role for women, delineating the continuity with pre-war conceptions of gender, the ways in which Rosie's heterosexuality and conventional femininity remained crucial, and the fact that Rosie generally returned home as soon as the boys were back. But as Deborah Montgomerie has argued, historians "are still struggling to understand the mechanisms by which ideological continuity was maintained."⁶⁶ Recent explanations for this continuity have depended less upon the policies of contemporary governments and employers, and more on cultural interpretations of sexuality, consumption, and wartime iconography: posters, advertisements, magazines, and fashion.⁶⁷

and of Betty Friedan's best-selling The Feminine Mystique (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1963).

⁶⁵ In Canada, this image has been most prevalent in popular histories such as Carolyn Gossage, Greatcoats and Glamour Boots: Canadian Women at War, 1939-1945 (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991). "Revisionist" historians are largely battling a popular conception or a collective memory rather than an earlier generation of academic historians.

⁶⁶ Deborah Montgomerie, "Reassessing Rosie: World War II, New Zealand Women and the Iconography of Femininity," Gender and History 8, 1 (April 1996): 108-132.

⁶⁷ Helen Smith and Pamela Wakewich, "'Beauty and the Helldivers': Representing Women's Work and Identities in a Warplant Newspaper," Labour/ Le Travail 44 (Fall 1999): 71-107; Montgomerie, "Reassessing Rosie"; Sonya O. Rose, "Sex, Citizenship, and the Nation in World War II Britain," American Historical Review 103, 4 (October 1998): 1147-1176; Gillian Swanson, "'So much money and so little to spend it on': morale, consumption and sexuality," in Gledhill and Swanson, eds., Nationalising Femininity; Pat Kirkham, "Fashioning the feminine: dress, appearance and femininity in wartime Britain," in Nationalising Femininity. Page Dougherty Delano's recent study of women's wartime use of lipstick, however, argues that, "Makeup could be a sign of female agency that included sexual power and citizenship and as such was disruptive of wartime's masculine codes of power." See "Making Up For War: Sexuality and Citizenship in Wartime Culture," Feminist Studies 26, 1 (Spring 2000), 33.

In part, the importance of this scholarly debate lies in its implications for a second debate: women's roles in the postwar period, or 'the fifties,' to use conventional shorthand. The two poles of this latter debate are most evident in the American literature. Elaine Tyler May depicts a nation of conservative and home-centred women, focused on their children and the comforts of the newly furnished bungalows and split-levels that dotted the suburban landscape. Expanded visions of women's work and public activity, she claims, were never intended to endure beyond the war.⁶⁸ In response, a number of American historians have insisted that postwar women were "Not June Cleaver," and have pointed to the diversity of women's experiences in 1950s America. They argue that the 1950s were not the nadir of a 'trough' separating two waves of feminism, and demonstrate the ways in which women continued to organize politically and to challenge gendered constraints in the postwar period.⁶⁹

In Canada, the lines of debate have not been as clearly drawn. The central Canadian work on women's wartime experiences, Ruth Pierson's 'They're Still Women After All', suggests that (whether willingly or under coercion) women returned home after the war, and that "... Fluffy Clothes Replace[d] the Uniform."⁷⁰ As in the United States, there is a small but growing literature on women ensconced in postwar suburbs and domesticity, written by historians such as Doug Owsram, Veronica Strong-Boag,

⁶⁸ May, Homeward Bound.

⁶⁹ Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960 (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1994).

⁷⁰ Pierson, 'They're Still Women After All,' Conclusion.

Mary Louise Adams, Mona Gleason, and Valerie Korinek.⁷¹ Yet these studies draw a rather more complex portrait of domestic bliss and suburban life than the received wisdom would have it. Gleason and Adams attempt to dissect the various discourses and forces that made heterosexuality, domesticity, and conformity 'compulsory' in postwar English Canada. Strong-Boag's work on Canadian suburbs and Korinek's study of suburban *Chatelaine*-readers point to a range of experiences among suburban women and varying degrees of attachment to domestic ideals.

There is also a significant strand of Canadian historiography that deals with working-class women in the war and postwar years, and that approaches the domesticity debate using a class analysis. These historians have undertaken studies of single industries or local settings in an effort to trace postwar transformations on a micro-level, and among women who may not have been able to afford the postwar domestic ideal.⁷²

⁷¹ Veronica Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-60," *CHR* 72, 4 (1991): 471-504; Owram, *Born at the Right Time*; Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*; Adams, *The Trouble with Normal*; Valerie J. Korinek, "'Mrs. Chatelaine' vs. 'Mrs. Slob': Contestants, Correspondents and the *Chatelaine* Community in Action, 1961-1969," *Journal of the CHA*, New Series, 7 (1996): 251-275. Owram comes closest to reaffirming notions of suburban bliss and domestic ideals. See also Chris Dummitt, "Finding a Place for Father: Selling the Barbecue in Postwar Canada," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, New Series, Vol. 9 (1998): 209-223.

⁷² Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960* (Toronto: UTP, 1995); Susanne Klausen, "The Plywood Girls: Women and Gender Ideology at the Port Alberni Plywood Plant, 1942-1991," *L/LT* 41 (Spring 1998): 199-235; Valerie Endicott, "'Woman's Place [Was] Everywhere': A Study of Women Who Worked in Aircraft Production in Toronto During the Second World War" (M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1991); Pamela Sugiman, *Labour's Dilemma: The Gender Politics of Auto Workers in Canada, 1937-1979* (Toronto: UTP, 1994); Julie Guard, "Fair Play or Fair Pay? Gender Relations, Class Consciousness, and Union Solidarity in the Canadian UE," *L/LT* 37 (Spring 1997): 149-177; Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "'Weaving It Together': Life Cycle and the Industrial Experience of Female

Their conclusions are for the most part cautious, pointing to the resonance of the breadwinner/ homemaker ideal among working-class women while at the same time noting the difficulty that many working-class families had in achieving this ideal. Few of these studies overturn the conventional portrait of a postwar period steeped in domesticity; most, however, acknowledge the ways in which wartime experiences altered women's sense of the possible.⁷³

With the exception of Gail Cuthbert Brandt's studies of the textile industry in southern Québec, none of this work deals with French Canada. The debate about women, war, and social change, which has flourished in scholarly circles in Britain, the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand, has received little attention among historians of Québec, and historians of postwar Canada have largely excluded Québec from the scope of their analyses.⁷⁴ This thesis is, in part, an attempt to address these omissions. Like the authors collected in Not June Cleaver, I critique the stereotype of postwar women as domesticated and apolitical, lulled into contented passivity by increased prosperity, an

Cotton Workers in Quebec, 1910-1950." L/LT 7 (Spring 1981): 113-125. For other studies that suggest postwar complexity, see Susan Prentice, "Workers, Mothers, Reds: Toronto's Postwar Daycare Fight." Studies in Political Economy 30 (Autumn 1989): 115-141; Sylvie Murray, "A la jonction du mouvement ouvrier et du mouvement des femmes: la Ligue auxiliaire de l'Association internationale des machinistes, Canada, 1903-1980" (M.A. thesis, UQAM, 1988); Franca Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1992). Joy Parr's edited collection, A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980 (Toronto: UTP, 1995), is for all intents and purposes the Canadian counterpart to Joanne Meyerowitz's Not June Cleaver.

⁷³ Julie Guard's study of women in the UE probably breaks most significantly with portraits of postwar political and gender conservatism. See "Fair Play or Fair Pay?"

⁷⁴ An exception here is Geneviève Auger and Raymonde Lamothe, De la poêle à frire à la ligne de feu: la vie quotidienne des Québécoises pendant la guerre '39-'45 (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1981).

abundance of consumer goods, and the joys of safe and clean suburbs. Such a portrait accurately described the lives of only a portion of Canadian women, and even these women lived more politically active lives than historians have acknowledged. Without insisting that postwar women were necessarily feminists or radicals, this thesis expands conventional definitions of politics to examine the ways in which women did mobilize in the postwar years.⁷⁵ It asks, as does Nancy Hewitt in another context, “Did Women Have a Reconstruction?”⁷⁶ It explores women’s community efforts and their relationship to the state in order to understand the ways in which ‘the political’ and ‘the public’ were gendered. And it demonstrates that the war cast a long shadow on Canadian public life and private lives: each chapter in this thesis shows the legacy of the war for the building and rebuilding of family in the postwar years. Reluctant to give up their public wartime activity (undertaken in the name of the Nation), many women drew on their experience of wartime organizing and continued their public activity in the postwar period – only this time in the name of Family and Community.⁷⁷ As we shall see, Family, Community, and Nation were invested with particular, and political, meanings in Québec. Family, in particular, served as a justification that it was assumed Ottawa would understand, but was also used to point out Québec’s distinctiveness to Ottawa.

⁷⁵ On expanded definitions of politics, see Paula Baker, “The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920,” American Historical Review 89, 3 (June 1984): 620-647.

⁷⁶ Hewitt, “Did Women Have a Reconstruction?”

⁷⁷ For evidence of the ideological diversity of women active in ‘familial’ causes in the 1950s, see Merrily Weisbord’s claim that Communist women in Montréal’s Park Extension district attended home-and-school meetings, “ran community nursery schools, and child-rearing seminars, started a library, petitioned for stop-signs, and presented a

'The family' is a concept that has historically been invested with many meanings and much ideological weight. It has always been a normative as much as a descriptive term; family, wrapped in what Marx and Engels called a "sentimental veil," remained a reassuring touchstone in much nineteenth- and twentieth-century public discourse, a "haven in a heartless world" of capitalism and unbridled competition.⁷⁸ Early social and demographic historians tended to write of the family as a unified entity, a consensual unit that made "family decisions," developed "family strategies," and worked together in harmonious "family economies." Feminist historians initiated a more critical examination of families in the past, on the one hand pointing to family as one site of women's oppression, and on the other consciously taking families apart in order to examine the diverse motivations and experiences of different family members and conflict among these members. Family was not simply a haven from the world of work, but for women, children, and some men, was in fact the site of much work: exploitation along the lines of sex, class, and age took place within the home as well as outside its walls. Family strategies were often not self-conscious enough to warrant such a label; moreover, not all family members had an equal say in directing these strategies or in managing a family 'economy.'⁷⁹

detailed, carefully researched brief to the Protestant School Board, asking that a high school be built in their underprivileged district." The Strangest Dream, 204.

⁷⁸ Cynthia R. Comacchio, "Beneath the 'Sentimental Veil': Families and Family History in Canada," L/LT 33 (Spring 1994), 297; Christopher Lasch, Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

⁷⁹ Joan Scott and Louise Tilly, Women, Work and Family (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978); Tamara K. Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time: The relationship between the family and work in a New England industrial community (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982); Bettina Bradbury, Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily

The sense that 'family' ought to consist of a breadwinning husband, a stay-at-home wife, and dependent children persisted from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries, although this ideal varied somewhat according to class, region, and religion.⁸⁰ Historians of women, children, and families have discovered, however, that this ideal was far from universally achieved. Wives and children worked for pay in various times and places; working-class men were not always capable of earning a 'breadwinner' wage. The Depression and the Second World War threw the longstanding discrepancy between ideal and experience into bold relief, and much of the postwar attention paid to the family consisted of hopes that economic improvement (spearheaded by private industry) and the development of a federal welfare state would ensure that the ideal family was realized.⁸¹ Moreover, as Mary Louise Adams has demonstrated, "Inherent in the postwar definition of 'the family' was its basis in a sexually charged

Survival in Industrializing Montreal (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993); Ellen Ross, Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918 (New York: Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993); Louise A. Tilly, "Women's History and Family History: Fruitful Collaboration or Missed Connection?", Journal of Family History 12, 1-3 (1987): 303-315; Comacchio, "Beneath the 'Sentimental Veil'."

⁸⁰ Farm families and Catholic families, for instance, are widely assumed to have welcomed more children than urban-dwellers or Protestants. See David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land, and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West (Toronto: 1981); Andrée Lévesque, Making and Breaking the Rules: Women in Québec, 1919-1939, trans. Yvonne M. Klein (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1994), Ch. 2; and the essays in Bettina Bradbury, ed., Canadian Family History: Selected Readings (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1992).

⁸¹ On men's longstanding inability to earn a "family wage" in Montréal, see Bradbury, Working Families; Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974); Denyse Baillargeon, Ménagères au temps de la crise (Montréal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 1991). Baillargeon argues, in fact, that the crisis of the Depression made little difference to poor families in Montréal.

heterosexual marriage.⁸² The postwar insistence upon heterosexual marriage as (in Adams's words) "the way of organizing erotic, emotional, and reproductive life" took place in a context where marriages had recently been severely tested: husbands and fathers had been absent and mobile; wives, mothers, and children had worked for wages; and many men and women had experienced the war in largely homosocial worlds.⁸³

In response to the perceived wartime trials of the family, 'experts' mobilized and came to the rescue. Canadian historians have noted the increased influence of 'experts,' ranging from social workers to public health nurses to Dr. Spock, over the course of the twentieth century.⁸⁴ Family experts were thus not new in the postwar period, but a wider cross-section of society believed in a need for their services in the wake of depression and war. Psychologists, in particular, enjoyed a broad popular influence in postwar Canada, as Mona Gleason has convincingly argued.⁸⁵ The development of a welfare state

⁸² Adams, The Trouble with Normal, 38.

⁸³ Adams, The Trouble with Normal, 9. On homosocial and homosexual relations in wartime see, for the United States, Allan Bérubé, Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two (New York: The Free Press, 1990). For Australia, see Ruth Ford, "Lesbians and Loose Women: Female sexuality and the women's services during World War II" in Damousi and Lake, eds., Gender and War. For Canada, see the fragmentary evidence in Gary Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire: Homo and Hetero Sexualities, 2nd ed., revised (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1996), 154-157; and see Paul Jackson, "The Prejudice of Good Order: Homosexuality and the Canadian Military, 1939-1945" (Ph.D. diss., Queen's University, in-progress).

⁸⁴ See, e.g., Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939 (Toronto: 1988); Cynthia R. Comacchio, Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children, 1900-1940 (Montréal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1993).

⁸⁵ Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal. On experts in Québec see Lévesque, Making and Breaking the Rules; Denyse Baillargeon, "L'encadrement de la maternité au Québec entre les deux guerres: les gardes de La Métropolitaine, les Gouttes de lait et l'Assistance maternelle," Bulletin du Regroupement des chercheurs-chercheuses en histoire des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec 16, 2-3 (été-automne 1990): 19-45; Denyse

provided new job opportunities to experts on the family.⁸⁶ In Québec, secular experts competed with religious organizations (Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish) concerned with family life after the war. Denise Riley has suggested that, in Britain, the wartime focus on ‘the family’ gave way in the immediate postwar period to a focus on mothers. In the Canadian setting, although motherhood has always been over-determined, there is considerable evidence that fathers and children also received a great deal of attention from state and society in the postwar years.⁸⁷ In turn, men were aware of the political advantages and social benefits to be gained from emphasizing their roles as fathers: as we shall see in Chapter 5, male workers regularly invoked their responsibilities as husbands and breadwinners in order to secure gains from employers and the state.

The fact that ‘the family’ was such an important player in reconstruction, and the fact that families were made ‘public’ in so many ways in the wake of the war, supports

Baillargeon, “Les infirmières de la Métropolitaine au service des Montréalaises,” in Évelyne Tardy et al., eds., Les Bâtisseuses de la Cité (Montréal: ACFAS, 1993).

⁸⁶ Cassidy, Social Security and Reconstruction in Canada, 67-68; Morin, “Women After the War,” 15. And see James Struthers, “A Profession in Crisis: Charlotte Whitton and Canadian Social Work in the 1930s,” in The ‘Benevolent’ State, 122; Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal, 141.

⁸⁷ Riley, “‘The Free Mothers’,” 98. On the overdetermination of ‘motherhood’ in Canadian history, see Katherine Arnup, Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada (Toronto: UTP, 1994). On attention paid to fathers and to children in the postwar period, see Mona Gleason, “Psychology and the Construction of the ‘Normal’ Family in Postwar Canada, 1945-60,” Canadian Historical Review 78, 3 (September 1997): 442-477; Marshall, Aux origines sociales; and Adams, The Trouble with Normal, 27, where she contends that “Whereas the primary focus of many earlier family discourses had been on women, motherhood, and the development of proper femininity, postwar discourses about the family tended to show (and construct) most concern for the development of properly adjusted – normal – children.” On fatherhood in the interwar period, see Cynthia Comacchio, “‘A Postscript for Father’: Defining a New Fatherhood in Interwar Canada,” CHR 78, 3 (September 1997): 385-408. On postwar fathers, see Dummitt, “Finding a Place for Father.”

recent literature arguing that boundaries between the public and private spheres in the past were “ragged” at best and frequently permeable.⁸⁸ Women’s history has, since its inception, been concerned with matters of public and private and the boundaries between them. Michelle Rosaldo’s early influential article about women’s historic lack of access to the public sphere was followed by scholarly studies of ‘separate spheres,’ which were, in turn, quickly succeeded by studies demonstrating that, in almost every time and place, the borders between the spheres were blurred and mutable.⁸⁹ Feminist historians have illuminated the construction of another nineteenth-century ‘sphere’: the feminized “social” that constituted, in Denise Riley’s words, “a blurred ground between the old public and private.”⁹⁰ Debates about public and private were reinvigorated with the translation into English of Jürgen Habermas’s The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere in 1989. Habermas conceives of the liberal, bourgeois public sphere as an arena of public discourse and discussion, separate from the state, where citizens participate and claim a stake in the polity. The public, in this view, acts as a check on the state. The “process of making proceedings public (Publizität) was intended,” Habermas

⁸⁸ Leonore Davidoff, “Regarding Some ‘Old Husbands’ Tales’: Public and Private in Feminist History,” in Joan B. Landes, ed., Feminism, the Public and the Private (Oxford; New York: Oxford UP, 1998), 180.

⁸⁹ Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, “Women, Culture, and Society: A Theoretical Overview” in Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds., Women, Culture and Society (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1974); Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: ‘Woman’s Sphere’ in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven: London: Yale UP, 1977); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850 (1987); Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton, eds., Separate Spheres: Women’s Worlds in the 19th-Century Maritimes (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994).

⁹⁰ Denise Riley, “‘The Social,’ ‘Woman,’ and Sociological Feminism,” in ‘Am I That Name?’ Feminism and the Category of ‘Women’ in History (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 49.

claims, “to subject persons or affairs to public reason, and to make political decisions subject to appeal before the court of public opinion.”⁹¹ Habermas’s work inspired feminists and historians of women to debate the nature and possibilities of the public sphere.⁹² Recent studies, however, have cautioned against assuming the public to be an unequivocal good, or necessarily benign. Nancy Fraser, for instance, has argued that the ability to defend one’s privacy is unevenly distributed along lines of sex, class, and race. Her work, and the work of other scholars, also points to the importance of recognizing a multiplicity of (sometimes competing) publics, particularly in late-capitalist society. This thesis takes both of these arguments into account.⁹³

Numerous historians have demonstrated that definitions of the private, or conversely, of what is acceptable for public discussion, have varied over time and by place.⁹⁴ This thesis is concerned with those moments when ‘family’ became public in

⁹¹ Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964),” New German Critique 3 (Fall 1974): 49-55; Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989 [original German publication 1962]). See also Peter Hohendahl, “Jürgen Habermas: ‘The Public Sphere’ (1964),” New German Critique 3 (Fall 1974): 45-48.

⁹² Joan B. Landes, Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution (Ithaca; London: Cornell UP, 1988); Kerber, “‘I Hav Don ... much to Carrey on the Warr’”; Landes, ed., Feminism, the Public and the Private.

⁹³ Nancy Fraser, “Sex, Lies, and the Public Sphere: Reflections on the Confirmation of Clarence Thomas” in Landes, ed., Feminism, the Public and the Private; also Mary P. Ryan, “Gender and Public Access: Women’s Politics in Nineteenth-Century America,” in the same collection.

⁹⁴ Davidoff, “Regarding Some ‘Old Husbands’ Tales’”; Judith R. Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge UP, 1980); Judith R. Walkowitz, City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). For the Canadian context, I would point to Kathryn Harvey, “Amazons and Victims: Resisting

postwar Montréal. In particular, it looks at reconstruction as a period when families were widely assumed to be integral to the social, economic, and political rebuilding of a country in the wake of war. Family and nation were intertwined: family became the subject of various publics.⁹⁵ The ‘public’ discussed in this thesis is centred on the formal apparatus of the state, but includes the institutions of civil society important to Habermas’s public arena, such as the press, voluntary organizations and, sometimes, the Catholic Church. It encompasses, moreover, the public institutions central to T.H. Marshall’s model of social citizenship, such as public schools, hospitals, and playgrounds.⁹⁶ Many of these ‘public’ institutions helped to shape conceptions of family and citizenship in the postwar years. The thesis asks, among other questions: who shaped the public? Who had access to the public? And what could be said in public? It looks at families not simply as the object of public discussion, but as agents: the ways in which they inserted themselves, their needs, and their claims into ‘the public.’ They did so by voicing family matters in public spaces such as newspapers, supermarkets, and picket lines, and by demanding that family matters be addressed in government (public) legislation. Finally, the thesis suggests that in the wake of the war, “the public” was an ideal as much as a place, and was twinned with ideas of full (or fuller) citizenship.

Where, then, did ‘the family’ encounter ‘the public’ in postwar Montréal? I begin with a look at the city’s geography and labour market in this period of reconstruction. I

Wife Abuse in Working-Class Montréal, 1869-1879,” Journal of the Canadian Historical Association, New Series, 2 (1991): 131-148.

⁹⁵ On the intertwining of family and nation, see Götz, “Family Matters.”

⁹⁶ Marshall, “Citizenship and Social Class”; Fraser and Gordon, “Contract versus Charity.”

consider the policies that federal, provincial, and municipal governments established to provide for postwar families, and I note the occasions when private agencies, voluntary associations, and the Catholic Church remained essential in shaping and providing for needy postwar citizens. In particular, I emphasize the diversity of families in postwar Montréal. This was a city of at least three solitudes (French-Catholic, English-Protestant, and Jewish), where families varied by religious affiliation, language, and class.

I then turn to the particular problems faced by soldiers and veterans in reconstructing family in the wake of the war. Although the family was viewed as an agent of postwar healing, it was apparent to many (not least the soldiers and veterans themselves) that postwar families were themselves in need of renovation and rebuilding. This was a source of considerable concern to the government agencies charged with supervising soldiers and their relatives such as the Dependents' Allowance Board and the Dependents' Board of Trustees. Marital infidelity and wives' illegitimate children, for instance, threatened the morale of soldiers on the battlefield but were also seen to pose a problem for the emotional health of families in the postwar period. Evidence of women's sexual autonomy, 'discovered' by government bureaucrats and private social workers but also clear to family, friends, and neighbours, suggested that postwar conjugal domesticity might not be easily achieved. The complexity of 'family' revealed in the process of applying for dependents' allowances – for instance, young male soldiers with dependent parents and siblings – belied an idealized version of family that consisted simply of breadwinning husbands and dependent wives and children. The federal government's intrusions into the private lives of French-Canadians through such Boards, moreover,

provoked resentment in a province fractured by military participation and conscription. Finally, the workings of the DAB and the DBT provide insight into women's relationship to the emerging welfare state and the nature of female citizenship in wartime.⁹⁷ Under the Dependents' Allowance system, women's social citizenship rested upon their dependent status – upon their familial relationships with men enlisted in the service of their country. Yet the wives and mothers of servicemen felt entitled to their allowances, complaining when they did not receive their cheques and demanding that allowance rates be indexed to the rising cost-of-living. This was a rehearsal, in a way, for subsequent forms of social welfare and more expansive visions of citizenship. At the same time that they called for improved public provisions, however, servicemen's wives resented the scrutiny and moral censure that often accompanied their cheques, and called for privacy with regard to family matters.

Chapter 3 takes as a focus the Cent-Mariés: 105 Catholic, working-class couples who participated in a mass marriage in Montréal's east-end Delorimier Stadium on Sunday, 23 July 1939 under the auspices of the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique. Conceived as a response to the material and spiritual dearth of the Depression, the JOC flourished in the wake of the war and spawned the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique (LOC) for married Catholic workers. After the wedding, the Cent-Mariés moved from the supervision of the JOC to that of the LOC, who traced the paths of these couples as they embarked on married life. This study begins with the couples' fifth wedding anniversary,

⁹⁷ On women's relationship to welfare states see, e.g., Carole Pateman, "The Patriarchal Welfare State" in Landes, ed., Feminism, the Public and the Private; Pedersen, "Gender, Welfare, and Citizenship in Britain"; Koven and Michel, eds., Mothers of a New World.

in 1944, and ends with their tenth anniversary in 1949. An examination of these couples, and of the public hype surrounding their marriages well into the postwar period, sheds light on French-Canadian, Catholic marriages and families. It provides insight into the place and relative importance of the Action catholique in postwar Montréal, and it highlights the existence of a “mouvement familial” in Montréal in this period. In educating its constituents for family life, and in making demands on behalf of Québec’s working-class families, this branch of the Catholic Church competed with the assorted secular experts of the day. The chapter illustrates, moreover, the ways in which the Church blurred the boundaries of private and public. Scholars generally characterize Church welfare services as ‘private,’ and certainly one of the Church’s major functions was to provide the forms for private worship. Yet we see, in the Cent-Mariés episode, the Church assuming a very public role.

Chapter 4 examines the ways in which Montréalers, and Montréal women in particular, adopted consumer activism as a form of protest, a means of claiming citizenship rights, and a method of inserting the family into the public in the postwar period. Consumer activism often straddled lines of class, language, and ethnicity, bringing people of disparate socio-economic backgrounds together to wage common cause as shoppers, as citizens of an economic democracy, and sometimes, as mothers. Such activism demonstrated that while consumers welcomed some forms of government interference in private life (such as price ceilings and rent controls), they opposed others (such as the prohibition of margarine). In the context of the nascent Cold War and the political culture of Québec, I argue, consumer activism was more widely tolerated than

strikes and the demands of wage-earners. Finally, this chapter is a response to a significant body of literature (much of it American) that proposes and celebrates a 'high consumption' era after the war. The characterization of the postwar period as one of Fordist mass production, high wages, and high consumption has much value for many times and places. In this chapter, however, I insist upon the cautious consumption of necessities (food, clothing, household goods) to which most Montréalers were forced to limit themselves in the years immediately following the war.

If Ottawa and the Wartime Prices and Trade Board saw it as their job to teach people how to save, reuse, and salvage during the war, advocates of Montréal workers, such as unions, the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique, and the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique, also thought it essential that working families learn how to consume wisely. Labour newspapers such as Le Front Ouvrier and Le Monde Ouvrier took it upon themselves to teach workers how to buy, and when not to buy. A lack of money – which at one point might have been something to be ashamed of – was now turned into a political statement in the face of high prices and a rising cost-of-living. Thus working families adopted consumer boycotts alongside more traditional rallies and protests. They lobbied their governments, moreover, for cheaper consumer alternatives, such as margarine. The generation of Montréalers that had lived through the Depression probably did not need to be taught habits of thrift and self-denial: these had been imposed on them by force of material circumstance for years. But there was undoubtedly a worry about those citizens showered with newfound funds: adolescents with war jobs; veterans with cash gratuities

and lump-sum payments. Both were seen to be susceptible to frivolous expenditures and ripe for the picking by unscrupulous “sharpers.”⁹⁸

Chapter 5 turns to protest at the point of production, exploring the ways in which working men cited family needs as a basis for their demands in the realm of labour. This is fundamentally a chapter about recreating breadwinners in the wake of the war. By standing up to employers and the state, and by demanding a “salaire familial” or social welfare measures that would alleviate the need for the paid work of women and children, working men asserted their own visions of family and crafted a sense of citizenship rooted in their rights as breadwinners. Family was used as a justification for strikes in a province where the political culture was at one and the same time pro-family and wary of labour protest. Ironically, opponents of strikes and labour activism in the postwar years also drew on the power of ‘family,’ arguing that ‘working families’ were the primary victims of picket lines. This chapter looks at two Montréal strikes in the 1940s, each of which sheds light on state involvement in ‘private’ life after the war. The mixed opinions expressed by Quebecers⁹⁹ about food rationing and compulsory schooling, in the context of strikes by butchers and schoolteachers, suggest some opposition to the expansion of

⁹⁸ ANQM, Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique (JOC), P104: C. 213, File: Cours [1944]. S.P.M. “Quelques idées en vue de faire épargner les jeunes pour leur futur foyer”; C. 286, Unfiled. Rapport de la 13^{ième} Session Intensive J.O.C. tenue à Duchesnay, Que. les 26-27-28 juin 1948, pp. 7-8. NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 12: File: General Correspondence Re: Citizens’ Committees. ‘A’ District -- MONTREAL. Albert Valois, P.A., V.G., Diocesan Director of Catholic Action, Montreal, to Reverend Father, 3 August 1945; File: Local Committees – General Correspondence, Vol. I. Article [no author, no title, n.d. but probably December 1944].

⁹⁹ I follow the Oxford Guide to Canadian English Usage in my use of “Quebecer” to designate a resident of the province of Québec. Margery Fee and Janice McAlpine, Guide to Canadian English Usage (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1997), 405.

the state, particularly when Ottawa was the branch of the state that was expanding. These strikes also provided opportunities for citizens to articulate claims, in public, as parents concerned about their children's sustenance and education.

The final chapter assesses the contributions of this dissertation to the historical literature on reconstruction; the welfare state and citizenship; the private-public dichotomy; the family; and Québec. The chapter concludes by considering the peculiarities of Montréal as a case study. What can this story tell us about the rest of Canada, or the rest of the province? Was the social history of Québec 'distinct' in the postwar period? Did reconstruction, or family, acquire different meanings in Québec than elsewhere in postwar Canada? How legitimate are descriptions of the province as shrouded in the *grande noirceur* of Duplessisme? Were there hints, in the late 1940s, of the social and political turmoil that would erupt in the 1960s? And if the Quiet Revolution did begin earlier than has traditionally been thought, what role did Montréal families of the 1940s play in laying its foundation?

A study of 'the public' in a particular time and place must be conscious of the degree to which one's historical sources were themselves 'public.' This dissertation draws on a wide range of sources, including federal government records; the records of private social welfare agencies and of women's voluntary organizations; the records of Catholic institutions, including the Société Saint-Vincent-de-Paul and organizations affiliated with the Action catholique; union minutes; and newspapers representing Montréal's mainstream, nationalist, labour, and religious press. Such sources help us to understand the ways in which boundaries between public and private were constituted in

1940s Montréal, and the ways in which elements of private life could become subjects for public scrutiny or discussion. The records of the federal Dependents' Allowance Board or the Dependents' Board of Trustees, for instance, show us the most intimate family secrets – situations that were no longer secret once exposed to the gaze of civil servants, but that were nonetheless discussed behind closed doors. Yet these family details became public, in a way, when the DAB or DBT communicated with private welfare agencies or municipal departments, or when civil servants' exposure to such secrets influenced the shaping of public policy. 'Private' social agencies, while committed (to varying degrees) to professional ethics and client confidentiality, used such family confidences (made them public, so to speak) as justification for their demands for more state support, less state intervention, or changes in state policy. Religious bodies bridged (and blurred) the private-public divide. Organizations such as the Société Saint-Vincent-de-Paul learned the private details of family through home visiting; such details generally went no further than the SVP's regular meetings. Members of the specialized movements of the Action catholique knew first-hand many of the trials of working families; they deliberately made them public in order to secure certain gains from the state and from the community. Moreover, as we shall see in Chapter 3, the JOC's staging of the 1939 mass marriage was a quest for a continued public presence for the Catholic Church in Québec. Unions and women's voluntary organizations were a fundamental part of the mid-twentieth-century public sphere. When they made demands, agitated for change, adopted resolutions, or -- in the case of unions -- went on strike, they made both their own organizations and the private needs of their constituents public. Finally, newspapers both addressed and

created a 'public' – or more accurately, various publics. In a literate nation, the press played a prominent role in making families and 'personal' lives public, and in educating readers about familial needs. Photographs, reproduced in the press, helped to shape public opinion; poll results and electoral campaigns, reported in daily newspapers, gave readers insight into what other members of the 'public' supposedly considered their priorities.

The fact that historians can unearth family needs and wants in these sources does not necessarily mean that families intended to leave their mark there for posterity. The most detailed sources of information on these 1940s families are the records of private social agencies and of federal departments dealing with the families of enlisted men. These are accounts of families in need – by and large, working-class families. Sometimes men and women sought assistance or advice from these organizations, implicitly agreeing to expose their private lives to examination. Occasionally, they criticized official policy. In these instances, it is possible to see ordinary citizens acting as agents. At other times, families appear in the sources as the objects of scrutiny, having unwillingly come to official attention – as when, for instance, wives were reported to the Dependents' Allowance Board for having failed to act in a manner appropriate to women in receipt of state funds. The records of the 105 married couples that participated in the mass wedding of 1939 are rather different. These men and women were voluntary participants in this public event – and the letters and survey responses that exist are from those couples who chose to maintain their relationship with LOC organizers. And

clearly, couples decided what and how much to tell the LOC about their private trials and triumphs.

Despite the inherent limitations of these sources, I remain committed to the possibility of piecing together elements of families' lived experiences in Montréal in the late 1940s. 'Experience' has become a controversial, much-debated concept among historians in recent years. Poststructuralist scholars have made important contributions to our understanding of the ways in which experience is mediated; they have argued persuasively that discourses determine the manner in which experience is understood.¹⁰⁰ But in this study of postwar reconstruction, and of those instances in 1940s Montréal when 'the family' became public, I am interested, not in discourses of family on their own, but in the ways in which they were interwoven with lived experiences.

The principal contributions of this dissertation to the existing historical literature lie, I would argue, in five areas. First, this thesis suggests that post-Second World War reconstruction was not just a matter of federal policy, but was a widespread project in which individuals, interest groups, and social movements participated in diverse ways. Reconstruction was neither consensual nor straightforward: various groups of Canadians had their own ideas about what the postwar world ought to hold for them. Even within

¹⁰⁰ Early statements include Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia, 1988); Bryan D. Palmer, Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1990); Christine Stansell, Response to Joan Scott, International Labor and Working-Class History 31 (Spring 1987). For two thoughtful Canadian discussions of these issues, see Joy Parr, Introduction, in The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns 1880-1950 (Toronto: UTP, 1990); Joan Sangster, "Introduction: Placing the Story of Women's Work in Context," in Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960 (Toronto: UTP, 1995).

the federal government, serious differences of opinion existed as to the best way to 'win the peace.' Moreover, periodization is important. The 1940s, I argue, were unlike the 1950s, in that they were a moment when a variety of possibilities for 'postwar Canada' were vigorously and publicly debated. Second, the dissertation reaffirms the importance of 'family' in the postwar period, but suggests that the conventional portrait of postwar families (secular, suburban, prosperous, nuclear) describes only some Canadian families in the 1940s. Both French- and English-Canadians used 'family' to point to the distinctiveness of Québec in the 1940s; family was frequently a point of difference between Ottawa and Québec City. Third, this project contributes to the existing literature on the building of a welfare state in Canada, and insists upon the close historical relationship between war and welfare in this country. Dependents' Allowances, for instance, were a rehearsal for later, more expansive kinds of social welfare and social citizenship, such as those constructed in family allowances. In their negotiation of Dependents' Allowances and other social welfare measures, we see, moreover, citizens shaping their welfare state. Fourth, this dissertation sheds new light on postwar Québec, contributing to the growing literature that insists upon the complexity of life in that province in the mid-twentieth century, but also examining its history through the lens of debates current in a broader Anglo-American historiography. There were numerous ideological, intellectual, and political currents in Duplessis's Great Darkness. Montréal was not a homogeneous city, in terms of class, language, or religion; nor were institutions commonly thought monolithic, such as the Catholic Church, homogeneous or exempt from historical change. Finally, this dissertation scrutinizes definitions of public and

private. It argues that distinctions between the two were mutable and blurred, but also suggests that definitions of the public changed over time. In the 1940s, the public was expanding under pressure from various groups of ordinary Canadians, who, in demanding improved citizenship rights, made the private public for political purposes. Indeed, distinctions between the spheres appeared to be collapsing. Yet as we shall see in Chapter 2, the example of family members and private social agencies complaining that the state was using “Gestapo” methods and creating public scandals over infidelity and marital breakdown suggests that ‘the private’ remained integral to this postwar liberal democracy. Calls for universal welfare measures were also a claim to privacy within families, in that they meant freedom from intrusive social workers and humiliating means tests. Such moments of resistance to an expanding public, and particularly a ‘public’ directed from Ottawa, help to explain why many of the possibilities for reform envisioned in the last days of war were thwarted or diluted by the end of the 1940s.

Chapter 1 City at Peace: Reconstructing Families in Postwar Montréal

Journalist William Weintraub recently characterized postwar Montréal as a “city unique,” and there is no doubt that it inspired outpourings of prose and verse from novelists, poets, and playwrights in a way that other Canadian cities did not.¹ What kind of city was Montréal in 1945, as Canada and the world around it emerged from six long years of war? Did it truly embody Hugh MacLennan’s “two solitudes”? Was it conservative and insular, dotted with churches, crucifixes, and *collèges classiques*? Or was it a city of bright lights, cabarets, jazz, and burlesque on rue Ste-Catherine and the Main? Was it a more glamorous city than its English-Canadian counterparts? Or a typically Canadian city that gloried in the wholesome excitement of hockey and northern winters? Was this the commercial metropolis of St. James Street, Anglo-Canadian capital, and the headquarters of all major Canadian banks? Or the nation’s industrial workshop, producing tanks and airplanes in Rosemount and Ville St-Laurent, locomotive parts in Point St-Charles, and women’s coats and children’s shoes in the sweatshops that lined Boulevard St-Laurent? Was it Gabrielle Roy’s St-Henri: poor, grey, and shabby? Or the green slopes of Mount Royal and the carefully tended gardens of Westmount? Or

¹ William Weintraub, City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and '50s (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1996); Bryan Demchinsky and Elaine Kalman Naves, Storied Streets: Montreal in the Literary Imagination (Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter and Ross, 2000).

was this the city of Mordecai Richler's Duddy Kravitz: narrow neighbourhoods of cramped flats, gossip, pedlars, and synagogues?²

If not all things to all people, Montréal was certainly many things to many people in the late 1940s. As in Christine Stansell's industrializing New York, there were numerous cities within this postwar city.³ This chapter sets the stage for this dissertation by examining the material conditions that underlay family formation and experiences of family in Montréal in the wake of the Second World War. It considers the ways in which the city's demography, geography, and labour market structured 'family,' and it looks at the social welfare provisions (both private and, increasingly, public) that existed for needy Montréal families in the 1940s.

I. Population

In the 1940s, Montréal was Canada's metropolis. More people lived there than lived anywhere else in the country: in 1941, its population was well past the one million mark.⁴ It was largely a French-Canadian city: 62.6% of the residents of metropolitan Montréal claimed to be of French origin in the 1941 Census. Yet the 24.7% of the population that traced its ethnic origins to the British Isles, and the 5.6% who were European Jews, shaped the city to an extent disproportionate to their numbers, and left

² Hugh MacLennan, Two Solitudes (Toronto: Macmillan, 1945); Gabrielle Roy, The Tin Flute, trans. Hannah Josephson (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1947); Mordecai Richler, The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959).

³ Christine Stansell, City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860 (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982).

indelible imprints on the city's cultural landscape. 2.2% of the city's residents were of Italian descent; 4.9% listed "other" ethnic origins.⁵

In the early nineteenth century, immigrants from Scotland, England, Ireland, and the United States outnumbered French-Canadians in Montréal. The massive influx of Irish famine migrants in the 1840s and 1850s, and waves of French-Canadian migration from the surrounding countryside beginning in the 1830s, meant that by the end of the century the city had become more Catholic and more French-Canadian.⁶ By the dawn of the twentieth century, Montréal was also home to a rapidly growing Jewish community. A small number of British Jews had settled in Lower Canada in the late eighteenth century. Most were relatively well integrated with the rest of Montréal's English-speaking population; many were soon financially comfortable. The huge number of Eastern European Jews who arrived in the city in the first few decades of the twentieth century had an entirely different history and demographic profile. Many of those who arrived before 1917 came from various parts of the Russian empire – Lithuania, Romania, the Ukraine, and Byelorussia – and were thus in themselves a diverse group. Generally poor and Yiddish-speaking, they came from rural areas and small towns, and found work in garment factories and provisioning the community as grocers, butchers, pedlars, and shopkeepers.⁷ A small number of Italians had migrated to Montréal in the 1860s and 1870s, but it was not until the very end of the nineteenth century and the first

⁴ Eighth Census of Canada 1941, Vol. 1, Chapter 2. The exact population was 1,139,921.

⁵ Eighth Census of Canada 1941, Vol. 1, Chapter 8.

⁶ Bettina Bradbury, Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montréal (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993), 39-43.

decade of the twentieth that a significant Italian community formed in the city. This community was to some degree integrated with the French-Canadian population, owing to a shared religion, common workplaces in the case of men and unmarried women, and initially, shared neighbourhoods.⁸ During and immediately after the Second World War, war brides from Britain and the Netherlands arrived in the city, many with children in tow. And in the very late 1940s and 1950s, new immigrants and refugees -- Polish, Italian, Romanian, Hungarian, and Jews of various nations who had survived the Holocaust -- would arrive from the war-torn cities and displaced persons camps of Europe.⁹

Religion was a key marker of identity in this period. French-Canadians were almost without exception Catholic; 86.8% of Québec residents were Catholic in 1941.¹⁰ English-Quebecers, commonly referred to by their French-speaking neighbours as “les Protestants,” were Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Church – and many, of course,

⁷ Pierre Anctil, Tur Malka: Flâneries sur les cimes de l’histoire juive montréalaise (Sillery: Septentrion, 1997), esp. Chapters 1-3.

⁸ Bruno Ramirez, Les Premiers italiens de Montréal: L’origine de la Petite Italie du Québec (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1984). Chapters 1-2.

⁹ National Archives of Canada (NA), Montreal Council of Women (MCW), MG 28 I 164: Vol. 5, File 7. Local Council of Women, 54th Year Book and Annual Report 1947-1948. Report of the Migration Committee 1947-48; Vol. 8, File 9. “Migration. Annual Report, Spring 1949”; Migration Report – 1949-50; Vol. 8, File 13. Mrs. T.W. MacDowell, Convener of Migration, Montreal, to Conveners of Migration, 14 April 1947; Mrs. T.W. MacDowell, Convener of Migration, NCW, to Conveners of Migration, 17 September 1947; Mrs. T.W. MacDowell, Migration Convener, NCW, to Conveners of Migration, 7 September 1948. See also Paul-André Linteau et al., Quebec Since 1930, trans. Robert Chodos and Ellen Garmaise (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1991), 159-161.

¹⁰ Eighth Census of Canada 1941, Vol. 1, Chapter 10.

were Catholic. In the city of Montréal proper in 1951, 78.6% of residents were Catholic; 6.5% Jewish; 5.7% Anglican; 3.9% United Church; and 2.3% Presbyterian.¹¹

Montréal, like most large cities, had more than its share of transients and of single people. War production, in particular, had attracted young, single, French-Canadian men and women from the surrounding countryside anxious to secure paid work in the city's booming factories. Armed services personnel, both Canadian and overseas members of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, were stationed in Montréal throughout the war, adding to the city's relatively young and transient population. But this was also a city of families, and in the wake of the war, this was increasingly the case, as rates of family formation rapidly increased. According to the Census, 197,840 "families" lived in the city of Montréal proper in 1941; by 1951, the number of families in the city had grown to 246,389.¹² Marriage rates, which had begun to climb soon after war was declared, continued apace in the first days of peace.¹³ From 1945 through 1948, in fact, marriage rates in Montréal were higher than the rates for both the province of Québec and Canada as a whole. All three sets of marriage rates peaked in 1946.¹⁴ Historically, a greater proportion of women in Québec than of women elsewhere in Canada remained unmarried; when they did marry, they tended to do so later than women in the English-

¹¹ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 1, Table 42.

¹² Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 3, Table 127. In both 1941 and 1951, "family" was defined as "husband and wife (with or without children) or a parent with an unmarried child (or children) living together in the same housekeeping community." Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 10, p. 304.

¹³ La Presse: 25 janvier 1945, "Pourquoi sévit la crise du logement," 3; 5 janvier 1946, "Mariages et naissances augmentent depuis 1939," 20.

¹⁴ Annuaire Statistique, Québec 1948, Table 74; Annuaire Statistique, Québec 1950, Tables 60 and 58.

speaking provinces.¹⁵ In January 1945, however, l'Association Canadienne de la Jeunesse Canadienne-française (l'ACJC) claimed that it was not unusual to see young people marrying at age 19 or 20; a survey conducted by the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique (JOC) two years later found that the average "jeune travailleur" married at age 22 or 23.¹⁶ Nation-wide, the average age of marriage at the end of the war was 24 for men and 21 for women.¹⁷

Despite clerico-nationalist rhetoric that had long celebrated Québec's large families, the postwar baby boom enjoyed by various western nations had less demographic impact in Québec than in other Canadian provinces.¹⁸ Moreover, contemporaries knew then, and historians have noted since, that even at the height of the boom, "Women were not having more children; more women were having children."¹⁹ The boom was fuelled, as Angus and Arlene McLaren observe, by "some women 'catching up' and having babies postponed by the war, and by other women marrying

¹⁵ Renée Vautelet, Post-War Problems and Employment of Women in the Province of Quebec (Montréal: 1945). Located in NA, Montreal Soldiers' Wives League (MSWL), MG 28 I 311, Vol. 5, File: Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1945. See also 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, 1986), 127.

¹⁶ Archives Nationales du Québec à Montréal (ANQM), Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique (JOC), P104: C. 240, File: Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse. Mémoires soumis par le comité central de l'ACJC à la CCJ, 27-28 janvier 1945. "Jeunesse et Famille" par Armand Godin; C. 134, File: Rapport Enquête 1947. "Les jeunes travailleurs et le problème de l'épargne."

¹⁷ Annuaire Statistique, Québec 1945-46, 148.

¹⁸ François Ricard, The Lyric Generation: The Life and Times of the Baby Boomers, trans. Donald Winkler (Toronto: Stoddart, 1994), 37, 42; McLaren and McLaren, The Bedroom and the State, 126.

¹⁹ Clio Collective, Québec Women: A History, trans. Roger Gannon and Rosalind Gill (Toronto: Women's Press, 1987), 304.

earlier and having their children sooner and closer together."²⁰ Thus while the number of families in Canada increased in the postwar period, the number of children per family did not. Hervé Gauthier has found that Québec women born in 1922-23 (and thus likely to have had their children in the late 1940s) had, on average, 3.6 children each.²¹ A fertility survey conducted by the Université de Montréal in 1971 also found that the generation of Québec women born between 1921 and 1925 had an average of 3.6 children each.²² Yet Montréal -- Canada's highly urbanized and industrialized metropolis -- was a slightly different story. Despite its higher marriage rates, the city's birth rates from 1945 through 1948 were lower than those for both the province of Québec and Canada as a whole.²³

II. The Urban Geography of Montréal

Montréal's class and ethnic divisions were reflected in the geography and topography of the city. Boulevard St-Laurent (The Main) divided the city between east and west. The western half of the city tended to be more English-speaking and more affluent than the east side, although this tendency was not absolute. Westmount, nestled into Mount Royal, was the bastion of English-Canadian wealth: here lived industrialists, bankers, financiers. The higher up the mountain one's residence, the greater one's wealth

²⁰ McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, 125.

²¹ Hervé Gauthier, *Évolution démographique du Québec* (Québec: Office de planification et de développement du Québec, 1977), Ch. 2.

²² Cited in Danielle Gauvreau et Peter Gossage, "'Empêcher la famille': Fécondité et contraception au Québec, 1920-60," *Canadian Historical Review* 78, 3 (September 1997), 487-488.

and the more elevated one's status. As Morley Callaghan noted bluntly in 1951, "Nearly all the rich families in Montreal lived on the mountain."²⁴ Notre-Dame-de-Grace (NDG), just west of Westmount, was mixed. To the north of the CPR tracks, it housed lower middle-class, white-collar workers and salaried employees, largely English-speaking and described in 1948 as "community-minded." Below the tracks, the neighbourhood was less affluent.²⁵ By the mid-1950s, the northern and western reaches of NDG were filled with newly constructed apartment blocks "housing a large number of young married couples with small children."²⁶ Housing for munitions workers and war veterans had also been built in NDG, as it had been in Cartierville, Park Extension, Montreal-North, and the new suburb of Ville St-Laurent, on the northern edge of Montréal and near the Canadair factory and the Noorduyn Aircraft plant.²⁷

²³ Annuaire Statistique, Québec 1948, Table 78; Annuaire Statistique, Québec 1950, Tables 64, 62.

²⁴ Morley Callaghan, The Loved and the Lost (Toronto: Macmillan, 1951), 1.

²⁵ McGill University Archives (MU), Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association (MPAP), MG 2079: C. 2, File 53. Recreation Survey Report, Notre Dame de Grace Ward, December 1948; C. 3, File 101. William Bowie to Alan C. Macdougall Esq., 16 February 1928.

²⁶ MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 3, File 101. William Bowie to Mr. L.A. Cormier, 17 June 1953; President, Parents' Association, Westhaven Village, to Pierre DesMarais, Esq., 2 May 1955.

²⁷ MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 5, File 320. Report of the Executive Assistant, Summer Programme, 1948; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 3, File 1A. Minutes, Sub-Executive Committee of the LCW, 9 April 1947; MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 6, File 226. Minutes of Meeting of Districts' Council of the Community Garden League of Greater Montreal, 29 November 1945; MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 7, File 252. Minutes of 42nd Annual Meeting of the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association Inc., 10 February 1944; MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 5, File 136. Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association Incorporated, Report of Executive Director for the Year 1944; Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association Incorporated, Report of Executive Director for the Year 1945; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 6, File 5. News clipping, The Gazette, "Approval Voiced by Council Head on Visit to Typical Vets' House," 13 June 1946; NA, Canadian Council on Social

Below Westmount lay the neighbourhoods that nineteenth-century industrialist Herbert B. Ames had termed “The City Below the Hill”: the industrial districts of Point St-Charles, Griffintown, St-Henri, St-Cunégonde, and St-Joseph. These ethnically mixed neighbourhoods provided the labour force for Montréal’s factories and transportation sector, as much in the 1940s as when Ames had described them in the 1890s.²⁸ The residents of Point St-Charles, south of the Lachine Canal and north of the St-Lawrence River, were largely working-class and English-speaking Protestants; many of the neighbourhood’s adult men worked in the local Canadian National Railway yards. Griffintown, on the other side of the Lachine Canal, was the home of both Irish-Canadian and French-Canadian Catholics; social workers and more affluent Montréalers considered the district “a crowded slum area.”²⁹ The residents of St-Henri, St-Cunégonde, and St-Joseph were largely, but not exclusively, French-speaking. They were, however, almost uniformly poor; many of the men in the area worked as unskilled labourers and on a seasonal basis. Gabrielle Roy described the crowds who congregated in Place St-Henri each evening as

Masons covered with lime, carpenters with their toolboxes, workmen carrying lunch pails, spinners, girls from the cigarette factory, puddlers, steelworkers, watchmen, foremen, salespeople, shopkeepers; the six o’clock crowd included not only employees from the neighborhood but also workers from Ville-Saint-Pierre, Lachine, Saint-Joseph, Saint-Cunégonde and as far away as Hochelaga, some of

Development (CCSD), MG 28 I 10, Vol. 236, File 236-9. Visite au ‘Wartime Housing’ de Cartierville. Entrevue avec M. Labrie, 10 décembre 1943, par Marie Hamel.

²⁸ An indication of the jobs performed by male Point St. Charles residents in 1934 is in MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 5, File 335. Family Welfare Association, Study of the Need of Recreational and Educational Facilities in Point St. Charles (April 1934), p. 24.

²⁹ MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 3, File 101. William Bowie to Alan C. Macdougall Esq., 16 February 1928.

whom lived on the other side of town and traveled vast distances in the streetcar before reaching home.³⁰

St-Antoine Street was the commercial heart of Montréal's small Black community. Close to the headquarters of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which employed African-Canadian men as sleeping-car porters, the street was home to some of the city's most popular nightclubs and cabarets, where some Black Montréalers, including jazz pianist Oscar Peterson, worked as musicians and performers.³¹ Montréalers who could count on steadier employment and higher wages than residents of the Point or St-Henri chose to live in Verdun: a "respectable" working-class suburb, to the south of the Lachine and Aqueduct Canals and bordering the St-Lawrence River, that had long been predominantly English-speaking and Protestant.³²

The east side of Montréal was largely francophone. The francophone elite – in this period, professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and notaries, and some industrialists and financiers – lived in Outremont, over the mountain from Westmount. French-Canadian workers lived in the various areas stretching east of Boulevard St-Laurent: St-Louis, Lafontaine, Rosemount, and east as far as Hochelaga and Maisonneuve. Rosemount was a mixed French- and English-speaking working-class neighbourhood to

³⁰ Roy, *The Tin Flute*, 48-49.

³¹ MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C.5, File 334. A brief Summary of Districts Studied in a preliminary survey by the Settlements Survey Committee. Memorandum submitted to the Education and Recreation Division, Montreal Council of Social Agencies, October 10th 1930; MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 3, File 101. William Bowie to Alan C. Macdougall Esq., 16 February 1928; MU, Montreal Council of Social Agencies (MCSA), MG 2076, C. 9, File 556. Report of the Work of the Negro Community Centre, Publication XXI, Montreal Council of Social Agencies, 1944; Weintraub, *City Unique*, 128-130; Callaghan, *The Loved and the Lost*, 41, 56-57.

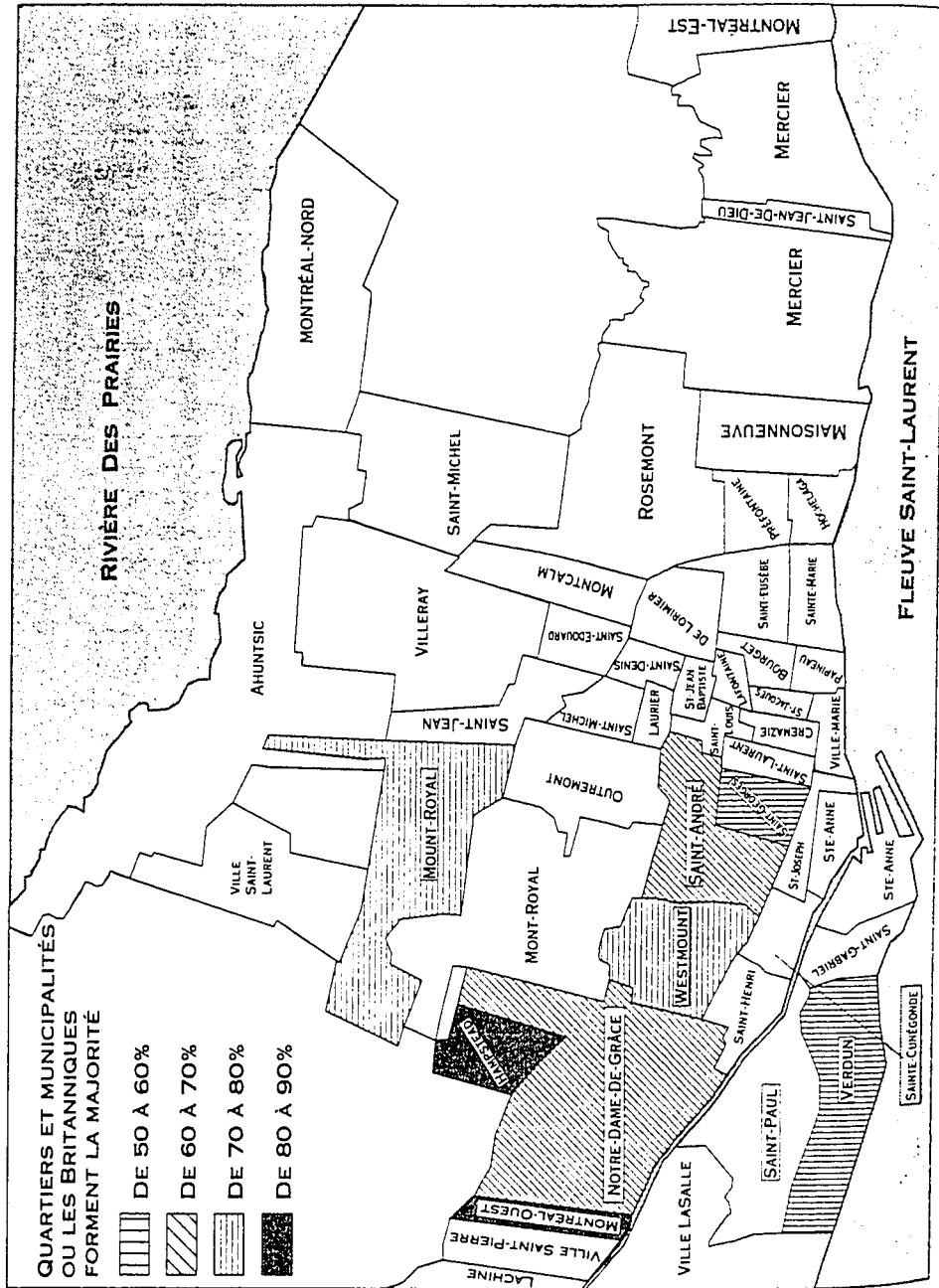
the north of the Angus Shops (the CPR's locomotive repair shops), where many neighbourhood men worked. Described by one social worker as poor but "self-respecting" working people. Rosemount residents were active participants in the creation of community gardens and children's playgrounds.³³ Some wartime housing was built in the northern section of Rosemount.³⁴ In the late 1940s and 1950s, French-Canadian families faced with Montréal's housing crisis and high rents began moving to Ville Jacques-Cartier, on the South Shore. Across the bridge from Montréal's east end, this was an impoverished region initially without running water, electricity, or welfare services, where families built their own homes out of tarpaper, heavy cardboard, and sheet-metal. Future FLQ member Pierre Vallières, who grew up in Ville Jacques-Cartier, described it as, in the early 1950s, "a totally new town made up of shacks and exiles."³⁵

³² On Verdun, see Weintraub, *City Unique*, 158-160.

³³ MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C.5, File 334. A brief Summary of Districts Studied in a preliminary survey by the Settlements Survey Committee. Memorandum submitted to the Education and Recreation Division, Montreal Council of Social Agencies, October 10th 1930; MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 3, File 101. William Bowie to Alan C. Macdougall Esq., 16 February 1928; MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C.6, File 226. Community Garden League of Greater Montreal [1933]; MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 5, File 136. Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association Incorporated, Report of Executive Director for the Year 1944. On the Angus Shops, see Pierre Vallières, *White Niggers of America*, trans. Joan Pinkham (Toronto; Montreal: McClelland & Stewart, 1971 [1968]), 79, 88-89.

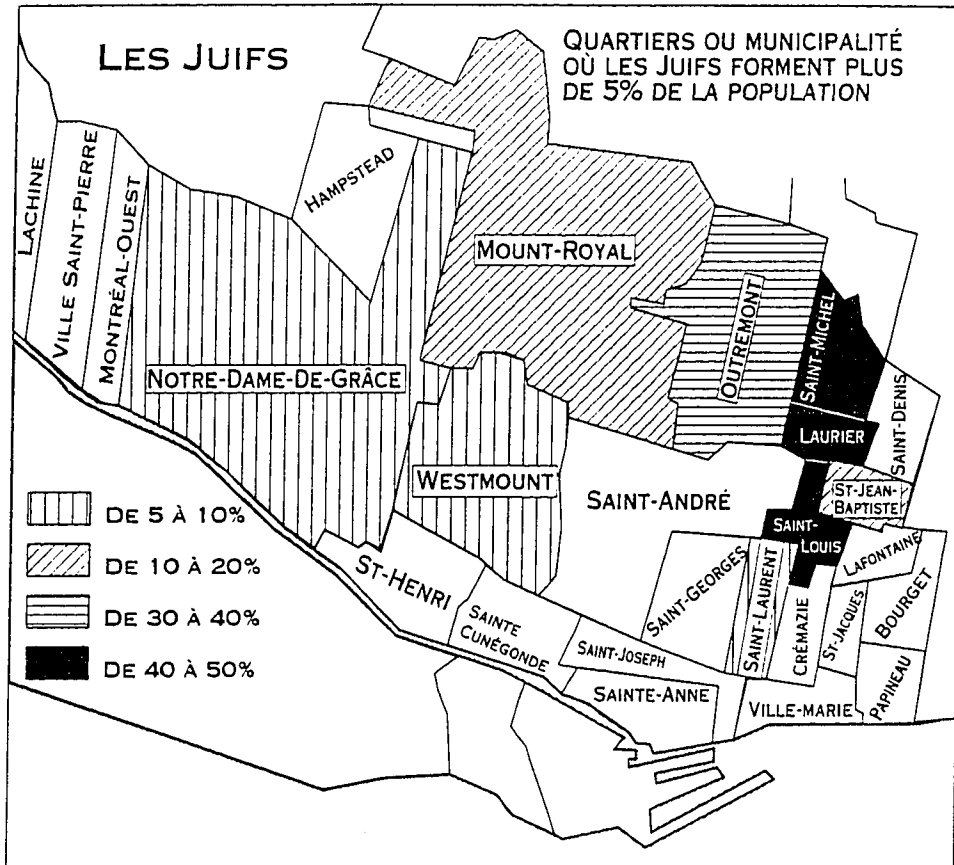
³⁴ MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 6, File 226. Minutes of Meeting of Districts' Council of the Community Garden League of Greater Montreal, 29 November 1945.

³⁵ Vallières, *White Niggers of America*, 119; *La Presse*, 24 août 1949, "C'est le régime sec à Ville Jacques-Cartier," 9. One couple married in the 1939 mass wedding moved to Coteau Rouge, Longueuil, in 1947, however, and were very happy with their "très beau petit logis." ANQM, Mouvement des Travailleurs Chrétiens (MTC), P257, Vol. 11, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 103. Husband and wife to Mr et Madame Nap. Chayer, 16 mai 1947. Both Protestants and Catholics worried about the lack of welfare services in Montréal's "outlying areas" in the early postwar period: NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 236, File 236-3. Isobel Woonton to Bessie Touzel, 10 March 1950; ANQM, Société



Map 2: Neighbourhoods and Municipalities in which Anglo-Canadians are in the Majority, 1941.

Source: Blanchard, *Montréal: Esquisse de géographie urbaine*, p. 216.



Map 3: The Distribution of Jewish Montréalers in the City, 1941.

Source: Blanchard, Montréal: Esquisse de géographie urbaine, p. 218.

St-Laurent Boulevard, or the Main, had been the heart of Montréal's Jewish community since the early twentieth century. Here were synagogues and Yiddish newspaper offices, smoked meat shops and kosher butchers. Here also were garment factories and sweatshops, where Jews were both owners and workers. Many Jewish families lived just off St-Laurent on St-Urbain, Bagg, St-Dominique, Coloniale, Villeneuve: residential streets of flats and brick triplexes. Instructors at Baron Byng high school, on St-Urbain, taught children such as Mordecai Richler and Irving Layton, who would one day be among Canada's best-known writers. The wealthiest of Montréal Jews lived in Outremont, alongside French-Canadian neighbours, a proximity that had long been a source of sharp ethnic tension.³⁶ By the late 1940s, more affluent Jewish families were also moving to new suburbs to the north and the west: Snowdon, Hampstead, and Côte St-Luc. One popular historian of Montréal has found that Jewish families migrating westward would leave their flats near the Main, including their furnishings, to the new waves of Jews arriving from Europe in the late 1940s.³⁷ Further north on Boulevard St-Laurent, near Jean-Talon, were the shops, markets, and cafés that constituted the commercial core of Montréal's Italian neighbourhood.³⁸

³⁶ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 7, File 18. "The Outremont School Problem," by Louis Rosenberg, Research Director. Canadian Jewish Congress [1947].

³⁷ Weintraub, City Unique, 198-199. Also NA, Jewish Family Services of the Baron de Hirsch Institute (JFS), MG 28 V 86: Vol. 12, File: Minutes of Meetings of Board of Directors, Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 1947-1949. Minutes, Meeting of Board of Directors of Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 17 September 1947; Vol. 7, File: Minutes of Meetings of Board of Directors, Family Welfare Department (Baron de Hirsch Institute), 25 August 1947 – 5 November 1952. Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors, 27 April 1948. And see Anctil, Tur Malka, 31.

³⁸ Ramirez, Les Premiers italiens, Chapters 3-4.

Montréal was a port town, a commercial hub, and an industrial city. Shipping activity took place along the St-Lawrence River and the Lachine Canal, and most financial and commercial transactions occurred in the downtown core. Montréal's industry had historically been concentrated along the River and the Canal, although by the 1940s some plants, including war industries, had moved north of established residential areas in search of greater expanses of space.³⁹ Mount Royal (landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted in the late nineteenth century as part of the City Beautiful movement) provided an oasis of greenery in the middle of the city, as did Ile Ste-Hélène, in the harbour, and Parc Lafontaine, on the city's east side.⁴⁰ Larger homes in Westmount and Outremont often had gardens, but most residents of the city had scant green space of their own, availing themselves, instead, of the small parks, playgrounds, and community gardens that had begun to spring up around the metropolis in the early twentieth century.⁴¹ Yet even such innocuous projects as community gardens and children's playgrounds embodied the ethnic divisions and tensions embedded in the city. Anglophones and francophones tended their vegetables under the auspices of the

³⁹ MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 5, File 315. Annual Report of the Executive Director to the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association Incorporated for the Year 1949.

⁴⁰ On Mount Royal and Olmsted, see Witold Rybczynski, A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and North America in the Nineteenth Century (Toronto: HarperFlamingo, 1999); Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), 18.

⁴¹ Jeanne M. Wolfe and Grace Strachan, "Practical Idealism: Women in Urban Reform, Julia Drummond, and the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association," in Caroline Andrew and Beth Moore Milroy, eds., Life Spaces: Gender, Household, Employment (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988): 65-80.

Community Garden League and the Service de Jardins Ouvrières respectively.⁴² The Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association battled the efforts of the Oeuvre des terrains de jeux de Montréal to establish playgrounds exclusively for the use of Catholic children, arguing that “All races and creeds should have an opportunity to play together happily. Our children should not be sacrificed on the chopping block of political, racial or religious prejudice.” A French-Canadian defender of the Oeuvre des terrains de jeux, meanwhile, responded to the Parks and Playgrounds Association by asking why French-Canadian Catholics ought to “renounce their point of view to conform to yours which is the echo of less than a fifth of the total population of Montréal!”⁴³

A much bigger municipal issue in the 1940s was the state of Montréal’s housing stock. This was a city of apartments and flats. In 1951, 92% of the city's total occupied dwellings were apartments or flats; 97% of rented dwellings were apartments or flats.⁴⁴ Montréalers were, by and large, tenants: nearly 83% of the city's "occupied dwellings" were rented, rather than owned, by their inhabitants in 1951. The postwar housing crisis

⁴² MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 6, File 226. Community Garden League of Greater Montreal [1933]; W.J. Tawse to J.O. Asselin, 3 December 1948.

⁴³ MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 5, File 188. Statement prepared by the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association, Incorporated, 28 June 1944; MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 5, File 198. Jean Gadoury to A.S. Lamb, 1 July 1944. The Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, meanwhile, expressed concern about Catholic anti-Semitism on Montréal playgrounds: NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 12, File: Minutes of Meetings of Board of Directors, Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 4 July 1945 – 25 June 1947. Minutes, Meeting of Board of Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 5 April 1944. A list of the playgrounds in Montréal in April 1945 is in MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 5, File 188. City of Montreal, Playgrounds List, 27/4/45.

⁴⁴ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 3, Table 10; also MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 5, File 136. Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association Incorporated, Report of Executive Director for the Year 1946; Archives de l'Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM),

had multiple dimensions. First, there was not enough housing for a population that had grown considerably over the course of the war, due to in-migration for munitions production; the influx of air force personnel associated with the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan; the immigration of British brides and their children; and the high rate of family formation involving new marriages and births. Second, the housing that did exist was often in poor condition. The poverty of the depression and the rationing and material shortages of the war had done nothing to improve the state of Montréal's residences. Finally, postwar housing in the metropolis was overpriced. The high cost-of-living offset the improved wages of Montréal citizens; this, combined with the poor supply and increased demand for housing, raised rents beyond the reach of many.

Those families unable to find private dwellings lodged in rooms, which contributed to the overcrowding of those who did have their own housing. The 1951 Census found that 21% of Montréal households were 'crowded' (defined as more than one person per room) and that 22.58% of tenant households were crowded.⁴⁵ Such aggregate numbers, however, disguised the class and ethnic dimensions of overcrowding. The Ligue Ouvrière Catholique (LOC) declared in 1947 that 64% of Montréal's working-class homes were overcrowded, and that 94% of working-class homes on the (largely francophone) east side of the city were overcrowded. 41.4% of the homes surveyed by

Fonds Henri-Gagnon, 54P 3g/2. Brochure: "Eviction! QUI SERA LE SUIVANT?"

This brochure claimed that 96.5% of Montréal's population were tenants.

⁴⁵ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 3, Table 118. In Canada's urban areas as a whole, 16.6% of households were deemed 'crowded' in 1951 (Vol. 10, p. 393). The definition of 'crowding' is also found on p. 393.

the LOC used the living room as a bedroom, and 39% of the homes had no bath.⁴⁶ That same year, the Montréal branch of the Canadian Association of Social Workers conducted its own survey of the housing conditions of 298 families known to the city's Family Welfare Association (who would have been largely Protestant). It declared that "Four and five children were found sleeping in one bed, parents and children sleeping in the same room."⁴⁷ Those families with the least money or luck squatted in public buildings, abandoned military barracks, sheds, garages, and stores.⁴⁸

The housing crisis had a serious impact on family life. Some marriages were delayed because of the lack of a place to live. Observers ranging from the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique to J.O. Asselin, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Montréal's City Council, claimed that thousands of young Montréalers were postponing their marriages because they could not find adequate housing.⁴⁹ One young man, a resident of Lachine, wrote to the Commission Nationale de l'Habitation in January 1948 for help in

⁴⁶ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 21, File: Habitation. Mémoire de la L.O.C. sur l'Habitation Ouvrière, préparé pour le Comité d'habitation de la Chambre de Commerce Senior de Montréal. Also MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 21, File 983. "Some Highlights of the Curtis Report." Prepared by the Housing Committee of the Montreal Branch of the Canadian Association of Social Workers and the MCSA. March 1946.

⁴⁷ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 7, File 27. "Housing -- their Problem. A Study of the Dwellings of 298 Montreal Families." Prepared by the Canada Committee of the Montreal Branch of the Canadian Association of Social Workers, March 1947.

⁴⁸ La Presse, 24 octobre 1949, "La famille Doyon 'déménagement' devant les démolisseurs," 29; NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 236, File 236-9. Service économique Ste-Justine, Entrevue avec Mlle Jeanne Baril, directrice, 1 décembre 1943, par Marie Hamel; NA, Dependents' Allowance Board (DAB), RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File DAB 4-7. Ruth Robertson, Supervisor of Investigations, DPNH, Montreal, to R.O.G. Bennett, Chairman, DAB, 15 March 1943.

⁴⁹ ANQM, JOC, P104, C. 286, Unfiled. Rapport de la Semaine d'Etude tenu à Contrecoeur le 4-5-6 septembre 1948; ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 23, File: Habitation --

finding an apartment in Lachine or Ville Lasalle. He had decided to marry in May if he could find housing; otherwise, the wedding would have to wait until June, July, or August. He did not want to start married life lodging in rooms, he and his fiancée could not live with his parents as his family was too large, and his fiancée did not want to begin married life in her own parents' home. This letter from "un jeune ouvrier" ended with a heartfelt plea: "Mon Dieu, Logez-nous."⁵⁰

The Commission Nationale de l'Habitation employee who responded to this call for help agreed that it was "most desirable" for a newlywed couple to have private living quarters in order to adapt to married life.⁵¹ The common wartime practice of soldiers' wives and children living with their parents or in-laws while their husbands and fathers were away had demonstrated that overcrowded housing and a lack of privacy placed serious strains on familial relationships.⁵² Surely new unions, celebrated in peacetime, should not have to begin in such circumstances. Yet some young couples decided to proceed with their weddings even if it meant spending the first months of their marriage lodging with strangers or crowded into their parents' homes.⁵³ Conflicts between young wives and mothers-in-law became the stuff of everyday conversation: what Colette, La Presse's widely-read advice columnist, called "L'éternelle histoire de la belle-mère et de

A chaque famille sa maison. "Montreal's Housing Problem and its Relationship to Urban Housing in Canada," 34. Brief presented by J.O. Asselin, 8-11 July 1947.

⁵⁰ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 21, File: Habitation -- Habitation ouvrière. Maurice Thérien to Commission Nationale de l'Habitation, 17 janvier 1948.

⁵¹ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 21, File: Habitation -- Habitation ouvrière. Adrien Malo to Maurice Thérien, 27 janvier 1948.

⁵² NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 29, File: Inadequacy of Allowances, Complaints, Etc., DAB 5-6, Vol. 3. Mrs. A. Stark to Mr. McIvor, 27 February 1944.

la bru qui habitent sous le même toit et refusent d'admettre que les affaires de l'une ne sont pas nécessairement celles de l'autre."⁵⁴

Poor housing conditions meant more work for both parents, but especially wives, in terms of cleaning, upkeep, and repairs. This increased burden strained couples' relationships.⁵⁵ Families with numerous children had difficulty securing adequate dwellings: partly because of the shortage of large apartments, but also because landlords could afford to be choosier in a time of scarce supply.⁵⁶ There is evidence, in fact, that landlords had no qualms about being deliberately difficult in order to force tenants out, particularly in the context of rent controls.⁵⁷ Landlords took advantage of the housing shortage to charge outrageous rents to new tenants, to demand six months' rent at a time, or to insist that would-be tenants purchase used furniture at sky-high prices. Keeping children out of landlords' way was more often the job of mothers than of fathers.⁵⁸ In the most severe cases, families were split up as parents unable to find proper accommodation boarded their children with relatives or strangers or placed them in institutions such as crèches and orphanages. Montréal's children's homes themselves became overcrowded in

⁵³ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Case Conferences: FWD and JCWB, 1944-46. Summary for Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 5 November 1945.

⁵⁴ La Presse, 26 février 1948, 26.

⁵⁵ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 7, File 27. "Housing -- their Problem. A Study of the Dwellings of 298 Montreal Families." Prepared by the Canada Committee of the Montreal Branch of the Canadian Association of Social Workers, March 1947; NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 10, File: Minutes, Case Committee, Family Welfare Dept, 1947. Presentation for Case Committee Meeting, 13 January 1948.

⁵⁶ UQAM, Fonds Henri-Gagnon, 54P 3g/2. Brochure: "Eviction! QUI SERA LE SUIVANT?"; ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: Histoire de la LOC - documents.

"Rerum Novarum au service de la Ligue Ouvrière Catholique."

⁵⁷ La Presse, 20 mai 1949, "Propriétaire agressive et trop bruyante," 11.

the 1940s, reflecting the city's general housing shortage. The Protestant Children's Aid Society attributed its increased intake in 1948 to the housing crisis; the Catholic crèches and orphanages affiliated with the Conseil des Oeuvres registered similar complaints of congestion, for the same reason, in 1946 and 1947.⁵⁹ Sometimes these placements were permanent; more often, they were until parents could find a suitable home. The Montréal Ladies' Benevolent Society, for instance, reported in September 1945 that two girls and their brother had left the L.B.S. Home for children as their mother had found a place to live.⁶⁰ Those children who stayed with their parents nonetheless felt the impact of the housing shortage, as they were without adequate space in which to play, do their homework, or entertain their friends. As the Montréal branch of the Canadian Association of Social Workers warned, "Older children were ashamed to bring their friends home and instead met them on street corners and spent their recreation time at downtown amusement centres."⁶¹

⁵⁸ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 16, File: Journée d'Etude Nationales, Avril 1949.

Pamphlet: L.O.C. -- Programme de notre Journée d'Etude, printemps '49 - L.O.C.F.

⁵⁹ MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 19, File 44. MCSA, Child Care Agencies, Policies and Practices in Collections and Budgetting [sic] (from meeting held 29 October 1948); NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 236, File 236-7. Annual meeting of the Conseil des Oeuvres, Montréal, 28 May 1947; Archives de l'Université de Montréal (UM), Fonds de l'Action Catholique Canadienne (ACC), P16/H3/18/24. Conseil des Oeuvres, Commission diocésaine des oeuvres de charité et de service social de Montréal, Rapport annuel 1946-47.

⁶⁰ NA, Summerhill Homes, MG 28 I 388, Vol. 4, File 4-1. Minutes, General Meeting of the L.B.S., 11 September 1945. Also NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 234, File 234-16. Fifth Annual Meeting of the Children's Aid Society of Montreal, Report of the Executive Director, 7 March 1951.

⁶¹ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 21, File: Habitation. Forum sur l'habitation ouvrière; La Presse, 24 août 1949, "L'étude en classe crée un problème," 9; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 7, File 27. "Housing -- their Problem. A Study of the Dwellings of 298 Montreal

III. The Labour Market

Since the early days of European settlement in North America, Montréal had been central to the colony's economic development, whether through the fur trade, shipping, railways, light and heavy industry, finance, or commerce. The city's geographic setting -- at the junction of the St-Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers -- was in part responsible for this economic pre-eminence. The Northwest fur trade was directed in large part from Montréal; the city became home to such early nineteenth-century Scots- and English-Canadian commercial barons as the McGills, the Molsons, and the McTavishes. Montréal was a major hub for the Grand Trunk Railway and later the CPR; by the end of the nineteenth century, it was unquestionably Canada's foremost industrial city. The prominent Canadian banks (such as the Bank of Montreal and the Royal Bank) that established their headquarters on St. James Street, and the presence in the city of successful entrepreneurs such as, by the twentieth century, the Bronfmans, ensured that it remained the repository for much of the nation's money.⁶² By the close of the Second World War, the city's position as metropolis of Québec and Canada meant that it was at the hub of a network of economic relationships that spanned the continent and crossed the Atlantic. The war had fuelled the city's industry, adding tanks, airplanes, and munitions to prewar manufacturing staples such as clothing, tobacco, and food. By 1951, 38% of

Families." Prepared by the Canada Committee of the Montreal Branch of the Canadian Association of Social Workers, March 1947.

Montréal's male labour force was employed in manufacturing; service, trade, transportation, and construction were the other major industries employing the city's men.⁶³

The war shaped, to a large extent, the nature of men's work in late-1940s Montréal. During the war, the spectre of postwar unemployment had plagued the city's workers even as they reaped the benefits of labour shortages, long working hours and improved wages. Policymakers, employers and industrial workers alike suspected that this war, like the previous one, would be followed by an economic recession. Yet social welfare payments, contributions to the reconstruction of Europe, greater integration with the booming American economy, and later, Cold War spending, ensured that the Canadian economy remained relatively healthy through the late 1940s and certainly through the 1950s.⁶⁴ Of course, aggregate statistics that paint a rosy picture of the postwar Canadian economy need to be taken apart to look at the impact of economic transition on particular cities, neighbourhoods, and families. Montréal did experience some transitional unemployment and minor shocks as the city, a significant centre of wartime munitions production, shifted to peacetime industry and services.⁶⁵

⁶² Bradbury, Working Families, 23-24; Paul-André Linteau et al., Quebec: A History, 1867-1929, trans. Robert Chodos (Toronto: James Lorimer and Co., 1983).

⁶³ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 4: Table 6, Table 17.

⁶⁴ Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English, Canada Since 1945: Power, Politics, and Provincialism, revised ed. (Toronto: UTP, 1989), 73, 68; Donald Creighton, The Forked Road: Canada 1939-1957 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1976), Ch. 6.

⁶⁵ The Labour Gazette: Vol. 45, 9 (September 1945), 1376-1377; Vol. 46, 8 (August 1946), 1151-1152. On transitional unemployment and economic uncertainty, see Clio Collective, Quebec Women: A History, 273; Bothwell et al., Canada Since 1945, 68; Desmond Morton, Working People: An Illustrated History of the Canadian Labour Movement, revised ed. (Toronto: Summerhill Press, 1990), 187. For a more optimistic

Despite the cancellation of war contracts, the city's industrial base persisted. Production for war gave way to the manufacturing of consumer goods for peacetime. Thus a large proportion of the city's male workers continued to benefit from the wartime gains made in the manufacturing sector: the industrial legality of P.C. 1003, the provincial *Loi des relations ouvrières*, and the Rand Formula; significant rates of unionization; and relatively high wages. Postwar Fordism, premised on state regulation, management-labour accommodation, and wages that permitted high levels of consumption, maintained high levels of production.⁶⁶ In 1951, 22% of Montréal's 314,682 male workers over the age of 14 worked in jobs considered "Manufacturing and Mechanical." They were followed by clerical workers (10%), transportation workers (10%), labourers (10%), construction workers (9%), service workers (8%), those employed in commercial occupations (7%), and professionals (7%).⁶⁷ The city's male job market was thus diverse. Moreover, it had not yet been radically transformed by the rapid increase in white-collar, clerical, and sales jobs and the corresponding decrease in blue-collar, manual work described by Desmond Morton as a Canada-wide phenomenon in the 1950s.⁶⁸ Factory workers continued to predominate in the male labour pool,⁶⁹ and

view of Montréal's postwar economy, see Paul-André Linteau, *Brève histoire de Montréal* (Montréal: Boréal, 1992) and Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération* (Montréal: Boréal, 1992).

⁶⁶ Bryan D. Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991), 268-269, 282-284, 336-339; Don Wells, "The Impact of the Postwar Compromise on Canadian Unionism: The Formation of an Auto Worker Local in the 1950s," *Labour/Le Travail* 36 (Fall 1995): 147-173.

⁶⁷ *Ninth Census of Canada 1951*, Vol. 4: Table 6, Table 17.

⁶⁸ Morton, *Working People*, 215.

the postwar building boom, within the city and especially in its suburbs, improved the job opportunities for construction workers and manual labourers.⁷⁰

The attempt to return newlywed and long-married women to the home at the close of the war has been well documented by North American historians.⁷¹ Canadian women's labour-force participation did plummet immediately after the end of the war, and the wartime high in their participation rate would not be equalled until the 1960s. But this reduced female labour-force increased steadily, especially after 1951. And within this reduced but growing female workforce, the paid work of married women became progressively more important.⁷² Canada-wide, the decade between 1941 and

⁶⁹ Paul-André Linteau observes that Montréal emerged from the war with a very strong manufacturing sector in Histoire de Montréal, Ch. 16; Bryan Palmer notes the considerable increase in manufacturing employment in Québec between 1939 and 1950 in Working-Class Experience, 308. The Labour Gazette contended in March 1947 that, in the province of Québec, "General manufacturing was on the upswing" Vol. 47, 3 (March 1947), 418. It is noteworthy that a decade later, in 1961, 31.6% of Montréal's total labour force was still employed in manufacturing. Donald Kerr and Deryck W. Holdsworth, eds., Historical Atlas of Canada, Vol. 3, Addressing the Twentieth Century, 1891-1961 (Toronto: UTP, 1990), Plate 51.

⁷⁰ La Presse: 4 septembre 1947, "Au jour le jour," 13; 5 décembre 1947, "Au jour le jour," 11; 5 janvier 1948, "L'Activité ne fait pas défaut," 6. For evidence of steadily increasing wages in the Montréal building trades from 1940 through 1950, see F.H. Leacy, ed., Historical Statistics of Canada, 2nd ed. (Ottawa: Statistics Canada in joint sponsorship with the Social Science Federation of Canada, 1983), Series E248-259. See also Linteau, Brève histoire, Ch. 11; Linteau et al., Québec Since 1930, Ch. 20; Linteau, Histoire de Montréal, Ch. 18.

⁷¹ For Canada, see Ruth Roach Pierson, 'They're Still Women After All': The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986); for the United States, see Elaine Tyler May, Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

⁷² Pierson, 'They're Still Women.' 215-216; Veronica Strong-Boag, "Canada's Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1945-60," Journal of Canadian Studies 29, 3 (Fall 1994), 6-7; Joan Sangster, Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960 (Toronto: UTP, 1995), 221-224; Alison Prentice et al., Canadian Women: A History (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich,

1951 saw the number of married women in the labour force increase by approximately three and a half times.⁷³ One analyst of the 1951 census, writing in 1954, thought it possible, and even likely, "that the wartime phenomenon of working wives will become an established and normal development of our Canadian society," rather than "a temporary phenomenon."⁷⁴ Opposition to the paid work of children and married women, and debate over which family members ought to work for wages, will be discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 5. Here, I want simply to assess the extent of wives' and children's participation in the paid labour force, and to outline the kinds of jobs available to them in Montréal.

Observers of postwar Montréal described a "Fuite vers le travail payé de la mère de famille," claiming that married women "often" left their homes to work in factories and to supplement husbands' inadequate salaries.⁷⁵ In 1951, 30% of Canada's female labour force was married. In the province of Québec, 17.3% of the female labour force was married, and in Montréal, 20.9%.⁷⁶ Examined from another angle, only 11.8% of

1988), 311-313. Francine Barry notes that in Québec, "Bien que la décennie de la guerre constitue le point de départ de cet accroissement de la participation féminine à la main-d'oeuvre, c'est à partir de 1951 que ce mouvement prend son ampleur véritable." Le travail de la femme au Québec, 23.

⁷³ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 10, pp. 6, 248.

⁷⁴ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 51, File 456. "What the Census Says About Families" by F.G. Boardman, Chief, Family Unit, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 14 January 1954.

⁷⁵ NA, Renée Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1. "Le droit de vote pour les femmes [n.d. but post-1945]"; ANQM, JOC, P104, C. 213, File: Semaine d'Etude (Long, 48). Programme - rapport - Correspondance etc. Rapport du Congrès des Responsables locaux du S.P.M., 23-29 août 1948; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 8, File 1. Causerie donnée à Radio-Canada, CBF Montréal, 6 février 1947, par Mme Pierre Casgrain, O.B.E., Présidente du Comité conjoint du Statut légal de la femme mariée.

⁷⁶ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 10, p. 286; Vol. 10, Table 8.

Montréal's married women were considered to be part of the labour force that year.⁷⁷ If the war had marked the beginning of wives' permanent entry into the paid labour force, it was a trend that was clearly still in its infancy in Montréal through the 1940s. An examination of census data comparing male and female labour-force participation by age groups reveals that Montréal men and women worked for pay in roughly similar numbers from age 14 through age 19. Considerably fewer women aged 20-24 worked than their male counterparts, and the drop-off in female labour-force participation was marked among women aged 25-34.⁷⁸ The less than 12% of wives who worked for pay contrasts with the 19.3% of Montréal widows and the 68.4% of Montréal divorcées who were included in the city's labour force in 1951.⁷⁹ It also appears a surprisingly small group compared to the 19.8% of wives who worked in (for instance) Hamilton, Ontario that same year.⁸⁰ Moreover, the almost ten percent gap between the 30% of the Canadian female labour force that was married and the 21% of Montréal's female labour force that was married in 1951 is considerable. These numbers appear particularly low given the metropolis's abundance of jobs in the manufacturing, clerical, and service sectors. Supply and demand is clearly inadequate to explain this discrepancy; as we shall see in the chapters that follow, cultural factors help to explain this difference.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 1, Table 29; Vol. 4, Table 8.

⁷⁸ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 4, Table 7.

⁷⁹ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 1, Table 29; Vol. 4, Table 8.

⁸⁰ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 1, Table 29; Vol. 4, Table 8.

⁸¹ The Labour Gazette, for instance, declared in 1947 that there were more jobs for women in Montréal than there were women available to fill them. The Labour Gazette, Vol. 47, 3 (March 1947), 296, 418. The Clio Collective claims that in Québec, only "a few" married women worked outside the home as part of the war effort. See Quebec Women: A History, 277. Likewise, a survey conducted in 1944 of the 105 couples

According to the Clio Collective, the increase in married women's labour-force participation that did take place in Québec between 1941 and 1951 was particularly marked in the manufacturing sector.⁸² The National Selective Service had certainly targeted married women for factory work during the war.⁸³ Yet Montréal's Local Council of Women claimed in October 1945 that "Most factories want young, unmarried girls under 25 years of age" and that older and married women found it much more difficult to secure factory employment, with the possible exception of work in the sewing trades.⁸⁴ Francine Barry argues that Québec women's paid work became more varied after 1941. Sectors of paid employment such as office work, for instance, expanded over the course of the 1940s.⁸⁵ Yet in clerical work, too, married women faced obstacles, as the end-of-the-war campaign to remove wives from the federal civil service suggests.⁸⁶ In 1950, the Local Council of Women's delegate to the Unemployment Insurance Commission claimed that many firms were "becoming more selective in their choice of workers." There was increasingly a trend, she argued, against the hiring of married women, and younger women were replacing older female employees. As early as

married in the mass JOC wedding of 1939 found that only three wives worked for pay, and that these women had no children. ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 10, File: Statistiques - Cent Mariés. "Les Cent Mariés Reviennent sur la Scène, 1939-1944."

⁸² Clio Collective, Quebec Women: A History, 294.

⁸³ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 13: File: Campagne de Propagande - Travail féminin. Réunions. Réunion du 4 octobre 1943 re: conscription des femmes.

⁸⁴ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 8, File 4. "Situation in regard to the Employment of Women as seen in Verdun at end of October 1945."

⁸⁵ Francine Barry, Le travail de la femme au Québec: l'évolution de 1940 à 1970 (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1977), 14, 11. In Montréal, 20,612 women worked in the clerical sector in 1941; by 1951, 38,159 Montréal women worked in this sector. Eighth Census of Canada, Vol. 6, Table 7; Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 4, Table 6.

October 1945, a survey of women's employment in Verdun found that employers were reluctant to hire married women and older women, and that in most fields, the demand was for "young, pretty women workers."⁸⁷ The LCW's Trades, Business and Professions Committee conducted a study of "the problem of the older woman worker" in 1949-50 and discovered that six of the sixteen Montréal firms surveyed hired only women between the ages of 25 and 35.⁸⁸ The 1951 Census counted 13,872 Montréal women as "professional" workers, but it is unclear how many of these were married.⁸⁹ In 1947, the Local Council of Women decried the "alarming" decline in the number of social workers, teachers, and nurses, and called for the amendment of income tax regulations so that married women and their husbands would not be penalized when wives continued to work for pay.⁹⁰

No doubt many means of earning a dollar were ignored by the federal census. La Presse's Colette, for instance, suggested in 1947 that married women in need of extra income might consider undertaking paid work at home.⁹¹ Paid work in someone else's home remained an option, as the demand for domestic help always exceeded the supply

⁸⁶ La Presse, 26 octobre 1945. "Retour au foyer," 5; Pierson, 'They're Still Women'.

⁸⁷ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164: Vol. 5, File 8. 56th Year Book and Annual Report 1949-50, Unemployment Insurance Commission, National Employment Service, Quebec Region: Vol. 8, File 4, "Situation in regard to the Employment of Women as seen in Verdun at end of October 1945."

⁸⁸ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 6, File 13. Report of the Trades, Business and Professions Committee of the MCW on the problem of the Older Woman Worker, 1949-50.

⁸⁹ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 4, Table 6.

⁹⁰ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 5, File 9. Resolution on Income Tax Regulations (Married Women), March 1947; and The Labour Gazette, Vol. 47, 3 (March 1947), "Working Wives, Their Income, and the New Income Tax," 293-297.

⁹¹ La Presse, 3 mai 1947, 24.

of women willing to undertake this work. Service as a live-in institution was dealt a serious blow by the growth of other work opportunities for women during the war: the LCW's chronic complaints about the shortage of domestic servants were even louder than usual in the wake of the war.⁹² Increasingly, domestic service became an occupation filled by immigrant and non-white women.⁹³ In any case, live-in domestics had almost always been single. But service persisted as a day job, and some married women hired themselves out as cleaning women and charladies.⁹⁴ In the more 'public' service sector, we see Steinberg's supermarket advertising in 1947 for women to work as cashiers: young and single women were specifically requested.⁹⁵

Almost invariably, the paid work of married women in postwar Montréal was characterized by low wages.⁹⁶ It was, moreover, irregular and usually contingent upon husbands' earnings and employment. The mothers of the children who attended

⁹² NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 8, File 4. "Situation in regard to the Employment of Women as seen in Verdun at end of October 1945"; Trades and Professions for Women Committee, Minutes, 7 February 1946. Francine Barry notes that the service sector (domestic service, in particular) became less significant for working women in the 1940s. See *Le travail de la femme au Québec*, 14, 11. The number of women employed in personal service in Montréal dropped from 22,063 in 1941 to 20,612 in 1951 – during a decade when the city's population rose considerably. *Eighth Census of Canada 1941*, Vol. 6, Table 7; *Ninth Census of Canada 1951*, Vol. 4, Table 6.

⁹³ See, e.g., Agnes Calliste, "Canada's Immigration Policy and Domesticity from the Caribbean: The Second Domestic Scheme." in Jesse Vorst et al., eds., *Race, Class, Gender: Bonds and Barriers* (Toronto: Garamond Press and Society for Socialist Studies, 1989). On the extent to which women and girls found service an unappealing option in the postwar period, see *The Labour Gazette*, Vol. 49, 1 (January 1949), "Employment of Women and Girls in Restaurants," 36.

⁹⁴ Clio Collective, *Quebec Women: A History*, 302.

⁹⁵ *La Presse*, 28 janvier 1947, 22.

⁹⁶ *The Labour Gazette*, Vol. 47, 3 (March 1947), 296; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 8, File 4. "Situation in regard to the Employment of Women as seen in Verdun at end of October 1945."

Griffintown's Garderie Ste-Anne, mostly Irish-Canadian labouring women ("femmes de peine") and office workers, often took part-time and seasonal work: more children attended the nursery, for instance, around Christmas.⁹⁷ Mothers without spouses sought ways to support themselves and their children, as did women whose husbands were ill, unemployed, or earned inadequate wages. Social agencies found, for instance, that a mother might go to work if her husband "drank to excess and lost jobs," or if he was "blind and unemployable."⁹⁸

Like working wives, working children suggested that the breadwinner ideal was far from attainable for many of the city's families. Despite a much-vaunted 'postwar prosperity,' children continued to contribute to family economies. Indeed, for many working-class families in Montréal, the wages of children were essential to postwar financial security.⁹⁹ The 'child labour' problem that continued to plague social workers and administrators of the emerging Canadian welfare state in the postwar years was largely a matter of 'youth' or 'teen' labour.¹⁰⁰ For their families, this 'problem' was rather a 'strategy' designed to cope with an increased cost-of-living and adult male wages that

⁹⁷ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 236, File 236-9. Garderie Ste-Anne, Entrevue avec Sister Magdeline, 4 novembre 1943.

⁹⁸ NA, Summerhill Homes, MG 28 I 388, Vol. 14, File 14-27. Summerhill House, Superintendent's Report for the Year 1950: NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 12, File: Minutes of Meetings, Case and Adoption Committee, JCWB, 1944-48. Minutes, 11 November 1946.

⁹⁹ Dominique Marshall, Aux origines sociales de l'État-providence: Familles québécoises, obligation scolaire et allocations familiales 1940-1955 (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1998); Thérèse Hamel, "Obligation scolaire et travail des enfants au Québec: 1900-1950," Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française 38, 1 (Été 1984): 39-58. On Canada more broadly, see Neil Sutherland, Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television (Toronto: UTP, 1997).

¹⁰⁰ Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 168.

remained insufficient despite a local labour market vastly improved since the days of the Great Depression. Class and ethnic differences produced differing perspectives on whether the work of adolescents was considered to be a problem or a strategy.¹⁰¹

Generational differences also determined attitudes toward this work. For teenagers, their parents' financial strategies, which involved their own paid labour, might constitute a 'problem' inasmuch as they prevented them from participating in the youth cultures of their peers.¹⁰²

The Second World War had significantly expanded the employment of children and teens across the nation.¹⁰³ Like women, they were hired to fill the jobs vacated by men departed for the front. The large number of adolescents employed in munitions factories during the war was the most visible sector of youth employment; highly concentrated in specific locales, they attracted a disproportionate amount of attention. But adolescents worked in a wide variety of occupations: girls in the garment industry, the textile and food trades, and as domestic servants; boys as industrial workers, messengers, delivery boys, newsboys, and apprentices in a trade. Many of these were occupations defined specifically as children's jobs.¹⁰⁴ Québec was perceived to have the

¹⁰¹ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 234, File 234-11. Memo: Baron de Hirsch, 24 January 1947.

¹⁰² See Tamara Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time: The relationship between the family and work in a New England industrial community (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge UP, 1982), for examples of the intrafamily conflict produced by children's labour; also Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 184-185.

¹⁰³ NA, Department of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 610, File 6-52-2, Vol. 2. Chief, Legislation Branch, Dept of Labour to Marion Royce, 23 September 1943.

¹⁰⁴ Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 231.

worst child labour 'problem' in the country.¹⁰⁵ This may have been, in part, a judgment by anglophone social workers and civil servants, related to perceptions of large francophone families and inadequate public welfare services in the province. Yet French-Canadian, Catholic observers also decried Québec's "worst possible situation" in regard to child labour.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the 1951 Census showed that Québec had the largest percentage of children aged 15-24 in the labour force in the country (almost 60%), as well as the largest increase in this percentage over the decade 1941-51.¹⁰⁷ Contemporaries argued that children's earnings were essential for many Québec families because of the inadequacy of both adult male wages and social services in the province.¹⁰⁸ Dominique Marshall has suggested that Québec children's employment may have increased during the war in part because the work of wives was so actively discouraged by provincial commentators. Marshall's study of postwar Québec demonstrates that children continued to work for wages even after compulsory schooling was implemented in 1943, and even after Family Allowances softened the edges of many parents' poverty.¹⁰⁹ The Canadian Youth Commission heard from French-Canadians that among those who benefited most from wartime improvements in the economy were "families with working sons and daughters." Some adolescents, in fact, told the Commission that "they were already the principal means of financial support for their

¹⁰⁵ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 218, File: Québec: Dept of Social Welfare and Youth (5), 1940-1962. Nora Lea to Maud Morlock, 26 April 1943.

¹⁰⁶ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 234, File 234-24. André M. Guillemette to Nora Lea, 6 avril 1944.

¹⁰⁷ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 10, p. 312. See also Hamel, "Obligation scolaire et travail des enfants."

¹⁰⁸ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 8, File 4. Resolution [n.d.].

parents."¹¹⁰ Thérèse Hamel attributes the chronic high rates of children's employment in twentieth-century Québec, and corresponding low rates of school attendance, to the importance of light industry (which required neither extensive education nor much physical strength) in Montréal, and the persistence of the self-sufficient family farm outside the metropolis.¹¹¹

The LOC and the JOC claimed that children as young as 13, 14, and 15 were kept out of school and sent to work because of their parents' poverty.¹¹² In fact, the JOC argued in 1948, 44% of young people began working for pay at or before age 15, and 69% at or before age 16.¹¹³ Montréal's Société Saint-Vincent-de-Paul commented in 1944 on the widespread problem of children leaving school for work at the age of 14, while the Montreal Council of Social Agencies (the city's umbrella organization for Protestant agencies) noted that same year the considerable numbers of children under 16 and even under 14 working full- and part-time.¹¹⁴ One family that came to the attention

¹⁰⁹ Marshall, *Aux origines sociales*, esp. Ch. 5.

¹¹⁰ Canadian Youth Commission (CYC), *Youth, Marriage and the Family* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1948), 39, 85-86.

¹¹¹ Hamel, "Obligation scolaire et travail des enfants."

¹¹² ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 13, File: Campagne de Propagande - Allocation familiale. Comités généraux de la JOC et de la JOCF to Marcel Labrie, 2 février 1943; Vol. 11, File: Discours du Congrès. 5e anniversaire 1944. Discours de Léo Turcotte, 1944 - 5e anniversaire; UM, ACC, P16/G5/8/3, Manifeste de la JOC sur la situation économique des jeunes travailleurs [1948].

¹¹³ UM, ACC, P16/G5/8/4, Mémoire présenté par la JOC canadienne à l'Honorable Paul Martin, Ministre du Bien-Etre Social, autour de l'établissement des Jeunes Travailleurs [août-sept. 1948].

¹¹⁴ ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 5, File 32. Assemblée 18 décembre 1944; MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 1, File 874. Memorandum concerning the employment of children in the Province of Quebec [May 1944]. Thérèse Hamel notes that the problem in Montréal was not a complete lack of school attendance, but rather, "*l'abandon précoce de l'appareil scolaire.*" One of the principal goals of compulsory schooling "est donc de *prolonger la*

of the Jewish Child Welfare Bureau in 1947 had two daughters, aged 16 and 17, who lived out and worked as domestics. At least one of the daughters had been working irregularly since the age of 13, in a clothing factory and elsewhere.¹¹⁵ Classifieds in La Presse in 1944 advertised light work in a cigar factory for girls under the age of 16 and noted that the perquisites of the job included annual paid vacations, group insurance, and free milk. Applicants, the posting noted, had to provide certificates of age and of studies. Meanwhile, boys under the age of 16 who desired a "métier d'après-guerre" and a chance of advancement were encouraged in 1944 to apply for jobs as messengers and apprentice jewellers.¹¹⁶

Clearly daughters, as well as sons, went out to work. Only slightly fewer girls aged 14 to 17 worked for pay than boys of the same age in 1951, and more 18- and 19-year-old girls worked than 18- and 19-year-old boys in Montréal that year.¹¹⁷ This differs from late-nineteenth-century Montréal, when, Bettina Bradbury argues, daughters were considerably less likely than sons to work outside the home, in large part because their families required their unpaid domestic labour.¹¹⁸ Yet Dominique Marshall points out that in the postwar period, many of the children kept out of school were girls whose labour was needed at home. The unpaid work of farmers' sons and working-class daughters, she argues, remained officially tolerated lacunae in the administration of

fréquentation scolaire." See "Obligation scolaire et travail des enfants," 48. Emphases in the original.

¹¹⁵ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Case Conferences, FWD and JCWB, 1944-46. Summary for Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 26 March 1947.

¹¹⁶ La Presse: 21 octobre 1944, 55; 22 avril 1944, 43.

¹¹⁷ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 4, Table 7.

¹¹⁸ Bradbury, Working Families, Ch. 4.

children's "new universal rights."¹¹⁹ Many of the 13,128 Montréal children aged 14 to 24 who are listed in the 1951 Census as neither working for pay nor attending school were likely girls undertaking unpaid domestic work at home.¹²⁰

IV. Social Welfare

Wages were essential for most Montréal families, but they were rarely enough on their own. Many of the city's working-class and poor families counted, at least on occasion, on additional kinds of support in the immediate postwar years. As in other Canadian cities, social welfare had historically been largely a private matter, taken care of by kin, friends, neighbours, and religious and charitable organizations. In Montréal, the Catholic Church had traditionally assumed the major responsibility for poor and needy French-Canadians. The city's Protestants, Jews, and to a certain extent English-speaking Catholics, turned to their own charitable organizations, such as those affiliated with the Montreal Welfare Federation, the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, and the Federation of Catholic Charities. After 1921, private bodies benefited from some state assistance through the Quebec Public Charities Act,¹²¹ which provided small subsidies to indigent citizens under the care of private welfare institutions. The costs of maintaining these clients were split three ways: among the province, the municipality, and the private

¹¹⁹ Marshall, *Aux origines sociales*, esp. 219-228.

¹²⁰ *Ninth Census of Canada 1951*, Vol. 3, Table 135; and see Bradbury, *Working Families*, 133-134; Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, 29. Thérèse Hamel observes that girls' unpaid domestic work "est totalement évacué dans les recensements." "Obligation scolaire et travail des enfants," 53.

institution in question.¹²² Provincial Needy Mothers' Allowances, established in 1937, also provided small sums of money to widowed and deserted wives, although the eligibility criteria were strict and the selection process somewhat arbitrary.¹²³ The federal government had established cost-shared, means-tested old-age pensions in 1927; Québec began participating in this programme in 1936.¹²⁴

By the mid-1940s, the federal government had made major inroads into the realm of social welfare, legislating unemployment insurance in 1940 and family allowances in 1944 alongside wartime measures such as dependents' allowances and veterans' provisions. The state was thus assuming some of the functions that, in an earlier period, had been assigned to that in-between realm known as 'the social.'¹²⁵ But only some: in Québec, federal and provincial public welfare measures coexisted with, rather than supplanted, older private forms of social welfare. Those citizens who found the new

¹²¹ La Loi de l'assistance publique, 1921.

¹²² Harry M. Cassidy, Public Health and Welfare Reorganization (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1945), 365-366, 375-376; Yves Vaillancourt, L'Évolution des politiques sociales au Québec 1940-1960 (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1988), Ch. 5; Marie-Paule Malouin, dir., L'Univers des enfants en difficulté au Québec entre 1940 et 1960 (Montréal: Bellarmin, 1996), Ch. 1; B.L. Vigod, "History According to the Boucher Report: Some Reflections on the State and Social Welfare in Quebec Before the Quiet Revolution," in Allan Moscovitch and Jim Albert, eds., The 'Benevolent' State: The Growth of Welfare in Canada (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1987); B.L. Vigod, "Ideology and Institutions in Quebec: The Public Charities Controversy 1921-1926," Histoire sociale/ Social History 11, 21 (May 1978): 167-182; Andrée Lévesque, "Les Québécoises et les débuts de l'État providence," in Brigitte Studer et al., eds., Frauen und Staat/ Les Femmes et l'État (Basel: Schwabe and Co., 1998), 177-178.

¹²³ Vaillancourt, L'Évolution des politiques sociales, Ch. 6; Malouin, L'Univers des enfants en difficulté, Ch. 5.

¹²⁴ Linteau et al., Quebec Since 1930, 56, 115, 235.

¹²⁵ Denise Riley, "'The Social,' 'Woman,' and Sociological Feminism" in 'Am I That Name?' Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

public provisions inadequate continued to turn to private charity. Private agencies, meanwhile, increasingly found themselves without the material resources to deal with the demands of their clients, and some looked to the state to step in. This was, without question, the “mixed social economy” that Mariana Valverde has identified as being characteristic of English Canada over the last two centuries.¹²⁶ The existence of such a mixed economy highlights the many links between private and public, and underlines the necessity of avoiding a whiggish narrative of the ‘rise of the welfare state.’ Under Premier Maurice Duplessis, moreover, the provincial arm of the state was notoriously reluctant to increase its responsibility for the poor and the needy.¹²⁷ Thus, the Executive Director of the Montreal Welfare Federation noted in 1945 the “Indispensable role of private charity or welfare work in [this] City and Province giving to [our] Federation a measure of urgency which Chests and Federations do not always have in other communities.”¹²⁸ The firm opposition to federal ‘intrusions’ into matters of social

¹²⁶ Mariana Valverde, “The Mixed Social Economy as a Canadian Tradition,” Studies in Political Economy 47 (Summer 1995): 33-60. A ‘mixed social economy’ of schooling also existed in Québec: private, religious schools received some funding from the provincial government. Nadia Fahmy-Eid, “Un univers articulé à l’ensemble du système scolaire québécois,” in Micheline Dumont and Nadia Fahmy-Eid, Les Couventines: L’éducation des filles au Québec dans les congrégations religieuses enseignantes 1840-1960 (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1986), 34.

¹²⁷ Vaillancourt, L’Évolution des politiques sociales.

¹²⁸ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 238, File 238-9. Welfare Federation Campaign Post-Mortem in Outline, 10 October 1945. The Welfare Federation likewise noted in 1949 that “The giving is good because the need is more urgent than in most cities – the absence of a public assistance program and low government subsidies impose a special burden on private welfare agencies in Montreal.” NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 238, File 238-11. Campaign Organization Review, Welfare Federation of Montreal, December 1949. An American child welfare worker noted in 1946 that “An observer from outside Montreal is struck by the lack of provincial or local governmental services.” MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 1, File 871. Howard W. Hopkirk to Charles H. Young, 31 January 1946.

welfare by other premiers, such as Ontario's George Drew,¹²⁹ suggests (perhaps in opposition to the Montreal Welfare Federation's Director) that Québec was not unique in this regard, and that private agencies would continue to play a role in delivering welfare measures across this nation under reconstruction.

i. Private Provisions

In 1943, Montréal Archbishop Joseph Charbonneau designated the Conseil des Oeuvres the official diocesan umbrella organization for Catholic, French-speaking charities (both religious and lay) in the city of Montréal.¹³⁰ The Société Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, which had addressed the material needs of poor, Catholic French-Canadians in Montréal since the mid-nineteenth century, was the most prominent member of this organization. Run by Catholic lay-men, the St-Vincent-de-Paul was organized at the parish level and emphasized the importance of conducting home visits. Participants in Montréal's ninety-two SVP councils, who included such respectable citizens as judges and notaries, met regularly to determine which of their parishioners' needs were

¹²⁹ Alvin Finkel, "Paradise Postponed: A Re-examination of the Green Book Proposals of 1945," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 4 (1993): 120-142. An indication of a Drew-Duplessis alliance in the early postwar years is in York University Archives (YUA), Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001, Reel 1. Note de l'hon. Geo. Drew à Hon. Duplessis à une conférence fédérale-provinciale, à Ottawa, 1945.

¹³⁰ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 234, File 234-24. Statement by André-M. Guillemette, o.p., Executive Director, Conseil des Oeuvres, Montréal, 17 November 1943; *Le Conseil des Oeuvres*, par Marie Hamel [n.d.].

legitimate and worthy.¹³¹ The presidents of at least some of these councils were periodically accused of not being particularly sympathetic to those poor families who came to them for assistance; the president of the central council, J.A. Julien, felt compelled to remind them in 1945 “qu'on doit traiter le pauvre avec beaucoup d'égards et de courtoisie.”¹³² A women's branch of the St-Vincent-de-Paul, also known as the Services Bénévoles Féminins, existed to train upper- and middle-class women in voluntary work and home visiting.¹³³ Other organizations affiliated with the Conseil des Oeuvres included the Gouttes de lait (well-baby clinics that provided mothers with advice and medical assistance); l'Assistance maternelle, which provided new and needy Catholic mothers with a layette, bedding, and medical services; l'Aide aux Vieux Couples; the Action catholique-affiliated Ligue Ouvrière Catholique (LOC); and the LOC's

¹³¹ The SVP described itself as “une institution purement laïque mais soumise à l'autorité ecclésiastique.” ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 3, File 17. Rapport de la première assemblée régulière du Conseil Particulier St Joseph de Bordeaux de la Société SVP, 13 novembre 1947. The SVP's objectives and organization are described in: Vol. 7, File 54. Rapport du Conseil Central de Montréal, 1848-1948; Vol. 7, File 54. Discours à l'Hopital Notre Dame de la Merci, 1er Dimanche du Careme, 6 mars 1949; Vol. 2, File 6. Réunion du Comité des Finances de la Société St-Vincent-de-Paul de Montréal, 9 août 1944; Vol. 2, File 6. Réunion du Conseil Central de la Société St-Vincent-de-Paul de Montréal, 28 août 1944; Vol. 2, File 7. Réunion de la Société SVP, 25 mars 1946; Vol. 3, File 19. Assemblée générale de tous les membres des conférences du conseil particulier Saint-Georges, 15 avril 1945; Vol. 5, File 33. Minutes, Conférence Notre-Dame, Assemblée du 9 septembre 1946. On the SVP during the Depression, see Vigod, “History According to the Boucher Report,” 179-181.

¹³² ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 2, File 6. Réunion du Conseil Central de la Société SVP de Montréal, 26 février 1945.

¹³³ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10: Vol. 236, File 236-9. Visite faite à la St-Vincent de Paul Féminine, le 7 mars 1944; Vol. 237, File 237-13. Pamphlet: “War or Peace – Share!” Federation of French Charities, Twelfth Annual Appeal, 21 February - 2 March.

l'Entr'Aide Familiale.¹³⁴ Various Catholic orders, including the Grey Nuns and the Sisters of the Miséricorde, operated crèches, orphanages, industrial schools, homes for the elderly, and homes for unwed mothers.¹³⁵ By the 1940s, the staff of the Miséricorde maternity home included both religious sisters and secular social workers.¹³⁶

These organizations were joined in 1938 by the Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles: the first social service and family welfare agency, strictly speaking, for the city's francophone population.¹³⁷ The Bureau's unique position in French-speaking

¹³⁴ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10: Vol. 234, File 234-24. Oeuvres Membres du Conseil des Oeuvres, Section d'Etude 'Assistance Familiale,' December 1944; Vol. 237, File 237-13. Pamphlet: "War or Peace – Share!" Federation of French Charities, Twelfth Annual Appeal, 21 February- 2 March; La Presse, 15 décembre 1945, 28; La Presse, 11 août 1948, 16; UM, ACC, P16/O4/52. Deuxième partie, Chapitre 2, "La santé dans la famille"; ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 7, File 54. Rapport du Conseil Central de Montréal, 1848-1948. For an analysis of l'Assistance maternelle and the Gouttes de lait, see Denyse Baillargeon, "L'encadrement de la maternité au Québec entre les deux guerres: les gardes de la La Métropolitaine, les Gouttes de lait et l'Assistance maternelle," Bulletin du Regroupement des chercheurs-chercheuses en histoire des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec 16, 2-3 (été/automne 1990): 19-45.

¹³⁵ NA, Department of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. "La Crèche d'Youville, Côte de Liesse, Direction des Soeurs Grises," Rapport soumis par Renée Morin, Service Sélectif National; NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 234, File 234-24. H.-H. Dansereau to Révérend Père A.M. Guillemette, 8 mars 1944; Malouin, L'Univers des enfants en difficulté; Andrée Lévesque, Making and Breaking the Rules: Women in Quebec, 1919-1939, trans. Yvonne M. Klein (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1994), Ch. 6. For an earlier period, see Bettina Bradbury, "Elderly Inmates and Caregiving Sisters: Catholic Institutions for the Elderly in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," in Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, eds., On the Case: Explorations in Social History (Toronto: UTP, 1998).

¹³⁶ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 236, File 236-7. Annual Meeting of the CONSEIL DES OEUVRES, Montréal, 28 May 1947; UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/H3/18/24. Le Conseil des Oeuvres, Rapport Annuel 1946-47. And see Lévesque, Making and Breaking the Rules, Ch. 6; Malouin, L'Univers des enfants en difficulté, 104-114.

¹³⁷ ANQM, JOC, P104, C. 134, File: Bureau d'Assistance aux Familles - Documentation. Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles, 8e Assemblée Annuelle, 3 juin 1948. And see Vaillancourt, L'Évolution des politiques sociales, 221; Malouin, L'Univers des enfants en difficulté, 416.

Montréal as a case-work agency with secular social workers, and without official ties to the Catholic Church, meant that it was soon seriously overworked and short of funds. Its minimal resources were taxed by the fall-out from Depression and war. During the war, for instance, many of the BASF's scarce resources were devoted to administering and supervising federal Dependents' Allowances and supplementary aid provided by the federal Dependents' Board of Trustees.¹³⁸ The fact that the agency's staff was primarily secular complicated its dealings with some of the city's religious social services. One Bureau worker was quoted in 1945 as saying that "a lot of difficulties in relationship [sic] with other agencies and communities and the Archbishop's Palace would be lessened or would not exist if the head of the agency were a priest. The Bureau was really imposed upon the community and it really has never been accepted as part of it."¹³⁹ Conflict existed, for instance, between the BASF and the St-Vincent-de-Paul. On numerous occasions, the BASF accused the latter of refusing to help poor families or of giving only parsimoniously.¹⁴⁰ Although clerical and lay social services were said to be roughly

¹³⁸ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 238, File 238-4. Memo for Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles File, 6 May 1943, by Nora Lea; NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: DAB 4-7. Reports by Administration Section D.A.B. on Cases Submitted by the Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles: Memoranda [sic] to R.O.G. Bennett from Board of Directors, Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles, Montréal [May 1944]; Mémoire from Jeanne Barabé-Langlois to R.O.G. Bennett, 23 décembre 1942 .

¹³⁹ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 238, File 238-4. Memo re Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles, Montréal, 31 May 1945. Conflict between B.A.S.F. workers and the Catholic sisters running the service for unwed mothers at the Miséricorde is described in NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 238, File 238-4, Field Visit to the Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles, 14-15 February 1946, by Marie Hamel.

¹⁴⁰ ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 2, File 6. Minutes de la réunion du Conseil Central de la Société St-Vincent-de-Paul de Montréal, 31 janvier 1944; Réunion du Conseil Central de la Société St-Vincent-de-Paul de Montréal, 28 février 1944; Réunion du Conseil Central

equal in number in Montréal by the late 1940s, at least one Catholic welfare worker thought that “Les oeuvres religieuses accomplissent toutefois la plus grande partie du travail.”¹⁴¹

Conflict between religious and lay personnel was one difficulty facing Catholic, francophone agencies in Montréal.¹⁴² Disagreement also existed between private social workers and the state, and between the federal and provincial arms of the state.¹⁴³ Father André-M. Guillemette, Director of the Conseil des Oeuvres, was quoted in 1944 as claiming, with regard to the indigent, that “people in the French Canadian section of the community prefer the Q.P.C.A. set-up under which a private agency handles the case, thinking of the private agency as more individual and human in its operations.” Father Guillemette felt it necessary to insist to the Board of the Conseil des Oeuvres “that the private agencies in the French community simply could not cope with existing need and ... that there must be a Public Welfare programme to deal with it.”¹⁴⁴ The Conseil des

de la Société St-Vincent-de-Paul de Montréal, 27 mars 1944; Réunion du Conseil Central, 26 juin 1944.

¹⁴¹ UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/H3/18/24. Le Conseil des Oeuvres, Rapport Annuel 1946-47.

¹⁴² NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10: Vol. 236, File 236-7. Field Visit to the Conseil des Oeuvres, 14-15 February 1946; Interview with Father Caron, Conseil des Oeuvres, 20 October 1948; Annual Meeting of the CONSEIL DES OEUVRES, Montréal, 28 May 1947; Vol. 238, File 238-1. Mémoire, ‘La Société d’Adoption et de Protection de l’Enfance,’ June 3rd 1946; Vol. 238, File 238-4. Memo re Bureau d’Assistance Sociale aux Familles, Montréal, 27 February 1945.

¹⁴³ Federal-provincial conflict played out on the terrain of social welfare is evident in NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 238, File 238-1. Report of Field Visit to Father Contant, Société d’Adoption, Montréal, 8 September 1950.

¹⁴⁴ MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 19, File 54. Memorandum Reporting on Conversation with Father Guillemette Re: the Position of the Conseil des Oeuvres on the Proposed Independent Welfare Agency (21 January 1944). The Conseil des Oeuvres also expressed the need for a “système d’assistance familiale [qui] protegeait mieux la vie

Oeuvres itself criticized Québec's Loi de l'assistance publique in 1946-47 as "inadéquate" and "malfaisante," and called for more and better-funded family welfare agencies.¹⁴⁵ Despite the fact that they were responsible for the bulk of the city's population, Catholic agencies had few financial resources.¹⁴⁶ Their low level of revenue explained their modest welfare budgets, although the English-language Gazette suggested in 1944 that their expenditures were low "partly because the French Federation's activities have been less elaborately and comprehensively developed, partly because such a large proportion of the work of member agencies is maintained by voluntary [i.e. religious] personnel."¹⁴⁷

Organizations devoted to the needs of English-speaking Catholics were affiliated with the city's Federation of Catholic Charities. The Catholic Welfare Bureau was the most prominent of these agencies; it was organized at the parish level and cooperated closely with the Société St-Vincent-de-Paul.¹⁴⁸ A Child Welfare Bureau, a Boys' Bureau, and a Family Welfare Association, the latter run by a priest, also existed for the

familiale" in its annual report of 1946-47. UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/H3/18/24. Le Conseil des Oeuvres, Rapport Annuel 1946-47.

¹⁴⁵ UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/H3/18/24. Le Conseil des Oeuvres, Rapport Annuel 1946-47.

¹⁴⁶ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 236, File 236-7. Interview with Father Caron, Conseil des Oeuvres, 20 October 1948. The St-Vincent-de-Paul's "alarming" financial situation is described in ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 2, File 7. Réunion du Conseil Central de la Société St-Vincent-de-Paul, 30 mai 1949.

¹⁴⁷ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 237, File 237-14. Newsclipping, The Montreal Gazette, 21 February 1944, "A Call to the Whole Community."

¹⁴⁸ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 234, File 234-15. CATHOLIC WELFARE BUREAU [1938].

city's English-speaking Catholic population.¹⁴⁹ The city's English-speaking Protestants were well served by private social agencies; indeed, the affluence of an important sector of this community meant that they were relatively better provided for than their French-Canadian neighbours.¹⁵⁰ The Montreal Council of Social Agencies was the umbrella organization for approximately sixty non-Catholic organizations, including the Family Welfare Association, the Ladies Benevolent Society, the Society for the Protection of Women and Children, the Old Brewery Mission, and the Protestant Foster Home Centre.¹⁵¹ The MCSA, and the Montreal Welfare Federation more broadly, were sharply critical of the lack of adequate public welfare in Québec, at both municipal and provincial levels. As the MCSA noted in 1946, "The voluntarily financed social agencies in Montreal still bear the burden of maintenance costs for dependent families and children to a far greater degree than in other cities of the Dominion."¹⁵² The need for social agencies to be "an ambulance service" prevented them, the MCSA argued, from undertaking "positive preventive programmes" or "true remedial treatment," and from

¹⁴⁹ MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 19, File 21. "An aid to the doctor in guiding unmarried mothers to social services for help"; NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 50. Report on the Visit to the Montreal Agencies, March 29 and 30 [1943], by Ruth Harvey; ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 3, File 16. "Cinéma." Brief prepared by the Boys' Bureau of the Federation of Catholic Charities, 13 janvier 1943.

¹⁵⁰ Cassidy, Public Health and Welfare, 376.

¹⁵¹ MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 14, File 1000. Montreal Council of Social Agencies, Annual Report for 1945.

¹⁵² MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 14, File 1001. Annual Report for 1946. Also C. 14, File 1002. Montreal Council of Social Agencies, Annual Report 1947, Report of the Board of Governors for the Year 1947; Annual Report 1948; Annual Report 1949, Health Section; Annual Report 1950, Report of the Board of Governors for the Year 1950.

becoming “a major educational force in social living.”¹⁵³ The Council saw “no reason why the City of Montreal should be the one City on the Continent singled out as being unable to operate an adequate Social Welfare Department.”¹⁵⁴ It was ironic, the MCSA observed in 1950, that “in this Province of Quebec where we hold family life particularly sacred that we are so very reluctant to strengthen and bolster it, right where it needs it, in the heart of the home.”¹⁵⁵ Protestant agencies’ criticism of the provincial government was rooted not only in the inadequacy of public welfare in Québec, but also in their suspicion that Duplessis looked more favourably upon the requests of Catholic welfare institutions than on those of social agencies catering to English-speaking Montréalers.¹⁵⁶

Jewish families in search of assistance looked to organizations affiliated with Montréal’s Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, in particular the Jewish Family Services of the Baron de Hirsch Institute (the Jewish Family Welfare Department and the Jewish Child Welfare Bureau). The Baron de Hirsch Institute’s Family Welfare Department and Legal Aid Department was, in the 1940s, “the largest private Jewish family welfare agency in Canada.”¹⁵⁷ Needy families in the community also turned to the Jewish

¹⁵³ MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 14, File 1002. Montreal Council of Social Agencies, Report of the Board of Governors for the Year 1947.

¹⁵⁴ MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 19, File 54. Report of a Special Committee of the Montreal Council of Social Agencies Concerning the Proposal to Establish an Independent Agency – the Montreal Public Welfare Bureau – to Care for Long Term and Borderline Cases, 5 January 1944: “Why the Family Welfare Association Needs So Much Money” [September 1942].

¹⁵⁵ MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 14, File 1002. Annual Report 1950, Report of the Board of Governors for the Year 1950.

¹⁵⁶ MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 14, File 1002. Montreal Council of Social Agencies, Annual Report 1949, Report of the Board of Governors for the Year 1949.

¹⁵⁷ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 237, File 237-2. Basic Facts on which to develop article re Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, Montreal.

Immigrant Aid Society and the United Jewish Relief Committee. Many Jewish agencies were affiliated with the largely Protestant Montreal Council of Social Agencies.¹⁵⁸ The Family Welfare Department was frustrated by the lack of a “public welfare set-up in Montreal.” because this lack meant that most of the agency’s time and resources went to “the providing of financial help to those families who through ill health or death of the breadwinner, are unable to look after their own basic needs.”¹⁵⁹ Likewise, in a discussion of what the city’s Protestant and Catholic agencies were doing for the “employable unemployed” in 1946, the Jewish Family Welfare Department’s Case Committee “felt very definitely that such financial assistance should come from Government funds, and that pressure must be brought on the Government to provide this help.”¹⁶⁰

In 1949, a Canadian Welfare Council worker reported back to Ottawa on her visit to Montréal’s Société d’Adoption et de Protection de l’Enfance. The Société’s Executive Director, Father Paul Contant, “asked specifically,” she noted, that the CWC “make it their job of interpreting [sic] to English speaking Canada the child welfare situation in Quebec: its institutional set-up which has grown up of the past tradition, its Catholic set-up, its recent efforts to modernize gradually its methods of work. Comparisons with

¹⁵⁸ MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 14, File 1000. Montreal Council of Social Agencies, Annual Report for 1945.

¹⁵⁹ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 10, File: Minutes of Meetings of Case Committee, Family Welfare Department, 1944-45. Review of purpose and activities of case committee [n.d.]. Donald Hurwitz, appointed to the head of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies in 1946, was likewise “appalled by deficiencies in public welfare and child welfare in Quebec” NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 237, File 237-1. Memo re Jewish Federation, Montreal, 23 September 1946, by K. Jackson, CWC.

¹⁶⁰ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 10, File: Minutes of Meetings of Case Committee, Family Welfare Department, 1946-47. Minutes of Case Committee Meeting, 20 March 1946.

other provinces should be avoided because they are unfair to every one concerned, he said, and really, because there is no possible basis for comparison."¹⁶¹ The perception that Catholic social welfare services were unprofessional -- perhaps anachronistic -- was widely shared among Anglo-Protestant observers. Canadian Welfare Council workers, Protestant and Jewish agency workers, and some French-Canadian welfare workers argued that French-Canadian charitable institutions were slow to adopt 'modern' methods of organized social work. They charged that those who undertook good works were untrained, and that the poor, sick, and needy were too often institutionalized rather than treated in their homes or communities.¹⁶² Even the city of Montréal, itself frequently criticized for its lack of initiative in social welfare, accused the St-Vincent-de-Paul of poor administrative practices.¹⁶³ Yet, as Father Contant insisted, Catholic welfare

¹⁶¹ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 238, File 238-1. Visit to Father Paul Contant, Executive Director, La Société d'Adoption et de Protection de l'Enfance, Montréal, 12 October 1949. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁶² NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10: Vol. 219, File: Quebec Gov't General (2), 1930, 1942-1952. "Public Welfare Services in the Province of Quebec," 16 May 1946; Vol. 234, File 234-24. Mémoire au Révérend Père Guillemette sur les Oeuvres visitées à Montréal au cours des mois d'octobre, novembre et décembre 1943; Marie Hamel to Révérend Père A.M. Guillemette, O.P., 6 janvier 1944; Marie Hamel to Révérend Père André M. Guillemette, O.P., 23 mai 1945; Vol. 236, File 236-7. Interview with Father Caron, Conseil des Oeuvres, 20 October 1948; Vol. 238, File 238-1. Nora Lea to Laura L. Noya, 9 November 1945; Memo on field visit to La Société d'Adoption et de Protection de l'Enfance, 21 January 1948, by Marie Hamel; Vol. 238, File 238-4. Memo for Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles File, 6 May 1943, by Nora Lea. The social service branch of the Ste-Justine children's hospital, meanwhile, felt that municipal welfare investigators were similarly lacking in social work training. NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 236, File 236-9. Service économique Ste-Justine, Entrevue avec Mlle Jeanne Baril, directrice, le 1er décembre 1943, par Marie Hamel. The differing organization of lay and religious social services is described in UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/H3/18/24. Conseil des Oeuvres, Rapport Annuel 1946-47, p. 22.

¹⁶³ ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 3, File 19. Rapport de la dernière assemblée tenu au sein de la Conférence St-Enfant-Jésus, 14 juin 1948.

agencies were attempting “to modernize gradually” their “methods of work” in these years. Many religious sisters, moreover, had received considerable training in teaching, nursing, and social service work.¹⁶⁴ On the other side of the coin, non-francophone and non-Catholic agencies in the city of Montréal were far from universally ‘professionalized.’ The Canadian Welfare Council, for instance, considered the senior staff of Montréal’s English-language Catholic Welfare Bureau to be untrained and the Bureau’s case-work standards to be low.¹⁶⁵ Although the city’s Protestant agencies increasingly articulated the importance of secular staff with some formal training in social work, levels of training varied widely among workers in different Protestant agencies, and sometimes within the same agency.¹⁶⁶ The records of the Baron de Hirsch Institute’s Jewish Family Services show us social agencies attempting to professionalize. The Jewish Family Welfare Department, for instance, was anxious to be, and to be seen to be, more than simply a “relief agency.”¹⁶⁷ It wanted to do more than dispense funds, and was concerned with social work technique and with enhancing its expertise.

¹⁶⁴ Nicole Laurin et al., A la recherche d’un monde oublié: Les communautés religieuses de femmes au Québec de 1900 à 1970 (Montréal: Le Jour, 1991), 236, 386-387; Marta Danylewycz, Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Québec, 1840-1920 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987), 139-140, 153-154; Micheline Dumont, “Les congrégations religieuses enseignantes,” in Dumont and Fahmy-Eid, eds., Les Couventines.

¹⁶⁵ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 234, File 234-15. K.M. Jackson’s comments [confidential] on Catholic Welfare Bureau. Montreal, 1 August 1950.

¹⁶⁶ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 234, File 234-16. Memo for Children’s Service Association, 6 April 1943, by N.L. [Nora Lea]. One American child welfare worker claimed in 1946 that, “The scarcity of professionally trained social workers is perceptible in Montreal.” MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 1, File 871. Howard W. Hopkirk to Charles H. Young, 31 January 1946. See also Vaillancourt, L’Évolution des politiques sociales, 221.

¹⁶⁷ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Staff Meetings, Sept. 1945 – Jan. 1947. Minutes of Staff Conference, 20 February 1946.

Representatives of the Department attended conferences for family agencies on the use of psychiatric consultation services and on marriage counselling.¹⁶⁸ The Jewish Child Welfare Bureau was likewise anxious “to engage well trained and experienced case workers” in the wake of the war, and was eager to keep up with “the most modern trends in child welfare work”¹⁶⁹ But the records show clearly that such aims were far from realized in the 1940s. The fact that almost all providers of private welfare in the city were debating the merits of professional training suggests that they were anxious to maintain a role for themselves amid the state’s new forays into social security.

Denominational barriers meant that welfare organizations were sometimes unaware of what other institutions in the city were doing.¹⁷⁰ Sectarian conflict between social services also existed. The MCSA’s Non-Catholic Juvenile Court Committee, for instance, found its relationship with “the French committee” strained, and recorded in its minutes for 18 January 1946, “Again the need to work harmoniously together was stressed, though the achievement was fraught [sic] with many difficulties.”¹⁷¹ The St-

¹⁶⁸ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 10, File: Minutes of Meetings of Case Committee, Family Welfare Department, 1946-47. Minutes of Case Committee Meeting, 29 October 1946.

¹⁶⁹ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 12, File: Minutes of Meetings, Staff Committee, J.C.W.B., 1942-1947. Minutes, Meeting of Staff Committee of Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 21 October 1945; Memo re: salary standards for social agency employees [n.d.]; NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 237, File 237-1. An Affair of Honour, 1917-1941. The Story of Canada’s First Financial Federation.

¹⁷⁰ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10: Vol. 218, File 17. Interview with Miss Laurette Hetu by Maud Morlock, 24 March 1944; Vol. 234, File 234-11. K.M. Jackson to Anna H. Sacks, 28 January 1946.

¹⁷¹ MU, MCSA, MG 2076. C. 47, File 435. Juvenile Court Committee Meeting, 18 January 1946. See also, in the same file, Minutes of Meeting of the Juvenile Court Committee, 4 May 1949; Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Juvenile Court Committee, 23 June 1949.

Vincent-de-Paul worried because some of its parishioners were turning to Protestant agencies for handouts and Christmas baskets, and were buying second-hand clothing at the Salvation Army depot instead of at the SVP's Grenier du Pauvre.¹⁷² Some of the city's private social agencies were anxious for the state to intervene in social welfare, at least in certain capacities.¹⁷³ By the late 1940s, even the Société St-Vincent-de-Paul regularly turned away the unemployed and sent them to knock at the door of the city's social welfare department.¹⁷⁴ Others, particularly Catholic institutions, were resistant to state intervention, especially that of the federal state.¹⁷⁵ Although the war had, in certain ways, facilitated the development of a federally directed welfare state, lingering animosity in Québec over conscription and the wartime expansion of Ottawa's reach also made the building of a national welfare state more difficult. Yet the reluctance of some French Canadians to see the state intervene in family life was not just a case of anti-Ottawa sentiment: it was also rooted in ideas about who was best suited to help the poor or the needy, and about the importance, for Catholics, of performing good works.¹⁷⁶ Some SVP volunteers, for instance, were disinclined to see the Société register with the

¹⁷² ANQM, SVP, P61: Vol. 2, File 7. Réunion du Conseil Central, 27 janvier 1947; Réunion du Conseil Central, 30 août 1948; Réunion du Conseil Central, 28 mars 1949; Vol. 3, File 19. Rapport de la réunion du Conseil Particulier St-Georges, 28 septembre 1948.

¹⁷³ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 238, File 238-9. Newsclipping, The Montreal Gazette, 28 March 1946, "Dollar Hobbles on Welfare."

¹⁷⁴ ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 2, File 7. Réunion du Conseil Central de la Société St-Vincent-de-Paul, 29 avril 1946; Réunion du Conseil Central, 29 mars 1948. Vol. 3, File 17. Rapport de l'assemblée tenue conjointement par les Conseils Particuliers St-Georges et St-Joseph de Bordeaux au siège de l'Oeuvre des Vocations tardives que dirige le R.P. Menard o.f.m. le 22 février 48 sous la présidence de M. le juge Laramée.

¹⁷⁵ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 234, File 234-24. André M. Guillemette, o.p., to Nora Lea, 6 avril 1944; UM, ACC. P16, File: P16/R57. Institutions d'assistance aux familles.

provincial government as an institution eligible to receive QPCA funds, even though this would have considerably improved its precarious finances and helped its poverty-stricken parishioners.¹⁷⁷

ii. Public Provisions

The new public welfare measures of the 1940s have undergone much scholarly scrutiny. By the mid-1940s, the city of Montréal had a Social Welfare Department, and the province of Québec a Department of Social Welfare and Youth.¹⁷⁸ Historians agree, however, that the initiative in public welfare came from Ottawa in these years.¹⁷⁹ In this section, I want to look briefly at two new federal measures – veterans’ benefits and family allowances – in order to demonstrate the blending of private and public welfare that took place in the 1940s, and the ways in which private social agencies, the state, and recipients of social welfare negotiated private and public assistance. A coexistence of private and public provisions was not new in this period,¹⁸⁰ but the particular mix was

¹⁷⁶ See Vigod, “Ideology and Institutions in Quebec,” 171.

¹⁷⁷ ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 2, File 7. Réunion du Conseil Central, 27 janvier 1947; Réunion du Conseil Central, 31 mai 1948; Réunion du Conseil Central, 30 mai 1949.

¹⁷⁸ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10: Vol. 134, File 600 (II). Response to questionnaire from N.R. Beudet, 8 June 1942; Vol. 218, Files 13, 14, 17; Vaillancourt, *L'Évolution des politiques sociales*, 133.

¹⁷⁹ Vaillancourt, *L'Évolution des politiques sociales*; Marshall, *Aux origines sociales*; John A. Dickinson and Brian Young, *A Short History of Québec*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993), 278-280.

¹⁸⁰ See, e.g., Valverde, “Mixed Social Economy,” and in the same issue, Margaret Little, “The Blurring of Boundaries: Private and Public Welfare for Single Mothers in Ontario”; Lynne Marks, “Indigent Committees and Ladies Benevolent Societies: Intersections of Public and Private Poor Relief in Late Nineteenth Century Small Town Ontario.”

new. The state's involvement in welfare was more visible than before, and recipients were especially conscious of new state intervention. Moreover, they developed a sense of entitlement to state welfare utterly unlike their sentiments toward private charity.¹⁸¹ This sense of entitlement took different forms: veterans' benefits and family allowances, as we shall see, spoke to two distinct visions of citizenship in the 1940s.

Almost immediately after the Canadian government declared war in September 1939, it began planning measures for returned soldiers. The Cabinet Committee on Demobilization and Re-establishment was established by Order-in-Council in December 1939. The federal Advisory Committee on Reconstruction, headed by McGill University's Cyril James, was formed in March 1941. The Department of Pensions and National Health turned its veteran-related matters over to the newly created Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) in 1944; a Parliamentary Commission on Veterans' Affairs began sitting shortly thereafter. And as one First World War veteran noted in 1943, there was scarcely a department within the federal government that did not deal in some way with the rehabilitation of veterans. Furthermore, many of Canada's senators and elected Members of Parliament were themselves Great War veterans with a particular interest in the well-being of discharged soldiers.¹⁸² Veterans' benefits were thus rooted in war, but they were also integral to the federal welfare state emerging in the 1940s. They will be explored in depth in Chapter 2 for what they meant for gender and family during and

¹⁸¹ See Valverde's opposing view in "Mixed Social Economy," 36.

¹⁸² Robert England, Discharged: A Commentary on Civil Re-establishment of Veterans in Canada (Toronto: Macmillan, 1943), 115, 78; Desmond Morton, A Military History of Canada: From Champlain to the Gulf War, 3rd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992), 176, 182.

immediately after the Second World War; in this chapter, I am interested in what they can tell us about the meeting of private and public welfare measures in Québec in the 1940s, and in their implications for expanding senses of entitlement and citizenship in this period.

Despite the fanfare that greeted returning war heroes, veterans were seen to be a potentially problematic group. Governments and private organizations were wary of antagonizing old soldiers. Veterans deserved government benefits, of course, as a reward for their contribution to the nation's safety. But they were also a force to be satisfied in order to prevent political unrest. The Canadian state had learned from the experience of the First World War and the nation-wide labour protests of 1919 that unhappy veterans posed a threat to order.¹⁸³ One DVA employee, for instance, warned in 1943 that Montréal's "scandalous" housing situation might lead to "a sort of 'POPULAR FRONT' radicalism on one side, and very marked MARXIST movements on the other."¹⁸⁴

Rehabilitation benefits (considerably more generous than those allowed First World War

¹⁸³ NA, Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). RG 38, Vol. 184. File: Rehabilitation - Confidential Letters, Vol. 1. Walter S. Woods [for Minister] to Alex Walker, Dominion President, Canadian Legion of the B.E.S.L., Ottawa, 18 August 1941; England. Discharged, 28. On the 1919 labour revolts, see David Bercuson, Confrontation at Winnipeg: Labour, Industrial Relations, and the General Strike, 2nd ed. (Montréal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1990); Gregory Kealey, "1919: The Canadian Labour Revolt," Labour/Le Travail 13 (Spring 1984): 11-44; and Craig Heron, ed., The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925 (Toronto: UTP, 1998).

¹⁸⁴ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A. Monthly Report, 2 Feb. 1943. See also ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 216, File: Soldats (Service). Memorandum of the JOC To the CANADIAN GOVERNMENT in Favour of Demobilized Young Men [n.d. but after Oct. 1946].

veterans) were thus a means of thanking but also of appeasing returned soldiers.¹⁸⁵ In addition, they were a way of assisting military recruitment and of maintaining the morale of those still enlisted. Men would be more likely to volunteer and would make better soldiers, it was assumed, if they could rest assured that they would be provided for once their services were no longer required. As one federal recruiting pamphlet promised French-Canadians, "Il n'y a pas lieu de vous inquiéter de l'après-guerre."¹⁸⁶

The state, then, willingly undertook the task of transforming the "fighting man" into the "peacetime citizen."¹⁸⁷ Most of the initiative came from the Dominion government, as veterans, like soldiers, were a federal responsibility. The 1944 Veterans Charter made provision for medical treatment, pensions, gratuities, transportation home, clothing allowances, life insurance, land purchases and, finally, a choice of university allowances, vocational training, or rehabilitation credits with which to purchase and furnish a home or establish a business. The centrepiece of rehabilitation, however, from the perspective of both federal officials and returned soldiers, was employment.¹⁸⁸ After

¹⁸⁵ On First World War veterans, see Desmond Morton and Glenn Wright, Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life 1915-1930 (Toronto: UTP, 1987).

¹⁸⁶ ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 216. File: Soldats (Service). DND recruiting pamphlet: "NOTRE ARMÉE A BESOIN DE BONS CANADIENS." This message was followed by a list of nine ways in which veterans would be helped by the state. Also NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 184, File: Rehabilitation - Confidential Letters, Vol. 1. Confidential Letter No. 1, 22 July 1941.

¹⁸⁷ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 12. File: Local Committees - General Correspondence, Vol. 1. Article [no author, n.d. but probably Dec. 1944], 7.

¹⁸⁸ UM, Fonds Edouart-Montpetit, P 8/1, Comité de Reconstruction, 1941-43. Memorandum for the Committee on Reconstruction by F. Cyril James, 27 March 1941; Memorandum regarding the activities of local committees in the field of Post-War Reconstruction, 17 Aug. 1942. See also Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein, eds., The

August 1942, veterans could rely on the Reinstatement in Civil Employment Order, which promised them their old civilian jobs back, with seniority rights.¹⁸⁹ The government's dilemma was how to award veterans that to which they were entitled without undermining their sense of initiative and assuming them as permanent wards. As one civil servant noted pointedly, the new Re-establishment Order was not to "degenerate into a dole or relief measure"; it was "not the intention of the Government to subsidize idleness."¹⁹⁰ This challenge was similar to that facing the state in its administration of other new welfare-state measures such as unemployment insurance. Although American scholar Theda Skocpol has questioned the appropriateness of grouping veterans' allowances -- allocated to a specific group of 'morally worthy' people, regardless of socio-economic need -- with social welfare measures, the benefits paid to Second World War veterans ought to be seen as part of Canada's emerging welfare state.¹⁹¹ They were implemented at a particular moment in time, when Keynesian economic policies had considerable appeal in Ottawa, when federal coffers were full, and when the memory of the Great Depression was acute. Like family allowances, established in 1944, they were intended to maintain purchasing power in what was expected to be a difficult period of

Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP), 1998.

¹⁸⁹ England, Discharged, 201-202.

¹⁹⁰ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 184, File: Rehabilitation - Confidential Letters, Vol. 1. Confidential Letter No. 11, 24 Jan. 1942. Also NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 12, File: Local Committees - General Correspondence, Vol. I. Article [no author, n.d. but probably December 1944], 4.

¹⁹¹ Theda Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1992), 151.

economic transition and reconstruction.¹⁹² And yet they drew on older visions of citizenship, in that (like servicemen's assigned pay and dependents' allowances) it was necessary to prove loyalty to Canada through military service in order to receive them.

Veterans themselves clearly felt entitled to government benefits. This stemmed from their sense of their contribution to military victory, but also from their memory of post-World War I benefits and their knowledge of what other countries were doing for veterans. The Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique noted relatively early in the war that while soldiers cherished their independence and did not want to be the objects of private charity, they were counting on help from the government in their postwar re-establishment. Indeed, the JOC argued, soldiers were sceptical of political leaders' promises and needed to be convinced of the government's sincerity. In 1945, one Montréal social and political reformer claimed that Canadian soldiers overseas were voting Liberal in the federal election because of their "extreme approval" of the "plans being made for their re-establishment in civilian life." And in 1946, a Jewish family agency observed that veterans were accepting government grants without any sense of humiliation because they "felt that they paid for this assistance by risking their lives."¹⁹³

Such was veterans' sense of entitlement to government benefits that they (and their advocates) were not in the least hesitant to complain when they found the amounts

¹⁹² Family allowances and purchasing power are discussed in NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 58, File 490. Nora Lea to Col. H.E. Pense, 20 March 1945; Nora Lea to Col. H.E. Pense, 13 February 1946.

¹⁹³ ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 216, File: Soldats (Service). Untitled memorandum [n.d. but 1941-42]; NA, Renée Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1, "Federal election" [1945], 6; NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Staff Meetings, Sept. 1945 -

paid to be insufficient. In 1943, Montréal's Veterans' Welfare Officer noted that soldiers' discharge pay was not enough to carry them through until they had secured a job and received their first paycheque. As a consequence, veterans were resorting to the Poppy Day Fund for temporary help -- a practice, the DVA worried, that would initiate the "habit of receiving assistance" in veterans' families.¹⁹⁴ The Montreal Soldiers' Wives League expressed in February 1944 the "widespread feeling" that the \$65 clothing allowance "was not sufficient for men discharged in winter time."¹⁹⁵ Student-veterans from the Université de Montréal and McGill demanded an increase in their monthly allowances in 1946 and 1947. The government's establishment of a supplementary grants system in 1947 spoke to the real need of some veterans; the high cost-of-living of the immediate postwar years spurred an increase in pension rates for veterans and soldiers' widows by the end of 1947.¹⁹⁶ The Local Council of Women commended the Departments of National Defence and Veterans' Affairs in 1948 for establishing a benevolent fund of \$9 million for "needy veterans in receipt of pensions."¹⁹⁷

That some veterans were not able to make ends meet on government benefits or in an undeniably improved labour market serves as a useful check on the notion of

Jan. 1947. Minutes of Joint Meeting, Family Welfare Department and Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 30 January 1946.

¹⁹⁴ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A, Monthly Report, Montreal, 3 May 1943.

¹⁹⁵ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 1, File 91. Association Meeting, 11 February 1944.

¹⁹⁶ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 3, File 1A. Minutes, 21 May 1947; *La Presse*: 3 janvier 1947, 6; 20 décembre 1947, 47. One of the JOC's topics for discussion in 1945 was veterans who were 'rehabilitated' but irregularly employed. ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 170, File: Divers (Amour-Guerre-Chômage). Forum Populaire: "Guerre ou Chômage."

¹⁹⁷ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 3: File 1A. Minutes, 19 Feb. 1947; File 1B. Minutes, 21 Jan. 1948.

immediate and widespread postwar prosperity. Veterans who found that discharge benefits, 'veteran preference' policies, and a general consensus that returned soldiers deserved a break were not enough to ensure their postwar well-being often turned to Montréal's private family and welfare agencies. Many perceived help from private agencies, unlike government benefits, to be charity.¹⁹⁸ Memories of piecemeal relief and means tests during the Depression explain some of the distaste felt by veterans for this private assistance. Nonetheless, in a province where the state was just beginning to extend its tentacles into matters of social welfare, and where federal welfare-state measures such as family allowances were often administered by local, private, denominational agencies, such agencies were a logical source of assistance in times of need.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs appears to have fully anticipated that its assistance would be supplemented by private agencies. It routinely referred veterans to private bodies when their situation required extra care, funds, or time.¹⁹⁹ Thus agencies and voluntary organizations such as the Family Welfare Department of the Baron de Hirsch Institute, the Jewish Vocational Service, organizations affiliated with the Conseil des Oeuvres, Montréal's Citizens' Rehabilitation Committee, and the welfare committees

¹⁹⁸ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 5, File 24. Montreal War Services Co-Ordinating Council - Welfare Committee. Minutes, 8 Feb. 1946; NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 197, File: Rehabilitation, Statistics: Women's Division. Proceedings: Training Conferences on Women's Rehabilitation, 83.

¹⁹⁹ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 5, File 24. Montreal War Services Co-Ordinating Council - Welfare Committee. Minutes, 8 Feb. 1946; ANQM, SVP, P 61, Vol. 2, File 7. Réunion du Conseil Central, 30 sept. 1946; NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 234, File 234-16. George F. Davidson to Miss Muriel Tucker, 18 December 1942; NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 234, File 234-24. André-M. Guillemette, o.p., to Nora Lea, 24 juillet 1945.

of regimental auxiliaries habitually undertook to help veterans in need of advice or material assistance.²⁰⁰ Private bodies sometimes threw veterans back to the state, as when Montréal's Local Council of Women referred "begging letters" from veterans to the DVA or when the Société St-Vincent-de-Paul refused aid to a veteran's family living in Wartime Housing, arguing that the family was the responsibility of the (federal) government.²⁰¹ Conversely, private agencies, such as those affiliated with Montréal's Conseil des Oeuvres, occasionally resented the federal government's interference in their veteran-clients' cases.²⁰²

Family Allowances, established in 1944, targeted a greater number of citizens. Universal in nature, allocated regardless of income or of 'moral worth,' and paid in cash, not in kind, Family Allowances assumed that parents possessed a legitimate entitlement to a regular, reliable supplement to their wages.²⁰³ As we shall see in Chapter 3, Catholic workers' organizations in Québec had lobbied for Family Allowances for many years on

²⁰⁰ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 10: File: Minutes of Meetings of Case Committee, Family Welfare Department, 1944-45. Minutes, 28 Oct. 1944; File: Minutes of Meetings of Case Committee, Family Welfare Department, 1946-47. Minutes, 20 March 1946; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 5, File 7. 53rd Year Book and Annual Report 1946-47. Report of the Committee for the Welfare of Members of National Defense Services and their Dependents; NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 12, File: General Correspondence Re: Citizens' Committees, 'A' District - Montreal. Letter from H.M. Hague, 25 July 1947; MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 17, File 67. Jacob Tuckman, "Vocational Guidance -- A Community Responsibility," 7 April 1949.

²⁰¹ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 3, File 1A. Minutes of Meeting of Sub-Executive Committee, 12 Feb. 1947; ANQM, SVP, P 61, Vol. 2, File 7. Réunion du Conseil Central, 26 mai 1947.

²⁰² NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 234, File 234-24. André-M. Guillemette, o.p. to Nora Lea, 24 juillet 1945.

²⁰³ For the most thorough treatment of Canadian family allowances to-date, see Marshall, Aux origines sociales; also Brigitte Kitchen, "The Introduction of Family Allowances in Canada," in Moscovitch and Albert, The 'Benevolent' State.

the grounds that men's salaries were inadequate to support large families.²⁰⁴ Once secured, women's groups campaigned to have Family Allowance cheques sent to mothers in Québec, as they were in every other province.²⁰⁵ The fact that this campaign was successful was an acknowledgement of women's role in managing family budgets. Yet their financial authority was not uncontested. La Presse's Colette received at least two letters from wives whose husbands were trying to expropriate their Family Allowance cheques, one husband arguing that the cheque was rightfully his since deductions were made from his salary for income taxes and social programmes. These women's letters show clearly that they regarded the Family Allowance cheques as their own money, to be spent for the good of the family.²⁰⁶ Women used their Family Allowances for milk for babies and children, extra and better food, clothing, children's pocket money, laundry bills, household equipment, medical care, and dental care.²⁰⁷ Families and social welfare agencies reported that the benefits of the Family Allowance programme were healthier and better-clothed children, increased school attendance, and fewer children being taken into institutional or foster care. Social workers and civil servants also anticipated that the

²⁰⁴ ANQM, JOC, P104, C. 181, File: Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse (Congrès - Janvier 1945). Mémoire de la JOC. Jeunesse vs. après-guerre. "Jeunesse et famille." And see Marshall, Aux origines sociales; Vaillancourt, L'Évolution des politiques sociales.

²⁰⁵ Thérèse F. Casgrain, A Woman in a Man's World, trans. Joyce Marshall (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972), Ch. 10: Lévesque, "Les Québécoises," 183.

²⁰⁶ La Presse: 2 novembre 1946, 34; 26 octobre 1948, 15.

²⁰⁷ La Presse, 14 février 1949, Courrier de Colette, 18; NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86: Vol. 10, File: Minutes of Meetings of Case Committee, FWD, 1944-45. Follow-Up re: L. family, 30 October 1945; Vol. 10, File: Minutes of Meetings of Case Committee, FWD, 1946-47. Follow Up Case No. 12, 8 May 1946; Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Staff Meetings, Family Welfare and Child Welfare Depts, July-December 1947. Minutes of

greater financial security provided by Allowances would mean less physical neglect of children and fewer marital difficulties.²⁰⁸

Although most observers claimed that Family Allowances had raised the standard of living of ordinary Montréal families, others argued that they had simply allowed it to keep pace with the rising cost-of-living in the immediate postwar period.²⁰⁹ There is no doubt that state welfare payments and private agency allowances often fell considerably short of the increased cost-of-living in the late 1940s. The rates established by Québec's *Loi de l'Assistance Publique* and the provincial Needy Mothers' Allowances were notoriously inadequate.²¹⁰ Families, then, made do by combining sources of state assistance. The universal nature of the Family Allowance programme added stability to the lives of those who had been dependent on social welfare provisions with strict eligibility requirements. Longstanding recipients of Needy Mothers' Allowances, for

Staff Meeting held 30 July 1947. On the uses to which Québec families put their Family Allowances, see also Marshall, *Aux origines sociales*, Chapters 4 and 5.

²⁰⁸ MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 14, File 1001. Chairman's Remarks, 1946; NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 58, File 490. "Family Allowances - from the National Point of View" by Mae Fleming. Paper presented at 10th Biennial Meeting, Canadian Conference on Social Work, 25-28 June 1946; Statement by Canadian Welfare Council, Ottawa, 16 February [1949?]; Nora Lea to Nora J. Rowe, 5 December 1944.

²⁰⁹ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 5, File 7. 53rd Year Book and Annual Report 1946-47. Report of Child Welfare Committee 1946-47; UM, ACC: P16/H3/18/24. Le Conseil des Oeuvres, Commission diocésaine des oeuvres de charité et de service social de Montréal, Rapport Annuel 1946-47; P16/R64, "Vers l'Edification de la famille de demain," Rapport des premières journées d'étude de la Commission française du Conseil canadien du Bien-être social. Hôpital de la Miséricorde, Montréal, 9-10 mars 1951: Mme Kaspar Fraser, présidente générale du Conseil canadien du Bien-être Social, "La famille canadienne en 1951."

²¹⁰ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 10, File: Minutes of Meeting of Case Committee, FWD, 1947. Memo to Mr. Weiss, Montréal, 22 October 1947; UM, ACC, P16/H3/18/24. Le Conseil des Oeuvres, Commission diocésaine des oeuvres de charité et de service social de Montréal, Rapport Annuel 1946-47.

instance, now added Family Allowances to the household budget.²¹¹ Families newly able to draw unemployment insurance could also count on their family allowance cheques each month. But in this era of a still-nascent welfare state, private assistance persisted. Families supplemented inadequate government cheques with aid from private, usually denominational agencies. As the Montreal Council of Social Agencies noted in 1949, a mother could not raise three children in Montréal on the \$37 per month she received from Needy Mothers' Assistance. Even when this was supplemented by Family Allowances to \$54 per month, the Council argued, she could not "keep herself and three children properly fed, clothed and healthy."²¹² Social workers, religious organizations, and government bureaucrats tried to figure out what to do with families who drew on more than one private agency, more than one government department, or both private and public assistance, in this era of considerable flux in Québec social welfare.²¹³ The Société Saint-Vincent-de-Paul discovered one family, for example, that was drawing on

²¹¹ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 10, File: Minutes of Meetings of Case Committee, FWD, 1944-45. Minutes, 31 October 1945. In 1948, more than 450,000 Québec families received Family Allowances, whereas only 12,000 families benefited from the provincial Needy Mothers' Assistance. NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 58, File 490. Statement by Canadian Welfare Council, Ottawa, 16 February [1949?].

²¹² MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 14, File 1002. Annual Report of MCSA, 1949. Report of the Board of Governors for 1949. Also C. 19, File 54. "Why the Family Welfare Association Needs So Much Money" [September 1942]. On state expectations that Family Allowances would be supplemented with private aid in cases of dire need, see Marshall, *Aux origines sociales*, Ch. 5.

²¹³ ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 2, File 6. Réunion du Conseil Central de la Société St-Vincent-de-Paul de Montréal, 28 février 1944; Réunion du Conseil Central, 27 novembre 1944; Vol. 2, File 7. Réunion du Conseil Central, 29 mars 1948; Vol. 5, File 32. Minutes, Conférence Notre-Dame, 5 juin 1944; Minutes, Conférence Notre-Dame, 2 octobre 1944; MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 14, File 1002. Montreal Council of Social Agencies, Annual Report 1949, Health Section; Montreal Council of Social Agencies, Annual Report 1950, Report of the President

three different sources of private aid in February 1946: the Société Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, the Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles, and the Family Welfare Association.²¹⁴ Social welfare organizations tried to figure out how to incorporate Family Allowances into agency and family budgets, and how to collect allowances for children under their care.²¹⁵ A survey of fourteen private family agencies across the country in 1946 found that most felt that "Public agencies should have the responsibility to do case work with families who were misusing the funds, rather than the private agencies."²¹⁶ At the same time, private agencies discovered that the development of public welfare measures such as family allowances made it more difficult for them to raise money through community fund-raising drives.²¹⁷ The St-Vincent-de-Paul defended itself from accusations that it was old-fashioned or obsolete by pointing to its new importance for recipients of the new public welfare measures; the Société was frequently asked to help its parishioners register for the new benefits, by filling out forms

²¹⁴ ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 2, File 7. Réunion du Conseil Central, 25 février 1946; also Réunion du Conseil Central, 31 octobre 1949.

²¹⁵ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86: Vol. 7, File: Minutes of Meetings of Board of Directors, Family Welfare Department (Baron de Hirsch Institute), 25 August 1947 – 5 November 1952. Memorandum to Members of the Board of Directors, 20 August 1947; Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Staff Meetings, Sept. 1945 – Jan. 1947. Minutes of Staff Meeting, 26 August 1947. NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10: Vol. 236, File 236-2. Nora Lea to Chas. H. Young, 15 May 1945; Vol. 238, File 238-1. La Société d'Adoption et de Protection de l'Enfance, Montréal. Field visit [by Marie Hamel], 24 August 1946. MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 14, File 1002. Montreal Council of Social Agencies, Report of the Board of Governors for the Year 1947. ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 2, File 7. Réunion du Conseil Central de la Société St-Vincent-de-Paul, 29 octobre 1945.

²¹⁶ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Staff Meetings, Sept. 1945 – Jan. 1947. Minutes of Staff Meeting, 12 March 1947.

²¹⁷ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 238, File 238-9. Charles H. Young to Nora Lea, 6 October 1945; Welfare Federation Campaign Post-Mortem in Outline, 10 October 1945;

and notarizing documents.²¹⁸ The point here is that the new, much-heralded public welfare measures did not sweep 'the private' away before them. There were points of resistance to the expanding public in the 1940s, and the private and the public continued to coexist.

The provision of child-care in postwar Montréal serves as a final illustration of the mixed private-public economy of family welfare in the late 1940s. The lack of comprehensive child care services in the postwar city, in fact, speaks to the kind of family desired by most wartime and postwar commentators: one with 'la mère au foyer.' Wartime critics were given to loud laments that negligent mothers (particularly the wives of servicemen) were running off to work in factories, abandoning their children to the hazards of the street and the dubious hands of barely older siblings. Such lax supervision, they claimed, was resulting in skyrocketing juvenile delinquency rates.²¹⁹ Concerns that children be better supervised in a peacetime nation underlay the occasional call for the continuation of government-run Wartime Day Nurseries after the end of hostilities. Six Dominion-Provincial Wartime Day Nurseries had been established in Montréal. Located on Coursol, Willibrord, Grand Trunk, Jeanne Mance, Delisle, and Ontario East streets, the nurseries targeted mothers employed in essential war industries. In August 1943, enrolments ranged from 25 children at the Jeanne-Mance daycare to 62

Welfare Federation of Montreal, Report on 1945-46 campaign, September 24th to October 2nd.

²¹⁸ ANQM, SVP, P61, Vol. 3, File 16. Historique de la Société Saint-Vincent-de-Paul de Montréal depuis sa fondation en mars 1848 jusqu'à nos jours [1948?].

²¹⁹ UM, ACC, P16/R219. R.P. Valère Massicotte, O.F.M., "La Délinquance juvénile et la guerre" (Montréal: L'Oeuvre des Tracts, 1944); NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: DAB 4-5, Vol. 4. Margaret H. Spaulding to R.O.G. Bennett, 21 November 1942.

children at the daycare on Willibrord; the range of enrolments was roughly the same a year-and-a-half later.²²⁰ Observers agreed that the Wartime Day Nursery project enjoyed less success in Montréal than in Ontario. There were far fewer daycare spaces in Québec than in Ontario (185 compared with 1,085 in July 1945), and yet the Ontario spaces were more rapidly and easily filled.²²¹ Administrators argued that French-Canadian parents were resistant to the idea of placing their children in the government-run daycares because of unfamiliarity with daycares generally, because of the bad press given to Montréal's privately run nurseries, and because of a wariness of state involvement in child-care. The fact that this state involvement was federal no doubt exacerbated this wariness. French-Canadian parents tended to regard the state-run daycares, one observer noted, as the "government nurser[ies]" and not "our nurser[ies]."²²² This despite the fact that Day Nursery No. 5, located on Delisle Street, was staffed by nuns: a blend of state and private administration familiar to Montréal parents in the 1940s.²²³ Enrolment was lowest at Day Nursery No. 6, in the largely francophone east-end district of Maisonneuve

²²⁰ NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. Quebec Dominion-Provincial Wartime Day Nurseries - Monthly Report. Month of August 1943; Quebec Dominion-Provincial Wartime Day Nurseries - Monthly Report. Month of February 1945.

²²¹ NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27: Vol. 609, File: 6-52-1, Vol. 2. Memorandum to Miss Norris from Margaret Grier, Ottawa, 7 July 1945; Vol. 610, File 6-52-2, Vol. 1. Memorandum to Mr. A. MacNamara from Mrs. Rex Eaton re Progress of Day Nursery Plan, 29 January 1943; Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-1. Florence F. Martel to Margaret Grier, 18 December 1943.

²²² NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. Memorandum to Margaret Grier, NSS, Ottawa, from Renée Morin, NSS, Montreal, re Meeting at the Maisonneuve Day Nursery, 23 April 1944; Miriam Chapin to Mrs. Rex Eaton, 18 February 1943; Florence Martel to Margaret Grier, 14 January 1944.

²²³ NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. A. Lapierre to Margaret Grier, 10 January 1945.

and near the Cherrier munitions plant. This nursery closed ten months earlier than the other five, on 31 December 1944, because of consistently poor attendance.²²⁴ It was anticipated that the nursery in Montréal's Hertzl Institute, catering largely to Jewish industrial workers, would be more successful.²²⁵ Those parents who did try out the nurseries seemed pleased with them.²²⁶ Some requested that they be allowed to leave their children there on Saturdays as well as on weekdays.²²⁷ Many of the children enrolled in the nurseries had mothers who were not working in the essential war industries for which the daycares had been designed, demonstrating a broader need.²²⁸

The closing of the government day nurseries in October 1945 was met with dismay by the minority of parents who had used them. Montréal mothers and their supporters dispatched petitions to various levels of government requesting that the nurseries remain open. They argued that the nurseries had provided children with reliable care and a good education, had improved their health, and had saved them from the perils of juvenile delinquency. Without the nurseries, mothers claimed, they would have had to leave their children in other institutions (for instance, orphanages) or on the street. Many

²²⁴ NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 2. Memorandum to Arthur MacNamara from Margaret Grier re Wartime Day Nurseries - Montreal, 8 November 1945; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 5, File 6. 51st Year Book and Annual Report 1944-45. Report of Child Welfare Committee.

²²⁵ NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 610, File 6-52-2, Vol. 1. Memorandum to Mr. A. MacNamara, Deputy Minister of Labour, from Mrs. Rex Eaton, re: Establishment of Day Nursery in Montreal, 1 March 1943.

²²⁶ NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. Memorandum to Margaret Grier, NSS, Ottawa, from Renée Morin, NSS, Montreal, re Meeting at the Maisonneuve Day Nursery, 23 April 1944.

²²⁷ NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. Margaret Huskins to Dr. Lalonde, 7 September 1944.

mothers, the petitions noted, would have to continue working in the postwar period due to the loss of their husbands, due to their husbands' inadequate wages, or due to the high cost-of-living. Keeping the daycares open, the mothers pleaded, "would be a great help in enabling us to get our home life back to a stable basis."²²⁹ Committees were formed to lobby for the re-opening of government daycares, and local organizations recommended their establishment "as a permanent peace measure."²³⁰

Such calls, however, were relatively isolated. This was because of the common assumption that mothers would return home when the war ended, and it was because many spokespersons for Québec continued to uphold the 'private' against a federal 'public.'²³¹ Provincial submissions to the Canadian Youth Commission in 1945 claimed that French-Canadian mothers did not like daycares, had not used them during the war, and would certainly not use them in peacetime, when they returned to their homes.²³² Wartime commentators remarked that French-Canadian mothers felt more comfortable

²²⁸ NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. Memorandum to Mr. A. MacNamara from Mrs. Rex Eaton, re Wartime Day Nurseries - Montréal, 4 July 1944.

²²⁹ NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27: Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. Mothers of Day Nursery No. 1, Montréal, to Dept of Day Nurseries, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 20 April 1945; Vol. 3538, File 3-26-45. Requête auprès du Gouvernement fédéral en faveur des garderies, octobre 1945.

²³⁰ NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27: Vol. 3538, File 3-26-45. James P. Anglin to Hon. Humphrey Mitchell, 12 October 1945; Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. Florence F. Martel to Margaret Grier, 30 December 1943; *La Presse*, 26 octobre 1945, 4; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 5, File 6. 51st Year Book and Annual Report 1944-45. Report of Child Welfare Committee. For an analysis of the Dominion-Provincial Wartime Day Nursery scheme, see Pierson, 'They're Still Women', Ch. 1.

²³¹ Mason Wade, *The French-Canadian Outlook. A Brief Account of the Unknown North Americans* (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), 165.

²³² UM, ACC, P16/O4/52, Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, Comité provincial du Québec, Mémoire sur la famille. Deuxième partie, Chapitre 2, "La santé dans la famille."

leaving children with relatives or neighbours than with strangers.²³³ In the wake of the war, Montréal mothers continued to turn to kin and community for childcare: complaints that working parents frequently left their children "to provide for themselves" also persisted in the postwar period.²³⁴ The choice of family and friends as providers of childcare was due partly to tradition and preference, but was no doubt also shaped by a lack of reliable and affordable alternatives in the postwar period.²³⁵

Yet even after the 1945 closure of the government-administered wartime day nurseries, there existed in Montréal a network of private day nurseries run by social agencies, religious communities, and stay-at-home mothers in search of extra income.²³⁶ The Montreal Day Nursery, which provided for both preschool and school-age children, served 158 families in 1945 and 162 families the following year. Parents used the nursery because both husband and wife were working outside the home; because the

²³³ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 5, File 24. MSWL to Mr. E.I. Smit, March 1942; NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. Florence Martel to Margaret Grier, 14 January 1944. But see also Marion V. Royce, The Effect of the War on the Life of Women: A Study (Geneva; Washington: World's YWCA, 1945), 47: Royce comments that this mistrust of wartime day nurseries was shared by women in various countries.

²³⁴ NA, Summerhill Homes, MG 28 I 388, Vol. 6, File 6-12. Bernard Coghlin to Mrs. A.T. Henderson, 5 November 1945.

²³⁵ Montréal women's complaints about the lack of reliable babysitters can be found in ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 11, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 20; Vol. 10, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 11; ANQM, SPM, P116, Boite 60-0-002-13-06-001B-01, File: 1949: Semaine des fiancés. Responses to SPM questionnaire, December 1948; La Presse, 6 avril 1948, 15.

²³⁶ NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. Memorandum to Margaret Grier, Director, Wartime Day Nurseries, Ottawa, from Florence F. Martel, NSS, Montréal, re: Visit to two Day Nurseries, 12 July 1943. Some of these were longstanding: see Micheline Dumont, "Des garderies au 19e siècle: les salles d'asile des Soeurs Grises de Montréal," in Nadia Fahmy-Eid et Micheline Dumont, Maîtresses de

father was absent from the home or unemployed; because a parent was ill; or because housing was inadequate.²³⁷ Various religious orders also administered nurseries for pre-school and young school-age children. The Garderie Ste-Anne, in Griffintown, and the Garderie St-Enfant-Jésus, for instance, took in Catholic children (French-Canadian and Irish-Canadian) on a daily basis, while the Asile pour jeunes enfants, a private kindergarten, occasionally took in pre-school-age children whose parents were seeking day-care. Fees ranged from 15¢ a day to 50¢ per week per child; the Garderie St-Enfant-Jésus frequently accepted children for free. Some daycares, such as the Garderie Ste-Anne, took no more than 35 children at a time; the Asile pour jeunes enfants, in contrast, took up to 200 children at once. Children were provided with lunch, sometimes with snacks, and occasionally with training in cleanliness and proper behaviour. Their mothers tended to work in factories, as charwomen, or as office workers, or were women at home who were pregnant or overworked and in need of a break from their children.²³⁸ Finally, there were nurseries run in the homes of private individuals, ranging from women who looked after neighbours' children for pay to those who took in the sons and daughters of strangers. The fact that such private, informal nurseries flourished in the city's crowded neighbourhoods indicates clearly that they served the needs of many

maison, maîtresses d'école. Femmes, familles et éducation dans l'histoire du Québec (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1983).

²³⁷ MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 17, File 84. "The Montreal Day Nursery: A Study of Services and Facilities," September 1947.

²³⁸ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 236, File 236-9. Asile pour jeunes enfants, 1471 rue Fullum, Entrevue avec Soeur Berthe-Cécile, directrice, 5 novembre 1943; Garderie Ste-Anne, Entrevue avec Sister Magdeline, 4 novembre 1943; Garderie St-Enfant-Jésus, 28 octobre 1943.

Montréal parents. Yet they were also subject to bad press, accused of not providing children with a safe, clean, or healthy environment.²³⁹

Parents used a variety of other institutions as babysitting services: after-school programmes, summer camps, foster homes, and even longer-term institutions such as crèches and orphanages. After-school programmes gained popularity during the war, as more mothers took on paid work. In 1942, the Commission des Écoles Catholiques de Montréal resolved to provide space in schools for noon meals and after-school care for 'latch-key' children. Two years later, the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association established an After-School Programme in Rosemount for "the children of mothers working in war industries." The Parks and Playgrounds Association described the Programme as "a very successful experiment": fifty children aged 5-13 registered, and each session saw an average of 30 children in attendance.²⁴⁰ During the summer, camps took on the functions of schools and daycares, providing working parents with a supervised environment in which to leave their children. The Montreal Council of Social Agencies noted in 1944 that, "with the father in the Forces or the mother in industry, camps have had to assume some of the functions of a summer nursery."²⁴¹ This function

²³⁹ *La Presse*, 5 novembre 1945, "La garderie était dans un état de malpropreté," 3.

²⁴⁰ NA, Department of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. Florence F. Martel to Mrs. Rex Eaton, 25 September 1942; MU, MPAP, MG 2079, C. 5, File 136. Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Assn Incorporated, Report of Executive Director for the Year 1944.

²⁴¹ MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 9, File 556. Camp Survey, Publication XIX, 1944.

may well have continued after the war's end, and mothers appeared appreciative of the camps' services.²⁴²

Sometimes parents chose longer-term options than after-school programmes and summer camps. Convents, for example, boarded Catholic children.²⁴³ Some working mothers in Montréal's Jewish community resorted to foster-care by the day or for longer periods of time.²⁴⁴ Classified advertisements in La Presse reveal a trade in children, as parents sought placements "en pension" for their sons and daughters, while other families expressed their willingness to provide children with bed and board.²⁴⁵ The city's Children's Aid Society reported in 1951 the occasional temporary placement of children due to their mothers' need to take on paid employment.²⁴⁶ And occasionally, unmarried mothers entrusted their infants to religious crèches, paying a monthly fee and then taking them back once they were too old to remain in the crèche.²⁴⁷ Summerhill House.

²⁴² A woman whose 12-year-old daughter had attended Summerhill House's Camp Carowanis, for instance, telephoned the House in 1949 to express her thanks and noted that her daughter had gained six pounds at camp. NA, Summerhill Homes, MG 28 I 388. Vol. 14, File 14-27. Report on Camp Carowanis, 1949.

²⁴³ NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. Miriam Chapin to L. Austin Wright, 9 April 1942.

²⁴⁴ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 12, File: Minutes of Meetings, Case and Adoption Committee, Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 1944-48. Minutes, 11 November 1946.

²⁴⁵ See, e.g., La Presse, 7 mars 1944, 19.

²⁴⁶ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 234, File 234-16. Fifth Annual Meeting of the Children's Aid Society of Montreal. Report of the Executive Director, 7 March 1951.

²⁴⁷ NA, Dept of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1. "La Crèche d'Youville. Côte de Liesse, Direction des Soeurs Grises," Rapport soumis par Renée Morin, Service Sélectif National.

meanwhile, sometimes took in non-Catholic girls whose mothers needed to work for pay and whose fathers were unavailable or unable to look after their daughters.²⁴⁸

Parents turned to outside institutions to assist them in controlling, as well as caring for, their children. Social agencies, truant officers, and juvenile courts were called upon to discipline wayward sons and delinquent daughters. One Jewish mother whose husband had deserted her seven years earlier habitually took her 15-year-old son to the Family Welfare Department "whenever his behaviour was especially difficult, in order that the [social] worker should punish him."²⁴⁹ Both Protestant and Jewish parents took their children to the Juvenile Court "for a reprimand." One mother, for instance, hauled her son before the Court because he "had been a behaviour problem at home and at school for some time - he was disrespectful to all members of the family, and was consistently untruthful. He was also beginning to indulge in petty thievery."²⁵⁰ Sometimes, longer-term solutions were sought. One woman, married to a man with a drinking problem, requested that her 13-year-old son be placed in a foster home in 1947, as she was "unable to discipline him."²⁵¹ The residents of Summerhill House included, in

²⁴⁸ NA, Summerhill Homes, MG 28 I 388, Vol. 15, File 15-2. Case Committee Meeting, 25 February 1948; Case Committee Meeting, 27 April 1949.

²⁴⁹ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Case Conferences, FWD and JCWB, 1944-46. Social History Re: K. family, 22 February 1946.

²⁵⁰ MU, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 47, File 438. Table No. 1: Number of Official Complaints Made; Table No. 2: Non-Catholic Probation Officer's Statistical Report; NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 12, File: Minutes of Meetings, Case and Adoption Committee, JCWB, 1944-48. Minutes, 25 April 1944. See also UM, ACC, P16/R219, "Juvenile Delinquents" (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1949), which claims that Canada-wide, "Some parents turn to the court for assistance in handling the difficulties they are having with their children," 14-15.

²⁵¹ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Case Conferences, FWD and JCWB, 1944-46. Social Summary for Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 7 April 1947.

1948, a girl whose father had died and whose mother was "not able to handle her," and in 1950, an "incorrigible" 15-year-old girl whose mother had died and whose father "could not manage her" and a 14-year-old girl whose mother was "unequal to the task of disciplining her."²⁵² To be sure, such judgments of parents' incapability were often made by social agencies rather than by parents themselves. But in a period when public bodies appeared to be increasingly intervening in 'private' matters, it is worth considering the ways in which families continued to seek out the intervention of social agencies (both private and public), as well as those moments when families did not appear particularly concerned that such matters remain private.

What we see in this dissertation, then, is a large and complex industrialized city, with a complicated array of provisions for families in need. Private provisions varied according to religion (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish) and language (French-Catholic, English-Catholic), and were distributed by both religious and lay workers. Public welfare was supplied, to varying degrees, by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments. Prior to the Second World War, the provincial government had, like the governments of most other Canadian provinces, begun to provide means-tested mothers' allowances and old-age pensions. Québec began participating in the federal-provincial pension scheme, however, a decade after the other provinces: its Needy Mothers' Allowances were established fifteen to twenty years later than elsewhere in Canada. On the surface, the QPCA arrangement appeared unique to Québec. It helped to alleviate need while

²⁵² NA, Summerhill Homes, MG 28 I 388: Vol. 15, File 15-2. November Case Committee Meeting, 24 November 1948; Vol. 14, File 14-27. Summerhill House, Superintendent's Report for the Year 1950.

respecting the longstanding institutional presence of the Catholic Church in the province (and taking advantage of its resources -- in particular, its real estate and the unpaid labour of female members of religious communities). Yet recent studies emphasize the mixed public-private economies of the English-speaking provinces, calling into question the distinctiveness of the QPCA.²⁵³ Moreover, despite an undeniable lag in delivery of state welfare programmes, the provincial government had begun to incur significant welfare costs by the beginning of World War II.²⁵⁴

Québec's resistance to an expanding welfare state appeared most rigid after the Second World War. Maurice Duplessis and his Union Nationale not only opposed federal intervention in matters properly deemed provincial, but argued for the importance of the state not intervening in 'private' matters, on ideological grounds.²⁵⁵ This created an administrative vacuum that allowed Ottawa to move in with its postwar, nation-building social programmes. Bernard Vigod and Lucia Ferretti are right, then, to suggest that the *grande noirceur* was in some ways an aberration – somewhat of a departure from

²⁵³ Valverde, "Mixed Social Economy"; Little, "Blurring of Boundaries"; Marks, "Indigent Committees."

²⁵⁴ Vigod, "History According to the Boucher Report"; Vigod, "Ideology and Institutions in Quebec"; Dickinson and Young, *A Short History of Québec*, x. Father Gerald Berry, former director of Montréal's Catholic Welfare Bureau, noted in 1948 that religious communities across the country were saving governments large sums of money through their charitable and social service work. *La Presse*, 13 mai 1948, "Nos lois sociales," 3.

²⁵⁵ Duplessis calls for scrupulous adherence to the division of powers laid out in the BNA Act in YUA, Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001, Reel 7. Summary of Duplessis's speech to federal-provincial conference in Québec City [September 1950?], p. 4. In the same speech, Duplessis claimed that in the realm of social security, "Québec n'a de leçons à recevoir de personne. Notre législation sociale est avancée et avancée plus que partout ailleurs." Rather than providing any evidence for this claim, he was content to say that "Il serait trop long d'énumérer ici ce que nous avons fait. Nous sommes à la page et j'éprouve beaucoup de fierté à le déclarer."

the earlier twentieth-century history of Québec – rather than simply the culmination of a long record of what Michel Brunet called, in 1953, “anti-étatisme.”²⁵⁶ What we see here is not “anti-étatisme,” but a continued mixed private-public economy. We see tensions between Ottawa and Québec City over what the particular mix will be, and we see them vying to claim credit for ensuring the well-being of their citizens. The similar resistance to federal intrusions displayed by provincial politicians such as Ontario Premier George Drew in this period suggests, moreover, that Québec was not an isolated case.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ Vigod, “History According to the Boucher Report”; Lucia Ferretti, Brève histoire de l’Église catholique au Québec (Montréal: Boréal, 1999), 144. On Brunet, see Vigod, “Ideology and Institutions in Quebec.” 168.

²⁵⁷ YUA, Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001, Reel 1. Note de l’hon. Geo. Drew à Hon. Duplessis à une conférence fédérale-provinciale, à Ottawa, 1945; Finkel, “Paradise Postponed.”

Chapter 2 The Romance of Reunion: War, Demobilization, Family, and Citizenship

The narratives of homecoming told in Canada during the last years of war and the first few years of peace included many of the elements of a literary romance. Like a romance, these war stories had young, valiant heroes and loyal, virtuous heroines who had suffered through a period of trial and tribulation. As in a romance, these heroes and heroines had vanquished evil and been vindicated by victory. These narratives of reunion, like romances, ended with the welcoming embrace between the returning hero and the girl he'd left behind. And, like romances, these stories had great popular appeal. 'Integrating' myths, aimed at all classes and cultures, they were told in fiction and film, in song, in advertisements, and in magazine articles. They were also told in photographs: a couple embracing at a train station, or children on the knee of a long-departed father in uniform.¹

Historians have also told this tale. V-E Day and V-J Day meant the return of the armed forces. North America settled down into domesticity, the suburbs, and relative affluence. And, one is left to assume, everyone lived happily ever after. Although more

¹ For reunion photographs see *La Presse*, 30 avril 1945, 3; National Archives of Canada (NA), Montreal Soldiers' Wives League (MSWL), MG 28 I 311, Vol. 4, File 83. Clipping from *The Gazette*, 22 December 1943. On the romance in literature, see Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1976). Kate Darian-Smith has argued that Australian women interviewed decades after the Second World War described their wartime experiences using the structure and language of "conventional romantic narratives." "Remembering Romance: Memory, Gender and World War II," in Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake, eds., *Gender and War: Australians at War in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge

recent historical literature has challenged assumptions of postwar prosperity, suburban homogeneity, and contented nuclear families, and has begun to paint a more complex picture of 'the Fifties,'² historians of Canada have remained largely silent about the period of transition in family life that was the late 1940s.

The metaphor of reunion resonated even among those who did not themselves have loved ones overseas. Indeed, governments and communities, as well as individuals and families, participated in the romance with Canadian veterans. But the moment of reunion, while it may have been the ending to one story, was the beginning of another. Veterans found that returning home was often difficult, and that readjusting to civilian status and family life required considerable work. The sense of entitlement to a fair deal promoted by the Dominion government resonated with veterans' own feelings of sacrifice and the necessity of making up for lost time. Veterans were told that they were special kinds of citizens, deserving of special treatment. Upon their return, however, they discovered that not all members of their communities felt indebted to them. The warm reception extended by some civilians contrasted with the indifference and even hostility

UP, 1995), 117-129.

² Susan Prentice, "Workers, Mothers, Reds: Toronto's Postwar Daycare Fight," Studies in Political Economy 30 (Autumn 1989): 115-141; Franca Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Montréal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1992); Line Chamberland, "Remembering Lesbian Bars: Montréal 1955-1975," Journal of Homosexuality 25, 3 (1993): 231-269; Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960 (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1994). On postwar pressures for domesticity, conformity and "normality," see Doug Oram, Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation (Toronto: UTP, 1996); Veronica Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960," Canadian Historical Review 72 (December 1991): 471-504; Mona Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada (Toronto: UTP, 1999).

exhibited by others, particularly in Québec. Moreover, veterans' sense of entitlement was not always well received by their families. Parents, wives, and children had experienced their own wartime difficulties, and were not necessarily willing to subordinate their own interests to those of returning heroes. The gap between expectations and experience, aggravated by the fact that war had sometimes soured relationships, was harder to bear given the rhetorical force of the reunion narrative for soldiers and their families.

In this chapter, I look first at the ways in which wartime experiences affected relationships between enlisted men and their families. Physical separation, miscommunication, infidelity, poor health, inferior housing, the material difficulties caused or exacerbated by the absence of a male breadwinner, and dealings with private and public welfare providers all shaped family relationships in the 1940s. I then turn to the lessons that Montréal families took from their experiences of war, and to the ways in which they incorporated them into their expectations of the future and, in particular, of the state. Montréalers' conceptions of citizenship in the wake of the war drew on their negotiation of dependents' allowances, for instance, and were translated into expectations of what family allowances and veterans' benefits, among other measures, could do for them.

I. Veterans and their Families

Soldiers seldom left the armed forces unscarred. Suffering from wounds, illness, 'battle exhaustion,' or anxiety about the future, they looked, with their governments and

their communities, to the family as an agent of postwar healing. Women, as wives, girlfriends, or mothers, were to ensure the “mental reestablishment of soldiers.”³ The adjustment of war veterans to family life in the late 1940s can be viewed through four different sets of relationships: those with wives and girlfriends; those with war brides; those with sons and daughters; and those with parents.

The romance of reunion emerged from the heightened idealization of the heterosexual family during the war. Men posted overseas, single and married, had had plenty of time in which to romanticize ideas of marriage and parenthood. Veterans were returning to start their own homes, while girls and women were assumed to be eagerly anticipating weddings and children now that the boys were back. As one French-Canadian sergeant told his chaplain in September 1944, "j'ai bonne espoir que tout cela sera fini bientôt et que je pourrai enfin reprendre la vie tranquille que je menais avec ma chère épouse avant la guerre."⁴

Yet social service agencies, in Montréal and across the nation, discovered to their dismay that the soldiers' return produced "intimate and complex" domestic problems.⁵

³ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 3, File 64. Speech by Brock Chisholm, 13 November 1944, “Women's Responsibility for Mental Reestablishment of Soldiers”; Terry Copp and Bill McAndrew, Battle Exhaustion: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Canadian Army, 1939-1945 (Montréal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1990).

⁴ "I am hopeful that all this will be over soon and that I will finally be able to take up the calm life I led with my dear wife before the war." Archives Nationales du Québec à Montréal (ANQM), Mouvement des Travailleurs Chrétiens (MTC), P 257, Vol. 11. File: Cent Mariés – Couple 92. Sgt [Husband], 12 Cdn Amd Regt, Cdn Army Overseas, Italie, to Rév. Père Victor-M Villeneuve, Aumônier général de la J.O.C. et de la L.O.C., 11 septembre 1944. Also NA, Marion Creelman Savage papers, MG 30 C 92, Vol. 7, Consumers' News: June 1945, p. 7; November/December 1945, p. 2.

⁵ NA, Savage papers, MG 30 C 92, Vol. 3, File: Council of Women, Montreal Local,

Veterans suffering from "shattered nerves" found it difficult to readjust to family life.⁶ The fact that so many of these unions were "mariages éclairs" -- whirlwind weddings that had taken place immediately before enlistment, during wartime leaves, or in the first flush of homecoming -- was part of the problem. The usual strains of new relationships were exacerbated by problems of inadequate housing, lodging with in-laws, and the attendant lack of privacy. Yet even long-established relationships suffered from the strains of separation. Many husbands found wives changed by the time apart: imbued with a new sense of independence and self-sufficiency.⁷ Other wives had suffered from loneliness and a lack of leisure activity while their husbands were away. Both parties had experienced serious problems of morale. Women were stretched thin by years of managing households and children alone, men by long periods of time away from home and family.⁸

1948-51. 1947 Report of the Convener for the Welfare of Members of National Defence Services and their Dependents. Also NA, Society for the Protection of Women and Children (SPWC), MG 28 I 129, Vol. 5, File: Minutes of Board Meetings, June 1943 to March 22 1945. Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of the SPWC, 20 September 1944.

⁶ NA, Jewish Family Services of the Baron de Hirsch Institute (JFS), MG 28 V 86, Vol. 12, File: Minutes of Meetings, Case and Adoption Committee, Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 1944-48. Minutes of Meeting of Placement Committee, 28 March 1944; also Vol. 10, File: Minutes of Meetings of Case Committee, Family Welfare Department, 1944-45. Minutes, 28 October 1944.

⁷ NA, Dependents' Allowance Board (DAB), RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 12, File: Committees Local -- General Correspondence. "Volunteer Citizens' Committees"; Marion V. Royce, The Effect of the War on the Life of Women: A Study (Geneva; Washington: World's YWCA, 1945), 71; Canadian Youth Commission, Youth, Marriage, and the Family (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1948), 46; Renée Morin, "Women After the War," Canadian Affairs 2, 4 (March 1945), 3.

⁸ Archives de l'Université de Montréal (UM), Action Catholique Canadienne (ACC), P16/ R219, R. P. Valère Massicotte, O.F.M., "La Délinquance juvénile et la guerre"

Separation by time and distance meant that a great deal of weight had been placed on letters that crossed the Atlantic, with consequent problems of miscommunication. Wives and mothers worried about a lack of news from husbands and sons in action.⁹ Military officials noted that the only thing as bad for soldiers' morale as discouraging news from home was no news from home. Women were encouraged to write frequently to their companions, to eschew complaints, and to fill letters with good news.¹⁰ Not all couples wrote regularly to one another, however. Even among frequent correspondents, there was room for misinterpretation and for fretting over silences and omissions. The most potent source of worry had to do with infidelity. Wives and girlfriends worried about soldiers' references to women met overseas.¹¹ Friends and relatives took it upon themselves to keep soldiers and their partners informed of any misbehaviour, often without much evidence. As one young sergeant overseas wrote to his Montréal priest in June 1944, "J'ai été les plus sincères avec R----- et il me semble avoir fait tous les

(Montréal: L'Oeuvre des Tracts, 1944); NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 5, File 25. Women's Auxiliary of the R.C.C.S., Annual Report, 1944. A soldier-husband's perspective on "personal family trouble brought upon by discouragement and loneliness and war bastard that prey on soldier wives [sic]" is in NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 29, File: Inadequacy of Allowances, Complaints, Etc. DAB 5-6, Vol. 3. Letter from C.E.N. to DAB, n.d.

⁹ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 5, File 25. Report of Victoria Rifles Ladies Association [1944-45?] regarding men's neglect in writing regularly to their wives and mothers.

¹⁰ Robert England, Discharged: A Commentary on Civil Re-establishment of Veterans in Canada (Toronto: Macmillan, 1943), 325; La Presse, 22 avril 1944. See also John S. Sonnen, "Out of the Attic, or What Price Memorabilia? A Minnesota Couple's World War II Letters," Minnesota History 53, 2 (Summer 1992), esp. p. 60.

¹¹ NA, Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD), MG 28 I 10, Vol. 134, File 600. Response to Questionnaire from Welfare Convener, Royal Montreal Regiment; NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 29, File: Children of Unmarried Mothers, DAB 5-5. G.F.

sacrifices pour me la garder, on est si loin l'un de l'autre! Je ne comprends pas encore qui a bien pu lui mettre dans la tête que j'étais attaché de quelque façon que ce soit à une autre fille. C'est parfaitement faux et vous pouvez me croire."¹² The morale of servicemen and of their dependents was adversely affected, the Artillery Branch of the Montreal Soldiers' Wives League noted, by "Anonymous letters containing malicious information."¹³

Tales of wartime infidelity were common currency in 1940s Canada. Military Lotharios and ungrateful women who refused to wait for soldier-sweethearts had become stock characters in public discourse.¹⁴ The enforced mobility of married men and the increased visibility of women living alone fuelled the narratives of unfaithfulness. Determining how often rumours of infidelity were founded was difficult enough then; any attempt by the historian to quantify infidelity in the past is foolhardy. It is likely that war, through spousal separation, increased geographic mobility, and new work opportunities for women (which provided a measure of independence as well as new possibilities for romantic partners), did hasten the breakdown of some relationships. War

Thompson to DAB, 6 March 1943.

¹² "I have been most sincere with R----- and feel that I have made every sacrifice to keep her, we are so far from one another! I still do not understand who could have put the idea in her head that I am somehow attached to another girl. It's perfectly false and you can believe me." Emphasis in the original. ANQM, Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique (JOC), P 104, Container 250, File: Militaires. Sgt. L. to R.P. Victor Villeneuve, 24 juin 1944.

¹³ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 134, File 600. Response to questionnaire from MSWL, Artillery Branch, June 1942. Also NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: Reports on Conferences and Inspections. DND Memorandum by Ruth Harvey, 16 December 1941.

¹⁴ ANQM, MTC, P 257, Vol. 24, File: Divers - Faits. Faits [n.d.]; ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 170, File: Divers (Amour - guerre- chômage). Forum populaire: "L'Amour

also seems to have provided an escape from those relationships that were already rocky: there is a great deal of evidence to indicate that unhappy home lives were one spur to military enlistment.¹⁵ Although it is probably safe to assume that anxiety about infidelity was more common than actual instances of adultery, those instances that did come to light were enough to fuel a larger discourse of disloyalty.¹⁶

The public concern about infidelity was paralleled by policy-makers' more private negotiation of its consequences. Soldiers' and later veterans' personal lives were open to scrutiny in a way that those of most civilians were not. Candidates for military enlistment submitted their health, finances, and family relationships to examination by the various military bureaucracies: they were thoroughly 'administered' citizens.¹⁷ At the same time, they had access to sources of state assistance that many civilians did not. Activities that had always taken place, then, came to the attention of state and private agencies more frequently during the war. The application process for Dependents' Allowances, in particular, uncovered 'irregular' relationships such as common-law

est-il aveugle?"; *La Presse*, 15 août 1945, 18.

¹⁵ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 10, File: Minutes of Meetings of Case Committee, Family Welfare Dept., 1946-47. Case of the T. family, 3 May 1946; NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 134, File 600 (II). Response to questionnaire from David G. Stevenson, Children's Aid Society for the County of Ontario and the City of Oshawa, June 1942.

¹⁶ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 50, File: Procedure 43. Gwyneth Howell to Ruth Harvey, 30 April 1943; Charles H. Young to R.O.G. Bennett, 20 October 1942. Young claimed that the number of unfaithful wives was "small compared with the total number of enlisted men," but noted that "nevertheless such problems loom very large to the local groups who have to deal with them."

¹⁷ On the more general lack of privacy for American families during the Second World War, see Perry R. Duis, "No Time for Privacy: World War II and Chicago's Families," in Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch, eds., The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness during World War II (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press,

marriages, adulterous unions, and illegitimate children.¹⁸ Social service agencies in Montréal and elsewhere, long used to dealing with the problems of unmarried mothers, now discovered the wives of soldiers giving birth to the children of men other than their husbands.¹⁹ Frequently, women in such a situation attempted to place their children for adoption, often before their husbands returned or learned of the situation. Other wives came to the attention of family agencies because they were deliberately neglecting their illegitimate children out of "guilt and anxiety over the husband's re-action."²⁰ Wives' infidelity was attributed to loneliness, to 'disreputable' leisure pursuits such as frequenting dance halls and beer parlours, and to retaliation for their husbands' own extramarital encounters overseas.²¹

The Dependents' Allowance Board (DAB) frequently suspended allowances to wives on evidence of their sexual infidelity. It was, the Board's Chairman argued, "a general practice in welfare legislation to demand fidelity on the part of the wife in receipt

1996).

¹⁸ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 36, File: Petitions of Unmarried Applicants, DAB 7-24-117. R.O.G. Bennett to Colonel Ralston, 8 August 1942; Memorandum to Deputy Adjutant-General from H.T. Cook, 21 October 1942.

¹⁹ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 2, File 33. E.I. Smit to C.H. Young, 5 May 1943; J.F. Chisholm to Children's Service Association, 10 November 1943; NA, SPWC, MG 28 I 129, Vol. 5, File: Minutes of Board Meetings, April 18 1945 to January 15 1947. Executive Secretary's Report, Annual Meeting, 22 March 1946.

²⁰ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: Reports on Conferences and Inspections. Children's Aid Society Meeting [Ottawa], 1 December 1941.

²¹ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File DAB 4-5, Vol. 4, General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies; NA, Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), RG 38, Vol. 184, File: Rehabilitation, Confidential Letters, Vol. 2. Counsellors' Reference Book, April 1945, "Collaboration of Social Welfare Agencies with Ex-Service Personnel and the DVA"; NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 134, File 600. Responses to questionnaire, 1942;

of public funds."²² Even questionable leisure activities, such as wives entertaining men in their homes, were cause for the DAB to assign the family to the supervision of a social agency. Part of the concern over disloyal and 'immoral' wives was that they were perceived to be abdicating their "domestic responsibility."²³ The children of adulterous wives were sometimes removed to the care of relatives or institutions, particularly when wives were living with their new male companions.²⁴ If the wife promised to mend her ways, her children were allowed to remain in the home, and their dependents' allowances were increased in order to compensate for the loss of their mother's allowance.²⁵

The unfaithfulness of soldiers and their partners inspired considerable comment. Gossip played an important role in the public and private negotiation of disloyalty. In addition to affecting the relationships in question, gossip frequently had a tangible effect

CYC, Youth, Marriage, and the Family, 44-45.

²² NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 50. File: Procedure 43, Suspension of Allowances for Wife on Ground of Improper Conduct. R.O.G. Bennett to Charles H. Young, 27 October 1942. The Chairman added that "Even in needy Mothers' Allowance Regulations, where in most cases, the mother is a widow, the procedure is to declare her ineligible for a Government allowance is [sic] she has irregular relations with a man." It appears that Mothers' Allowances in other provinces were also cut off upon news of recipients' 'illegitimate' pregnancies. "Report on the Visit to the Montreal Agencies, March 29 and 30," by R. Harvey. DAB, 3 May 1943, in the same file. See also Margaret Little, No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997 (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1998).

²³ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 50, File: Procedure 43. R.O.G. Bennett to Charles H. Young, 27 October 1942; R.O.G. Bennett to Miss R. Robertson, 3 December 1943.

²⁴ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18: Vol. 50, File: Procedure 43. Memo re D.A.B. & C.W.C. by Nora Lea, 14 June 1941; Vol. 28, File: Montreal Welfare Department, DAB 4-7. "Families referred by D.A.B. to the Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles for supervision and re-education," 31 July 1944.

²⁵ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 50, File: Procedure 43. R.O.G. Bennett to Charles H. Young, 27 October 1942.

on wives' and children's material well-being. The DAB relied heavily on rumours and innuendo to pinpoint unfaithful husbands and especially wives. Although complaints to the DAB often came from husbands themselves, neighbours and in-laws also took it upon themselves to inform the Board of sexual disloyalty.²⁶ The Board insisted that the allowances of unfaithful wives whose soldier-husbands were overseas were not suspended without prior investigation. In the case of wives whose husbands were posted in Canada, however, a husband's request was sufficient to have his wife's allowance suspended until allegations of her infidelity were disproven.²⁷ Moreover, private citizens used the Dependents' Allowance system as a means of condemning disloyalty. One Montréal woman whose husband was having an affair with the wife of a soldier, for instance, reported this "other woman" to the DAB in order to have her Dependents' Allowance cut off.²⁸ Such tattling reflected personal grudges, but also pointed to the larger question of who was perceived to be entitled to state support. For the public, as for

²⁶ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28: File: DAB 4-5, Vol. 4, General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies. R.O.G. Bennett to Miss Elizabeth Wallace, 25 January 1944; File: Montreal Welfare Department, DAB 4-7. MCSA, Meeting to discuss services provided by certain Montreal Social Agencies to Dependents' Allowance Board Cases, 10 October 1941; File: Reports on Conferences and Inspections. DND, Memorandum by R. Harvey, 16 December 1941; File: DAB 4-3, Vol. 1, Investigations, Department of Pensions and National Health. K.M. Jackson to R.O.G. Bennett, 24 August 1945; NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 134, File 600 (II). Response to questionnaire from Local Superintendent, Children's Aid Society of Huron County, Goderich, 15 June 1942.

²⁷ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 50. File: Procedure 43. R.O.G. Bennett to Charles H. Young, 27 October 1942.

²⁸ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Case Conferences: Family Welfare Department and Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 1944-46. Case History to be presented at conference between Child Welfare Bureau and Family Welfare Department, 26 December 1944. See also NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 134, File 600 (I). Response to

the DAB, the criterion for receiving military allowances was clearly loyalty: men's loyalty to their country, and women's loyalty to the men who were loyal to their country. As Nora Lea of the Canadian Welfare Council emphasized, the unfaithful wife who was not remorseful had "forfeited her right to consideration as the soldier's wife."²⁹

Yet gossip concerning sexual infidelity occasioned a certain backlash. The Dependents' Allowance Board was criticized by representatives of some family agencies on a number of grounds, one of which was its reliance on gossip as sufficient evidence for withholding allowances.³⁰ When it did undertake to investigate claims of immorality and infidelity, these agencies charged, the DAB and affiliated public bodies used "Gestapo" and "bullying" techniques. Montréal agencies complained "that information secured in this way was not treated as confidential and that before the investigation was completed a large sized scandal was public property in the neighbourhood."³¹ A family agency elsewhere in Canada likewise accused the Department of Pensions and National Health of taking "a murky satisfaction in the sexual delinquencies of the soldiers' wives."³² Furthermore, critics noted, the suspension of allowances harmed the soldier's

questionnaire from Family Service Bureau, Hamilton.

²⁹ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 50, File: Procedure 43. Memo re D.A.B. and C.W.C. by Nora Lea, 14 June 1941.

³⁰ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18: Vol. 28, File: Report on Conferences and Inspections. DND, Memorandum by R. Harvey, 16 December 1941; Frances Barr to Chairman, DAB, 27 June 1944; Vol. 50, File: Procedure 43. Gwyneth Howell to Ruth Harvey, 30 April 1943.

³¹ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: DAB 4-7, Montreal Welfare Department. "Conference on Working Relationships Between the Dependents' Allowance Board and Protestant Welfare Agencies of Montreal," 15 October 1941.

³² NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File DAB 4-5, Vol. 4, General Correspondence

children as much as his wife by decreasing the family's income.³³ Married women pregnant with 'illegitimate' children, moreover, were avoiding seeking medical care for fear that their allowances would be suspended.³⁴ Certain Montréal social agencies were accused of keeping wives' adultery a secret from the DAB so that allowances would not be withheld.³⁵ Others applied to the Board for the reinstatement of wives' allowances where they thought it warranted.³⁶

Clearly, the reaction to women's infidelity was not monolithic. A concern for the morale of soldiers overseas, and a desire to preserve family units for the postwar period, meant that certain social agencies were willing to turn a blind eye, or at least a forgiving one, to sexual indiscretions. Some family agencies tried to prevent official reports from going to husbands overseas, particularly when wives appeared repentant. As one female worker from the Kitchener Children's Aid Society explained, "Not that we wish to

with Welfare Agencies. K.M. Jackson, Edmonton Family Welfare Bureau, to Ruth Harvey, 16 November 1943.

³³ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18: Vol. 50, File: Procedure 43. MCSA, Memorandum on Problems caused by Stoppage of Pay, or Reductions in Allowances paid to Dependents of Enlisted Men, October 1942; Vol. 28, File: DAB 4-5, Vol. 4, General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies. Elisabeth Wallace to R.O.G. Bennett, 6 January 1944; NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 134, File 600. Response to questionnaire from G.B. Clarke, General Secretary, Family Welfare Association, Montreal, 12 June 1942.

³⁴ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: Report on Conferences and Inspections. Children's Aid Society Meeting [Ottawa], 1 December 1941.

³⁵ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: Montreal Welfare Department, DAB 4-7. Lt. Col. J.G. Raymond to Mr. Charles Young, n.d. [22 September 1941]; and "Conference on Working Relationships Between the Dependents' Allowance Board and Protestant Welfare Agencies of Montreal," 15 October 1941 for the SPWC's denial of these charges.

³⁶ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 5, File 18. Report of Welfare Committee, Women's Division, Black Watch (R.H.R.) of Canada, 1942.

excuse them whatsoever, but we feel too, that if the matter could be kept quiet, we might be able to keep the family together for the sake of the husband who is Overseas."³⁷ Many social workers, including some employed by public bodies, agreed that "a definite family break could be avoided" if husbands were not informed of wives' illegitimate children until the couple had a chance "to meet and talk things over."³⁸ At the very least, family agencies pleaded, wives should be given the opportunity to tell their husbands themselves rather than have them receive the news from the DAB.³⁹

The DAB also professed concern for the soldier's morale, but it took a different tack. Wives would "have greater peace of mind" if they confessed all, the Board argued, but regardless, husbands ought to be informed of wives' illegitimate children as soon as possible. As R.O.G. Bennett, Chairman, explained,

Careful as one tries to be in covering up the situation, the chances are the man will get word at some future time and distressing as the news will be to him now, it is thought by the Board that it is better for him to know when he has time to think over things while away rather than to return home and find out later. It is the attitude of the Board that to be fair to the soldier overseas, he should be informed how things are going at home.⁴⁰

The differing attitudes of the DAB and the private family agencies are interesting.

³⁷ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: DAB 4-5, Vol. 4, General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies. Olive M. Snyder to R.O.G. Bennett, 3 May 1943.

³⁸ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: Reports on Conferences and Inspections. Report on Canadian Conference of Social Workers, May 1944. Also NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 29, File: Children of Unmarried Mothers, DAB 5-5. B.W. Heise to R.O.G. Bennett, 5 August 1942.

³⁹ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18: Vol. 50, File: Procedure 43. F.N. Stapleford to Joseph E. Laycock, 24 June 1941; Vol. 28, File: DAB 4-5, Vol. 4, General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies. George F. Davidson to R.O.G. Bennett, 28 June 1944.

⁴⁰ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: DAB 4-5, Vol. 4, General Correspondence

At one level, this was a difference between those who formulated policy and those faced with implementing it. But there were other reasons for the contrasting approaches. Veterans of the First World War often filled key positions in federal departments such as the DAB and the Department of Veterans' Affairs.⁴¹ The 'clients' of the DAB were members of the armed forces; in a sense, the Board was standing in for the absent husband and father.⁴² Social agencies were concerned with the needs of various family members, and there is considerable evidence that agency workers felt torn between their commitment to client confidentiality and their responsibility to inform the Board of wives 'misbehaving' while in receipt of allowances.⁴³ Local agencies had roots in their communities that predated the war, and intended to continue serving their clients once peace was secured. Federal bodies such as the Dependents' Allowance Board and the Dependents' Board of Trustees (DBT), on the other hand, took their direction from Ottawa and were intended to function only "for the duration." It is worth noting that in the Québec context, where enthusiasm for military enlistment was muted and opposition to conscription intense, the intervention of the DAB and the DBT in marital difficulties probably did little to improve French-Canadian families' opinions of the federal

with Welfare Agencies. R.O.G. Bennett to Olive M. Snyder, 28 May 1943.

⁴¹ England, Discharged, 78; Desmond Morton, A Military History of Canada: From Champlain to the Gulf War, 3rd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992), 176, 182.

⁴² NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 50, File: Procedure 43. R.O.G. Bennett to Miss R. Robertson, 11 March 1944.

⁴³ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: DAB 4-5, Vol. 4, General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies. Mrs. E.A. Richardson to Chairman, DAB, 25 January 1943; Report on the Children's Aid Societies' Conference and Toronto Social Agencies Held May 20th to 22nd, 1943. By V.M. Parr, 25 May 1943.

government.⁴⁴

In general, agency workers appear to have been more willing to give erring wives a second chance, to keep in mind the difficulties of surviving without an allowance, and to think of the long-term consequences of confession. From the perspective of the DAB, women who chose not to remain faithful were traitors to their country as well as to their menfolk. The men they took up with were, furthermore, those who were not overseas: those who had either not enlisted, or who had volunteered but had failed to make the grade. The masculinity of such men, from the point-of-view of soldiers, veterans, and the Board, was undoubtedly somewhat suspect.⁴⁵

Women's infidelity was interrogated to a far greater degree than men's. The occasional lapse of judgment by men far from loved ones was not ideal, but it was tolerated and perhaps even expected.⁴⁶ As Ruth Jamieson has shown for Britain, for the military bureaucracies, the sexual fidelity of a soldier's wife "was also taken to be an index of her commitment to the national interest."⁴⁷ The question of soldiers' own loyalty was slightly more ambiguous. Their loyalties to their families, to the nation, and to comrades-in-arms may have been reinforcing, but perhaps, as Susan Hartmann suggests, fidelity to fellow soldiers took precedence. The result, she argues, was that in the United

⁴⁴ My thanks to Denyse Baillargeon for this observation.

⁴⁵ On returned Australian soldiers' views of "the shirker" as a "non-man," see Stephen Garton, "Return home: War, masculinity and repatriation," 191-204, in Damousi and Lake, eds., Gender and War.

⁴⁶ Susan Hartmann, "Prescriptions for Penelope: Literature on women's obligations to returning World War II veterans," Women's Studies 5 (1978), 230-231.

⁴⁷ Ruth Jamieson, "The Man of Hobbes: Masculinity and Wartime Necessity," Journal of

States. "The sexual double standard was reinforced on the grounds that the horrors of war both excused male infidelity and required female faithfulness."⁴⁸

There is no doubt that, as Jamieson and Hartmann show for Britain and the U.S. respectively, women's infidelity was denounced in both public discussion and public policy. But the exposure of Canada's social service workers and government bureaucrats to wartime adultery may have developed in them a greater tolerance of 'irregular' sexual relations -- or at least, a pragmatic recognition that few marriages were uncomplicated.⁴⁹ There was considerable debate within the DAB and the Department of National Defence over how to handle marital infidelity,⁵⁰ as well as occasions on which the DAB demonstrated more flexibility than usual. As the war in Europe drew to a close and the soldiers' return appeared imminent, for instance, the Board shifted its focus from the punishment of wives to the preservation of households. The "necessity of considering the deterrent effect of Board decisions which existed in the past has now largely disappeared with the approach of partial demobilization," the Board noted. Past decisions revoking wives' allowances might be reconsidered more sympathetically, "providing the Dependent does her part." Like the family agencies, the Board increasingly counselled forgiveness and reconciliation, and insisted upon the importance of maintaining "home

Historical Sociology 9, 1 (March 1996), 33.

⁴⁸ Hartmann, "Prescriptions for Penelope," 231, 236.

⁴⁹ Royce, Effect of the War, 59.

⁵⁰ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 50, File: Procedure 43. Memorandum from the Office of the Deputy Minister of National Defence to R.O.G. Bennett, Chairman, DAB, 30 August 1943; Memorandum re Erring Wives of Soldiers, 20 May 1941.

and family circles" for the postwar period.⁵¹

How, then, did postwar couples deal with relationships that were at the very least strained, and often fractured? Most married couples probably stuck it out. It is possible, as one social service agency argued, that the impact of their wives' infidelity on soldiers' morale was less than might be supposed. Certainly some soldiers, despite "rather desperate" first reactions, took the news of wives' infidelity in stride. The DAB claimed that a serviceman's reaction would "depend a good deal on their marital relationship before he enlisted, on his behaviour since they have parted, and on the point of view of his relatives and their influence upon him."⁵² Some soldiers accepted their wives' 'illegitimate' children as their own. One French-Canadian woman, for instance, gave birth to her eighth child during the war, a child fathered by someone other than her soldier-husband. The soldier and his wife were reconciled, however, and the family

⁵¹ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18: Vol. 28, File: Report on Conferences and Inspections. Typed statement re: the DAB [no title, n.d.]. The DAB's claim that its aim was to preserve "home and family circles" can be found in Vol. 49, File: Procedure 33. Watson Sellar to A. MacNamara, 30 September 1940; Vol. 28, File: DAB 4-5, Vol. 4, General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies. R.O.G. Bennett to Olive M. Snyder, 28 May 1943; George F. Davidson to R.O.G. Bennett, 28 June 1944. Margaret McCallum argues that in the First World War, the Canadian Patriotic Fund likewise demonstrated a degree of flexibility regarding "immoral" soldiers' wives, especially in Montréal. Margaret E. McCallum, "Assistance to Veterans and their Dependents: Steps on the Way to the Administrative State, 1914-1929," in W.W. Pue and B. Wright, eds., Canadian Perspectives on Law and Society: Issues in Legal History (Ottawa: Carleton UP, 1988), p. 161.

⁵² NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 134, File 600: Questionnaire, Service Men's Families, Morale and Security, 1942. Commissioner, Bureau of Child Protection, Saskatchewan, to Dr. George F. Davidson, 15 June 1942; NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: DAB 4-5, Vol. 4, General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies. R.O.G. Bennett to Olive M. Snyder, 28 May 1943.

stayed together.⁵³ Soldiers could request that dependents' allowances be reinstated to their unfaithful wives and/or allocated to their wives' illegitimate children. The DAB would agree to these requests if the wife showed signs of changing her 'immoral' ways, and if the soldier agreed to raise the children in question as his own.⁵⁴

Evidence of formal or de facto postwar marital breakdown is nonetheless substantial. Divorce, for instance, increased in Québec in the immediate postwar period, particularly among servicemen's families. Petitions to the Dominion government from Montréal residents rose steadily through the war years and jumped sharply in the immediate postwar period.⁵⁵ Yet in a predominantly Catholic province with no divorce courts, where a divorce required the delay, expense, and notoriety involved in petitioning the Dominion government, legal divorce was but one form of marital dissolution. More

⁵³ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: Montreal Welfare Department, DAB 4-7. "Families referred by DAB to the Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles for supervision and re-education," 31 July 1944.

⁵⁴ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18: Vol. 29, File: Children of Unmarried Mothers, DAB 5-5. R.O.G. Bennett to G.F. Thompson, 14 April 1943; Vol. 28, File: DAB 4-5, Vol. 4, General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies. R.O.G. Bennett to Olive M. Snyder, 28 May 1943. The Dependents' Board of Trustees likewise observed in 1945 that "In respect to children born to a dependent whose husband is alleged not to be the father, the attitude of the husband should be the criterion for action by the Board; if the member of the Forces accepted the child as a member of his family (and in many cases this is done and even an application is made for an allowance for the child as the enlisted man's dependent) the Board would be prepared to consider granting assistance." NA, Department of National Defence (DND), RG 24, Vol. 1596, File: Dependents' Board of Trustees – Reference Manual for Regional Dependents' Advisory Committees. DND, The Dependents' Board of Trustees, Information Circular No. 46, 3 May 1945. Also File: Dependents' Board of Trustees, Index and Minutes of Meetings. Minutes, Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee, 12 April 1944, p. 351.

⁵⁵ La Presse, 6 avril 1946, 32; CYC, Youth, Marriage and the Family, 52; NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 36, File: Permission to Marry (Army) - DAB 7-24-102g, Vol. 1. Circular No. 103, 3 April 1944; Statutes of Canada 1944-45; 1945; 1946; 1947; 1948;

common, especially for French-Canadians, were legal separations of bed-and-board or informal separations. Catholic organizations warned Quebecers that civil divorce was not a valid way of dissolving Christian marriages, while even agencies that catered primarily to non-Catholic clients, such as Montréal's Society for the Protection of Women and Children, advised judicial separation rather than divorce in "cases of marital discord."⁵⁶ Some soldiers simply chose not to return to their relationships. Social service agencies noted the large number of wives abandoned by soldier-husbands; military enlistment was occasionally tantamount to desertion.⁵⁷ Some married Canadian soldiers formed second families in Europe and elected to stay with them: a precedent established during the First World War a generation earlier.⁵⁸

Those who lived through the war were struck by the explosion of marriages after September 1939 – an explosion attributed by one historian of Britain to a 'last dance' mentality that saw sexual tension heightened by the excitement of war and a reckless and

1949 (8 George VI - 13 George VI).

⁵⁶ UM, ACC, P16, P16/H3/18/84. "Le Mariage Chrétien" (1946); NA, SPWC, MG 28 I 129, Vol. 6, File: SPWC Minutes, February 19 1947 to March 24 1950. Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors, 19 October 1949. Approximately 20 percent of the parliamentary divorces awarded to Montréal couples between 1944 and 1946 went to couples where at least one of the partners had a French surname; clearly French-Canadians were under-represented. Statutes of Canada 1944-45; 1945; 1946 (8 George VI – 10 George VI).

⁵⁷ NA, Savage papers, MG 30 C 92, Vol. 3, File: Council of Women, Montreal Local, 1948-51. Local Council of Women, Vancouver, B.C., Annual Report of Convener of Armed Forces. See also David A. Kent, "'Gone for a Soldier': Family Breakdown and the Demography of Desertion in a London Parish, 1750-91," Local Population Studies 45 (1990): 27-42.

⁵⁸ James Snell, In the Shadow of the Law: Divorce in Canada 1900-1939 (Toronto: UTP, 1991).

romantic attitude in the face of an unknown future.⁵⁹ In Canada, other factors no doubt forced the formalization of relationships that might otherwise have remained unsolemnized: hopes of avoiding conscription, for instance, or the opportunity to allocate and receive dependents' allowances. The improved economy, moreover, meant that couples that had courted in the depths of the Depression could finally afford to establish their own households. For many Canadian soldiers, a 'last dance' attitude would result in marriages to women met in Europe, primarily England. The subsequent arrival in Canada of close to 45,000 war brides and their more than 21,000 children captured the public's attention and also encapsulates many of the peculiar difficulties of postwar marital adjustment.⁶⁰

The immigration of British brides began midway through the war and was largely completed by 1947.⁶¹ Some arrived while their husbands were still fighting overseas; many came with young children.⁶² Brides were greeted by spouses and by in-laws: the

⁵⁹ Raynes Minns, Bombers and Mash: The Domestic Front 1939-45 (London: Virago, 1980), 180.

⁶⁰ Desmond Morton, 1945: When Canada Won the War (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1995), 11; Joyce Hibbert, The War Brides (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1978).

⁶¹ La Presse noted that the last boatload of war brides and children was expected to arrive in Halifax on 21 November 1946 and that after 30 November, dependents of Canadian soldiers wishing to come to Canada would have to pay their own way. Yet an article on 8 February 1947 observed that 400 Canadian soldiers had recently arrived in Halifax and that the ship's passengers included 26 war brides and their children. La Presse: 3 octobre 1946, 4; 2 novembre 1946, 28; 8 février 1947, 35.

⁶² NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311: Vol. 5, File 25. Annual Report of the Recording Secretary, Women's Auxiliary of the R.C.C.S. (Montreal) [1944]; Vol. 3, File 54. Canadian Red Cross Society, Quebec Provincial Division, Lists of Dependents (Army) Arriving from Britain for Montreal.

publicity accorded these reunions was extensive. The photograph of "Jane-Margaret et son papa" that appeared in La Presse on 7 March 1946, for instance, depicted the reunion at Montréal's Bonaventure Station of M. Bérubé, former member of the Fusiliers Mont-Royal, his English bride, and their one-year-old daughter, Jane-Margaret. Newspaper articles gushed about "heureuses Canadiennes," "Nouvelles citoyennes du Canada": young Englishwomen who were being received with open arms and who would create comfortable homes for their veteran-husbands.⁶³

In addition to the usual resources offered by an urban centre, the Englishwomen who settled in Montréal found special provisions made for them, largely by the city's Anglo-Protestant community. CN Rail and the Red Cross set up a canteen, a rest-area and a nursery for British mothers and children arriving at Bonaventure Station. The Acorn Club, established "to welcome and help in any way possible all British brides arriving in Montreal," sent "a letter of welcome to every member two weeks after her arrival" in the city. Members of the Local Council of Women were requested to do everything in their power "to help the British war brides to become happy and useful Canadian citizens." The YWCA, meanwhile, offered to arrange French lessons for them.⁶⁴

⁶³ La Presse: 7 mars 1946, 4; 27 novembre 1944, 4; 27 mars 1944, 4; 2 novembre 1946, 63.

⁶⁴ La Presse, 6 décembre 1944, 4; NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 3, File 65. Letter to all Auxiliary Presidents from Mary Elder, Hon. Corresponding Secretary, 1 June 1945; NA, Savage papers, MG 30 C 92, Vol. 3, File: Council of Women -- National -- 1940-1948. Letter from Marion D. Savage, National Convener, to Local Conveners, 13 Oct. 1945; NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 1, File 91. Association Meeting and Directors' Meeting, 12 October 1945.

Not everyone was caught up in the romance of the British brides, however. Many French-Canadians looked askance at these Englishwomen newly arrived on their soil. L'Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne Française (l'ACJC) argued that English women were morally unworthy of young French-Canadian men, despite their often superior education. The ACJC warned that French-Canadian families would not necessarily extend a warm welcome to these brides, and it wondered aloud whether the children of these unions would be French or English.⁶⁵

War brides themselves found much to adjust to. Canadian observers were surprised by reports of unhappy British wives, and tended to attribute their discontent to Montréal's postwar housing crisis. The Victoria Rifles Ladies Association of Montreal felt it essential that the housing shortage be rectified so that "no Canadian or British bride will feel like returning home to mother just because we have failed to provide liveable homes for them."⁶⁶ Others blamed marital unhappiness on conflicts with in-laws. Montréal's Society for the Protection of Women and Children reported in 1945 and 1946 that it was seeing an increased number of cases involving "marriages contracted overseas by service personnel," including "numerous cases in which the War-bride is not accepted

⁶⁵ ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 240. File: Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse. Mémoires soumis par le comité central de l'ACJC à la Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, 27-28 janvier 1945. Also UM, ACC, P16/04/52, Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, Comité provincial du Québec. Mémoire sur la famille, for similar worries about the linguistic and religious problems posed by war brides.

⁶⁶ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 5, File 25. Victoria Rifles Ladies' Association, Report of Welfare Committee [1946?]. Also NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311: Vol. 1, File 91. Executive Meeting, 5 January 1945; Vol. 3, File 54. Letter from Chairman of Oak Society for British War Wives, n.d.; Vol. 3, File 66. Letter from President of Royal Montreal Regiment Ladies Committee, 19 November 1945.

by the soldier's family." The SPWC noted "more or less acute marital difficulties" related to "culture, religion and race," to the transition to urban living, and to situations where "the soldier has reverted to an attachment made prior to his departure for overseas service."⁶⁷ One woman's story captures war brides' frustrations with both housing and in-laws. The woman's husband, a veteran, worked the nightshift, and the couple and their two children lived with the husband's married sister in Verdun. Not long after her arrival in the city, the woman wrote to the Montreal Soldiers' Wives League, "Please can you refer me how to find out about returning home. I have two children and I am expecting another. We have one room here, and have been told that we must find another place. Whereas we can't -- places are hard to get and I wish to return to England."⁶⁸

Other war brides were also prepared to return home. Montréal service clubs such as the Oak Society for British War Wives perceived "this inability to settle down" to be widespread and problematic.⁶⁹ Newspapers noted that English wives were returning to the UK because they found Canadians cold and unfriendly.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, numerous

⁶⁷ NA, SPWC, MG 28 I 129: Vol. 6, File: Minutes, February 19 1947 to March 24 1950. Report of the Executive Secretary for the Year 1946; Vol. 5, File: Minutes of Board Meetings, April 18 1945 to January 15 1947. Executive Secretary's Report, Annual Meeting, 22 March 1946; also Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors, 16 May 1945.

⁶⁸ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 3, File 54. Mrs. V to MSWL, September 1945 and n.d.; also Canadian Red Cross Society, Quebec Provincial Division, List of Dependents (Army) who arrived in Montreal Ex. Vessels W933 and W934 on August 29 1945.

⁶⁹ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 3, File 54. Letter from Chairman of Oak Society for British War Wives [n.d.].

⁷⁰ La Presse, 2 novembre 1946, 28. Barry Broadfoot's interviews with veterans also uncovered evidence of the poor reception given to some English wives and he notes that many returned to England after a very short time in Canada. See The Veterans' Years: Coming Home from the War (Vancouver; Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985), 87, 134.

instances of abandoned war brides were coming to the attention of social service agencies. A few women deserted by Canadian husbands overseas decided nonetheless to come to Canada.⁷¹ The conclusions to some of these stories can be found in the Statutes of Canada: each year between 1945 and 1949 saw parliamentary divorces awarded to Montréal residents whose marriages had taken place in wartime England.⁷² Yet as observers were quick to point out, those war brides who returned to Britain were the exception rather than the rule. La Presse, for instance, claimed in November 1945 that only 29 of the 9000 British war brides in Canada had requested a return to England.⁷³

Many returning soldiers met their children for the first time, or encountered them after a separation of several years.⁷⁴ Wartime commentators had expressed considerable concern over Canada's temporarily fatherless children. Even worse was the prospect that this temporary state might become permanent. As the ACJC worried, "Combien

⁷¹ NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 58: File 489. K.M. Jackson, Secrétaire de la Division d'Assistance familiale, to Monsieur L. Désilets, C.R., Assistant-procureur-général, Québec, 25 février 1948; File 489A. Memorandum Re: Wives of Canadian Servicemen Overseas Proceeding to Canada but either Widowed or Deserted, 1946; File 489A. Letter from Reverend S.A. Yeo, Department of Social Service, P.E.I. to Miss Lillian Thompson, National Council, YWCA, Toronto, 4 December 1946.

⁷² Statutes of Canada 1944-45: 1945: 1946: 1947; 1948; 1949 (8 George VI - 13 George VI). See also NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 58, File 489A. Memorandum re: Wives of Canadian Servicemen Overseas Proceeding to Canada but either Widowed or Deserted, 1946.

⁷³ La Presse, 28 novembre 1945, 4. The opinions of a representative of the Department of Immigration on this matter can be found in NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 5, File 18. MSWL Welfare Report [n.d.].

⁷⁴ On veterans and their children in the United States, see William M. Tuttle, Jr., 'Daddy's Gone to War': The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children (New York: Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993), esp. Ch. 12. See also the scattered examples in Neil Sutherland, Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the Age

d'enfants ne connaîtront pas leur père et n'auront pas son aide pour se faire un avenir."⁷⁵

The nation-wide perception that juvenile delinquency was flourishing was rooted in anxiety over women's paid work and 'latch-key' children. Were the children of employed mothers and enlisted fathers under proper supervision? Mothers were seen to be incapable of enforcing the strict discipline that was the purview of fathers. Members of the Montreal Soldiers' Wives League felt that soldiers' children were deprived of "the steadying hand of a father in their guidance and upbringing"; veterans' advocates worried that soldier-fathers would return from overseas "to find incipient juvenile delinquency in the home."⁷⁶ The effect of fathers' absence on children's emotional and (hetero)sexual development was also a concern. Observers worried about daughters' "future adjustment to men and marriage." Sons, meanwhile, might become "overdependent" on their mothers as a result of being "thrown too much with women." "The boys who are raised during the war years," warned the Canadian Youth Commissioners, "must be safeguarded against becoming men who are 'tied to their mothers' apron strings.'"⁷⁷

Commentators were aware that relations between returned soldiers and their children might be strained. A federal government brochure reminded veterans to "tenir

of Television (Toronto: UTP, 1997), e.g. p. 45.

⁷⁵ ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 240, File: Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse. Mémoires soumis par le comité central de l'ACJC à la Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, 27-28 janvier 1945, "Jeunesse et Famille."

⁷⁶ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 3, File 65. Mrs. Ward C. Pitfield to David Munroe, 30 March 1945; England, Discharged, 326. See also Jeff Keshen, "Wartime Jitters over Juveniles: Canada's Delinquency Scare and Its Consequences, 1939-1945," in Age of Contention: Readings in Canadian Social History, 1900-1945 (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1997); Mary Louise Adams, The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality (Toronto: UTP, 1997), esp. Ch. 4.

compte de la croissance des enfants durant leur absence." Promoters of Volunteer Citizens' Committees noted that veterans were often strangers to their children. Veterans interviewed by Barry Broadfoot recounted the disappointment on the part of children who had expected their returning fathers to be larger-than-life war heroes and who found instead only ordinary men.⁷⁸ Awkward relations between veterans and children affected veterans' relationships with their wives; likewise, strained marital relations affected children's perceptions of their soldier-fathers.⁷⁹ Children also suffered from the fallout of marriages shattered by war; some children were taken into institutional or foster care after their servicemen-fathers returned and their parents' marriages disintegrated.⁸⁰

Some idea of the pressure that both military service and the return to family life placed on men can be ascertained from the more extreme and tragic examples of veterans' difficulties with their children. La Presse, for instance, published a photograph of a battered infant in March 1947, under the caption "Le pitoyable enfant d'un ancien combattant aussi malheureux."⁸¹ A 39-year-old Montréal war veteran, Edmond O'Driscoll, had been charged with injuring his six-month-old daughter Maureen three

⁷⁷ CYC, Youth, Marriage and the Family, 50-52.

⁷⁸ La Presse, 12 juin 1945, "Le chemin du retour," 6; NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 12, File: Committees Local - General Correspondence. Janet R. Keith, "Volunteer Citizens' Committees"; Broadfoot, The Veterans' Years, 94.

⁷⁹ CYC, Youth, Marriage, and the Family, 50; Norah Lewis, "'Isn't this a terrible war?': The Attitudes of Children to Two World Wars," Historical Studies in Education 7, 2 (1995), esp. 213-214.

⁸⁰ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 12, File: Minutes of Meetings, Case and Adoption Committee, Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 1944-1948. Minutes, Meeting of Placement Committee of JCWB, 28 March 1944. See also Sutherland, Growing Up, 83, 106.

⁸¹ La Presse, 5 mars 1947, 3.

times in three months, breaking her arms and fracturing her ribs and collarbone. O'Driscoll had undergone lengthy treatment at Ste. Anne's Military Hospital for a head wound and apparently was not always conscious of his actions; the judge hearing his case scheduled him for a psychological examination. In suggesting that the baby's injuries could be attributed to the fact that the six-foot veteran was not aware of his strength and held her too tightly, the La Presse journalist clearly extended sympathy to the former soldier as well as to his child. Incidents such as these thus spoke both to the problematic nature of reunion and to the ways in which veterans' troubles were framed in their communities.⁸²

Finally, Second World War veterans were 'sons' as well as 'lovers.'⁸³ Married veterans and their wives were often depicted as the heroes and heroines of the postwar romance of reunion, but most Canadian veterans appear to have been young and single.⁸⁴ Veterans were referred to in the popular press as "boys" (often "our boys"): in a sense,

⁸² Montréal's Society for the Protection of Women and Children described two cases of incest involving Second World War veterans and their daughters in its submission to the Royal Commission on the Criminal Law relating to Criminal Sexual Psychopaths in 1956. McGill University Archives (MUA). Montreal Council of Social Agencies (MCSA). MG 2076, Container 14. File 244. SPWC. Summary of Representations to be made before the Royal Commission on the Criminal Law relating to Criminal Sexual Psychopaths, 30 January 1956.

⁸³ D.H. Lawrence, Sons and Lovers (New York: Viking, 1913).

⁸⁴ England, Discharged, 152. The Montreal Soldiers' Wives' League also claimed that after the first year of war, during which the married unemployed enlisted in great numbers, the average soldier tended to be single. NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 5, File 24. MSWL to Mr. E.I. Smit, Chairman, Committee on Provision of Care for the Children of Working Mothers, March 1942. Married men were not called up under the National Resources Mobilization Act until December 1942. C.P. Stacey, Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada 1939-1945 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970). Appendix 'N,' p. 586.

they were everyone's sons. Parents, and often siblings, were expected to contribute to the task of rehabilitation. The Department of Veterans' Affairs noted approvingly that Montréal parents were encouraging their sons to get "back to work."⁸⁵ The Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique Féminine reminded families and friends that young working-class men were returning much changed by their military experiences, often nervous and irritable. Women were to help them to readjust by reintroducing them to good habits, notably religious practice.⁸⁶

Yet while young soldiers were sons, they were often in the ambiguous position of allocating dependents' allowances to their parents and siblings.⁸⁷ This was not necessarily a new situation, given Montréal's history of child and teen labour and given the working-class background of many soldiers.⁸⁸ Parents of soldiers and veterans, used to relying on sons' earnings, had a clear sense of entitlement to state-administered allowances. As one woman reminded the Montreal Soldiers' Wives League in January

⁸⁵ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A. Monthly Report on Activities, 1 August 1944. Robert England's massive rehabilitation manual, Discharged, was written to reassure service men and their parents: see p. 376.

⁸⁶ ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 28. File: Bulletins des Chefs de la J.O.C.F. 1945-1946-1947. Bulletin mensuel J.O.C.F. Mars 1946. "Le retour de nos vétérans."

⁸⁷ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 1, File 91. Executive Committee Meeting, 19 January 1940; NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol.10, File: Minutes of Meetings of Case Committee, Family Welfare Department, 1944-45. Follow Up, H.P., 9 May 1945.

⁸⁸ On Montréal soldiers' class background: ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 170, File: Organisation. Projet d'un service de soldat. Organisé par la J.O.C. et la L.O.C. 2e copie. On child and teen labour in mid-twentieth-century Montréal, see Dominique Marshall, Aux origines sociales de l'État-providence: Familles québécoises, obligation scolaire et allocations familiales 1940-1955 (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1998).

1946. "After all, I am a veteran's mother and entitled to my check" ⁸⁹ Moreover, parents across the country exhibited a marked preference for soldiers' and veterans' allowances over other forms of social welfare: military allowances were a source of pride rather than stigma. ⁹⁰

Those veterans who were young and unmarried but whose adolescence had ended abruptly with their period of service found the return to the nest frustrating after several years of absence and mobility. Montréal's severe postwar housing shortage meant that veterans frequently moved back into overcrowded parental homes. Friction ensued as parents were forced to adjust to their young sons' independence and resistance to parental authority. ⁹¹ With regard to female veterans, the Canadian Youth Commission thought it likely that "once the first pleasure of returning home is over, the standards of the parents will appear more rigid than ever and the advice and restrictions more irksome than before." ⁹² Readers of the daily press were exposed to grim examples of the difficulties of rehabilitation. 25-year-old Laurent Leduc, for instance, a Montréal navy veteran, was

⁸⁹ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 2, File 33. Mrs. C to MSWL, January 1946; also NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 29, File: Mothers' Allowance, DAB 5-1. Gertrude C[?], Secretary to the Child Welfare Board, Department of Health and Public Welfare, Winnipeg, to R.O.G. Bennett, 19 March 1942.

⁹⁰ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 29, File: Mothers' Allowances, DAB 5-1. C.W. Lundy, Superintendent of Welfare, Department of the Provincial Secretary, Social Assistance Branch, B.C., to R.O.G. Bennett, 26 July 1943.

⁹¹ La Presse, 5 novembre 1945, "Idéal à mettre à la portée de nos combattants," 4; ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 216, File: Soldats (Service). Memorandum of the J.O.C. To the CANADIAN GOVERNMENT in Favour of Demobilized Young Men [n.d.]; CYC, Youth, Marriage, and the Family, 43.

⁹² ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 58, File: Emissions Radiophoniques -- Campagne des loisirs -- 1946. 3^{ème} émission. Semaine de propagande de la J.O.C. 16 au 23 juin 1946;

charged in February 1946 with knifing his father in the back in a fit of hysteria, and with attempting to attack his mother and sisters.⁹³

Well-known Canadian psychologist Brock Chisholm noted that "Many people still speak of our soldiers as 'boys'" but insisted that "It is very important that we should not regard our soldiers as boys but rather that we should see them clearly as they are -- grown-up responsible men."⁹⁴ War's function as a rite of passage was highlighted by the fact that these men often returned with new family responsibilities.⁹⁵ The transfer of assigned pay and dependents' allowances from mothers to new brides suggests one way in which the war transformed (and often strained) filial relationships. As soldiers and veterans transferred their primary allegiances and allowances from mothers to wives, mothers not only felt displaced, but suffered tangible consequences. Social service agencies noted the financial hardship caused to mothers by this switch, and by the fact that allowances to mothers were less than those to wives. Widowed mothers, in particular, appear to have relied on their allowances to cover the costs of medical care.⁹⁶

CYC, Youth, Marriage, and the Family, 62-63.

⁹³ La Presse, 6 février 1946, "Accusé d'avoir tenté d'assassiner son père," 3.

⁹⁴ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 3, File 64. Speech by Brock Chisholm, 13 November 1944: "Women's Responsibility for Mental Reestablishment of Soldiers." See also England, Discharged, 329-330.

⁹⁵ NA, MSWL, MG 29 I 311, Vol. 2, File 33. "Clothing Allowance for Discharged Officers [n.d]."

⁹⁶ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 2, File 33. Janet Bennett, Welfare Committee, Black Watch of Canada, Women's Division, to MSWL, 23 May 1944; Report of Sub Committee on Need of Soldier's Widows and Widowed Mothers for Supplementary Grants [n.d.]. Also NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 134, File 600. Response to Questionnaire from H.P. Lyne, Kelvington Branch Canadian Legion, Kelvington, Saskatchewan, July 1942. One of the original purposes of the Dependents' Board of

Conflict was aggravated in situations where new brides were living with their in-laws. Housing shortages, the increased cost-of-living, fixed incomes, and perceptions of respectable living arrangements meant that families often doubled up, particularly while soldier-husbands were overseas. The General Secretary of Montréal's YWCA observed that in such situations, "Disagreements often start regarding allowances, discipline of children, etc., between the mothers-in-law and wives, both of whom may be the official responsibility of the enlisted men."⁹⁷ The heroine of an advertisement for Castoria, a young mother living with her mother-in-law while her soldier-husband was overseas, presumably spoke to a receptive audience when she complained "J'ai un emploi de guerre ... et des ennuis avec belle-maman."⁹⁸

II. Citizenship under Reconstruction

Roughly a quarter of Québec men between the ages of 18 and 45 had served in the armed forces; the veterans' return, then, did not go unnoticed.⁹⁹ And yet there is a

Trustees was to provide financial assistance to "a mother whose Dependents' Allowance has been reduced by reason of the prior claim of more immediate dependents of the son." NA, DND, RG 24, Vol. 1596, File: Dependents' Board of Trustees, Index and Minutes of Meetings. Minutes, Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee, 12 April 1944, pp. 352-353.

⁹⁷ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A. Monthly Report on Activities, 2 February 1943; NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 134: File 600. E.J. Verity, Secretary Treasurer, Village of Goodwater, Saskatchewan to Director of Relief, Veteran Block, Regina, 10 July 1942: File 600 (2). Catherine Stuart Vance, General Secretary, Montreal YWCA, to Charles H. Young, Executive Director, MCSA, 10 June 1942.

⁹⁸ "I have a war job ... and troubles with Mother-in-law." *La Presse*, 7 avril 1945, 15.

⁹⁹ By 30 September 1944, 163,430 of 699,900 Québec men aged 18-45 were enrolled in

resounding historiographical silence on the treatment of Second World War veterans in Québec -- despite the considerable scholarly attention paid to responses to the threat of conscription in that province.¹⁰⁰ In the absence of an extensive secondary literature, it nonetheless seems safe to assume that the greatest insistence on society's obligation to its veterans came from the federal government. Ottawa had allies, of course, in the Canadian Legion and in local organizations such as the Montreal Soldiers' Wives League, which emphasized the "need for a hearty welcome to returned men."¹⁰¹ Volunteer Citizens' Committees were established in Montréal, as elsewhere in Canada, in order to greet and rehabilitate local heroes.¹⁰² Service clubs such as the Rotarians, the Kiwanis, the Chamber of Commerce and the Advertising Club -- none of which catered to French Canadians -- offered their assistance to Montréal veterans seeking employment or simply company. Local French-language radio stations broadcast programmes such as CKAC's

the armed forces. UM, ACC, P 16/O4/52. Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, Comité provincial du Québec, *Mémoire sur la famille*. As of 31 March 1945, 171,007 men from the province of Québec had enlisted. NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 12, File: General Correspondence Re: Citizens' Committees, 'A' District - Montreal. Letter from H. Frechette, District Superintendent of Rehabilitation, DVA (Re-Establishment Division), Montreal, 7 August 1945. In 1951, approximately 15% of households in the City of Montréal included at least one war veteran: Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 10, Ch. 16, 427. This last statistic is somewhat misleading since it refers to the city proper and does not include those municipalities such as Verdun, Outremont, and Westmount, which were not suburbs per se but were located within the greater city.

¹⁰⁰ Québec veterans are barely alluded to in Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein, eds., The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1998). Neary's article about veterans in Canadian universities touches briefly upon this question: see his "Canadian Universities and Canadian Veterans of World War II," esp. 142-143.

¹⁰¹ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 1, File 91. Executive Meeting, 8 September 1944.

¹⁰² NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 12. File: Committees Local - General Correspondence. "Volunteer Citizens' Committees," by Janet R. Keith.

"Au Service des Vétérans," featuring discharged soldiers as guest speakers.¹⁰³ Branches of the Action catholique attempted to bring French-Canadian veterans into the religious fold by easing their readjustment to community and family life. Priests were encouraged by DVA officials and military officers to interview soldiers and their families as soon as the former returned to their parishes.¹⁰⁴ Mainstream newspapers such as La Presse called upon citizens and employers to help veterans reintegrate into society and find jobs. Rehabilitation, the paper reminded its readers, could not be left entirely to the government.¹⁰⁵ But the government was certainly veterans' biggest supporter. Despite the official fanfare that greeted returning war heroes, the political, linguistic, and class-based cleavages that structured Montréal were evident in the mixed reactions evoked by the veterans' return. Montréal's Assistant Veterans' Welfare Officer noted in 1942 that, "much unnecessary feeling exists as to the limits of a citizen's obligation to service in war."¹⁰⁶ Certainly Québec had contributed a smaller percentage of its eligible men to the armed services than had other provinces.¹⁰⁷ The Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique alluded in 1945 to a 'méfiance' of veterans, suggesting that they had earned a bad name in certain

¹⁰³ La Presse: 23 mai 1945, 9; 6 février 1946, 14; 25 avril 1946, 21; 6 juin 1946, 27.

¹⁰⁴ ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 170. File: Organisation. Service Jociste du Soldat, Circulaire spéciale 27/3/45; NA, DAB, RG 36 Series 18, Vol. 12. File: Committees Local-General Correspondence. Letter from Albert Valois, Diocesan Director of Catholic Action, Montréal, 3 August 1945.

¹⁰⁵ La Presse, 5 novembre 1945, "Les démobilisés ont besoin d'aide," 6.

¹⁰⁶ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A. Monthly Report on Activities, Montreal, 3 September 1942.

¹⁰⁷ 25.69% of Québec men aged 18 to 45 enlisted (voluntarily or through the NRMA). The percentage in other provinces ranged from 42.38 in Saskatchewan to 50.47 in British Columbia. Stacey, Arms, Men, and Government, Appendix 'R,' p. 590.

circles.¹⁰⁸ As men who had risked their lives for Canada and for Christianity, veterans were, the youth organization argued, in need of friends, assistance, and public sympathy.¹⁰⁹ On the other side of the political and ethnic fence, distinctions were made between conscripts and volunteers: the Women's Auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Corps Signals, for instance, was reluctant to take gifts to draftees in hospital.¹¹⁰ The DVA itself did not idealize veterans: Montréal's Veterans' Welfare Officer worried that "shiftless and unstable men" would try to take advantage of their veteran status in order to secure concessions and charity from receptive members of the public.¹¹¹

Veterans' own feelings about the society to which they returned were equally ambivalent. They disliked the complacency of those on the home front and were impatient with what Major-General Brock Chisholm called the "little certainties of civilians."¹¹² Many had grievances against those who had not gone overseas and who

¹⁰⁸ ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 170, File: Organisation. Projet de Réhabilitation, 20 avril 1945. And see the belligerent Montréal war veteran with a chip on his shoulder described by Morley Callaghan in The Loved and the Lost (Toronto: Macmillan, 1951), 53.

¹⁰⁹ ANQM, JOC, P 104: Container 58, File: Semaine de propagande - 1946. Semaine des vétérans. Pamphlet: "Donnons-leur notre Appui!"; Container 214, File: Service du Soldat, 1942-45. Directives concernant les retours d'outre-mer; La Presse, 30 septembre 1946, 7.

¹¹⁰ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 2, File 52. Letter from R.C.C.S. (Montreal) Women's Auxiliary, 17 October 1944. The opposite argument -- that conscripts needed to be considered in rehabilitation efforts along with volunteers -- is in ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 216, File: Soldats (Service). Memorandum of the JOC To the CANADIAN GOVERNMENT in Favour of Demobilized Young Men [n.d. but after Oct. 1946].

¹¹¹ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A. Monthly Report on Activities, Montreal, 4 October 1943.

¹¹² NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 3, File 64. Major-General G.B. Chisholm, Speech, 13 November 1944: "Women's Responsibility for Mental Reestablishment of Soldiers."

appeared to have profited by wartime employment. As one DVA official observed, veterans were not likely to look upon civil service or munitions workers as having made sacrifices comparable to their own.¹¹³ Such distinctions were especially sharp in times of unemployment. A Montréal DVA official noted in 1944, for instance, that veterans laid off before younger men who had been exempted from service for three or four years were particularly bitter.¹¹⁴ The sense that civilians were unable to understand the experience of those who had served in the armed forces, combined with a resentment of civilians who appeared to have done well by the war, meant that veterans often felt "more at home with other veterans."¹¹⁵

For this reason, Brock Chisholm claimed that returned soldiers needed a sense of importance and belonging. He urged that soldiers be "absorbed into the civilian community" immediately, rather than segregated and made to feel as though their interests were "separate from and then in conflict with those of the rest of the people."¹¹⁶ As we saw in Chapter 1, Ottawa was eager to use the Veterans Charter to transform the "fighting man" into the "peacetime citizen."¹¹⁷ Such an undertaking meant both de-

¹¹³ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A. Monthly Report, 3 September 1942.

¹¹⁴ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A. Monthly Report, 3 February 1944.

¹¹⁵ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 197, File: Rehabilitation, Statistics: Women's Division. Proceedings: Training Conferences on Women's Rehabilitation, 88; Broadfoot, The Veterans' Years, 53. This sentiment was clearly gendered. On the "surprisingly powerful male subculture produced by the war," see William S. Graebner, The Age of Doubt: American Thought and Culture in the 1940s (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 14-15.

¹¹⁶ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 3, File 64. Major-General G.B. Chisholm, Speech, 13 November 1944: "Women's Responsibility for Mental Reestablishment of Soldiers."

¹¹⁷ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 12, File: Local Committees - General Correspondence, Vol. 1. Article [no author, n.d. but probably December 1944], 7. On

masculinizing and re-masculinizing the former soldier, who was generally assumed to be male. Men had to be taken out of the homosocial, combative milieu of the armed services and re-acclimatized to heterosexual relations and domestic life.¹¹⁸ Thus provisions for land and housing were established to enable veterans and their families to set up conjugal homes. The centrepiece of rehabilitation, from the perspective of both federal officials and returned soldiers, was employment.¹¹⁹ Former servicemen had to shake off the regimentation and supervision of the services and stand on their own two feet; as the Department of Pensions and National Health reminded soldiers, sailors, and members of the air force in 1943, "The aim of the whole re-establishment programme is to help a man to help himself."¹²⁰ Veterans had to secure breadwinner jobs in order to be proper husbands and fathers; their wives and children should not have to work for pay.

provisions for Canadian veterans after the First World War, see Desmond Morton and Glenn Wright, Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915-1930 (Toronto: UTP, 1987). For World War II, see Neary and Granatstein, eds., The Veterans Charter. Historians agree that veterans were far more generously treated after the Second World War than after the First. See, e.g., Desmond Morton, "The Canadian Veterans' Heritage from the Great War," and Jeff Keshen, "Getting It Right the Second Time Around: The Reintegration of Canadian Veterans of World War II," both in Neary and Granatstein, eds., The Veterans Charter.

¹¹⁸ Rehabilitation, Montréal's Veterans' Welfare Bureau insisted, was "'a family, as well as a social-economic problem, which all must assume.'" NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File: 65-47-A. Monthly Report on Activities – April. Montreal, 2 May 1944.

¹¹⁹ UM, Fonds Edouard-Montpetit, P 8/1, Comité de Reconstruction, 1941-43. Memorandum for the Committee on Reconstruction by F. Cyril James, 27 March 1941; also Memorandum regarding the activities of local committees in the field of Post-War Reconstruction, 17 August 1942.

¹²⁰ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 197, File: "'What Will I Do When the War is Won' (Booklet)." Pamphlet entitled "'What Will I Do, When the War is Won? Provisions already made and plans under way for the re-establishment of Canadian Service Personnel in civil life.'" Issued for members of the Canadian Navy, Army and Air Force. Department of National Defence, Ottawa, 28 August 1943, p. 4.

As one female observer commented in 1945, veterans whose wives had obtained paid employment during the war worried that “their manly, breadwinning status [was being] whittled down.”¹²¹ Veterans enjoyed a sense of entitlement: as men who had served their country, but also as family men.¹²²

Re-making former soldiers as men was most difficult in the case of those who had suffered serious wounds or illness during the war and were thus, at least temporarily, incapable of being breadwinners or ‘productive’ citizens. Many of the city’s men had gone off to war suffering from poor health and years of inadequate diets (and many had been turned down by the services as “medically unfit”¹²³). Montréal’s Veterans’ Welfare Officer observed in 1943 that “The appalling number of substandard people (depression victims) who have old war, or new war service, who simply cannot do any kind of hard work, and who seem to have limited physical stamina, cannot be realized unless one ‘sits in’ on placement work.”¹²⁴ Hospitals such as Ste. Anne de Bellevue's Military Hospital, the Queen Mary Military Hospital, and the Ste. Hyacinthe DVA Hospital had been

¹²¹ Morin, “Women After the War,” 3.

¹²² Ottawa occasionally warned that provisions for veterans should not be viewed as an entitlement. In 1944, for instance, it claimed that educational training “should not be regarded as a right, or as a reward for service to the state. It is more in the nature of compensation for loss of skills or opportunity resulting from a changed manner of living while in the armed services.” NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 184, File: Rehabilitation – Confidential Letters, Vol. I. Office Manual on Resumption of Educational Training provided under the Post Discharge Re-Establishment Order, P.C. 7633 As amended by P.C. 775. March 1st 1944. It is clear, however, that veterans regarded such provisions as a right, and that this was due in no small part to Ottawa’s marketing of the Veterans Charter.

¹²³ Stacey, *Arms, Men and Government*, Appendix ‘O,’ p. 587.

¹²⁴ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A. Monthly Report on Activities, Montreal, 2

established during the war by the federal government to care for Montréal soldiers afflicted with injuries or disease. After the war, these hospitals, along with a service ward at the tuberculosis sanatorium in Ste. Agathe, became the purview of veterans. Understaffed, suffering from the lack of repair and physical plant common to most Montréal buildings, and ill-prepared for the influx of soldiers and veterans in the last months of the war, the hospitals were overcrowded and the target of numerous complaints. The irate mother of a veteran hospitalized with a spinal wound wrote a four-page letter in October 1944 detailing the "deplorable conditions existing at the St. Anne's Military Hospital." Montréal's veterans, she concluded, were "deserving of better treatment and should not be obliged to put up with conditions such as these."¹²⁵

Women's voluntary groups carried out hospital visiting for years after the war had ended, taking candy, cigarettes and reading material to hospitalized veterans. The Local Council of Women reported in 1947-48 that its members were still regularly visiting veterans at the Ste. Anne's, Queen Mary, and St. Hyacinthe hospitals. The Montreal Soldiers' Wives League observed in 1949 that there were more veterans in hospital in the region than at any time since 1945. Hospitalized veterans, the MSWL noted, were battling "pain and disease, depression and sometime despair [sic]."¹²⁶ Most difficult to

July 1943.

¹²⁵ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 2: File 30. Annual Meeting 1945, Hospital Visiting Report; File 52. Letter from Mrs. Wm. P. McFeat, Montreal, 18 October 1944.

¹²⁶ NA, Montreal Council of Women (MCW), MG 28 I 164, Vol. 5, File 7. 54th Year Book and Annual Report 1947-48, Report of the Committee for the Welfare of Members of National Defense Services and Their Dependents 1947-48; NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 2, File 30. Annual Meeting, 27 April 1949; Report on Hospital Visiting from April 1946 to end of April 1947.

treat were those veterans suffering from mental illnesses defined variously as 'nerves,' 'battle exhaustion,' 'psychopathic' or 'neuropsychiatric' disorders.¹²⁷ The Johns-Manville Company issued a notice in La Presse in 1947 asking Montréalers not to forget the veterans still languishing in military hospitals, while the Community Garden League and the Diggers and Weeders Garden Club offered to plough land near the Queen Mary Road Veterans Hospital in order that psychiatric patients might benefit from the "therapeutic value of gardening."¹²⁸

For healthy veterans, homes and jobs were priorities. Veterans' feelings of entitlement to discharge benefits extended to their quest for lodging, and veterans' housing was implicitly assumed to be family housing. Veterans became a target market: classified advertisements, for instance, offered them household appliances and furniture for sale.¹²⁹ La Presse advised returned men to consult with their wives before taking advantage of the Veterans' Land Act and putting down roots in the suburbs or countryside. "S'habituerait-elle à la vie de la banlieue ou tous ses rêves convergent-ils vers le bruit et l'agitation de la grande ville?" the newspaper asked veterans. "Tout cela

¹²⁷ See England, Discharged, Ch. 16; Copp and McAndrew, Battle Exhaustion; Terry Copp, "From Neurasthenia to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Canadian Veterans and the Problem of Persistent Emotional Disabilities," in Neary and Granatstein, eds., The Veterans Charter.

¹²⁸ La Presse, 5 mars 1947, "N'oublions pas nos braves défenseurs!" 18; MUA, Community Garden League, MG 2079, Container 7, File 248: Community Garden League Minute Book, 1941-1952. Minutes of Meeting of General Committee, 20 November 1952; President's Address, 1944 Annual Meeting.

¹²⁹ La Presse, "Articles de ménage": 6 août 1946, 17; 8 avril 1947, 19. See also Jeff Keshen, "One For All or All For One: Government Controls, Black Marketing and the Limits of Patriotism, 1939-47," Journal of Canadian Studies 29, 4 (Winter 1994-95), 133.

est à considérer."¹³⁰ Most Montréal veterans were more interested in finding a home in the city than in rural or suburban land ownership.¹³¹ Confronted with housing shortages and high rents, veterans turned to the state to demand affordable homes for their families. The problem, Montréal's Local Council of Women noted, was that housing had become a political "football tossed between the Federal and Municipal Governments, with local organizations trying to give the ball a shove in the right direction."¹³² Under Section 92 of the BNA Act, which included "property and civil rights," housing was generally a provincial responsibility. With the establishment of Wartime Housing Ltd., a Crown Corporation, the federal government entered the housing domain in order to house wartime munitions workers. After the war, veterans were eligible for Wartime Housing in such Montréal neighbourhoods as Ville St. Laurent, Rosemount, and Montreal-North. Concerned citizens, notably club-ladies from the LCW, visited the homes for veterans constructed by the federal government and found them to be "liveable and attractive," "Ideal for the young married couple just starting up housekeeping."¹³³ Yet while the Local Council of Women was pleased with the 843 Wartime Houses for veterans built and occupied by 1946-47, it claimed the next year that there were still 400 veteran

¹³⁰ La Presse, 7 août 1945, 4.

¹³¹ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File: 65-47-A. Monthly Report – December 1944, Montreal, 4 January 1945, H.M. Bell.

¹³² NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 5, File 6. 51st Year Book and Annual Report 1944-45, Report of the Committee on Housing and Town Planning.

¹³³ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164: Vol. 6, File 5. Digest of Address given by J.S. Hodgson, CMHC, 17 Nov. 1948; Vol. 7, File 27. "Housing -- their Problem. A Study of the Dwellings of 298 Montreal Families," March 1947; Vol. 6, File 5. Newsclipping, Montreal Daily Star [n.d. but 1946?], "New Homes for War Veterans Well Planned."

families in emergency shelters in the Montréal region.¹³⁴ It was up to cities and municipalities, the LCW noted, to petition the Dominion government for more Wartime Housing projects. Meanwhile, Montréal navy veterans demanded housing aid from the city and from the federal government, and Montréal's municipal councillors requested that the Department of National Defence put military barracks at the disposition of homeless families.¹³⁵

In their search for housing, veterans met with considerable sympathy. A Gallup poll taken in late 1946 reported that most Canadians, including those in Québec, saw homeless veterans' illegal occupation of government buildings as justified.¹³⁶ Voluntary groups across the city, including the LCW, the Montreal Soldiers' Wives League, the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique, and the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique, decried the local housing crisis and blamed various levels of government for failing to see that veterans were properly housed.¹³⁷ The Legion complained that rents at the new Benny Farm housing project were too high for veterans.¹³⁸ Discharged soldiers, then, had staunch

¹³⁴ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 5, File 7. 53rd Year Book and Annual Report 1946-47, Report of the Committee on Housing and Town Planning; 54th Year Book and Annual Report 1947-48, Report of the Housing and Town Planning Committee.

¹³⁵ La Presse: 15 août 1945, 5; 26 octobre 1945, 8; 28 novembre 1945, 3.

¹³⁶ La Presse, 2 novembre 1946, 30.

¹³⁷ NA, MSWL, MG 28 I 311, Vol. 5, File 25. Report of Mrs. Basil Hingston - Visiting of Next-of-kin [n.d.]; ANQM, MTC, P 257, Vol. 21, File: Habitation - Enquête de l'habitation ouvrière et logement. "La situation du logement à Montréal" [n.d.]; ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 216, File: Soldats (Service). Memorandum of the JOC To the CANADIAN GOVERNMENT in Favour of Demobilized Young Men [n.d. but after October 1946].

¹³⁸ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 3, File 1A. Minutes of Meeting of Sub-Executive Committee, 9 April 1947.

allies in some volunteer organizations. The federal government, meanwhile, sought assistance from local citizens who might be willing to rent to returned soldiers. "Ceci Vous a été Epargné," it reminded readers of La Presse in an advertisement depicting Nazi atrocities. "Soyez Reconnaissants. LOUEZ A UN VETERAN." Equally evocative was an ad portraying a veteran walking with a cane, his wife, and their young daughter. "NOUS AVONS BESOIN D'UN LOGIS!" the family exclaimed.¹³⁹ But housing had ethnic dimensions in Montréal. The Société St-Jean-Baptiste, for instance, complained in 1947 that Wartime Housing was lodging Anglo-Protestant veterans in French-Catholic neighbourhoods. Not only were anglophones taking over housing that should by all rights go to francophones but, the society argued, the two cultural groups ought to be segregated so that French-Canadian morals, faith, language, and culture would not be at risk.¹⁴⁰

Gallup polls conducted early in the war found that most Canadians wanted to see veterans treated better than their fathers had been at the end of the First World War and that this improved treatment should extend to finding employment for discharged soldiers.¹⁴¹ Montréal's Veterans' Welfare Officer reported that many employers thought that veterans deserved "a 'break' upon discharge" and were willing to "'try a veteran first'."¹⁴² In July 1945, for instance, local Dominion Stores advertised the fact that they

¹³⁹ La Presse: 5 janvier 1946, 11; 28 novembre 1945, 27.

¹⁴⁰ La Presse, 27 novembre 1947, 26.

¹⁴¹ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 197, File: Rehabilitation, Special Casualties. Address by Walter S. Woods, 7 September 1942.

¹⁴² NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A, Monthly Report, 2 November 1943.

were holding jobs for returning soldiers.¹⁴³ Yet returned men fretted about potential postwar unemployment. The Comité D'Action Trade-Unioniste appealed explicitly to veterans in November 1945. "Du FRONT DE COMBAT A LA CRISE ECONOMIQUE? Est-ce là ce que signifie 'reconversion'?" it warned.¹⁴⁴ Veterans who were among the last contingents to return from overseas worried that they might already have lost their chance to secure employment in postwar Montréal. One veteran interviewed by Barry Broadfoot, for example, recalled that he had returned to Montréal in February 1946 and had been unable to find work because "All the jobs were taken by those guys who were sent home in July and August of '45 and believe me, there were no jobs."¹⁴⁵

After August 1942, veterans could rely on the Reinstatement in Civil Employment Order, which promised them their old civilian jobs back, with seniority rights.¹⁴⁶ Those who had been unemployed or in school when they enlisted or who had no wish to return to their former jobs could visit the Veterans' Welfare Officers who had set up shop at the Unemployment Insurance Commission's local Employment and Claims Offices.¹⁴⁷ Returned soldiers who visited Montréal's Veterans' Welfare Bureau, located on Notre-Dame Ouest, obtained jobs as acetylene welders, warehousemen, metallurgists, stationary

¹⁴³ La Presse, 7 juillet 1945, 23.

¹⁴⁴ La Presse, 5 novembre 1945, 14.

¹⁴⁵ Broadfoot, The Veterans' Years, 47.

¹⁴⁶ England, Discharged, 201-202.

¹⁴⁷ England, Discharged, 156.

engineers, engine mechanics, parks men, teamsters, stokers, and chefs.¹⁴⁸ One of the Welfare Officer's tasks was to persuade the private sector to adopt 'veteran preference' policies and 'adjusted employment' for injured and disabled men: employment in the federal civil service and in work secured through government war contracts already operated according to this affirmative action policy.¹⁴⁹ By June 1944, Montréal's Veterans' Welfare Officer was able to report that the 'preference' campaign was working and that employment conditions for the city's veterans were good. Nonetheless, in September 1946, the DVA still felt the need to advertise Canadian employers' endorsements of their good relations with "leurs employés invalides."¹⁵⁰ Some employers apparently viewed men discharged early in the war "as though they had contagious diseases" and were reluctant to hire them.¹⁵¹ Moreover, in their attempt to place veterans in positions with seniority rights, DVA and National Selective Service officials confronted the rights of civilian workers inscribed in unions' collective agreements. Michael Stevenson's work demonstrates that certain employers, such as the Ford motor company, were eager to hire veterans so as to avoid hiring unionized workers. The failure of the Ford scheme, Stevenson argues, suggests that veterans' entitlement was

¹⁴⁸ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A. Monthly Report, Montreal, 2 November 1943.

¹⁴⁹ NA, DVA, RG 38: Vol. 193, File 65-47-A. Monthly Report, Montreal, 2 June 1943; Vol. 197, File: Rehabilitation, Reconstruction. Sub-Committee on Post-War Employment Opportunities. Committee on Reconstruction, Sub-Committee on Post-War Employment Opportunities, 4th meeting, 29 April 1942.

¹⁵⁰ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A, Monthly Report, Montreal, 2 June 1944; *La Presse*, 30 septembre 1946, 8.

¹⁵¹ NA, DVA, RG 38 Vol. 184, File: Clippings on Demobilization and Rehabilitation.

not untouchable or necessarily pre-eminent.¹⁵²

Those veterans who wanted to improve their postwar opportunities through further education could take advantage of the university education credits allowed discharged soldiers, or could enrol in vocational training and apprenticeship programmes. All Second World War veterans were eligible for retraining, in contrast to the First World War, when only the approximately twenty percent who were disabled were eligible. The federal government presented educational and vocational training as part of its attempt to provide "opportunity combined with security" to veterans. It emphasized mainly independence, however: training grants were "intended for those who are willing to help themselves."¹⁵³ Discharged men and women in Montréal could take apprenticeship and 'improvement' courses offered by the Aid to Youth service, which was administered by Québec's newly-established Department of Social Welfare and Youth in conjunction with the federal government.¹⁵⁴

University credits were intended to prepare veterans for employment in the postwar job market, but were also a way of delaying the entry of large numbers of

Transcript of article in the Montreal Daily Star, 8 January 1941, "Rehabilitation."

¹⁵² Michael D. Stevenson, "National Selective Service and Employment and Seniority Rights for Veterans, 1943-1946," in Neary and Granatstein, eds., The Veterans Charter. Thinking along the same lines as Ford, Montréal's Veterans' Welfare Officer suggested that "It should be the aim of employers to keep the ex-soldier as his inner guard against radicalism, not give him inspiration for it." NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File: 65-47-A. Monthly Report on Activities, Montreal, 3 February 1944.

¹⁵³ UM, Fonds Edouard-Montpetit, P 8/1, Committee on Reconstruction. Sub-Committee on Post-War Employment Opportunities, 5th meeting, 12 May 1942; NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 184, File: Rehabilitation - Confidential Letters, Vol. 1. Office Manual on Resumption of Educational Training, 1 March 1944.

¹⁵⁴ ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 216, File: Aide à la Jeunesse. Pamphlet, Department

veterans into that market until economic reconversion was stabilized.¹⁵⁵ Québec's French-language universities, however, such as the Université de Montréal and Laval, never came close to enrolling the number of veterans that flocked to McGill.¹⁵⁶ The Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique argued that "les Anglais" profited to a greater degree from their university credits than "les Canadiens-Français" because it was easier to meet the admission standards of anglophone universities, and there may have been some truth to this claim.¹⁵⁷ Peter Neary speculates, moreover, that the discretionary character of education credits (in order to be eligible for them, veterans had to be recommended by DVA counsellors) may have worked against French-Canadian servicemen.¹⁵⁸

Female veterans also faced a job search upon their return. The 4.64% of

of Social Welfare and Youth, Province of Québec.

¹⁵⁵ Peter Neary, "Canadian Universities and Canadian Veterans of World War II," in Neary and Granatstein, eds., *The Veterans Charter: Morton, A Military History*, 226.

¹⁵⁶ Peter Neary notes that McGill was the third-largest recipient of federal money for student-veterans, while Laval was 23rd and l'Université de Montréal in 25th place. See "Canadian Universities and Canadian Veterans of World War II," 139, 142, in Neary and Granatstein, eds., *The Veterans Charter*. Also NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A. Monthly Report, Montreal, 3 October 1945; *La Presse*, 5 janvier 1946, 22.

¹⁵⁷ ANQM, JOC, P 104, Container 239, File: Réhabilitation des militaires dans la vie civile. Service du Soldat. Notes en marge de l'entrevue avec monsieur Louis Charbonneau [n.d.]. Edgar Andrew Collard, in his history of McGill, writes that "... McGill and Sir George Williams had a very much larger proportion of veteran students than the Francophone universities. The reason for this was largely because admission to the Francophone universities was solely on the basis of the classical college baccalaureate. The Anglophone universities admitted on the basis of the matriculation or school-leaving certificate. Few veterans could make good the deficiencies in Latin, Greek and philosophy for admission to the French universities in the eighteen months from discharge allowed by DVA, but many could and did make good matriculation deficiencies." Collard, ed., *The McGill You Knew: An Anthology of Memories 1920-1960* (Don Mills: Longman Canada, 1975), p. 41.

¹⁵⁸ Neary, "Canadian Universities," 142. See also Neary, "Introduction," 8.

Canadian veterans who were female had been paid less than men while enlisted and had not been able to allocate dependents' allowances until July 1943. After January 1945, however, they were entitled to the same pensions, discharge benefits, and rehabilitation credits as men.¹⁵⁹ They were also eligible for retraining schemes: for instance, as practical nurses and nurses' aides.¹⁶⁰ At least one bureaucrat within the DVA, however, argued that ex-service women were not receiving appropriate or adequate training for postwar employment.¹⁶¹ Female veterans were trained for, and appear to have secured work in, traditionally feminine fields of employment. La Presse reported in 1944 that most female veterans hoped to work as stenographers after the war, with others preferring careers in nursing, teaching, book-keeping, and office work.¹⁶² A female speaker at a Training Conference on Women's Rehabilitation in 1946 felt that DVA counsellors should "advise ex-service women generally to go into work accepted as women's

¹⁵⁹ England, Discharged, 130; NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 184, File: Rehabilitation, Confidential Letters, Vol. 2. Counsellors' Reference Book, April 1945; Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein, Victory 1945: Canadians from War to Peace (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1995), 19, 150. On enlisted women and dependents' allowances: NA, RG 24, DND, Series E-1-b, Vol. 3371: File: HQ 428-1-1, Vol. 1. Memorandum to His Excellency, the Governor General-in-Council, from the Minister of National Defence for Air, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, 31 July 1941; File: HQ 428-1-1, Vol. 2. K.G. Nairn, A.M.A.F., Memorandum to Mr. Ghewy, D.P.R., 18 June 1943; Memorandum by K.G. Nairn, A/V/M, A.M.A.F., to A.M.O./A.H., 18 July 1944, Re: RCAF Women's Division, Dependents' Allowance.

¹⁶⁰ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 184, File: Rehabilitation, Confidential Letters, Vol. 2. Routine Letter No. 307, Ottawa, 18 June 1945, RE: Training of Ex-service Women as Nurses' Aides or Practical Nurses.

¹⁶¹ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 184, File: Rehabilitation, Confidential Letters, Vol. 2. Confidential Letter No. 179, 3 January 1946.

¹⁶² La Presse, 23 février 1944, 3.

work,"¹⁶³ while the National Council of Women noted that same year that the "Tendency for discharged service women is to go into commercial courses and hair dressing."¹⁶⁴ In February 1945, Montréal's District Superintendent of Rehabilitation noted that the demand from employers for ex-service women was "negligible." Those women who had obtained jobs through the Veterans' Welfare Bureau had found them in clerical work. By April 1946, the Montréal Superintendents were able to report that female veterans were securing employment without undue difficulty, but were finding it tough to "adjust their income to civilian needs."¹⁶⁵

Women discharged from the services faced other difficulties in their transition to civilian life. The DVA, for instance, argued that homeowners preferred to rent to men than to women.¹⁶⁶ One social worker observed, "Some girls look forward eagerly to returning home and are disappointed at what they find. Others openly admit they do not wish to leave the Service and for these too, return to civilian life is difficult." A YWCA worker likewise noted that, "some girls come to the 'Y' who felt like nobodies after discharge."¹⁶⁷ Female veterans occupied an ambiguous position in public perceptions.

¹⁶³ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 197, File: Rehabilitation, Statistics -- Women's Division. Proceedings: Training Conferences on Women's Rehabilitation [1946], 50.

¹⁶⁴ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 2. Minutes of Adjourned meeting of sub-executive, 16 May 1945; NA, Savage papers, MG 30 C 92, Vol. 3. Council of Women - National - 1940-48. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 28 February - 1 March 1946. See also Ruth Roach Pierson, *'They're Still Women After All': The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986), esp. Ch. 2.

¹⁶⁵ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A. Monthly Report, Montreal, 2 February 1945; Monthly Report, Montreal, 9 March [April?] 1946.

¹⁶⁶ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 193, File 65-47-A. Monthly Report, 9 March [April?] 1946.

¹⁶⁷ NA, DVA, RG 38, Vol. 197, File: Rehabilitation, Statistics - Women's Division.

Alongside provisions for training for postwar employment was the expectation that former servicewomen would marry and leave the workforce. Marriage, one army spokesman thought, “would appear to simplify the rehabilitation problems.” as “the marriage of a woman in the Defence Forces will result in there being one less competitor for post-war employment.”¹⁶⁸ Yet commentators were not entirely sure that these women, who had enjoyed some economic and personal independence within the structures of the armed services, would settle for marriage, homemaking, and financial dependency in the postwar period.¹⁶⁹

At least one Montréal social worker felt that the community's reaction to veterans was "hysterical" and that it accepted grants to veterans where it would not to strikers or miners who also risked their lives.¹⁷⁰ This begs an important question: did the Veterans Charter pave the way for, and ease the reception of, other postwar social security

Proceedings: Training Conferences on Women's Rehabilitation, 86-88.

¹⁶⁸ NA, DND, RG 24, Series E-1-b, Vol. 3371, File: HQ 428-3-1. Memorandum from A.E. Walford, Major-General, Chairman, Personnel Members Committee, Department of National Defence (Army) to Defence Council (Through Deputy Ministers), 31 July 1945.

¹⁶⁹ Armed forces personnel had been surprised to discover, for instance, that many enlisted women were important sources of financial support for their mothers or for incapacitated husbands. Evidence of these women's financial obligations spurred calls for enlisted women to be permitted to allocate dependents' allowances. NA, DND, RG 24, Series E-1-b, Vol. 3371: File: HQ 428-1-1, Vol. 1. Memorandum from J.A. Sully, Air Vice-Marshal, A.M.P., to Minister (through C.A.S.), 10 November 1942; Minutes of a meeting of a joint service committee of the personnel heads convened by air member for personnel at the direction of defence council to consider and report upon the question of Rates of Pay for Women in the Forces [29 December 1942]; File: HQ 428-1-3. W. Walker to Air Officer Commanding, No. 3 Training Command, Montreal, 15 December 1942; File: HQ 428-3-1. H.P. Crabb to The Secretary, Department of National Defence for Air, Ottawa, 18 January 1943.

¹⁷⁰ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Staff Meetings, September 1945 - January 1947. Minutes of Joint Meeting, Family Welfare Dept, Jewish Child Welfare

measures?¹⁷¹ Or did expenditures on veterans prevent money from going elsewhere: to hospital and health insurance, for instance, or to an expanded old-age pension system? Alvin Finkel, for one, has recently suggested that it is just as likely that provisions for veterans delayed or deflected the creation of a full-blown welfare state as that they fuelled it.¹⁷² It is quite likely that, given the relatively cautious desires for social security on the part of Ottawa Liberals, they had no intention of launching any further social security measures in the 1940s anyway.¹⁷³ On the other hand, the brief popularity of Keynesian thinking in Ottawa did produce a willingness to spend: as Peter Neary has argued, the Veterans Charter was the “enabling fiction” for this Keynesian spending.¹⁷⁴ Ottawa assumed that veterans were (to borrow Patrick Wilkinson’s words from another context) “a category of recipients whom no one would begrudge the help.”¹⁷⁵ What is certain is that the measures for veterans, and more broadly, the attention to veterans, gendered notions of entitlement and of the public. Veterans were largely male, in

Bureau, 30 January 1946.

¹⁷¹ Margaret McCallum, for instance, argues that in the First World War, “the existence of the CPF and veterans’ pensions likely facilitated the acceptance of other programs of state assistance, such as the provincially-funded mothers’ allowances introduced in the 1920s.” See “Assistance to Veterans,” 173.

¹⁷² Alvin Finkel, “Competing Master Narratives on Post-War Canada,” *Acadiensis* 29, 2 (Spring 2000), 203-204. For a similar argument about American Civil War pensions, see Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.; London, England: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1992).

¹⁷³ James Struthers, “Family Allowances, Old Age Security, and the Construction of Entitlement in the Canadian Welfare State, 1943-1951,” in Neary and Granatstein, eds., *The Veterans Charter*, 187.

¹⁷⁴ Neary, “Introduction,” in Neary and Granatstein, eds., *The Veterans Charter*, 11.

¹⁷⁵ Patrick Wilkinson, “The Selfless and the Helpless: Maternalist Origins of the U.S.

numbers and even more strongly in public perception. To bestow provisions on old soldiers, then, was to give men in particular significant opportunities in the realms of work, home, and education. As Linda Kerber has recently argued, when women are exempted from the obligations of citizenship (such as military service), their rights of citizenship are commensurately diminished.¹⁷⁶ In Québec, moreover, the Veterans Charter was a sharp reminder that certain obligations of citizenship – such as bearing arms in defence of the nation – were amply rewarded. Thus older conceptions of citizenship involving military duty persisted amid new senses of universal entitlement.

Theda Skocpol has suggested that in the early twentieth-century United States, soldiers (male) and mothers (female) were most likely to benefit from state-administered social policies: far more likely, she argues, than men claiming rights as breadwinners.¹⁷⁷ In Canada, some mothers had benefited from the means-tested mothers' allowances launched by the provinces during the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. All mothers benefited from the federal family allowances legislated in 1944. Male breadwinners obtained some security through the provincial workmen's compensation measures of the 1910s and through unemployment insurance, introduced in 1940. Soldiers certainly benefited from the Veterans Charter. Nonetheless, although soldiers and mothers were heralded as the principal beneficiaries of veterans' benefits and family allowances (two of the biggest social welfare measures of the 1940s), both policies were in fact aimed at supporting

Welfare State," *Feminist Studies* 25, 3 (Fall 1999), 586.

¹⁷⁶ Linda K. Kerber, *No Constitutional Right To Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), esp. pp. 223-224.

¹⁷⁷ Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*; Skocpol, "Soldiers, Workers, and Mothers:

male breadwinners.¹⁷⁸ Veterans' provisions were deliberately enacted in order to help former soldiers become self-sufficient breadwinners; family allowances were to permit men earning inadequate wages to support their families without their wives or children having to go out to work.¹⁷⁹ In the wake of the war, when women and children had worked for pay in large numbers, the male breadwinner was seen to need some help from the state.

The dependents' allowances discussed earlier in this chapter were somewhat different. Although Nancy Christie claims that they, too, were a 'breadwinner' measure, they emerged from an older conception of citizenship that emphasized loyalty to the nation expressed through military service. The DAB insisted throughout the war that assigned pay and dependents' allowances were not a wage; rather, they were designed to encourage recruitment and sustain morale among the troops by assuring servicemen that their wives, children, and other dependents would be cared for by the federal state.¹⁸⁰ Dependents' allowances were not only for women who were mothers: the childless wives, children, parents and siblings of enlisted men could all receive allowances under

Gendered Identities in Early U.S. Social Policy," *Contention* 2, 3 (Spring 1993). 169.

¹⁷⁸ For the argument that almost every social policy enacted from the 1930s on was designed to shore up the male breadwinner, see Nancy Christie, *Engendering the State: Family, Work, and Welfare in Canada* (Toronto: UTP, 2000).

¹⁷⁹ James Struthers argues that policymakers in the 1940s justified family allowances in terms of "deficiencies in the male breadwinner wage." See "Family Allowances, Old Age Security," 186.

¹⁸⁰ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 29, File: Mothers' Allowance, DAB 5-1. A.H. Brown to Arthur MacNamara, 15 April 1940. For an excellent article on the role of American Civil War pensions in sustaining soldiers' morale, making up for the loss of a male breadwinner, providing for the elderly, and supervising widows, see Megan J. McClintock, "Civil War Pensions and the Reconstruction of Union Families," *Journal of*

certain circumstances.¹⁸¹ But as Susan Pedersen has argued about First World War “separation allowances” in Britain, some of the basic characteristics of wartime dependents’ allowances re-appeared in the welfare state of the 1940s. Dependents’ allowances created a relationship between the federal state and some working-class wives that would be echoed, to some degree, in family allowances.¹⁸² Like family allowances, dependents’ allowances were not subject to means tests (at least for wives and children), and were calculated according to a diminishing rate after the first child.¹⁸³ Many wives felt entitled to their dependents’ allowances.¹⁸⁴ This sense of entitlement, more usually associated with the universal measures of the postwar period, extended to demanding cost-of-living bonuses and increases in their allowances. One woman from Montreal North wrote to the DAB in 1941, saying that she was

American History 83, 2 (September 1996): 456-480.

¹⁸¹ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: DAB 4-5, Vol. 4, General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies. R.O.G. Bennett to J.M. Telford, 19 January 1945.

¹⁸² A reading of Pedersen’s article suggests a number of similarities between separation allowances in First World War Britain and dependents’ allowances in Second World War Canada. The former, she argues, were characterized by the “privileging of the status of the citizen-soldier as a consequence of the pressures of war; the development of a state administration that incorporated the work of private charities; and the enforcement of the sexual and economic rights of men through the operation of moral tests of wives’ eligibility for benefits.” Susan Pedersen, “Gender, Welfare, and Citizenship in Britain during the Great War,” American Historical Review 95, 4 (October 1990), 985-986.

¹⁸³ This decreasing rate was also present in the Canadian Patriotic Fund allowances to soldiers’ children during the First World War. Dominion of Canada, Debates of the House of Commons, Fifth (Special War) Session – Eighteenth Parliament, 11 September 1939, p. 123.

¹⁸⁴ Women’s and children’s sense of entitlement to their dependents’ allowances was suggested in the advertisement that appeared in The Canadian Unionist 19, 9 (September 1945), inside front cover.

... hoping to get an answer to the question that is being asked by hundreds everywhere, that being, When are we soldiers wives going to get a rise in our pay. the factory workers have all had their pay increased to keep up with the rise in the cost of living, also all Civil Servants are getting a bonus to help them out. But we Soldiers wives are still having to carry on the best we can with the same pay as we got when war started, and that is no easy job now that the cost of living has doubled, we are not complaining all we want is a square deal and a chance to live properly.¹⁸⁵

Dependents had their advocates in Parliament: one MP argued that a cost-of-living bonus to soldiers' wives would mean that "these women would take care of their children, look after their homes, devote themselves to their domestic duties instead of feeling impelled to take part in public movements to save their standards of living."¹⁸⁶

The investigations that accompanied the administration of dependents' allowances uncovered real need in these families (temporarily) without male breadwinners. Cramped and deteriorating housing was common, and poor health was frequent in these days before health and hospital insurance. The establishment of the Dependents' Board of Trustees in 1941, to deal with financial needs above and beyond those covered by dependents' allowances, testified to the poverty of many of these families of enlisted men.¹⁸⁷ Over 90% of DBT expenditures were related to costs incurred by illness.¹⁸⁸ A

¹⁸⁵ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 29, File: Complaints, DAB 5-6, Vol. 2. Mrs. E. Wiltshire to DAB, 5 September 1941 [emphases in the original]. An Ottawa woman concerned about the impact of the rising cost of living on her dependent's allowance told Mackenzie King, "... I think that we are entitled to some consideration in this matter. After all my husband and all my brothers are in the Army. So we are doing our bit. Don't you think so?" In the same file, Mrs. K. Fawcett to the Prime Minister, 15 August 1942.

¹⁸⁶ Dominion of Canada, Debates of the House of Commons, 12 November 1941, p. 4334; also Debates, 28 April 1942, pp. 1935, 1939.

¹⁸⁷ Dominion of Canada, Debates of the House of Commons: 14 November 1941, pp.

“disproportionately large” number of applications for DBT assistance came from Québec, and were attributed to the many large families in the province, as well as the “Small number of Welfare Agencies operating in Quebec” and the “Abnormal incidence of sickness and attendant expense, resulting inevitably from many large families in poor circumstances.”¹⁸⁹ The poverty of many French-Canadian families, in particular, was evident in the considerable costs incurred by the Bureau d’Assistance Sociale aux Familles, the social agency charged with administering dependents’ allowances for French-Canadian families whom the Board thought needed to be supervised. The DAB believed these costs to be out of all proportion to costs incurred by agencies elsewhere. The Bureau justified its expenditures by pointing to the severe need of many of the city’s French-Canadian families, as well as the fact that many of these families had more children than the number provided for by the DAB (which increased from two children to six between September 1939 and January 1943¹⁹⁰). Ottawa, the Bureau charged, needed a better understanding of the workings of welfare in Montréal. Moreover, it needed to appreciate the fact that in administering allowances for the Board, the Bureau was

4424-4426; 28 April 1942, pp. 1932-1933.

¹⁸⁸ NA, DND, RG 24, Vol. 1596, File: Dependents’ Board of Trustees, Index and Minutes of Meetings. DND, The Dependents’ Board of Trustees, Confidential Memorandum re: The Dependents’ Board of Trustees, 1 March 1946. The DBT considered applications for assistance “when the need is due to: size of family, illness, death, change of domicile, educational assistance, social problems or other hardships.” NA, DND, RG 24, Vol. 1596, File: Dependents’ Board of Trustees – Reference Manual for Regional Dependents’ Advisory Committees. Part 10, Applications, p. 2.

¹⁸⁹ NA, DND, RG 24, Vol. 1596, File: Dependents’ Board of Trustees, Index and Minutes of Meetings. Minutes, Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee, 8 November 1944, p. 402.

¹⁹⁰ Dominion of Canada, Debates of the House of Commons, 28 April 1942, p. 1923.

unfairly neglecting the civilian cases under its care.¹⁹¹

The Dependents' Allowance system bequeathed a legacy to the reconstruction period in terms of French-English relations, social policy, and conceptions of family. Across Canada, investigations for the DAB were generally carried out by local social agencies.¹⁹² In Montréal, this was the practice for Protestant and Jewish families. The city's French-Canadian families, however, were investigated not by the Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles (which was overburdened with work), but by the Department of Pensions and National Health, the Montreal Unemployment Relief Department (especially in "tough" cases) and occasionally, the RCMP.¹⁹³ What this meant was that federal allowances to French-Canadian families were often accompanied

¹⁹¹ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: Montreal Welfare Department, DAB 4-7. Eveline P. Laporte, pour Mlle Françoise Marchand, to Capitaine J.M. Campeau, 29 juin 1946; Mme Jeanne Barabé-Langlois to M. R.O.G. Bennett, 23 décembre 1942; Memoranda [sic] from Board of Directors, Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles, to R.O.G. Bennett, DAB, 6 May 1944; R.O.G. Bennett to Mr. Charles E. Geoffrion, 31 July 1944. The Montreal Council of Social Agencies also pointed out to the DAB that "The Montreal Social Agencies have their particular difficulties in that as there is no Public Welfare Department functioning here, the voluntarily supported agencies are overloaded with work at all times, and therefore find it particularly difficult to add extra work and costs to continually overburdened staffs and inelastic funds." In the same file, MCSA, Meeting to discuss services provided by certain Montreal Social Agencies to Dependents' Allowance Board Cases, 10 October 1941.

¹⁹² NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28: File: DAB 4-5, Vol. 4, General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies. J. Pembroke, Chairman, DBT, to R.O.G. Bennett, Chairman, DAB, 4 November 1942; File: DAB 4-3, Investigations, Department of Pensions and National Health. R.O.G. Bennett to Kathleen M. Jackson, 12 July 1945.

¹⁹³ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18: Vol. 28, File: Montreal Welfare Department, DAB 4-7. MCSA, Meeting to discuss services provided by certain Montreal Social Agencies to Dependents' Allowance Board Cases, 10 October 1941; Lt. Col. J.G. Raymond to Mr. Charles Young, n.d. [22 September 1941]; R.O.G. Bennett to Colonel G.S. Currie, 12 August 1944; Vol. 50, File: Procedure 43. Suspension of Allowances for Wife on Ground of Improper Conduct. Ruth Robertson to R.O.G. Bennett, 29 November 1943.

by federal intrusions into family life. And yet, the most vigorous complaints by dependents were reserved for City of Montreal investigators, who were criticized for being rude, “unethical and indiscreet.”¹⁹⁴

The ordinary citizens who agitated for social welfare measures, or for better social welfare measures, were expanding the public: both the scope of public provisions, and membership in ‘the public.’ Paradoxically, at the same time that the public was under reconstruction – and more precisely, under expansion – appeals for privacy persisted. Indeed, the call for universal social provisions – measures that would be delivered without intrusive and humiliating means tests – was a demand for privacy within the family. Thus when citizens likened means tests and investigations of families to “Gestapo procedure,” they were arguing that a degree of privacy was essential in a democratic society in the 1940s.¹⁹⁵ Dependents’ allowances were an in-between measure: the wives of soldiers were eligible for them without financial means tests, but

¹⁹⁴ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18: Vol. 28, File: DAB 4-3, Investigations, Department of Pensions and National Health. J.W. McKee to R.O.G. Bennett. 10 November 1941; Vol. 29, File: DAB 5-6. Inadequacy of Allowances, Complaints, Etc., Vol. 2. R.O.G. Bennett to Brigadier General Edouard de B. Panet, 24 November 1941.

¹⁹⁵ NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File: Montreal Welfare Department, DAB 4-7. Conference on Working Relationships Between the Dependents’ Allowance Board and Protestant Welfare Agencies of Montreal, 15 October 1941. James Snell has also found a reference to means-tested old age pensions and the investigations accompanying them as a “Gestapo” system. James G. Snell, “The First Grey Lobby: The Old Age Pensioners’ Organization of British Columbia, 1932-1951,” *BC Studies* 102 (Summer 1994), 5. Cited in Struthers, “Family Allowances, Old Age Security,” 191. American historians have argued that the years after World War II saw families attempting to reclaim the privacy they had lost during the war. See Duis, “No Time for Privacy,” 39; Graebner, *Age of Doubt*, 1-2.

their behaviour was still open to moral scrutiny.¹⁹⁶ They were, then, a rehearsal for more expansive kinds of welfare-state measures (such as family allowances) that would be universal and not contingent on notions of loyalty and propriety. In Québec, moreover, family allowances, which were paid to all parents, probably defused the jealousy provoked by dependents' allowances – federal money allocated only to the dependents of servicemen.

The evidence of need unearthed by DAB and DBT investigations may well have increased support for family allowances a few years later. Yet in reaffirming a heterosexual, nuclear family consisting of a breadwinning husband, a stay-at-home wife, and dependent children, family allowances ignored the alternative conceptions of family espoused by many Canadians and discovered by DAB and DBT personnel during the war. One of the biggest sources of controversy in the administration of dependents' allowances had to do with the different amounts allocated to wives and mothers respectively. The wives of enlisted men were allocated \$35 per month as a matter of right – that is, without financial means tests. The mothers of enlisted men could also apply for allowances. If their sons had supported them prior to enlistment, and they were found to be truly needy, they could be allocated payments of up to \$20 (later \$25) a month, depending on how much the son had contributed to his mother's home prior to

¹⁹⁶ I would argue that Nancy Christie underestimates the degree to which questions of 'morality' continued to play a role in the administration of dependents' allowances. See Christie, *Engendering the State*, 259-261. Pedersen's "Gender, Welfare, and Citizenship in Britain," about First World War separation allowances, describes more accurately what happened in Canada in World War II. Margaret McCallum observes about pensions for Canadian First World War widows that "Although not subject to a means test, soldiers' widows were not free of BPC [Board of Pension Commissioners] supervision." See

joining up.¹⁹⁷ An avalanche of criticism was heaped upon the federal government from soldiers' advocates, Members of Parliament, women's groups, and mothers themselves. Elderly mothers, their champions argued, needed at least as much financial support as wives, who were presumably healthier, had fewer medical expenses, and could take on paid work if need be. Why should the rights of wives be "inviolable" while mothers who had raised sons and given them to the service of their country were reduced to applying for "charity"?¹⁹⁸ The campaign to match the allowances of mothers to those of wives was a reminder to the government that children continued to be a major source of support for aging parents (and sometimes for siblings). It also suggests that other familial relationships competed with the heterosexual marriage bond for loyalty during the war years.

By the end of 1947, the veteran-oriented work of social agencies such as the Jewish Vocational Service was coming to an end. Montréal's Citizens' Rehabilitation

"Assistance to Veterans," 167.

¹⁹⁷ The DAB's rationale for this difference is in NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 29, File: DAB 5-1, Mothers Allowance. Memorandum by A.H. Brown, 7 June 1940.

¹⁹⁸ As one Toronto woman wrote to the Prime Minister's Office in 1942, "It seems most unfair that wives of soldiers should get so much better treatment than dependent mothers, for after all, it is the mothers who supply the men for our fighting forces! And who have devoted the best years of their lives to their upbringing, and probably made many sacrifices in doing so; surely they deserve to be treated as fairly as the wives?" NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 29, File: DAB 5-6, Inadequacy of Allowances, Complaints, Etc., Vol. 2. Annie C. Duncan to Mr. H.R.L. Henry, 28 October 1942. Also Vol. 28, File: Reports on Conferences and Inspections. Report on Canadian Conference of Social Workers, May 15-18 1944, Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg, by Ruth Harvey; and Dominion of Canada, Debates of the House of Commons: 24 May 1940, pp. 212-215; 28 May 1940, p. 298; 28 April 1942, pp. 1928, 1930-1932.

Committee, likewise, was effectively "moribund."¹⁹⁹ Many of the veterans dealt with by such organizations – men at loose ends, or men suffering from illness or depression, or men who had returned to face significant family problems – figured only occasionally in the narratives of postwar reunion.²⁰⁰ As poststructuralist scholars remind us, the telling of any story involves the suppression of other stories that might be told just as well; every narrative is built on omissions and exclusions.²⁰¹ The silences in the romance of reunion are important. Most obviously, this was a resolutely heterosexual narrative. Despite (or perhaps because of) the military bureaucracy's exposure to homosexual relationships between armed forces personnel during the war, such relationships received no sanction in the dominant discourse of postwar reunion.²⁰² Furthermore, sexual relationships were privileged over others. More soldiers had parents than had wives, for instance, but it was the reunion of the male soldier and his female companion that attracted the most public

¹⁹⁹ MUA, MCSA, MG 2076, C. 17, File 67. Jacob Tuckman, "Vocational Guidance -- A Community Responsibility," 7 April 1949; NA, DAB, RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 12, File: General Correspondence Re: Citizens' Committees, 'A' District - Montreal. Letter from H.M. Hague, 25 July 1947.

²⁰⁰ American historian William Graebner notes, however, that some contemporary Hollywood films about returning veterans depicted "the moment of homecoming ... as awkward, traumatic, or disappointing." Graebner, *Age of Doubt*, 14.

²⁰¹ Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia UP, 1988).

²⁰² On the homecomings of gay and lesbian veterans in the United States, see Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: Free Press, 1990), esp. Ch. 9. For Canada, see the fragmentary evidence in Gary Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire: Homo and Hetero Sexualities*, 2nd ed., revised (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1996), 154-157. See also Paul Jackson, "The Prejudice of Good Order: Homosexuality and the Canadian Military, 1939-1945" (Ph.D. diss., Queen's University, in-progress). For evidence of lesbian relationships in the Canadian navy, see Pierson, 'They're Still Women', 275n83.

attention.

Moreover, such was the commitment of the narrative to heterosexuality and to 'traditional' gender roles that female veterans fit uneasily into the conventional story. The returning military hero was depicted as male; women's role was to wait loyally at home. The Canadian public was assured that women veterans, like their male counterparts, were eagerly anticipating establishing homes and families of their own. As historian Ruth Pierson has shown, servicewomen's marriages to servicemen were given extensive publicity.²⁰³ But it was difficult to reconcile the female veterans' wartime mobility, military experience, and (albeit limited) degree of sexual freedom with the romance of reunion. Certainly those unmarried service women discharged for pregnancy played little part in postwar romances.²⁰⁴

Narratives of reunion were also problematic given the anti-conscription, and sometimes antiwar, sentiment in Québec. Indeed, the homecoming narratives coexisted uneasily with counter-narratives, such as those recorded by Pierre Vallières, of French-Canadian men "hidden in the woods, armed with their rifles," who had "mobilized their wives and children to organize resistance to the military police."²⁰⁵ In this case the North

²⁰³ Pierson, *'They're Still Women.'* 159-161, 184.

²⁰⁴ NA, DVA, RG 38 Vol. 197, File: Rehabilitation, Statistics, Women's Division. Proceedings: Training Conferences on Women's Rehabilitation, 83-87. The fact that some women discharged for pregnancy had been pregnant at the time of enlistment suggests that joining the armed services may have been an effort to escape the censure of family and community. NA, DND, RG 24, Series E-1-b, Vol. 3371, File: HQ 428-1-1, Vol. 1. E.D. Martin to Air Officer Commanding, No. 3 Training Command, Montreal, 3 August 1942.

²⁰⁵ Pierre Vallières, *White Niggers of America*, trans. Joan Pinkham (Toronto; Montréal: McClelland & Stewart, 1971), 64.

American military hero met his match in the French-Canadian antihero resisting the coercive power of the state and British imperialism. The reunion tales also tended to elide questions of class: the differing experiences of officers and rank-and-file servicemen, or the particular difficulties of working-class family economies. The romance of reunion was produced and narrated in Québec, as it was elsewhere on the continent. But given the dynamic of French-English relations and the political economy of enlistment within the province, it also met with greater challenges than elsewhere.

Narratives of demobilization had a certain timeless quality, harking back to a mythical golden age of Ulysses and Penelope, and were no doubt told in the wake of other military conflicts such as the First World War a generation earlier. Indeed, the strength of these narratives can be attributed partly to their familiarity. But the length of the war, Canadians' 'total war' effort, the extent to which women had taken on 'men's jobs,' the homosocial nature of life for many Canadians in wartime, and the legacy of the Depression, ensured that these heterosexual reunion narratives had a particular resonance in the late 1940s. Family strains were deeply felt, given that Canadian soldiers (like those pledging allegiance to other nations) had been encouraged to fight to preserve Home and Family, and given that the postwar years witnessed an intense pressure to rebuild households disrupted by war. Widespread evidence of troubled marriages and of women's sexual autonomy was, in part, what lay behind the push for conjugal domesticity in the postwar period.²⁰⁶

As we have seen, there were other ways, too, in which Montréalers incorporated

²⁰⁶ On American women's wartime sexual autonomy, see Elaine Tyler May, "Rosie the

'private' wartime experiences into postwar expectations. The material context of family life in wartime – including absent breadwinners, decrepit housing, and regular (if sometimes inadequate) federal allowances – informed families' visions of citizenship and their demands of the state under reconstruction. As veterans and their families attempted to secure jobs or set up house in the postwar metropolis, they drew on, and expanded, the relationships that many of them had established with their governments during the war.

Riveter Gets Married," in Erenberg and Hirsch, eds., The War in American Culture, 134.

Chapter 3 Commemorating the Cent-Mariés: the Mass Marriage, the *Mouvement familial*, and the Politics of Postwar Reconstruction

I. The Wedding

Six weeks before Canada entered the Second World War, 105 Catholic, French-Canadian, working-class couples were married in a baseball stadium on the east side of Montréal. Over 25,000 observers crowded the stands on this sunny Sunday morning. Local dignitaries and public officials were present, as were reporters from over 150 Canadian and American newspapers. Numerous newsreel companies filmed the extraordinary events of July 23rd, 1939.¹

The mass wedding was the brain-child of Oblate priests involved with the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique (Young Catholic Workers). The JOC was one of the specialized movements of the Action catholique (Catholic Action), which had been organized in Québec in an effort to re-spiritualize everyday life amid what appeared to be rapid secularization and rampant materialism.² As its name suggests, the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique (founded, in Canada, in 1932) was a forum in which young,

¹ Archives Nationales du Québec à Montréal (ANQM), Mouvement des Travailleurs Chrétiens (MTC), P257: Vol. 11, File: 5e anniversaire - Congrès - 1944 - Publicité et propagande. Clipping, *The Social Forum*, June 1944, "Canadian Jocists Celebrate Mass Marriage Anniversary"; Vol. 12, Scrapbook: Cent Mariés, 1939-. Clipping, *The Standard* [n.d. but July 1940], "First Anniversary of the Mass Marriage. All 'Very Happy'."

² The ACC claimed that its goal was "influencer le temporel pour le rendre conforme au plan de Dieu." Archives de l'Université de Montréal (UM), Fonds de l'Action

unmarried, working-class French-Canadian men and women could address everyday matters that concerned them both as Catholics and as workers.³ In response to the papal encyclical *Casti Connubii* of 1931, which had called for an effort to make marriage sacred again, the JOC established marriage preparation courses for Catholic working-class couples. All 210 participants in the mass wedding had taken the marriage preparation courses for over a year; the wedding was thus a kind of graduation ceremony as well.⁴ Over one hundred other couples had apparently applied to participate in the wedding but had been refused. Many observers considered the mass wedding a kind of publicity stunt for the JOC; its organizers insisted, however, that it was a public celebration of Christian marriage and of the benefits of carefully considered marital unions.

Catholique Canadienne (ACC), P16, File: P16/G5/8/4. "Action Catholique Canadienne."

³ The JOC operated on the principle of "la non-mixité," which meant that young men and women organized separately in the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique Masculine and the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique Féminine. For a good analysis of the opportunities provided to young working-class women by the JOCF, see Lucie Piché, "La Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique Féminine: Un lieu de formation sociale et d'action communautaire, 1931-1966," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 52, 4 (Printemps 1999): 481-506.

⁴ *Le Mouvement Ouvrier*, Juillet-Août 1944, "Un Avant-goût du congrès," 24; ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 10, File: Statistiques – Cent Mariés. *Les Cent Mariés Reviennent sur la Scène, 1939-1944; Preuves vivantes; Les 105 mariages et leurs développements* [all n.d. but 1944]; Vol. 12, Scrapbook: Cent Mariés, 1939-. Clipping from *The (Montréal) Standard*, "First Anniversary of the Mass Marriage. All 'Very Happy'" [n.d. but July 1940]. On the Service de Préparation au Mariage, see Gaston Desjardins, *L'Amour en patience: la sexualité adolescente au Québec, 1940-1960* (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1995); Michael Gauvreau, "The Emergence of Personalist Feminism, Catholicism and the Marriage Preparation Movement in Québec, 1940-1966" (Unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association meetings, 1998); Anne Pelletier, "La Contribution, le rôle et la place des femmes au Service de préparation au mariage de Montréal 1944-1972" (M.A. thesis, Université de Montréal, 1997).

Like the working-class weddings in early twentieth-century Halifax described by historian Suzanne Morton, this wedding combined the sacred and the secular, and twinned an infatuation with romance with a concern for economic realities. The marriage ceremony was preceded by communion at Montréal's Notre-Dame cathedral, and followed by a picnic for the celebrants and their guests on Ile Ste-Hélène. Although clearly a religious event designed to celebrate Christian marriage, it reflected broader North American concerns of consumption. Young couples on tight budgets worried about being able to afford dresses, bouquets, and honeymoons. Moreover, unlike most working-class women who married in 1930s Montréal, all 105 brides wore white. White wedding gowns were becoming the norm elsewhere in mid-twentieth-century North America, and were, as both Morton and British historian John Gillis point out, part of the promotion of a classless ideal of romance.⁵ Yet these elements of romance that were supposed to transcend class and ethnicity were incorporated into a wedding that was all about the specificity of French-Canadian and working-class experiences.

The commemoration of the mass marriage tells us much about postwar reconstruction in Québec. In this chapter, I look first at the public celebration of the couples' fifth, tenth, and fifteenth wedding anniversaries by the press, provincial politicians, and the Catholic Church. I then turn to the ways in which the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique kept track of the couples (known as the Cent-Mariés), and of the daily events

⁵ Suzanne Morton, "The June Bride as the Working-Class Bride: Getting Married in a Halifax Working-Class Neighbourhood in the 1920s," 373, 375, in Bettina Bradbury, ed., Canadian Family History: Selected Readings (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1992); Denyse Baillargeon, Ménagères au temps de la Crise (Montréal: Les Éditions du remue-

of their married lives, well into the postwar period through surveys and questionnaires. The Ligue Ouvrière Catholique (LOC) itself traced its birth to the mass wedding. Calling itself “le mouvements [sic] des papas et des mamans,” it was an offshoot of the JOC intended for married working-class French-Canadians. I examine the LOC’s postwar projects for what they can tell us about family and reconstruction, and I situate the Cent-Mariés and the LOC within the broader context of the Catholic Church’s ‘mouvement familial.’ Finally, I contrast the LOC’s vision of family under reconstruction to that of a competing ‘expert’ on marriage and family: the postwar advice columnist. This chapter highlights the role of one branch of the Catholic Church in Québec’s postwar reconstruction, and points to alternative visions of family and reconstruction to the ones proposed by the federal government in the wake of the Second World War.

II. The Marriages

i. Public Remembering

The mass marriage merits a mention in several histories of twentieth-century Québec. Some scholars have viewed it as a last gasp of clerical nationalism, others as heralding the advent of “personalist feminism” and as helping to sow the seeds of the

ménage, 1991), 88-89; John R. Gillis, For Better. For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present (New York; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985), 293-294.

Quiet Revolution.⁶ My own interest is not so much the wedding itself as the ways in which the marriages of these 105 couples were both celebrated and monitored, in public and in more private forums, five, ten, and fifteen years after the wedding. It is not likely that the fanfare and hoopla of this wedding would have quickly disappeared from public memory, and journalists and magazine writers would probably have periodically revisited the couples as a human-interest story anyway, as they did, for instance, with the Dionne quintuplets.⁷ What interests me here are the efforts taken by the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique to ensure that the couples would not be forgotten, by organizing very public celebrations of their wedding anniversaries. Both the wedding and the anniversary celebrations spoke volumes about the LOC's conceptions of family and nation. More than a tribute to romantic love, the anniversary celebrations, like the wedding, reflected, and shaped, ideas of class, community, and patriotism.⁸

⁶ Andrée Lévesque, Making and Breaking the Rules: Women in Quebec, 1919-1939, trans. Yvonne M. Klein (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1994), 46; Michael Gauvreau, "Emergence of Personalist Feminism," 1-2. The wedding is also briefly mentioned in Robert Rumilly, Histoire de Montréal, Tome IV (Montréal: Fides, 1974), 293; Jean-Pierre Collin, La Ligue ouvrière catholique canadienne, 1938-1954 (Montréal: Boréal, 1996), 34; Marie-Paule Malouin, Le Mouvement familial au Québec. Les débuts: 1937-1965 (Montréal: Boréal, 1998), 47; William Weintraub, City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and '50s (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1996), 20.

⁷ See the Journal of Canadian Studies 29, 4 (Winter 1994-95), a special issue devoted to the Dionne quintuplets.

⁸ Raphael Samuel suggests that "National fictions might be considered not as reflections of ideology, whether at second or third remove, but as components in it, an imaginative underpinning, or disguise, for precepts which are the common currency of political debate." There is a sense in which the Cent-Mariés, although real people, became a 'national fiction' for mid-twentieth-century Québec. See "Introduction: The Figures of National Myth," in Samuel, ed., Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Vol. 3: National Fictions (London; New York: Routledge, 1989), xix.

The LOC held picnics for some of the anniversaries,⁹ but it reserved the major celebrations for the 5th, 10th, and 15th anniversaries. These celebrations involved masses at St. Joseph's Oratory and pilgrimages to Cap-de-la-Madeleine, both popular sites of religious worship. Seventy of the 105 couples showed up for their fifth anniversary, and forty-nine couples for their fifteenth; moreover, thousands of curious onlookers crowded the grounds of the Oratory on each occasion in order to observe the festivities.¹⁰ The strong religious component of the anniversaries is not surprising, but there were other dimensions to the celebrations. The fifth anniversary celebration, in 1944, included a large-scale pageant about the material problems facing working families. For, as the LOC's propagandist, Léo-Paul Turcotte, asked the provincial Leader of the Opposition, Maurice Duplessis, "Le relèvement de la famille ouvrière, n'est-ce pas le second front sur lequel il faut à tout prix gagner la guerre[?]."¹¹ The LOC also took the opportunity to present its "Charte de l'Oratoire" (Oratory Charter), which called on workers, employers, and the state to address the needs of working families. Obviously patterned on the 1941

⁹ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 10, File: Correspondance – Cent Mariés. Secrétariat Général. LOC, Montréal, to "Chers amis," 14 juillet 1945.

¹⁰ Montreal Gazette, 22 July 1944, "Mark 5th Anniversary. Commemorate Mass Marriage of 106 Couples," 17; Montreal Gazette, 24 July 1944, "Mass Marriage is Commemorated," 11; Toronto Daily Star, 22 July 1944, "115-Pound Cake, 200 Children 5 Years After Mass Marriage," 25; Globe and Mail, 24 July 1944, "Mass-Wedding Couples Mark 5th Anniversary," 11; Globe and Mail, 25 July 1949, "Mass Marriage of 1939 Recalled," 12; Montreal Gazette, 25 July 1949, "49 Couples Married at Stadium Observe 10th Anniversary at Mass." 15. Also ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 10, File: Statistiques – Cent Mariés. Preuves vivantes [1944]; Vol. 11, File: 5e anniversaire: Congrès – autorités religieuses. Clipping, Le Petit Journal, 22 avril 1954, "Quinze ans après. Que sont devenus les cent mariés de 1939?"; Clipping, Action Populaire, 19 avril 1954, "Quinzième anniversaire des '105 mariages jocistes de 1939'." See also Malouin, Le Mouvement familial, 39.

Atlantic Charter, Roosevelt's and Churchill's declaration of postwar principles that incorporated Roosevelt's Four Freedoms (freedom from want and fear, freedom of speech and religion), the Charte de l'Oratoire spoke to the context of war, to a new international awareness, and to an emerging sense of entitlement among ordinary citizens.¹² The fifteenth-anniversary pilgrimage to Cap-de-la-Madeleine took place in an "année mariale"; this tribute to the Virgin Mary, however, included a Rally for Working Families.¹³ Clearly, the spiritual and the material were closely intertwined.

The anniversaries drew attention from both Church and State. Provincial politicians, including Liberal Premier Adélard Godbout, Leader of the Opposition Maurice Duplessis, and leader of the Bloc Populaire, André Laurendeau, published

¹¹ York University Archives (YUA), Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001, Reel 7. Léo-Paul Turcotte to Honorable M. Maurice Duplessis, 28 juin 1944.

¹² ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: Congrès du 5e anniversaire – organisations. Aimé Carbonneau and Pierre-Paul Asselin to "Cher Monsieur," 6 juillet 1944; Le Mouvement Ouvrier, Septembre 1944, "La Charte de l'Oratoire," 20; Collin, Ligue ouvrière catholique, 45, 214n27. Robert Rumilly notes that Quebecers calling for the release of former Montreal mayor Camillien Houde from a federal internment camp also did so in the name of the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms. See his Histoire de Montréal, Tome V, 1939-1967 (Montréal: Fides, 1974), 109. For American commemorations of the Atlantic Charter, see John Bodnar, "Public Memory in an American City: Commemoration in Cleveland," in John R. Gillis, ed., Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1994), 83-84. Bodnar suggests that "the principles enunciated in the Atlantic Charter, such as the right to resist territorial aggrandizement by outsiders, ... reinforced both American and ethnic interests during the war." On Québec families' new sense of entitlement in the 1940s, see Dominique Marshall, Aux origines sociales de l'État-providence: Familles québécoises, obligation scolaire et allocations familiales 1940-1955 (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1998), esp. Ch. 6.

¹³ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: 5e anniversaire: Congrès – autorités religieuses. Clipping, Le Petit Journal, 22 avril 1954, "Quinze ans après. Que sont devenus les cent mariés de 1939?"; Clipping, Action Populaire, 19 avril 1954, "Quinzième anniversaire des 105 mariages jocistes de 1939'." On 1954 as an "année mariale," see Malouin, Le

messages of congratulations in the LOC's newspaper, and Laurendeau dispatched a personal telegram to the LOC, apologizing for not being able to attend the anniversary celebrations but thanking it for its efforts on behalf of Québec families.¹⁴ Meanwhile, French-Canadian businesses, such as the Dupuis Frères department store, offered best wishes to the couples.¹⁵

The LOC devoted so much effort to commemorating the mass marriage because it wanted to insist upon the religious component of an ideal marriage, the importance and effectiveness of marriage preparation, and that which set Catholic and French-Canadian workers apart from continental norms. To some degree, its motives reflected those ascribed by American historian John Bodnar to "cultural leaders," who, he claims, "orchestrate commemorative events to calm anxiety about change in political events, eliminate citizen indifference toward official concerns, promote exemplary patterns of citizen behavior, and stress citizen duties over rights."¹⁶ Bodnar's analysis has some applicability to LOC organizers, who celebrated the Cent-Mariés in the context of war, growing secularization, and competing models of marriage and family offered by both popular culture – often American – and the official culture of the federal state. Aimé

Mouvement familial, 91; Jean Hamelin, Histoire du catholicisme québécois. Le XXe siècle, Tome 2: De 1940 à nos jours (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1984), 151.

¹⁴ Le Mouvement Ouvrier, Juillet-Août 1944 [n.p.]; ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: Discours du Congrès, 5e anniversaire 1944. André Laurendeau to Mr le Président Général, LOC, 23 July 1944; Discours de M. Winner. The LOC's invitation to Maurice Duplessis to attend the fifth anniversary celebrations, and its request for a message of congratulations, are in YUA, Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001, Reel 7. Aimé Carbonneau, président-général, LOC, to Honorable M. Maurice Duplessis, 28 juin 1944; Léo-Paul Turcotte, propagandiste, LOC, to Honorable M. Maurice Duplessis, 28 juin 1944.

¹⁵ Le Mouvement Ouvrier, Juillet-Août 1944, 10.

Carbonneau, the président-général of the LOC, declared that the July 1944 reunion was essential in a context where everyone was claiming to save the family, and where the state was busy making plans for postwar social security. No policy would be truly family-centred, Carbonneau argued, unless it took into account the perspective of the Church and, more specifically, the LOC, as the embodiment and representative of working-class families.¹⁷

In the speeches and press releases that accompanied the wedding anniversaries, the LOC emphasized above all the happiness of the couples and the speed and ease with which they were bearing children. The LOC found itself having to defend the mass marriage experiment to critics, denying charges that the experiment had turned out to be a “fiasco” or that many of the marriages had ended in divorce.¹⁸ A year after the marriage, the LOC informed the Montreal Standard that “not one single case of marital discord” had been discovered among the couples; on the occasion of the fifth anniversary, the LOC claimed that the couples continued to enjoy “perfect harmony” in their

¹⁶ John Bodnar, “Public Memory in an American City,” 75, 76.

¹⁷ Carbonneau’s words were: “Alors que tout le monde prétend sauver la famille, il est bon qu’on voie la part de la L.O.C. dans ce travail de restauration. A l’heure où l’État fait tant de plans d’après-guerre et prépare un système de sécurité sociale, il importe souverainement qu’il sache qu’aucune politique ne sera véritablement familiale s’il n’est pas tenu compte du point de vue de la Ligue Ouvrière Catholique, qui est le point de vue de l’Église. La sécurité sociale en effet s’adresse d’abord et surtout à la famille ouvrière à qui il appartient de faire connaître ses besoins réels. Et la L.O.C. n’est pas seulement le corps représentatif des familles ouvrières, elle est *la famille ouvrière elle-même*. A ce titre le Congrès du 23 juillet devient une nécessité.” Le Mouvement Ouvrier, Juillet-Août 1944, “De Churchill à St-Joseph,” 8-9. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁸ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 10, File: Correspondance – Cent-Mariés. Jeanne Godbout to Bernadette St-Onge, 7 février 1945; Gracia Gaudet to Jeanne Godbout, 19 février 1945; Vol. 11, File: Discours du Congrès, 5e anniversaire 1944. Discours du Président, 5e anniversaire, 1944.

relationships.¹⁹ The insistence upon the couples' marital happiness was an argument that preparation worked. The LOC claimed that the Action catholique's marriage preparation courses had provided these young couples, who had reached adulthood in the dark years of the Depression, with as many chances at happiness as possible.²⁰ Faith in the value of marriage preparation was certainly not unique to the LOC or to Québec. Marriage preparation courses were offered elsewhere in Montréal: the Young Women's Hebrew Association and various synagogues, for example, offered lecture series in the late 1940s on marriage and the family, the psychology of marriage, and marriage counseling. Moreover, as the work of historian Mona Gleason demonstrates, marriage preparation courses were increasingly offered at sites across the country, sponsored by church groups or taught as part of university curricula.²¹ This emphasis on adequate preparation was part of a twentieth-century reliance on 'experts,' as historians such as Katherine Arnup, Veronica Strong-Boag, and Cynthia Comacchio have argued. It also anticipated the

¹⁹ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 12, Scrapbook: Cent Mariés, 1939-. Clipping, The Standard, "First Anniversary of the Mass Marriage. All 'Very Happy'" [n.d. but July 1940]; Vol. 10, File: Statistiques – Cent Mariés. Les 105 mariages et leurs développements [1944].

²⁰ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 10, File: Statistiques – Cent Mariés. Les Cent Mariés Reviennent sur la Scène, 1939-1944 [1944]; Preuves vivantes [1944]; Vol. 11, File: Discours du Congrès, 5e anniversaire, 1944. Discours de M. Winner; Vol. 12, Scrapbook: Cent Mariés, 1939-. Clipping, The Standard, "First Anniversary of the Mass Marriage. All 'Very Happy'" [n.d. but July 1940]. Examples of young French-Canadian couples who appeared to agree that the Service de préparation au mariage had started them off on the right foot are in ANQM, Service de préparation au mariage (SPM), P116, Boîte 60-0-002-13-06-001B-01, File: 1949 – Semaine des fiancés. Responses to questionnaire sent December 1948.

²¹ Canadian Jewish Chronicle: 2 January 1948, Congregational News, 11; 16 January 1948, "'Marriage and the Family' at the Y.W.H.A.," 10; 6 February 1948, Congregational News, 11; Mona Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada (Toronto, UTP, 1999), 58-59.

postwar passion for planning.²² But preparation for marriage was seen to be especially important in a period when war was seen to have wreaked havoc with many relationships, or when the fragility of relationships was brought to light by war. In a period of massive gender disruptions across the continent – married women’s paid work; a certain geographic mobility for women; husbands away; rising divorce rates outside Québec – people were seen to need reminding of the necessity of heterosexual marriage and of the best ways in which to ensure its stability.

The couples’ fertility was also remarked upon ceaselessly – in a context where Québec’s birthrate had been dropping more-or-less steadily since the late nineteenth century and would fall to the Canadian average within two decades. As we saw in Chapter 1, Montréal’s birthrates between 1945 and 1948 were lower than those of both the province of Québec and Canada as a whole.²³ The LOC noted in 1944 that the Cent-

²² Katherine Arnup, Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada (Toronto: UTP, 1994); Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939 (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988); Cynthia Comacchio, ‘Nations are Built of Babies’: Saving Ontario’s Mothers and Children, 1900-1940 (Montreal: Kingston: McGill-Queen’s UP, 1993); Elaine Tyler May, Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Desjardins, L’amour en patience. On the enthusiasm for planning in the reconstruction years, see Peter S. McInnis, “Planning Prosperity: Canadians Debate Postwar Reconstruction,” in Greg Donaghy, ed., Uncertain Horizons: Canadians and their World in 1945 (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1997); Doug Owsam, The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900-1945 (Toronto; Buffalo; London: UTP, 1986), Ch. 11.

²³ Annuaire Statistique, Québec 1948, Table 78; Annuaire Statistique, Québec 1950, Tables 64, 62. See also Hervé Gauthier, Evolution démographique du Québec (Québec: Office de planification et de développement du Québec, 1977); Danielle Gauvreau et Peter Gossage, “‘Empêcher la famille’: Fécondité et contraception au Québec, 1920-1960,” Canadian Historical Review 78, 3 (September 1997): 478-510; John A. Dickinson and Brian Young, A Short History of Québec, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993), 263; Lévesque, Making and Breaking the Rules, 82-83.

Mariés had produced 204 children to-date, including two sets of twins. Twenty-three couples had given birth to three or more children in the first five years of their marriage, while only eight of the 105 couples had no children as yet.²⁴ The insistence upon the Cent-Mariés' numerous children was a political claim. LOC organizers argued that large families were what had traditionally set Québec apart from other provinces. That cultural differences regarding the ideal number of children were perceived to exist was reflected in the LOC's claim that the Cent-Mariés' fertility "fait l'admiration de tous et même des protestants."²⁵ Some commentators deployed the "revanche des berceaux" argument: a contributor to the LOC's newspaper, Le Mouvement Ouvrier, for instance, argued that French-Canadians could exert their influence across Canada only if they went forth and multiplied.²⁶ At the same time, the LOC noted pointedly that the provincial government had not always given large families the material support they had a right to expect.²⁷ In underlining the material costs of numerous children, the LOC departed somewhat from the traditional celebration of fertility espoused by clerical nationalists such as Lionel Groulx.

If the 'family' idealized by the LOC in its commemoration of the mass marriage was one with numerous children, it was also one where wives and mothers confined their

²⁴ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 10, File: Statistiques – Cent Mariés. Les Cent Mariés Reviennent sur la Scène, 1939-1944 [1944]; Statistics in response to 1944 survey; Preuves vivantes [1944].

²⁵ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 10, File: Statistiques – Cent Mariés. Preuves vivantes [1944].

²⁶ Le Mouvement Ouvrier, Juillet-août 1944, "Réflexions de 1999," 9-10.

²⁷ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: Discours du Congrès, 5e anniversaire 1944. Introductions to speakers: Introduction to Représentant du Premier Ministre (M. le Notaire Paul Gauthier).

work to the home. Thirteen of the 105 wives worked for pay a year after their marriage; by 1944, the LOC noted approvingly, only three of the wives worked for pay, and none of these women had children.²⁸ The LOC's disapproval of married women's waged labour was neither a new nor an isolated sentiment in 1940s Québec, but it acquired a particular resonance in a wartime context where the paid work of married women was relatively extensive, highly visible, and highly publicized. Alongside other organizations in Montréal and elsewhere in Canada, the LOC hoped to rectify the disruptions in gender roles occasioned by the Second World War and what it perceived to be the consequences of these disruptions, including unhappy marriages and smaller families. Mothers' paid employment, a *lociste* claimed in 1944, was destroying working-class homes more surely than the war itself.²⁹ In particular, the LOC objected to the National Selective Service's registration of women for war-work, which it called "la conscription des femmes" and which it viewed as an example of federal intrusions into French-Canadian homes.³⁰ Thus as the Cent-Mariés celebrated their fifth anniversary, the LOC lobbied federal and provincial authorities in an attempt to prohibit mothers with children under the age of sixteen from working in factories, and called for family allowances so that married

²⁸ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 12, Scrapbook: Cent Mariés, 1939- . Clipping, The Standard, "First Anniversary of the Mass Marriage. All 'Very Happy'" [n.d. but July 1940]; Vol. 10, File: Statistiques – Cent Mariés. Les Cent Mariés Reviennent sur la Scène, 1939-1944 [1944].

²⁹ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: Discours du Congrès, 5e anniversaire 1944. Discours de Léo Turcotte, 1944 – 5e anniversaire.

³⁰ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 13: File: Campagne de Propagande – Travail féminin. Réunions. Réunion du 4 octobre 1943: conscription des femmes; File: Travail féminin – Mémoire. Mémoire sur la conscription du travail féminin. Par les comités généraux de la JOC et de la LOC, Montréal.

women could stay home where they belonged.³¹ “[R]éclamez plutôt les allocations familiales.” the LOC told married working-class women, “et vous pourrez RESTER CHEZ VOUS.”³² This highly gendered notion of an ideal marriage was also evident in the LOC’s description of the informal aspects of the fifth anniversary celebration: “Tous étaient contents de se revoir. Les mamans parlaient de leurs petits, de leur maison, de leur mari. Les hommes causaient entre eux de leur travail et des grands projets qu’ils avaient en tête pour améliorer le sort de leur petite famille naissante.”³³ That the gender politics of these anniversary celebrations had a particular tone is perhaps not surprising when, as Suzanne Morton has noted, weddings were an event that publicly cast women as wives.³⁴

The Cent-Mariés were portrayed by the LOC as both ordinary and special: both representative couples and model couples. They were described as “Comme tout le monde,” and yet they were warned that both within Canada and beyond its borders, they were the standard by which French-Canadian, Catholic, working-class families would be

³¹ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: Discours du Congrès, 5e anniversaire 1944. Discours de Mme Yvette Choquette, 1944 5e anniversaire.

³² ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 13, File: Campagne de Propagande – Allocation familiale. Leaflet: “Quand la femme abandonne son foyer ... LE FOYER EN MEURT!”

³³ Le Mouvement Ouvrier, Juillet-Août 1944, “Un Avant-goût du congrès,” 24. Lucie Piché notes that ideas of gender difference and the complementarity of masculine and feminine roles were espoused by the JOCF. See “La Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique Féminine,” 485-486, 505.

³⁴ Morton, “The June Bride,” 361. The Action catholique’s Service de préparation au mariage also set out to convince participants that wives should not work outside the home. UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/G5/9/13. “Situation des jeunes en face du mariage.” Mémoire présenté par la JOC canadienne au Congrès Mondial de la Famille et de la Population tenue à Paris du 22 au 29 juin 1947.

judged.³⁵ They were both something for other working-class French-Canadians to emulate and couples with which others could empathize. From the beginning, the couples were intended to be “exemples” or “échantillons.”³⁶ On their fifth anniversary, the Cent-Mariés crowned their own “model couple”: a couple who owned their own home, had savings in the bank, and “a much easier time making the budget balance now than when they were married.”³⁷ Le Mouvement Ouvrier featured another couple in its June 1944 issue, describing the pair as “Un couple ordinaire mais uni,” and insisting that theirs were not the sensational lives of modern novels.³⁸ The LOC declared that all the couples set a good example, “dans un monde et à une époque où le mariage perd de son caractère sacré.”³⁹ Moreover, the LOC encouraged the couples to think of themselves as one large ‘family,’ or community.⁴⁰ There is evidence that some of the Cent-Mariés took

³⁵ “A l'étranger aussi bien qu'au Canada, on a les yeux sur vous. D'après vous on jugera bien souvent les foyers ouvriers canadiens-français et catholiques.” ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 10, File: Statistiques – Cent Mariés. Preuves vivantes [1944]; Vol. 11, File: Discours du Congrès. 5e anniversaire 1944. Discours du Président, 5e anniversaire, 1944. Again, the Dionne quintuplets provide an interesting analogy here. As Kari Dehli argues, the quintuplets were portrayed as both special and ordinary; they were worth tracking, but were ‘normal’ enough to merit everyone’s consideration. Kari Dehli, “Fictions of the Scientific Imagination: Researching the Dionne Quintuplets,” Journal of Canadian Studies 29, 4 (Winter 1994-95), 94, 99.

³⁶ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 10, File: Statistiques – Cent Mariés. Preuves vivantes [1944].

³⁷ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 12. Scrapbook: 100 Mariés (5e anniversaire). Clipping, Toronto Daily Star, “Happier, Say Couples Wed En Masse Five Years Ago” [n.d. but July 1944].

³⁸ “Leur vie ne contient rien de sensationnel à la manière des romans modernes.” Le Mouvement Ouvrier, Juin 1944, 16.

³⁹ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 10, File: Statistiques – Cent Mariés. Les Cent Mariés Reviennent sur la Scène. 1939-1944 [1944].

⁴⁰ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: Cent-Mariés – Couple 26. Husband and wife to Mlle G. Filion, 22 juillet 1940. It is apparent from this letter that the LOC correspondent had told the couple that almost all of the Cent-Mariés were keeping in touch with the

this to heart. More than one couple stated that they felt linked to the others by bonds akin to family ties. Other couples proposed business ventures and cooperative schemes exclusively for the Cent-Mariés.⁴¹

Not everyone commemorated the Cent-Mariés for the same reasons. Provincial politicians, for instance, did not necessarily have the same interest in religion as the LOC. But the Cent-Mariés phenomenon offered them an alternative to the vision of reconstruction promoted by the expanding federal state. At the heart of the federal government's postwar reconstruction programme was a federally-directed welfare state, scaffolded on family allowances, veterans' benefits, and an unemployment insurance programme that reinforced traditional notions of gender and family.⁴² One of the reasons that a reconstruction programme centered on 'family' had so much appeal for Prime Minister Mackenzie King and his Liberal government was that it promised to paper over the bitter cleavages of class, ethnicity, and politics recently exacerbated by the Second World War. Just as individual families would heal the physical and emotional wounds of

LOC. I have chosen not to use the couples' real names, and instead refer to them by the order in which they are listed in the Notre-Dame church registers. A compilation of the registers is located in ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 10, File: Cent-Mariés de 1939 – Documentation. Feuille de compilation des Registres de l'Église Notre-Dame de Montréal (juillet 1954).

⁴¹ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 11, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 8. Husband and wife to M. et Mme G.E. Gince, n.d.; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 20. Husband and wife to M. et Mme Nap. Chayer, 14 février 1946; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 36. Husband and wife to M. et Mde. Chayer, 14 juillet 1944; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 37. Husband to Mrs. Mad. Chayer, 30 décembre 1945; Questionnaire [December 1945]; Vol. 10, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 7. Husband to Monsieur Chayer, 8 février 1946.

⁴² On unemployment insurance, see Ruth Pierson, "Gender and the Unemployment Insurance Debates in Canada, 1934-1940," *Labour/Le Travail* 25 (Spring 1990): 77-103; Ann Porter, "Women and Income Security in the Postwar Period: The Case of Unemployment Insurance, 1945-1962," *Labour/Le Travail* 31 (1993): 111-144.

servicemen and servicewomen,⁴³ so a federally-directed welfare state geared to families would help to create an allegiance to the federal government and a sense of citizenship in a common 'nation.' As Dominique Marshall has argued, for instance, family allowances, which had been inspired in part by the demands of workers for higher wages, deflected these class-based demands into provisions for children.⁴⁴ Such a family-centred policy was safer, politically, than appearing to accede to the claims of class.

In a sense, King and his "Ottawa men" were arguing that class, ethnicity, and religion didn't matter: all Canadians were citizens of a common federal state. This was an attempt to forget the ruptures of ethnicity and politics made rancorous, and public, by war and conscription. But there were competing visions of reconstruction, and of family, in postwar Montréal and across the nation more broadly. Provincial politicians and private organizations offered alternative visions of reconstruction: ones that insisted upon the specificity of French-Canadian families and the importance of recognizing differences of ethnicity and class. So in opposition to Mackenzie King's desire for a public forgetting, the LOC's anniversary celebrations were attempts at public remembering, at inserting these differences into the public consciousness and the public memory.⁴⁵ The fifth anniversary celebrations, in particular, took place amid the tensions

⁴³ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 13, File: Campagne de Propagande – Allocation familiale. Ernest Darsigny and Thérèse Guilbert to Marcel Charbonneau, 20 février 1943. Declared Darsigny and Guilbert, "C'est bien beau de penser à faire la guerre qui détruit mais il faut bien penser à reconstruire. Et c'est la famille qui sera appelée à guérir les plaies béantes que laissera le présent conflit."

⁴⁴ Dominique Marshall, "Reconstruction Politics, the Canadian Welfare State and the Ambiguity of Children's Rights," in Donaghy, ed., Uncertain Horizons.

⁴⁵ On nation-building, public forgetting, and public remembering, see John R. Gillis, "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship," in Gillis, ed., Commemorations.

engendered by war and conscription and in the context of other types of commemoration that celebrated English-Canadian patriotism and wartime sacrifice.⁴⁶ Patriotic celebrations of war were countered by anti-commemorations – anti-conscription riots, for instance. The summer of 1944 found André Laurendeau, for example, simultaneously congratulating the couples on their fifth wedding anniversary and protesting the federal government's internment of former Montréal mayor Camillien Houde and its proposal to implement military conscription for overseas service.⁴⁷ Duplessis's congratulations to the couples in July 1944 were part of a larger campaign to capitalize on the groundswell of nationalist sentiment in Québec in order to return to power in the provincial election two weeks later. Liberal Premier Adélard Godbout's words of congratulations were notably more restrained, and unlike those of Laurendeau or Duplessis, made no mention of distinctly 'French-Canadian' experiences.⁴⁸ But as Dominique Marshall has observed, since the August 1944 election was the first provincial election in which Québec women would vote, all three political parties took care to elaborate and articulate "une politique familiale."⁴⁹

Attention to the anniversaries was not simply local. Just as journalists and magazine writers from elsewhere in Canada and from the United States had descended

⁴⁶ On commemoration and wartime patriotism, see Gillis, "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship" and Bodnar, "Public Memory in an American City: Commemoration in Cleveland," both in Gillis, ed., *Commemorations*; also Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

⁴⁷ Robert Rumilly, *Histoire de Montréal*, Tome V, *1939-1967* (Montreal: Fides, 1974), 110, 114.

⁴⁸ *Le Mouvement Ouvrier*, Juillet-Août 1944, Messages of congratulation from André Laurendeau, M.L. Duplessis, Adélard Godbout [n.p.].

upon the wedding in 1939, so they remarked upon the anniversaries. Toronto newspapers such as the Globe and Mail and the Daily Star assessed the couples' first five years together in terms similar to those of the LOC itself, commenting on the couples' happiness, their children, and the degree to which they kept in touch with members of their extended families.⁵⁰ 'Foreign' newspapers' interest in the Cent-Mariés reflected a widespread celebration of heterosexuality, domesticity, and conjugal bliss across North America in the immediate postwar years.⁵¹ Yet at the same time, the foreign interest in this local phenomenon reflected some sense that here was a quaint relic of 'traditional' Québec: a mythical place that was devout, family-centred, and fertile. Like the American sociologists who parachuted into Québec in the 1930s and 1940s (most notably Everett Hughes and Horace Miner), these foreign journalists sensed, to a certain degree, that they had found what historian Ian McKay has called 'the folk.' Thus the mass marriage appealed to outside observers both because it spoke to their own postwar interests but also because it appeared to hark back to simpler, more 'traditional' values.⁵²

⁴⁹ Marshall, Aux origines sociales.

⁵⁰ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 12, Scrapbook: 100 Mariés (5e anniversaire). Clipping, Globe and Mail, 24 July 1944, "Mass-Wedding Couples Mark 5th Anniversary"; Clipping, Toronto Daily Star, "Happier, Say Couples Wed En Masse Five Years Ago." See also Maclean's Magazine, 6 December 1958, "The happy sequel to Quebec's great ball-park wedding."

⁵¹ May, Homeward Bound; Mary Louise Adams, The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality (Toronto: UTP, 1997).

⁵² Ian McKay, The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1994). A fascinating response to Life magazine's assumptions about a quaint, pastoral Québec is in YUA, Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001, Reel 7. P.H. Conway, o.p., Life and French Canada. Cahiers de l'École des Sciences Sociales, Politiques et Économiques de Laval, Vol. 2, no. 1 (Éditions Cap Diamant, 1942). For examples of American sociologists' studies of Québec, see Everett C. Hughes, French Canada in Transition (Chicago;

By keeping the Cent-Mariés in the public eye in the late 1940s, the LOC, the press who advertised them, and the provincial politicians who congratulated them argued (implicitly and sometimes explicitly) that the family was an integral part of postwar reconstruction. But in doing so, they suggested an alternative vision of reconstruction to the one proffered by the federal government. Ottawa had accrued a great deal of power and authority during the Second World War, and it continued to do so in the postwar period, with its new social programmes and what some have called its “revanche administrative” or its New National Policy.⁵³ Unlike the vision of family offered by the expanding federal state, the celebration of the Cent-Mariés recognized the material realities of French-Canadian families, and made the Church a player in postwar reconstruction.

ii. Private Tracking

The LOC kept extensive records on the Cent-Mariés. At semi-regular intervals for at least fifteen years, it sent questionnaires to the couples. Many couples not only responded to the questionnaires, but took the initiative to write letters to the LOC to give additional news, request advice, or ask for help. In 1954, fifteen years after the wedding,

London: University of Chicago Press, 1943); and Horace Miner, St. Denis: A French-Canadian Parish (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963 [1939]).

⁵³ V.C. Fowke, “The National Policy – Old and New,” The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science 18, 3 (August 1952): 271-286; Michael D. Behiels, Prelude to Quebec’s Quiet Revolution: Liberalism versus Neo-Nationalism, 1945-1960 (Kingston; Montreal: McGill-Queen’s UP, 1985). The term “revanche administrative” is used in Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 115.

the LOC was in contact with seventy of the couples; the files on these seventy couples have survived, and I've relied especially on the files of those couples who lived in Montréal at some point in the 1940s.⁵⁴ These documents, used carefully, can give us some sense of the ways in which relatively 'ordinary' French-Canadian families perceived their lives in a postwar democracy.

In one sense, the LOC's tracking of these couples can be seen as a justification of the enormous effort that had gone into planning the mass marriage, a desire to see how the experiment had worked out. It was also an effort to build a Catholic working-class 'family' or community, just as was done through the LOC's newspaper, Le Mouvement Ouvrier and then Le Front Ouvrier. But in keeping track of its flock, the LOC was also gathering information for its own reconstruction project. The Cent-Mariés who wrote to the LOC described the daily material realities of their lives and the conditions of wartime and postwar urban life in general: births, illness, death, jobs, unemployment, moving. Much of this news must have informed the LOC's various postwar projects for better and more affordable housing, consumer cooperatives, a family budget. As the work of Jean-Pierre Collin and others has demonstrated, the specialized Action catholique movements emphasized the importance of knowing their constituency (through first-hand observation) before taking action to improve that constituency's lot in life.⁵⁵ The social survey, conducted in workplaces and working-class neighbourhoods, and the collection

⁵⁴ That is, thirty-seven of the seventy files. ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: 5e anniversaire: Congrès – autorités religieuses. Clipping, Le Petit Journal, "Quinze ans après. Que sont devenus les cent mariés de 1939?", 22 avril 1954.

⁵⁵ Hamelin, Histoire du catholicisme, 64, 68, 76; Collin, Ligue ouvrière catholique, esp. Ch. 4; Malouin, Le Mouvement familial, 39.

of “facts,” were central to their methods.⁵⁶ The LOC was concerned with urban-industrial life, with “familles ouvrières.” That it was well aware of working-class realities was indicated by its chaplain’s prescriptions for a happy marriage in 1944, which were, in fact, remarkably material: “good health, freedom from debt, and prospects of saving enough money to care for a rainy day.”⁵⁷ In compiling ‘facts’ about working-class Quebecers, the LOC anticipated the later work of French-Canadian sociologists such as Maurice Lamontagne and J.-C. Falardeau, whose empirical studies of urban French-Canadian families were an attempt to counter the moralism of the rural, pastoral myth propagated by Lionel Groulx and other conservative clerical nationalists.⁵⁸ The LOC’s project was in some ways truly radical: working-class citizens -- normally the ‘observed’ -- were not only doing the observing themselves, but were assuming responsibility for the interpretation and dissemination of what they discovered, whether that was low incomes, poor health, or inadequate housing.

Lucie Piché notes that the AC’s belief in la “primauté méthodologique du réel” – the importance of first-hand observation of everyday realities – was inspired by the

⁵⁶ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 21, File: Habitation. Forum sur l’habitation ouvrière [1948?]; Piché, “La Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique Féminine,” 489, 491.

⁵⁷ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 12, Scrapbook: 100 Mariés (5e anniversaire). Clipping, Toronto Daily Star, “Happier. Say Couples Wed En Masse Five Years Ago.” The LOC’s urban bias was noted by at least one of the couples married in the mass wedding: a couple living on a farm in Drummond County, for instance, responded to the LOC’s questionnaires by noting that the questions regarding women’s work didn’t apply to them, as they were farmers and “nous travaillons tous deux sur notre ferme.” ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 10, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 45. Questionnaire received 22 May 1940; Questionnaire [July/August 1942].

⁵⁸ Maurice Lamontagne and J.-C. Falardeau, “The Life-Cycle of French-Canadian Urban Families,” The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science 13, 2 (May 1947):

methods of French scholars such as Frédéric LePlay, Gustave LeBon, and Charles Péguy.⁵⁹ I would suggest, however, that in keeping tabs on the Cent-Mariés, the LOC also drew on twentieth-century North American developments, where social scientists were beginning to take an interest in focus groups and longitudinal studies that traced subjects over time. American historian Elaine Tyler May, for instance, has drawn on the records of the Kelly Longitudinal Study, a series of surveys of 300 middle-class American couples that also began in the late 1930s and continued until the mid-1950s.⁶⁰ Closer to home, psychologists were undertaking longitudinal studies in Toronto schools in the interwar years.⁶¹ *Locistes* were not necessarily plugged in to these academic trends. But such scholarly developments had echoes in the media and public culture, where newspapers regularly reported the results of polls conducted by the Gallup-affiliated Canadian Institute of Public Opinion after 1941, and by Britain's Mass Observation during the war, and provided periodic updates on the scientific observation of the Dionne quintuplets.⁶² The LOC's tracking of the Cent-Mariés, in fact, can be seen

233-247. See also Philippe Garigue, La vie familiale des canadiens français (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1970 [1962]).

⁵⁹ Piché, "La Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique Féminine," 489n23.

⁶⁰ May, Homeward Bound, 11-13, 227-246.

⁶¹ See Johannes C. Pols, "The School as Laboratory: The Development of Psychology as a Discipline in Toronto, 1915-1955" (M.A. thesis, York University, 1991). My thanks to Marlene Shore for this reference.

⁶² On Gallup and the CIPO, see Daniel J. Robinson, "Polling Consumers and Citizens: Opinion Sample Surveys and the Rise of the Canadian Marketing Polity, 1928-45" (Ph.D. diss., York University, 1996). On the Dionne quintuplets, see the special issue of the Journal of Canadian Studies 29, 4 (Winter 1994-95). Another Canadian example of social scientists and focus groups is the Crestwood Heights project, a study of Forest Hill families undertaken in the late 1940s and early 1950s. John R. Seeley et al., Crestwood Heights (Toronto: UTP, 1956).

as one way in which certain elements of the Church attempted to ‘modernize’ in the wake of the war.⁶³

What, then, can these letters tell us about the private lives of the Cent-Mariés, and by extension, about other French-Canadian, working-class couples in the wake of the war? We know that in 1944, half of the couples lived in Montréal. According to the LOC’s records, the men worked as mechanics, machinists, drivers, clerks, grocers, and bakers. Before their marriage, the women had worked as domestic servants, dressmakers, and factory operatives.⁶⁴ The couples reflected the constituency of the JOC and the LOC, of course, in that they were largely working-class. Wives reported on their husbands’ success, or lack thereof, in finding work; on the kinds of hours they worked; and on whether the couple felt itself to be financially stable.⁶⁵

Many of the Cent-Mariés who wrote to the LOC insisted upon the happiness of their marriages.⁶⁶ News of children dominated the letters, at least in part because the LOC specifically asked for details on children’s names, ages, and birthdays. Parents reported on their children’s ill-health and on their pride when their children were

⁶³ On the Church’s attempts at modernization in postwar Québec, see Desjardins, *L’amour en patience*, p. 19 and *passim*. He distinguishes between the discourse of “orthodox” Catholicism and the discourse of “reformist” Catholicism,. See also Hamelin, *Histoire du catholicisme*, Ch. 1; Collin, *Ligue ouvrière catholique*, Introduction, Ch. 1, and 176-177.

⁶⁴ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 10, File: Statistiques – Cent Mariés. Les Cent Mariés Reviennent sur la Scène, 1939-1944 [1944]; Vol. 12, Scrapbook: 100 Mariés (5e anniversaire). Clipping from the *Globe and Mail*, 24 July 1944, “Mass-Wedding Couples Mark 5th Anniversary.”

⁶⁵ e.g. ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 10, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 65; Vol. 11, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 25; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 26.

⁶⁶ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 10, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 89. Wife to LOC, 8 juin 1940; Vol. 11, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 26. Wife to Mlle. G. Filion, 22 juillet 1940.

healthy.⁶⁷ Couples without children who felt obliged to respond to the LOC's requests for their children's names and ages articulated their disappointment at being childless. As one woman told the LOC eight years after the mass wedding, "C'est bien malheureux, nous n'avons pas encore d'enfant."⁶⁸ Clearly the LOC was not simply interested in knowing its subjects, but was also attempting to shape behaviour. Its emphasis on children was surely intended to remind the couples of what they ought to be doing, even if they were not (or could not). Asking whether wives worked for pay, and taking care to find out who was looking after these women's household duties, was another way of prescribing family.⁶⁹

In all likelihood, the Cent-Mariés emphasized marital happiness and children in their letters because they thought that this was what the LOC was interested in hearing. Certainly these elements of the marriages were what turned up in the LOC's press releases and anniversary updates. On the other hand, the Cent-Mariés also confided other truths, which did not show up in the official celebrations, such as severe poverty and the inability to find work or housing. Their letters point to the existence of real poverty among some of them, both before their wedding (at the tail end of the Depression) but

⁶⁷ E.g. ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 18; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 103; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 25.

⁶⁸ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 10, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 82. Wife to Mme Napoléon Chayer [n.d. but April 1947?]. Also Vol. 11, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 28. Husband and wife to Mlle Filion, 27 mai 1940; Husband and wife to Mr and Mme Chayer, 30 décembre 1946.

⁶⁹ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 10, File: Statistiques – Cent Mariés. Résultat de l'enquête sur les 105 mariages du Congrès jociste 1939 (Août 1942). On the power-knowledge complex and the normalizing power of 'the gaze,' see Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books,

also after their marriage, during the years of supposed wartime and postwar prosperity. Some of the couples were on relief; some husbands lost jobs or worked irregularly; many suffered from serious problems of health and poor housing related to low or no income.⁷⁰ These harsher realities of working-class existence turned up, instead, in the LOC's community action: in its demands for family allowances, or for affordable housing.

The Cent-Mariés did not write simply in response to the LOC's requests for information and to provide the details in which the LOC was interested. They also wrote to the LOC for advice and for tangible aid. Couples wrote to ask if the LOC knew of available jobs or housing; they requested advice on how to secure a housing loan; they asked for monetary assistance in order to pay hospital bills and rent and to buy toys and clothing for their children.⁷¹ Turning to the LOC for assistance was in a sense invoking an older model than turning to the state – but in a city where much social welfare was private and denominational,⁷² and where the provincial government's welfare initiatives

1977); Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979).

⁷⁰ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 10: File: Cent Mariés – Couple 97; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 65; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 24; Vol. 11: File: Cent Mariés – Couple 10. At least one couple had to withdraw from participating in the mass marriage because of poverty. Vol. 11, File: Cent Mariés – R.M., Y.R. (Annulé).

⁷¹ e.g. ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 10: File: Cent Mariés – Couple 97; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 69; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 24; Vol. 11: File: Cent Mariés – Couple 28; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 48; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 10; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 33.

⁷² André Guillemette, o.p., director of the Conseil des oeuvres de la Fédération des oeuvres de charité, found that Montreal in the early 1940s “comptait tout près de 200 oeuvres ou agences sociales catholiques d’expression française, toutes et chacune nées d’une initiative privée au fur et à mesure qu’un groupe de personnes généreuses découvraient des besoins auxquels aucun service existant ne pouvait répondre, de sorte que la ville était couverte d’oeuvres grandes et petites, agences ou organisations, chacune

were limited, this was a logical strategy. There may have been a sense, too, in which the Cent-Mariés saw the LOC as implicated in their fates. The JOC had organized the wedding and sent them off to embark upon married life: did the Action catholique not bear some responsibility for how that married life turned out?

The letters written by the Cent-Mariés reveal their own concern for reconstruction, for what they hoped their lives would look like in a victorious postwar democracy. Their reconstruction dreams involved family, children, decent housing -- even, in some cases, home ownership. One couple, for instance, had had a very difficult first few years of marriage, marked by poverty, illness, and the death of their infant son. But by 1945, things were looking up. The couple had three young healthy children; the husband (a streetcar driver) had more work than he could handle; and, as his wife explained, "Surtout quand nous aurons notre petit 'home' à nous avec une grande cour ce sera le bonheur rêvé."⁷³ Other couples wrote to the LOC at the end of the war, describing their plans to build their own house or to provide their young children with a decent future.⁷⁴ The war had clearly improved the financial situation of many of these couples, especially where husbands had secured steady employment in the city's munitions

travaillant à sa guise selon l'esprit et quelquefois l'arbitraire des personnes qui s'en étaient constituées responsables." Cited in Hamelin, Histoire du catholicisme, 38-39.

⁷³ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 10, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 65. Husband and wife to M. and Mme Nap. Chayer, 8 juillet 1945.

⁷⁴ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11: File: Cent Mariés – Couple 39. Husband and wife to LOC, 8 février 1946; File: Cent Mariés – Couple 20. Husband and wife to M. et Mme Nap. Chayer, 14 février 1946.

factories and aircraft plants.⁷⁵ At the same time, their letters serve as a check on easy notions of postwar security and prosperity. In this era of a still-nascent welfare state, before state-administered health and hospital insurance, illness especially cast a dark shadow upon these young families, bringing worry, sorrow, and debt.⁷⁶ Moreover, enthusiasm for domesticity and child-rearing had its limits. The LOCF, for instance, acknowledged that fear of another pregnancy was a common sentiment among working-class wives.⁷⁷ One Granby woman married in the mass wedding explained in 1947 that she and her husband loved their children but, with the seventh baby on the way, were beginning to find the task of child-rearing burdensome and expensive, especially given the high cost-of-living.⁷⁸ Her words contrasted rather sharply with the LOC's celebration of fertility, and were a reminder that this fertility was not always freely chosen. Finally, even among the select and closely scrutinized Cent Mariés, not every wife confined her work to the home.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 11, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 26. Husband and wife to Mlle G. Filion, 22 juillet 1940; Vol. 12, Scrapbook: 100 Mariés (5e Anniversaire).

Clipping, Toronto Daily Star, “Happier, Say Couples Wed En Masse Five Years Ago.”

⁷⁶ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 10, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 65; Vol. 10, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 24; Vol. 11, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 10.

⁷⁷ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 16, File: Journée d'Étude Nationales, avril 1949.

“Programme de notre Journée d'Étude, printemps '49 – LOCF.” And see Simonne Monet Chartrand, Ma vie comme rivière: récit autobiographique 1939-1949, Tome 2 (Montréal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 1982), 204-205, 223-225, 303-304.

⁷⁸ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 10, File: Cent-Mariés – Couple 35. Wife to LOC, 1 juin 1947. Note the 21-year-old French-Canadian, Catholic factory worker interviewed by the Canadian Youth Commission who wanted to “put off having children for a few years,” and did not want to have “too many children in a row.” Canadian Youth Commission, Youth, Marriage, and the Family (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1948), Appendix A, Case 6.

⁷⁹ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: Cent-Mariés – Couple 36.

The problems and possibilities experienced by the Cent-Mariés were undoubtedly shared by other working-class families in postwar Montréal and elsewhere in the country. Unemployment, housing shortages, infant mortality, illness, and a skyrocketing cost-of-living were concerns evident in the letters written by the Cent-Mariés but also in Montréal union newspapers such as Le Monde Ouvrier. A broad ‘public’ of newspaper readers and radio listeners was exposed to the celebration and commemoration of this mass wedding through the 1940s and 1950s; some elements of the married lives of these couples must surely have resonated with them. In translating the Cent-Mariés’ private experiences into the basis of political or community action through lobbying governments, through services such as l’Entr’aide familiale, and through its newspaper, the LOC helped to shape new definitions of what was fit for public discussion. Moreover, in supporting “une politique vraiment familiale,” the LOC explicitly acknowledged the ways in which family and politics were intertwined in visions of postwar reconstruction.⁸⁰

III. A ‘Mouvement familial’

The Cent-Mariés experiment, and the specialized movements of the Action catholique canadienne (ACC) more broadly, were projects – projects that took place within the context of increasing secularization, marital disruptions occasioned and

⁸⁰ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 13, File: Campagne de Propagande – Allocation familiale. Ernest Darsigny and Thérèse Guilbert to Marcel Charbonneau, 20 février 1943. On the

brought to light by war, the expansion of married women's paid work, and falling birth rates.⁸¹ The LOC, one of the most active of the ACC's specialized movements, adopted as its particular cause the well-being of French-Canadian, Catholic, working-class husbands and wives. It operated under the assumption that in order to re-spiritualize these couples' daily lives, it had to address the material conditions of their surroundings. It was impossible, the LOC argued, to create truly Christian spouses and parents without first effecting considerable improvements in their housing, incomes, budgets, and health. The LOC's advice to married couples, then, was an amalgam of the spiritual and the mundane, combining an analysis of men's and women's 'true natures' with an emphasis on marriage contracts and family budgets.⁸²

The Action catholique's slogan, "Voir, Juger, Agir," indicated the various elements of its mission: observing its community carefully, deciding what needed to be done, and then acting to change the world around it. The LOC attempted to transform marriage and family in Québec in three ways: through education (for example, its Forum Populaire, its Service d'orientation des foyers, and its newspaper), through its community

LOC's community projects and lobbying efforts, see Collin, Ligue ouvrière catholique, esp. Chapters 4 and 5.

⁸¹ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 17, File: Conseil National, Novembre 1946. Rapport des séances du Conseil Général de la L.O.C. tenues les 10 et 11 novembre 1946; Vol. 24, File: DIVERS: Faits. Document entitled F-A-I-T-S [n.d.]. On secularization, see Hamelin, Histoire du catholicisme, Ch. 1.

⁸² All 105 couples married in the mass wedding chose to make marriage contracts. Marriage contracts were also discussed as part of the Action catholique's Service de préparation au mariage. ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 12, File: Scrapbook: Cent Mariés – 1939. "All Very Happy," The Standard [July 1940]; ANQM, Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique (JOC), P104, C. 213, File: Cours [1944]. Le Contrat de Mariage; ANQM, SPM, P116, Boîte: 60-0-002-13-06-003A-01, File: 1952 – Résumés de Cours. Sixième Cours: La préparation économique – Le contrat de mariage.

services (such as l'Entr'aide familiale, summer camps, and a family budget), and through lobbying various levels of government for changes in legislation (among them a *crédit ouvrier*, family allowances, and restrictive legislation governing married women's employment in factories). Publicizing and commemorating the Cent-Mariés was one way of educating the city's workers about marriage and family.

The LOC's choice of what to celebrate in the lives of the Cent-Mariés spoke to working-class experiences. Its determination to teach couples how to be happy in their conjugal life reflected, among other things, the difficulty of escaping an unhappy marriage in Québec – a province with no divorce courts, where divorce was forbidden by Catholic teachings and required a petition to the Dominion government.⁸³ Its celebration of marriage took place at a time when Quebecers, like citizens elsewhere on the continent, were marrying at unprecedented rates.⁸⁴ Its emphasis on children reflected a pronatalism evident in the baby boom and North America's postwar fascination with domesticity.⁸⁵ But it was also a reaction to the long-term decline in Québec's birth-rates, particularly in urban areas. The Action catholique-sponsored Service de préparation au mariage took it upon itself to teach the Ogino-Knauss (rhythm) method of birth control in

⁸³ Unhappy couples could, however, seek a legal separation of bed-and-board, which, to a certain extent, freed them financially from their partners. National Archives of Canada (NA), Montreal Council of Women (MCW), MG28 I164, Vol. 8, File 1. Causerie donnée à Radio-Canada, C.B.F., Montréal, octobre 1946 par Me Elizabeth Monk, avocat, Montréal; James G. Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law: Divorce in Canada 1900-1939* (Toronto: UTP, 1991), 14.

⁸⁴ *La Presse*, 25 janvier 1945, "Pourquoi sévit la crise du logement," 3; *La Presse*, 5 janvier 1946, "Mariages et naissances augmentent depuis 1939," 20; *Annuaire Statistique*, Québec 1948, Table 74; *Annuaire Statistique*, Québec 1950, Tables 60 and 58.

part because Montréalers were clearly learning about other forms of contraception elsewhere: from mothers and mothers-in-law, co-workers, the armed services, some private social agencies, and from back-alley abortionists.⁸⁶ The Montreal Council of Social Agencies' Committee on Unmarried Parenthood observed in 1949, in fact, that "a large section of society" was familiar with contraceptives.⁸⁷ The LOC's insistence that married women confine their work to the home reflected longstanding Catholic precepts but was articulated more shrilly in the wake of a war when married women had worked for pay in unprecedented numbers and when many shapers of public opinion had actively

⁸⁵ May, Homeward Bound; Doug Owram, Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation (Toronto: Buffalo; London: UTP, 1996).

⁸⁶ UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/H3/18/84. "Le Mariage Chrétien" (1946); ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 13, File: Campagne de propagande – Travail Féminin, Correspondance. Paul Guay to LOC, 17 octobre 1942; ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 24, File: Divers – Faits. "Faits"; NA, Jewish Family Services of the Baron de Hirsch Institute (JFS), MG28 V86, Vol. 10, File: Minutes of Meetings of Case Committee, Family Welfare Dept., 1947. Presentation for Case Committee Meeting, 13 January 1948; NA, JFS, MG28 V86, Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Case Conferences: FWD and JCWB, 1944-46. Minutes of meeting between Family Welfare Dept and Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 10 January 1945. On Montreal's Protestant Family Welfare Association and contraceptives, see 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, 1986), 124-125. On members of the armed services and condoms, see Clio Collective, Quebec Women: A History, trans. Roger Gannon and Rosalind Gill (Toronto: Women's Press, 1987), 281; Earle Birney, Turvey: A Military Picaresque (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1949), 136. Examples of newspaper reporting of illegal abortions include La Presse: 8 juillet 1947, "Une garde-malade traduite en cour," 17; 30 juillet 1947, "La femme Odina Henri envoyée aux Assises," 26; 27 août 1947, "Mme Montpetit et le Dr Shear en correctionnelle," 3; 26 février 1948, "Marie Montpetit coupable d'homicide involontaire," 3. On abortion in Montréal in an earlier period, see Lévesque, Making and Breaking the Rules, 84-94.

⁸⁷ McGill University Archives (MU), Montreal Council of Social Agencies (MCSA), MG 2076, C. 19, File 21. Report of the Committee on Unmarried Parenthood, March 1949.

encouraged this work.⁸⁸ Finally, its faith in the redemptive powers of a family budget (an example of the postwar faith in planning) built on an understanding of the minimal incomes with which many of its constituents made do, but was also a recognition of the fact that money was a frequent source of conflict in marriages. A "ménagère prévoyante économe et industrieuse" was seen to be essential to a happy marriage, and husbands were not to upset the family budget with unnecessary spending.⁸⁹

In its celebration and tracking of the Cent-Mariés, and in its community projects more generally, the LOC exemplified the conflict of ideologies that historians such as Jean Hamelin, Jean-Pierre Collin, and Gaston Desjardins have recently argued existed within the Catholic Church in the postwar period. On the one hand, the LOC's position was defensive: a rearguard action in the face of considerable changes in the lives of Quebecers. On the other hand, the LOC wanted to respond in positive ways to these changes and to demonstrate the Church's adaptability to the real lives of its parishioners.⁹⁰ The LOC argued for the distinctiveness of French-Canadian families in the wake of the war, but these were not the rural, pastoral, pre-industrial French-

⁸⁸ As we saw in Chapter 1, however, the numbers of married women who worked for pay in Montreal were still relatively small. In 1951, 20.86% of the city's female labour force was married; conversely, 11.79% of Montréal wives worked for pay. Ninth Census of Canada 1951: Vol. 10, p. 286; Vol. 10, Table 8; Vol. 1, Table 29; Vol. 4, Table 8.

⁸⁹ ANQM, JOC, P104: Container 28, File: Bulletin des Chefs de la JOCF, 1945-1946-1947. Bulletin mensuel JOCF, Janvier 1946. "Soyons femme! Votre futur royaume, Mesdemoiselles!"; Container 37, File: Bulletin des Chefs de la JOCF, 1948-1949. Équipe Ouvrière, novembre 1948. "Enquête Nationale: 'Pour Etre une Femme de Maison Dépareillée': l'économie"; La Presse, 5 janvier 1946, "Nécessité familiale. Le budget familial ramènera l'harmonie et le bien-être au foyer," 20.

⁹⁰ Le Mouvement Ouvrier, Septembre 1944. "La Charte de l'Oratoire," 20; Desjardins, L'amour en patience; Hamelin, Histoire du catholicisme; Collin, Ligue ouvrière catholique.

Canadians whose virtues were lauded by conservative clerical nationalists such as Lionel Groulx. Rather, the LOC made new kinds of claims, on behalf of modern, urban, working-class French Canadians with material concerns. Its religious and its social missions thus coexisted uneasily. But if, as Collin has argued, the LOC was generally progressive on matters of class, its record on gender was more conservative. Although Collin maintains that the LOC espoused a “familial feminism,” I would contend that this was an ideology more steeped in the ‘familial’ than in the ‘feminist.’⁹¹ Like many secular postwar organizations, in Québec and elsewhere in North America, the LOC’s vision of women’s roles was circumscribed by traditional conceptions of ‘family’ and gendered conceptions of ‘work.’

The extent to which the Action catholique was able to combat the problems it perceived around it is another question altogether. By 1950, the LOC claimed to have effected transformations in a considerable number of working-class households by teaching Christian family values.⁹² But despite the fact that Montréal’s LOC federation was relatively large and active, the Action catholique movements, and the LOC in particular, only ever engaged a small minority of the city’s population.⁹³ The beliefs of

⁹¹ Collin, Ligue ouvrière catholique, 97, 99. In a similar vein, Michael Gauvreau claims that the AC’s Service de préparation au mariage espoused a “personalist feminism.” See his “Emergence of Personalist Feminism.”

⁹² ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: Histoire de la LOC – documents. “La LOC et la pénétration du milieu social ouvrier” (1950).

⁹³ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 7, File: Rapport M.T.C. et Fédés – Rapport d’action-comité – 1947. Rapport des Activités de la Ligue Ouvrière Catholique, Année 1944-45; Rapport de la Ligue Ouvrière Catholique 1944-45; Vol. 11, File: Discours du Congrès. 5e anniversaire 1944. Introductions to speakers: Introduction to Le Maire de Montréal. Jean-Pierre Collin estimates that at the end of the 1940s, the LOC “peut compter sur 3 800 militantes et près de 1 900 militants.” Collin, Ligue ouvrière catholique, 170. A

those who joined the LOC were not necessarily representative of those of other French-Canadians, nor of the sentiments of Montréalers of other ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, by the early 1950s, according to Jean-Pierre Collin, the LOC was turning away from social, community, and class-based activism, and began instead to look inward, focusing on relations within families and matters of personal and spiritual improvement. This shift observed by Collin reflected a larger 'turn to the right' that Jean Hamelin argues took place within the Catholic Church in Québec in the 1950s.⁹⁴ If the LOC failed to fulfill its democratic potential in the later postwar years, it was not alone: many other community organizations, unions, and consumer groups also appear to have turned inward and away from the utopian projects they had launched in the mid-to-late 1940s.

The LOC was by no means the only organization in postwar Montréal concerned with the well-being of the city's families. In particular, it needs to be examined in the context of the Catholic Church's *mouvement familial* – an ensemble of organizations for working- and middle-class families that had begun to emerge in the late 1930s but that seemed poised for expansion at the end of the war.⁹⁵ Marie-Paule Malouin, the historian of Quebec's *mouvement familial*, describes the *mouvement* as encompassing institutions

complaint about the small number of participants attending the Action Catholique's marriage preparation courses in 1946 is in UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/H3/18/84. Rapport de la troisième réunion du comité diocésain du S.P.M., tenue au Secrétariat du Service, le 29 novembre 1946. It is generally acknowledged, however, that attendance at these courses increased dramatically in the 1950s. See, e.g., Malouin, Le Mouvement familial, 88.

⁹⁴ Collin, Ligue ouvrière catholique, 14, 51, 64-70, 178-180; Hamelin, Histoire du catholicisme, 102 and Ch. 2 more generally. And see Malouin, Le Mouvement familial, 10, 84-86, 93-94, 126.

ranging from the LOC to the École des parents to the Service d'éducation familiale (SEF) to the Associations parents-maîtres (APM, or Parent-Teacher Associations).⁹⁶ All of these groups were affiliated with the Catholic Church to some degree. Some, like the JOC and the LOC, were member organizations of the (Oblate-dominated) Action catholique; others, like the Institut familial, were affiliated with the Franciscans, and still others (for example, the Foyers Notre-Dame) were founded by Sulpicians. Malouin notes the lack of unity among these organizations, citing differences of approach, class cleavages, and varying degrees of attachment to the Church hierarchy.⁹⁷ Jean-Pierre Collin, in fact, maintains that it is inappropriate to consider the LOC part of the *mouvement familial*; more important than its interest in families, he claims, were its urban and sociopolitical concerns.⁹⁸ Yet despite disagreements over method and priorities, all of these organizations were concerned with the same kinds of issues at the same time -- and at the same time as other organizations across North America. Although André Laurendeau claimed in 1950 that Quebec was still waiting for a unified and articulate

⁹⁵ The opinion that the number of organizations prepared to assist Québec families had multiplied dramatically in recent years is in UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/R57. Institutions d'assistance aux familles.

⁹⁶ Malouin, *Le Mouvement familial*.

⁹⁷ Malouin, *Le Mouvement familial*, 126, 128, 129.

⁹⁸ Collin, *Ligue ouvrière catholique*, 15. Malouin, conversely, places the LOC squarely in the context of Québec's *mouvement familial*. See *Le mouvement familial*, 37 and *passim*. I would argue that an organization that called itself "le mouvement des papas et des mamans" and that subtitled its newspaper "Le journal de la famille ouvrière" had much in common with the other groups that made up the *mouvement familial*.

“mouvement des familles,” he acknowledged that recent years had seen an explosion of associations and publications devoted to the province’s families.⁹⁹

All of these organizations argued that men and women needed to learn how to be members of a postwar family.¹⁰⁰ They shared a sense that the family had undergone a prolonged crisis through the years of depression and war. Working wives, absent husbands, marital breakdown, adultery, juvenile delinquency: all were cited as signifiers of widespread familial distress.¹⁰¹ For the organizations that made up Québec’s *mouvement familial*, the solution was two-fold: improving the day-to-day functioning of families, and doing so with some eye to Christian teachings.¹⁰² These organizations argued that parents needed answers, and from reliable sources. Future spouses should be educated through marriage preparation courses; mothers and fathers could seek assistance in the *École des parents*.¹⁰³ In teaching domestic skills, budgeting, birth control, and parenting, these Church-affiliated organizations were, in effect, usurping parents’ own

⁹⁹ UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/R57. Newspaper clipping, André Laurendeau, “Pour un mouvement des familles,” 22 novembre 1950.

¹⁰⁰ UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/O4/52. Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, Comité provincial du Québec, *Mémoire sur la famille*. The Quebec committee claimed that “dans la majorité des foyers règne une compréhension lamentable du mariage et de ses obligations avec tout ce que cela comporte de mésententes et de négligence dans l’éducation des enfants,” p. 5.

¹⁰¹ UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/O4/52. Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, Comité provincial du Québec, *Mémoire sur la famille*; File: P16/R57. *Institutions d’assistance aux familles*. And see Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*.

¹⁰² Québec’s submission on the family to the Canadian Youth Congress argued that broken homes were the result of a lack of preparation, a lack of religious principles, and poor economic conditions. UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/O4/52. Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, Comité provincial du Québec, *Mémoire sur la famille*.

¹⁰³ ANQM, SPM, P116; Desjardins, *L’Amour en patience*; Gauvreau, “Emergence of Personalist Feminism”; Pelletier, “Contribution”; Malouin, *Le Mouvement familial*; Chartrand, *Ma vie comme rivière*.

role.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, they often complained that young men and women had not received proper training in their own homes. Yet the active role played by clerics varied considerably from one organization to the next. One fundamental tenet – perhaps *the* fundamental tenet -- of the specialized Action catholique movements was the central role played by lay-people.¹⁰⁵ This gave working-class participants in the JOC and the LOC some space in which to contest and depart from the teachings of the Church hierarchy. In some organizations, such as the École des parents, the initiative in sustaining the group and setting the agenda came from young parents themselves.¹⁰⁶ Many of these groups subscribed to an ethos of mutual aid. Their names (École des parents, Équipes de ménages) reflected a sense of teamwork and a conviction that they were educating one another. In this way they provided postwar Quebecers, as Jean-Pierre Collin has argued about the LOC, with an education in democracy.¹⁰⁷ Clearly Ottawa was not the only postwar player calling for the cultivation of democracy by individual citizens: parents' groups and some branches of the Catholic Church were also involved in teaching citizens how to participate in the public sphere.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ For one parent's anger at the SPM, see Gauvreau, "Emergence of Personalist Feminism," 18.

¹⁰⁵ UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/G5/8/4. "Action Catholique Canadienne"; Piché, "La Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique Féminine," 488-489.

¹⁰⁶ Malouin, *Le Mouvement familial*, 34; Chartrand, *Ma vie comme rivière*, 250-251, 326-329.

¹⁰⁷ Collin, *Ligue ouvrière catholique*, 14, 16, and *passim*. In 1941, Chartrand described Montréal's La Bonne Coupe cooperative as an exercise in democracy and popular participation. *Ma vie comme rivière*, 76-77.

¹⁰⁸ Collin argues that the state's growing monopoly over political action was in fact the reason for the LOC's demise in the 1950s. See *Ligue ouvrière catholique*, 173-175, 179-180.

The École des parents illustrates many of these more general arguments about the *mouvement familial*. Begun by a group of young parents in 1940, the École initially resisted close clerical supervision (although, according to Malouin, it began accommodating itself to this supervision and focusing on religious matters in the 1950s).¹⁰⁹ Its meetings were democratic; it encouraged participation from men and women as equals. The École des Parents de Québec (based in Québec City) offered lectures in 1949-50 by French-Canadian notables such as Gérard Pelletier, Claude Ryan, and André Laurendeau. These members of a francophone intelligentsia, many of whom had cut their political teeth in the Action catholique movements, spoke on such topics as aloof parents; demanding parents; close-minded parents; busy parents: fathers and their social clubs; friendship between mothers and daughters; camaraderie between fathers and sons; ungrateful children; disobedient children; and family leisure.¹¹⁰ The Montreal-based École des Parents *du* Québec numbered among its early members Gérard and Alexandrine (Leduc) Pelletier, and Michel Chartrand and Simonne Monet-Chartrand – all four of whom were active in Montréal’s intellectual, political, and union circles in the postwar years, and all of whom had been involved with the Action catholique youth movements.¹¹¹ Its illustrious speakers included Thérèse Casgrain, Florence Martel, Mme Gérard Parizeau, and Édouard Montpetit.¹¹² Beginning in 1943, Montreal’s École des Parents du Québec spoke to a broader audience through its Radio-Canada radio series,

¹⁰⁹ Malouin, *Le Mouvement familial*, 34.

¹¹⁰ UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/O5/45. Programme des cours de l’École des Parents de Québec, 1949-50. On the perception that the École was aimed at an elite audience, see Malouin, *Le Mouvement familial*, 36.

¹¹¹ Chartrand, *Ma vie comme rivière*, 251.

called RADIO-PARENTS. In 1949, for instance, the École's on-air ventures were two-fold. For half an hour each week, it answered listeners' questions about children and family life ("Le Courrier de RADIO-PARENTS"). For another half hour each Tuesday evening, it presented a radio-drama entitled "Monsieur Quelqu'un, Père de Famille." In its promotional literature, the École claimed that this radio-drama studied "des situations familiales qui sont celles de tous les jours. Les auteurs, Alex et Gérard Pelletier, présentent avec une pointe d'humour la famille typique de Jean et Marie Laroche et font voir comment des 'parents moyens' se tirent de leurs difficultés qui sont en même temps celles de tout le monde."¹¹³

The example of Montreal's École des parents is instructive for a number of reasons. To begin with, its emphasis on "everyday" situations, "typical" families, "average" parents, and "everybody's" difficulties represented a kind of democratization of experience – a valuing of common knowledge. In inviting listeners to write in with their experiences, it invoked a model already established by newspaper advice columns and opinion polls. By then making these experiences public, it echoed the tracking and commemoration of the Cent-Mariés that we saw earlier in this chapter. What this meant was that new people – 'ordinary' people – were appearing in public in new ways.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Chartrand, *Ma vie comme rivière*, 174, 327-328.

¹¹³ UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/O5/45. Programme des cours de l'École des Parents de Québec, 1949-50; and see Malouin, *Le Mouvement familial*, 46. English-language CBC Radio also broadcast a show entitled "School for Parents" between 1954 and 1962: see Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, 50.

¹¹⁴ Daniel Robinson claims that, "When introduced in 1941, Canada's first opinion polling operation, the George Gallup-affiliated Canadian Institute of Public Opinion (CIPO), promised to strengthen democratic expression by recording and promoting the views of ordinary citizens. The CIPO, like its American counterpart, championed polling

Moreover, they were using their identities as parents to legitimate their public claims. Second, the École's radio-drama introduced a new player to the public: the "Père de Famille." The responsibilities, experiences, and difficulties of fathers were made public in a way that the work of motherhood had been for decades. The École even offered a twenty-four-lesson course on Wednesday evenings called "Le Père ... cet aventurier."¹¹⁵ Finally, the involvement of people like André Laurendeau, Gérard and Alex Pelletier, and Claude Ryan in the École des parents suggests that certain activist French-Canadians considered this part of their political work, and that they saw ties between voluntary work on behalf of francophone families and political work on behalf of community and nation.¹¹⁶

Although various orders of the Catholic Church had long assumed responsibility for social welfare provisions in Québec,¹¹⁷ the emergence of a widespread *mouvement familial* in this period was something different. It aimed to educate families, and sometimes speak for them, rather than simply assisting them with their most immediate needs. The emergence of the *mouvement familial* suggests, first, that a variety of social

as a 'scientific' counterweight to the political might wielded by state officials, politicians, pressure groups and business lobbyists. The voices of the 'common people' could now be heard and heeded by those in power." "Polling Consumers and Citizens," iv.

¹¹⁵ UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/O5/45. Programme des cours de l'École des Parents de Québec, 1949-50. See also Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal, on "the reconstituted postwar father," 141.

¹¹⁶ Chartrand, Ma vie comme rivière; UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/R57. Newspaper clipping, André Laurendeau, "Pour un mouvement des familles," 22 novembre 1950; Le Mouvement Ouvrier, Juillet-Août 1944, Messages of congratulation from André Laurendeau, M.L. Duplessis, Adélar Godbout [n.p.].

¹¹⁷ Marta Danylewycz, Taking the Veil: an Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987); Nicole

groups in Québec were in search of new models of family.¹¹⁸ Its blossoming after the war also suggests that various branches of the Catholic Church had an interest in postwar reconstruction, and, possibly, a desire to counteract other models of marriage and family present in Québec in the late 1940s.

IV. Contrast: the Secular Advice Columnist

Competing models of family ranged from that structured by the expanding federal welfare state¹¹⁹ to an increasingly prosperous, suburban, and secular North American norm propagated by the popular culture of movies, magazines, and advertisements.¹²⁰ All of these models advocated, to some degree, a new “democratic” ideal of family in the

Laurin et al., A la recherche d'un monde oublié: les communautés religieuses de femmes au Québec de 1900 à 1970 (Montréal: Le Jour, 1991).

¹¹⁸ One participant in a 1951 conference of the French section of the Canadian Welfare Council in Montreal summarized the conference by saying “Le sens de cet inventaire c’est que nous sommes tous à la recherche de styles nouveaux de vie familiale dans tous les domaines.” UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/R64. “Vers l’Edification de la famille de demain.” Rapport des premières journées d’étude de la Commission française du Conseil canadien du Bien-être social, Hôpital de la Miséricorde, Montréal, les 9 et 10 mars 1951. Synthèse générale de la journée présentée par M. Roger Marier.

¹¹⁹ The Action catholique worried, for instance, that the French-Canadian family would become “une assistée de l’État.” Yet it also criticized federal income tax policy and federal family allowances for not taking large families into account. UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/R57. Institutions d’assistance aux familles; La famille nombreuse; Législation familiale.

¹²⁰ One lesson in the Catholic Church’s 1948 Cours d’Orientation dans la Vie denounced the “false ideas” of marriage and the heathen influence propounded by newspapers, magazines, radio, and movies. UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/G5/9/8. Cours d’Orientation dans la Vie, Le Centre Catholique, Université d’Ottawa, 1948. Neuvième leçon: “Le Saint État du Mariage.” See also Adams, The Trouble with Normal. On advertisements in Québec during the Second World War, see Geneviève Auger and Raymonde Lamothe,

wake of the war. Like the Catholic Church, most secular marriage experts were fully aware that many unions were far from idyllic, and like their religious counterparts, many blamed unhappy marriages on the privations of the Depression and the turmoil of war and separation. Commentators fretted about the lingering after-effects of these major crises on Canadian families.¹²¹ But they were also optimistic that a return to peace and a stable economy would permit families to rebuild and to flourish. This optimism was rooted in part in North America's postwar faith in democracy: families, observers agreed, should operate on the same democratic principles that had been recently vindicated on the battlefields of Europe.¹²² Thus Montréal liberal reformer Renée Vautelet declared at the dawn of 1947 that a modern family was "no longer the husband with his chattel goods but a union of two partners."¹²³ La Presse likewise claimed in 1949 that the French-Canadian family was making the transition from an "authoritarian" to an "egalitarian" institution, and that children were now recognized to have certain rights.¹²⁴

The Canadian Youth Commission found, however, that its inquiry into the family lives of young Canadians elicited mixed responses. In its handbook for postwar youth,

De la poêle à frire à la ligne de feu: la vie quotidienne des Québécoises pendant la guerre '39-'45 (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1981).

¹²¹ Mona Gleason, "Psychology and the Construction of the 'Normal' Family in Postwar Canada, 1945-60," Canadian Historical Review 78 (September 1997), 477; Annalee Gölz, "Family Matters: The Canadian Family and the State in the Postwar Period," left history 1 (Fall 1993), 9.

¹²² Gölz, "Family Matters," 15.

¹²³ NA, Renée Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1. "Québec and Canada," 3 January 1947.

¹²⁴ La Presse, 26 mars 1949, "Egalité de préférence à autorité," 28; Dominique Marshall, "The Language of Children's Rights, the Formation of the Welfare State, and the Democratic Experience of Poor Families in Québec, 1940-55," Canadian Historical Review 78, 3 (September 1997): 409-441.

entitled "Jeunesse vs. Après-Guerre," the Commission described the currency enjoyed in Canada by a new democratic (rather than patriarchal) conception of the family and an improved status for women. Yet its 1948 publication, Youth, Marriage and the Family, called for still more democracy in family relationships. In the opinion of the Commission, this need was particularly acute in Québec. While family size was steadily diminishing in that province, the Commission argued, family status would probably "retain much of its patriarchal character."¹²⁵ This ambivalence was evident in the JOC's 1945 submission to the Commission. At the same time that the Catholic youth organization claimed that fathers and mothers should hold authority within the family together, it observed that if families were assured of some economic security, wives would stay home where they belonged.¹²⁶

In part this ambivalence reflected the confusion of a transitional era in family relations. But it was also an indication of the particular meanings ascribed to democracy in postwar Canada. Most observers saw no lapse in logic in simultaneously advocating democratic families and stay-at-home wives. Indeed, the new democratic family was in many instances predicated on a stay-at-home wife and mother: the essence of the postwar democratic family was cooperation, not equality. Women's unpaid contributions to the family's well-being were to be recognized and lauded, but there was very little

¹²⁵ UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/O4/59. "Jeunesse vs. Après-Guerre. Guide destiné aux jeunes pour l'étude des problèmes que leur posera l'après-guerre." Publié par la Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse; Canadian Youth Commission, Youth, Marriage and the Family, ix, 33-34.

¹²⁶ ANQM, JOC, P104, C. 181, File: Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse (Congrès - Janvier 1945). Comité de la famille. Résumé du rapport des délibérations, 27-28 janvier 1945.

question that this unpaid labour was women's work. As Mona Gleason has convincingly argued, prescriptions for modern democratic marriages drew heavily on the much older ideal of separate spheres for women and men.¹²⁷ Postwar psychological discourse commended, and recommended, families based on emotional bonds wherein fathers were the "rightful 'heads' of families" and wives were responsible for the "emotional climate" of the marriage. The "legitimization of traditional gender roles," Gleason claims, "hierarchized the spousal relationship in postwar marriages."¹²⁸ Like secular experts, the Action catholique movements attempted to reconcile democracy and sex-specific roles – sometimes with difficulty. Most Catholic commentators continued to insist that the father was the "chef de famille" and the rightful source of authority within the family.¹²⁹ But they also suggested that he exercise this authority with benevolence. Leaders of the AC movements emphasized husbands' and wives' particular and complementary roles.¹³⁰ Some participants in the AC resisted the narrowness of the Church's prescriptions. Twenty-one-year-old Simonne Monet, for instance, wrote to her fiancé in 1941 that "L'Église catholique considère les femmes ou comme des religieuses ou comme des procréatrices. Les lois morales en matière de sexualité ont toujours été dictées et rédigées par des clercs célibataires: pape, évêques, chanoines. C'est le 'droit canon.' Ce n'est pas gai ni progressif, mais plutôt agressif et restrictif." But there were many who subscribed, to some degree, to the Church's teachings on gender and family. Monet's

¹²⁷ Gleason, "Psychology and the Construction of the 'Normal' Family," 457-460.

¹²⁸ Gleason, "Psychology and the Construction of the 'Normal' Family," 464, 474, 459, 446.

¹²⁹ e.g. UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/H3/18/84. "Le Mariage Chrétien" (1946).

¹³⁰ Piché, "La Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique Féminine," 485-486, 505.

fiancé, Michel Chartrand, for instance, agreed with the AC that men and women had different ways of thinking.¹³¹

Alongside the pronouncements of secular experts such as psychologists and marriage counselors were new ways in which the family lives of ordinary people were made public in this period: the opinion polls that were beginning to turn up regularly in the press, such as the results of the Gallup-affiliated Canadian Institute of Public Opinion and Britain's Mass Observation; and the advice columns, or "chroniques sentimentales," that appeared in most daily and weekly newspapers in Montréal.¹³² Gaston Desjardins has explored the advice columns of Montréal newspapers between 1940 and 1960 and has argued that they played a significant role in constituting discourses of youth and sexuality in Québec in this period.¹³³ Montréalers who wrote to Colette, or Fadette, or Françoise, or Josette, made their private matters public, albeit behind the anonymity of initials or a pseudonym.¹³⁴ The daily columns of La Presse's widely read "Colette" (actually Édouardine Lesage)¹³⁵ illustrate both new ideas of democratic families and new ways in which the public was being enlarged and democratized, as family matters were made public.

¹³¹ Chartrand, Ma vie comme rivière, 87, 97.

¹³² Robinson, "Polling Consumers and Citizens." As we have seen, the JOC and LOC relied on surveys to know their constituencies, and used survey results to educate participants about the realities of working-class life. UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/G5/8/12. Surveys for "Ceux qui n'ont pas plus que trois ans de mariage" and "A ceux qui ne pensent pas sérieusement au mariage"; Enquête sur la situation religieuse. Canada – J.O.C.F.

¹³³ Desjardins, L'Amour en patience.

¹³⁴ Colette, Fadette, Françoise, and Josette were advice columnists in La Presse, Le Devoir, Le Petit Journal, and Photo-Journal respectively.

¹³⁵ On Colette's true identity, see Lévesque, Making and Breaking the Rules, 24.

Colette faced a difficult task: dispensing prescriptions for marriage while dealing with clear and abundant evidence of unhappy marriages. Wives wrote to Colette with problems ranging from husbands who cheated to husbands who tried to expropriate family allowance cheques to husbands who saw themselves as masters of the house to husbands who went drinking after work, leaving their wives stuck at home with the children and suffering from boredom and a lack of entertainment.¹³⁶ In general, Colette advised wives to be tolerant and to work for the preservation of the marriage and the household. In 1949, for instance, a woman wrote to Colette despairing of her husband, in his 50s, who cheated on her and at the same time criticized her for not managing to put away any savings. Colette counselled the woman to keep her chin up and to try to resuscitate her marriage.¹³⁷ Yet the advice columnist was also insistent that wives and mothers demand to be treated with respect. In response to one woman who had written complaining of a tyrannical husband, Colette noted:

Il faut qu'un homme soit singulièrement borné, de nos jours, pour user envers sa femme d'une tyrannie comme celle qui est décrite ici. Le monde a marché depuis les âges où le mariage asservissait la faiblesse de la femme à la brutalité, et à l'égoïsme de l'homme; il n'y a plus de donjons où l'on enferme l'épouse durant les absences du maître. ... Il est impossible, de nos jours, qu'un homme conserve la confiance et l'amour de sa femme, s'il blesse journallement sa fierté en la traitant en subalterne.¹³⁸

Despite the increasing popularity of assumptions about democracy and men's and women's equality within the household, Colette was well aware that 'home' meant different things for women and men respectively. A wife, she argued, "est enchaînée au

¹³⁶ La Presse: 2 novembre 1946, 34; 6 juin 1947, 17; 6 avril 1948, 15.

¹³⁷ La Presse, 8 octobre 1949, 34.

foyer par mille liens: enfants, réputation à soutenir, dépendance matérielle, etc., tandis que l'autre [the husband] trouve maintes raisons et prétextes pour n'y apparaître que le moins possible, s'il s'y déplaît."¹³⁹ Wives' material dependence on husbands remained very real in the wake of the war, despite women's wartime experience of jobs and, occasionally, savings. In response to a 27-year-old woman trying to choose among spinsterhood, marriage to a poor, jobless man with a heart of gold, and marriage to a wealthy farmer, Colette did not hesitate to advise the last alternative. Marriage, she claimed, "même accepté sans enthousiasme, est encore la meilleure ressource de la fille pauvre et sans moyens de gagner sa vie. Il vaut mieux dépendre d'un mari que de ses frères et belles-soeurs."¹⁴⁰

Colette was clearly aware of the material dimensions of marriage. That many of the letters in her daily columns turned on spousal conflict over the management of money shows the importance of finances to marriage and helps to explain why the LOC spent so much time addressing a family budget. Men's inadequate income, and women's injudicious spending, were frequent sources of grievance for wives and husbands respectively. Women complained to Colette of husbands with low earnings and high debts.¹⁴¹ Husbands complained of wives' careless spending of hard-earned paycheques.¹⁴² Husbands who upset wives' carefully planned budgets were also a source

¹³⁸ La Presse, 6 juin 1947, 17.

¹³⁹ La Presse, 6 juillet 1946, 24.

¹⁴⁰ La Presse, 30 septembre 1946, 14.

¹⁴¹ La Presse, 14 février 1949.

¹⁴² La Presse, 8 octobre 1949, 34. Nancy Forestell notes in her study of Timmins, Ontario that "the clear separation between breadwinning and housekeeping permitted the husband to more easily lay the blame of financial difficulties on a wife's management of

of marital tension; money spent on alcohol was especially begrudged.¹⁴³ On numerous occasions, Colette argued that men must not be tyrannical and must allow women their own money. One mother of two claimed that her husband of six years regularly took her money without asking, demanded that her savings be placed in the bank under his name, and treated her so badly that even his parents disapproved. Colette advised the woman not to give her husband a penny more, to avoid separation if possible for the sake of the children, but to turn to the courts if necessary for the children's well-being.¹⁴⁴

The detailed attention given to budgets in Colette's column also made the minutiae of running a household (often on very small incomes) public, and gave readers the opportunity to compare their own household management with the examples that appeared in print. Many women, and a few men, wrote in describing their average intake and expenditure of income, wondering how they could cut costs and where they might save money. One woman, for instance, asked Colette whether five people could live on \$35 per week. She listed her monthly expenses: rent, \$22; board for a 15-year-old boy, \$20; insurance, \$7; telephone, \$4; streetcar tickets, \$12; lights, \$3.50; church collection, \$2.40; bread, \$5. She did not have to pay for heating. With the remainder of their income, she had to feed and clothe the family. As a way of cutting costs, Colette suggested cancelling the telephone and sending the 15-year-old son to school instead of

the household budget rather than on his inability to earn an adequate living or on other economic factors beyond his control." See "All That Glitters is Not Gold: The Gendered Dimensions of Work, Family and Community Life in the Northern Ontario Goldmining Town of Timmins, 1909-1950" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1993), 143.

¹⁴³ La Presse, 4 juin 1948, 10.

boarding him out.¹⁴⁵ Another woman had \$25 per week to cover her own expenses and those of her husband and their two babies. Her rent was \$15 a month, insurance \$8 per month, and their gas and electricity bill \$8 every two months. She had difficulty finding enough money for clothing. Colette agreed that it would be almost impossible to set aside clothing money on her income, given that food was expensive and that babies required special food and care.¹⁴⁶ A husband wrote to Colette in February 1949 asking whether his wife ought to be able to save more than she was managing at present. He explained that he gave his wife \$22 a week in order to cover the rent (\$17.60 a month), the electricity and gas bills (\$6-7 every two months), laundry bills (\$1 a week), and food. The couple had no children, and he paid for the heating and clothing bills himself. Colette pointed out that this arrangement gave his wife just over \$2 a day to feed two people, and that given current prices for butter, meat, etc., it was unrealistic to expect her to put away any savings.¹⁴⁷

In cases where budgets were simply insufficient, Colette reluctantly conceded that wives might consider some way of earning money at home. In cases of real need, such as a husband becoming ill or losing his job, then a wife's work outside the home might be excused. Far better this option, Colette argued, than depending on the charity of relatives or incurring debts.¹⁴⁸ In general, however, Colette's opinion about married women's paid

¹⁴⁴ La Presse, 7 juillet 1944, 14. See also La Presse, 14 février 1949, 18, where Colette asks a husband, "... songez-vous qu'une femme doit avoir sur elle un peu d'argent, tout comme un homme?"

¹⁴⁵ La Presse, 29 novembre 1948, 19.

¹⁴⁶ La Presse, 27 mars 1948, 30.

¹⁴⁷ La Presse, 14 février 1949, 18.

¹⁴⁸ La Presse, 3 mai 1947, 24.

work was not terribly different from that of the Church. If a man's salary was reasonably adequate, she argued, his wife should not leave the home for paid work. One young woman who wanted to continue in paid employment after her marriage was told that this was a bad idea, as her husband might come to take her wages for granted and take advantage of her willingness to work, rather than properly fulfilling his own duties as the family breadwinner.¹⁴⁹

In some ways, Colette was a rival to the Catholic Church. Québec's postwar Church saw itself as attempting to address, and sometimes counteract, such secular models of family through the Action catholique and other organizations affiliated with the *mouvement familial*. But in doing so, it revealed the numerous ways in which it was in fact similar to secular institutions in postwar North America. Like other postwar institutions, the Church saw proper families as integral to reconstruction. At the dawn of 1945, for instance, the Canadian episcopate urged wives and mothers to return home as soon as possible so that families torn apart by the exigencies of war could be mended.¹⁵⁰ This message was part of a larger (and well-documented) North American push to return both newlywed and long-married women to their homes at the close of the war.¹⁵¹ In the immediate postwar period, the Catholic Church's longstanding interest in keeping wives at home converged with the renewed effort by secular institutions to do the same.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ *La Presse*, 5 janvier 1946, 24.

¹⁵⁰ *La Presse*, 25 janvier 1945, "Devoirs incombant aux Catholiques," 1-2.

¹⁵¹ Ruth Roach Pierson, *'They're Still Women After All': The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986); May, *Homeward Bound*.

¹⁵² See Sherene Razack, "Schools for Happiness: *Instituts familiaux* and the Education for Ideal Wives and Mothers," in Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, eds.,

Leaders of the *mouvement familial* participated, moreover, in what amounted to a postwar consensus concerning the value of experts, marriage counselling, good parenting, and education for democracy.¹⁵³ Like other institutions, the Church was optimistic about the potential of planning as a solution to social problems. Planning was equated with progress – however that progress was defined.¹⁵⁴ But the model of family promoted by the Action catholique movements was not quite the hegemonic Anglo-Celtic, middle-class model that historians have claimed was universally lauded in the 1950s.¹⁵⁵ The Action catholique promoted an ethnically specific (French-Canadian and Catholic) family, and in the case of the JOC and the LOC, a working-class family. The tensions between the exaltation of a Catholic “reine du foyer” and the realities of working-class budgets in 1940s Montréal help to explain some of the ambivalence in the LOC’s thinking. Its calls for “un salaire familial” and family allowances were so vociferous because it was attempting to bring into being a working-class family that consistently adhered to the model of a breadwinning husband and a dependent wife and children.

Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women’s History, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1991), 372, on the way in which Québec’s *instituts familiaux* of the 1950s were a manifestation of a longstanding clerical nationalism but also “found an agreeable climate in the postwar world.”

¹⁵³ The Action catholique’s files include, for instance, a booklet entitled “Your Marriage,” part of the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene’s Guideposts to Mental Health series, published in 1949. UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/R65. Clearly the AC was attuned to the thoughts of other ‘experts’ on family. And see Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal.

¹⁵⁴ Owram, Government Generation, Ch. 11.

¹⁵⁵ Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal; Adams, The Trouble with Normal; Franca Iacovetta, “Making ‘New Canadians’: Social Workers, Women, and the Reshaping of Immigrant

V. Conclusions

The commemoration of Montréal's mass marriage, and the postwar efforts of the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique more generally, point, first, to competing visions of reconstruction in Canada in the wake of the Second World War. Although the federal Liberals' vision, which rested on a federally directed welfare state, ultimately prevailed, it did not go unchallenged. There were, of course, similarities between this federal vision and that promoted by the LOC. Both the federal state and the LOC were 'constructing family' in a context where women and wives had recently worked for pay in large numbers. Both the Catholic Church and Mackenzie King argued that a wife and mother should be "la reine du foyer."¹⁵⁶ The LOC campaigned for family allowances using the argument that they would allow mothers to stay home; as Ruth Pierson has demonstrated, there were numerous federal incentives to encourage married women to return home, including family allowances, the closing of wartime day nurseries, and amendments to the federal income tax act.¹⁵⁷ The primary difference here was that Ottawa promoted a 'Canadian family' with allegiance to a federal state that was classless; the LOC, in contrast, insisted upon the specificity of the experiences of French-Canadian and of working-class families. This story is thus significant for a second reason: because it

Families," in Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, eds., Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History (Toronto: UTP, 1992).

¹⁵⁶ La Presse, 1 juin 1945, "King, et la famille canadienne," 14; ANQM, JOC, P104, C. 250, File: Service du B.E. Social. J.A. Bougie to Rév. Père V. Villeneuve, 18 février 1943.

points to competing definitions of 'family.' The popular conception of a postwar North American family – prosperous, suburban, secular, and nuclear – clearly coexisted with other familial realities.¹⁵⁷ Third, this story supports recent work that highlights the pluralism and ideological flux of 1940s Québec, the Catholic Church's responses to the social, economic, and intellectual changes taking place around it, and the competing strands of thought within the Church itself.¹⁵⁸ Just as North American scholars have insisted in recent years that the State must be taken apart, so must we pry open the conceptual monolith that is the Catholic Church – as Québec scholars have long argued.

Finally, I would argue that the celebration of the Cent-Mariés in the postwar years had implications for understandings of 'the public.' During the war, citizens had been encouraged to think in terms of a 'public interest,' a civic community. In the postwar years, more people, and more kinds of people, claimed access to this public: to public provisions, and to public spheres of discussion. Hence the number of issues that could be appropriately discussed in public also multiplied. The German philosopher Jürgen

¹⁵⁷ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: Discours du Congrès, 5e anniversaire 1944. Discours de Mme Yvette Choquette, 1944 5e anniversaire; Pierson, 'They're Still Women'.

¹⁵⁸ For the North American 'norm,' see May, Homeward Bound. For studies that question the pervasiveness of this norm, see Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960 (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1994); Franca Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1992); Veronica Strong-Boag, "Canada's Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1945-1960," Journal of Canadian Studies 29 (Fall 1994): 5-25; Susan Prentice, "Workers, Mothers, Reds: Toronto's Postwar Daycare Fight," Studies in Political Economy 30 (Fall 1989): 115-142; Line Chamberland, Mémoires lesbiennes: le lesbianisme à Montréal entre 1950 et 1972 (Montréal: Éditions du Remue-ménage, 1996).

¹⁵⁹ Hamelin, Histoire du catholicisme; Collin, Ligue ouvrière catholique; Desjardins, L'Amour en patience.

Habermas has argued that the development of liberal, capitalist societies in the nineteenth century was accompanied by the growth of a 'public' separate from the state: indeed, the public, in Habermas's conception, was a sphere of discussion that acted as a check on the state.¹⁶⁰ A Habermasian conception of the public is useful here if we think of the LOC as raising public awareness of social welfare issues that the provincial state was dragging its heels on or that the federal state was addressing, but in ways that the LOC found inadequate or inappropriate for Québec. The LOC argued, for instance, that a family allowances programme ought to be administered by the provincial government so as to safeguard provincial autonomy. Once federal family allowances were implemented in 1945, the LOC maintained that the programme should at least take into account Québec's larger families and not drop its rates after the fourth child.¹⁶¹ The public thus became a forum for competing conceptions of family, and despite the many 'private' functions of the Catholic Church, the Action catholique served as one counterpublic, in the 1940s, to the expanding federal state.

¹⁶⁰ Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)," New German Critique 3 (Fall 1974): 49-55.

¹⁶¹ Le Mouvement Ouvrier, Juillet-août 1944, "ENFIN!", 10; ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: Discours du Congrès, 5e anniversaire 1944. Discours du Président, 5e anniversaire, 1944; Discours de Léo Turcotte, 1944 – 5e anniversaire. The "taux décroissant" was abolished in 1949: see Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 291.

Chapter 4 'Purses on Legs': Economic Citizenship, Gender, and a Politics of Prices

In Gabrielle Roy's novel The Cashier, set in Montréal between 1947 and 1949, Alexandre Chenevert visits his local *dépanneur*. There, "Neighbourhood people were buying bread, smoked sausage, the evening paper." The owner of the grocery store, Fred Trottier, "a thin little man with a big moustache, was taking a bottle out of the icebox while at the same time discussing the latest railroad strike. 'If they get their raise, we'll still be the ones to pay for it,' he said. 'You mark my words: prices will go up again.'"¹ At about the same time, a member of the Canadian Association of Consumers declared that "every woman in Canada [is] thinking of prices at the present time ..."² A concern with prices, and a politics centred on purchasing, figured prominently in Canada's urban centres in the 1940s.

This chapter looks at how Montréal families developed a sense of economic citizenship over the war years, and how they drew on this sense of economic citizenship to organize around consumer issues in the postwar period. The federal government had encouraged a wartime consumer consciousness as part of its efforts on the home front. Rationing, price controls, salvaging and recycling drives, and the black market made the availability and distribution of goods a popular topic of discussion through the 1940s.

¹ Gabrielle Roy, The Cashier, trans. Harry Binsse (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1955), 79.

² National Archives of Canada (NA), Canadian Association of Consumers (CAC), MG 28 I 200, Vol. 1, File 1. Program [29 September 1947].

After the war, consumers' groups, labour newspapers, and continuing government controls encouraged middle- and working-class families to maintain their interest in prices, standards, consumer choice, and the availability of products. Montréalers, grown accustomed to the equity of rationing and worried about the rising cost-of-living, demanded the ability to purchase household necessities at reasonable prices as one of the rights of economic citizenship.³

Household management and daily shopping had long been considered the work of married women – so-called "Mrs. Consumers" or "Purses on Legs."⁴ Consumer activism, then, allowed women in particular to carve out significant space in the public sphere. These women, acting in the name of wives and mothers, targeted the state as well as shopkeepers, and thus claimed gendered citizenship rights using what American historian

³ This appears to bear out the first part of Victoria de Grazia's triple-barrelled assertion: that "Some time in the mid-twentieth century, it also became axiomatic that access to consumer goods was a fundamental right of all peoples, that this right was best fulfilled by free enterprise, and that free enterprise operated optimally if guided by the profit motive unimpeded by state or other interference." De Grazia, "Introduction," in The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 2. This chapter demonstrates that Canadians' opinions on free enterprise and the proper role of government in the 1940s were more varied than de Grazia suggests in the second and third parts of her statement. On ordinary Americans' scepticism about the market and free enterprise during the Depression, see Alice Kessler-Harris, A Woman's Wage: Historical Meanings and Social Consequences (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 74-80.

⁴ American historian Susan Strasser analyses the role of housewife as "Mrs. Consumer" in a capitalist economy in Never Done: A History of American Housework (New York: Pantheon, 1982), Ch. 13. See also Victoria de Grazia, Introduction to "Establishing the Modern Consumer Household," in de Grazia, ed., The Sex of Things, 152. The expression "Purses on Legs" was used by Montréal liberal reformer Renée Vautelet to describe the public perception of female consumers. NA, Renée Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1, File: The High Cost of Living. Notes Lib. Womens Fed. [n.d.].

Susan Porter Benson has called the “trope of the good manager.”⁵ Yet the middle- and working-class women who took on ‘maternalist’ causes were clearly not confined to their homes, as much secondary literature on postwar North America would have it. Rather, consumer activists’ call for the recognition of women's unpaid work suggests one way that gender configured the ‘political’ and the public in the postwar period.⁶ Moreover, consumer movements in Montréal in the 1940s coincided with Québec women’s belated achievement of the provincial suffrage. Their articulation of economic citizenship, then, took place in the context of their newly acquired political citizenship.⁷

An examination of consumer organizing helps us to understand the balance of ‘private’ and ‘public’ in the 1940s. The federal government’s intervention in the running

⁵ Susan Porter Benson, “Living on the Margin: Working-Class Marriages and Family Survival Strategies in the United States, 1919-1941,” p. 222, in de Grazia, ed., The Sex of Things. In Canada, the consumer activism of women on the left has received some attention: see Joan Sangster, Dreams of Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1920-1950 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989); Ruth A. Frager, “Politicized Housewives in the Jewish Communist Movement of Toronto, 1923-1933” in Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster, eds., Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics (Toronto: UTP, 1989); Linda Kealey, Enlisting Women for the Cause: Women, Labour, and the Left in Canada, 1890-1920 (Toronto: UTP, 1998), esp. Chapters 2, 5; Julie Guard. “Women Worth Watching: Radical Housewives in Cold War Canada,” in D. Buse, G. Kinsman, and M. Steedman, eds., Rethinking National Security (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2000).

⁶ Joan Scott suggests that historians examine both the ways in which gender configured the ‘political’ and the ways in which a gendered public sphere conditioned the kinds of political action that women took, in Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia UP, 1988).

⁷ Andrée Lévesque notes that Québec’s Civil Code assigned responsibility for political activity to husbands, not wives. She also argues that French-Canadian feminists had been less influenced than Anglo-American women by the social reform wave of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I would argue, then, that the realm of consumption assumed even more importance as a sphere of action for French-Canadian women in the 1940s. Lévesque, Résistance et transgression: Études en histoire des femmes au Québec (Montréal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 1995), 17, 22.

of households during the war, through its regulations on what and how much people could buy, what they could eat, and what they ought not to discard, threw wide open what had once been private. Historians have argued that at the end of the war, some citizens called for a restoration of privacy; they retreated to domesticity in an attempt to avoid engagement with 'public' matters.⁸ Yet as we shall see in this chapter, others took the lessons that they had learned over the course of the war and used them to transform their private household and financial situations into a kind of politics. They made a public, political statement out of what might once (for instance, during the Depression) have been regarded as a shameful situation, to be hidden at all costs.⁹ In making the 'private' public, individuals and groups who took action as consumers were taking the promise of 'Freedom from Want' seriously, and were attempting to craft a more democratic public sphere.

The consumption at issue here was the limited consumption of necessities such as food and clothing, not the 'high consumption' of automobiles and expensive consumer

⁸ This argument is particularly common in the American literature: see William S. Graebner, The Age of Doubt: American Thought and Culture in the 1940s (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 1-2; Perry R. Duis, "No Time for Privacy: World War II and Chicago's Families," in Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch, eds., The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness during World War II (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 39.

⁹ On the Depression and shame in the U.S., see Duis, "No Time for Privacy," 19-20. Alice Kessler-Harris claims, however, that for Americans who wrote to the government to describe the impact of the Depression on their families, "the most intimate details of one's life became a public issue; the idea of a distinct domestic sphere scarcely existed." See A Woman's Wage, 75. For Canada, consider the letters written to Prime Minister Bennett collected in L.M. Grayson and Michael Bliss, eds., The Wretched of Canada: Letters to R.B. Bennett, 1930-1935 (Toronto: UTP, 1971). I would argue, however, that government intervention in this 'private' sphere had increased considerably by the 1940s,

durables such as refrigerators celebrated by many historians of postwar North America. In this chapter, I look at three consumer campaigns in particular: the boycott of grocers and butchers in 1947-48; the battle to secure the legalization of margarine as a cheaper substitute for butter; and the demand for affordable rental housing. All three campaigns had echoes across the country, but had particular class and ethnic dimensions in Montréal. Each of these campaigns demonstrates the importance of consumer issues to both middle- and working-class Montréalers in the immediate postwar years, and reveals sites where the family met the public in the reconstruction period. The public claims of consumers point to some of the things to which families thought they were entitled in a victorious, welfare-state democracy. While middle-class families had long been units of consumption rather than production, by the 1940s this was increasingly true for Montréal's working class as well.¹⁰ But as the anecdote that begins this chapter suggests, consumers often pitted their demands against those of wage-earners: 'family' could be

as had the ability of ordinary citizens to turn their private struggles into public politics.¹⁰ Denyse Baillargeon, *Ménagères au temps de la crise* (Montréal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 1991), 160, 196. Baillargeon emphasizes the minimal levels of consumption among Montréal's working-class families in the 1930s. The working-class family, she argues, remained a site of production rather than of consumption at least until the 1940s. Susan Porter Benson likewise insists upon the minimal levels of consumption among American working-class families between 1919 and 1941: see "Living on the Margin." There is an extensive international literature on consumption and the middle class: see, e.g., Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987); Stuart Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge UP, 1989).

deployed for conservative as well as progressive ends.¹¹

I. Gaining Consumer Consciousness During the Second World War

In order to manage the war and build a consensus on the homefront, Ottawa crafted a relationship with its citizens premised on preserving scarce materials for the war effort and avoiding the inflation that might result from having more money than goods in circulation. Ordinary Canadians were to save, salvage and reuse; they were to accept rationing in order that everyone received his or her fair share. They were to ensure that shopkeepers adhered to price ceilings, and they were to curb their own desires to spend.¹² Victory Bond campaigns catered to patriotic sentiment while siphoning off 'excess' purchasing power and also satisfying citizens' Depression-bred instincts to put money away in case of future need. Constant public monitoring of prices and increases in the cost-of-living meant that, despite the improved wages of the war years, Canadians were keenly aware of fluctuating costs and of the fine balance between income and expenditures.

¹¹ For an excellent historical analysis of relationships among production, consumption, and gender, see Dana Frank, Purchasing Power: Consumer Organizing, Gender, and the Seattle Labor Movement, 1919-1929 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994).

¹² La Presse, 21 octobre 1944, "Exception à la règle. Remettons à plus tard ce que nous pouvons faire aujourd'hui: acheter," 28; NA, Marion Creelman Savage papers, MG 30 C 92, Vol. 7, File: WPTB 1933-1944 [sic]. Poster: "The Story of Inflation ... in one easy lesson." The Banque Canadienne Nationale advised the female, French-Canadian readership of La Bonne Parole that savings were the best protection for any family. La Bonne Parole, Septembre-Octobre 1944, Advertisement for La Banque Canadienne Nationale, 7.

The work of rationing, recycling, salvaging, saving, and spending wisely largely belonged to women.¹³ Moreover, the Consumer Branch of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board (WPTB) secured the official cooperation of 16,000 women across the country, all of whom agreed to monitor prices and report back to the Board.¹⁴ These women, the state and the press insisted, were contributing to an Allied victory and were ensuring that the country their men came home to would be in sound economic health.¹⁵ Women were reminded, moreover, that in wartime Canada, unlike war-torn Europe, government controls and regulations were "inconveniences," not "'hardships' or 'sacrifices'."¹⁶ On V-E Day, the government congratulated women on their wartime efforts: thanks to them, Canadians had managed to keep inflation to reasonable levels. Now, the task was to win the peace.¹⁷ Citizens, consumers, and housewives were reminded that the worst inflation

¹³ La Presse: 3 janvier 1944, "L'ennemi se dresse, implacable. Les femmes sur la première ligne de combat dans la lutte à l'inflation," 4; 3 janvier 1944, "La récupération au programme de l'année nouvelle. Les femmes peuvent beaucoup dans ce domaine, aussi compte-t-on sur elles," 4; 7 juillet 1944, "Le marché noir est une plaie économique," 6. And see Ruth Roach Pierson, 'They're Still Women After All': The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986), Ch. 1; Geneviève Auger et Raymonde Lamothe, De la poêle à frire à la ligne de feu: la vie quotidienne des Québécoises pendant la guerre '39-'45 (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1981). On rationing in the United States, see Amy Bentley, Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

¹⁴ Joseph Schull, The Great Scot: A Biography of Donald Gordon (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1979), 66-67.

¹⁵ La Presse, 21 octobre 1944, "Exception à la règle. Remettons à plus tard ce que nous pouvons faire aujourd'hui: acheter," 28.

¹⁶ NA, Savage papers, MG 30 C 92, Vol. 7, File: WPTB - Consumer News 1944-1945. Consumers' News (May 1945), "The Price of Freedom," 1.

¹⁷ La Presse, 7 mai 1945, "L'inflation, le dernier ennemi," 4.

associated with the First World War had come *after* the end of hostilities.¹⁸ The "danger of inflation" was "more real now than at any time since the war commenced"; the "homemakers of the Nation should be on the alert, more than ever ...".¹⁹ Price controls would be lifted only gradually. Slowly, the production of peacetime consumer durables would resume and goods would return to store shelves: in the meantime, anxious consumers were to be patient.²⁰ Rationing would remain necessary for certain items, especially since Canada was allocating some of its food supplies for export to the hungry of Europe.²¹ Victory Bond campaigns continued through the late 1940s. As long as wages and savings exceeded supplies of consumer goods, inflation remained a threat and the black market tempting.²²

¹⁸ NA, Savage papers, MG 30 C 92, Vol. 7: File: WPTB 1944-45. Directive No. 4 to Liaison Officers from Byrne Sanders, Director, Consumer Branch; File: WPTB - Consumer News 1944-45. Consumers' News (November/December 1945), "Why it Could Happen Here," 4; File: WPTB 1933-1944 [sic]. Women's Regional Advisory Committee, Montreal, Minutes, 19 September 1944.

¹⁹ NA, Montreal Council of Women (MCW), MG 28 I 164: Vol. 2. Minutes, Local Council of Women, 20 February 1946; Vol. 5, File 6. Local Council of Women 52nd Year Book and Annual Report 1945-1946, Report of the Liaison Officer to the Women's Regional Advisory Committee (Consumer Branch) of the WPTB.

²⁰ La Presse: 5 janvier 1946, "Le Canada ne doit pas perdre patience," 22; 3 janvier 1947, "Le retour à l'état normal," 6. Joy Parr argues that the production of household goods was deliberately given lower priority than the reconstruction of heavy industry. Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years (Toronto: UTP, 1999), Ch. 3.

²¹ La Presse, 27 décembre 1945, "La lutte à l'inflation. Résumé de l'oeuvre de la commission des prix et du commerce," 12; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 6, File 13. Letter from the LCW of Montreal [Food Conservation], 2 January 1948.

²² On the black market and the refusal to adhere to wartime controls, see Jeff Keshen, "One For All or All For One: Government Controls, Black Marketing and the Limits of Patriotism, 1939-47," Journal of Canadian Studies 29, 4 (Winter 1994-95): 111-143. Opposition to the black market is noted in La Presse: 30 septembre 1946, "Violentes

Ottawa's need to secure individual cooperation with federal controls was especially acute in Québec, where opinions about military participation were mixed. Jeff Keshen reminds us that cheating, "gouging," and black-marketing co-existed with civilian compliance with wartime controls and regulations. Black-marketing, he claims, was "most prevalent in Montreal," a development that he attributes to "Quebec's lukewarm support for the war."²³ Certainly some French-Canadians took pride in their cooperation with the state: the women of Montréal's Fédération Nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste, for instance, reprinted Donald Gordon's letter thanking them for their assistance with price controls in the May 1947 issue of their newsletter.²⁴ Yet it is quite likely that the federal propaganda machine had to work harder in Québec than elsewhere. Maurice Duplessis's return to provincial power in August 1944 suggests the depths of French-Canadian resentment of federal policy, and the purchase of French-Canadian nationalism as the war drew to a close. Duplessis himself regularly attacked Ottawa's wartime regulations, deriding them as "Restrictions, vexatoires, stupides, inopportunes, intempestives," and claiming that "La BUREAUCRATIE remplace la démocratie."²⁵

protestations contre le marché noir," 11; 29 mai 1946, "Un juge s'élève contre les responsables du marché noir," 3. For evidence of one French-Canadian woman purchasing sugar on the black market, see Baillargeon, Ménagères au temps de la crise, 141.

²³ Keshen, "One For All," 126; La Presse, 28 août 1946, "La vente de l'automobile. Il existe un marché noir encouragé par le public, dit M. W. Pagé," 15.

²⁴ La Bonne Parole, Mai 1947, Témoignage. 8.

²⁵ York University Archives (YUA), Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001. Reel 7, "Schéma – Discours" [n.d. but written in context of 1944 provincial election campaign?], p. 2; Reel 3, Speech by Maurice Duplessis [n.d., no title], p. 14.

Grumbling about government restrictions intensified once the war was won and rationing and controls remained in place: the 'orderly decontrol' campaign led by Donald Gordon and the WPTB required persistent and strategic marketing.²⁶ Producers, consumers, and shopkeepers alike welcomed the end of rationing.²⁷ The decontrol of prices, however, met with mixed reactions. La Presse noted at the end of 1945 that price controls, not surprisingly, continued to enjoy a popularity that wage controls did not.²⁸ Landlords, manufacturers, and some shopkeepers rejoiced as controls were gradually lifted, but tenants, workers, and consumers soon began lobbying for the reestablishment of certain controls, especially rental ceilings.²⁹ The Canadian Institute of Public Opinion found in 1947 that price controls were most popular among women, poor people, and unionized workers and their families. Yet it also found that Québec was less eager for a reimposition of price controls than other regions of the country.³⁰ High taxes remained a source of grievance in the postwar period: as the fictional Alexandre Chenevert noted in

²⁶ La Presse: 4 mai 1946, "Première victoire contre l'inflation. En maintenant encore certains contrôles et certains rationnements, M. Gordon affirme que l'inflation sera finalement vaincue." 31; 26 juillet 1946, "Le Contrôle des prix reste nécessaire." 6. See also Schull, The Great Scot, 59, 64.

²⁷ La Presse: 27 mars 1947, "Au Jour le Jour." 13; 4 novembre 1947, "Au Jour le Jour." 15.

²⁸ La Presse, 15 décembre 1945, "Contrôle des prix. Il conserve auprès de l'opinion la faveur qu'a perdue celui des salaires." 30.

²⁹ La Presse, 5 novembre 1947, "La lutte à l'inflation. Le Congrès canadien du travail demande de rétablir le contrôle des prix," 38; La Presse, 11 novembre 1947, "Subsides et contrôle des prix réclamés," 4; Le Devoir, 16 décembre 1948, "Le contrôle des prix réclamé par deux organisations ouvrières," 3. An editorial in La Presse (3 janvier 1947, "Double moyen pour éviter l'inflation," 6) warned that abandoning price controls might lead to inflation, but that maintaining them for too long risked deflation.

³⁰ La Presse, 20 décembre 1947, "Rétablissement du contrôle des prix," 30.

the late 1940s, "taxes, taxes on all sides, and the cost of living was soaring."³¹ Regular reports in the daily press on Canadians' progress in holding the line against inflation, and regular updates on price indexes, kept readers aware of the continued importance of prices in peacetime.³² As La Presse concluded in 1947, the Canadian public had learned a great deal about inflation over the past three years.³³

Most Canadians had had their consumer consciousness raised by the war effort, but the fact that this effort had so frequently been framed as women's work had consequences for the gendered nature of postwar consumer activism. In the late 1940s, household consumers were invariably assumed to be women.³⁴ More specifically, they

³¹ Roy, The Cashier, 160. The desire for lower postwar taxes is expressed in La Presse: 28 janvier 1947, "Va-t-on soulager le contribuable?", 1; 5 mars 1947, "Qui va bénéficier des dégrèvements prévus?", 1; 4 février 1948, "Le fardeau restera assez lourd," 6. The Local Council of Women demanded in 1947 that the 8% Dominion Sales Tax "be eliminated or drastically reduced." NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 3, File 1A. Minutes, LCW, 19 November 1947.

³² La Presse: 6 août 1946, "Hausse accélérée du coût de la vie," 1; 5 novembre 1948, "Le coût de la vie monte légèrement," 7; 9 décembre 1948, "La famille et la vie chère," 13; 5 juillet 1949, "Le coût de la vie continue d'augmenter," 17; 24 août 1949, "Quel est le minimum nécessaire pour vivre?", 10.

³³ La Presse, 30 juillet 1947. "L'inflation est connue. La majorité des Canadiens en ont une idée au moins approchée," 6. The WPTB's Consumers' News had noted two years earlier that "'Inflation' has entered the vocabulary of high school and college students, girls tasting the heady independence of their first jobs, those who are preparing to become brides and homemakers when the boys return to Canada." NA, Savage papers, MG 30 C 92, Vol. 7, File: WPTB - Consumer News 1944-1945. Consumers' News (June 1945), "Youth Takes Up the Challenge," 7.

³⁴ The Montreal Council of Women, for instance, planned to commend the Québec Dairy Industry Commission for its refusal to grant an increase in milk prices and to suggest that "a qualified woman" be appointed "to represent the consumer on the Commission." NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 3, File 1B. Minutes, Sub-Executive Committee of LCW, 1 December 1948. See Baillargeon, Ménagères au temps de la crise, 146, on the well-established tradition in Québec of women managing the working-class family budget.

were assumed to be married women; the purchasing power of single women was largely ignored. Many Canadian wives argued that they deserved recognition for their wartime cooperation with the government's fiscal policy. Mrs. Leslie Hodges, who was involved with both Montréal's Local Council of Women and the WPTB, claimed in May 1944 that Canada was "the only country in the World where Price Ceilings are really effective, chiefly through the co-operation of the housewives and the Government."³⁵ Another woman, proposing the establishment of a Women's Centre in Montréal in the Spring of 1946, declared that it would be "a tribute to the excellent work done on the home front by the ordinary housewife during the past six years": in voluntary war work, in the home, and "as a consumer when she co-operated to maintain price ceilings."³⁶ Women were aware that their ordinary work had acquired new worth during the war. The mainstream press reminded them that they were responsible for the country's purchasing power, and urged them to consume soberly -- to shop "avec le bon sens qu'elles ont déployé dans le passé" -- for the sake of a nation in the throes of reconstruction. As the National Council of Women noted a half-dozen years after the war had ended, thrift had "national

Belinda Davis notes in her study of consumer activism in Berlin during the First World War that "the feminization of the home front population" during the war reinforced the popular perception of consumers as female. See "Food Scarcity and the Empowerment of the Female Consumer in World War I Berlin," p. 288, in de Grazia, ed., The Sex of Things. And see Joy Parr, Domestic Goods, 85-86.

³⁵ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 2. Minutes, Local Council of Women, 17 May 1944. See also Marion V. Royce, The Effect of the War on the Life of Women: A Study (Geneva; Washington: World's YWCA, 1945), where Royce claims that Canadian women's voluntary cooperation with the Consumer Branch of the WPTB was responsible "in large degree for the efficient enforcement of price control," 62.

³⁶ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 2. Mrs. E.C. Common to President, LCW, 3 April 1946.

importance" because of its role in combating inflation. Housewives, Montréal liberal reformer Renée Vautelet observed astutely, enjoyed a new importance as citizens of an economic democracy.³⁷ And activist women such as Vautelet used the construct of the price-watching housewife to make new claims in the public sphere.

The Canadian Association of Consumers (CAC), an exclusively female organization formed in 1947, was one example of women building on public recognition of their wartime achievements. The CAC carried on some of the wartime work of the WPTB's Consumer Branch and represented the determination of some women to maintain a role in public life and to keep their unpaid labour in the public eye.³⁸ Described by one journalist as "A permanent consumers' organization of women who 'cannot sit idly by' and watch rising prices and production bottlenecks disrupt the

³⁷ *La Presse*: 7 juillet 1944. "Le marché noir est une plaie économique," 6; 7 mai 1945, "L'inflation, le dernier ennemi," 4; 21 octobre 1944. "Exception à la règle," 28; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 12. "Why Be Thrifty?" (Ottawa: National Council of Women, 1950); NA, Renée Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1. "L'association canadienne des consommateurs" [n.d. but after September 1947]. Renée Vautelet was a well-known Montréal social reformer: active in the Liberal Party; involved in campaigns to improve women's political and economic opportunities; and instrumental in founding and sustaining the Québec branch of the Canadian Association of Consumers. She regularly gave addresses to service clubs and voluntary associations within Québec and served as a spokesperson for French Canada outside the province.

³⁸ NA, CAC, MG 28 I 200, Vol. 1, File 1. The Canadian Association of Consumers [Constitution]; Program [29 September 1947]. Also *La Presse*, 20 novembre 1947, "Les femmes du Canada s'unissent. Sous l'égide de l'Association canadienne des consommateurs," 4; Joy Parr, "Shopping for a Good Stove: A Parable About Gender, Design and the Market," in Joy Parr, ed., *A Diversity of Women: Ontario 1945-1980* (Toronto: UTP, 1995); Parr, *Domestic Goods*, Ch. 4. An indication that some women were reluctant to give up their public activity at the end of the war is the member of the Montreal Soldiers' Wives League who noted to a co-worker, "Well, dear. I think this is all and now I find myself quite 'blue' at being 'out of work' as it were." NA, Montreal Soldiers' Wives League (MSWL), MG 28 I 311, Vol. 1, File 88, Lillian to Olive [n.d.].

economy of the home," the CAC declared its realm of interest to be "tout ce qui peut améliorer le statut social de la famille canadienne."³⁹ Designed to fill what Renée Vautelet and others saw as the need for disciplined consumers' action,⁴⁰ the CAC met regularly with federal politicians and civil servants, and asked its members to protect housewives' interests by scrutinizing prices and adhering to government controls.⁴¹ Like the Consumer Branch and the Councils of Women that dotted the country, the CAC consisted of a national council overseeing provincial and local chapters. The Québec division, however, drew on institutional structures particular to the province and recruited through existing parishes.⁴²

Middle-class women, both English- and French-Canadian, were the initiators of the CAC. Its French-Canadian organizers included women affiliated with the Liberal party (either directly or through their husbands) as well as women active in provincial

³⁹ "... everything that can improve the social status of the Canadian family." *La Presse*, 3 novembre 1947, "Première réunion de l'Association des Consommateurs," 4.

⁴⁰ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 11, File: MCW Scrapbook, 1942-1959, Part I. Newsclipping from *The Star*, 29 September [1947], "Women Meet to Organize Program. Threat to Nation's Economy Feared at Ottawa"; NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1. "L'association canadienne des consommateurs" [n.d.]. The Canadian Association of Consumers' application to federate with Montreal's Local Council of Women was accepted in December 1949, and it was permitted to sell memberships at the LCW's December meeting. NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 3, File 2. Minutes, Executive Committee of LCW, December 1949.

⁴¹ *La Presse*, 28 novembre 1947, "Le devoir des Canadiennes. Le plafonnement des prix ne sera efficace que si elles l'appuient," 4.

⁴² *La Presse*, 20 novembre 1947, "Les femmes du Canada s'unissent. Sous l'égide de l'Association canadienne des consommateurs," 4.

and municipal social and political reform movements.⁴³ Yet the CAC made some effort to ally with working-class organizations, notably the Canadian Congress of Labour and affiliates of the Action catholique such as the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique (LOC). According to Claire Aubin, national president of the LOC Féminine and the CAC's liaison with women workers, the CAC's goal was to maintain "un certain standard de vie pour les ouvriers."⁴⁴ Another member of the CAC insisted with reference to male unionists that it was "the wives of these men whom we [are] representing and trying to help."⁴⁵

Although the CAC was the largest and most prominent of the many consumers' leagues formed in the wake of the war, some working-class women chose instead to

⁴³ For example, its French-Canadian publicist (and then national vice-president, French-Canadian section) was Mme Gérard Parizeau, whose husband was a professor at Montréal's Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales; well-known liberal reformers Thérèse Casgrain and Renée Vautelet were also actively involved with the CAC from its inception. La Presse, 3 novembre 1947, "Première réunion de l'Association des Consommateurs," 4. See also La Bonne Parole: Juillet-Août-Septembre 1947, Rapports des Comités, Rapport du Congrès du National Council of Women of Canada, 13; Octobre 1947, "Instrument d'action féminine collective," 1.

⁴⁴ "... a certain standard of living for workers." La Presse, 26 novembre 1947, "La L.O.C. appuie une nouvelle organisation." 4; ANQM, Mouvement des Travailleurs Chrétiens (MTC), P257, Vol. 24, File: DIVERS - Rapport Comités LOCF 9 octobre 1946-30 septembre 1950. Comité National de la LOCF tenu le 20 octobre 1947; Le Front Ouvrier, 22 novembre 1947. "Les femmes sont décidées," 10-11. The affiliation of the Canadian Congress of Labour is discussed in NA, CAC, MG 28 I 200, Vol. 1, File 3. Newsclipping from The Canadian Unionist (November 1949), "Consumers' Association Holds Annual Meeting."

⁴⁵ NA, CAC, MG 28 I 200, Vol. 1, File 2. CAC, Brief of Minutes of National Annual Meeting, 21-22 September 1948. At least one member of the CAC felt that "the labour people should have more representation in this group." NA, CAC, MG 28 I 200, Vol. 1, File 1. Morning Session, September 30. On links between the CAC and women in the Ontario CCF, see Dan Azoulay, "Winning Women for Socialism: The Ontario CCF and Women, 1947-1961," Labour/Le Travail 36 (Fall 1995): 59-90.

participate in consumers' leagues and cooperative movements affiliated with unions and union auxiliaries.⁴⁶ The union movement's consumer activism was not the exclusive purview of women: union men also organized around prices. The Montreal Labour Council, for example, protested the increased cost-of-living and the lifting of price controls by the federal government; called for union label shopping; demonstrated enthusiasm for consumers' cooperatives; and invited the female representatives of the city's consumer leagues to speak at its meetings. Male members of the Council made a point of inviting their wives to their 1947 conference on the cost-of-living, and, as breadwinners, claimed an interest in prices on behalf of their families.⁴⁷ Other Québec unions, such as the Confédération des travailleurs catholiques du Canada (CTCC), also made prices and the rising cost-of-living their business in the late 1940s. The CTCC insisted in 1947 that the federal government's decision to abandon controls had seriously diminished the purchasing power of working families. In taking on the cost-of-living, such unions, the Front Ouvrier declared, were becoming attuned to the needs of working families.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ See, e.g., Sylvie Murray, "A la jonction du mouvement ouvrier et du mouvement des femmes: la Ligue auxiliaire de l'Association internationale des machinistes, Canada, 1903-1980" (M.A. thesis, UQAM, 1988), 97-98.

⁴⁷ Archives de l'Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Fonds d'Archives du Conseil des Métiers et du Travail de Montréal (CMTM), 103P, File: 103P-102/6. Minutes, 23 January 1947; Minutes, 13 February 1947; Minutes, 27 February 1947; Minutes, 10 April 1947; Minutes, 12 June 1947; Minutes, 27 November 1947; Minutes, 11 March 1948. Québec's Provincial Federation of Labor also urged supporters to "Buy Union-Made Goods." Le Monde Ouvrier, 14 février 1948, 8.

⁴⁸ Le Front Ouvrier, 1 novembre 1947, "M. Abbott dit NON! POURQUOI?", 10-11; Le Front Ouvrier, 6 décembre 1947, "Les unions ouvrières et le coût de la vie," 3; Le Front Ouvrier, 28 février 1948, "Une expérience syndicale," 2.

Behind Québec unions' objections to spiralling prices and vanishing controls was the conviction that Ottawa did not understand French-Canadian realities: low wages, meagre budgets, and families that were often larger than the English-Canadian norm. A cartoon printed in Le Monde Ouvrier (published by the Trades and Labor Congress-affiliated Provincial Federation of Labor) in January 1948, for instance, shows a tired couple sitting in the living room of a house in disarray, surrounded by eleven rowdy children. The wife reassures her husband: "Ne te décourage pas, vieux, le docteur Pett, d'Ottawa, dit qu'on peut les nourrir pour 15 ½ cents par repas!"⁴⁹ In reaction to this same federal statistic, Saint-Henri's newspaper, La Voix populaire, conducted an informal survey of the neighbourhood's housewives, asking them if they could feed their families on 15 ½ cents each per meal. The journalist was greeted with laughter and jeers, the women insisting that it was impossible to feed their husbands well enough on that sum for them to properly carry out their jobs.⁵⁰ The context for this critique was a city that was, by and large, still poor. The rickety household economies of many Montréal families in the 1940s bear little resemblance to the "mass consumption society" assumed by most historians of postwar North America. Montréalers in the immediate postwar years were accustomed to frugality, and their need to restrain themselves to careful,

⁴⁹ "Don't worry, old man: Ottawa's Dr. Pett says that we can feed them for 15 1/2 cents a meal!" Le Monde Ouvrier, 31 janvier 1948, "Le Régime alimentaire d'Ottawa," 3.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Le Front Ouvrier, 14 février 1948, "Les ménagères n'en reviennent pas!", 3. Le Front Ouvrier, 17 janvier 1948, "Les prix qui montent!", 17, notes that even the thriftiest of French-Canadian housewives could only accomplish so much given the current cost-of-living.

minimal spending continued for some time.⁵¹ In such circumstances, consumption (for married women, at least) was a matter of political economy far more than a means of self-actualization or self-expression.⁵²

The Action catholique adopted consumer efforts similar to those of labour unions. The Ligue Ouvrière Catholique, for instance, built on the heightened awareness of prices and the cost-of-living by holding study groups on cooperative movements and consumers' leagues and by teaching its working-class participants how to budget in the context of the increased cost-of-living.⁵³ Unlike most unions in this period, the Action catholique was somewhat wary of state involvement. Consumers' cooperatives, for instance, were praised as a response to the high cost-of-living that embodied the Christian principle of

⁵¹ Joy Parr argues that historians of Canada's postwar economy would do well to look to the scarcity of the United Kingdom as well as to the plenty of the United States for analogies. Domestic Goods, 32, 64-65.

⁵² Joy Parr discusses theories of consumption as "cultural reproduction" and as resistance in Domestic Goods, 8-10. On consumption, gender, and potential sites of female agency, see Cynthia Wright, "'Feminine Trifles of Vast Importance': Writing Gender into the History of Consumption," in Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, eds., Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History (Toronto: UTP, 1992). By situating consumption within political economy, this chapter reaffirms the importance of the state in analyses of consumption and consumer organizing. On this topic, see de Grazia, Introduction, in The Sex of Things, 9.

⁵³ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 5, File: Décisions du Conseil National. Décisions prises au conseil national de la LOC tenu à Montréal les 22-23 novembre 1947; Vol. 5, File: Comité National - oct. 48 - septembre 1949. Rapport du comité national conjoint tenu le 28 juin 1949; Vol. 5, File: Comité National, octobre 1949-octobre 1950. Comité National Conjoint de la LOC tenu le 16 septembre 1949; Vol. 7, File: Rapport MTC et Fédés - Rapport d'action-comité - 1947. Aperçu des activités de la LOC pour l'année 1945-46, 26 juillet 1946; Vol. 18, File: Conseil National - février 1948. Rapport des Assemblées du Conseil National de la LOC tenues les 28-29 février 1948 à Montréal. Also La Presse, 5 janvier 1946, "Nécessité familiale. Le budget familial ramènera l'harmonie et le bien-être au foyer," 20; and Le Front Ouvrier, 31 janvier 1948, 4, for a

cooperation: they were an alternative, not simply to unfettered capitalism, but also to state-directed socialism or communism.⁵⁴ But in publishing editorials, articles, and cartoons about high prices, price controls, and rationing, both the LOC's Le Front Ouvrier and union newspapers such as Le Monde Ouvrier fostered a consumer consciousness and took it upon themselves to teach their working-class readers how to consume in the early postwar years.

Consumer consciousness and consumer organizing clearly had ethnic dimensions. These spoke to the divisions of labour and wealth in Québec, where large capital was generally English-Canadian or American and most workers French-Canadian,⁵⁵ and they spoke to wartime politics and federal-provincial battles over jurisdiction. Ethnicity shaped attitudes to governments seated in Ottawa and Québec City respectively. Its influence was also evident at the local level. Consumer activism targeted the federal and provincial governments, but it also targeted merchants – often, small shopkeepers. While large employers targeted by strikers (such as Canadian Johns-Manville and the Montreal Tramways Company) represented English-Canadian or American capital, the landlords, grocers, and butchers criticized by disgruntled consumers were more likely to be French-

cartoon depicting a farmer placing cabbages in a housewife's basket while telling her "Organisez-vous en coopératives ... ça vous reviendrait moins cher"

⁵⁴ Le Front Ouvrier, 16 juillet 1949, "Essor d'une coopérative de consommation," 8-9.

⁵⁵ Everett C. Hughes's 1943 study of "Cantonville" observed that "the French-Canadian, in becoming an industrial worker and a town-dweller, gets a culturally alien employer." Hughes noted the frequent conflict between French-Canadian workers and English-Canadian employers in the 1930s. See his French Canada in Transition (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1963 [1943]), 2, 202, 205, 212; also Stuart M. Jamieson, "French and English in the Institutional Structure of Montreal: A Study of the Social and Economic Division of Labour" (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1938).

Canadian, Jewish, or European immigrants.⁵⁶ Whereas the division of work and wealth along ethnic lines exacerbated and sometimes even sparked labour strife,⁵⁷ such divisions could have contradictory effects in the realm of consumption. Ethnic solidarity may have made French-Canadians reluctant to boycott local shopkeepers, particularly in neighbourhood contexts where a relationship had developed between housewives and shopkeepers, nourished with credit during the Depression and perhaps the trading of ration coupons during the war.⁵⁸ Yet ethnic difference may also have played some part in fuelling the antagonism to shopkeepers of the Anglo-Protestant ladies of the Local Council of Women. And ethnic difference had certainly fuelled the "Achat chez nous" campaign of the 1920s and 1930s, which was couched as an effort to encourage shoppers to buy Québec products but which in practice boycotted Montréal's Jewish grocers,

⁵⁶ On the ethnicity of small grocers and butchers in interwar Montréal, see Sylvie Taschereau, "Les petits commerçants de l'alimentation et les milieux populaires montréalais, 1920-1940" (Ph.D. thesis, UQAM, 1992). Some of the elderly French-Canadian women interviewed by Denyse Baillargeon recalled Jewish pedlars selling clothing door-to-door in 1930s Montréal. *Ménagères*, 185.

⁵⁷ Hughes, *French Canada in Transition*, Chapters 1, 18, 19; Gabrielle Carrière, *Comment Gagner Sa Vie: Carrières féminines* (Montreal: Éditions Beauchemin, 1942), 99, 183; ANQM, Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique (JOC), P104, C. 181, File: Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse (Congrès - Janvier 1945). Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, Congrès provincial, Université de Montréal, 27-28 janvier 1945.

⁵⁸ On Montréal small grocers and credit, see Sylvie Taschereau, "L'arme favorite de l'épicier indépendant"; Taschereau, "Les petits commerçants," Ch. 7; and Baillargeon, *Ménagères*, 226-229. On the negotiation of relief vouchers with local merchants in 1930s Montréal, see Baillargeon, *Ménagères*, 206-207. On shopkeepers and wartime coupon-trading, see Jeff Keshen, "One For All," 124-125. Baillargeon notes the importance of neighbourhood grocers and retailers to Montréal's working-class housewives, claiming that trips to downtown department stores were generally reserved for Christmas shopping or large sales. *Ménagères*, 183-185.

butchers, and shopkeepers.⁵⁹ The Ligue de l'Achat Chez Nous lived on into the postwar period: it is difficult to ascertain whether its race politics had changed by the end of the war, but it appears to have been considered sufficiently respectable to give regular lectures to the French-Canadian women of the Fédération Nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste and the Société des ouvrières catholiques, and to advertise in the LOC-affiliated Catholic labour newspaper Le Front Ouvrier.⁶⁰ Whether or not it had toned down its virulent anti-Semitism, the league continued to promote the economic interests of French-Canadians.⁶¹ When buying was considered to be an act of citizenship, who one bought from mattered.⁶²

⁵⁹ John A. Dickinson and Brian Young, A Short History of Québec, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993), 279; Lita Rose Betcherman, The Swastika and the Maple Leaf: Fascist Movements in Canada in the Thirties (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1975), 4-5, 23-24; Esther Delisle, The Traitor and the Jew: Anti-Semitism and the delirium of extremist right-wing nationalism in French Canada from 1929 to 1939 (Montréal; Toronto: Robert Davies Publishing, 1993), 44, 130, 187-189. Sylvie Taschereau notes briefly the existence of some hostility to "foreign" (particularly Jewish) shopkeepers in interwar Montréal. See "Les petits commerçants," 346.

⁶⁰ La Bonne Parole: Juillet-Août 1946, Rapport des Associations professionnelles, Société des ouvrières catholiques, 8; Mai 1947, Journal des Oeuvres, Chez les ouvrières catholiques, 14; Juillet-Août-Septembre 1947, Rapports des Associations professionnelles, Association des Aides Maternelles, 7; Juillet-Août-Septembre 1947, Rapports des Comités, Comité des questions nationales, 12. Le Front Ouvrier carried an advertisement in 1945 encouraging readers to buy from merchants posting the "Ligue de l'Achat Chez Nous" sign: 22 septembre 1945, "Encourageons de préférence ceux qui affichent cette carte," 2.

⁶¹ La Bonne Parole, Mars-Avril-Mai 1948, "Participons tous à ce concours," 23.

⁶² See, e.g., the thoughts of Lionel Groulx and the contributors to l'Action nationale on this matter cited in Esther Delisle, The Traitor and the Jew, 101-102, 113-115, 129-131,

II. Consumer Activism: Three Case Studies

What follows are three examples of Montréal residents organizing as consumers in the immediate postwar years: the 1947-48 boycott of grocers and butchers; the campaign to secure the legal sale of margarine as a substitute for butter; and the demand for affordable housing. These basic elements of 'private' life – food and shelter -- made headlines in the late 1940s, and in the case of margarine, made it as far as the Supreme Court. At stake here was the consumption of necessities such as groceries and rental housing, not expensive consumer durables such as automobiles or refrigerators. The prominent role played by women in these battles is not surprising: women around the world had a long history of public protests around consumption, ranging from pre-industrial bread riots to cost-of-living rallies at the close of the Great War.⁶³ What distinguishes the following episodes from their earlier precedents is, first, the degree to which this consumer consciousness had been encouraged over the course of the Second

160-162, 187-189.

⁶³ John Bohstedt, "Gender, Household, and Community Politics: Women in English Riots, 1790-1810," Past and Present 120 (1988): 265-284; Judith Smart, "Feminists, food and the fair price: The cost-of-living demonstrations in Melbourne, August-September 1917" in Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake, eds., Gender and War: Australians at War in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995); Linda Kealey, Enlisting Women for the Cause: Women, Labour, and the Left in Canada, 1890-1920 (Toronto: UTP, 1998), especially Chapters 2, 5; Susan Levine, "Workers' Wives: Gender, Class and Consumerism in the 1920s United States," Gender & History 3, 1 (1991): 45-64; Frank, Purchasing Power; Frager, "Politicized Housewives." Victoria de Grazia summarizes women's consumer activism thus: "poor women were at the forefront of food riots, socialist women backed consumer cooperatives, and middle-class women reformers promoted consumer legislation." See her introduction to "Empowering Women as Citizen-Consumers," p. 275, in de Grazia, ed., The Sex of Things.

World War; and, second, citizens' growing sense that an expanding state was accessible to them and that they were entitled to make certain demands upon it.

When the federal government imposed an embargo on the importation of certain American goods in the fall of 1947 in order to conserve its supply of American dollars, Canadian consumers feared an imminent shortage of fruits and vegetables. Across the country, shoppers filled carts and stocked cupboards with fresh and canned produce. Panic buying led to speculation, and prices skyrocketed.⁶⁴ In Montréal, housewives' response to this turn of events varied by class and ethnicity. The west (predominantly English-Canadian and more affluent) side of the city witnessed a "course des acheteurs" (buyers' race), as shoppers made massive purchases of goods that might soon be unavailable. On the east (largely French-Canadian and poorer) side of Montréal, women with less money, and more likely to have ice-boxes than refrigerators, made small day-to-day purchases and watched prices carefully.⁶⁵ But in late November, in reaction to

⁶⁴ La Presse: 25 novembre 1947, "Spéculation injustifiée," 3; 26 novembre 1947, "Organisme prêt à agir. Une guerre foudroyante serait faite au marché noir des fruits et légumes," 3; 2 décembre 1947, "Réactions de la ménagère. Le rétablissement de certains contrôles ne comble pas tous ses désirs," 4. The Gazette: 20 November 1947, "Fruit, Vegetable Prices Up as Imports Cut But Modification of Law is Forecast," 13; 21 November 1947, "Grocers Scour Market for Vegetables as Price Trend Continues Upward Climb," 15.

⁶⁵ La Presse: 26 novembre 1947, "Organisme prêt à agir. Une guerre foudroyante serait faite au marché noir des fruits et légumes," 3; 25 novembre 1947, "Spéculation injustifiée," 3. The Gazette: 25 November 1947, "Enforcement Now Feared Impossible of New Ceilings Announced by Abbott As Grocers, Others Here Hail Action," 1; 28 November 1947, "Consumer Group to Fight Panic Buying in Montreal," 4. On the lack of refrigerators and the daily shopping habits of Montréal's working-class families, see Baillargeon, Ménagères, 172; Taschereau, "Les petits commerçants," 202, 293, 317. On the particular need for ice-boxes in Québec, given that so many people there lived in flats without cold cellars, see Parr, Domestic Goods, 29.

farmers,' wholesalers,' and shopkeepers' attempts to profit from anticipated shortages, housewives across the nation implemented 'buyers' strikes,' refusing to purchase fruits and vegetables at outrageous prices. The president of the Canadian Association of Consumers, Mrs. R.J. Marshall, urged Canadian women to use their purchasing power to put an end to inflation in the produce trade. If charged 25 cents for a cabbage that's worth ten cents, she advised, leave it where it is. Buy something else or buy nothing at all. As soon as housewives stop buying, prices will fall.⁶⁶ Montréal housewives took note and stayed home, "eating the products bought in panic earlier this week and last week."⁶⁷ Newspapers described deserted produce stands across the city; at the Bonsecours Market, women asked prices and moved on without purchasing when they heard the responses.⁶⁸ La Presse reported that buyers' strikes were making farmers and merchants gloomy and that the market for fruits and vegetables was "mort, tout à fait mort!" (dead, absolutely dead!)⁶⁹

The housewives' strike worked, at least in the short term. Some farmers dropped the prices of their fruits and vegetables almost immediately. By the end of November,

⁶⁶ La Presse, 22 novembre 1947. "'N'achetez pas si c'est trop cher,' dit Mme Marshall," 36.

⁶⁷ The Gazette, 29 November 1947, "Increased Prices Laid to Producers," 7.

⁶⁸ La Presse, 25 novembre 1947, "Les fermiers se ravisent," 3; "Grèves de détaillants?," 3.

⁶⁹ La Presse: 26 novembre 1947, "Le marché mort," 3; 27 novembre 1947, "Les acheteurs font la grève. Les fermiers offrent la légume à la baisse; les marchands, pessimistes," 3.

for instance, the cost of carrots and onions was falling daily.⁷⁰ The federal government's reimposition of price ceilings on certain tinned foods and fresh produce at the end of the month contributed to the stabilization of prices.⁷¹ By late February 1948, La Presse noted, Montréal housewives were loosening their purse-strings as essential foods were becoming more affordable. Cabbages that had been left on grocers' shelves at 30¢ a pound were now selling for 5¢ a pound. Shoppers' "silent strikes" had had serious effects, the newspaper claimed, and butchers, as well as produce-vendors, had been hard hit. Meat prices had peaked in early January: although they had dropped somewhat after the federal government threatened to impose a price ceiling, shoppers continued to exercise restraint in their purchases of bacon, beef, and sausages. By late February, butchers' ice-boxes were reported to be overflowing, and meat was selling for approximately ten percent less than at the beginning of the month.⁷² Meat consumption was especially likely to drop in times of high prices. As one labour journalist discovered, working-class mothers with numerous mouths to feed and few groceries stockpiled in their pantries could not stop buying food altogether, but tended to avoid purchasing

⁷⁰ La Presse: 28 novembre 1947, "Le contingent serait mince," 3; 25 novembre 1947, "Les fermiers se ravisent," 3.

⁷¹ La Presse: 29 novembre 1947, "Le commerce se stabilise. Le prix-plafond sur les conserves de fruits et légumes a bon effet," 27; 20 février 1948, "Les réductions sur les agrumes," 29.

⁷² La Presse: 26 février 1948, "Les prix se stabilisent. Viande en quantité et moins cher: agrumes et conserves à prix plus abordable," 3; 21 février 1948, "Les prix maxima de la viande tout prêts," 17.

expensive items such as meat and butter.⁷³ Class and cultural differences were also evident in the choice of scapegoats for high food prices. While Montréal's mainstream press pointed to farmers and shopkeepers as the culprits, Le Front Ouvrier, a Catholic labour paper, indignantly defended rural producers and suggested that the speculation and attempted profiteering of importers, wholesalers, and distributors were more likely the cause of increased prices.⁷⁴

The boycott of grocers and butchers in 1947-48 crossed lines of class and ethnicity and straddled the division between organized and informal consumer activism. In this sense it was both more widespread and more diffuse than other postwar consumer campaigns, such as the battle to secure the legalization of margarine as a cheaper alternative to butter. Margarine became news across the nation in the late 1940s, but as a city of a million consumers, Montréal was a key player in this campaign. In his useful legislative history of margarine, W.H. Heick argues that Canada's 1886 ban on the manufacture, importation and sale of margarine was the result of the leverage exercised by dairy farmers and butter producers in a largely rural nation.⁷⁵ By the 1940s, a more

⁷³ Le Front Ouvrier, 17 janvier 1948, "Les prix qui montent!", 17. Thérèse Casgrain noted to the Canadian Association of Consumers that less milk was delivered to the poorer sections of Montréal once prices went up. NA, CAC, MG 28 I 200, Vol. 1, File 1. Morning Session. September 30.

⁷⁴ Le Front Ouvrier, 6 décembre 1947: "Les dernières hausses de prix," 3; "Qu'on laisse la paix aux cultivateurs!", 3; "Lettre d'un producteur de lait à des ouvriers." 15; Le Front Ouvrier, 13 décembre 1947, "Qui est coupable?", 3; Le Front Ouvrier, 10 janvier 1948, "Beurre ou margarine?"; 3; Le Front Ouvrier, 7 février 1948, "QUI fait monter les prix?", 1, 10, 11.

⁷⁵ W.H. Heick, A Propensity to Protect: Butter, Margarine and the Rise of Urban Culture in Canada (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 1991). See also Ruth Dupré, "'If It's Yellow,

urban Canada faced with food rationing and a high cost-of-living called for margarine as a less expensive and more easily available butter substitute. The country's political centre of gravity had shifted: in Heick's words, "the wishes of 150,000 producers of milk had to give way to the desires of 13 million consumers."⁷⁶ But they were not to give way without a fight. The seemingly mundane issue of margarine sparked debate not only between rural producers and urban consumers, but also between provinces and the federal government. In Québec, the debate assumed major proportions as Premier Duplessis, mindful of rural electors, chose to present the demand for margarine as an attack on the province's agrarian traditions and rural voters' livelihoods. He drew support from the Union catholique des cultivateurs (UCC), who argued that the manufacture and sale of margarine in Québec would deal a death blow to the province's dairy industry and, by extension, to its entire agricultural sector.⁷⁷ Yet the massive in-migration to Montréal that had occurred during the war, with rural Quebecers flocking to jobs in wartime industries, meant that within Québec the balance between food producers and consumers had shifted dramatically.⁷⁸ While Duplessis catered to rural constituents, the growing number of urban residents who called for the right to purchase margarine drew support from unions, social welfare agencies, and voluntary associations across the country, including the Montreal Labour Council, Montréal's Family Welfare Association, the

It Must Be Butter': Margarine Regulation in North America Since 1886," Journal of Economic History 59, 2 (June 1999): 353-371.

⁷⁶ Heick, A Propensity to Protect, 73.

⁷⁷ Le Devoir, 15 décembre 1948, "L'U.C.C. et la margarine," 3; NA, CAC, MG 28 I 100, Vol. 1, File 2. Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting, 10-11 February 1948.

Canadian Welfare Council, and the Canadian Association of Consumers.⁷⁹ At stake were questions of class and entitlement: those most in need of margarine were low-income families.⁸⁰

Proponents of margarine targeted governments rather than farmers or shopkeepers,⁸¹ and invoked free enterprise, free choice, healthy competition, and family needs in a victorious democracy. In the early postwar years, amid butter rationing and high food prices, Montréal's Local Council of Women protested the "prohibition on the manufacture, Import and sale of Margarine," because it felt that "a vitamin fortified substitute for butter should be available for needy Canadian families."⁸² Le Front Ouvrier noted in January 1948 that the cost of butter had risen steadily since price

⁷⁸ NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 2. "The Community - Its Background and Development" (revised version, 1951).

⁷⁹ La Presse, 21 février 1948, "Lever l'interdiction sur l'oléomargarine," 49; UQAM, Fonds d'Archives du Conseil des Métiers et du Travail de Montréal, 103P, File: 103P-102/8. Minutes, Montreal Labour Council Meeting, 22 September 1949; NA, CAC, MG 28 I 200, Vol. 1, File 4. Canadian Association of Consumers, Executive Meeting, 9 March 1949. Renée Vautelet called Duplessis's treatment of the butter question "a form of political bribe to rural voters." NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 3, File: Allocation: Has butter a future? "Has Butter a Future?" [n.d.].

⁸⁰ Dupré, "'If It's Yellow'," 353. Margarine lends itself nicely to Victoria de Grazia's call for a "sustained consideration of the symbolic or communicative powers of particular goods." See her Introduction to "Empowering Women as Citizen-Consumers," in The Sex of Things, 277.

⁸¹ The Montréal LCW decided not to support a butter boycott proposed by the Lachine Community Council, for instance. NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 3, File 2. Minutes, LCW, 16 March 1949.

⁸² La Presse, 3 janvier 1947, "Pas de changement au prix du beurre," 6; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 3, File 1A. Report of the Recording Secretaries, 1946-47.

controls had been lifted; with what, the newspaper asked, would workers replace it?⁸³ By early 1948, polls showed that the margarine movement was gaining ground in Canada. With the notable exception of farmers, most people now opposed the ban on margarine. Housewives, La Presse reported, were the ones who felt the scarcity of butter most acutely, but polls found that opinions on margarine did not vary much by sex.⁸⁴

The Supreme Court's much-reported December 1948 decision -- that the federal government did not have the right to prohibit the manufacture or sale of margarine -- was upheld by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1950 and appeared to confirm the consumer's right to choose.⁸⁵ Margarine lobbyists then turned their efforts to provincial authorities. In Québec premier Maurice Duplessis, they faced a formidable opponent.⁸⁶ Provincial anti-margarine legislation was enacted in March 1949, and margarine would remain illegal in Québec until 1961.⁸⁷ Montréal's Local Council of Women dispatched a series of telegrams to Duplessis, arguing for the consumer's right to "free choice in the purchase of a healthful substitute for butter." Anti-margarine

⁸³ Le Front Ouvrier, 3 janvier 1948, "Spéculation sur le beurre," 3.

⁸⁴ La Presse, 21 avril 1948, "La vente de la margarine. La majorité des Canadiens accepte maintenant qu'elle soit permise." 6.

⁸⁵ Le Devoir: 14 décembre 1948, "La Cour Suprême permet la vente de la margarine. Elle en défend l'importation." 1; 15 décembre 1948, "Nous protégerons les droits de l'agriculture (M. Duplessis)," 10; 16 décembre 1948, "La margarine. Le jugement de la Cour suprême n'était pas inattendu," 1; 16 octobre 1950, "La vente de la margarine relève des provinces," 1. See also Heick, A Propensity to Protect, Ch. 7; Dupré, "'If It's Yellow,'" 356.

⁸⁶ La Presse: 18 décembre 1948, "Sort incertain de la margarine dans Québec," 1; 5 janvier 1949, "La couleur de la margarine," 4.

⁸⁷ Le Devoir, 16 octobre 1950, "La vente de la margarine relève des provinces," 1; Heick, A Propensity to Protect, 98, 107; Dupré, "'If It's Yellow'," 356.

legislation, the club-women claimed, "encroached on personal liberty." How ironic that "a government which has stood for provincial autonomy," the ladies commented, should "deny the autonomy of the individual in his home and household."⁸⁸ In emphasizing free choice, personal liberty, and individual autonomy, the Local Council of Women articulated assumptions about citizenship and entitlement increasingly common in the late 1940s. As the Canadian Association of Consumers and the National Council of Women argued in 1948, if this was truly a period of free enterprise, then consumers had the right to the protection offered by competition among manufacturers, products, and stores.⁸⁹ Or, as popular Montréal performer Peter Barry sang in his postwar calypso hit, "Margie Margarine":

My mother go to the grocery store,
 To buy a pound of butter or more
 But the butter price is much too high
 So mother sit at home and cry ...
 This is democracy. I am told,
 So why can't margarine be sold?⁹⁰

⁸⁸ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164: Vol. 5, File 7. LCW 55th Year Book and Annual Report 1948-1949, Report of the Economics and Taxation Committee; Vol. 3, File 2. Minutes, LCW, 19 January 1949; Minutes, Sub-Executive Committee of LCW, 9 March 1949; Vol. 7, File 25. Telegram from Miss Esther W. Kerry, President, LCW of Montreal, to Maurice Duplessis, 13 January 1949; Vol. 7, File 25. LCW of Montreal. Third telegram to Mr. Duplessis re Margarine, 5 March 1949. Renée Vautelet also claimed that anti-margarine legislation was illegitimate because it violated principles of democratic liberty. NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1, File: Faits et chiffres. "Le Soutien des prix favorise t'il le consommateur?" Meanwhile, CCL-affiliated meatpackers' unions, bruised by their recent treatment at the hands of Duplessis, shipped 1000 pounds of illegal margarine to striking Asbestos miners in 1949. Réginald Boisvert, "The Strike and the Labour Movement," in Pierre Elliott Trudeau, ed., The Asbestos Strike, trans. James Boake (Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1974 [1956]), 303.

⁸⁹ La Presse, 9 décembre 1948, "Concurrence qu'on juge nécessaire. Les consommateurs ont droit à la protection que fournit la concurrence," 15.

⁹⁰ Quoted in William Weintraub, City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s

In contrast to the margarine episode, where consumers demanded less government intervention, Montréal's acute postwar shortage of housing led its residents to demand a more active state. In the face of the housing crisis, Montréalers doubled up with friends and relatives, lodged in strangers' spare rooms and, according to the Action catholique, were more likely to use birth control.⁹¹ They also campaigned for more housing, better housing, and more affordable housing. In calling for low-cost housing and continuing rent controls in the postwar period, citizens framed their demands in the language of family needs and economic democracy. Housing was seen as a basic right of citizenship: the state should do everything in its power to see that decent housing was accessible to all.⁹² Here was a cause upon which the classes could agree: working- and middle-class Montréalers undertook parallel campaigns, and sometimes worked together, to demand affordable housing.⁹³ As early as 1944, the city's Local Council of Women and the

and '50s (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1996), 126.

⁹¹ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 17, File: Conseil National, Novembre 1946. "L'habitation ouvrière," Conseil National de novembre 1946.

⁹² e.g., Le Front Ouvrier, 1 novembre 1947. "La famille, entreprise par excellence," 3.

⁹³ The largely middle-class Canadian Association of Consumers, for instance, endorsed rent controls in 1948 because "the housing crisis is still acute, particularly for the low-income groups" NA, CAC, MG 28 I 200, Vol. 1, File 2. CAC, Brief of Minutes of National Annual Meeting, 21-22 September 1948. Likewise, the West End Consumers' League promised the Montreal Labour Council its cooperation in any protests the Council might undertake against rent increases. Archives de l'UQAM, Fonds d'Archives du Conseil des Métiers et du Travail de Montréal, 103P, File: 103P-102/6. Minutes, 10 April 1947.

Canadian Legion passed resolutions requesting the prolongation of rental controls.⁹⁴ The Montreal Labour Council lobbied vigorously for rental controls and low-cost housing through the late 1940s.⁹⁵ Advocates of rent control spanned the political, ethnic, and linguistic spectrum and included the Canadian Welfare Council; the Montreal Section of the National Council of Jewish Women; consumers' leagues in NDG and Snowdon; the Next-of-Kin Association; the Ligue des électrices catholiques; the Ligue des locataires de Montréal; the Société de protection du locataire; the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique; and the Communist-led Ligue des Vétérans Sans Logis.⁹⁶

The postwar campaign for affordable housing went beyond lobbying elected authorities. It is essential to distinguish between those who wanted the state to play a central role in housing reform and those who merely wanted it to facilitate the efforts of hard-working individuals, between those who sought help from Ottawa and those who turned to Québec City. The Montreal Labour Council denounced the federal government in November 1949 for lifting rental controls and at the same meeting called upon

⁹⁴ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 2. Resolution on Rental Control, endorsing those drawn up by the Canadian Legion, 15 November 1944.

⁹⁵ UQAM, CMTM, 103P, File: 103P-102/6. Minutes, 11 March 1948; File: 103P-102/8. Minutes, 10 November 1949; Minutes, 29 November 1949.

⁹⁶ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 3, File 1B. Minutes, Sub-Executive Committee of LCW, 13 October 1948; UQAM, Fonds Henri-Gagnon, 54P, File: 54P 3g/2. Brochure: "Eviction! QUI SERA LE SUIVANT?" [n.d.]; ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 5, File: Comité National - octobre 1947-septembre 1948. Comité national conjoint, 17 septembre 1948; *La Presse*: 5 décembre 1946, "Pour enquêter sur le revenu de l'immeuble," 37; 11 novembre 1947, "Subsides et contrôle des prix réclamés," 4; 26 mars 1949, "Revendications de locataires. Cessation des évictions et maintien des contrôles réclamés," 28; 28 novembre 1949, "Les locataires vont préparer leur lutte," 35; 6 décembre 1949, "Deux réunions de locataires. L'une au Forum; l'autre à la Légion canadienne dimanche pour protester," 25.

Duplessis to enact provincial rent control legislation.⁹⁷ The Action catholique movements looked more frequently to the provincial government than to Ottawa.⁹⁸ Yet while the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique's campaigns for housing cooperatives and a *crédit ouvrier* for single-family homes depended on provincial assistance, they were also a form of self-help and mutual aid.⁹⁹ The LOC's attempt to put home ownership within the reach of working-class French Canadians met with a favourable response from its constituents. One father of five children wrote to the LOC in March 1948 requesting information about the *crédit ouvrier* in order that he might provide a suitable house for his family. Another father, a carpenter-builder, wrote six months later to say that he was interested in building a house through the LOC's cooperative movement and would also like to contribute his expertise to the movement. He and his three children lived in an apartment consisting of a small bedroom and a small kitchen.¹⁰⁰ The men who wrote to the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique to find out how to secure decent housing or to offer their construction skills to

⁹⁷ UQAM, CMTM, 103P, File: 103P-102/8. Minutes, Montreal Labour Council, 10 November 1949.

⁹⁸ Jean-Pierre Collin, "Crise du logement et Action catholique à Montréal, 1940-1960," *RHAF* 41, 2 (automne 1987), 183.

⁹⁹ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 5, File: Comité National, octobre 1949-octobre 1950. Comité national conjoint tenu le 4 novembre 1949; Vol. 5, File: Décisions du Conseil National. Décisions prises au conseil national de la LOC tenu à Montréal les 22-23 novembre 1947; Décisions du Conseil National de la LOC tenu au Centre National, les 19-20 novembre 1949; Vol. 7, File: Rapport MTC et Fédés - Rapport d'action-comité, 1947. La LOC, Rapport, 1946-1947. For a thorough discussion of the Action catholique's cooperative movement and campaign for a "crédit ouvrier," see Collin, "Crise du logement et Action catholique à Montréal."

¹⁰⁰ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 21, File: Habitation -- Habitation ouvrière. Dollard Pépin to LOC, 18 mars 1948; Rolland Rivard to LOC, 30 septembre 1948; also ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 11, File: Cent Mariés – Couple 39.

other *locistes* in need of shelter clearly understood it to be the duty of a man, as a father and breadwinner, to ensure that his family had a roof over its head. Their interest in a cooperative form of consumption reflected and responded to the Action catholique's efforts to promote cooperatives among French-Canadian workers. Their willingness to contribute their skills and labour to building their homes demonstrates, meanwhile, that they continued to view their families as units of production as well as consumption. Cooperation was an attractive option for families on the margins of consumption, with earnings insufficient to allow them to consume at going prices. Yet the type of home envisioned by the *crédit ouvrier* was a dramatic departure from the Montréal norm. The LOC's campaign for single-family home ownership broke with a long tradition of tenancy, extended families, and 'doubling up' in Montréal's brick triplexes. The LOC's slogan, "A chaque famille sa maison" (A house for each family) claimed decent housing as a right for every family, but also spoke to new norms of consumption, property ownership, and privacy that were emerging across North America more broadly in the postwar years.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 21, File: Habitation. Mémoire de la L.O.C. sur l'Habitation Ouvrière, préparé pour le Comité d'habitation de la Chambre de Commerce Senior de Montréal [1947?]; Mémoire sur le crédit ouvrier, présenté par la Ligue Ouvrière Catholique à l'Honorable Premier Ministre de la Province de Québec, Monsieur Maurice Duplessis; Programme souvenir: Bénédiction solennelle des premières maisons de l'habitation ouvrière, 6 août 1944, Les Saules, Québec; Vol. 23, File: Habitation – A chaque famille sa maison. Census figures demonstrate that Montréal was a city of tenants and a city of apartments and flats. In 1951, nearly 83% of the city's "occupied dwellings" were rented, rather than owned, by their inhabitants. 97% of these rented dwellings were apartments or flats; 92% of the city's total occupied dwellings were apartments or flats. Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 3, Table 10. On housing in postwar North America, see Veronica Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams: Women and the

Men's active participation in housing campaigns was reflected in forms of protest typically considered 'masculine,' such as sit-ins and the occupation of public buildings. These highly visible, noisy, insistent demonstrations (in contrast to club-women's polite, if firm, resolutions requesting the legalization of margarine) reflected both the gendered and class nature of housing protest in postwar Montréal. The use of these tactics by war veterans, especially, attracted a great deal of attention. Homeless veterans were seen to deserve special sympathy; the fact that those who had risked their lives for their country were now unable to find shelter made affordable housing a fashionable cause. As Jill Wade demonstrates in her study of veterans' 1946 occupation of the old Hotel Vancouver, public tolerance of homeless veterans 'squatting' in public buildings was high; citizens argued that the onus was on the government to provide former soldiers with proper housing.¹⁰² Yet homeless veterans, like others, were seen to be vulnerable to the agitation and influence of those on the political left. Organizations ranging from the relatively conservative housing committee of the Canadian Legion to the relatively progressive Conseil des métiers de Montréal deployed the argument (presumably in an

Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-60," Canadian Historical Review 72, 4 (1991): 471-504; Elaine Tyler May, Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Kenneth T. Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States (New York: Oxford UP, 1985). On American families' desires for privacy in the wake of the war, see Graebner, Age of Doubt, 1-2; Duis, "No Time for Privacy," 39.

¹⁰² La Presse, 2 novembre 1946, "Une illégalité reçue comme moindre mal. La majorité accepte l'occupation par les vétérans des édifices d'Etat," 30; Jill Wade, "'A Palace for the Public': Housing Reform and the 1946 Occupation of the Old Hotel Vancouver," BC Studies 69-70 (Spring-Summer 1986): 288-310.

effort to push various levels of government to action) that people unable to afford adequate shelter would be easy targets for Communist and "subversive" elements.¹⁰³

Many of these concerns crystallized in the Montréal 'Squatters' Movement' of 1946-47. Homeless veterans and their families occupied government buildings on McGill-College Avenue, Ile Ste. Hélène, and the South Shore. Faced with eviction, they drew widespread support from the public and leadership from Henri Gagnon, an electrician, union organizer, and political activist. Gagnon and his Ligue des Vétérans sans Logis demanded the preservation of rent controls, a halt to evictions, and the construction of low-rent housing. In doing so, they relied upon gendered perceptions of the right and obligation of a man to house his family. Gagnon demanded that the federal government "PROVIDE DECENT SHELTER FOR THESE EVICTED VETERANS THEIR WIVES AND CHILDREN." Overcrowded housing meant that "Aucune vie familiale n'est plus possible." Québec families were particularly hard hit by landlords who refused to rent to families with numerous children. "Les chefs de famille," the Ligue observed, were employed and could afford to pay their rents – if only there were houses to rent.¹⁰⁴ The men who invoked the rights of breadwinners were not afraid to ask for the government's help in housing their families. Veterans, in particular, accustomed to receiving federal allowances and possessed of a sense of entitlement earned through

¹⁰³ *La Presse*, 3 novembre 1949, "Le contrôle des loyers resterait," 25; 28 novembre 1949, "Les locataires vont préparer leur lutte," 35.

¹⁰⁴ UQAM, Fonds Henri-Gagnon, 54P, File: 54P 3g/2. Telegraph from Henri Gagnon, President, Quebec Veterans' League, to J.S. Hodgson, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Montréal, Hon. C.D. Howe, Ottawa, Hon. Ian Mackenzie, Ottawa, 18 July 1947. Brochure: "Éviction! QUI SERA LE SUIVANT?" [n.d.].

military service, looked to Ottawa for aid. The federal government, Gagnon charged, was guilty of "callous human indifference" and of poor treatment of "those who served our country during wartime."¹⁰⁵

Yet what appeared to be a widespread popular campaign for decent and accessible housing was not without its fissures. The fact that Henri Gagnon was the provincial French-language organizer of the Labour-Progressive Party agitated the government and the press and alienated some public support, although many squatters professed not to care about his politics: "le principal, pour eux était d'avoir obtenu un toit pour leur famille."¹⁰⁶ If his case shows the divisive role of politics and anti-communism, the example of the Local Council of Women demonstrates how the consensus could fracture along class lines. In 1948, the LCW commended the federal government for extending rental controls for an additional year. The following year, however, it recommended (unsuccessfully) that the federal government reconsider its decision on rental controls and allow rent increases "on a gradual scale" in order "to avoid hardship for families of moderate incomes" (i.e. landlords).¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, responses to the campaign for

¹⁰⁵ UQAM, Fonds Henri-Gagnon, 54P. The quotation is from File 3g/2, Ligue des vétérans sans logis, 1946-48. Telegraph sent 18 July 1947 from Henri Gagnon, President, Quebec Veterans' League, to J.S. Hodgson, C.D. Howe and Ian Mackenzie. See also Marc H. Choko, "Le mouvement des squatters à Montréal 1946-1947," *Cahiers d'histoire* 2, 2 (Printemps 1982): 26-39.

¹⁰⁶ "... the important thing, to them, was that they'd secured a roof for their family." UQAM, Fonds Henri-Gagnon, 54P, File: 54P 3g/3, Ligue des vétérans sans logis, 1946-48. Newspaper clipping: "L'accusation de communisme inquiète les 'squatters'" [n.d., unidentified source].

¹⁰⁷ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 5: File 7. Local Council of Women 55th Year Book and Annual Report 1948-1949, Report of the Committee on Housing and Town Planning;

affordable housing illustrate some of the tensions, referred to at the outset of this chapter, between consumption and production. Working people's need for low-cost housing conflicted with construction workers' requests for wage increases. Employers and building associations who refused to allow raises in the construction industry argued that the costs of residential construction were already too high and that increased wages would push any new housing beyond the financial reach of ordinary Montréalers.¹⁰⁸ Workers were reminded that they were also consumers, and that it was to their own advantage to help to "hold the price line" by limiting their demands for "higher returns."¹⁰⁹ It was up to workers and their unions, the mainstream press insisted, to prevent increases in the cost-of-living.¹¹⁰

III. Prices, Purchases, and Economic Citizenship

As the preceding example indicates, the claims of consumers were often better received than the demands of wage-earners in postwar Québec. As we shall see in the next chapter, in arguing for the importance of class, workers and their unions were

File 8. LCW 56th Year Book and Annual Report 1949-50, Report of the Committee on Housing and Community Planning.

¹⁰⁸ La Presse: 8 juillet 1947, "Logements d'après-guerre seulement pour les riches," 25; 30 juillet 1947, "Augmentation refusée à l'ouvrier en construction," 3; 4 septembre 1947, "Le point de vue des ouvriers et patrons," 19.

¹⁰⁹ NA, Savage papers, MG 30 C 92, Vol. 7, File: WPTB Consumer News 1946-47. Consumers' News (October 1946), "1919 and 1946 -- A Comparison."

¹¹⁰ La Presse, 6 juin 1947, "Equilibre important à réaliser," 6; Le Devoir, 14 décembre 1948, "Une nouvelle hausse de salaires serait préjudiciable à l'industrie," 6; Le Devoir, 15 décembre 1948, "Les doléances des fabricants et des agriculteurs au sujet des prix," 3.

frequently accused of undermining the united 'community' that had been encouraged over the course of the war.¹¹¹ The mainstream press and some consumer activists attributed increased prices to workers' demands for higher wages; strikes (called "Labor's blackmail" by consumer activist Renée Vautelet) were blamed for shortages of goods.¹¹² In contrast, consumer activism was portrayed as bringing conscientious shoppers of all classes together in a common effort to win the peace. Vautelet, for instance, declared consumption to be "the only economic interest in Canada that speaks for all Canada. ... our common denominator ... the only shared Interest of the land."¹¹³ Organizing around prices was often better received than striking because it was more often a place where the classes could agree on goals and tactics. Although working people argued that they were especially affected by the increase in the cost-of-living, middle-class citizens also

¹¹¹ Jenny Hartley, for one, has argued that in wartime Britain, the interests of 'community' often superseded those of class. Millions Like Us: British Women's Fiction of the Second World War (London: Virago, 1997), Ch. 2.

¹¹² La Presse: 8 juillet 1947, "Logements d'après-guerre seulement pour les riches," 25; 30 juillet 1947, "Augmentation refusée à l'ouvrier en construction," 3; 4 septembre 1947, "Le point de vue des ouvriers et patrons," 19; NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1, File: Our Educational System. Notes for Eastern Townships Canadian Womens Clubs [n.d.].

¹¹³ NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1, File: The High Cost of Living. Notes Lib. Womens Fed. [n.d.]. Vautelet's claim exemplifies Victoria de Grazia's argument that "mass consumption promised to overcome class-based political cleavages by advancing the idea that individuals, even entire peoples, could mount a new kind of social claim, that to well-being." See her introduction to "Empowering Women as Citizen-Consumers," p. 280, in de Grazia, ed., The Sex of Things. Joy Parr likewise notes that the Canadian Association of Consumers promoted the idea "that there was a single unified consumer interest which transcended regional, class, and sectional differences." Domestic Goods, 13.

publicly deplored increases in prices.¹¹⁴ Participants in the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique were supported in their demands for low-cost housing by the club-ladies of the Local Council of Women; as we shall see in the next chapter, the same club-women condemned strike action by local butchers.¹¹⁵

The fact that the mainstream press and some elements of public opinion saw consumer activism as a less disruptive form of protest than striking had much to do with gendered perceptions of production and consumption, with ideas of men's and women's work and of masculinity and femininity. With the key exception of the Dominion Textiles strikes in Montréal and Valleyfield in 1946-47, the high-profile strikes of the late 1940s -- in shipyards, steel mills, meatpacking plants, and asbestos mines -- featured male workers and masculine militancy. Strikes were public, vocal, sometimes violent.¹¹⁶ Consumer boycotts -- tellingly referred to as "grèves silencieuses" (silent strikes) -- were less obvious. Not only did they target lower-profile establishments, but like much of women's domestic labour, decisions about what and what not to purchase were made

¹¹⁴ For a cartoon arguing that "petit salariés" were harder hit by price increases than "gros salariés," see Le Front Ouvrier, 1 novembre 1947, 1.

¹¹⁵ James Hinton, however, has pointed out that consumer activism, like strikes, could be fuelled by class antagonism. The British Housewives' League's resentment of queuing for rationed goods, he argues, "was sharpened by the fact that it represented an inversion of the natural authority relationship between middle-class customer and lower middle-class retailer" "Militant Housewives: the British Housewives' League and the Attlee Government," History Workshop Journal 38 (1994), 140.

¹¹⁶ On the gendered nature of a 1949 textile strike, see Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950 (Toronto: UTP, 1990), Ch. 5.

quietly, often in private, and were acts of restraint, most noticeable in their absence.¹¹⁷

Most of women's consumer 'activism,' in fact, was probably informal and unorganized: simply not buying when prices were too high.¹¹⁸ Consumers' delegations and marches of women on City Hall were important exceptions: visible and newsworthy, attracting public attention similar to that garnered by strikes and men's occupations of public buildings. The squatters' movement reminds us that consumer activism was not always the purview of women, although such a movement was nonetheless thoroughly gendered.

Consumer activism had considerable purchase in the postwar years in part because Quebecers, like other Canadians, were reshaping their sense of citizenship. Dominique Marshall has cogently argued that in the postwar years, Québec residents came to adopt a sense of "economic citizenship" that included new welfare state measures such as unemployment insurance and family allowances.¹¹⁹ These new measures were intended, in part, to paper over the cleavages of ethnicity and politics exacerbated by war and conscription, and to build allegiance to the federal state and a common 'nation.'

¹¹⁷ Renée Vautelet argued that such acts of restraint were a peculiarly feminine form of protest: women, she insisted, resisted temptation better than men. NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1, File: L'Association Canadienne des Consommateurs. St-Vincent de Paul [n.d.]. But, as Dana Frank notes, shopping's "limited visibility" meant that "the success of a boycott was always hard to prove and observance hard to police." Purchasing Power, 248.

¹¹⁸ There are indications, for instance, that the CAC was initially slow to attract "the women in the home"; as Thérèse Casgrain observed, it was the majority of women who did not belong to organized consumer groups who were probably most affected by the increased cost-of-living. NA, CAC, MG 28 I 200, Vol. 1: File 2. Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting, 10-11 February 1948; File 1. Minutes, National Conference, 29 September 1947.

What Dominique Marshall calls economic citizenship has been described by other historians and sociologists as “social citizenship” – that is, a sense of citizenship rooted, in part, in state welfare measures.¹²⁰ In this chapter I have borrowed the phrase “economic citizenship,” however, and imbued it with another meaning. I would argue that Québec families did indeed acquire a sense of economic citizenship over the years of war and reconstruction, and that this citizenship rested on the conviction that they were entitled to participate in a capitalist economy on reasonable terms. This sense of economic citizenship had been fuelled by wartime rhetoric and propaganda, which insisted that being a good citizen meant spending wisely, and it was encouraged by early Cold War rhetoric that touted the superiority of democratic capitalism.¹²¹ Increasingly, I would argue, Canadians expected the rewards of citizenship to include such tangible

¹¹⁹ Dominique Marshall, Aux origines sociales de l'État-providence: Familles québécoises, obligation scolaire et allocations familiales 1940-1955 (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1998), 264, 274, 291.

¹²⁰ T.H. Marshall, “Citizenship and Social Class,” in Class, Citizenship, and Social Development (New York: Anchor Books, 1965). See also Suzanne Mettler, “Dividing Social Citizenship by Gender: The Implementation of Unemployment Insurance and Aid to Dependent Children, 1935-1950,” Studies in American Political Development 12 (Fall 1998): 303-342; Susan Pedersen, “Gender, Welfare, and Citizenship in Britain during the Great War,” American Historical Review 95, 4 (1990): 983-1006; Ann Shola Orloff, “Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States,” American Sociological Review 58 (June 1993): 303-328.

¹²¹ By the early postwar period, Renée Vautelet could state confidently that “Today being a wise and self-disciplined consumer is one way of being a good citizen.” NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1, File: Allocation - Why a Canadian Association of Consumers? Why a Canadian Association of Consumers? [n.d.] American historian Lizabeth Cohen has argued that during the Second World War, definitions of the ‘good citizen’ and the ‘good consumer’ were intertwined. See her paper “A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in America,” presented at York University, Toronto, 2 March 2000.

benefits as an acceptable cost-of-living.¹²² By the later 1940s and certainly by the 1950s, many understandings of economic democracy and economic citizenship assumed the superiority of a more or less 'free' market.¹²³ A broad spectrum of public opinion argued that the security provided by a healthy economy and publicly funded social welfare programmes would prevent Communism from taking root among the nation's citizens; economic, social, and political citizenship were linked.¹²⁴ Ordinary citizens had a role to play in fighting the Cold War and arresting Communism by being disciplined consumers. In its 1950 publication "Why Be Thrifty?", the National Council of Women warned that Communism grew amid "economic collapse" but also amid regimentation and rigid controls; conversely, "Democracy's strength lies in a sense of individual responsibility

¹²² For a similar argument for post-First World War Germany, see Belinda Davis, "Food Scarcity and the Empowerment of the Female Consumer." Joy Parr notes that states make assumptions about "what standard of living should be considered an ordinary entitlement of citizenship." Like their demands for state welfare measures, postwar Canadians' call for a satisfactory cost-of-living reflected what Parr has termed their hopes for "a more equitable peace." See Parr, *Domestic Goods*, 10, 12.

¹²³ *La Presse*, 4 juin 1948, "Avantage qu'il nous faut conserver," 6; *Le Front Ouvrier*, 8 janvier 1949, Advertisement for the Bank of Montreal, 3.

¹²⁴ *La Presse*, 5 mai 1949, "Le communisme est toujours dangereux," 13; Archives de l'Université de Montréal (UM), Action Catholique Canadienne (ACC), P16, File: P16/R64. "Vers l'Edification de la famille de demain." Rapport des premières journées d'étude de la Commission française du Conseil canadien du Bien-être social, Hôpital de la Miséricorde, Montréal, 9-10 mars 1951. Discours de Me Jean Lesage; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 3, File 1B. Minutes, LCW, 19 May 1948; NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1, File: L'Association Canadienne des Consommateurs. St-Vincent-de-Paul [n.d.]. Victoria de Grazia notes that "When the U.S. model of mass consumer society finally prevailed in post-war Europe, consumer citizenship arrived hand in hand with, and gave an individualist cast to, the 'social citizenship' of Western Europe's emerging welfare states." See her Introduction to "Empowering Women as Citizen-Consumers," in *The Sex of Things*, 283.

and the exercise of individual initiative."¹²⁵ Democracy needed to be carefully cultivated: citizens, including women, had responsibilities as well as rights.¹²⁶ The liberal strand of economic citizenship that seems to have won out by the 1950s drew explicit links between (gendered) consumption and political participation in a democracy. Renée Vautelet, for example, spoke of women's votes "going to market," of "shop[ping] on election day at the store of experience in government," of "buying" the future.¹²⁷ In this political culture, conscientious consumer activists (demanding lower prices, greater quantities of goods, and more choice in products) were seen to help, not hinder, the smooth operation of the postwar economy.

IV. Conclusions

The Second World War raised the consumer consciousness of Canadians, and of Canadian women in particular. This heightened consciousness, along with the national importance assumed by budgeting, saving, and spending in a period of economic

¹²⁵ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 12. "Why Be Thrifty?" (Ottawa: National Council of Women, 1950). See also NA, CAC, MG 28 I 200, Vol. 1, File 3. Mrs. F.E. Wright, President, Canadian Association of Consumers, to Presidents of National Women's Organizations, 29 November 1949; NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 3, File: Notes for talk to Canadian Association of Consumers Annual Meeting. "Notes for talk to Canadian Association of Consumers Annual Meeting" [n.d.].

¹²⁶ NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1: File: L'Association canadienne des consommateurs. Article pour bulletin provincial [n.d.]; File: Social Reforms for Women. C.B.C. Xmas Eve 4.18 p.m.; File: Les droits de la femme. Untitled [s.d.].

¹²⁷ NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1: File: Brooke Claxton, candidat libéral. Text Radio Talk - June 24th; Radio Talk for Brooke Claxton, 1st of June; File:

reconstruction, created conditions propitious for consumer organizing. As the Women's Regional Advisory Committee of the Consumer Branch of the WPTB noted in 1946, "we are trying today to keep the Consumer satisfied as much as is possible."¹²⁸ The postwar Canadians who scrutinized prices, interrogated shopkeepers, reported infractions to the authorities, drew up petitions, lobbied their Members of Parliament, and boycotted grocers and butchers were aware, moreover, of the international geography of consumer activism. The Canadian Association of Consumers exchanged information with consumers' groups in the United States, New Zealand, England, and France.¹²⁹ Montréal readers of the daily press learned about "militant housewives" and angry shoppers across the country and overseas; such reports lent legitimacy and increased importance to the activities of housewives at home.¹³⁰ In Canada, consumer activism fit comfortably with new conceptions of economic citizenship. It responded to the postwar and Cold War needs to demonstrate that capitalism worked. And in Québec, where both Church and State drew on and demonstrated a longstanding animosity to socialism and militant unionism, it appeared a less threatening form of protest than strikes.

Assemblée Mackenzie King, élection 1945. Discours Assemblée Mackenzie King Election 1945 (11 juin).

¹²⁸ NA, Savage papers, MG 30 C 92, Vol. 7, File: WPTB 1946. Minutes, Women's Regional Advisory Committee, Consumer Branch, 12 November 1946. This contrasted starkly with, for instance, survey results, reprinted in La Presse in 1949, showing that the American public declared the nation's most important problem to be strikes. La Presse, 28 novembre 1949, "Le grand problème américain," 4.

¹²⁹ NA, CAC, MG 28 I 200, Vol. 1, File 2. President's Remarks, 1st Annual Meeting of CAC, 21-22 September [1948].

¹³⁰ La Presse: 26 mai 1947, "Le mot d'ordre des ménagères de l'ouest," 4; 22 septembre 1947, "Une manifestation des ménagères de Paris," 1; 20 février 1948, "La baisse des

Working-class organizations such as unions and the Action catholique movements adopted consumer activism both in addition to, and instead of, organizing at the point of production.¹³¹ The middle-class women who had forged partnerships with the federal government during the war years through, for example, the Consumer Division of the WPTB, also continued their consumer efforts. The claims by these women to freedom of purchase were often conservative and anti-labour. But in demanding recognition of the economic worth of women's domestic labour, and in insisting that people listen to the voice of the housekeeper as well as that of the shopkeeper, they made women's unpaid work public.¹³²

This uncomfortable combination of conservatism and gender-consciousness points to the ways in which women could be conditioned by the politics of the postwar period while simultaneously pushing at their boundaries. Although Cold War democracy encouraged the voices of all, including women, it imposed limits on what they could say. In subscribing to what British historian Sonya Rose has called a "discourse of active citizenship," these women joined other postwar women across the nation involved in such home- and family-centred causes as Home-and-School organizations, Parent-Teacher Associations, and battles for daycare. Their efforts made the family visible in the public

prix continue," 1. On British women's postwar consumer activism, see Hinton, "Militant Housewives."

¹³¹ On working-class consumer activism, see also Frank, Purchasing Power; Murray, "A la jonction du mouvement ouvrier"; Sangster, Dreams of Equality; Kealey, Enlisting Women.

¹³² NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1. "L'industrie oubliée" (1949); "L'association canadienne des consommateurs" [n.d].

sphere and, indeed, used family as a way of claiming citizenship.¹³³ The maternalist argument was heard in sites as diverse as the largely middle-class Canadian Association of Consumers and the Montréal Catholic labour paper Le Front Ouvrier.¹³⁴ But as Sylvie Murray has argued, a concern for issues that affected home and family was clearly not the same thing as a 'retreat' to the nuclear family.¹³⁵ Members of Montréal's Notre-Dame-de-Grace Women's Club, for instance, taught each other parliamentary procedure and held study sessions on "Canadian Democracy in Action"; took field trips to City Hall and to Parliament Hill; and invited guest speakers to lecture on such topics as "Women Face a Changing World" and "Education for a New Day."¹³⁶ Their outlook was neatly summarized in the 1948 declaration by the president of the Local Council of Women that "as politics today have to do with the home and family politics should be our

¹³³ Drawing on the work of Jenny Hartley, who argues that the war made 'Home' visible, Rose claims that the postwar emphasis on marriage and maternity for women produced an upsurge of women's activism on behalf of wives and mothers. Sonya Rose, paper presented at York University, 25 February 1999; Jenny Hartley, Millions Like Us, 54. For Canadian examples of postwar women's maternal activism, see Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams"; Murray, "A la jonction du mouvement ouvrier"; Susan Prentice, "Workers, Mothers, Reds: Toronto's Postwar Daycare Fight," Studies in Political Economy 30 (Autumn 1989): 115-141.

¹³⁴ NA, CAC, MG 28 I 200, Vol. 1, File 3. President's Remarks, Annual Meeting of Canadian Association of Consumers, 28-29 September 1949; Le Front Ouvrier, 22 novembre 1947, "La femme au foyer, une isolée?", 17; Le Front Ouvrier, 6 décembre 1947, "Editorial féminin. 'Gardons' le foyer," 17; NA, Vautelet papers, MG 30 C 196, Vol. 1, File: Parti Libéral Fédéral (élections). "C.B.F. 15 Mai, 4 heures (Parti Libéral)" [1945].

¹³⁵ Murray, "A la jonction du mouvement ouvrier," 120.

¹³⁶ McGill University Archives (MUA), NDG Women's Club, MG 4023, Container 1: 14th Record Book, Minutes, 7 January 1944; 15th Record Book, Minutes of 23rd Charter Day Luncheon, 2 March 1945; 16th Record Book, Minutes, 18 October 1946; 17th

business."¹³⁷ This claim had particular resonance in a place where women had only recently secured the provincial vote.¹³⁸ These women certainly defined themselves as active citizens; their actions call into question assumptions about postwar women's insular domesticity, and suggest broader definitions of 'politics' for this period. Moreover, they support a growing literature suggesting that the 'great darkness' that is supposed to have descended over Québec during Duplessis's second tenure in power was punctuated by numerous points of protest.

Examining the politics of prices in a city under reconstruction points to one way that 'family' and families were mobilized in pursuit of postwar citizenship rights. A grassroots politics scaffolded on prices had the potential to rally large numbers of people around issues commonly thought private, ranging from margarine to monthly rent payments. Such a politics highlighted the fragility of working-class budgets in a city grappling with the rising cost-of-living. A politics of prices resonated with Montréal citizens precisely because, in many cases, every penny mattered. Yet it could be argued that this emphasis on prices was misplaced, or at least inadequate on its own. As Susan

Record Book, Minutes, 3 October 1947; 17th Record Book, Minutes, 17 October 1947; 19th Record Book, Minutes, 13 April 1949.

¹³⁷ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 3, File 1B. Minutes, Local Council of Women, 8 December 1948. The francophone counterpart to the LCW, Montréal's *Fédération Nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste*, likewise reminded female readers of its newsletter of the importance of their vote in an upcoming municipal election, arguing that women could not remain indifferent to such civic problems as poor housing. *La Bonne Parole*, Novembre 1947, "Les femmes et l'élection municipale," 2.

¹³⁸ For a discussion of Australian women's post-suffrage feminism as a working-out of "the meaning and possibilities of citizenship for women," see Marilyn Lake, "The Inviolable Woman: Feminist Conceptions of Citizenship in Australia, 1900-1945," in

Porter Benson reminds us, consumption “was always tightly tethered to earning”: in a province where wages were among the lowest in the nation, attempts to lower prices could only accomplish so much.¹³⁹ Moreover, like 'family' itself, consumer activism could be deployed on behalf of a variety of political beliefs and to a multitude of ends. Yet while organizations as different as the Local Council of Women and the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique sometimes had different visions of family, the families invoked by these disparate bodies were increasingly ones that purchased, rather than produced, their basic needs. And although the particular notions of family marshalled in support of consumers' rights were not always identical, 'family' as an abstract concept had remarkable persuasive power in the postwar years.

Habermas's vision of “a sphere of private people coming together as a public through the ‘historically unprecedented’ public use of their reason” – creating a ‘public’ that mediated between the state and private life – has appealed to many historians.¹⁴⁰ Yet this notion of a time-bound bourgeois public sphere of rational deliberation and discourse, emerging in the eighteenth century and waning in the nineteenth century, has

Joan B. Landes, ed., Feminism, the Public and the Private (Oxford; New York: Oxford UP, 1998).

¹³⁹ Benson, “Living on the Margin,” 236. On wages in 1940s Québec, see Pierre Elliott Trudeau, “The Province of Quebec at the Time of the Strike,” in Trudeau, ed., The Asbestos Strike, 5.

¹⁴⁰ The quotation is from Joan B. Landes, “The Public and the Private Sphere: A Feminist Reconsideration,” 139, in Landes, ed., Feminism, the Public and the Private. See also Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964),” New German Critique 3 (Fall 1974): 49-55; Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989); John L. Brooke, “Reason and Passion in the Public Sphere: Habermas and the Cultural

also been much criticized.¹⁴¹ American historian Mary Ryan, for instance, argues that Habermas posits the decline of the public sphere at the precise moment that, in the United States at least, the public was opening up to new players such as women, African-Americans, and immigrants.¹⁴² This chapter suggests that Habermas's bourgeois public sphere had become something quite different by the mid-twentieth century: at once larger and more fractured. What we see in Montréal in the 1940s are attempts by working- and middle-class citizens to make the public sphere more democratic by expanding its membership, but also efforts to translate public presence into political and legislative difference.¹⁴³ The working-class families who exposed their meagre incomes and expenditures to public view were unveiling the 'private' in an attempt to see the democratic rhetoric of wartime realized. In claiming and negotiating new postwar citizenship rights (economic citizenship, but also, for women, political citizenship in the form of the provincial suffrage, and for working-class families, especially, social citizenship in the form of new welfare-state measures), Montréalers pushed for a broader

Historians," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 29, 1 (Summer 1998): 43-67.

¹⁴¹ For a perceptive discussion of these criticisms, see Brooke, "Reason and Passion in the Public Sphere."

¹⁴² Mary P. Ryan, Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880 (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1990), 13, 168-169, 176-177. Habermas later changed his mind about the demise of the public sphere in the nineteenth century and argued that the public sphere had become, in John Brooke's words, "a permanent fixture in modern society" Brooke, "Reason and Passion," 61.

¹⁴³ Mary Ryan, for instance, celebrates the pluralism of the nineteenth-century American public sphere; I would caution that a plurality of voices in the public sphere does not necessarily mean that they are all (equally) effective. See Women in Public, 168-169. By 1964, Habermas was able to assert that "Conflicts hitherto restricted to the private sphere now intrude into the public sphere." See "The Public Sphere," 54.

and more inclusive public, and they used the rhetoric of 'family' to strengthen their claims.

Chapter 5 **Creating the Breadwinner-Citizen: Family, the Labour Movement, and the State**

In 1947, the Montreal Labour Council decided to print 50,000 postcards for the city's workers to send to Prime Minister Mackenzie King. The cards were to read: "FURTHER INCREASES IN PRICES OF COMMODITIES AND RENT WILL SIMPLY MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO MEET THE NEED OF MY FAMILY [sic]."¹ Such a statement had considerable resonance in the wake of the Second World War. It suggests, moreover, how a gendered perspective can reshape the conventional narrative of twentieth-century Canadian labour history. This narrative highlights the importance of the war as a moment when organized labour expanded its membership, staged several landmark strikes, and secured significant gains in labour legislation and collective bargaining. It posits the mid-1940s as years of promise for Canadian unions, before they were bureaucratized and anaesthetized by Cold-War red-baiting and the 'postwar compromise' among labour, capital, and the state.² While this story is not wrong, it is incomplete, neglecting the ways in which labour's claims in the postwar years were fundamentally gendered. Working men took advantage of wartime union

¹ Archives de l'Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Fonds d'Archives du Conseil des Métiers et du Travail de Montréal (CMTM), 103P, File: 103P-102/6. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Montreal Labour Council, 27 February 1947.

² Desmond Morton, Working People: An Illustrated History of the Canadian Labour Movement, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Summerhill Press, 1990), Chs 17-19; Bryan D. Palmer, Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992), Ch. 6; Craig Heron, The Canadian Labour Movement: A Short History (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1989), Ch. 3.

gains, an improved economy, and a certain receptiveness on the part of the state to assert their rights as men and as breadwinners in the 1940s. Indeed, they pushed to ensure that 'breadwinner' was understood to be a masculine term. in the wake of a war when women and children had worked for pay in large numbers. Because they asserted these claims to the state as well as to their employers, and called for social security measures as well as improved wages and working conditions, their demands had implications for postwar citizenship. The "breadwinner-citizen" crafted and sought in the 1940s was a masculine entity entitled to, ideally, a 'family wage,' and failing that, state measures that would ensure that the contributions of his wife and children to the family economy would be largely unwaged.³

The campaign for a breadwinner-citizen in the early postwar years acquired its intensity in an economic context where it finally seemed possible that men might earn enough to single-handedly support their families. The Depression had brought the paucity and irregularity of men's wages in Montréal (and elsewhere) into sharp relief, but as many scholars have pointed out, this was hardly new in, or specific to, the 1930s.⁴ In

³ Social welfare measures such as family allowances were clearly second-best, in the eyes of male workers, to adequate male wages. Most Canadian unions, for instance, were initially opposed to family allowances. See also Louise A. Tilly, "Women, Work, and Citizenship," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 52 (Fall 1997): 1-26; and, in the same issue, Chiara Saraceno, "Reply: Citizenship is Context-Specific," 27; Ann Shola Orloff, "Reply: Citizenship, Policy, and the Political Construction of Gender Interests," 39-40. On the 'family wage,' see Martha May, "Bread before roses: American workingmen, labor unions and the family wage," in Ruth Milkman, ed., *Women, Work and Protest: A Century of U.S. Women's Labor History* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985).

⁴ Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974); Denyse Baillargeon,

the 1940s, union gains and men's improved wages hinted at the possibility of a true 'family wage.' Such a possibility competed, however, with the legacy of the war years, when women and children had been encouraged to find paid work: what if these women and children wanted to keep their jobs in the postwar period?

The state and private employers lent a hand to the would-be breadwinner-citizen. The well-known narrative of married women's 'postwar return to the home' notes their dismissal from civil service jobs, the closing of dominion-provincial day nurseries, and the end to income-tax incentives for married women's paid work.⁵ Family allowances, implemented in 1944, were an instance of the state stepping in to assume new responsibility for families in the 1940s, but also suggested a particular model of family: one in which women would receive government money as mothers, in lieu of going out to work. The Keynesian pump-priming that produced private-sector jobs for men and the federal family allowances provided to mothers are evidence of American historian Alice Kessler-Harris's observation that, "While men acquired rights not only on their own behalf, but on behalf of their families, women acquired rights *through* their families"⁶ In effect, the 1940s heard the swan song of the 'family wage' claim: this was one of the

Ménagères au temps de la Crise (Montréal: Les éditions du remue-ménage, 1991); Bettina Bradbury, Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993).

⁵ Ruth Roach Pierson, 'They're Still Women After All': The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986).

⁶ Alice Kessler-Harris, "Gendered Interventions: Rediscovering the American Past," in Mario Materassi and Maria Irene Ramalho de Sousa Santos, eds., The American Columbiad: 'Discovering' America, Inventing the United States (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1996), p. 197. My emphasis. Kessler-Harris is discussing the antebellum United States.

last historical moments in Canada when it had cross-class appeal and was espoused by most public commentators.

Both unions' family wage paradigm and the Family Allowances Act envisioned men's primary dependents to be wives and children, rather than (as we saw in Chapter 2) elderly parents and needy siblings.⁷ A parallel story to 'women's return home' was the creation of new, legal obligations on parents to support their children: in Québec, the compulsory schooling act of 1943 and legislation restricting child labour. These acts were an attempt to ensure the prolonged dependence of all children, including working-class children, upon their parents.⁸ Historians Dominique Marshall and Susan Pedersen remind us of the importance of considering generation as well as gender in studies of social policy.⁹ In the two strikes discussed in this chapter, we see men articulating rights as parents rather than as husbands. We also see, in Québec, the confrontation of two ideologies that Pedersen has identified for England and France respectively: the "breadwinner logic" and the "parental logic" of social welfare. In Pedersen's words, "while male-breadwinner policies compensate men for dependent women and children

⁷ On debates over "which family members could legitimately be considered 'dependent,'" see Susan Pedersen, Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914-1945 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), 4.

⁸ Dominique Marshall, Aux origines sociales de l'État-providence: Familles québécoises, obligation scolaire et allocations familiales 1940-1955 (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1998). Susan Pedersen discusses the twinning of these two measures in western European countries in the late nineteenth century, leading to children's prolonged, and enforced, dependence. See Family, Dependence, 3-4.

⁹ On children's new rights, see Dominique Marshall, "Reconstruction Politics, the Canadian Welfare State and the Ambiguity of Children's Rights, 1940-1950" in Greg Donaghy, ed., Uncertain Horizons: Canadians and their World in 1945 (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1997).

during legitimate interruptions of earnings, states with parental policies compensate adults for dependent children irrespective of earnings or need.”¹⁰ Time and time again, in the 1940s, Montréal workers and welfare advocates claimed that the breadwinner logic of federal social policies needed to take into account the “familles nombreuses” of Québec.

This chapter examines the ways in which working men claimed rights as breadwinner-citizens in the years following the Second World War. In particular, it explores the relationships they crafted with the federal and provincial arms of the state. The new regime of industrial legality in the 1940s has received a great deal of attention from labour historians, and with good reason. New terms were established for collective bargaining, and unions achieved far greater security in Canada than ever before. What I want to look at here is labour’s interaction with the state around matters that were not strictly workplace issues but that pertained, rather, to the supposedly ‘private’ realm of home and family. Such issues existed, of course, alongside and within the larger context of the new industrial legality and all that it meant for working-class economic security. But the fact that union men felt compelled to lobby their governments over family matters suggests, first, that they thought it important (and felt entitled) to make these ‘private’ concerns public, and second, that they may not have been sure that the workplace gains of the 1940s were enough to ensure their families’ social and economic well-being. This chapter concludes by examining two Montréal strikes as moments that made family needs public and inserted discussions of family into the public arena. My

¹⁰ Pedersen, Family, Dependence, 17-18.

analysis of responses to the 1945 butchers' strike and the 1949 teachers' strike points to some of the ways in which the state had intervened in family life during the 1940s, including food rationing and compulsory schooling. It sheds light on the renegotiation of relationships between families and the state in this period of reconstruction. The mixed responses to state intrusions into 'private' life that we see here were hardly the unequivocal "anti-étatisme" that was once seen as the hallmark of pre-Quiet Revolution Québec.¹¹ But they also remind us of the importance, in that time and place, of distinctions between the federal and provincial arms of the state, and of the ways in which federal-provincial tensions could play out around 'family.'

I. Working Men and Family Needs

Reflecting upon the achievements of recent labour history, Elizabeth Faue notes that "We have learned that working-class women framed their work lives and protests in the context of familial obligation; we know less about how men connected their family and work identities."¹² The pressures on working men to be breadwinners were

¹¹ Historian Michel Brunet characterized pre-Quiet Revolution Québec as "anti-étatiste." See B.L. Vigod, "Ideology and Institutions in Quebec: The Public Charities Controversy 1921-1926," *Histoire sociale/ Social History* 11, 21 (May 1978), 168; Marshall, *Aux origines sociales*, 282.

¹² Elizabeth Faue, *Community of Suffering and Struggle: Women, Men, and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis, 1915-1945* (Chapel Hill; London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 16. Canadian historians have begun to explore these connections. See, e.g., Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns 1880-1950* (Toronto: UTP, 1990); Nancy M. Forestell, "All that Glitters is Not Gold: The Gendered Dimensions of Work, Family and Community Life

fundamental to labour's demands in postwar Québec. During the war, men's employment situation had improved dramatically; labour shortages were so acute, in fact, that women's paid employment was encouraged and children's work tolerated. Men faced the postwar period with some trepidation, anticipating another economic recession or, at the very least, a difficult period of transition.¹³ This trepidation, combined with the fact that some women and children continued to work for pay through the late 1940s, spurred men's renewed campaign for rights as breadwinner-citizens. The "salaire familial" demanded by labour unions, the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique, the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique, and the Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne Française (among others) was a masculine wage that would singlehandedly support a family.¹⁴

in the Northern Ontario Goldmining Town of Timmins, 1909-1950" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1993); Franca Iacovetta, "Defending Honour, Demanding Respect: Manly Discourse and Gendered Practice in Two Construction Strikes, Toronto, 1960-1961," in Kathryn McPherson, Cecilia Morgan, and Nancy M. Forestell, eds., Gendered Pasts: Historical Essays in Femininity and Masculinity in Canada (Don Mills: Oxford UP, 1999). For the American context, see Susan Porter Benson, "Living on the Margin: Working-Class Marriages and Family Survival Strategies in the United States, 1919-1941," in Victoria de Grazia, ed., with Ellen Furlough, The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

¹³ UQAM, Fonds d'Archives de la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec (FPTQ), 84P, File: 84P, 6/3, Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada le 17 janvier 1945.

¹⁴ Archives Nationales du Québec à Montréal (ANQM), Mouvement des Travailleurs Chrétiens (MTC), P257, Vol. 38, File: Semaine de la famille ouvrière, 1946. Speech on poste C.B.F. de Radio Canada, 11 mai 1946; ANQM, Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique (JOC), P104, Container 240, File: Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse. Mémoires soumis par le comité central de l'Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne Française à la Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, à l'occasion du congrès provincial du Québec tenu à l'Université de Montréal les 27 et 28 janvier 1945.

Although somewhat obscured by the historiography, which has tended to focus on the more dramatic mid-century fluctuations in women's paid employment, men's work did not simply march on in a timeless progression after 1945. Rather, men dealt with wartime employers' transition to peacetime production and services, with diminishing hours and days of employment as certain sectors reduced production, and, eventually, with negotiating a new balance between work and family commitments. Observers of Montréal's labour market agreed that the war had benefited men who had been unemployed or irregularly employed during the Depression. The steady paycheque allocated by the Armed Services and, more important, the enormous expansion of industrial production and factory jobs, allowed men to fill the breadwinner roles expected of them and severely disrupted by the economic depression of the 1930s.¹⁵ In many cases, regular work and pay continued after the war; in others, however, demobilization of the armed forces and industry resulted in lay-offs and reduced hours. Montréal's Société Saint-Vincent-de-Paul observed that many "heads of families" (i.e. men) laid off at the end of the war had resorted to the Société for assistance with food, heating, shoes,

¹⁵ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 40. Texte rédigé spécialement pour la revue *Relation*, "La Ligue Ouvrière Catholique de Chez Nous a Quinze Ans." Par Laurette Larivière [1954, unfiled]; ANQM, Église Catholique, Diocèse de Montréal, Service de préparation au mariage (SPM), P116, Boîte 60-0-002-13-06-001B-01, File: 1947 -- Semaine des fiancés. Conférence de Me Jean Penverne au Gesù, 30 octobre 1947. On the disruption of men's breadwinner roles during the Depression, see also Baillargeon, Ménagères au temps de la Crise; Margaret Hobbs, "Equality and Difference: Feminism and the Defence of Women Workers During the Great Depression," Labour/Le Travail 32 (Fall 1993): 201-223; and, for the United States, Benson, "Living on the Margin"; Faue, Community of Suffering and Struggle. Faue argues that the Depression constituted "a crisis of masculinity," 191.

clothing, and medicine until they found new employment.¹⁶ A wife and mother of two children wrote to La Presse's advice columnist, Colette, in 1946, explaining that during the war her husband had earned a good salary, but that his wages were now reduced and she was having trouble making ends meet.¹⁷ That same year, the Family Welfare Department of Montréal's Baron de Hirsch Institute encountered a husband and father who was unwilling to accept jobs paying \$15 a week; the man had earned \$25 a week at his previous job and had not "yet accepted the changed wage situation."¹⁸

This changed situation clearly frustrated men's sense of entitlement, produced by a high demand for labour, union victories, management accommodation, and state legitimization during the war.¹⁹ The war had undoubtedly heightened men's expectations of their employers and their workplace. Steady work and wages and union security, hard-won, were cherished gains. In this era of supposed postwar prosperity, then, wages that were "low and inadequate for his family's needs"²⁰ were viewed by a male worker, his family, and interested observers as an affront, or else as a personal failing on the man's part. Colette's advice column provided a forum for discussion of these issues, and in

¹⁶ ANQM, Société Saint-Vincent-de-Paul (SVP), P 61, Vol. 3, File 16. Historique de la Société Saint-Vincent-de-Paul de Montréal depuis sa fondation en mars 1848 jusqu'à nos jours [1948].

¹⁷ La Presse, 6 avril 1946, 32.

¹⁸ National Archives of Canada (NA), Jewish Family Services of the Baron de Hirsch Institute (JFS), MG 28 V 86, Vol. 10, File: Minutes, Case Committee, FWD, 1946-47. Follow-Up Case No. 11, 8 May 1946.

¹⁹ Morton, Working People. Chapters 16-17; Heron, The Canadian Labour Movement. Ch. 3.

²⁰ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Case Conferences, FWD and JCWB, 1944-46. Social Summary for Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, 7 April 1947.

doing so, helped to make both 'family' and societal pressures on husbands public in the postwar years. Her mailbox was filled with letters from women complaining of shiftless husbands who refused to carry out their breadwinning duties and husbands who earned inadequate wages and ran up debts on unwise purchases. In a noteworthy departure from her usual counsel to wives to patiently endure trying marriages, Colette advised one 40-year-old woman in 1948 to leave her lazy husband. This widow with six children had married a widower with five children of his own. She worked by the day; her children worked and paid money for board; her husband was not employed; and only one of his children had a job and paid board. Colette suggested that the woman leave and take her children with her, since her new husband had clearly married her only to exploit her.²¹ Men unable or unwilling to properly live out the breadwinner role, whose wives were 'forced' to go out to work, were alternately pitied and scorned.

Added to the continued precariousness of men's work in the immediate postwar years was the continued presence of women and children in the labour market. Even before the tides of war turned in Europe and peace and the soldiers' return appeared imminent, Canadians debated the fate of women's employment in the postwar period. Women's work was seen to be a question intimately bound up with the project of reconstruction.²² Pre-eminent was the concern about postwar unemployment. The "high

²¹ La Presse, 26 février 1948, 26. See also La Presse: 4 juin 1948, 10; 14 février 1949, 18.

²² Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "'Pigeon-Holed and Forgotten': The Work of the Subcommittee on the Post-War Problems of Women, 1943," Histoire sociale/Social History 15, 29 (May 1982): 239-259.

and stable level of employment" promised by federal Liberals in 1945²³ was not only understood to mean men's employment, but was in fact contingent upon the return home of working women -- or at least, of married women.²⁴ Women were also anxious about the possibility of postwar unemployment and renewed poverty, and were thus wary of leaving their own jobs until they were certain that their husbands could support their families on their own.²⁵ This produced the "two-edged sword" described by Marion Royce in 1945: women who feared "the loss of their own jobs" in the wake of war, but who "were haunted also by the spectre of keeping a man out of a job" in the event of widespread unemployment.²⁶ While some commentators assumed that, with the war over, most women would "again look to marriage and home-making as their number one life interest,"²⁷ others suspected that women would be forced home whether they wanted to go or not. Representatives of youth and women's organizations worried that women's wartime gains would not be sustained, and that they would be the first victims of any

²³ Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English, Canada Since 1945: Power, Politics, and Provincialism, revised ed. (Toronto: UTP, 1989), 50.

²⁴ Pierson, 'They're Still Women,' 13.

²⁵ Canadian Youth Commission, Youth, Marriage and the Family (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1948), 58.

²⁶ Marion V. Royce, The Effect of the War on the Life of Women: A Study (Geneva: Washington: World's YWCA, 1945), 27.

²⁷ NA, Montreal Council of Women (MCW), MG 28 I 164, Vol. 11, File: MCW Scrapbook, 1942-59, Part I. News clipping from The [Montreal] Star, 18 Jan. [n.y.]. "Post-War Jobs Seen as Right of Women. But Most Will Prefer Homes, Lecturer Believes"; NA, Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), RG 38 Vol. 197, File: Rehabilitation, Statistics - W.D. Proceedings: Training Conferences on Women's Rehabilitation, 1946.

transitional postwar unemployment.²⁸ Some argued that women would not easily give up the independence achieved through their own paycheques and that they would continue to constitute a significant segment of the labour force.²⁹ Others recognized that some married women had always worked out of necessity and would continue to do so for this reason.³⁰ Some foresaw employment for women in very particular fields, such as social work, teaching, and office work.³¹ Others warned that the expansion of clerical work incurred by the war would be short-lived and that many female office workers would be jobless in the postwar period.³² Although members of Montréal's Local Council of Women wondered whether "girls" discharged from the Armed Services might be "willing

²⁸ CYC, Youth, Marriage and the Family, 58; Royce, The Effect of the War, 28; Archives de l'Université de Montréal (UM), Fonds de l'Action Catholique Canadienne (ACC), P16/O4/52, Report, CYC, "Employment Opportunities for Youth in Post-War Canada"; NA, Summerhill Homes Collection, MG 28 I 388, Vol. 15, File 15-1. Minutes, Special Meeting of Board of Management of Summerhill House, 13 December 1944; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 8, File 4. Alis O'Connell Hayes to Mrs. Allan Smith, 16 November 1943. Historian Ruth Roach Pierson has also concluded that women's wartime liberation was never intended to be anything but "for the duration." 'They're Still Women.' 11, 220.

²⁹ Renée Vautelet, Post-War Problems and Employment of Women in the Province of Quebec (Montréal: 1945), p. 6. Located in NA, Montreal Soldiers' Wives League (MSWL), MG 28 I 311, Vol. 5, File: Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1945.

³⁰ Gabrielle Carrière, Comment gagner sa vie: carrières féminines (Montréal: Éditions Beauchemin, 1942), 22; Royce, The Effect of the War, 30; Vautelet, Post-War Problems, 8, 13; CYC, Youth, Marriage and the Family, 117.

³¹ La Presse, 23 février 1944, "Du travail pour tous à la fin de la guerre," 3; NA, DVA, RG 38 Vol. 197, File: Rehabilitation, Statistics - W.D. Proceedings: Training Conferences on Women's Rehabilitation, 1946.

³² NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 8, File 4. Alis O'Connell Hayes to Mrs. Allan Smith, 16 November 1943.

to take up domestic work." most observers were sceptical about the potential appeal of domestic service for women in the postwar period.³³

Priority in employment was to go to veterans and to breadwinners; both categories were generally assumed to be male.³⁴ Such views were given concrete form in the closing of Dominion-Provincial wartime day nurseries and the Reinstatement in Civil Employment Act, which promised veterans their old jobs back with seniority rights (and which effectively pushed out the women who had replaced servicemen during the war).³⁵ Federal income tax incentives to encourage married women's work during the war were dismantled in 1947, and the civil service likewise attempted to reduce the number of married women in its employ once the war ended and veterans began to return.³⁶ Women's war work had been highly praised, and their contributions to victory were frequently cited in demands for equal pay for equal work legislation and reforms to

³³ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 2. Minutes of Meeting of Sub-executive of LCW, 16 May 1945; NA, Department of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 610, File 6-52-2, Vol. 2. Chief, Legislation Branch, Dept of Labour to Marion Royce, 23 September 1943. Perhaps, the LCW suggested, young women in Europe's Displaced Persons camps might satisfy Canadian householders' dire need for domestic servants. NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 5, File 7. 53rd Year Book and Annual Report 1946-47, Report of the President.

³⁴ ANQM, JOC, P104, C. 181, File: Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse (Congrès - janvier 1945). Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, Congrès provincial, Université de Montréal, 27-28 janvier 1945. Comité de l'emploi. Rapport.

³⁵ Robert England, Discharged: A Commentary on Civil Re-establishment of Veterans in Canada (Toronto: Macmillan, 1943), 201-202; Brandt, "'Pigeon-Holed and Forgotten,'" 242.

³⁶ "Working Wives, Their Income, and the New Income Tax," in The Labour Gazette, Vol. 47, 3 (March 1947): 293-297; NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 2. Minutes, Meeting of Sub-Executive Committee of LCW, 13 November 1946; La Presse, 26 octobre 1945, "Retour au foyer," 5. See also Pierson, 'They're Still Women', 49; Forestell, "All that

Québec's Civil Code, for instance.³⁷ Yet many Canadian legislators and employers appeared to agree with Fraudena Eaton, Associate Director of the Women's Division of the National Selective Service, who claimed in February 1946, with regard to working mothers, that "No suggestion could be made now or even four months ago, that the employment of those women whose children are in day care centres is essential for work of national importance."³⁸ The fact that so much worry was expended over the work of mothers, in particular, suggests that the cause of this concern was not only the competition for jobs that women posed to male 'breadwinners,' but also anxiety about the future of Canadian childhood: a concern that had taken on a new resonance in the context of war and family separation.³⁹ But it also reflected what American historian Alice Kessler-Harris has termed the "provider" ethos: that is, the conviction that wives ought not to seek paid work when their families already included one (male) "provider."⁴⁰

In their interactions with social agencies, government officials, and religious bodies, married women who worked for pay in the postwar period justified their employment in terms likely to elicit sympathy or understanding. Many women were no

Glitters," 161. The Labour Gazette maintained [p.297] that the "new tax regulation for working couples" was not an attempt to push married women out of the job market.

³⁷ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164, Vol. 8: File 4. Resolution. "Equal Pay for Equal Work" [n.d.]; File 1. Causerie donnée à Radio-Canada, CBF Montréal, 6 février 1947, par Mme Pierre Casgrain, O.B.E., Présidente du Comité conjoint du Statut légal de la femme mariée.

³⁸ NA, Department of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 609, File 6-52-1, Vol. 2. Fraudena Eaton to Mr. A. MacNamara, 18 February 1946.

³⁹ Doug Owsram, Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation (Toronto: UTP, 1996), Ch. 2.

doubt reluctant to give up the measure of financial independence they had enjoyed during the war.⁴¹ Overwhelmingly, however, women defended their employment in terms of economic necessity.⁴² This necessity was generally defined by the inadequacy or complete absence of a husband's wage: husbands who were unemployed, ill, irregularly employed, or employed at wages insufficient to meet the postwar cost-of-living; in extreme cases, husbands who were departed, delinquent, or dead. The mothers of the (largely Irish-Canadian) children who attended the Garderie Ste-Anne in Griffintown attributed their wartime work to the increased cost-of-living.⁴³ The supervisor of Montréal's Wartime Day Nursery No. 5, on Delisle Street, argued in 1943 "that all the working mothers she is in contact with are working outside the home because of serious financial need and not for earning, as some objectors to women's labour seem to think, pocket money." Twenty-one mothers who had used the services of the city's Wartime Day Nursery No. 1, on Coursol Street, petitioned the provincial Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in April 1945 to keep the day nurseries open after the end of the war. The women declared that many would still have to work to support their children, due to

⁴⁰ Alice Kessler-Harris, A Woman's Wage: Historical Meanings and Social Consequences (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), Ch. 3.

⁴¹ Vautelet, Post-War Problems, 6; CYC, Youth, Marriage and the Family, 58-59. For one woman's account of the independence she had gained while her husband was away at war, see La Presse, 5 décembre 1947, Courrier de Colette, 26.

⁴² On "the vast majority of women" who "stressed the immediate economic necessity that compelled them to go out to work," see Sangster, Earning Respect, 230, 233; also Kessler-Harris, A Woman's Wage, Ch. 3.

⁴³ NA, Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD), MG 28 I 10, Vol. 236, File 236-9. Garderie Ste-Anne, Entrevue avec Sister Magdeline, 4 novembre 1943.

"Death of husband," "Separation from husband," "War injuries or sickness of the husband," "Inadequate wages earned by the husband, and high cost of living."⁴⁴

Working children, like working wives, suggested that the breadwinner ideal was far from attainable for many of the city's families – before, during, and after the war. The JOC, troubled by the young age at which many Catholics went to work and their consequent lack of extensive formal education, blamed the low wages paid to fathers -- wages insufficient, it argued, to support large French-Canadian families.⁴⁵ In addition to children who worked to supplement fathers' inadequate wages were those who worked to make up for the absence of a father's wage. One French-Canadian woman wrote to Colette in March 1948 explaining that her husband had barely worked that winter, and that she was relying on her children's earnings to cover subsistence costs and her husband's debts.⁴⁶ A 15-year-old Jewish boy whose father had deserted his mother in 1939 after nine years of marriage worked delivering orders for a hardware store.⁴⁷ The 1951 census reveals that the children of widows were especially likely to take jobs.⁴⁸ A 19-year-old French-Catholic carpenter, for instance, informed the JOC that he had

⁴⁴ NA, Department of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 611, File: 6-52-5-2, Vol. 1: Memorandum to Margaret Grier, Director, Wartime Day Nurseries, Ottawa, from Florence F. Martel, N.S.S., Montreal, re: Visit to two Day Nurseries, 12 July 1943; Mothers of Day Nursery No. 1, Montreal, to Department of Day Nurseries, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 20 April 1945.

⁴⁵ ANQM, JOC, P104, C. 134, File: Rapport Enquête 1947. "Les jeunes travailleurs du Québec et le problème de l'épargne. Rapport d'une enquête menée sur le sujet par la JOC en septembre et octobre 1947."

⁴⁶ La Presse, 27 mars 1948, 30.

⁴⁷ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Case Conferences, FWD and JCWB, 1944-46. Social History re: K. family, 22 February 1946.

worked for pay since the age of 15. He and a brother were the only two of eight children left at home; he paid \$8 a week in board to his widowed mother. Because of unemployment and family responsibilities, he noted, he had been unable to put away any savings since beginning work.⁴⁹ Many adolescents contributed to the viability of family economies by leaving the household and becoming self-supporting at early ages. A 17-year-old girl told the JOC in the spring of 1947 that she had been earning her living for ten months in domestic service and then in a factory. Her father was still alive but her mother was deceased and she had six siblings.⁵⁰ The JOC conducted a survey of 480 young workers (average age: 20) in the province's cities in 1947 and discovered that they had been working for an average of 3.55 years. Only 52 of these young workers lived away from the parental home ("en chambre" or "en pension"). The great majority who lived at home paid an average of \$8.56 a week in board to their parents, out of a total average salary of \$26.23 a week. 184 of the 480 workers gave their parents their entire salary in return for a modest allowance to cover their expenses. The average size of these young workers' households was 5.32 people, excluding those siblings who had already left home.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 10, 322.

⁴⁹ UM, ACC, P16/G5/8/12, JOC Survey "A ceux qui ne pensent pas sérieusement au mariage" [n.d.].

⁵⁰ ANQM, JOC, P104, C. 121, File: Retour d'enquête du Service Domestique, Printemps 1947. Retour d'enquête du service domestique, Printemps 1947, Montréal.

⁵¹ UM, ACC, P16/G5/8/15. "Les jeunes travailleurs du Québec et le problème de l'épargne. Rapport d'une enquête menée sur le sujet par la J.O.C. en septembre et octobre 1947." Note that this was larger than the average Montréal household, which consisted

Children's wages alleviated financial woes but also produced familial conflict.⁵² Labour shortages during the Second World War had led to higher wages than most teens had ever known. Perceptions that children and youth were earning wages far beyond what they deserved or were entitled to given their youth, lack of experience, and lack of training were widespread.⁵³ It is quite possible that parental authority was diminished when children earned high wages; social workers found that in certain cases, parents were not even aware of their children's place of employment or of how much they earned.⁵⁴ Some critics warned that working youths, enjoying a certain financial independence due to their high wages, and also free, to a certain extent, from the constraints and controls of the family setting and the routine of the classroom, were prone to loose morals.⁵⁵ Members of the Action catholique depicted factories as hotbeds of immorality and informal sex education, where young men and women mingled freely with sexually experienced co-workers, obtaining advice and even contraceptives.⁵⁶ In part, the wartime and postwar concern over juvenile delinquency was related to worries about loosened controls over these adolescent wage-earners, and a perceived loss of authority by parents.

of 4 persons (or 3.9 persons for tenant households). Ninth Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 3, Table 118.

⁵² A 17-year-old girl wrote to La Presse's Colette in 1944, for instance, complaining that she had to hand her entire \$18-a-week salary over to her mother, while her three sisters paid only \$7 per week each in board. La Presse, 23 février 1944, 14.

⁵³ CYC, Youth, Marriage and the Family, 54-55.

⁵⁴ NA, JFS, MG 28 V 86, Vol. 11, File: Minutes of Staff Meetings 1945-1947. Minutes of Staff Conference. 21 August [1946].

⁵⁵ La Presse, 2 novembre 1946, 34.

especially fathers.⁵⁷ Commentators worried, moreover, about whether children would be able to adjust to dependency and perhaps less disposable income once the war was over and they had to return to lower wages or the restrictions of school.⁵⁸ The Catholic Service de préparation au mariage (SPM), mindful of the recession that had followed the last war, urged young people to profit from high wartime wages in order to save for their future homes.⁵⁹ Yet perhaps perceptions of working children swimming in dollars were overblown. Marshall reminds us that children were, after all, a reserve labour force and a cheap labour pool. Boys earned roughly one quarter of an average male wage and girls just over one third of an average female wage. Moreover, their paid employment was often short-term and irregular.⁶⁰ Finally, the fact that adolescents and young adults continued to turn a good part of their earnings over to their parents suggests another

⁵⁶ ANQM, MTC, P257. Vol. 13, File: Campagne de propagande - Travail Féminin. Correspondance. Paul Guay to Secrétariat Général de la LOC, Montréal, 17 octobre 1942.

⁵⁷ On wartime and postwar juvenile delinquency, see Jeff Keshen, "Wartime Jitters over Juveniles: Canada's Delinquency Scare and Its Consequences, 1939-1945," in Age of Contention: Readings in Canadian Social History, 1900-1945 (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1997); Mary Louise Adams, The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality (Toronto: UTP, 1997), Ch. 4.

⁵⁸ CYC, Youth, Marriage and Family, 53-55.

⁵⁹ ANQM, JOC, P104, C. 213. File: Cours [1944]. SPM, "Quelques idées en vue de faire épargner les jeunes pour leur futur foyer."

⁶⁰ Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 231. Marshall notes, in particular, the low wages paid to domestic servants, 225.

source of potential conflict: that between parents and youths who postponed their own marriages because of family responsibilities.⁶¹

The debate over who would work for wages in the postwar period had deep roots. The Depression years had highlighted the longstanding precariousness of the breadwinner ideal in Montréal, as men lost jobs or worked irregularly. Women who worked to support themselves or their families were harshly criticized in light of the lack of employment for men. The war promised to restore the male breadwinner to his rightful place, as jobs, hours, and wages increased. But as labour shortages grew, wives, mothers, and children also went out to work. Perceptions of the extent of women's paid work were always greater than actual labour force participation rates, and actual rates of wives' work were greater elsewhere in Canada than they were in Québec. But a variety of observers nonetheless worried that this was a harbinger of things to come -- hence the campaign, in the late 1940s, for the breadwinner-citizen.

II. Labour and the State

Motivated in part, then, by familial responsibilities and gendered expectations, working men set out to achieve their demands. Organized Québec workers were affiliated, in this period, with one of three union federations: the Catholic unions of the Confédération des travailleurs catholiques du Canada (CTCC); the (primarily) craft

⁶¹ ANQM, JOC, P104, C. 240, File: Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse. Mémoires soumis par le comité central de l'ACJC à la CCJ, 27-28 janvier 1945. "Jeunesse et

unions of the Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec (FPTQ), which was, in turn, affiliated with the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada; and the (primarily) industrial unions of the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL). Some of the Action catholique movements, such as the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique (JOC) and the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique (LOC), were also explicitly concerned with improving the lives of working-class Montréalers, and frequently made representations on their behalf to the various levels of government.⁶² Yet despite the fact that they often served as a training ground for future union militants, the Action catholique movements were not part of the organized labour movement, and sometimes opposed its goals and tactics.⁶³ Moreover, the province's three union federations rarely acted in concert: Québec's labour movement was riven with schisms. While the FPTQ and the CCL were initially dubious about the CTCC's capacity for militant action, the postwar period saw the tentative beginnings of

Famille" par Armand Godin. See also Marshall. Aux origines sociales, 184-185.

⁶² e.g. Le Front Ouvrier, 22 septembre 1945, "La J.O.C. rencontre le gouvernement provincial," 4. For an attempt by the Montréal LOC to build solidarity between the AC movements and the city's labour unions, see La Presse, 7 septembre 1946, "Grande semaine de la fraternité ouvrière," 26.

⁶³ Le Travail, Septembre 1945, "Action Catholique et Action Syndicale," 2; Le Front Ouvrier, 22 septembre 1945, "Pour en finir avec la loi de la jungle," 8-9; ANQM, JOC, P104, Container 286. Rapport de la 13ième Session Intensive J.O.C. tenue à Duchesnay, Que. les 26-27-28 juin 1948; ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 40, File: Documents Officiels, Centre Social Ouvrier, Front Ouvrier. Allocution de S.E. Mgr Philippe Desranleau, le 8 octobre 1947; Vol. 5, File: Comité Général, 1941-1944: procès-verbaux. Comité conjoint le 24 janvier 1944. On the ACC (particularly the JOC and JEC) as a training-ground for future union militants, see Gérard Pelletier, Years of Impatience 1950-1960, trans. Alan Brown (Toronto: Methuen, 1984), 31-32, 34; Simonne Monet Chartrand, Ma vie comme rivière. Récit autobiographique 1939-1949, Tome 2 (Montréal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 1982).

an alliance between the CCL and an increasingly assertive CTCC, as both resented the FPTQ's growing tendency to collaborate with the Duplessiste regime.⁶⁴

Many historians have argued that Cold War red-baiting rendered North American unions more conservative in this era, and there is no doubt that the Trades and Labour Congress-affiliated FPTQ, for instance, purged its ranks of militants and cozied up to Duplessis after 1949.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, some of the province's unionized workers demonstrated unprecedented levels of militancy in this period. Although recent work has questioned longstanding assumptions about the conservative nature of Québec's Catholic unions in the first half of the twentieth century, it seems clear that the CTCC became more radical after the war.⁶⁶ Determined to retain wartime gains, postwar unions objected strenuously to provincial labour legislation that they saw as inimical to workers'

⁶⁴ Jacques Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme québécois (Montréal: Boréal, 1989), Ch. 4; Jacques Rouillard, "Major Changes in the Confédération des Travailleurs Catholiques du Canada, 1940-1960," in Michael D. Behiels, Quebec Since 1945: Selected Readings (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1987), 122-123. One member of the CCL-affiliated Montreal Labour Council commented in 1949 that "not much could be expected from the AFL" in terms of attempting to reform the manner in which the Quebec Labour Relations Act was interpreted. UQAM, CMTM, 103P, File: 103P-102/8. Minutes, Meeting of the Montreal Labour Council, 27 October 1949. Readers of Le Front Ouvrier complained to the LOC that the newspaper too obviously favoured the Catholic unions over the international unions. ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 17, File: Conseil National, Novembre 1945. Conseil Général -- L.O.C. -- 3 et 4 novembre 1945; Rapport du Conseil Général de la L.O.C. tenu à Ville Lasalle, les 3 et 4 novembre 1945.

⁶⁵ Le Front Ouvrier, 28 février 1948. "Les communistes en déroute," 2; Paul-André Linteau et al., Quebec Since 1930, trans. Robert Chodos and Ellen Garmaise (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1991), 223; Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme, Ch. 4; Réginald Boisvert, "The Strike and the Labour Movement," in Pierre Elliott Trudeau, ed., The Asbestos Strike, trans. James Boake (Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1974 [1956]), 311-312, 315-316.

interests.⁶⁷ The province's three union federations formed a rare common front in 1948 and again in 1949 to protest the provincial government's proposed labour codes.⁶⁸ Strike activity, moreover, was extensive. In part, this was a reaction to the stubborn opposition with which labour's demands were sometimes met in this period. But the militancy was also fuelled by the experience of the Second World War, when high demand for labour had forced acknowledgement of its importance and concessions from management. It was fuelled, moreover, by the rhetoric of postwar reconstruction, which, in Canada, touted progress, democracy, and a public arena newly receptive to the claims of workers. The postwar years were, as Gérard Pelletier insisted, "years of impatience."⁶⁹

Although the immediate postwar years saw some noteworthy strikes by women workers, such as the Dominion Textiles strikes in Québec in 1946 and 1947, strikes were

⁶⁶ Rouillard, "Major Changes"; Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme, Ch. 4; Boisvert, "The Strike and the Labour Movement"; Pierre Elliott Trudeau, "The Province of Quebec at the Time of the Strike," 60, in Trudeau, ed., The Asbestos Strike.

⁶⁷ La Presse: 24 janvier 1949, "Des clauses inacceptables," 3; 24 janvier 1949, "L'opinion des travailleurs," 3; 3 mars 1949, "Des amendements à un projet de loi ouvrier," 1; 3 mars 1949, "Les ouvriers n'accordent pas de répit au bill 60," 3; Le Monde Ouvrier, 29 janvier 1949, "Lutte à mort contre le projet de Code et contre son esprit inique," 1.

⁶⁸ La Presse, 24 février 1949, "Un ralliement ouvrier sans précédent demain," 3; Le Front Ouvrier, 29 janvier 1949, "Sur la défensive," 4. See also Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme, 260; Rouillard, "Major Changes," 122-123; Trudeau, "The Province of Quebec at the Time of the Strike," 63; Boisvert, "The Strike and the Labour Movement," 299-301. Some attempt to form an alliance to protest a proposed provincial labour code had also been made in 1947. UQAM, CMTM, 103P, File: 103P-102/6. Minutes, Meeting of the Montreal Labour Council, 27 March 1947.

⁶⁹ Pelletier, Years of Impatience.

often framed as embodying the demands of male breadwinners.⁷⁰ While the existence of women workers could not be ignored, particularly when their paid work had been so recently celebrated in the name of the war effort, union politics and strike activity remained highly masculine cultures. Elizabeth Faue suggests that in the United States, "women emerged from the war experience more unionized but less active in unions"; it is quite likely that in Canada, too, by gendering 'work' masculine in a segmented labour market, unionized workers were attempting to remasculinize the labour movement in the wake of the gendered disruptions occasioned by war.⁷¹ The occasional reference to "sister [Léa] Roback" in Montreal Labour Council minutes underscores the absence of other union "sisters" in the council's recorded history; discussions appear to have been

⁷⁰ On the Dominion Textiles strikes, see Le Front Ouvrier, 8 novembre 1947, "La grève du textile. À la conquête de la liberté," 4; Le Front Ouvrier, 15 novembre 1947. Supplement on textile strike, 9-12; Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme, 195-196. For another postwar textile strike involving women workers, see Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners, Ch. 5. On strikes as embodying the demands of male breadwinners, see Iacovetta, "Defending Honour, Demanding Respect"; Forestell, "All that Glitters is Not Gold"; Faue, Community of Suffering and Struggle.

⁷¹ Faue, Community of Suffering and Struggle, 192. On the masculine nature of unions and strikes at mid-century, see also Pamela Sugiman, Labour's Dilemma: The Gender Politics of Auto Workers in Canada, 1937-1979 (Toronto: UTP, 1994); Julie Guard, "Fair Play or Fair Pay? Gender Relations, Class Consciousness, and Union Solidarity in the Canadian UE," Labour/Le Travail 37 (Spring 1997): 149-177. On the gendering of work as masculine, see the essays in Ava Baron, ed., Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991); and Faue, Community of Suffering and Struggle, 10, where she argues about early twentieth-century Minneapolis, "In the culture of craft solidarity, women were defined outside the sphere of work." On a segmented labour market in Canada, see, e.g., Jane Ursel, Private Lives, Public Policy: 100 Years of State Intervention in the Family (Toronto: Women's Press, 1992), 239, 250.

almost without exception debates among men.⁷² One speaker at a 1948 FPTQ conference in Montréal suggested that the TLC-affiliated Montreal Trades and Labour Council (not the same body as the CCL-affiliated Montreal Labour Council) establish a women's auxiliary, indicating the masculine nature of the Council itself.⁷³ Meanwhile, Simonne Monet Chartrand, reflecting upon her role in supporting the Asbestos strikers, argued about the CTCC:

Je me rendis alors compte que les femmes, qu'elles soient des épouses de syndiqués, des employées syndiquées ou non, épouses d'organiseurs et de permanents syndicaux, toutes les femmes jouaient à tous les niveaux des instances de la CTCC, des rôles de bienfaisance, d'auxiliaires sauf les rares syndiquées (Confédération des syndicats nationaux) qui étaient élues et qui participaient aux décisions par le fait même. Moi, comme les autres, j'étais la bénévoles que les syndicats invitaient surtout **après** les votes de grève, à venir bénévolement encourager femmes et maris, soutenir leur moral, trouver des fonds de secours, etc. comme au temps des oeuvres de guerre. Peu ou pas informées des questions relatives aux négociations ou aux décisions des instances concernant le droit de grève, de mutation ou d'habit, les femmes, même vers la fin des années quarante, demeuraient dans leur cuisine, dans leur usine ou dans leur bureau de secrétaire de syndicat, des personnes non consultées.⁷⁴

This, then, was the labour movement that confronted the state in the wake of the war. By virtue of Order-in-Council P.C. 1003, the Wartime Labour Relations Board, and Québec's 1944 Loi des relations ouvrières, the state loomed large in wartime and postwar

⁷² Roback is mentioned in UQAM, CMTM, 103P, File: 103P-102/6. Minutes, 27 November 1947. See also the list of "brothers" (and no "sisters") present at the Montreal Labour Council meeting of 9 June 1943: The Canadian Unionist 17, 1 (June 1943), p. 17.

⁷³ UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P, 3a/20, Conférence de la FPTQ, 1948. Conférence spéciale sous les auspices de la F.A.T., le C.M.T. et la F.P.T. tenue dans le Salon B de l'hôtel Mont-Royal, à 10.30. See also the reference to the women's auxiliaries of Montréal unions affiliated with the CCL in the Canadian Unionist 17, 5 (October 1943), p. 123.

⁷⁴ Chartrand, Ma vie comme rivière, 354. Emphasis in the original.

industrial relations: as a legislator, an arbiter, and an employer, but also in its emerging capacity as a provider of social welfare measures. Postwar workers recognized that the state was in a period of flux, and sensed that its openness to change at that particular moment rendered it more receptive than usual to workers' demands.⁷⁵ Moreover, a postwar government that touted the advantages of 'democracy' left itself open to workers' insistence that it live up to its democratic rhetoric by providing the conditions for a decent life for all. Workers in a victorious nation claimed a 'social citizenship,' demanding that their rights of political citizenship be supplemented by a minimum level of social security that would ensure 'freedom from want.'⁷⁶ They did so in gendered ways. Men demanded social security measures as breadwinners; women claimed (and secured) entitlement to state welfare as wives and mothers.⁷⁷ In articulating their own visions of family and democracy and challenging those promoted by the state, workers were, in Stephen Garton's and Margaret McCallum's words, both "contesting and

⁷⁵ On labour and the state in the 1940s, see Ursel, Private Lives, Public Policy; Marshall, Aux origines sociales; Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme; Dennis Guest, The Emergence of Social Security in Canada, 3rd ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), Ch. 8.

⁷⁶ UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P, 6/3. Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada le 18 décembre 1945; Le Mouvement Ouvrier, Septembre 1944, "La Charte de l'Oratoire," 20; T.H. Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class" [1949], reprinted in Class, Citizenship and Social Development (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 65-122.

⁷⁷ Suzanne Mettler, "Dividing Social Citizenship by Gender: The Implementation of Unemployment Insurance and Aid to Dependent Children, 1935-1950," Studies in American Political Development 12 (Fall 1998): 303-342; Ann Shola Orloff, "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States," American Sociological Review 58 (1993): 303-328.

shaping" Canada's emerging welfare state.⁷⁸ Increasingly, workers looked to the federal state, in particular, as an "ally" rather than an "adversary"; unions were eager to claim a role in the politics of reconstruction.⁷⁹

The provincial state was another matter. Led by a premier who had little desire to expand the state's role in social services or education, and who fiercely resisted federal incursions into these areas, the Québec government's relationship with workers was more often one of opposition than of cooperation in these years. Premier Maurice Duplessis and his Minister of Labour, Antonio Barrette, did their best to contain labour activism within carefully circumscribed boundaries and bureaucracies.⁸⁰ The Union Nationale's labour legislation was inspired in part by the similarly restrictive American Taft-Hartley legislation.⁸¹ The growing North American Cold War hostility to socialism and to strikes

⁷⁸ Stephen Garton and Margaret E. McCallum, "Workers' Welfare: Labour and the Welfare State in 20th-Century Australia and Canada," *Labour/Le Travail* 38 (Fall 1996): 116-141.

⁷⁹ Rouillard, *Histoire du syndicalisme*, 468-469 and *passim*; Marshall, "Reconstruction Politics"; Peter S. McNinnis, "Planning Prosperity: Canadians Debate Postwar Reconstruction" in Donaghy, ed., *Uncertain Horizons*.

⁸⁰ This was not, of course, a phenomenon unique to Québec in the war and postwar years. Nor was it unknown before Duplessis's reelection in 1944: Liberal premier Adélard Godbout had been proud to announce in his campaign speech of 1944 that his government had adopted a law designed to reduce strikes to a minimum and to keep them a weapon of last resort. *La Presse*, 7 juillet 1944, "Quatre étoiles guident la destinée du Québec." On Duplessis's antiunionism, see Rouillard, *Histoire du syndicalisme*, Chapters 3-4; Pelletier, *Years of Impatience*: Boisvert, "The Strike and the Labour Movement."

⁸¹ "Quebec Proposes Taft-Hartley Act," *The Canadian Unionist* 23, 2 (February 1949), p. 29; Rouillard, "Major Changes," 126.

found fertile terrain in Duplessis's longstanding anti-Communism.⁸² Strikebreakers habitually received police protection in Québec.⁸³ Duplessis generally enjoyed the support of the Catholic church hierarchy, which likewise dissuaded labour activism and joined with emerging cold warriors to cast suspicions of communism on left-leaning movements. The generalized anticommunism of the Cold War era was as strong in Québec as elsewhere in the country and was shared by most of the province's labour unions, out of self-protection if nothing else. Unions and the CCF, in Québec as elsewhere in Canada, were called upon to defend their politics and to deny communist 'tendencies.'⁸⁴

Yet Québec's labour movement was far from quiescent in the late 1940s. All three of the province's union federations protested the way in which Duplessis's government interpreted the 1944 labour legislation passed by Liberal premier Adélard

⁸² La Presse, 20 février 1946, "Québec et le communisme. On ne tolérera pas la propagande communiste, déclare l'hon. M. Duplessis," 1. One of Duplessis's best-known acts in his first term of power was the notorious Padlock Law, enacted in 1937 and used against "subversive" groups. See Linteau et al., Quebec Since 1930, 47.

⁸³ La Presse, 6 juin 1946, "La grève des textiles," 3; York University Archives (YUA), Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001, Reel 1. James Y. Murdoch, Noranda Mines Limited, to Maurice Duplessis, 23 November 1946.

⁸⁴ La Presse: 20 mai 1949, "La CCF combat la menace communiste," 13; 6 juin 1949, "Liberté pour les ouvriers," 1. The newspaper had noted in 1944 that only one CCF candidate had been elected in the provincial election: "preuve que nos gens ne présentent guère cette doctrine." 9 août 1944, "Le vote d'hier," 6. On anticommunist purges within Québec's union movement, see Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme, esp. Ch. 4. On hostility (or at best, indifference) to the CCF in Québec, see Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme, 264-269; Pelletier, Years of Impatience, 92, 137, 143-145; Andrée Lévesque, Virage à gauche interdit: Les communistes, les socialistes et leurs ennemis au Québec 1929-1939 (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1984), Ch. 3. Even the CCL-affiliated Montreal Labour Council was divided over whether to support the CCF. UQAM.

Godbout.⁸⁵ The FPTQ's annual submissions to the premier reveal a frustration with having to make the same demands year after year.⁸⁶ While the FPTQ assured Duplessis of its "entire cooperation" and explained that its criticisms of the provincial government were meant to be fair and constructive, its private discussion of the Union Nationale government in the late 1940s was more critical.⁸⁷ As J-Elphège Beaudoin (president of the FPTQ) told the Fédération's annual convention in 1946, employers and governments had treated workers like "angels" during the war, but now that the war was over, "les anges se sont transformés en démons et ... il est pratiquement impossible d'avoir la coopération des patrons ou des gouvernements."⁸⁸ Duplessis maintained power in large

CMTM. 103P, File: 103P-102/8. Minutes, Meeting of the Montreal Labour Council, 2 June 1949.

⁸⁵ UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P. 6/3, Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif de la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec présenté à l'Honorable Maurice Duplessis, Premier ministre et aux Honorables Membres du Cabinet Ministériel de la Province de Québec, le 15 décembre 1948. Québec members of the Parti Ouvrier-Progressiste also insisted upon "la lutte à conduire contre la réaction duplessiste." UQAM, Fonds Henri-Gagnon, 54P, File: 54P 3g/4, Ligue d'action ouvrière, janvier-février 1948. "En réponse à une déclaration du Comité Provincial du P.O.P. parue dans le journal 'COMBAT,'" 10 janvier 1948.

⁸⁶ UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P. 6/3, Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada le 4 décembre 1946.

⁸⁷ UQAM, FPTQ, 84P: File: 84P. 6/3, Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada le 17 janvier 1945; le 4 décembre 1946; le 7 janvier 1948; le 15 décembre 1948; File: 84P. 3a/9, Conférence de la FPTQ, 1945-1946. Rapport des Délibérations de la Neuvième Conférence Annuelle de la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec, tenue en la Cité de Québec les 28, 29 et 30 juin 1946.

⁸⁸ "the angels have become devils and ... it is practically impossible to obtain cooperation from bosses or governments." UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P, 3a/9, Conférence de la

part by exploiting French-Canadian nationalism and widespread resentment over the federal government's handling of wartime conscription. But according to Jacques Rouillard, Québec unions, including the CTCC, voiced little of this resentment during the war.⁸⁹ Regardless of their members' opinions of conscription, most of the province's unions appeared willing to cooperate with the federal government in the postwar years in return for the benefits of federal citizenship -- benefits that were themselves intended (at least in part) to soften the divisions of ethnicity and politics recently sharpened by the war.⁹⁰

Unions had their own vision of reconstruction: one that drew on much of the rhetoric and some of the assumptions of federal reconstruction plans, but which recast them into what was in some ways an alternative conception of reconstruction. The Montreal Labour Council argued for the existence of a grassroots vision of reconstruction when it condemned the Wartime Prices and Trade Board's lifting of price controls for "sabotaging the peace-time programme of the Canadian People."⁹¹ In setting out their

FPTQ, 1945-1946. Rapport des Délibérations de la Neuvième Conférence Annuelle de la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec, tenue en la Cité de Québec les 28, 29 et 30 juin 1946.

⁸⁹ Rouillard, *Histoire du syndicalisme*, 201-209. See also the advertisement in *La Presse*, 6 décembre 1944, "On pense clairement dans les rangs du travail organisé!", 10, for a sampling of Québec unions' messages to Prime Minister King on the subject. A few of these messages express reservations about some of King's political decisions, but all state their desire for national unity, their expectation that King will adopt progressive measures of postwar reconstruction and social programmes, and their dislike for "tory" attempts to sunder the country along ethnic lines.

⁹⁰ Family allowances, as Dominique Marshall notes, arrived in Québec mailboxes with a reminder that they came courtesy of the federal government. See *Aux origines sociales*.

⁹¹ UQAM, CMTM, 103P, File: 103P-102/6. Minutes of the Montreal and District Labour Council Meeting, 23 January 1947.

plans for an "ordre nouveau." workers frequently invoked Roosevelt's Four Freedoms and the 1941 Atlantic Charter.⁹² Unionists regularly called for postwar aid for veterans. Veterans -- seen as especially deserving citizens -- were convenient, in that unions could call for assistance to them that they might not demand for ordinary civilian workers. The reconstruction needs of war workers could also be safely insisted upon, as such workers were clearly a federal responsibility.⁹³ Through at least the end of 1946, unions continued to claim that the problems of rehabilitation and readaptation were pressing. The FPTQ argued that the reconstruction years were "des années difficiles," and that the working class must be able to envisage the future with serenity. Workers worried aloud about the possibility of postwar unemployment and, as we saw in Chapter 4, the spectre of inflation.⁹⁴

Unions wanted to play a part in the politics of postwar reconstruction. Their official submissions and requests to various levels of government spoke to these

⁹² UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P, 6/3. Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada le 17 janvier 1945; le 18 décembre 1945. As we saw in Chapter 3, the LOC also modeled its 1944 "Charte de l'Oratoire" on the Atlantic Charter.

⁹³ UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P, 6/3. Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada le 18 décembre 1945; UQAM, CMTM, 103P, File: 103P-102/8. Minutes, Montreal Labour Council, 10 November 1949.

⁹⁴ UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P, 6/3. Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada le 17 janvier 1945; le 18 décembre 1945; le 4 décembre 1946.

governments in the latter's own language. They praised democratic institutions, and spoke of wanting to reform capitalism, not overthrow it.⁹⁵ Yet they also pushed official promises to their logical conclusions. In the spirit of democracy, the FPTQ requested that provincial legislation be worded clearly enough so that workers could understand (and thus obey) it. Moreover, the FPTQ reminded Duplessis in 1946, it was not enough to pass social legislation; the government must also enforce it unless it wanted workers to lose respect for the law. Democracies, the FPTQ insisted, must prove their superiority to autocratic societies; Communism, it warned, flourished amid poverty and need.⁹⁶ The new order should be one in which goods were more equitably distributed.⁹⁷ Such a claim had ethnic as well as class dimensions; the province's unions were conscious of Québec's particular reconstruction needs. The FPTQ called for parity with workers in other

⁹⁵ UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P, 6/3, Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada le 17 janvier 1945; le 18 décembre 1945; le 7 janvier 1948.

⁹⁶ UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P, 6/3, Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada le 4 décembre 1946; Mémoire Législatif de la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec présenté à l'Honorable Maurice Duplessis, Premier ministre et aux Honorables Membres du Cabinet Ministériel de la Province de Québec, le 15 décembre 1948.

⁹⁷ UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P, 6/3. Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada le 17 janvier 1945.

provinces in terms of wage rates, working conditions, and social legislation; the Montreal Labour Council also demanded the "Equalization of wage rates across the Country."⁹⁸

Family allowances were a cornerstone of federal reconstruction policy, and are one of the most obvious examples of the family 'in public' in the postwar years. The attraction of family allowances for the federal government was, in part, that they were a way of satisfying labour's demand for higher incomes without having to tamper with wartime wage controls.⁹⁹ Organized labour understood this, and was wary of accepting a measure that might be used to depress wages.¹⁰⁰ Yet, as Jane Ursel notes, "It was clearly not politically popular to attack a program that offered to subsidize the income of families who could not adequately provide for their basic needs with wages alone."¹⁰¹ Once

⁹⁸ UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P, 6/3, Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada le 17 janvier 1945; UQAM, CMTM, 103P, File: 103P-102/6. Minutes. 13 February 1947. In January 1945, the Canadian Youth Commission, holding hearings in Montréal, was informed that many French-Canadians suffered lower standards of living and wages and poorer health than citizens of other provinces. ANQM, JOC, P104, Container 181. File: Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse (Congrès - Janvier 1945). Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, Congrès provincial, Université de Montréal, 27-28 janvier 1945. For complaints that wages in the building trades were lower in Montréal than in Toronto, see La Presse, 4 septembre 1947. "Le point de vue des ouvriers et patrons," 19.

⁹⁹ Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 45-47; Ursel, Private Lives, Public Policy, 188-198; Guest, Emergence of Social Security, 124; Garton and McCallum, "Workers' Welfare," 131-132. On wartime wage controls, see Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme, 206.

¹⁰⁰ "Family Allowances and Wages." The Canadian Unionist 17, 4 (September 1943), p. 93; NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 58. File 490. Resolution adopted at convention of Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, Toronto, October 23-30, 1944. See also Guest, Emergence of Social Security, 123; Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 45-47; Ursel, Private Lives, Public Policy, 197; Garton and McCallum, "Workers' Welfare," 131-132.

¹⁰¹ Ursel, Private Lives, Public Policy, 197.

implemented. family allowances were rapidly incorporated into working-class budgets and almost as readily accepted by unions, who soon signalled their acquiescence to the principle of family allowances by demanding that they be indexed to the rapidly rising cost-of-living.¹⁰² Family allowances had a lengthy history of support in Québec: the Action catholique movements representing working families, for instance, had long argued that such allowances, calculated according to the number of children in a family, were essential in a province where men could not earn wages high enough to support numerous children.¹⁰³ Indeed, argued the LOC, parents of large families were doing society a favour and ought to be compensated for their contributions by the state.¹⁰⁴ Such arguments explicitly highlighted what Ursel has called "the contradiction between

¹⁰² Marshall, *Aux origines sociales*, 259-262. The JOC also expressed its approval of the federal government's decision to increase family allowance rates in 1948. ANQM, JOC, P104, Container 286. Rapport de la 13ième Session Intensive J.O.C. tenue à Duchesnay, Qué. les 26-27-28 juin 1948 [unfiled]. Dennis Guest claims that by 1945, "Canadian unions fully accepted the family allowance scheme and saw that, far from weakening their bargaining position, it gave labour extra resources with which to withstand the financial pressures of a strike or lockout." *Emergence of Social Security*, 124.

¹⁰³ UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/G5/8/4. Mémoire présenté par la JOC canadienne à l'Honorable Paul Martin [1948]; ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 13, File: Campagne de Propagande - Allocation familiale. Comités généraux de la JOC et de la JOCF to Marcel Labrie, 2 février 1943; ANQM, JOC, P104, C. 181, File: Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse (Congrès- Janvier 1945). Mémoire de la JOC. Jeunesse vs. après-guerre. "Jeunesse et famille." And see Trudeau, "The Province of Quebec at the Time of the Strike," 14-15.

¹⁰⁴ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 13, File: Campagne de propagande -- Allocation familiale. Press release to *Le Devoir* from Aimé Carbonneau, président général, Ligue Ouvrière Catholique, le 4 janvier 1943. J.A. Bougie of Montréal's Social Welfare Department also reported the opinion of "Certaines gens" [sic] that family allowances would be "un acte de justice envers les familles nombreuses qui paient par conséquent plus de taxes que les autres." ANQM, JOC, P104, Container 250, File: Service du B.E. Social. J.A. Bougie, Président, Comité des Activités Sociales, Service du Bien Etre Social, Montréal, to Rév. Père V. Villeneuve, Montréal, le 18 février 1943.

production and reproduction." Small wonder, then, that English-Canadian conservatives like Charlotte Whitton argued that family allowances were simply a way for the federal government to bribe French-Canadian voters alienated by Ottawa's about-face on military conscription -- voters who were assumed to be parents of families larger than their English-Canadian counterparts.¹⁰⁵ Increasingly, as Ursel has observed, the postwar state was taking on the role of subsidizing (and not just substituting for) wages: that is, of providing the difference between that which could be earned by a male breadwinner and that which was required to maintain a family.¹⁰⁶ While this development could be read as an acknowledgment of the practical impossibility of achieving a 'family wage,' it can also be interpreted as a tacit agreement that the state and the male breadwinner would, in tandem, provide this wage. Critics in Québec worried that family allowances would usurp paternal authority; it is more accurate, I think, to see this federal measure as an attempt by the state to supplant wage-earning wives and children, in an environment and an economy where both wives and teenage children had recently worked for pay in large numbers.¹⁰⁷

Family allowances were not the only example of working people claiming citizenship rights as family members. Military dependents, as we saw in Chapter 2, viewed their allowances as a right and complained when they found them to be

¹⁰⁵ Ursel, Private Lives, Public Policy, 198.

¹⁰⁶ Ursel, Private Lives, Public Policy, 198, 223, 226; Garton and McCallum, "Workers' Welfare," 126.

¹⁰⁷ On fears that family allowances would usurp paternal authority, see Trudeau, "The Province of Quebec at the Time of the Strike," 14-15; Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 179-182; Chartrand, Ma vie comme rivière, 256-258.

insufficient.¹⁰⁸ The JOC protested poor housing conditions, high taxes, and a high cost-of-living in the name of working families.¹⁰⁹ The FPTQ argued that a provincial *crédit ouvrier* to help workers build their own homes would assist workers with numerous children who had difficulty securing adequate rental housing.¹¹⁰ The Montreal Labour Council likewise took on the cause of parents and children by condemning the provincial government's decision to authorize school boards to tax the parents of schoolchildren and to charge for textbooks.¹¹¹ As Dennis Guest has suggested, "one unanticipated consequence of the system of social rights subsumed under the term 'welfare state'" was "a population less deferential to authority and with a greater propensity to demand accountability from public and private sector officialdom."¹¹² Thus as wartime measures and the welfare state supplemented political with social citizenship, recipients of government money not only came to view this money as their due, but demanded cost-of-

¹⁰⁸ An advertisement in The Canadian Unionist captures this sense of entitlement in its depiction of a mother and two children watching the postman deliver their dependents' allowance cheque. The small boy is saying, "Here comes our cheque Mummy!" The Canadian Unionist 19, 9 (September 1945), inside front cover.

¹⁰⁹ UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/G5/8/4. Mémoire présenté par la JOC canadienne à l'Honorable Paul Martin [1948]; ANQM, JOC, P106, C. 216, File: Soldats (Service). Memorandum of the JOC to the CANADIAN GOVERNMENT in Favour of Demobilized Young Men [n.d.].

¹¹⁰ UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P, 6/3, Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTQ, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada le 4 décembre 1946.

¹¹¹ UQAM, CMTM, 103P, File: 103P-102/8. Minutes of Meeting of Montreal Labour Council, 13 October 1949; Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of Montreal Labour Council, 18 October 1949.

¹¹² Guest, Emergence of Social Security, x.

living bonuses and increased allowances.¹¹³ Such protests reflected workers' sense that if the state were going to proclaim the rewards of democracy, it ought to follow through and ensure that such benefits were actually delivered.¹¹⁴

In calling for citizenship rights as breadwinners, or wives, or mothers, Quebecers frequently lent their support to federal conceptions of family and proper gender roles. Occasionally, however, French-Canadian workers, in particular, argued for alternate visions of family. Federal family allowances, for instance, were criticized by the CTCC and (as we saw in Chapter 3) the Action catholique movements on three grounds. First, they argued, allowances ought to come from Québec City, not Ottawa. Federal allowances infringed upon provincial autonomy as guaranteed by the BNA Act. Second, the "taux décroissant" (the decreasing allowance rates for fifth and subsequent children) discriminated against Québec's larger families. Finally, they insisted, family allowance cheques should be sent to fathers, as the proper heads of the household.¹¹⁵ Where the

¹¹³ As we saw in Chapter 2, student-veterans at McGill and l'Université de Montréal argued that their allowances were insufficient. La Presse, 3 janvier 1947, "Demande des vétérans-étudiants à l'étude." 6. See also La Presse, 20 décembre 1947, "On a disposé de la législation d'urgence," 47; Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 259-262; Ussel, Private Lives, Public Policy, 232; James Struthers, The Limits of Affluence: Welfare in Ontario, 1920-70 (Toronto: UTP, 1994).

¹¹⁴ Le Front Ouvrier, 22 septembre 1945, "Le gouvernement d'Ottawa devrait être plus prudent," 4.

¹¹⁵ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 13, File: Campagne de propagande -- Allocation familiale. Press release to Le Devoir from Aimé Carbonneau, président général, Ligue Ouvrière Catholique, le 4 janvier 1943; Ministre de la Santé Nationale et du Bien-Etre Social, Ottawa, to Les Comités Nationaux de la Ligue Ouvrière Catholique, Montréal, le 30 juin 1945. ANQM, JOC, P104: Container 240, File: Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse. Mémoires soumis par le comité central de l'Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne Française à la Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, à l'occasion du congrès provincial du Québec tenu à l'Université de Montréal les 27 et 28 janvier

CTCC and the LOC agreed with federal policymakers, however, was in their argument that family allowances would permit married women to stay home 'where they belonged.'¹¹⁶ The CTCC's preference for provincial family allowances spoke to a wariness of the federal state – a misgiving not always shared by the FPTQ or the CCL (and not always espoused by the CTCC itself).¹¹⁷ Here the CTCC and Premier Duplessis agreed: Duplessis's objections to the family allowances proposed in 1944 were that they were federal, and that they were designed for "petites familles."¹¹⁸ Such protests remind us both of the rifts within Montréal's labour movement and of the potential limits to the federal government's plans for reconstruction.

The "famille ouvrière" invoked and sought by Québec unions and the Action catholique movements involved a specific and relatively narrow role for children and

1945; Container 286. Rapport de la 13ième Session Intensive J.O.C. tenue à Duchesnay, Qué. les 26-27-28 juin 1948 [unfiled]. In contrast to my own evidence that the LOC's Comités nationaux had called for cheques to be sent to fathers, Jean-Pierre Collin claims that "à l'encontre de la grande majorité des organisations catholiques et nationalistes québécoises, la LOC propose le versement de l'allocation à la mère plutôt qu'au père." I can only suggest as an explanation for this discrepancy that there was some dissension within the LOC, or that its official opinion changed over time. See Jean-Pierre Collin, La Ligue ouvrière catholique canadienne, 1938-1954 (Montréal: Boréal, 1996), 97.

¹¹⁶ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 13, File: Campagne de Propagande -- Allocation familiale. Leaflet entitled "Quand la femme abandonne son foyer ... LE FOYER EN MEURT!" The other side of the leaflet read "Avec nous réclamez plutôt les allocations familiales et vous pourrez RESTER CHEZ VOUS." See also Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 52-53.

¹¹⁷ Le Front Ouvrier, 22 septembre 1945, "Le gouvernement d'Ottawa devrait être plus prudent," 4.

¹¹⁸ YUA, Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001, Reel 1. "Empiètements et centralisation du pouvoir fédéral."

married women.¹¹⁹ Their disapproval of married women's paid work was not restricted to highly visible jobs in offices or factories: the FPTQ, for instance, demanded the abolition of home-work. In launching an attack on the home-workers who manufactured cheap goods for low pay, the FPTQ was targeting (admittedly exploitative) jobs performed largely by women, recent immigrants, and children.¹²⁰ Attempting to remove the cheap competition that working children provided to husbands and fathers, the CCL-affiliated Montreal Labour Council protested "the employment of youth in heavy industry, and also [...] their employment on night-shift at low rates."¹²¹ The FPTQ's annual calls for the age of school-leaving to be increased from 14 to 16 were, in part, an attempt to remove younger teens from the labour market.¹²² The argument that children and wives did not, under normal circumstances, belong in the labour force was not new.

¹¹⁹ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 18, File: Conseil National -- Novembre 1948. Voeux du Conseil National de la LOC.

¹²⁰ UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P, 6/3, Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada le 4 décembre 1946. On home-work, see Mercedes Steedman, Angels of the Workplace: Women and the Construction of Gender Relations in the Canadian Clothing Industry, 1890-1940 (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1997).

¹²¹ "Equal Representation on Superior Council of Labour Asked by Montreal Labour Council," The Canadian Unionist 19, 9 (September 1945), p. 223. See also UM, ACC, P16/O4/56, Rapport sur l'Emploi. Opinions Générales du Comité Provincial du Québec.

¹²² UQAM, FPTQ, 84P, File: 84P, 6/3, Mémoires de la FPTQ et du CMTC, 1945-1952. Mémoire Législatif présenté au Premier Ministre et aux Membres du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec par la Fédération Provinciale du Travail du Québec au nom du Congrès des Métiers et du Travail du Canada: 18 décembre 1945, 4 décembre 1946, 7 janvier 1948. Historian Thérèse Hamel notes that unions were much quicker to agree that children should be removed from the paid workplace than they were to reach a consensus on the need for compulsory schooling. Thérèse Hamel, "Obligation scolaire et travail des

In the late 1940s, however, it was shaped by the wartime work of women and children and by working men's conviction that employers in a newly prosperous nation ought to be able to pay male breadwinners a living wage. Increasingly, too, it was shaped by their sense that children in a victorious postwar democracy belonged in school.

The state, then, played a key role in postwar labour relations and in shaping the lives of working-class families. As Jacques Rouillard has observed, the federal government facilitated the unionization of certain groups of workers during the war, and provided unions with some support at moments when employers were resistant or hostile to their demands.¹²³ As the number of unionized workers in Canada increased dramatically during the war, the nation's political parties were surely conscious of the growing importance of the unionized vote.¹²⁴ In the postwar years of high capitalism, workers demanded that the state fulfil certain criteria, not as favours, but as rights of social citizenship. Moreover, as Dominique Marshall has argued, Québec workers began to look increasingly to the federal arm of the state for the rewards of citizenship in this period.¹²⁵ A joint delegation of the Montreal Labour Council, the Quebec Labour Council, and various C.B.R.E. and O.T.W. locals, for instance, descended upon Premier Duplessis and his Cabinet in October 1945 and asked the provincial government to

enfants au Québec: 1900-1950." Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française 38. 1 (Été 1984), 41, 58.

¹²³ Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme, 468-469.

¹²⁴ La Presse, 7 avril 1945, "L'opinion syndicale," 22.

¹²⁵ Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 53 and *passim*.

“relinquish its right to the Federal Government regarding Labour legislation.”¹²⁶ This growing preference for the federal government was rooted in the fact that Ottawa was, in these years, more receptive than Québec City to workers’ claims. But the federal state had also requested more of them of late. Claiming citizenship rights seemed only fair, given that this was a state that had recently taxed them, rationed them, conscripted them, and imposed wage controls upon them.¹²⁷ In bargaining with the federal and provincial arms of the state, workers helped to make families ‘public’ in a period of reconstruction.

III. Two Strikes

Strikes could be very public articulations of the wants of families: men and women were driven to strike partly out of concern for their families’ material needs, and they used these needs as justification for their labour activity in a climate that could be hostile to their tactics.¹²⁸ But the responses to strikes also revealed the ways in which ‘family’ was positioned in a broader social and political context. What follows is a discussion of two Montréal strikes that provide insight into the relationship between the

¹²⁶ “Joint C.B.R.E. and Montreal Labour Council Delegation Presents Brief to Quebec Cabinet.” The Canadian Unionist 19, 12 (December 1945), p. 298. Not surprisingly, Duplessis refused.

¹²⁷ ANQM, MTC, P257, Vol. 18, File: Conseil National -- Novembre 1949. Communiqué: Le Conseil National de la Ligue Ouvrière Catholique proteste contre l'augmentation générale des loyers [Letter to Prime Minister Louis St-Laurent].

¹²⁸ See, e.g., Faue, Community of Suffering and Struggle, 2-3. In her analysis of the development of “community unionism” in Minneapolis, Faue suggests that, “During the economic crisis of the 1930s, the family, which was the ultimate reason for labor’s victory, also became its primary defense against despair.”

state and the family in the late 1940s. They show us the new ways in which government was assuming responsibility for 'private' life in this period, and they suggest how workers and other public commentators perceived state intervention into families. The butchers' strike of 1945 illustrates Quebecers' thoughts on federal food rationing in the context of reconstruction. The 1949 Catholic teachers' strike allows us to hear opinions on the education of children half a dozen years after the provincial government had implemented compulsory schooling in Québec. In looking at which voices were raised in response to these strikes, this discussion shows the mixed sentiments toward Ottawa and state intervention more generally that existed in Québec in the wake of the Second World War.

Some contemporary Quebecers worried that government intervention into family life – through compulsory schooling or family allowances, for instance – meant the usurping of fathers' authority. A paternalistic state would replace real fathers in caring for wives and children. While it is undeniable that the state assumed new responsibilities for families in this period, I think that it is more accurate to understand this development as a new alliance between the state and male breadwinners. The state would step in to regulate and sometimes assist families – but at the same time, fathers would have new 'public' obligations to be breadwinners, as wives and children were encouraged and sometimes forced to leave the paid workplace. On occasion, however, state intervention met with resistance. Sometimes, as in the example of the butchers' strike that follows, this resistance was opposition to Ottawa's regulation of Québec families in the context of war and postwar reconstruction. But as we shall see in the case of the 1949 teachers'

strike, the provincial government's intervention in 'private' life was not completely exempt from criticism.

When meat rationing was reimposed in September 1945 in order to supply England and Europe with Canadian meat, butchers across the nation went on strike.¹²⁹ As the Wartime Prices and Trade Board noted some months later, "The introduction of meat rationing was accompanied and followed by a considerable volume of protests, mainly from the retail meat trade. Retailers proposed that rationing should be suspended and that meat required for export should be requisitioned from packers, leaving domestic supplies to be distributed equitably through the regular channels without rationing."¹³⁰ Montréal butchers protested both the severity and the structure of meat rationing. In calling for "democracy" and an end to "dictatorship" and government controls, they claimed to be acting on behalf of their customers. Their complaints spoke to impatience with the federal government's long reach, particularly now that the war had ended. As one butcher from the Bonsecours Market asked, why should they have to put up with "mesures de guerre" in peacetime? Couldn't Europe's needs be met without restricting the diets of Canadians? Over one thousand of Montréal's French-Canadian, English-Canadian and Jewish butchers stopped work between September 24th and 28th. According to reports in the press, groups of militant strikers circulated in the city, forcing independent butchers

¹²⁹ The Labour Gazette, Vol. XLV (December 1945), "Activities of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board July-September, 1945," pp. 1883-1884; La Presse, 24 septembre 1945, "Les bouchers ont commencé leurs grèves," 1; "La manière forte chez un boucher," 3; "Grève encore sans ampleur," 3.

¹³⁰ The Labour Gazette, Vol. XLV (December 1945), "Activities of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board July-September, 1945," p. 1884.

and those with meat counters in groceries and department stores to shut down. Workers in processing and packaging plants were also encouraged to withdraw their services.¹³¹ Although most butchers were not unionized workers, the work stoppage appears to have been universally referred to as a "strike," by commentators including journalists, club-women, union leaders, and politicians.

The mainstream press emphasized the divisions among butchers, claiming that the majority, strong-armed by small bands of militants, were striking under duress.¹³² The Chairman of the city's Executive Committee, J.O. Asselin, encouraged butchers to keep their shops open and offered them municipal police protection. Authorities called for the maintenance of law and order; if the city's police force proved inadequate, the provincial police and the RCMP would be called in.¹³³ The federal Minister of Finance, J.L. Ilsley, emphasized public order rather than the critique of rationing fundamental to the butchers' strike. "The question in Montreal," he declared in the House of Commons, "is whether law and order will be enforced or whether gangs will be permitted to prevent the people of Montreal from getting their food."¹³⁴ Prime Minister Mackenzie King and his cabinet refused to meet with a delegation of Montréal butchers.¹³⁵ The Association of Retail Merchants dissociated itself from the strike: the Canadian Legion and the mayors of

¹³¹ La Presse: 25 septembre 1945, "La grève des bouchers générale dans la ville," 3; 26 septembre 1945, "Toute la protection est assurée aux bouchers, épiciers et cultivateurs," 1, 17.

¹³² La Presse, 26 septembre 1945, "M. Donald Gordon affirme qu'il ne flanchera pas," 1.

¹³³ La Presse, 25 septembre 1945, "Réaction à l'exécutif. M. J.-O. Asselin affirme que toute protection sera accordée aux bouchers," 3.

¹³⁴ Canada, Debates of the House of Commons, 26 September 1945, p. 466.

Montréal and its suburbs also criticized the strike as misguided and inappropriate.¹³⁶ By the third day, the strike was tapering off as some butchers returned to work, particularly on the west side of the city. Within four days, the strike was over: in the words of La Presse, nothing remained but "Un mauvais souvenir que personne ne tient à rappeler."¹³⁷

Reaction to this very public event suggests, first, that strikers' actions could be depicted as harming the interests of families. Those who claimed to be concerned with the rights of consumers and families responded swiftly and forcefully to the butchers' actions. The Local Council of Women called a special meeting "to consider what action the Council should [take] in the present Strike of Montreal Butchers." Most of the women's clubs affiliated with the LCW "were in favour of taking action." The women decided to send telegrams to J.O. Asselin and to Fernand Dufresne, Director of the Police Department, protesting the "acts of lawlessness, which prevent housewives making legitimate purchases." They called for "adequate police protection immediately" so that they could "resume our daily shopping." Indeed, the club-women argued, the "ring leaders of the disturbance [should] be arrested and punished, that it may serve as a warning to future lawbreakers." Reiterating women's right "to make legitimate purchases in meat stores during the time of the strike of Montreal butchers," a Council delegation,

¹³⁵ Canada, Debates of the House of Commons, 27 September 1945, pp. 494-495.

¹³⁶ La Presse, 25 septembre 1945. "La grève des bouchers générale dans la ville," 3; 26 septembre 1945, "Toute la protection est assurée aux bouchers, épiciers et cultivateurs," 1; 28 septembre 1945, "L'opinion du maire. Il dénonce certains 'éléments subversifs' de la grève des bouchers," 29.

¹³⁷ "A bad memory of which no one wants to be reminded." La Presse: 27 septembre 1945, "Eaux ouverts -- Invitation à s'y présenter," 1; 28 septembre 1945, "Les bouchers ont mis fin à leur grève," 1.

led by the LCW President, descended upon City Hall.¹³⁸ There is evidence that other women's organizations and private social welfare agencies in the city also saw the butchers' strike as a hindrance to their community efforts and were not above strike-breaking in order to continue their daily activities. The Housekeeper of the Ladies' Benevolent Society, for instance, reported in October 1945 that, "During the butcher's [sic] strike Pesners was very obliging and managed to run the gauntlet every morning early to keep the Home supplied with meat."¹³⁹ Some union members, who would have had more qualms about crossing picket lines, also went on record as opposing the strike. After a vigorous discussion, the CCL-affiliated Montreal Labour Council endorsed "the present rationing system, with some modifications."¹⁴⁰ Other union leaders noted their opposition to meat rationing, but voiced concerns to the mainstream press about the effects of a prolonged butchers' strike. Workers' children, they argued, were suffering from the closing of butcher shops and supermarkets.¹⁴¹ More generally, unions'

¹³⁸ NA, MCW, MG 28 I 164: Vol. 2. Minutes, Special meeting of Sub-executive of LCW, 26 September 1945; Vol. 5, File 6. LCW 52nd Year Book and Annual Report 1945-1946, Report of the Recording Secretaries.

¹³⁹ NA, Summerhill Homes, MG 28 I 388, Vol. 4, File 4-1. Minutes, General Meeting of LBS, 9 October 1945. Charles Young of the Montreal Council of Social Agencies reported in October 1945 that the Federation drive had been tougher that year, in part because of the loss of volunteer time during the campaign as a result of the meat strike. NA, CCSD, MG 28 I 10, Vol. 238, File 238-9. Charles H. Young to Miss Nora Lea, 6 October 1945.

¹⁴⁰ The Canadian Unionist 19, 11 (November 1945), pp. 269, 271. The Executive Council of the CCL also decided to support meat rationing as it "appeared to be the only way" for Canada to meet its commitments to Europe. "Support Meat Rationing," The Canadian Unionist 19, 10 (October 1945), p. 237.

¹⁴¹ La Presse, 27 septembre 1945, "Attitude prise par les chefs ouvriers," 3.

objections to the strike were rooted in the sense that workers, in particular, needed regular access to adequate supplies of meat in order to earn a living.¹⁴²

The strike also illustrates opinions on state intervention in family life. The butchers' protest took place amid mixed sentiments about government intervention in private life during the war, and considerable opposition to rationing in particular. Those who raised their voices to oppose rationing in Québec tended to use the rhetoric of provincial autonomy and freedom from federal intervention. Premier Maurice Duplessis, for example, claimed that "le rationnement" had replaced "le raisonnement." Ottawa's wartime regulations, he argued, were ubiquitous, coercive, and unreasonable. Québec citizens had to deal with the rationing of everything from work to water, alcohol to paper, meat, tea, coffee, sugar – even, he claimed with a rhetorical flourish, "le rationnement du soleil, de la lune...."¹⁴³

Duplessis's opposition to rationing was shared by other spokespersons for Québec. Like the mainstream press, Montréal's French-Canadian labour press was dubious about the merits of the butchers' strike. Yet it was much more vocal in its

¹⁴² The CCL passed a resolution in September 1943 demanding "that the rationing regulations be revised with a view to providing for extra rations for workers engaged in heavy manual labour." "A Wide Variety of Resolutions," *The Canadian Unionist* 17, 4 (September 1943), p. 93; "A Message to the Men who carry Lunch Pails," *The Canadian Unionist* 19, 12 (December 1945), pp. 294-295. This was also the view of the Alberta miners who struck for larger meat rations, arguing that labourers needed larger rations than other citizens. On the miners, see *La Presse*: 24 septembre 1945, "Les bouchers ont commencé leurs grèves," 1; 28 septembre 1945, "Mineurs en 'chômage.' Une forte diminution de la production du charbon appréhendée en Alberta," 1.

¹⁴³ YUA, Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001, Reel 3. Speech by Maurice Duplessis, no title, n.d., pp. 13-14 ("Raison et Ration"); also Reel 7. "Schéma – Discours" [1944?], pp. 2-3.

opposition to meat rationing, framing its critique in languages of nationalism, class, and democracy. Le Monde Ouvrier, published by Québec's (TLC-affiliated) FPTQ, had no qualms about undermining a wartime 'consensus' and criticized the large daily newspapers for supporting postwar rationing in their editorial columns when they knew full well that rationing was opposed by most of their readers. Canada's workers had made a multitude of sacrifices during the war, but should not have to do so now that the war was over, the paper argued. Rationing was "anti-democratic" and "totalitarian"; Donald Gordon and Ottawa's dollar-a-year men were "Tsars," "dictators," representatives of the banks and high finance.¹⁴⁴ The LOC's Front Ouvrier, meanwhile, argued that the federal government had to release its wartime hold, claiming that "On nous avait promis qu'avec la fin de la guerre cesseraient les restrictions."¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, meat rationing was a class issue. Le Monde Ouvrier contended that working people needed meat in order to perform manual labour. With the increased working hours and wages of the war years, working-class Montréalers could afford to purchase more meat – but there were now limits on the amount of meat available to them. Unlike more affluent citizens and those with small families, the newspaper claimed, most workers could not afford to dine in restaurants once they had used up their meat coupons.¹⁴⁶ The women's groups that passed resolutions supporting rationing did not, the paper argued, represent most citizens.

¹⁴⁴ Le Monde Ouvrier: 22 septembre 1945, "Le magnifique exemple," 1, 4; 29 septembre 1945, "La dictature à la Gordon-Ilisley," 1, 4; 6 octobre 1945, "La grenouille et le boeuf," 1, 4; Le Front Ouvrier, 29 septembre 1945, "Le rationnement de la viande."

¹⁴⁵ Le Front Ouvrier, 29 septembre 1945, "Le rationnement de la viande," 4; "Le Pic-Bois," 4; Lettres à la Rédaction, 5.

On the other hand, the Montréal longshoremen who walked off the job when the butchers struck, claiming that they could not work without an adequate diet of meat, had a legitimate grievance.¹⁴⁷ Federal Minister of Labour Humphrey Mitchell agreed with the latter contention, acknowledging, "you cannot load ships on salads. You have to have solid food. The longshoremen themselves need meat to do the heavy work they have to do." According to Mitchell, the freight-handlers' strike was not so much a protest against rationing as it was an objection to the butchers' own strike; the longshoremen, he claimed, felt little sympathy for or solidarity with the butchers.¹⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the mainstream press blamed the longshoremen for keeping meat from the hungry of Europe.¹⁴⁹

Québec labour papers such as Le Monde Ouvrier and Le Front Ouvrier were particularly incensed by the fact that Canadians had to limit their intake of meat because the federal government had committed to sending meat to Britain. Canada had taken on responsibilities to England disproportionate to its size and beyond its means, the paper argued. It could not be assumed that England would return the favour in the postwar years by turning to Canada for its imports. Charity begins at home, the paper reminded

¹⁴⁶ Le Monde Ouvrier, 29 septembre 1945, "La dictature à la Gordon-Ilisley," 1, 4; "La grève des bouchers," 5.

¹⁴⁷ Le Monde Ouvrier, 29 septembre 1945, "La dictature à la Gordon-Ilisley," 1, 4. The longshoremen's strike is noted in The Labour Gazette, Vol. XLV (October 1945), "Strikes and Lockouts in Canada During September, 1945," p. 1579.

¹⁴⁸ Canada, Debates of the House of Commons, 28 September 1945, pp. 545-546.

¹⁴⁹ La Presse, 28 septembre 1945, "Les bouchers ont mis fin à leur grève," 1.

readers: Canada should take care of Canadians first.¹⁵⁰ As one reader of Le Front Ouvrier asked, why should the "père d'une bonne grosse famille canadienne-française" have to reduce his family's meat consumption from thirty pounds a week to barely ten pounds a week in order to feed "les peuples des vieux pays"?¹⁵¹ Le Front Ouvrier took pleasure in noting that the most vociferous protests against meat rationing were coming from Ontario (which suggests that the postwar antipathy to government controls was not restricted to Québec). Shouldn't that province now practise the "equality of sacrifice" it had preached during the war, the Catholic labour paper asked?¹⁵² Le Monde Ouvrier printed articles about the partial abolition of meat rationing in the United States next to its coverage of the Montréal butchers' strike.¹⁵³ Despite (or perhaps because of) the CCL-affiliated Montreal Labour Council's official grudging support for meat rationing ("with some modifications"), the Wartime Prices and Trade Board and private enterprise found it necessary to market meat rationing in the CCL's official organ, The Canadian Unionist.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Le Monde Ouvrier: 22 septembre 1945, "Le magnifique exemple." 1, 4; 29 septembre 1945, "La dictature à la Gordon-Ilisley." 1, 4; 6 octobre 1945, "La grenouille et le boeuf." 1, 4; Le Front Ouvrier, 29 septembre 1945: "Le rationnement de la viande," 4; Lettres à la Rédaction, 5.

¹⁵¹ Le Front Ouvrier, 29 septembre 1945, Lettres à la Rédaction, 5.

¹⁵² Le Front Ouvrier, 22 septembre 1945, "Pic-Bois." 4.

¹⁵³ Le Monde Ouvrier: 29 septembre 1945, "Le rationnement de la viande aboli en partie aux Etats-Unis." 5; 6 octobre 1945, "Rationnements bientôt abolis aux Etats-Unis." 4.

¹⁵⁴ e.g., the cartoon sponsored by John Labatt Limited: "Isn't it the Truth?". The Canadian Unionist 17, 2 (July 1943), p. 25; and the WPTB's "A Message to the Men who carry Lunch Pails," The Canadian Unionist 19, 12 (December 1945), pp. 294-295. The latter was published in the wake of the September 1945 butchers' strike.

Notwithstanding the labour press's opposition to rationing, to meat rationing in particular, and to the rationing of meat for England's sake, Le Monde Ouvrier disapproved of the butchers' strike. The newspaper objected to the coercion exercised by some of the strikers and, like La Presse, questioned the degree of unity among Montréal butchers. In all likelihood, the paper speculated, the strike would merely achieve a change in the rationing system, rather than its abolition. The fact that many of the strikers were small business owners was no doubt responsible for some of the labour paper's animosity; this was not a strike by unionized workers.¹⁵⁵ But the gist of the newspaper's critique was that customers, and not the government, would suffer from the strike. "Working families" and "school-children" would go hungry.¹⁵⁶ The butchers' interests were clearly counterposed to the needs of other families – unlike the men that we heard at the outset of this chapter, who, in protesting the lifting of price controls, explicitly linked their interests to those of their own families. And while men demanded government regulation in the form of price ceilings in order to care for their families, they argued that government regulation in the form of rationing prevented the fathers of large French-Canadian families from determining what those families should eat. Here it is worth considering, too, American scholar Amy Bentley's analysis of the gendered meanings of meat.¹⁵⁷ She argues (convincingly) that, in the United States during the

¹⁵⁵ Le Monde Ouvrier, 29 septembre 1945: "La dictature à la Gordon-Ilsley," 1, 4; "La grève des bouchers," 5.

¹⁵⁶ Le Monde Ouvrier, 29 septembre 1945, "La dictature à la Gordon-Ilsley," 1; "La grève des bouchers," 5.

¹⁵⁷ Amy Bentley, Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), Ch. 4.

Second World War, meat was considered a 'masculine' food. Its real and symbolic importance to men's diets helps to explain why Montréal men protested meat rationing so vociferously, and, perhaps, why meat rationing received more public attention than the rationing of other foods. It also suggests why government propaganda regarding the necessity of meat rationing was often explicitly directed at men.¹⁵⁸

Like the butchers' strike, the strike by Montréal's Catholic schoolteachers some four years later revealed mixed reactions to the state's regulation of families. The 1949 strike by the city's Catholic lay teachers was unprecedented and was an early and notable instance of white-collar organizing.¹⁵⁹ It took place only half a dozen years after the provincial Liberal government, under Adélard Godbout, had implemented compulsory schooling in Québec. Thus the provincial arm of the state was imbued with new responsibility for education, while children had new, twinned, obligations to be in school and not to work for pay.¹⁶⁰ We have already seen union men demanding that the age of school-leaving be extended from 14 to 16, both because the children of a victorious postwar democracy were seen to be entitled to an education, and so as to remove cheap competition from the labour market. Reaction to the teachers' strike included considerable sympathy for the teachers' cause. Commentators spoke of children's "right"

¹⁵⁸ "A Message to the Men who carry Lunch Pails," The Canadian Unionist 19, 12 (December 1945), pp. 294-295.

¹⁵⁹ For a history of Montréal Catholic teachers' earlier organizing efforts, see Geoffrey Ewen, "Montréal Catholic School Teachers and the International Unions: The Association de bien-être des instituteurs et institutrices de Montréal, 1919-1920" (unpublished paper, 2000). For an overview of this 1949 strike, see the account in Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme, 275-278.

¹⁶⁰ Marshall, Aux origines sociales.

to education¹⁶¹ – a right that was, of course, only newly acquired. The teachers themselves, in their public rhetoric, tied their interests to those of their pupils. But responses to the strike also suggest that many Montréalers were wary of relinquishing control of education to the government, and that they demanded a prominent role for parents in the instruction of their children.

The international unions in Québec had called for compulsory schooling since the turn of the century, and by the early years of the Second World War they were joined by Catholic unions affiliated with the CTCC. Union members welcomed Godbout's 1943 provincial schooling law providing for free and universal education, knowing full well that many working-class children received scant formal instruction.¹⁶² Although Maurice Duplessis, in a public tirade against government controls during the war, described provincial compulsory schooling legislation as the conscription "des enfants pour l'école,"¹⁶³ he did not revoke the legislation. The fact that the introduction of compulsory schooling in Québec coincided closely with the establishment of federal family allowances meant that fathers' responsibility to support their children had been made more onerous on the one hand, but was simultaneously lightened by monthly cheques

¹⁶¹ Le Front Ouvrier, 22 janvier 1949, "Les parents et la grève des professeurs," 10.

¹⁶² Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 25, 28-29, 31, 259. Thérèse Hamel notes that compulsory schooling was favoured by the Trades and Labour Congress but opposed by the CTCC in the early twentieth century. Hamel, "Obligation scolaire," 41. On the limited formal education of many Québec girls in the first half of the twentieth century, see Micheline Dumont et Johanne Daigle, "Les couventines," in Dumont and Nadia Fahmy-Eid, eds., Les Couventines: L'éducation des filles au Québec dans les congrégations religieuses enseignantes 1840-1960 (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1986), 189.

from Ottawa.¹⁶⁴ The 1949 teachers' strike, then, took place in a period when parents, the state, and the Catholic Church were sorting out responsibility for who would teach, and who would be taught, in the province of Québec.

If the provincial government was going to insist upon free and obligatory schooling for the province's children, it had to provide the resources (e.g. fairly-paid teachers) to carry this out. As Nadia Fahmy-Eid has noted, public schools were the 'poor cousin' of Québec's educational system. Moreover, public school classrooms were overflowing in these years, owing to the compulsory schooling law, legislation restricting child labour, family allowances, and an improved economy, which meant that parents' need for children's wages was generally less acute.¹⁶⁵ In early November 1948, frustrated with the Montreal Catholic School Commission's failure to respond to its demand for salary increases, the Alliance des Professeurs Catholiques de Montréal threatened to strike, despite the fact that provincial legislation prohibited teachers from doing so.¹⁶⁶ Strike they did, for a week in January 1949. Wages were at the heart of this dispute: the Catholic teachers argued that their pay was insufficient to meet the rising cost-of-living in the postwar years and, moreover, that they earned considerably less than

¹⁶³ YUA, Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001, Reel 7. "Schéma – Discours" [1944], p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ Marshall, Aux origines sociales.

¹⁶⁵ Nadia Fahmy-Eid, "Un univers articulé à l'ensemble du système scolaire québécois." in Dumont and Fahmy-Eid, eds., Les Couventines, 36. On crowded classrooms in the wake of the compulsory schooling legislation, see Micheline Dumont, "Les congrégations religieuses enseignantes," in Dumont and Fahmy-Eid, eds., Les Couventines, 271.

teachers in the Protestant school board. Many of these striking Catholic lay teachers were women,¹⁶⁷ and the central role played by female teachers in the strike was acknowledged and commended by the press. A reporter for Le Devoir argued that women had assumed leadership roles in this strike. He praised the female strikers for their rational approach to the issues at hand (in contrast, he noted, to women's reputation for flightiness), for their solidarity, and for their role in sustaining morale.¹⁶⁸ Le Front Ouvrier also highlighted women's centrality to this strike by publishing a photograph of picketing female teachers, along with a photo of an empty classroom with the caption "La maîtresse n'y était pas" ("the schoolmistress was not there"). Striking female teachers were reported to have the support of "des mères de famille."¹⁶⁹ Yet the union's wage demands maintained a gendered wage discrepancy, requesting salaries of up to \$2500 per year for women and up to \$3500 per year for men.¹⁷⁰

The 1800 teachers enjoyed considerable support from other groups of teachers. Montréal's English-speaking Catholic teachers struck in sympathy with their francophone colleagues. The city's Protestant teachers offered their "moral support," and messages of encouragement arrived from teachers elsewhere in the province and in neighbouring Ontario. Many observers clearly viewed the teachers' demand for a living wage as

¹⁶⁶ La Presse, 5 novembre 1948, "Un ultimatum à la commission scolaire," 3; Le Devoir, 18 janvier 1949, "Déclaration du ministère du travail," 3.

¹⁶⁷ On the high proportion of lay teachers in the public system who were women, see Fahmy-Eid, "Un univers articulé," 36, 43-44; Dumont, "Les congrégations religieuses enseignantes," 263-264.

¹⁶⁸ Le Devoir, 22 janvier 1949, "Ce que femme veut ... ," 9.

¹⁶⁹ Le Devoir, 22 janvier 1949, "Ce que femme veut ... ," 9.

legitimate, if not strictly legal. The CCL, CTCC, and FPTQ all backed the Alliance's stand, offering financial assistance if need be. Streetcar drivers and students at the Université de Montréal held support rallies.¹⁷¹ Although the many public school teachers who were religious brothers and nuns continued to go to work, Le Front Ouvrier reported that most pupils were loyal to their striking teachers and stayed home.¹⁷² Other newspapers described schoolchildren parading in front of their school with placards reading, "We support our teachers."¹⁷³ The considerable sympathy for the teachers' demands reflected a sense that teachers played an essential role in a postwar world. Teachers were seen to be fighting for the city's children, a perception that teachers capitalized on by publicly expressing their concern for their "dear students."¹⁷⁴ These Catholic teachers garnered significant support from Catholic organizations, and used religious rhetoric in their campaign for public sympathy. This strike was legal according

¹⁷⁰ Le Devoir, 17 janvier 1949, "1.500 instituteurs en grève ce matin," 1, 3.

¹⁷¹ Le Devoir: 17 janvier 1949, "1.500 instituteurs en grève ce matin," 1, 3; 19 janvier 1949, "Me Simard empêche le règlement de la grève," 1; 24 janvier 1949, "Les instituteurs retournent en classe," 1, 3. The Gazette, 17 January 1949, "Catholic Schools Strike Is On; English Teachers Join French," 3; The Gazette, 24 January 1949, "Striking Teachers' Return Urged By Local Parents' Associations," 3.

¹⁷² Le Front Ouvrier, 29 janvier 1949, 20; Le Devoir, 17 janvier 1949, "1.500 instituteurs en grève ce matin," 1, 3. Note the photograph of an empty classroom published in Le Front Ouvrier, 22 janvier 1949, 10. On the importance of clerics to the teaching staff of both the private and public systems in Québec, see Micheline Dumont, Girls' Schooling in Quebec, 1639-1960 (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 1990); Dumont and Fahmy-Eid, eds., Les Couventines; Marta Danylewycz, Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987).

¹⁷³ Le Devoir, 17 janvier 1949, "1,500 instituteurs en grève ce matin," 1, 3.

to the "law of God," if not Québec law, argued Michael Collins, president of the English-speaking Catholic teachers' union.¹⁷⁵

Not everyone sympathized with the teachers' cause, however. Premier Duplessis responded to the strike by promptly decertifying (via the Quebec Labour Relations Board) both the Alliance des Professeurs Catholiques de Montréal and the Federation of English-speaking Catholic Teachers of Montreal.¹⁷⁶ His government, he declared, would have no truck with illegal strikes. He expressed his regret that people in charge of young minds should exhibit such a lack of respect for law, order, and properly constituted authority.¹⁷⁷ Children, he argued, were the strike's "principales victimes."

The teachers stayed out of their classrooms for nearly a week, in large part because they could not secure a promise from the Montreal Catholic School Commission that it would not inflict "reprisals" on them.¹⁷⁸ In the end, they returned to work upon the

¹⁷⁴ Le Front Ouvrier, 22 janvier 1949, Caption to photographs, 10; Le Devoir: 17 janvier 1949, "1,500 instituteurs en grève ce matin," 1, 3; 22 janvier 1949, "Ce que femme veut ...," 9.

¹⁷⁵ The Gazette, 17 January 1949, "Catholic Schools Strike Is On; English Teachers Join French," 3.

¹⁷⁶ La Presse, 24 janvier 1949, "Le statut des instituteurs," 1; The Gazette, 24 January 1949, "Striking Teachers' Return Urged By Local Parents' Associations," 3. Although it was widely understood to be unfair that the teachers' unions had had their certification revoked, six months after the strike the unions remained decertified. Le Front Ouvrier, 30 juillet 1949, "Et les instituteurs?", 2. The extent of the teachers' bitterness over their treatment by Duplessis was reflected in their support for striking Asbestos miners, who also faced a hostile provincial government, later that year. Boisvert, "The Strike and the Labour Movement," 304.

¹⁷⁷ Le Devoir, 17 janvier 1949, "1,500 instituteurs en grève ce matin," 3; The Gazette, 17 January 1949, "Duplessis Scores Teachers' Strike," 3.

¹⁷⁸ The Gazette, 24 January 1949, "Teachers' Strike Ended, Classes Resume Today; Walk-Out Now Week Old," 1.

urging of three key members of Montréal's Catholic community: Montréal Archbishop Joseph Charbonneau, the École des Parents du Québec, and the Catholic Parents' League.¹⁷⁹ All three players promised the teachers that they would lobby for wage increases for them and would attempt to ensure that no reprisals were taken, if only the teachers would return to their classroom duties. The intervention of these two parents' associations and of Archbishop Charbonneau played upon the loyalties of these Catholic teachers to the postwar Church (and it is worth noting here that female, francophone lay teachers in the province at this time would have been trained by nuns).¹⁸⁰ But L'École des Parents' entreaties to the strikers were also made in the name of parents and of children.¹⁸¹

Upon the teachers' return to the classroom on 24 January, La Presse applauded them for yielding to the pressures of the common good. Teachers were seen to have returned to work "pour le bien des enfants" or, alternatively, because they recognized the desires of Montréal parents.¹⁸² Clearly the 'common good,' children's welfare, and parental preferences took precedence over the teachers' own financial security. It was not desirable, La Presse advised, to deprive children of the education to which they had a

¹⁷⁹ La Presse, 24 janvier 1949, "L'aide des parents est bien reçue," 1; Le Front Ouvrier, 22 janvier 1949, "Les parents et la grève des professeurs," 10; The Gazette, 24 January 1949, "Striking Teachers' Return Urged By Local Parents' Associations," 3; Le Devoir, 24 janvier 1949: "Les instituteurs retournent en classe," 1, 3; "Les instituteurs ont entendu l'appel des parents," 1.

¹⁸⁰ Dumont, "Les congrégations religieuses enseignantes," 266.

¹⁸¹ The Gazette, 24 January 1949, "Striking Teachers' Return Urged By Local Parents' Associations," 3.

right. Let us ensure, it editorialized, that there is never another strike in the schools of Montréal or elsewhere in the province.¹⁸³ Le Devoir, Montréal's nationalist newspaper, was more sympathetic to the striking teachers.¹⁸⁴ Columnist and nationalist politician André Laurendeau, for instance, certainly empathized with the instructors. Yet the thrust of his articles during the strike was that children would be the first to suffer and that parents had no way of making their voices heard in the dispute. Parents, he argued, bore the primary responsibility for the education of their children – before the state and even before the Church. They thus needed an official role in the management of the schools. Although they paid school taxes, they had no voice in educational policy. School boards were responsible to the provincial government, not to Montréal parents. Parents received no recognition for their role in raising children, and were treated like minors. Laurendeau especially lamented the loss of authority of the "chefs de famille" and, more precisely, the "père de famille." Civil authorities, he insisted, did not listen to fathers anymore. Was there no way to reintegrate them into "la cité"? Laurendeau approved of the interventions of l'École des Parents du Québec and the Catholic Parents' League in the strike, but noted that these organized groups of middle- and working-class parents had only moral

¹⁸² La Presse, 24 janvier 1949, "Fin de la grève; retour en classe," 1; Le Devoir, 24 janvier 1949, "Les instituteurs ont entendu l'appel des parents," 1.

¹⁸³ La Presse, 24 janvier 1949, "Fin de la grève; retour en classe," 1; "La Grève est enfin terminée," 6. One writer for Le Front Ouvrier argued that parents wanted the strike to end so that their children could receive "l'enseignement auquel ils ont droit." Le Front Ouvrier, 22 janvier 1949, "Les parents et la grève des professeurs," 10.

¹⁸⁴ Marguerite Roux, a Trois-Rivières teacher, commended Le Devoir for its fair and impartial coverage of the strike. Le Devoir, 24 janvier 1949, letter to the editor, 2.

suasion, not direct authority, on their side.¹⁸⁵ These groups garnered widespread praise in the press for intervening to end the strike. But in promising the teachers that they would lobby for their interests if they would only go back to work, they exercised a moral pressure that encouraged workers (many of them unmarried women) to subordinate their own rights to those of parents and children.¹⁸⁶ As one female Trois-Rivières teacher noted to Le Devoir, teachers bore the burden of representing a “triple authority”: the Church, the State, and the Family.¹⁸⁷

One Montréal journalist argued that the teachers' strike had forced citizens to think about the importance of education.¹⁸⁸ Meanwhile, the federal MP for Dauphin, Manitoba cited the strike as evidence that “It is going to become more and more difficult for some of the provinces to finance their educational program unless this government is prepared to give some grants in aid to help them over the rough spots.”¹⁸⁹ As Dennis

¹⁸⁵ Le Devoir: 18 janvier 1949, “Et les parents?”, 1; 24 janvier 1949, “Les instituteurs ont entendu l'appel des parents.” 1. See also UM, ACC, P16, File: P16/R57. Newspaper clipping, 22 novembre 1950, “Pour un mouvement des familles.” L'École des Parents also noted to the press that parents bore the principal responsibility for their children, and had merely “delegated” powers to civil authorities. Le Devoir, 24 janvier 1949, “L'École des Parents,” 1.

¹⁸⁶ The Gazette, 24 January 1949, “Striking Teachers' Return Urged By Local Parents' Associations,” 3. In a slightly different context, Dominique Marshall argues that the rights of 'families' often superseded those of 'workers' in the postwar period. Family Allowances, for instance, were the federal government's answer to unionized workers' demands for higher wages. Marshall, Aux origines sociales, 144. Jenny Hartley has similarly argued that in wartime Britain, the interests of 'community' often superseded those of class. See Millions Like Us: British Women's Fiction of the Second World War (London: Virago, 1997), Ch. 2.

¹⁸⁷ Le Devoir, 24 janvier 1949, letter to the editor from Marguerite Roux, 2.

¹⁸⁸ La Presse, 24 janvier 1949, “Fin de la grève; retour en classe,” 1.

¹⁸⁹ Canada, Debates of the House of Commons, 3 February 1949, p. 204.

Guest has argued, some of the explanation for Canada's slowness to adopt certain welfare-state measures lay in the discrepancy between the provinces' constitutional responsibility for social programmes and their inability to fund such programmes.¹⁹⁰ In the case of Québec, this was also a province governed, after 1944, by a premier reluctant to assume this responsibility -- although Dominique Marshall argues that provincial bureaucrats convinced of the value of Godbout's educational reforms continued to promote them after Duplessis took office.¹⁹¹ Duplessis was highly resistant to federal incursions into education. This argument was occasionally turned against him: Laurendeau, for instance, noted that Duplessis lauded the merits of decentralization, but in fact kept the province's educational system tightly centralized in his own hands.¹⁹² The Catholic Church had long borne the principal responsibility for education in the province, and nuns and teaching brothers continued to be important to both the private and public school systems. In effect, the episcopate and the clergy performed many of the tasks of a modern state, but increasingly found themselves without adequate financial resources to do so.¹⁹³ Moreover, once compulsory schooling was imposed, they were forced to relinquish some control to the provincial state. The 1949 strike revealed the changing

¹⁹⁰ Guest, *Emergence of Social Security*, 9-10.

¹⁹¹ Marshall, *Aux origines sociales*, 111-113, 115.

¹⁹² *Le Devoir*, 18 janvier 1949, "Et les parents?", 1.

¹⁹³ Pelletier, *Years of Impatience*, 49-50. On the extent to which religious orders provided teachers for both the private and public school systems until the 1960s, see Nicole Laurin et al., *A la recherche d'un monde oublié: Les communautés religieuses de femmes au Québec de 1900 à 1970* (Montréal: Le Jour, 1991), 182, 387; Dumont, *Girls' Schooling in Quebec*; Dumont and Fahmy-Eid, eds., *Les Couventines*; Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil*.

relationships among church, state, parents, and children, and the lack of a clear and rigid consensus about the kind of education to which the province's children were entitled.¹⁹⁴ If the development of a welfare state was explicitly tied to federal promises of 'reconstruction,' then jurisdictional disputes between the federal and provincial levels of government, and desires for provincial autonomy, ensured that the building of this welfare state was neither inevitable nor straightforward, and that the federal Liberals' vision of reconstruction would not go unchallenged.¹⁹⁵

Some of the challenges to this vision were evident in the mixed reactions to government controls under war and reconstruction. The butchers' strike illustrates the opposition to rationing that existed in certain circles in Québec.¹⁹⁶ The teachers' strike suggests that the view that schooling was a "right" for Québec's children had become quite quickly entrenched – indeed, it had probably existed in some form prior to the 1943 legislation. It also suggests how compulsory schooling allowed parents to claim a public voice as parents, as they negotiated citizenship rights and the terms of their children's education with the state. Laurendeau's columns, furthermore, reveal some discomfort with the idea that parents were to relinquish control of their children's education to the

¹⁹⁴ On this lack of consensus, see Fahmy-Eid, "Un univers articulé," 41.

¹⁹⁵ An obvious example is the failure of the 1945 Dominion-Provincial Conference on Reconstruction, due to the reluctance of Ontario and Québec to make concessions to the federal government. Guest, *Emergence of Social Security*, 133.

¹⁹⁶ For the claim that the end of rationing was welcomed by Canadians more generally, see *La Presse*, 4 novembre 1947, "Au Jour le Jour," 15.

state.¹⁹⁷ Reactions to these two forms of government intervention took place amid discussion of other forms of wartime regulation by Ottawa and Québec City. Taxes, for instance, were a subject of hot debate. Duplessis criticized both federal wartime taxes and the sales tax implemented by Adélard Godbout's provincial Liberal administration. He framed his critique of the provincial sales tax in terms of the family. Everything from old-age pensions to coffins to "la crème à glace de nos enfants" was taxed, he claimed. Large families were unfairly injured by the sales tax, he argued, and these taxes "doivent être soldées par la mère, trésorière de la famille, qui doit résoudre le pénible problème de voir à les payer."¹⁹⁸ In 1950 (only a year after the Montréal teachers' strike), Duplessis blamed income taxes for cutting into teachers' salaries at a time when, he claimed, the Québec government was attempting to raise these salaries.¹⁹⁹ Conscription for overseas military service, of course, was the federal wartime regulation most fiercely debated in Québec, but the language of conscription was appropriated to describe Ottawa's wartime and postwar regulations more broadly. Duplessis argued that everything was "conscripted" during war: not only youth for the armed services, but men and young women for factory work through the National Selective Service; children for school; food and clothing through rationing; and money through taxes and Victory bonds. Wartime

¹⁹⁷ On the lack of consensus over compulsory schooling in 1943, see Fahmy-Eid, "Un univers articulé," 41.

¹⁹⁸ YUA, Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001, Reel 7. Speech, untitled, n.d., p. 21. His perspective on federal taxes can be glimpsed in Reel 1, "Empiètements et centralisation du pouvoir fédéral."

¹⁹⁹ YUA, Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001, Reel 7. Summary of Maurice Duplessis's speech to federal-provincial conference in Québec City [September 1950?],

regulations were unnatural, he insisted.²⁰⁰ Duplessis used the highly charged rhetoric of wartime, describing himself as protecting the province from dictatorial “Hitlers” and “Goerings” at home.²⁰¹ Other nationalist voices agreed: Le Devoir, for instance, argued in 1944 that the federal government had assumed “toutes les dictatures imaginables” during the war, regulating everything from buttons on clothing to pleats in trousers to “la conscription du travail.”²⁰² But this opposition to federal incursions into private life was not universally shared in Québec. All three of the province’s union federations (along with the JOC and LOC) demanded the maintenance of price controls and rent controls in the years immediately following the war.²⁰³ Indeed, Le Front Ouvrier, quick to complain of rationing as an odious wartime “restriction,” saw no contradiction in demanding

p. 5. In the same speech, Duplessis noted the desire for lower taxes expressed by Alfred Charpentier and the CTCC.

²⁰⁰ YUA, Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001, Reel 7. “Schéma – Discours” [1944?], pp. 2, 3. Le Front Ouvrier pokes fun at the myriad restrictions of wartime in “Restrictions,” 22 septembre 1945, p. 6.

²⁰¹ YUA, Maurice Duplessis Fonds, 1980-008/001: Reel 1. Maurice Duplessis to Major J.-M.-Paul Sauvé, 11 août 1943; Reel 7. “Schéma – Discours” [1944?], p. 2.

²⁰² Le Devoir, 12 août 1944, “Bloc-notes,” p. 1.

²⁰³ Le Devoir, 16 décembre 1948. “Le contrôle des prix réclamé par deux organisations ouvrières,” 3; La Presse, 5 novembre 1947, “La lutte à l’inflation. Le Congrès canadien du travail demande de rétablir le contrôle des prix,” 38; La Presse, 22 novembre 1947. “Campagne en faveur d’une baisse des prix,” 62; La Presse, 26 mars 1949, “Revendications de locataires. Cessation des évictions et maintien des contrôles réclamés,” 28; Le Travail, septembre 1945, “Le contrôle des prix,” 2; Le Travail, février 1948, “Commision [sic] Royale d’enquête sur la hausse continue des prix,” 10.

continued peacetime price controls.²⁰⁴ And as we saw in Chapter 4, Québec workers repeatedly called for state intervention in the realm of housing in the late 1940s.

V. Conclusions

As Peter McInnis has suggested, Canadian unions were keen to play a part in the politics of reconstruction. They claimed an "industrial citizenship" by virtue of their contributions to the wartime economy and their cooperation with federal wartime controls, such as wage ceilings and rationing.²⁰⁵ Jacques Rouillard is correct to point to an emerging alliance between Québec labour and the federal state in these years, although I would caution that this alliance was still tentative and precarious.²⁰⁶ But at the provincial level, labour faced roadblocks that a conservative regime led by Duplessis had no compunction about putting in its way. The reputations of Duplessis and of his Minister of Labour, Antonio Barrette, require no rehabilitation; this was not a union-friendly government.²⁰⁷ What must be insisted upon, however, as Québec historians have

²⁰⁴ Le Front Ouvrier called for an end to wartime restrictions in 29 septembre 1945. "Le rationnement de la viande," 4. Its support for price controls is clear in 29 novembre 1947, "Pompez, mes vieux," 3.

²⁰⁵ McInnis, "Planning Prosperity," 253.

²⁰⁶ Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme, 204, 468-469; McInnis, "Planning Prosperity." Dominique Marshall also argues that Québec workers looked increasingly to Ottawa for the rewards of citizenship in Aux origines sociales, 53 and *passim*. But see Pelletier, Years of Impatience, 142, on the federal government's "clumsily paternalistic" attitude to the CTCC.

²⁰⁷ For one defense of Duplessis, see Conrad Black, Duplessis (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977).

recently done, is the discrepancy between the passive and cautious workforce evoked by Duplessis in his dealings with big capital, and the reality of an increasingly frustrated union movement, spurred on by wartime gains to make greater claims in the workplace and to the state.²⁰⁸ As Rouillard and Gérard Pelletier have both argued, Québec's labour movement was one of the main sources of opposition to Duplessisme.²⁰⁹ We need, then, to look at the contradictions here. Working men were building an alliance and crafting relationships with the state – but unions enjoyed rather different experiences with the federal and provincial governments respectively, and they did not welcome all forms of state intervention in 'private' life. What this chapter underlines, in fact, is the lack of consensus, in early postwar Québec, about new roles for the state. Canadian historians have carefully avoided positing a 'wartime consensus,' but they have been rather quicker to assume a 'postwar consensus' centred on the reconstruction plans of federal Liberals. This chapter suggests that this assumption needs interrogation – for Québec and, in all likelihood, more broadly.

In making claims upon the state, unions frequently alluded to the needs of their families. The realm of labour activism, then, was one place where families were made public in the immediate postwar years. Invoking 'family' could be a prudent strategy in an environment that was often as hostile to strikes as it was enamoured of the promise of

²⁰⁸ John A. Dickinson and Brian Young, A Short History of Quebec, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993), 263, 276-277.

²⁰⁹ Pelletier, Years of Impatience; Rouillard, "Major Changes."

family.²¹⁰ Familial needs and metaphors thus aided labour's cause considerably in the reconstruction years. Much of the support for the striking Asbestos miners, for instance, was couched as money and supplies for their families.²¹¹ Working men, as we have seen, explained to the government that current wage scales, high prices, and rental costs were a hindrance to their efforts to provide for their families. Of course, as much as 'family' helped the cause of labour, unions helped real families. In a province where wages were among the lowest in Canada, and in a city where many working-class families lived in real dearth, the labour movement was instrumental in wresting wage gains from recalcitrant employers and modifications to labour legislation from a state in flux, and thus securing improvements in working-class standards of living.²¹²

'Family,' however, had conservative as well as progressive potential. As much as real family needs provoked workers to make demands of their employers and legislators,

²¹⁰ On the federal government sidestepping the thorny question of workers' rights to promote instead the innocuous and untouchable rights of children, see Marshall, "Reconstruction Politics," 265-266.

²¹¹ ANQM, MTC, P257: Vol. 5, File: Comité National -- Oct. 48 - septembre 1949. C.E. national conjoint, tenu le 5 mai 1949; Vol. 40, File: Documents divers pour les archives: Eglise et syndicalisme; LOC et grèves Asbestos, Louiseville; LOC et actions auprès des gouvernements. David Bosset to Mgr Laurent Morin, 9 avril 1949; David Bosset to Dirigeantes, Dirigeants et Aumoniers Fédéraux de la LOC, 23 mai 1949; Jean-Paul Lefebvre to dirigeantes, dirigeants et aumoniers fédéraux, 24 mars 1949; La Presse, 6 juin 1949, "Autres secours aux grévistes." 35; Chartrand, Ma vie comme rivière, 346-347.

²¹² On the real and persistent poverty of Montréal's working-class families in the 1940s, see Pelletier, Years of Impatience, 35-36, 43; Pierre Vallières, White Niggers of America, trans. Joan Pinkham (Toronto; Montréal: McClelland & Stewart, 1971); Baillargeon, Ménagères; Marshall, Aux origines sociales. Much of this has been evoked in one of the most famous works of literature to emerge from this time and place: Gabrielle Roy's The Tin Flute [Bonheur d'Occasion], trans. Hannah Josephson (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1969 [1947]).

and as much as 'family' did persuade management and politicians to accede to these demands, 'family' could also hold labour back and hinder its efforts to secure public support, particularly when it came to strikes. As we saw in the case of Montréal's butchers' strike and Catholic schoolteachers' strike, ordinary families were seen to be injured by workers' picket-lines, and their needs were invoked in order to persuade strikers to return to the job or in calling for government intervention. Children were a particularly powerful argument in the immediate postwar years: opponents of the butchers' strike invoked hungry children, and critics of the teachers' strike invoked ignorant children deprived of their 'right' (albeit a right only recently bestowed by Godbout's Liberal provincial government) to education. It was difficult to deny, or trump, the rights of children in this pronatalist era.²¹³ As both strikes demonstrate, family could be used to legitimate parents' claims to a public voice – but the use of family in this way could also have conservative results.

In pointing to moments of opposition or reluctant acquiescence to state intervention, this chapter unpacks notions of private and public in postwar Canada. In opposing state intrusions into familial life such as the rationing of food, unions -- as the organized representatives of, principally, working men -- and the Action catholique movements -- which did a better job of representing both working-class men and women -- were selectively resisting what appeared to be a rapid expansion of 'the public.'

²¹³ On the new rights of children, see *La Presse*, 26 mars 1949, "Égalité de préférence à autorité. Transformation et non décadence de la famille. Droits de l'enfant," 28; Marshall, "Reconstruction Politics"; Marshall, "The Language of Children's Rights, the

Indeed, they were calling for a measure of privacy: the right to decide for themselves what and how much their children should eat, and the right to use their wages to consume as they wished. Likewise, the middle- and working-class parents who intervened in the 1949 teachers' strike revealed a reluctance to entirely relinquish their children's education to the political machinery of the state. The gender politics of these interventions were complex. While the care and nourishment of children had long been viewed as a (perhaps *the*) primary task of women, the most vocal opponents of rationing were men, as were those who called, in public forums such as newspapers, for a role for parents in their children's education. Clearly, a 'breadwinner' ethos assumed men's right to provide food and education for their own children. And, as Alice Kessler-Harris has argued about the United States, freedom from regulation and from state intervention had historically been viewed as *manly*.²¹⁴ But it was more complicated than this in Québec in the wake of the Second World War. We see, in this chapter, working-class men opposing rationing, and both working- and middle-class men expressing mixed feelings about state control of education. But we also see working men calling for state intervention in housing, lobbying persistently for the preservation and reimposition of price controls, and eventually accepting family allowances.

Formation of the Welfare State, and the Democratic Experience of Poor Families in Quebec, 1940-55," Canadian Historical Review 78, 3 (September 1997): 409-441.

²¹⁴ Kessler-Harris, "Gendered Interventions," 204.

Chapter 6 ‘City Unique’? Assessing the Family and the Public in Postwar

Montréal

“It is a curious city, Montreal, and in this story I keep returning to the fact that it is.”

- Hugh MacLennan, The Watch That Ends the Night¹

In The Return of Martin Guerre, historian Natalie Zemon Davis recounts the notorious tale of the sixteenth-century French impostor who took over Martin Guerre’s identity, property, and wife Bertrande while the real Guerre was away fighting for Spain. The story is a compelling argument for the value of what Davis elsewhere calls the “singled-out case”: a selected example that can shed light on larger processes and phenomena.² I want to begin this chapter, and conclude the dissertation, by telling two stories that I think illuminate, in similar fashion, some of the larger themes and arguments of this thesis.

David and Norma Klein came to the attention of Montréal’s Jewish Family Welfare Department in May 1944. Both had been born in Montréal; both were 22 years old. The couple lived in the Plateau district, to the east of St. Laurent Boulevard and south of Mount Royal Avenue. They had three children, aged 3 ½, 2 ½, and 1 ½; a fourth child would be born in May 1945. The couple had married a week after the birth of their

¹ Hugh MacLennan, The Watch That Ends the Night (New York: Scribner, 1959), 255.

² Natalie Zemon Davis, The Return of Martin Guerre (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983); Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Shapes of Social History,” Storia della Storiografia 17 (1990), 29. Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson use the expression “the illuminating

first baby (a boy), their hand “forced” by David’s mother. In their first years of married life, they lived with each set of in-laws in turn. David initially worked as a dress salesman, but the couple required assistance from their families in order to make ends meet. In July 1943, David enlisted in the Canadian army. He was discharged six months later with health problems: a “nervous stomach” and ulcers. Within a month, the Veterans’ Welfare Bureau had placed him in the parts shop of Noorduyn Aircraft: his hours and earnings were irregular, however, because of his poor health. According to the agency worker assigned to the family, David was “very ashamed of the fact that he is not able to adequately provide for his family. As a result, at times he becomes depressed.” The couple owed money to their neighbourhood grocer, to their landlord, and to the city’s Water Tax Department. Their grocer had “threatened to bring the family to court”; their landlord had threatened them with eviction on numerous occasions, until the Jewish Family Welfare Department intervened and provided five months’ worth of rent money. On other occasions, the agency supplied furniture, appliances, clothing, and money for food; David’s relatives also chipped in with food, coal, clothing, furniture, and cash.

Norma did not work outside the home; her days were no doubt fully occupied with the care of the couple’s three young children. The family lived in what the agency worker described as “a dilapidated four room house, where the plaster is falling in the kitchen, and the walls are covered with roaches.” The caseworker recognized that the poor condition of the house made it difficult to keep clean, but nonetheless labelled Norma a “poor housekeeper.” Norma’s mother-in-law also claimed that she was slovenly

single case”; see “Introduction: Social History and Case Files Research,” in On the Case:

and that the children were not properly cared for. When examined by the Family Welfare Department in October 1944, two of the three children had enlarged tonsils, skin conditions such as rashes and boils, and “signs of having rickets when younger.” A cousin had complained to the Jewish Child Welfare Bureau that Norma was neglecting the children: a public health nurse had likewise reported Norma to the Juvenile Court for leaving the children alone in the house. Despite the family’s financial troubles, and despite strained relations with in-laws, the FWD recorded affectionate relationships among members of the immediate family. David, in particular, was described as having become “quite attached to his family during the past four months” and as having recently begun to help with household chores and child-care.³

This family is made visible to historians through the files of private social service agencies active in Montréal in the 1940s. These files allow us glimpses of intimate details (premarital sex, for instance) and human emotions (frustration and humiliation) that we might not find in other kinds of sources. The files exist, however, because this was a family in trouble: the Kleins first came to the attention of these private agencies because a cousin had reported what he or she believed to be the neglect of the Klein children. The families that historians come to know well, whether through case files, government records, or -- like the cast of characters in Davis’s Martin Guerre -- through court proceedings, are largely families like this one, and we meet them at the unhappier

Explorations in Social History (Toronto: UTP, 1998), 16n4.

³ National Archives of Canada (NA), Jewish Family Services of the Baron de Hirsch Institute (JFS), MG 28 V 86, Vol. 10, File: Minutes of Meetings of Case Committee, Family Welfare Department, 1944-45. Minutes, 28 October 1944; Summary for Case Committee – [K] family. David and Norma Klein are pseudonyms.

or the more complicated moments in their lives.⁴ The records created by the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique about the Cent-Mariés, into which we peered in Chapter 3, are a different kind of document. In the fact that they dealt with the members of a voluntary, self-selecting ‘community,’ they were perhaps closer to the records kept by nineteenth-century Protestant churches or twentieth-century class reunion committees than to modern case files.⁵ The celebratory element of the Cent-Mariés phenomenon, and the fact that these files include letters written by the Cent-Mariés themselves, mean that we can find happiness in these records. They depict contented marriages, joy at births, relief at finding work – alongside more tragic ‘news’ such as illness and death. Consider, for example, the following family.

Roger Toupin and Rita Boucher grew up two blocks away from one another in St-Henri, the Montréal neighbourhood made famous in 1947 by Gabrielle Roy's Bonheur d'occasion (The Tin Flute). Both were involved with the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique as young adults. When they took part in the mass marriage in 1939, Roger (the son of an electrician) was a 22-year-old day labourer; Rita (the daughter of an unemployed painter) was 21 years old and employed at housework. Their first home as a married couple was a rented four-room flat in St-Henri, only a few blocks away from the homes of their parents. Their first child, Lucien, was born less than ten months after the wedding, at the

⁴ For an extended discussion of such sources and their problems, see Iacovetta and Mitchinson, “Introduction,” in On the Case.

⁵ On church records, see Lynne Marks, “Christian Harmony: Family, Neighbours, and Community in Upper Canadian Church Discipline Records,” in On the Case. My thanks to Bettina Bradbury for suggesting the class reunion analogy.

Hôpital Ste-Jeanne d'Arc. Denis was born ten months later, and Gérard two and a half years after Denis.

Roger, who had been excused from military service due to his essential war job, worked as an operator for the Montreal Tramways Company. A year after their marriage, his wife described his salary as simply "passable," but by 1944 he was working seven days a week, including evenings. The couple rarely had time for evening amusements due to Roger's busy work schedule and a lack of babysitters. By 1947, the Toupins found life to be somewhat calmer. After an accident with his streetcar, Roger had been transferred to the garage, where he no longer had to work Sundays or evenings. He now had time to participate in the LOC activities of his parish. Rita did not work outside the home but found her days to be full, especially since she did her own sewing. She described herself as "très grasse" and not particularly healthy, suffering from rheumatism and high blood pressure and, after her third Caesarian delivery, unable to have any more children. Her sons, she informed the LOC, were a source of great comfort. "[D]es vrais perfections" who ate well, slept well, and were never ill, they constituted her "belle petite famille, dont je suis très fier bien qu'elle se compose que de 3 petits garçons. J'aurais aimé une petite fille. A la volonté de Dieu il n'y a plus d'espérance. Le magasin est fermé par malheur."⁶

⁶ "...beautiful little family, of which I'm very proud even though it consists only of three small boys. I would have liked a little girl. It is the will of God that there's no hope of that. The store is closed, unfortunately." Archives Nationales du Québec à Montréal (ANQM), Mouvement des Travailleurs Chrétiens (MTC), P257, Vol. 11, File: Cent-Mariés – Couple 25. "Roger Toupin," "Rita Boucher," "Lucien," "Denis," and "Gérard" are all pseudonyms.

What do these two brief sketches tell us about reconstruction and family in postwar Montréal? They suggest, first, the variety of ways in which the war affected families. To some families, like the Toupins, it brought financial stability. David Klein's ulcers, however, remind us that the war could also place strains upon men who went overseas. Both stories show us, in these years of supposed postwar prosperity, poor neighbourhoods and crowded housing. The two accounts suggest that at the dawn of the nuclear age, extended family continued to be important for many young couples. The Toupins, for instance, set up house just around the corner from their parents. Family, however, was double-edged: in the Klein case we see family members offering monetary and other kinds of assistance, but we also see extended family reporting Norma to the Jewish Child Welfare Bureau and in-laws slighting her to agency workers. The Kleins' story illustrates that men's inability to provide for their wives and children could be a potent source of shame. In both families, we see births spaced very close together and mothers tied closely to their homes and domestic responsibilities. The total of three children in the Toupin family and the four children (by May 1945) in the Klein family are not, however, the huge families that many English-Canadians assumed populated Québec in this period. Moreover, at a time when conservative Canadians and Quebecers worried about increasing state intervention into private lives, we see a great deal of 'private' interference in these families by in-laws, extended family, the Jewish Child Welfare Bureau, the Jewish Family Welfare Department, and, in a less coercive way perhaps, the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique. In the case of the Kleins, we glimpse relations between clients and caseworkers. Clearly, the coal, ice-box, stove, bed, mattress, rent, and food

money provided by the Jewish Family Welfare Department helped the Kleins to make do through the mid-1940s. But it came accompanied by labelling (“slovenly,” “poor housekeeper,” “dull”) and by attempts to re-educate them in housekeeping, budgeting, and proper family relations. Finally, these stories suggest the diversity of ‘family’ in postwar Montréal. The city’s families differed along religious and linguistic lines, by the kinds of resources available to them, and by the ways in which they weathered the war and the years of reconstruction.

If case studies of particular families have the potential to tell us much about family and social change more generally in this period, then a case study of Montréal can shed light on other places (urban centres especially) at this time. In its complex mix of language, religion, ethnicity, and class, Montréal was, perhaps, a “city unique,”⁷ or as long-time resident Hugh MacLennan christened it, a “curious city.” As Natalie Zemon Davis argues, “The singled-out case is not the world translated into a grain of sand, but a local power cluster, receiving influence and signals from – and sending them to – other clusters and authoritative power centers.”⁸ As such, Montréal and its citizens offer us the opportunity to study a variety of responses to war, welfare, and postwar state formation. Although a story about Québec, this is not a story exclusively about Québec. A study of the nooks and crannies of a particular city can illuminate, moreover, not only other places, but also big assumptions such as ‘postwar prosperity.’

⁷ William Weintraub, City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and ‘50s (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1996).

⁸ Davis, “The Shapes of Social History,” 31.

This thesis explores the political economy of 'family' in postwar Montréal. It examines the ways in which members of working- and middle-class families took the promise of 'freedom from want' seriously, and the ways in which they incorporated it into their reconstruction projects and their expectations of the postwar state. 'Social security' was not just a political platitude: it had real meaning to families who had lived through the poverty of the Depression and the unsettled years of war. Montréalers chose security in their reconstruction campaigns. In seeking security, they demanded and negotiated new kinds of citizenship rights. Citizenship was up for discussion, in the context of an international war, Québec women's winning of the provincial suffrage in 1940 (and their use of it, for the first time, in the 1944 election), and the Canadian Citizenship Act of 1946. Ordinary families demanded that the rights of political citizenship be supplemented with social citizenship (new welfare-state measures) and economic citizenship (the right to participate in a capitalist economy on reasonable terms). In formulating demands for expanded citizenship, they pushed at the boundaries of 'the public.' They demanded new kinds of public legislation that would be available to more members of the public. They made private troubles public in order to demonstrate the legitimacy of demands for enhanced citizenship. We hear, in this period, new voices in public spaces: unionists, members of consumer leagues, working-class participants in the JOC and the LOC, recipients of state allowances.

The family troubles of working-class Canadians, in particular, had long been visible in public. Too often, however, others had articulated their troubles for them – for instance, in the published reports of private charities. Such accounts were frequently

moralistic, and often positioned working-class families themselves as the ‘problem.’ What was happening in the 1940s – what we see in this dissertation – was new in a number of ways. To begin with, working-class families themselves were among those setting the agenda for public discussion of family. They initiated public debate, chose what to reveal about their private lives, and decided for themselves what the ‘problems’ were. Second, both working- and middle-class families looked to the state (and in particular, the federal arm of the state) for responses and solutions in this period. The state was the logical and necessary target in campaigns for expanding citizenship rights and a more accessible public. Third, the particular historical juncture of the 1940s (shaped by memories of the Depression, the democratic rhetoric of war, new federal powers, and a proliferation of plans for the postwar world, many of which promised freedom from want) meant that Ottawa, and ‘the public’ more broadly, were receptive to new claims that turned on families’ material needs in ways that they were not in earlier (or later) eras. Material needs were acknowledged without the same degree of moralistic judgment. Moralizing about family matters continued to take place, of course – witness sex ‘scares’ and panics over juvenile delinquency – but in a context where poverty and scarcity were recognized to exist without being the fault of their victims.

In exploring the political economy of family life in a city under reconstruction, this dissertation addresses problems and processes of concern to historians of the family, the public, the welfare state, war, women, labour, Québec, and ‘postwar Canada’ more generally. Below, I delineate the ways in which the findings of this thesis contribute to five bodies of historical literature in particular: the scholarly writing on reconstruction,

the welfare state and citizenship, the public-private dichotomy, the family, and Québec. It should be apparent, however, that a principal argument of this dissertation is that these phenomena, and processes, were linked. A local focus enables us to see the ways in which ordinary families contributed to the shape of the Canadian welfare state and appropriated and reformulated the meanings of various kinds of citizenship, in the context of postwar reconstruction. These families, as much as their political or clerical leaders, shaped the character of postwar Québec. In pushing to ensure that the material needs of their families were met, they pried open public purses, demanded a broader range of public provisions, and expanded the kind and number of 'private' claims that were viewed as legitimate and appropriate to make in public.

First, then, this thesis addresses the historiography on reconstruction. It argues that reconstruction was a process that took place as much down on the ground as in the various departments that made up the federal state. The historiography on reconstruction has generally remained at the national level and has tended to focus on reconstruction policy (for employment, for social welfare, for veterans, for married women) and on the Dominion-Provincial Conference on Reconstruction.⁹ The failure of this conference (at

⁹ Greg Donaghy, ed., Uncertain Horizons: Canadians and their World in 1945 (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1997); Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein, eds., The Veterans Charter (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1998); Doug Owram, Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation (Toronto: UTP, 1996); Ruth Pierson, 'They're Still Women After All': The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986); Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "'Pigeon-Holed and Forgotten': The Work of the Subcommittee on the Post-War Problems of Women, 1943," Histoire sociale/ Social History 15, 29 (May 1982): 239-259; Dennis Guest, The Emergence of Social Security in Canada, 3rd ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 126-133; Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John

least from Ottawa's perspective) should alert us to the challenges that the 'regions' would pose to the federal Liberals' reconstruction plans in the postwar years. Ottawa was important, and perhaps seldom as important in Canadian history as in the 1940s, but it was not the only locus of reconstruction. People across the country had their own sense of what they wanted their postwar world to be like, and often, their visions of reconstruction were informed by 'family.' Reconstruction, to Montréal citizens, meant social welfare measures, increasingly public but also private. It meant union security and decent wages for male breadwinners and frequently, by extension, conceptions of family that involved children and married women leaving the paid workplace. It meant being able to purchase family necessities – food, shelter, household goods – at reasonable prices. And sometimes, in Montréal, it meant visions of family dissimilar to those inscribed in the new federal welfare-state policies. Ottawa looked different from Montréal than it did from vantage points elsewhere in the country. And yet, arguably, it played a larger role in offering up new conceptions of family in the 1940s than did the provincial government of Maurice Duplessis and the Union Nationale. Duplessis jealously guarded provincial autonomy, but chose not to make full use of existing provincial powers. Finally, a focus on reconstruction reinforces the importance of paying closer attention to periodization. The 'postwar period' was not a monolithic entity; the 1940s, I argue in this thesis, were unlike the 1950s. The wartime and immediate postwar years were a sustained moment when a variety of possibilities for Canada and Canadians were openly articulated and debated. The avenues that Canadians eventually took into

English, Canada since 1945: Power, Politics, and Provincialism (Toronto: UTP, 1981),

the 1950s were not inevitable; nor, from the vantage point of V-E Day, were they even very obvious.

Second, this thesis addresses historical thinking on the building of a welfare state and the creation of new kinds of citizenship. It attempts to put people in the welfare state and to give a human face to the rather abstract term that is 'citizenship.' As historians have begun to demonstrate, the creation of a Canadian welfare state was not simply a top-down process. The beneficiaries and targets of the new social security measures made sure that their voices were heard. They complained when their allowances were insufficient, or when they thought that eligibility rules were too strict or inappropriate.¹⁰ There were, to be sure, limits to what ordinary citizens were able to accomplish through their letters to government, their public protests, and their unions. "Executive federalism" meant that powerful cabinet ministers worried about costs, or convinced of the value of a market unfettered by government intervention, exercised a great deal of influence over federal policy in the 1940s.¹¹ The constitutional division of powers posed

91-96.

¹⁰ James Struthers, The Limits of Affluence: Welfare in Ontario, 1920-1970 (Toronto: UTP, 1994); Dominique Marshall, Aux origines sociales de l'État-providence: Familles québécoises, obligation scolaire et allocations familiales 1940-1955 (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1998); Margaret Little, No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997 (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1998).

¹¹ Alvin Finkel, "Paradise Postponed: A Re-examination of the Green Book Proposals of 1945," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association 4 (1993): 120-142; Dennis Guest, "World War II and the Welfare State in Canada," in Allan Moscovitch and Jim Albert, eds., The 'Benevolent' State: The Growth of Welfare in Canada (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1987); James Struthers, "Family Allowances, Old Age Security, and the Construction of Entitlement in the Canadian Welfare State, 1943-1951," in Neary and Granatstein, eds., The Veterans Charter; Alvin Finkel, "Competing Master Narratives on Post-War Canada," Acadiensis 29, 2 (Spring 2000): 188-204.

obstacles – occasionally real, often convenient – to the implementation of social programmes. Quebecers dealt not only with Ottawa Liberals, but also with Maurice Duplessis and the provincial Union Nationale. Like Ontario's George Drew and Nova Scotia's Angus L. Macdonald, Duplessis did little to accelerate or expand the delivery of social welfare in these years. As a result, much of the welfare state promised during the war – health and hospital insurance are two obvious examples -- would not be realized until the late 1950s and 1960s. The loud and persistent demands by Quebecers for affordable housing that we witnessed in Chapter 4 were also inadequately addressed. A broad spectrum of citizens – working- and middle-class, veterans and civilians, conservatives, liberals, social democrats, and Communists – called for state intervention in the form of continued rent controls and the construction of government-subsidized, affordable housing. And yet, in the end, a market model of housing favouring single-family home ownership won out, despite the wartime promises of the federal Liberals and the recommendations of the Curtis Report on housing.¹²

The welfare-state measures that were enacted, however, had enormous implications for Quebecers' sense of citizenship. With nationalism in disrepute in many western countries in the immediate wake of the war, citizenship came to the forefront as a more tolerant and more democratic alternative. The Canadian Citizenship Act of 1946 provided a context in which discussions of citizenship were current and topical. As I argue in Chapter 4, consumers' heightened wartime awareness of prices and the cost-of-

¹² Jill Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947: Canadian Housing Policy at the Crossroads," *Urban History Review* 15, 1 (1986): 41-59; Finkel, "Competing Master Narratives," 190-191.

living developed in many of them a sense of 'economic citizenship.' This rested on their conviction that in a victorious, postwar, capitalist democracy, citizens were entitled to buy – to participate in democratic capitalism – on reasonable terms. Moreover, new social programmes expanded Canadians' vision of citizenship to include social as well as political rights. But if historians interested in the welfare state have focused largely on social citizenship, it is worth thinking about how the welfare state shaped Quebecers' sense of political citizenship. Québec women, in particular, had acquired the right to vote at the provincial level only in 1940, and had exercised this right for the first time in the provincial election of 1944.¹³ Thus not only had they voted for their Members of Parliament long before their representatives in Québec City, but the hallmark of their political citizenship from Québec arrived at roughly the same time as the new social citizenship measures from Ottawa – which were, of course, an attempt to entrench a sense of national (i.e. federal) citizenship.¹⁴

This thesis joins with a large body of feminist work, moreover, to argue that citizenship was crafted and negotiated along gendered and familial lines. Women's

¹³ Andrée Lévesque argues that many early twentieth-century Québec feminists were at least as concerned with reforming the Civil Code as with securing the provincial suffrage. This speaks to the first kind of citizenship – civil – in T.H. Marshall's tripartite typology of citizenships. Lévesque, "Le Code civil au Québec: Femmes mineures et féministes," in *Résistance et transgression: études en histoire des femmes au Québec* (Montréal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 1995), 24; T.H. Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class," in *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development* (New York: Anchor Books, 1965).

¹⁴ Marshall, *Aux origines sociales*; Yves Vaillancourt, *L'Évolution des politiques sociales au Québec 1940-1960* (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1988); Michael D. Behiels, *Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution: Liberalism versus Neo-Nationalism 1945-1960* (Kingston; Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1985); Keith G. Banting, *The Welfare State and Canadian Federalism*, 2nd ed. (Kingston; Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1987), 140-144.

social citizenship often depended upon their roles as wives and mothers: witness, for instance, dependents' allowances and family allowances.¹⁵ Economic citizenship was often the expression of organized women's groups or, less obviously, individual women who made private choices about what and what not to buy for their families and households. Women claimed this right of citizenship as wives, as mothers, and as consumers, using what Susan Porter Benson has called the "trope of the good manager."¹⁶ They claimed it also as something that was only fair, as their part of the bargain they had struck with the state during the war, when they had adhered to wartime directives and controls.

As we saw in Chapter 4, working-class men also made prices their business, both within their unions and when they organized as 'squatters' to protest the lifting of rent controls and the lack of affordable housing in postwar Montréal. Men (single as well as married) claimed the perquisites of social and economic citizenship as breadwinners and heads of families. In Chapter 5, we saw men demanding, in the absence of a true 'salaire familial' that would permit them to single-handedly support their families, policy measures that would eliminate or mitigate the need for the paid work of other family

¹⁵ Ann Shola Orloff, "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States," *American Sociological Review* 58 (June 1993): 303-328; Suzanne Mettler, "Dividing Social Citizenship by Gender: The Implementation of Unemployment Insurance and Aid to Dependent Children, 1935-1950," *Studies in American Political Development* 12 (Fall 1998): 303-342; Louise A. Tilly, "Women, Work, and Citizenship," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 52 (Fall 1997): 1-26; Susan Pedersen, "Gender, Welfare, and Citizenship in Britain during the Great War," *American Historical Review* 95, 4 (1990): 983-1006.

¹⁶ Susan Porter Benson, "Living on the Margin: Working-Class Marriages and Family Survival Strategies in the United States, 1919-1941," in Victoria De Grazia with Ellen

members and thus secure men's breadwinner status. Union members and workers' advocates wanted better labour legislation, welfare-state measures, and the perquisites of social citizenship in part so that their wives and children would not have to work for wages.¹⁷ Moreover, standing up to a state that had disappointed them (through not addressing the woes of the Depression) or coerced them (through conscription and wartime controls), and demanding a role in shaping the state, was manly. Citizenship, then, drew upon, rewarded, and further entrenched notions of appropriate gender roles and responsibilities.

The war itself was instrumental in shaping Canada's social provisions. Dependents' allowances, which had been implemented by the federal government in large part to sustain the morale of enlisted men (and later enlisted women), went a considerable distance to materially preserving families in the absence of a male breadwinner. In the administration of these allowances, we see relationships among family members, private social agencies, and public welfare bodies. Indeed, we see state welfare programmes depending upon the resources and labour of private social agencies – one example of what sociologist Mariana Valverde has called a “mixed social economy.”¹⁸ When faced with infidelity or other family troubles among recipients of

Furlough, eds., The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 222.

¹⁷ Tilly, “Women, Work, and Citizenship,” and the replies in International Labor and Working-Class History 52 (Fall 1997): Chiara Saraceno, “Reply: Citizenship is Context-Specific,” 27; Ann Shola Orloff, “Reply: Citizenship, Policy, and the Political Construction of Gender Interests,” 39-40.

¹⁸ Mariana Valverde, “The Mixed Social Economy as a Canadian Tradition,” Studies in Political Economy 47 (Summer 1995): 33-60. See also, in the same issue, Margaret Little, “The Blurring of Boundaries: Private and Public Welfare for Single Mothers in

dependents' allowances, federal civil servants and private agency workers attempted above all to keep families together for the postwar period. They did this in ways shaped by their own views of what constituted proper families, respectable behaviour, and appropriate activities for men and women respectively. Married women were not supposed to drink in beer parlours or entertain other men in their husbands' absence. Married men were not supposed to desert their wives and children, or appropriate their wives' allowances. Such views were undoubtedly class-bound and moralistic. But private agency workers in particular had a very good idea of the material and emotional challenges facing families in wartime. They knew how poor many of these families were; they knew exactly what their incomes were and how much it cost them to live. They had a good idea, moreover, of the state of their health and their housing. They were, then, more willing to acknowledge the messiness and fragility of marriage and family, and the extent to which people departed from gendered norms, than the monolithic stereotype of the bossy and interfering social worker suggests.¹⁹

Citizens' responses to the expansion and transformation of the Canadian state in the 1940s help us to understand conceptions of 'private' and 'public' -- the third major theme of this dissertation. The thesis draws on an international feminist literature that

Ontario"; Lynne Marks, "Indigent Committees and Ladies Benevolent Societies: Intersections of Public and Private Poor Relief in Late Nineteenth Century Small Town Ontario."

¹⁹ On social workers, see James Struthers, "A Profession in Crisis: Charlotte Whitton and Canadian Social Work in the 1930s" and Struthers, "'Lord Give Us Men': Women and Social Work in English Canada, 1918-1953," both in Moscovitch and Albert, eds., The 'Benevolent' State; Daniel J. Walkowitz, Working with Class: Social Workers and the Politics of Middle-Class Identity (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

demonstrates the ways in which boundaries between the private and the public in the past were both fluid and permeable.²⁰ Definitions of 'public' and 'private' shifted in particular times and places; private incidents and public events always influenced one another. This matters because it helps us to think about motivation, and causality, and how citizens create and shape their lived and legislative environments. For scholars interested in women's history, the melding of the private and the public suggests ways in which women were able to exercise influence beyond a 'private sphere.' For those concerned with the gendered nature of men's lives, it reveals men as family members and private beings as well as public actors.

This thesis goes beyond a demonstration of the continual interaction of the private and public spheres to suggest that, in the mid-twentieth century, the 'spheres' themselves were undergoing a transformation. 'The public' was expanding in the 1940s to encompass much of what, in the nineteenth century, would have been seen to belong to 'the social.'²¹ Beyond this, it became increasingly acceptable, in these years, to express 'the private' publicly. Part of the postwar 'democratization' of family life, in fact, involved voicing family matters in public. The family not only became absorbed into the public, but also fashioned the public. We have seen, for instance, that conceptions of family shaped the administration of war and of government -- two pillars of a 'public'

²⁰ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850 (London: Hutchinson, 1987); Mary P. Ryan, Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1990); Cecilia Morgan, Public Men and Virtuous Women: The Gendered Languages of Religion and Politics in Upper Canada, 1791-1850 (Toronto: UTP, 1996).

typically thought masculine. If, as Cecilia Morgan has argued, 'public men' in nineteenth-century Upper Canada were expected to eschew the private claims of family, public men in twentieth-century Canada and Québec embraced such claims, and such a cause.²² Under reconstruction, then, the family and the public became increasingly intertwined. By the time that 'second-wave' feminists in the 1960s and 1970s argued that the personal was political, some (though by no means all) aspects of the personal had been thought 'political' for quite some time. Indeed, the private/public framework no longer seemed a useful description of how most Canadians interpreted the world.

Yet alongside, and within, the postwar expansion of the public, calls for privacy, and for the private regulation of family matters, endured. We see, in this study, important moments of resistance to an expanding state. Such moments of opposition to, or ambivalence about, state intrusions into 'private' life help to explain why the expansion of the public slowed dramatically in the later 1940s. It was not just that conservative voices among the federal Liberals won out over the advocates of reform, or that provincial premiers opposed Ottawa's activism on the grounds of provincial autonomy and the dictates of the BNA Act. Ordinary citizens – perhaps especially in Québec – also demonstrated mixed feelings about an interventionist state. Thus in Chapter 2, we see women articulating a sense of entitlement to their dependents' allowances – but protesting the monitoring of their behaviour and the moral censure that frequently accompanied them. In Chapter 3, we see the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique calling for

²¹ Denise Riley, "'The Social,' 'Woman,' and Sociological Feminism," in 'Am I That Name?' Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

measures that would ensure the social and economic security of Catholic, working-class families – but arguing that Ottawa’s version of such measures was not always appropriate for, or acceptable to, French-Canadian families. In Chapter 4, we see citizens of various political stripes demanding continued price and rental controls. We also see, however, consumer organizations, unions, and middle-class women’s groups using the language of democracy and the free market to call for an end to government prohibition of margarine and for the consumer’s right to choose. And in Chapter 5, we see working men crafting relationships with various levels of the state, and demanding social welfare measures that would supplement their wages and replace those of wives and children. But we also see considerable opposition to federal intervention in private life through rationing. And we see approval of compulsory schooling legislation, but accompanied by concern about parents’ inability to make their voices heard to the state that controlled their children’s education.

The fourth contribution of this dissertation is to the enormous historical literature on ‘the family.’ This study finds a variety of families in postwar Montréal. It is abundantly clear that, despite what the popular wisdom might suggest, not all postwar North American families were nuclear, or secular, or prosperous, or suburban. In Montréal, in fact, few of them were. This highly urbanized and industrialized city housed families with numerous children, working children, and young male soldiers supporting siblings and parents. We see unfaithful, separated, and divorced spouses; families headed by widows or widowers; and families living (often uncomfortably and unhappily) with

²² Morgan, Public Men and Virtuous Women, 190, 197.

in-laws. We see families on the margins of consumption – at a time, we are told, when North American families embraced consumer durables. And we see families crowded into walk-up apartments and brick triplexes, often without such basics as refrigerators, at a time when, we hear, North Americans moved *en masse* to private bungalows with large back yards in the suburbs. The families discussed in this thesis were not, by and large, families who participated in the continental race for automobiles and soon, television sets – or at least, not for a while. Canadian historians might do well to consider the British ‘austerity’ model of the early postwar years along with the American ‘prosperity’ model.²³ Montréal families were, moreover, heterogeneous in terms of religion, language, and ethnicity – and this long before the great waves of post-Second World War immigration.²⁴

In examining these families, the thesis contributes to the international debate about war, women, and social change. The tentative semi-conclusions of much recent Canadian work on this topic, discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation, can be explained in part by the fact that historians are unable to completely overturn the conventional wisdom. There appears to be some truth to the stereotype of married women tied to home and domesticity in the postwar years. Yet to accept the demographic fact that, in Montréal at least, most married women did not work outside the home in the late 1940s does not mean assuming that such women had no interests beyond

²³ Michael Sissons and Philip French, eds., *Age of Austerity 1945-51* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963).

²⁴ All of this counters a rather generic North American family depicted by Doug Owsram in *Born at the Right Time*. For an important study of some of Toronto’s postwar

the walls of their households. Married women engaged in a variety of 'public' activities and made claims to public provisions both during and after the war. In Chapter 2, for instance, we see soldiers' wives demanding increases in their dependents' allowances, and soldiers' mothers arguing that they deserve allowances as substantial as those of wives. In Chapter 4, we see married women, both working- and middle-class, organizing in consumers' groups, union auxiliaries, and the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique to demand affordable household necessities such as groceries. And in Chapter 5, we see mothers involved with the École des parents and the Catholic Parents' League intervening to claim a voice in the resolution of the 1949 Montréal teachers' strike.

In dissecting postwar families, this thesis attempts to explain rather than assume the postwar model of a breadwinning husband and dependent wife and children. Chapter 5 is about recreating male breadwinners – in the wake of the war, but also in the wake of a decade-long Depression that had taxed men's abilities to provide for their families (and often, simply for themselves). Moreover, working-class men in Montréal had a long history of earning wages insufficient to support their families without waged and unwaged assistance from other family members.²⁵ Many thought that the improved economy, increased wages, and newfound union security of the war years provided, at last, an opportunity for men to be breadwinners. At the same time, the war had boosted

immigrants, see Franca Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1992).

²⁵ Denyse Baillargeon, Ménagères au temps de la crise (Montréal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 1991); Bettina Bradbury, Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993); Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974).

the paid work of married women and, especially, children in Québec. Men who came out of the war with a desire to stabilize and entrench men's breadwinning roles, and thus reshape the family, argued through their unions that wives and children needed to be removed from the paid workplace and returned to the home and, in the case of children, the classroom.

This study also notes the role of 'experts' in attempting to shape families across North America in the postwar period.²⁶ Chapter 3, on the Cent-Mariés and the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique, is a chapter about creating and celebrating good "mariés" -- proper husbands, wives, and married couples. Like many secular organizations across North America during the war and the immediate postwar years, the LOC argued that family life had been seriously undermined by the material and emotional deprivations of the Depression and the War, and that people needed to be taught how to become good spouses and good parents. Commemorating and tracking the married lives of the 105 Catholic, French-Canadian, working-class couples who had been married in a mass wedding in Montréal in 1939 was one way of educating Quebecers about marriage and family. Yet many of the experts that we see in this dissertation -- priests, social workers, advice columnists, labour journalists -- are not the experts typically discussed in histories of postwar North America. Some of them, such as the LOC, were particular to Québec. Some, like the LOC and the journalists who wrote for Le Monde Ouvrier, could be

²⁶ Elaine Tyler May, Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Mona Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada (Toronto: UTP, 1999); Katherine Arnup, Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada (Toronto: UTP, 1994).

characterized as 'grassroots' experts. This complicates the criticism typically made of twentieth-century experts, which is that their prescriptions were top-down and frequently irrelevant to working-class audiences.

The fifth body of literature addressed by this dissertation is that on Duplessis's Québec. For too long painted as a cold, stifled wasteland of an era, when Duplessis and the Catholic bishops reigned unchallenged, postwar Québec is increasingly turning out to be, in historians' accounts, raucous and contested. Labour historians, for instance, note the militant strikes of the 1950s, such as those at Louiseville, Dupuis Frères, Murdochville, and Radio-Canada.²⁷ Cultural historians have long pointed to the Refus global of 1948 as an isolated cry in the Duplessiste wilderness; increasingly, scholars are finding other, concurrent, instances of protest and refusal.²⁸ This thesis joins with these recent works in arguing that Québec citizens did not necessarily share or accept the views of their political and clerical leaders.²⁹ It looks at the ways in which the labour movement both challenged and crafted relationships with the state, and it explores the claims made by unorganized working people (both women and men) in the realm of consumption and around state policy.

Much of the scholarly discussion of Québec's 'difference' turns on the role of the Catholic Church in providing educational, health, and welfare services in the province

²⁷ Jacques Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme québécois (Montréal: Boréal, 1989).

²⁸ On the Refus global, see Ramsay Cook, Canada, Québec, and the Uses of Nationalism, 2nd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986); Patricia Smart, Les femmes du Refus global (Montréal: Boréal, 1998). On Cité libre, see Behiels, Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution.

²⁹ Ramsay Cook notes, for instance, that Duplessis never won more than 51% of the popular vote. Canada, Quebec, and the Uses of Nationalism, 113.

well into the twentieth century.³⁰ While assumptions about the secularization of English Canada ignore the persistence of real religious sentiment among many English Canadians' long into the twentieth century, there is no doubt that at a structural level, this was a key difference. This study acknowledges and explores this difference, but attempts to examine the ways in which the Church in Montréal was part of its mid-twentieth-century surroundings. It looks at its links with secular society and with social, economic, and political change, including war and the creation of a welfare state.³¹ As Father Paul Contant, Executive Director of Montréal's Société d'Adoption et de Protection de l'Enfance, told the Canadian Welfare Council in 1949, child-welfare workers in Québec, including those affiliated with the Church, had recently begun "to modernize gradually" their "methods of work."³² The thesis also attempts to unravel differences of approach

³⁰ Vaillancourt, *L'Évolution des politiques sociales au Québec*; B.L. Vigod, "History According to the Boucher Report: Some Reflections on the State and Social Welfare in Quebec Before the Quiet Revolution," in Moscovitch and Albert, eds., *The 'Benevolent' State*.

³¹ Studies that look at Québec's Catholic Church as 'of' this world include Lucia Ferretti, *Entre voisins: la société paroissiale en milieu urbain, Saint-Pierre-Apôtre de Montréal, 1848-1930* (Montréal: Boréal, 1992); Lucia Ferretti, *Brève histoire de l'Église catholique au Québec* (Montréal: Boréal, 1999); Jean Hamelin, *Histoire du catholicisme québécois, Le XXe siècle, tome 2: De 1940 à nos jours*, dir. Nive Voisine (Montréal: Boréal, 1989); Gaston Desjardins, *L'Amour en patience: la sexualité adolescente au Québec, 1940-1960* (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1995); Jean-Pierre Collin, *La Ligue ouvrière catholique canadienne, 1938-1954* (Montréal: Boréal, 1996); Bettina Bradbury, "Elderly Inmates and Caregiving Sisters: Catholic Institutions for the Elderly in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," in *On the Case: Brian Young, In Its Corporate Capacity: The Seminary of Montreal as a Business Institution, 1816-1876* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1986).

³² NA, Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD), MG 28 I 10, Vol. 238, File 238-1. Visit to Father Paul Contant, Executive Director, La Société d'Adoption et de Protection de l'Enfance, Montréal, 12 October 1949. Harry Cassidy likewise claimed in 1945 that, "the health and welfare system of Quebec is in a process of transition, out of which will emerge a pattern more similar to that of the other provinces than in the past."

and opinion within the Catholic Church. Its outlook was not as uniformly conservative as many have assumed of these years. In its examination of the Cent-Mariés phenomenon and the Ligue Ouvrière Catholique, the thesis concludes, with other recent works in Québec history, that some religious bodies were caught up in the democratic spirit of the 1940s and were actively engaged in attempting to make Catholicism relevant to the lives of Montréal citizens.³³

One reason that private, denominational assistance persisted in postwar Montréal was that the Union Nationale (like provincial governments elsewhere in the country) confined its social welfare initiatives to limited and means-tested measures. Content to let the Catholic Church (and to a much lesser extent, Protestant and Jewish organizations) act as a “junior state,” Duplessis largely abdicated responsibility for innovations in social welfare in a period when the Catholic Church could no longer adequately supply this assistance.³⁴ But rather than simply assuming Québec’s distinctiveness, it is worth situating the particular constellation of private and public welfare services in the province in the broader Canadian context. Debates about the role of the state, the relative importance of the federal and provincial arms of the state, and the roles of private charitable workers and trained social workers, were current and important across the

Cassidy, Public Health and Welfare Reorganization (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1945), 391.

³³ Collin, Ligue ouvrière catholique canadienne; Hamelin, Histoire du catholicisme québécois; Desjardins, L’Amour en patience; Ferretti, Brève histoire de l’Église catholique au Québec.

³⁴ Vaillancourt, L’Évolution des politiques sociales; Behiels, Prelude to Quebec’s Quiet Revolution. On the Church’s financial difficulties in this period, and on the monetary value of the unpaid work of members of religious orders, see Cassidy, Public Health and Welfare Reorganization, 375-76.

country in the wake of the Second World War. Examining them in a Québec setting sheds light on Québec's response to, and role in, the development of a Canadian welfare state, but also suggests further approaches to the study of war and welfare in English Canada. Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish families in Montréal turned to private, denominational agencies in times of need. Some of them also benefited from early twentieth-century provincial welfare measures, such as old-age pensions, Needy Mothers' Allowances, and subsidies to private institutions under the Quebec Public Charities Act of 1921. By the 1940s, they could begin to count on new federal measures, such as unemployment insurance, dependents' allowances, veterans' benefits, and family allowances. Residents of other provinces also negotiated the fine lines and shifting boundaries between private and public welfare measures in this period of reconstruction. The continued presence of the Catholic Church as a welfare-provider for the majority of the city's needy families did make Montréal somewhat different from cities elsewhere in Canada. Yet the people and organizations that made up 'the Church' were themselves rethinking their tasks and roles in these years. Increasingly, they found their responsibility for welfare and education expensive and burdensome.

This thesis, then, supports recent work arguing that the Quiet Revolution was a much longer evolution that began well before 1960, and even well before the Second World War. Québec was not, as so many English-Canadians thought, a province mired in a *grande noirceur*, fettered by conservatism and Catholicism until liberated by (former

federal cabinet minister) Jean Lesage and his Liberal *équipe de tonnerre* in 1960.³⁵ This evolution was hastened by the economic and industrial activity of the war, and by the federal government's "revanche administrative" in the 1940s. As Dominique Marshall has persuasively argued, the new federal measures paved the way for Quebecers' acceptance of the provincial Liberals' state-centred, neo-nationalist reforms in the 1960s.³⁶ Ottawa's aggressive occupation of areas that properly belonged to the provinces, moreover, provoked some Quebecers into demanding that subsequent reforms be undertaken by the provincial arm of the state.³⁷

It is worth considering the ways in which the stories told in this thesis might have played out somewhat differently in Québec than elsewhere in Canada. The events of Chapter 2 -- strained relationships, wartime infidelity, and intervention in the lives of soldiers' families by both public and private bodies -- were echoed in Vancouver and Edmonton, Kingston and Charlottetown. Similar stories could most likely be told of the United States, Australia, or England during the war. What made Montréal different was, to begin with, the fact that French-Canadian husbands and wives may have been willing to tolerate far fewer familial strains and sacrifices for the sake of a war effort with which some of them were only lightly engaged, and against which many had actively protested.

³⁵ On the 'grande noirceur' and the Quiet Revolution, see Pierre Elliott Trudeau, The Asbestos Strike, trans. James Boake (Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1974 [1956]); Gérard Pelletier, Years of Impatience 1950-1960, trans. Alan Brown (Toronto: Methuen, 1984 [1983]); Behiels, Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution; Cook, Canada, Québec, and the Uses of Nationalism; Paul-André Linteau et al., Quebec Since 1930, trans. Robert Chodos and Ellen Garmaise (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1991).

³⁶ Marshall, Aux origines sociales.

³⁷ Cook, Canada, Quebec, and the Uses of Nationalism, 131; Banting, The Welfare State and Canadian Federalism, 140-144.

Second, the intervention of the federal Dependents' Allowance Board in the workings of French-Canadian family life probably did little to endear the federal government to Québec families in the context of debate over military participation and the threat of conscription. To be sure, the administration of the allowances of 'problem' families by Montréal's private welfare bodies, organized along linguistic and religious lines, may have mitigated and buffered federal rulings. But the complaints of Montréal's Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles -- that Ottawa did not understand the workings of welfare in Montréal, or the poverty of Montréal families, or the challenges facing French-Canadian families with more children than the number provided for by the Dependents' Allowance system -- are telling.³⁸ What is certain is that Québec families, and Québec welfare workers, entered the reconstruction period with acute memories of these wartime negotiations between Ottawa and Montréal, anglophones and francophones, the federal state and private welfare bodies, and social workers and family members.

The Cent-Mariés phenomenon, explored in Chapter 3, is one example of the ways in which elements within Québec's Catholic Church were interested in 'modernizing' -- in becoming relevant to the daily lives of their constituents -- in the 1940s. It is also an illustration of the way in which behaviour continued to be regulated by the Church, as

³⁸ NA, Dependents' Allowance Board (DAB), RG 36, Series 18, Vol. 28, File DAB 4-7, Montreal Welfare Department. Mme Jeanne Barabé-Langlois, directrice, Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles, Montréal, to M. R.O.G. Bennett, président, Bureau des Allocations Familiales, Ottawa, 23 décembre 1942; Board of Directors, Bureau d'Assistance Sociale aux Familles, Montréal, to Mr. R.O.G. Bennett, Dependents' Allowance Board, Ottawa, 6 May 1944. See also NA, Department of National Defence (DND), RG 24, Vol. 1596: Dependents' Board of Trustees, File: DBT, Index and Minutes of Meetings. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee, 8 November 1944.

well as the State, in the mid-twentieth century.³⁹ In some ways, the mass wedding is a phenomenon that could only have happened in Québec, given the institutional presence of the Catholic Church and a population familiar with its rituals. Without a doubt, other religions intervened in family life. Yet the pageantry and ceremony of Catholicism were striking.⁴⁰ Indeed, the LOC used the Cent-Mariés as a way of asserting, to a public audience and to various levels of government, the distinctiveness of working-class French-Canadians and their needs. Gathering information on these families became a way for the LOC to marshal evidence for its reconstruction projects. Its findings were touted as evidence that Ottawa's new social programmes were inadequate or inappropriate for Québec families. And yet, the mass wedding was clearly a "telling" rather than a typical event.⁴¹ How many French-Canadian observers, watching the ceremony at the Delorimier Stadium or looking at photographs in the newspapers, found the whole affair rather odd, curiously archaic, and not at all in tune with their own sensibilities in 1939? Did those who followed the celebration of the fifth and tenth anniversaries in 1944 and 1949 do so with intense interest or simply mild curiosity akin, perhaps, to the interest in the Dionne quintuplets some years earlier?

The development of the politics of prices and the sense of economic citizenship discussed in Chapter 4 had particular dimensions in Québec. The awareness of having complied with federal restrictions, perhaps reluctantly, was particularly acute among

³⁹ On the regulation of 'private' behaviour by Protestant churches in early nineteenth-century Ontario, see Lynne Marks, "Christian Harmony," in *On the Case*.

⁴⁰ On pageantry, see Hamelin, *Histoire du catholicisme québécois*, Ch. 2; H.V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: UTP, 1999).

Québec residents. This was a state that had in recent years taxed them, placed a ceiling on their wages, rationed what they ate and bought and, most seriously, threatened to conscript them. Now, in a period of reconstruction, surely it owed them. Thus the housing crisis, the margarine issue, and the grocer and butcher boycotts were all inflected with Quebecers' sense of which level of government commanded their allegiance, and of which level was in fact indebted to them. Likewise, as we see in Chapter 5, organized working men, by the later 1940s, turned more frequently to Ottawa than to Québec City in order to secure gains in the realm of social welfare.⁴² This was, in part, because the federal arm of the state had asked more of them during the war than had Québec. It was also because submissions and petitions to Ottawa enjoyed more success than those to Duplessis in these years of federal expansion.

It should be clear to the reader that I view the 1940s – both the war years and the period of reconstruction that followed – as a kind of plastic moment: a vibrant period of challenges to convention and older ways of thinking, when social change seemed, to many, both desirable and possible. Just what form that change would take was, of course, up for debate. Indeed, it was precisely the extent and proliferation of debate in these years that make this period so interesting for the historian. By the 1950s, however, many of the questions raised in the hectic years of war and reconstruction seemed to have been settled, at least in the short term. The 1950s, in Canada, have been charged with complacency, conformity, insularity – and some of this reputation appears deserved. By the beginning of the new decade, we see the closing down of the more radical and

⁴¹ See Davis, “The Shapes of Social History,” 31.

egalitarian plans for social change proposed in the 1940s. We see curbs on the expansion of the public: on what it was possible to say in public, and on the launching of new public welfare measures.

The most obvious explanation for this narrowing of horizons was the entrenchment of Cold War thinking in Canada, which polarized debate and diminished the range of possible answers and acceptable solutions. Greater integration with the American economy and American culture in these years contributed to this process. Of course, integration with the American economy and Cold War spending also resulted in a greater and more generalized degree of prosperity than Canada had hitherto known. This relative affluence (which, as James Struthers has rightly observed, had its “limits”⁴³), based on private and government spending, produced a certain complacency. Moreover, the fact that the demands of many Canadians had been so modest to begin with, meant that many were satisfied with relatively little. Postwar Canadians were grateful for security – and to many, security appeared to have been achieved.

Third, many of the architects of social security in Canada were fiscal and philosophical conservatives who had never had any intention of building the New Jerusalem. Many were content to stop with the federal measures enacted in the first half of the 1940s. The obstacles to grand visions of full-blown welfare states posed by Canada’s federal system and its provincial premiers were real, and were particularly important in the case of Québec. A cynic might argue that they were also convenient.

⁴² Marshall, Aux origines sociales.

⁴³ Struthers, The Limits of Affluence.

And yet, the 1950s were a plateau, not a retreat. In later years, Canadians would expand on the gains of the 1940s. The late 1950s would bring hospital insurance: the 1960s, medicare, the Canada Assistance Plan, the Canada Pension Plan, and calls for a Just Society. In Québec in particular, unions would prove militant throughout the 1950s. And the state-centred, neo-nationalist reforms of the 1960s (dubbed the Quiet Revolution), led by the provincial government, would build on the federal programmes of the 1940s, but also on the relationships that citizens had initiated and forged with their governments in the years of war and reconstruction.

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