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UMI
DEPLOYING DISCOURSES OF EMPLOYABILITY AND DOMESTICITY:
WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING POLICIES

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto

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The period 1935 to 1947 provides an excellent opportunity to investigate the ways in which the employment and training policies of Canadian welfare state forms delineated the boundaries of gender, race, class and nation in ways that actively constituted (i) legitimate social and economic forms of work, of motherhood, of sexuality and citizenship.

Covering attempts starting in the Depression and accelerating during the Second World War into the postwar period, this study tracks the constitution and deployment of government attempts at mapping the female labour supply, of monitoring the activities of women in the labour market, of charting and opening up to scrutiny the conditions of women’s labour force attachment: all in an effort to predict and prescribe patterns of women’s employment and problems of female unemployment. I approach government reports, studies, commissions and committees as policy events – exercises in governance – as markers for policy analysis which signified important shifts in governmental approaches to the phenomenon of female participation in the formal waged economy.

Viewed during the war as a crucial national resource, central to the war effort, women war workers would be cast as a largely ‘unskilled female labour reserve’ by war’s end. I examine how ideas about mental testing, intelligence and human capacities – ideas that comprised the foundation of the mental hygiene programme during this period – informed employment and training policies in the formation of the Canadian welfare state for the period 1935-1947.

During the Depression, studies of the labour force produced classifications of unemployed women and men. Scrutiny of female employment patterns resulted in the production of categorical knowledges about employability. These practices were further elaborated through the unprecedented research opportunities presented by the war. Suitable vocation, aptitude, and measures of intelligence: these concepts were drawn
upon as part of a growing apparatus of employment policy intended to facilitate the smooth transition into the postwar period. I argue that the roster of policies and programmes devised in the name of postwar rehabilitation constituted ideas about female employability which were deeply imbued with the principles of scientific racism and sexism at the core of the mental hygiene program. Vocational planning, counselling and training practices reorganised relations of employment and of unemployment in ways that reflected the managing principles of the risk society. Postwar planning drew upon and constituted new areas of activity for government and community agencies, creating opportunities for the deployment of knowledge-practices such as personnel selection while opening up the interior of the subject as an object of governance, by assessing and calibrating allegedly innate human capacities.
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Introduction

In this study, I examine the deployment of discourses of employability and domesticity in the development of employment and training policies regulating the lives of working and enlisted women during the Second World War in Canada. I consider the intensification of efforts to scrutinise the quality of the labour supply during the war, activities which would directly inform postwar demobilisation of women war workers. Once viewed as a crucial national resource that was central to the war effort, women war workers would be cast as an ‘unskilled female labour reserve’ by war’s end.

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics, the National Selective Service, the Unemployment Insurance Commission and the National Employment Service were all engaged in developing a framework of vocational and pre-employment training, a framework that was to have enduring effects on the labour market policy and planning activities of the Canadian welfare state. During the Depression, studies of employment and of the labour market generally produced classifications of unemployed women and men, projections of ‘normal’ labour market operations and intensified investigation into the formative conditions thought to enhance or to diminish employment capacity. Scrutiny of female employment patterns resulted in the production of categorical knowledges about employability. In sum, employment research organised, racialised and gendered the design principles and subsequent practices of the policy regime of postwar rehabilitation and national reconstruction.

During the Second World War, women workers presented a challenge to federal Canadian policy planners who faced the task of developing and implementing policies intended to move women into and then out of war industries and the women’s services in the military. For many women workers, the regular paycheque had become a necessity. For policy staff like Dr. Olive Ruth Russell at the Department of Veteran’s Affairs, or her colleagues Dr. Mary Salter or Fraudena Eaton at the Department of Labour, overseeing women’s labour force activities was a challenging task. The Government of Canada was on record in support of statements and reports advocating women’s equality, including those issued by the International Labour Office temporarily headquartered at Montreal for the duration of the war. Most policy staff and their community agency colleagues, however, proceeded on the assumption that women would not be inclined to pursue what were clearly understood to be men’s occupations once the war was
finally over. In fact, the predominant view was that most women would marry and leave the paid labour force. Was their task, then, to encourage women to abandon regular waged employment?

The Second World War has been characterised as a watershed in the formation of the welfare state in Canada. The Veterans Charter in particular has been singled out as a path-breaking legislative initiative designed to secure and promote equality and universality, complementing the social security initiatives that accompanied the postwar reconstruction programme. Rehabilitation legislation was indicative of a broader convergence of interests across the country for a postwar era of peace, prosperity and social security. For example, Neary and Brown identify the Veterans Charter, that compendium of rehabilitation programming for ex-service personnel, as "one of the building blocks of the Canadian welfare state," even as they acknowledge the need to avoid over-stating its significance in promoting gender-based equality due primarily to the numerical insignificance of women in comparison with men among discharged personnel. Neary and Brown also gesture toward the deeply entrenched social conservatism which hampered the efforts of equality advocates such as Dr. Olive Ruth Russell.

The elaboration of state regulation during the war combined with increasing demands for social security to permanently alter the role and scope of state activity by the postwar period. The introduction of social security programming, including unemployment insurance, family allowance and old age security provisions, are all identified as hallmarks of the welfare state, the class-based postwar consensus between labour and capital which underscores welfare state models generally. Certainly, by mid-century, the formative areas of social security legislation were in place, although, as Struthers documents, notions of entitlement remained closely informed and regulated by a constellation of political objectives of concern to the Liberal government between 1943 and 1945, in particular that of wage stabilisation. As Struthers argues, family allowances and old age security provisions were the product of "transitory political and economic dilemmas of the 1940s, not a broadly based social democratic vision." Residualism remained deeply entrenched within the design principles of social security, notwithstanding rhetorical gestures toward universality, just as the principle of 'less eligibility' was — and still is — an enduring feature of income support provisions as forms of wage replacement and subsidisation.
Other studies have emphasised patterns of historical continuity, patterns that are themselves grounded in enduring gender, class and race-based relations and forms of oppression and subsequent inequality. Ruth Roach Pierson's study of the experiences and state practices confronted by women war workers and service personnel traces the deep continuity linking material conditions of postwar society with those obtaining during the pre-war period. Pierson and Cohen suggest in their collaborative study of federal labour market policy during the Second World War, that the federal government's position on the matter of gender equality was deeply contradictory, if not ideologically inconsistent:

[In spite of the vision of a more egalitarian society in the future and a professed confidence in the ability of government to plan for postwar full employment, there was no attempt in the postwar planning schemes to maintain the gains for women in social and employment policy that had been made during the war. The result was rhetoric.]

Conversely, Forestell and others have attempted to salvage the perception that the Canadian government was not equivocating on the matter of gender-based equality, but that instead any significant move in that direction would have to await more congenial times. Forestell argues that in fact public opinion was weighted very much in favour of women's withdrawal from the formal waged economy, a view that disallows analysis of how 'public' is formed through the deployment of opinion polling as a technique of governance. In contrast to Forestell's positivist approach to opinion poll results as historical source material, Robinson's recent study of the use of polling and market research by the federal government between 1930-1945 closely documents the activities of psyche-based practitioners in the conduct of polling and the deeply inequalitarian foundation of this commercialised technique.

It is also noteworthy that studies of the WW II period, for example Douglas and Greenhous', rarely open up the psyche-based techniques of mental hygienists to historical inquiry. Consider the following excerpt, a description of the psychological screening techniques deployed within the personnel selection practices of the RCAF, developed by University of Toronto psychologist and NCMH (Canada) associate Edward Bott:

The first difficulty arose over selection procedures. How was aircrew potential to be assessed? Physical failings were easy to spot and it was possible to make fairly accurate judgements of mental stability, but intellectual capabilities were harder to pin down.
In her study of the deliberations and report of the Sub-committee on the Postwar Problems of Women, Brandt contends that the Liberal government was indeed under significant pressure to respond to “public demand for government leadership in the planning of a better postwar Canada.” Brandt’s account is illustrative of historical narratives which posit ‘woman’ as a unitary category of analysis, of how the very different material conditions and lived experiences of women are collapsed into, and therefore subsumed by, the universalising category of ‘woman’ as the subject of her historical narrative. For example, Brandt argues that the sub-committee articulated its “claim for the official recognition of women by means of government appointments,” an articulation of the very elision accomplished through the positioning of the interests and hegemony of women of the dominant culture in liberal choice discourse as universalising and truly representational, and of gender as a unifying and unitary category uninflected by race, class and sexuality. This mode of analysis also positions ‘individual’ freedom as fundamentally opposed to ‘government,’ another accomplishment of liberalist discourse.

In contrast, I argue that liberal state formation projects and techniques of governance work in part through the articulation of ‘personal’ interests, in concert with a range of so-called private interests mobilised through organisations – community and other – representing claims and interests of the dominant culture. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the workings of the voluntary advisory committees instituted as techniques of governance during WW II, including the sub-committee appointed to ‘investigate’ the postwar problems of women. Finally, Forrestell’s account tacitly accepts the claims made by committee members that what women most required was training to become ‘skilled industrial workers.’ ‘Skill,’ as I shall demonstrate in this study, was a highly contested, deeply racialised, class-based and gendered category grounded in employability discourses that were reflective of, and worked through, notions of citizenship, of domesticity and of employability. Skill, moreover, worked discursively to organise and reify the gendered and racialised division of labour, shoring up the boundaries of the formal waged economy.

The Second World War witnessed an extended and considerably elaborated role of the Canadian state, particularly in the area of labour market regulation, a development that is frequently cited in support of claims that this was a formative period for the construction of
welfare state forms. The emergence of modern forms of labour market regulation is signalled in particular by the acceptance of collective bargaining as a legitimate practice — and domain of governance — and of unions as legitimate representatives of workers, a long struggle that finally culminated in the institution of compulsory dues check-off following a 99-day strike at the Ford Motor Company Windsor facility in 1945. MacDowell points to the actions of the National Selective Service, the Wartime Labour Relations Board, and the federal Department of Labour to demonstrate how the “grip of government tightened” in “building the regulatory state.”

The federal government sought to assume control of a wartime ‘command economy,’ although as Stevenson has recently documented, labour department administrators did not entirely succeed in developing, let alone successfully implementing any such “master plan.” Stevenson’s thesis is critical of what he characterises as the bureaucratic inefficiency of the NSS. The agency was “unable to maintain comprehensive and efficient control of the mobilisation of Canadian human resources for the duration of the war.” This inability Stevenson attributes to the absence of political will of enforcement, of government’s refusal to institute a system of conscription, and the preference for a decentralised structure for decision-making and programme of implementation. Stevenson asserts that where the approach of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board to industrial consolidation necessitated a massive labour transfer, “a national draft of human resources to conscript labour from regions deemed less efficient in the national economic structure,” NSS officials under the direction of Arthur MacNamara preferred a more decentralised approach to labour market planning and policy operationalisation.

At the core of this argument lie two inter-dependent questions. What are ‘human resources’ in the context of historically contingent ‘efficiency’ measures and discourses of nation? How is the ‘labour market’ conceptualised historically for the purposes of state-based regulation, as an articulation of state, of nation and of human productive capacity? A central dilemma posed in studies of welfare state formation is the very incapacity for central regulatory measures to enhance full efficiency and productivity. At the core of this critique lies the on-going tension over states-vs.-markets, the alleged trade-off between the equity objectives presumed to underscore welfare state forms counter-posed to the alleged efficiency objectives of so-called free markets. As Ann Porter has documented in her study of postwar federal labour market policies, building upon Pierson’s study of the deployment of gender as a central organising
strategy in the development of the unemployment insurance programme, the labour market is itself a social institution deeply informed by relations of gender, in addition to those of class, and race. Bowles and Gintis challenged the then-prevailing marxist theory of labour markets for its inability to examine and come to grips with how women were differentially located in and by labour markets. According to Bowles and Gintis, while there is no necessary correspondence between capitalism and patriarchy, capitalist employers were actively engaged in deploying a divide-and-rule strategy along the lines of gender. In their view, public patriarchy, in the form of state-provided income support programmes was key to the extension of consciousness, identity and transformative social action: “What Marx thought the accumulation process would do for workers – create the conditions for the transparency of capitalist exploitation and thus promote a common working-class identity and consciousness – ‘public patriarchy’ may well do for women.” If patriarchal domination in the capitalist era is reproduced through economic dependency, it must find in the labour market an analogue to the forms of female dependence earlier made possible by patriarchal inheritance of private property. But the Marxian theory of labour markets, no less than the neo-classical, is unremittingly hostile to this project.

Joan Sangster’s historical study of women production workers in Peterborough shares a similar finding with respect to the organisation of work and ideologies of domesticity in shaping women’s identities as women and as workers, with tremendous implications for both. My study seeks to challenge conceptualisations of markets as ontologically distinct from government and, therefore, from governance. For example, Stevenson documents the considerable opposition to the NSS, positioned as it was in between veterans’ organisations arguing for the preferential placement of returning enlisted personnel [primarily men] on the one hand, and unions attempting to secure recently won collective bargaining rights by enforcing seniority provisions as the central vehicle for exercising rights under negotiated collective agreements. As Stevenson observes: “In the event, NSS failed to find a satisfactory compromise between the positions of the unions and the veterans’ organisations. This failure illustrates the practical limitations of government interference in the labour market in Canada at the time.” However, Stevenson does not address the gendered or racialised dimensions of NSS regulatory measures, a move which permits his argument that the impact of NSS practice would be limited. As I demonstrate in this study, for the vast majority of women, policies and practices deployed through NSS were profoundly influential, even in the presence of an administrative
apparatus that was far from the ‘well-oiled machine’ its overseers purported it to be. As a project of the state, an instance of state formation, the deployment of discourses of employability and domesticity would have enduring effects on the conditions of labour market access for women well into the postwar period.

The very real problems confronting women who needed and desired to continue in paid employment in the postwar period were to be reshaped in a variety of ways through the policies pursued by the Canadian state, taken up and reorganised through multiple discourses touching on everything from an alleged increase in postwar ‘juvenile delinquency’ to enforced domesticity. As Ruth Roach Pierson so clearly demonstrated in her study of the experiences of women during W.W.II, government planners hastened to redirect women into a narrowing range of occupations deemed appropriate for women wage-earners. The problem for the National Employment Service was posed as one of restoring order, of bringing under control the spectre of thousands of mainly young women, roaming the streets in search of employment. Government personnel and practitioners in community agencies hastened to keep tabs on the labour market activities of these women, to direct as closely as possible their movement from wartime employment into what were deemed suitable vocations for women, preferably into the home through marriage or domestic service. Suitable vocation, aptitude, measures of intelligence: these concepts were drawn upon as part of a growing apparatus of ‘manpower policy’ intended to facilitate the smooth transition into the postwar period.

I argue that the techniques and technologies of governance deployed during and after the war were mobilised through strategies for the moral regulation of women, drawing upon social relations of class, gender, sexuality and race. Fraudena Eaton, Supervisor of the NSS Women’s Division, frequently referred to pre-employment training as a highly effective method for ‘weeding out’ women workers whose allegedly undesirable qualities were held to render them unsuitable for certain occupations. Similarly, training was deployed as a strategy for ‘raising the status’ of occupations characterised by low wages and hazardous working conditions, ‘upgrading’ the worker in occupations for which policy makers thought designated groups of women were particularly well suited. Some proposals were floated calling for legislated minimum wages and conditions of work. However, any legislative strategy for state intervention would regularise a program of employment rights for women. As Eaton and her colleagues made
clear, this was an option few in government policy circles were prepared to endorse. Instead, the strategy of choice was one of moral regulation, approached here as practices of normalisation which disciplined specific groups of women as subjects of employment policy.

In the face of postwar fears of recurring depression, unemployment was framed in terms of economic democracy and the rights of citizenship. The ideal-typical citizen who was the subject of this rights discourse was white, male and capable of consolidating his employment rights through his skilled capacity. The question of women’s employment was framed quite differently and reflexively in relation to men’s right to work. As Margaret Hobbs has indicated in her study of women’s employment experiences during the 1930s in Canada, the solution to men’s unemployment was women’s unemployment. Welfare state regimes which adopted policies of full employment, as Jane Lewis has demonstrated, incorporated women’s economic dependency on men as a given. These gendered assumptions formed the conceptual bedrock underpinning theories and subsequent policies about unemployment and the employability of groups within the population during the period in question.

Female unemployment was taken up as a specific and particularised category of scrutiny within employment policy, framed by economic modernisation discourses on the one hand, and moral regulatory strategies on the other. Policies designed to address women’s rehabilitation in the postwar period were steeped in conceptions about appropriate occupations for groups of women, preconceptions which were deeply informed by, and in turn further entrenched, the existing racial and sexual division of labour. Approaches to the demobilisation of women war workers took the form of efforts to ‘clear’ the labour market of women. Some women, among them educated, white and professional women, were directed into a limited range of appropriate occupations; others into low-wage industries such as textiles, needle trades, personal services and retail. For many, household domestic labour or its institutional equivalent, hospital and institutional cleaning and food preparation was the target. The vast majority of women were encouraged and, as subjects of employment policy discourses, positioned as ‘choosing’ to withdraw from the paid work force altogether in order to take up their rightful place within the so-called private household. This stood in direct contrast to the articulation of men’s employment rights around which veterans’ organisations and trade unions were actively organising. For the thousands of working-class women, immigrant women, native women and women of colour
whose future paid employment was very much in question, there would be no such political space within which to organise, through which to mobilise similar citizenship claims and entitlements. For women, youth and so-called ‘alien races’ singled out for intense scrutiny and/or interned during the war, ideas about productive capacity, the appropriateness of and right to paid employment, and presumptions about employability took on an altogether different form and significance. Policy discourses were deployed differentially for each of these groups in ways that drew upon and organised relations of gender, race, sexuality and class.

The production and deployment of knowledges about the labour market, of employment and occupational research, and of psyche-based knowledge-making practices can be examined in ways that reveal overlapping techniques of regulation and discipline implemented through the same policy regime. In this way it is possible to gain important insights into the dynamics of policy development and administration, and the production of policy effects and subject positions. Citizenship entitlements, while articulated within a liberal frame of apparent equality and universality, drew on and transformed categories of race, gender, sexuality and ability, all in an attempt to achieve that universalising sameness which is held to be an accomplishment of the welfare state. An effect of this apparent sameness was the elision of the material consequences of patriarchy, capitalism and colonialism: that is, an effect that transformed material inequalities into individual and individualising deficiencies and that located the source of these absences within the psyche – as formative of the very identities of those whose apparent incapacity/deficiency prevented them from articulating the same claims and entitlements shared by fellow citizens.

Policy approaches and attitudes towards unemployment are deeply rooted in poor law traditions, held to be a threat, a source of delinquency and of political unrest. Research conducted during the latter part of the Depression began to approach unemployment as a clinical phenomenon to be observed, calibrated and administered at the level of the individual. At the same time, it was an economic phenomenon – a deviation from the achievable objective of full employment and an index by which to gauge the significance of that deviation – the occurrence of which could be similarly observed, calibrated and administered through macroeconomic policy, for example in the operation of actuarial discourse of the ‘moral hazard’ posed by unemployment insurance. I argue that the postwar policy regime signalled the emergence of a
particular mode of governance, one involving state and community agencies and their ‘clients’ in a new paradigm of remediation through policy. Rehabilitation strategies were developed within the discursive frame of Keynesian full employment, by now a political object for governance. Full employment was characterised as a discrete economic phenomenon, theorised as ontologically distinct from – albeit having real, material consequences in – the social.

Theoretical conceptions of full employment, and policies devised in its name, actively constituted and reflected gendered, racialised and class-based relations of employment and employability, redrawing the boundaries of legitimate employment and economically calculable unemployment in ways that transformed and even more deeply embedded these relations within the policy regime of the welfare state. As the principles of the “risk society” emerged through efforts to assure the actuarial soundness of unemployment insurance programming, “unemployment” was to be approached as a distinct measurable economic condition. At the same time, unemployment was broached as a set of relations, calibrated according to verifiable gradations of employability, a move which reified individualising discourses of employability, classifying groups of workers according to what researchers contended were qualitative characteristics forming a greater propensity to/risk of unemployment. That is, unemployment did not affect all workers in the same way. For example, employment researchers at the McGill School for Social Research, together with policy analysts at the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, contended that the social causes and economic effects of unemployment took on different forms, corresponding to identifiable and measurable characteristics of population groups. In this model for social research, researchers contended that as a social category, unemployment had to be measured in different ways, and subsequently addressed through distinct policy measures.

I argue that policies adopted during this period were part of a discursive frame that foregrounded individualising knowledge practices drawn from the psyche-sciences. Employment policies transformed the economic ‘fact’ of employment – the need for and the act of securing paid employment – into a psyche-based register for calibrating ‘employability’ along a continuum of alleged individual capacities. I demonstrate the multiple ways in which the diagnostic procedures for assessing human capacities were grounded in, and intensified the effects of, racialised and gendered knowledge practices, taken up in turn through policy discourses as vehicles for revealing and speaking the truth about the individual to whom they
were applied. In this way, the inability to find or keep a job of any sort was conceived of as derivative of intelligence, skill or poor vocational choice, made sense of differentially according to whom the job-seeker was understood to be: lunch counter server, stenographer or manual labourer. At the same time, these were totalising practices, always seeking to categorise groups within the population according to what was thought most culturally appropriate. In casting these activities as vectors for the norm – the average – all others fell into or out of place. The maladjusted worker, the man or woman out of place was to become both a new challenge and a new rationale, demonstrating the utility of and pressing need for a comprehensive employment policy.

An important site for the administration of these new techniques of individualising knowledge practices was through an expanded network of public employment offices linked together through a national employment service. From the mid-1930s onward, chief statistician R. H. Coats of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, argued the significance of the public employment office as a site for local administration and statistics-gathering. In his study of the labour market and the social security state in Britain, William Beveridge made the local employment office a key component for the successful operation of any national programme of unemployment insurance. Beveridge argued that without a comprehensive national system of publicly administered local employment exchanges, no unemployment insurance programme could ever succeed.

Personnel experts took the argument further, claiming that the public employment office should be organised according to the same set of scientific principles as the most modern personnel department of the corporation, perhaps even displacing the role of employers and workers in the function of linking the supply and demand functions in the free market for labour. The employment office played a pivotal role, locally, regionally and nationally. Here the individual worker would come to be assessed, examined, and gauged according to the appropriateness and efficiency of visible work habits and allegedly hidden but discoverable interior subjective capacities brought to the surface and exposed through mental testing. From that site, the individual would be referred into training for what was deemed a fitting vocation, directed into a job, or what was more likely for women, right out of the formal waged economy and into the home or domestic service – in any case into a pursuit alleged to appropriately match
apparent aptitude and occupational potential to ensure maximum productivity for industry, home and community. Attention could therefore be directed toward the remediation of the unemployed worker, through rehabilitation and redirection of effort to correct the mismatching of worker and job.

These remedial policy discourses worked in multiple ways: to regulate and discipline, but also to enable and incite in ways which both normalised and pathologised the employment capacities of women and men. At the same time, occupations, skills and phases of industrial development were themselves taken to define the contours of the national labour market. This market was characterised by the discernible economic effects of rising and declining industries, themselves thought to attract groups of working people who could be classed as intrinsically skilled or unskilled based on careful scrutiny of their innate capacities. Moreover, knowledges making use of gendered and racialised precepts were increasingly drawn on to assist in the effort to classify and measure a growing list of labour market behaviours. These behaviours would become vectors for governmental administration, opening up new sites for intervention, signifying and embodying productive potential or, conversely, individual and collective expressions of inefficiencies requiring remediation and correction. At the same time, such behaviours taken up in this way provided explication for other, by now directly related, forms of social malaise.

What began as a question of directing labour flows into essential industries and areas of priority economic activity during the early years of the war, soon became a matter of redirecting labour to prevent anticipated unemployment in the postwar period. The experience of full employment during the war, however, profoundly transformed policy discourses about employability. Full employment, understood as an achievable economic phenomenon, was also to have profoundly transformative effects on discourses concerning citizenship, and, by the postwar period, about economic and social equality for women. These discourses, while they did not abruptly transform ideas about employability,26 articulated a view of public policy that positioned the state more centrally in the shaping and subsequent administration of a national labour market. The regulation and day-to-day administration of the labour market would become a regular feature of state activity. Among the policy officials whose work is considered here, administration of employment policies, and therefore questions concerning the employability of
individual citizens, was increasingly approached as a matter of national interest. In this way, the promise of a risk management approach to employment, in addition to the actuarial management of the unemployment insurance fund, was thought to be realised through an enhanced governmental capacity to increase the employability of labour.

But this was not to be, nor could it be an exercise for the state alone. As the experience of the war demonstrated, productive efficiency was a national objective in which each and all had an important part to play. Efficiency was a social as well as an economic objective, one that could not only mitigate but also potentially eliminate altogether the social instability associated with unemployment. Everyone feared the return to high unemployment once the war was finally over. In fact, most expected it. Not only that, but many also recalled the poor treatment accorded veterans of the Great War. And above all, few doubted the politically charged significance of high male unemployment, for organised labour, for the organised left, or for the male veteran’s associations.

The combined experience of full employment during the Second World War, which brought with it hundreds of thousands of new entrants into the paid work force, and actuarial risk management approaches to unemployment, profoundly transformed relations surrounding employment, unemployment, citizens and the state. The public employment office emerged as an important site through which the state and the community engaged with individual women and men, through the activities of pre-employment and vocational training, referral and placement. These interactions constituted new terrain for social research and investigation, remediation and adjustment. The ‘maladjusted worker’ gained a new identity in the form of the irregularly employed working man or the female unskilled casual labourer. ‘Manpower’ policy became a matter of strategic significance during the war. As the economy reached peak employment, labour shortages began to emerge in critical production areas. Strategies devised to correct these shortages — characterised as shortages of skill — proceeded by seeking out and redirecting alleged industrial inefficiencies, and those who were thought to embody such inefficiencies because of inadequate skill, capacity, training, or all three. Educational psychologists were enlisted in this work. Their efforts expanded into an array of techniques and technologies involving mental testing and personnel selection, training and vocational counselling, techniques
that educational psychologists argued ought to be extended into rehabilitation and adjustment programmes during the postwar period.

Postwar rehabilitation plans drew specifically upon the personnel, together with the technologies and techniques of practitioners associated with the National Committee for Mental Hygiene (Canada), including faculty from the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Toronto. From a variety of academic posts came a range of practitioners who fanned out throughout the services as vocational experts, educational practitioners, psychiatrists and psychologists in both the men's and women's services. Their methods proved influential in guiding the development and implementation of a comprehensive program of postwar rehabilitation and adjustment. However, theirs was not an uncontroversial programme. The burden of a psychiatrist or for that matter a psychologist was a heavy one to bear as not everyone appreciated the significance and social value of this body of professional expertise. Psyche-practitioners confronted veterans' organisations and their supporters, many of whom argued that what male veterans needed most was a job: it was jobs not minds that needed to be adjusted.

The distinction, as it turned out, was far less precise than rehabilitation officials may have hoped, or more strategically made it out to be, since it was precisely through vocational counselling, training and employment rehabilitation that the mental hygiene program was implemented. Intelligence, skill and aptitude emerged as critical categories in postwar rehabilitation planning and programming. Scientific racism and sexism formed the foundation for much of this work and the subsequent knowledge practices developed in the name of mental hygiene, stemming from the constitution of racial typologies of intelligence which had in part comprised the focus of this work throughout the inter-war period. “Am I intelligent enough for this job?” This was the question ex-servicewomen and men were invited to ask themselves. The question embodied the techniques and technologies – the matrix of knowledge practices – practitioners hoped to make the new common sense of vocational and employment counselling.

Practitioners sought to position psychological knowledge practices as an articulation of the normal. Dr. Olive Ruth Russell and her colleague Dr. Jack Griffin of the CNCMH, contended that mental health – or mental hygiene as it was termed during the period – was a neglected but vital area of public policy. Russell was a leading advocate of the emerging field of educational
psychology, associated with the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Toronto. Russell’s work as an Army Examiner with the Canadian Women’s Army Corps provided her with a wide field for the application of mental testing and examination technique and the development of personnel policy for the Department of National Defence. Russell was both a practitioner and a senior bureaucrat whose responsibilities included the development of rehabilitation policy for women. She saw the potential for extending practices developed during the war well into the postwar period.

Throughout the W.W.II period, practitioners like Russell made repeated references to the need for a centralised, systematic program of vocational assessment, intelligence testing and careful personnel selection. The ideal model was one that linked public employment offices with private enterprise. Management engineers like the Montreal firm of Stevenson and Kellogg, along with industrial psychiatrists like Montreal-based McGill psychiatrist Dr. Ewen Cameron, worked closely with the National Selective Service personnel during the war and with the network of employment offices after, busily advancing themselves as leading practitioners in the field of personnel management.

Veteran’s self-help and advice manuals proliferated during the Second World War, as a favoured medium of public policy makers and experts in the area of vocational counselling. The technology of mental testing, together with the technique of the individual case study, lent credence and a strategic impetus to this burgeoning industry of vocational expertise. Charlatans were seen to be as abundant as Canada geese in this period. In a letter to Dr. Olive Ruth Russell, supervisor of women’s rehabilitation at the Department of Veterans’ Affairs in the spring of 1947, a publisher at Ryerson Educational Press was anticipating the deluge and seemed anxious to secure material of the more legitimate expert sort. “I suppose we are going to bring out a lot of books on guidance of all sorts, that will be old and out-of-date very soon,” wrote her colleague at the Press.

The people in Canada who should write them are too busy, and those who are eager are too ignorant. In between there are those who are anxious to fill the long felt want as best they can, and so we have these tentative books. Out of it all is growing something more like a science than anything we have yet had. In the immediate future we shall have to rely upon Ontario, for they are the only Province that has set up machinery of any importance. They have a wider variety of special training schools, are far ahead in vocational highs, and so on. But they are pretty smug!
The country is just now alive with experts on counselling; no two agree. To a poor benighted publisher the woods are full of bird calls... there are people all over the land, with pass BA's looking holes through other people, planning their lives and pushing them around.

Well, I hope someday to save the world by persuading people in droves to read Ryerson books! Write a dandy for me, and then we can all retire to Delta. 

While “looking holes through other people” may well have been an exercise in manipulation in the hands of those considered less expert, it was a preferred mode of governance for state agencies and accredited practitioners. Employment policies and practices worked increasingly through the administration of what were alleged to be the individual subjectivities of women and men, inviting each to participate in an exercise of self discovery, an exercise of uncovering the latent capacities that lay just beneath the surface. Failure to plan one’s occupational pursuits in these terms, as many knew and had experienced at first hand during the Depression, could have disastrous consequences for one’s family, community and self, and above all, the nation. The image of the ‘maladjusted worker’ represented economic, social and personal failure, above all the failure to assess accurately one’s inherent capacities according to the dictates of productive efficiency. In turn, when applied to women, the trope of maladjustment reflected non-compliance with social norms, failure to take up one’s appropriate place in work, home and nation.

I suggest that the subjectivities of working women and men were to be worked up in new ways, as new approaches to vocational counselling and training were devised to anticipate and satisfy the demands of the war-time and postwar economies. Interests of nation, of community and of industry, were broached as coextensive with personal aspirations. The allegedly innate, hidden capacities – the interior of the subject – was intensified as a field for governance by psyche-experts eager to place their specialised areas of expertise at the service of the war-time and postwar policy regime of the Canadian state. These techniques would have enduring effects into the postwar period, as practitioners deliberated over the most appropriate rehabilitation programmes for women and men seeking to take up their private lives in a peacetime economy.

I examine these practices as instances of the ‘conduct of conduct,’ a practice of governance that drew upon the techniques and technologies of the psychology of the individual evident in the development and application of intelligence testing. In what ways was intelligence deployed as an index of social and economic efficiency? By what techniques was ‘intelligence'
taken up within economic space, as both linear scale by which to define and administer subject populations, as well as the key to unlocking one's own allegedly hidden, unique capacities as worker, as mother, student and soldier? In what different ways were groups of women both encouraged and compelled to understand themselves in these terms, and to submit themselves to the techniques developed by the psyche-experts whose battery of tests and self-help manuals held out the promise of everything from suitable vocation and clear occupational choice to healthy and well-adjusted children?

The experience of the Second World War, in the areas of employment and military activity, provided a critical opportunity for the application of these new knowledge practices in the policies, practices and agencies of the Canadian welfare state. I argue that, as the quality of the labour supply became a central concern for the Dominion government during the course of the war, driven as it was by the need to achieve optimum productivity in essential war industries, administrative effectiveness was increasingly understood in terms shaped by psyche-discourses regarding human capacities. Concepts and techniques developed through the work of educational psychologists were placed in the service of personnel and policy administration, brought into the operation of programmes designed to administer the flow of labour. These policies and the relations to which they gave effect collectively inscribed the boundaries of the national labour market.

Occupation, skill and vocation were key categories in the identification of social and industrial efficiency, stability and domestic security. At the same time, employment studies looked to opening up links between occupational skills and alleged innate capacities like intelligence and aptitude. Occupation -- and ultimately one's economic and domestic location -- was itself the subject of study as a guide, a key unlocking what psyche-practitioners regarded as the innate capacities of the individual. These capacities, they argued, were reducible to, delimited by, and expressible in the form of a single quantity: the intelligence quotient. Taken together, these phenomena could be observed, and therefore measured, predicted and directed to achieve greater efficiency, higher output, better productivity performance, all of which accorded the interests of industry and society. They inscribed the employability of the individual within preconceived categories and prescriptive normative standards of class, race, gender and sexuality. Mental testing promised an efficient method for screening military as well as civilian
populations. Once applied to matters of labour policy – to diagnose problems of high turnover, absenteeism, manifestations of 'labour unrest' such as strikes or union organising, or to design and deliver vocational training in an effort to enhance productivity – the promise of mental testing seemed limitless.

In Chapter One, I address key questions of methodology concerning historical narratives of the Canadian welfare state and theories concerning the development of welfare state formations. I examine the theoretical tools which have informed my analysis and historiographic method, specifically theories of governmentality: the study of policy regimes as the formation and mobilisation of discursive fields through the deployment of knowledge practices, techniques and technologies; the positioning of subjects within policy discourses and the teasing-out of policy effects as discernible continuities within historical policy analysis. I review the work of leading welfare state theorists and historians, drawing principally on the work of Gosta Esping-Anderson, Jane Lewis, James Struthers, Ruth Roach Pierson, Ann Shola Orloff, Jane Jenson, Margaret Little and Fiona Williams, together with governmentality theorists including Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, and, of course, Michel Foucault.

The history of state formation in Canada is also a history of the emergence of 'the social' as an arena – a field – for the administration of identities thought to bolster or to threaten the social body, the Canadian nation. Labour market policy is a rich field for historical analysis of this sort, in particular those studies which adopt a more critical scrutiny of unemployment and poverty, examining how these work as administrative categories cast also as social problems, while at the same time operating discursively as individualising and totalising pathologies. Specifically, I argue that discourses about responsible citizenship framed questions of postwar rehabilitation and civilian readjustment as techniques of the self, placing a strategic emphasis on what were increasingly taken up as allegedly innate abilities and inherent qualities of individual women and men. Subjectivity, as Joan Scott has suggested, is constructed through experience, such that we see as subjective ('originating in oneself') the string of interpersonal, material and economic relations “which are in fact social, and in a larger perspective, historical.” 29
In Chapter Two, I take up the question of how discourses about employability were constituted within the policy regime of the Canadian welfare state from the mid-1930s into the early years of the W.W.II. I consider how questions of labour force participation were framed as questions about skill and individual capacity — questions which were highly contingent upon changing relations and conceptualisations of gender, class and race — on the one hand, and those pertaining to level of economic development — or maturity — on the other. I suggest that the employment and employability of designated groups of women were differentially constituted through modernising discourses, organising both worker and work in relation to labour market location. Occupation, productive capacity, indeed every aspect of one’s location within the ‘national labour market’ was articulated as both a function of economic development and as register of what were deeply racialised and gender-based characterisations of human capacities. So, for example, the young, as-yet unmarried, white, middle-class ‘business-woman’ was one embodiment of the Dominion’s future, an economic and social future that was both challenge and promise. The domestic worker in a residential training programme was also a trope for racialised subordination, for the containment of working-class women’s sexuality, and above all the social stability and economic prosperity of the white middle-class home.

During the final years of the Depression, business press and social practitioners alike contended that while economic conditions might be improving, unemployment did not appear to be diminishing in a corresponding manner. The reason, some argued, was because prolonged unemployment was diminishing individual employment capacity of Canada’s jobless, and that some unemployed persons might in fact be ‘mentally unemployable.’ I examine the work of the McGill School for Social Research, to consider the social security research work of Leonard Marsh, as well as employment research conducted at the school. In particular, William Morton’s study, *Occupational Abilities*, actively forged linkages between aptitude, occupation and patterns of employment and unemployment. These studies formed an important research base for the first national-scale study of unemployment conducted by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics in 1935. The DBS study profoundly influenced how these questions were to be approached through public policy. I examine the implications of the report’s findings in the context of the emerging political and administrative rationality of the ‘risk society.’ This was the policy environment within which the W.W.II labour force mapping exercises conducted by the federal Department of
Labour were framed. These exercises, in turn, provided the backdrop for postwar employment planning.

In Chapter Three, I review the work of the National Employment Commission appointed in 1935 by the King administration to study the problem of unemployment and make recommendations to the federal government concerning the federal role in administering unemployment relief. I examine the work of the Women’s Advisory Committee to the NEC to consider how questions of unemployment and employability were addressed. Discourses of domesticity closely informed the committee’s analysis of women’s relationship to the formal waged economy. The committee’s final report constituted the problem of female unemployment through the trope of the young farm girl – a signifier of domestic stability and productive potential. The ‘unattached woman’ was constructed as an agent of gender disruption, drawn both by the allurements of the modern city and by its promise of jobs, both of which were seen to be endemic to modern industrial capitalism. Alternatively, the young rural woman, the ‘farm girl, mobilised a trope of domestic stability, of restored peace and prosperity. The ‘farm girl’ had been driven from her ‘natural’ environment in which her domestic labours were undervalued, at the same time as she was lured by the promise and enticements of the modern city. Female unemployment, the committee concluded, was best resolved by stabilising the rural farm economy and domestic household.

Urban expansion and industrialisation were seen to be drawing young women in particular out of the rural economy and so measures were proposed to arrest this flow, primarily a programme of training for household domestic labour and home-based production. At the same time, however, some committee members were committed to the modernisation of the national employment service, the development of a system of public employment offices, and the implementation of a coherent programme of vocational assessment and guidance. Some women, WAC members pointed out, had a transitory attachment to the labour market for fixed periods of time, chiefly between school and marriage. But the federal government’s responsibility for female unemployment was delimited by the positioning of household employment as the primary form of female waged labour. The NEC conducted two national registrations of unemployed persons receiving federal relief. The registrations were counting and administrative exercises aimed at reducing the volume of relief recipients for whom the federal government was
responsible. Employability was the primary category, the filter, through which relief recipients were to be assessed. Women were invariably cast as 'dependants' upon men. Government measures of the regular workforce systematically dropped women from national labour force tallies. At the same time, the NEC approached female unemployment in much the same way as did the DBS. Domestic service was a safety valve and so, any woman who was unemployed was approached as 'unemployable,' in fact and at the level of theory.

In Chapter Four, I analyse the report of the Labour Supply Investigation Project issued in 1941. I examine strategies devised by officials at the federal department of labour and the National Selective Service, the agency charged with the task of organising the labour supply, to meet the labour requirements of an economy mobilised for total war. Recurring labour shortages threatened to derail the war effort, undermining the capacity to meet scheduled government commitments in military-industrial production to the allied forces. The LSIP identified the potentially lucrative supply of the 'female labour reserve' as the best way for government to secure its production commitments. I consider the various strategies devised to identify, map, assess, train and deploy the 'female reserve.' I review the final report of the Labour Supply Investigation Committee to examine how the deployment of women's labour was framed as a distinct and deliberate policy area for intervention, conceptualised as a matter of assessing skill and aptitude and, more specifically, training. As the level of production increased and the economy 'heated up' near the point of full employment, a discernible shift began to occur, as questions of labour force quality became an increasingly urgent policy matter. Instruments of governance, for example screening measures such as IQ testing, and official spaces such as the public employment office, took on more strategic significance. Labour force phenomena such as absenteeism, job turnover, and chronic shortages, were reclassified as discrete/categorical behaviours, as deficiencies and delinquencies thought to exemplify problems of individual employability which could be, indeed needed to be, identified, monitored and addressed through the appropriate combination of training and job placement.

I follow the practices recommended to mobilise the 'female labour reserve,' specifically the interventions of employment and personnel experts such as the Montreal-based management consulting firm of Stevenson and Kellogg. In this work, monitoring and calibrating the quality of the labour supply would become a legitimate domain of government, one which articulated a
new and elaborated role and scope of activity for the public employment office. This work positioned employment and training policies as a governmental intervention aimed at normalising and regulating labour force activities on the basis of prescriptive forms and relations of work. Such forms consolidated and reified the regulation of female labour in relation to the ideal-typical worker, as an object of governance and subject of administrative intervention.

Chapter Five takes up the work of the NSS WD between 1942 and 1945, tracing attempts of NSS WD staff to manage, regulate, monitor and direct women war workers. I show how the administrative and managerial practices of the division attempted to structure and to modify social relations of work in order to secure the objective of the national enterprise – the conduct of war – while at the same time stabilising the end goal of postwar policy – overseeing the peaceful withdrawal of women from the formal waged economy at war’s end. Proposals for reshaping the public employment office suggested an expanded domain for the application of psyche-based knowledge practices and sites of intervention. I consider the multiple ways in which the NSS WD identified and responded to the ‘manpower’ challenge, in particular through the moral regulatory programme of industrial welfare.

In Chapter Six, I turn to the work of postwar rehabilitation planning for ex-service women. Throughout the postwar planning phase, initiated while the war was underway and continued into the postwar years, each and all were enlisted in the considerable challenge of converting home, community, industry and workplace from the economic rationality of war to the domestic passivity of peace. This work enlisted scores of government administrators and community volunteers, organisations and agencies.

I examine the deployment of personnel assessment, selection and mental testing in the military, to consider how these techniques were deployed through rehabilitation programming. It was here that educational psychologists, particularly those associated with the National Committee for Mental Hygiene (Canada) would attempt to consolidate their professional expertise. Personnel located throughout the rehabilitation administration promoted and deployed a range of mental testing techniques, the benefits of which, or so mental hygiene experts claimed, seemed limitless. Under the veil of scientific objectivity, these psyche-experts steadily advanced their goal of a national standard for mental health, one grounded in the exclusionary ideal of
citizenship: domestic stability, industrial security and national order. Psychological security and individual adjustment were the key terms in these discursive practices. At the same time, mental hygiene knowledge-making practices were deeply inflected by notions of respectability and stability. The ideal-typical household was positioned as the anchor of liberal democratic discourse, a trope mobilised by mental hygiene practitioners as they turned their gaze upon the emerging world order of national stability and security. In this world, the shared national and cultural identity was white, middle-class, educated and above all, organised around the male breadwinner-dependent housewife model.

Rehabilitation legislation contained formal equality provisions of access for women and men who had sacrificed all in the service of nation and defence of democracy. However, rehabilitation programming would follow a path that bore many similarities to the employment policies developed by the federal Department of Labour in co-operation with the provinces, to orchestrate the withdrawal of civilian women from the formal waged economy. I review the policy framework developed to address rehabilitation, vocational training and job placement for women during the postwar period, in particular the key policy issues under review by leading government officials, including Russell at Veteran’s Affairs, and Eaton, supervisor of the Women’s Division, Department of Labour. Briefly, male employment was approached within the liberal framework of entitlement: returning veterans clearly had a right to a job. The question then was how these rights could best be secured, balanced against the employer’s right to hire only the most qualified of available applicants. Debates among veteran’s organisations, business and employer organisations, the labour movement and government about the most appropriate role for the National Employment Service most clearly illustrate the gendered contours of the state’s regulatory strategy in relation to articulation of employer rights, collective bargaining rights, and employment rights in the labour market. The role of the employment office in job placements was hotly debated and as strongly challenged in the name of veterans’ rights to employment. Even as women veterans were explicitly identified as equal participants, equally entitled to all postwar rehabilitation programmes and credits, there was little intention to intercede directly into the labour market or the workplace on their behalf. There was no equivalent discourse of employment rights for women.
Finally, in Chapter Seven, I examine postwar training and redeployment policies and practices designed to secure the withdrawal of women civilian war workers from the war economy. I review the organisation, conceptual framework and recommendations of the final report issued by the Committee on the Postwar Problems of Women. I consider also the work of the NSS WD, beginning with the national Pre-Employment Training Survey, a report which comprised the basis for postwar employment programming for women. Stabilising the household and averting postwar unemployment were the twin goals informing employment policy during this period. From strategic economic asset, women were now viewed as a potentially disruptive force, destabilising the wage-setting mechanisms of the labour market. The challenge, at least as it was framed by policy practitioners like Eaton, lay in how government might secure women’s peaceable withdrawal from the formal waged economy while at the same time upholding the gender-equality provisions to which Canada was signatory through international convention and within domestic rehabilitation legislation. Women were accorded formal equality through a discourse of liberal choice within the framework of contract theory, eliding the material effects of oppression grounded in race, class, gender and sexuality. The household, meanwhile, was positioned as primary social unit and the primary unit of social policy: any happy democracy depended upon happy homes. Within the emerging social security state, women’s first, only and true vocation lay within the household. Women’s employability had been widely scrutinised during the war as a key factor in the labour shortages emerging in essential industries. By the war’s end, women’s postwar employment was shaped by discourses about domesticity and employability.

I examine the development of the federal government’s program for postwar training and employment policy through the National Employment Service and the Canadian Vocational Training branch of the federal Department of Labour. I examine a sample of training programs developed to direct particular groups/categories of women into a narrow range of occupations. Training and employment policies drew directly on notions about aptitudes, intelligence and productive capacities to prescribe and predict appropriate occupations and labour market activity. For those women who insisted upon working, the NSS WD deployed training as a strategy to direct women into those occupations for which they were deemed suitable. The strategy of choice become one of ‘upgrading’ occupations in historically low-waged industries facing chronic labour shortages after the war, by ‘upgrading’ the individual. I consider training
programmes developed in the occupational groups of domestic labour, needletrades and hospital ward aide, to consider the multiple ways in which pre-employment training and related personnel techniques were deployed to counter labour shortages, stabilise the labour supply and suppress women's resistance to entering these 'traditional female' occupations. In each case, the 'quality of labour' was the central problem to be addressed thorough policy.
Endnotes


For a study of the regulation of women through social welfare programming by both state and community agencies, see Margaret Jane Hillyard Little, No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997).


11 See Denise Riley, "Am I That Name?" Feminism and the Category of ‘Women’ in History (Minnesota: University of Minneapolis, 1988).

12 Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose summarise this view as follows: “Personal autonomy is not the antithesis of political power, but a key term in its exercise, the more so because individuals are not merely subjects of power but play a part in its operations.” See Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, “Political Power beyond the State: problematics of government,” *British Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 2 (June 1992), p. 174.

For a critical analyses of the general tendency amongst some governmentality theorists to over-emphasise the state/government as the sole site/field of governance and thus under-emphasise the operation of agencies conceptualised as ‘outside’ or beyond the periphery of the state, including oppositional movements, see Pat O’Malley, Lorna Weir and Clifford Shearing, “Governmentality, criticism, politics,” *Economy and Society* 26, no. 4 (November 1997), pp. 501-517.


For a recent examination of the historical implications of trade union participation in tripartism, in particular the impetus toward institutionalising a ‘split-level’ economy that had the effect of privileging high-waged, unionised, skilled male workers and of deepening red-baiting tactics in the ensuing era of Cold War political rationality, see Peter S. McInnis, “Teamwork for Harmony: Labour-Management Production Committees and the Postwar Settlement in Canada,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 77, no. 3 (September 1996), pp. 317-352.

14 Sefton MacDowell, op. cit., p. 10.


16 See, for example, Robert Boyer and Daniel Drache, eds., *States Against Markets: The limits of globalisation* (New York: Routledge, 1996).


Yet another dimension in the historical analysis of how labour markets come to be constituted as such involves the study of variance and continuity in labour market ‘space’ and scope. As Grantham and MacKinnon put it, “[e]conomists study how given market structures produce specific outcomes. To historians, however, the question is how that structure came to be what it is.” Immigration policy and labour ‘standards’ combine with broader regulatory practices including recognition of unions as collective bargaining agents, occupational health and safety and other ‘employment standards’ policy.

Finally, the regionalisation of labour markets – a theme addressed in this study – is identified as “most obvious in the sphere of social regulation in the conditions of employment … [which] impose national or cultural definitions on labour markets.” See George Grantham and Mary MacKinnon, Labour Market Evolution: The Economic History of Market Integration, Wage Flexibility, and the Employment Relation (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 4, 5.


23 Margaret Hobbs, op. cit.


26 Theda Skocpol has developed the concept of policy feedback to describe policy effects in the longer duration and in particular their unintended effects across different electoral regimes, state formations and for that matter industrial, market and social formations. Skocpol included a most instructive discussion of her methodology in See Theda Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1992).

27 In fact, as Pierson has pointed out, the use of the term "womanpower" gained currency during the war and then disappeared entirely by the war's end.

28 NAC MG 31, K13, Volume 1, file 1, Letter marked 'personal' from Ryerson Press to Dr. Olive Ruth Russell, May 19, 1947 (n.a.).

Chapter 1

Welfare state theory and historical policy analysis: disturbing the worker-welfare paradigm

Leading theorists of the welfare state have relied on universalising schematics and categorising templates which are themselves grounded in evolutionary and teleological frameworks associated with modernist thought. Welfare states have been analysed as institutions associated with progress, particularly economic progress. At the same time, feminist theorists have analysed models of welfare state forms as sites of oppression and as locations through which to work toward equality measures. These projects are vulnerable to criticism for casting ‘woman’ as a unitary subject of social policy and political agency. Welfare state formation is, I argue, a narrative of nationhood and of empire. Its key components of citizenship, universality, entitlement and equality constitute a series of discursive fields that draw on and produce critical subject positions within social policy discourses.

It is important to consider historically how citizenship identities are mobilised through concepts of nation and nationhood, as part of what Bergeron describes as a “narrative of exclusivity.”¹ To do this, I use the concepts of governmentality and political rationality, as these have been deployed in the work of Miller and Rose. In a governmentality framework, population is constituted as a problem and therefore programme of government. A primary concern for governmental activity is to constitute and to scrutinise, regulate and administer populations. Population becomes a political problem of government.² These theoretical tools make it possible to consider how policy discourses operate historically within welfare state regimes through changes in the techniques and technologies of governance. These are also useful concepts by which to ground social policy discourses within state forms, at least with respect to answering the question: How do policy regimes change? The materiality and agency of change – the ‘why’ – remains elusive in this model of discursive analysis, as do the material effects of social relations of oppression grounded in race, class, and gender. For that, it is necessary to consider how social totalities are constituted by and mobilised through systems of patriarchy, imperialism and capitalism.³

Typologies of Welfare State Regimes

A central theme in the literature about the Canadian welfare state concerns the administrative, legislative and near-mechanistic features of income security programmes
operating as policy instruments designed to regulate the flow of labour through the economy. I consider that this theme is located in part within an evolutionary model of welfare state development, a model that is sufficiently elastic to accommodate variation attributable to culture and political struggle (or difference), but still comprehensive and coherent enough to chart as well as to predict (in time and space) the path of policy intervention in and regulation of capitalist markets and industrialising economies.4

Banting summarises the prevailing theme in conventional Canadian policy studies as follows: "The need for new forms of social protection in an industrial setting exists independently of the nature of the political order, and democratic and non-democratic nations alike have responded with often remarkably similar levels of social security spending."5 What is unique about the Canadian state, according to this account, is the balance of cultural forces at work, on the one hand, and limited fiscal capacities of municipal and provincial governments within federalism, on the other. So, a partial understanding can be attributed to "the individualism of a pioneer community and the conservatism of Catholic Quebec [which] were undoubtedly important in the evolution of income security programs."6 Even more significant was the inability of municipalities and provincial governments to absorb the growing demand of social programming on their budgets, prompting a massive centralisation of fiscal responsibility for income security through the federal government. The historical compromise lay in imposing limits on the redistributive income effects between classes, principally thorough the provision of social insurance.

Struthers has shown how poor law traditions were not so readily disbanded, even as industrial capitalism matured and a modernised system of universal social insurance was gradually introduced at the level of the federal government, however reluctantly. In his study of unemployment in Canada during the Depression, Struthers traces the interplay of cultural and economic forces in the development of the unemployment insurance programme.7 The final report of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations, the Rowell-Sirois Report (1940), was the blueprint for post-war social reform in Canada. According to Struthers, that report, together with the Marsh Report on Social Security and the Green Book proposals, laid the groundwork for the Canadian welfare state during the 1940s, effectively breaking down the
"categorical approach towards poverty by paving the way for the Canada Assistance Plan of 1966." The introduction of unemployment assistance, in taking policy approaches one step further away from poor relief traditions, was another significant step along the path toward the universalisation of social programmes. Thus, the National Employment Commission (1936) was instrumental in establishing a sound actuarial basis for a system of unemployment insurance, developing a risk-management approach that distributed the associated costs of unemployment equitably across all regions.

Where the problem arose, according to Struthers, was that roughly half of the workforce was left out of the system. For the social work profession, provision of assistance for this large segment of the population was a matter for public assistance, not unemployment assistance. Private charities wanted no part of such a weighty responsibility. But the Canadian Welfare Council, the voice of professional social work, was selflessly committed to finding a rational and well-ordered solution. Struthers points out that "no issue had higher priority within the social work profession than resolving the question of responsibility for the jobless with no insurance benefits." Establishing the level of assistance required was, apparently, a comparatively straightforward process of applying a family needs test which balanced need against work incentives, from which emerged the Canadian Standard Living Allowance.

Explaining the significance and the central dilemma of unemployment insurance provision, Struthers outlines how the central problem confronting government was one of achieving the correct balance between cultural/political imperatives – enforcing the work ethic – and macroeconomic objectives – income redistribution through fiscal policy instruments, including UI. This was a key design issue at the core of the integration of Keynesianism into the Canadian welfare state. The debate was as follows:

[Should unemployment insurance be used to redistribute income or to enforce the work ethic?] The answer was clearly the latter. In the first place, the department argued, under any insurance system those most in need of benefits were least likely to get them because their poor employment record would disqualify them from frequent payments. Moreover, the constant danger of over-insurance (less eligibility) made it impossible for the government to devise a flat-rate benefit that would preserve the work ethic and provide an adequate standard of living across the country.
In this, Struthers argues, the “sterner imperatives” of labour market need for a constant supply of low-waged labour undermined the emergence of welfare state initiatives, leaving to state bureaucratic officials the task of formulating policy measures that would not work in contradiction with market requirements. One way to accomplish this was for Ottawa to resist accepting responsibility for unemployment, forestalling centralised and enlightened Keynesian supply management approaches. The other was to meld punitive social control measures of the poor law heritage with limited state intervention, through policy measures designed to entrench a two-tiered labour market.

The emergence of the Canadian welfare state, then, is generally regarded as the productive compromise of fixed battles between capital and labour, a compromise which tempered the excesses of industrial capitalism by assuring the redistribution of income and guaranteeing the social reproduction of labour. The social formation under modern capitalism, it is argued, encompasses a move away from more punitive poor law traditions to the redistributive model of universalised social insurance. Marxist studies of the Canadian welfare state contend that structural crises increasingly occur through different stages of economic development in the form of contradictions between modes of production and modes of reproduction. James Dickinson explains this transition and ongoing tension within welfare state policy regimes:

Indeed, the effective reproduction of labour power under capitalism, especially at the collective or class level, appears to require that the state articulate and implement a social policy which transcends the contradictions that affect reproduction and the limitations which capitalism places on alternative solutions. Further, as capitalist social formations mature, the state is increasingly implicated in the organisation and structuring of the social reproduction process.¹⁰

According to Dickinson, the emergence of social insurance systems is the product of a dialectic which sees the working out in the social formation of the competing claims of maturing modes of production and of reproduction. Social insurance itself secures the reproduction of capitalist social relations of production. Legitimacy is accorded recipients of social insurance through two institutionalised social forms: through contract, in the form of contributions through work, and through status, whether as property-less wage-earner or as citizen.
In an important move away from the economism of marxist feminist arguments, Jenson argues convincingly against the analytic slip that moved directly from the needs of capital to the actions of the state; from the observation that the state participated in women’s oppression, producing concrete effects of such oppression, to an explanation for why this must be so. More importantly, Jenson questions whether such conditions prevailed everywhere, all the time, for all women in the same way, specifically through policies concerned with households and reproduction. This mode of analysis, Jenson argues, could not accommodate the historical contingency and geopolitical variation so clearly evident in comparative studies of welfare states:

Using the concept of ‘reproduction’ to account for the relationship between the capitalist state and women, it moves immediately from the assumption that the capitalist state plays a role in the reproduction of capitalism, to a description of the contribution of the state to the oppression of women through the reinforcement of the ideology of the family wage and specific policies. Gender cannot be reduced to material conditions alone, but has instead to be explained and understood as mobilised through political discourse. Such an analysis, she suggests, “leads to an analysis which concentrates less on the basis of difference than on the way that difference is constituted in any social formation.” Further, Jenson argues, it is “only by examining the universe of political discourse within which meaning is constructed can we understand the way that employment and sexual differences were given political meaning” within the context of any comparative studies between welfare states.

Certainly, so-called protective legislation for women factory operatives among others was directed toward the entrenchment and codification of sexual segmentation in the labour market. Ursel, along with Russell, agrees that in no way did the implementation of so-called protective legislative measures introduced at the provincial level in Canada during the inter-war period act as a disincentive to employers. Creating a separate legal category for women workers did not disrupt existing segregation of women clustered in specific sectors across manufacturing industries like box-making and food processing. Instead, these measures boosted the efforts of organised labour to keep women out of otherwise ‘all-male’ occupations/manufacturing sectors. This, in essence, is what the state as mediator does. The point is not to bar women from paid employment but to balance, through regulatory intervention, the contradictory demands and recurring crises that erupt between modes of production and modes of reproduction – between
work and family. The result is what Cameron has termed an occupational welfare system: that is, a post-war regime of social welfare built upon a “bifurcated system of labour market regulation.”

During the inter-war and post-W.W.II period, capitalist markets increasingly pervaded dimensions of social and economic life. It was thought to be in the national interest for the state to regulate social and political relations in a manner consistent with the rational collective aims of advanced industrial democracies. The principal model drawn upon here was the work of T.H. Marshall, whose study of the political development of modern capitalism contributed most substantially to subsequent studies of welfare state forms. His widely circulated 1949 essay outlined the citizenship trinity: civil rights (participation in market exchanges and contracts), political rights (collective organisation and participation) and social rights (guarantees of social provision providing at least the means for basic subsistence). Citizenship forms made possible the extension and deepening of capitalist markets, ensuring that capitalist societies would remain governable, Marshall argued. Through these rights, market forms and forces would be rationalised, while capitalism as an economic system would be made both socially legitimate and sustainable. The post-W.W.II consensus – a critical moment for the social democratic project and for the aetiology of the welfare state – brought together the basic components of this post-war world, including Beveridge-inspired social policy, Keynesian-based macroeconomic management, and the fordist model of employment relations. This consensus was held in place through mass-based production and consumption, the family wage and state redistributive social provision to those recognised as legitimate bearers of social citizenship rights. At the centre of the post-war consensus was a troubling paradox, however: the welfare state was rooted in a model of economic growth and continual market expansion, such that “economic growth was seemingly the irreplaceable foundation of the traditional welfare state.”

States and Markets: Securing the ‘interests’ of worker-citizens

Esping-Anderson approaches the welfare state as a dynamic and autonomous actor, capable of achieving partial autonomy from the economy. State formation and state policies are historically contextualised, he argues, and are, therefore, partially contingent upon political agency. His model pushed analysis of state forms beyond the linear evolutionary model of economic/political
development informing the work of classical liberal theorists, to understand state forms in terms of social relations rather than fixed categories. In his model, welfare states are dynamic autonomous political agents rather than static mechanistic entities. The model included three state forms: social democratic (institutionalised reallocation of social provision, based on universalised provision and the highest degree of de-commodification of labour); conservative (residual welfare model of corporatist regimes, organised around the principle of subsidiarity, supplementing private provision); and liberal (social insurance model in which social provision was based on a means-tested, residual principle).

According to Esping-Anderson, welfare states had to be analysed, not according to varying degrees of egalitarianism, but based on the degree of stratification (ranging from strong individualism to total universalism) and de-commodification embedded in the policies and practices of the regime. Political agency, in the form of class formation, political mobilisation and coalition-building were understood as major determining factors in the ultimate development of welfare state institutions. In this, Esping-Anderson did not rely on a simple reductionist model of working class mobilisation. Approached as a matter of political class formation, his study attempted to trace how social policies “delineate social identities, status communities and solidarities.” This form of analysis broadens our capacity to understand how the political and the economic are so closely intertwined. Economic determinist models (of classical economists, some marxists and now neo-liberals) would more readily read off the political from the economic base. For example, Keynes and Beveridge theorised social protection policy as totally distinct from labour market policy. Esping-Anderson, in contrast, sees this assumption as a central problem of the neo-classical model, one leading to a failure to account for the role played by the welfare state in the formation and day-to-day operation of labour markets. As he concludes, “A theory of what role the welfare state plays for mobility behaviour, job tenure, and more generally, for labour market rigidities and stratification, has yet to emerge.” So, for example, Esping-Anderson argues that social policy has been transformed systematically in order to “deliberately reshape the clearing mechanisms in the labour market.” The leading question then becomes: To what extent has social policy (have social-welfare criteria) dominated over the market in the allocation of employment?
Overall, Esping-Anderson established four major themes that have closely informed subsequent welfare state studies: the separation of states and markets at the level of theory; the process of de-commodification as the basis for state social provision; the development of a specific notion of social citizenship, closely linked to that of the social wage, outside of and responsive to inequalities in market provision; and the distinct separation of public (states and markets) and private (individual non-workers, families and households). This typology is generally considered useful to the extent that the model closely links work and welfare. It fails to acknowledge, let alone account for, the sexual division of labour between paid and unpaid work, specifically caring work. Lewis suggests that these elements of Esping-Anderson’s model be retained where they permit closer analysis of the links between economy and state, between paid work and welfare/social policies “that permit, encourage or discourage the de-commodification of labour.” However, assessments of varying levels of labour force participation rates – that is studies that do not go beyond the worker-welfare schema – cannot tell us very much about what occurs outside the public sphere of the market and the state, where Esping-Anderson concentrates his attention. As Lewis points out, “women disappear from the analysis when they disappear from labour markets.”

A central weakness in Keynesian economic theory (and in classical economics generally) is its inability to acknowledge the household as a site of production and distribution as well as consumption. Macroeconomic theory relies upon the continued elision of unpaid caring work within the broader measure of economic activity. Further, of course, the household continues to be (mis)represented as private – non-economic – space, somehow outside capitalist markets and outside the state. We need to be able to look beyond the straightforward measure of the redistributive mechanisms of social provision. Where approaches following on the social democratic model of welfare state development, like Esping-Anderson’s, appear to argue that the political development of welfare state regimes is driven by the dynamics of class coalitions, shifting with the relative strength of working-class organisations and political capacity, western feminist analysts consider that the basis for restructuring within welfare state regimes has been the product of changes in gender relations. One of the key insights of an analysis that takes account of gender relations is that, contrary to social democratic assertions/assumptions, gender interests do not always or necessarily coincide with class-based interests. This is central to further theorising about welfare state formation in the broader context of race, demography and empire, a step I think necessary to a
richer understanding of how gender categories work through and in relation to racialized categories, and in the context of class-based social relations. It is in this way that we can move toward a fuller understanding of how projects of nation and nation-building narratives are centrally implicated in the formation of, and the development of knowledge about, welfare state policy regimes.

Like the social democratic project generally, Esping-Anderson’s analysis can comfortably accommodate the dynamics of political change and identities grounded in class formation and relations. Citizenship rights are taken up as gender-neutral with respect to productive and reproductive labour, access to benefits and entitlements, and the capacity to mobilise and activate social and political rights. Concentrating policy studies and welfare state typologies in the public sphere reinforces and reproduces the systematic organisation of gender relations, marginalisation and inequality. Relegating women to the private sphere has historically resulted in women’s “partial individualisation” in policy regimes. It is here that women have gained entitlements through dependent status within heterosexual family structures.

Western feminist strategies for gender equality have largely concentrated on the worker-welfare paradigm, seeking alternatively to reshape labour markets and/or strengthen women’s capacity to form and maintain autonomous households. The relationship of family policy to social and economic policy is one area thought to be critical to what Jenson describes as the modernisation of women’s citizenship. Here, one of the broader trends of Keynesianism informing most western welfare state formations has been the divergence of social and economic policy from family. An implication of this divergence lies in the unhinging of access to social provision from labour market participation – back to the de-commodification theme. Achieving full citizenship rights requires that women have the capacity to reconcile the competing demands of paid work and caring work, and a strengthened capacity to form and maintain autonomous households. Of course, since women are centrally implicated by family policy, the more social policy regimes are seen to de-gender such policy by drawing it directly into the orbit of policy fields intended, for example, to fight poverty rather than increase birth rates, the better off women are alleged to be.30
Lewis outlines a model for policy analysis that looks directly at how welfare states support different breadwinner models. To what extent is women’s participation in the paid labour force encouraged or discouraged? And, in a broader critique of the de-commodification thesis, in what ways does women’s unpaid labour support different social policy regimes? Lewis delineates a continuum across which welfare states are distributed according to the division between paid and unpaid work and household labour: strong male breadwinner model, a modified breadwinner state that is gender-neutral, and dual breadwinner states. Strong breadwinner regimes mobilise women’s identities as mothers; moderate breadwinner regimes mobilise women’s identities as mothers and as workers. Orloff suggests that Lewis’ model does not take account of the differential position of single-parent households headed by women. Instead, she proposes a model which considers the impact of state policies in four key areas: the character of family ideology; entitlement (including the basis for, recipient and benefit unit, contribution unit and mode of taxation); employment and wage polices; and the organisation of care work. A key dimension is the capacity for women to form and to maintain autonomous households. Orloff suggests that we look to the following: state-market relations (for example, the provision of welfare through families and through states/markets); stratification, specifically the effects of social provision by the state on gender relations, looking in particular to its transformative effects in the distribution of paid and unpaid labour; social citizenship rights and de-commodification; and access to paid work.

The basis for both Lewis and Orloff’s critiques is particularly evident in Esping-Anderson’s explanation for how welfare state regimes addressed that favoured chestnut of social democratic governments: maintaining full employment, a dimension of policy considered coterminous with the interests of capital in pursuing the aims of industrial rationalisation, and the interests of trade unions in enhancing workers’ access to the distribution of surplus labour through increased monetary and non-monetary benefits. The following passage reveals many of the assumptions operative throughout Esping-Anderson’s model, from the construction and operation of labour markets, to the nationalist and racialized dynamics at work in the context of race, demography and empire – what I consider to be central to the nation-building script of welfare state forms in Western liberal democracies:
But, early retirement (and other means of reducing labour supply, such as repatriating foreign workers and encouraging women to remain at home) also came to serve broader aims of maintaining full employment, especially in countries where fiscal and monetary policies were restrictive and active manpower polices marginal.\textsuperscript{34}

In contrast to the presumed mobility of capital and fixed nature of labour, this passage certainly implies that labour is in fact far more mobile if denied national identity and accompanying citizenship rights: in other words, the denial of political agency to women and to so-called foreign workers at the level of theory is the price to be paid if we are to retain one of the most fundamental premises of the social democratic project, and the ancillary goal of the Keynesian welfare state (KWS), to maintain full employment through the correct mix of macro, fiscal, social and labour market policy.\textsuperscript{35} Immigration policy and related labour market strategies, together with broader macroeconomic and social policies must be assessed for how they work as part of a coherent policy regime, considered explicitly in the context of race, gender and demography, as well as historically with respect to narratives of empire and of nation.

According to Esping-Anderson, Marshall was correct in observing that an important feature in the evolution of liberal democracies in the post-W.W.II period was their capacity to confer social rights on the citizenry. However, the argument could be extended even further if welfare states were seen as direct participants, determining and actively shaping the stratification and organisation of social relations. In this way, social rights could “push back the frontiers of capitalist power” and thus fuel the social democratic project of regulating capitalism, while legitimating its capacity to govern. Citizenship, then, could out-determine class: “one’s status as a citizen will compete with, or even replace, one’s class position.”\textsuperscript{36} As Jenson has argued, proponents of the project of social democracy are deeply invested in claiming the welfare state as a working-class victory.\textsuperscript{37} Indeed, Esping-Anderson makes precisely this point when he suggests that, while for Marshall social citizenship constituted an end goal in itself, citizenship forms can be further extended as a “means by which social democracy can surmount obstacles to its own formation.”\textsuperscript{38} The central question, one taken up by feminist theorists whose work is considered here, then, was to determine how various states have structured social citizenship through the process of de-commodification. That is, for Esping-Anderson, “the range of human needs that are given the status of social right is a central definitional issue with regard to the identification
of welfare-state regimes." To do this, Esping-Anderson makes an important distinction between the state (law, legislation = public) and the rest (family, individual = private), since, as he argues, "this is the only meaningful way of differentiating social rights from the varieties of contractual arrangements." Through an expanded notion of social rights, human needs are decommodified, removed from the purview of the market-wage relation. This subsequent form of provision, the social wage, is defined as "the share of a nation’s resources that is distributed according to social rather than strict market criteria."

**Developing a feminist critique of the social democratic project: gender-relations studies**

Studies of welfare state regimes are, for the most part, organised around the typology of worker-welfare. The ideal-typical worker is engaged in paid labour in the formal labour market, is entitled to full citizenship status accorded through the nation-state, and draws the social/economic/political benefits of citizenship accordingly. This typology has been rightly criticised by feminist theorists considered here, among them gender-relations theorists, for failing to take account of gender relations and/or for reflecting a ‘male bias.’ A key site of critique is the elision in the worker-welfare typology of the male breadwinner model that lies at the core of welfare state formations. There is, however, more at stake in such studies than a failure to account for gender. In fact, this typology reflects a particular way of theorising relations of gender and of race, and how both work juxtaposed to class, to be taken up and acted upon through policy regimes as well as in day-to-day practices and relations. Gender-relations analyses perceive gender and likewise race as relatively discrete, fixed and stable categories capable of being ‘factored into’ policy studies of how, for example, states, markets and social institutions interact. This form of policy analysis then proceeds to consider the impact of this or that policy on women, such that, for example, women’s labour market participation may rise or decline as a measurable policy effect, intended or not. The welfare state takes on added significance as a state form that implicitly (for example, through the operation of market regulation or collective provision of socialised labour forms) and explicitly (through equity-seeking measures) recognises and moves to remediate the otherwise unequal position of specified social groups, such as women, disadvantaged by the operation of markets. The central policy issue, then, is how state interventions can correct the allocative and distributive inefficiencies – experienced as inequality – of various markets and market forms.
The male breadwinner model has remained a middle-class ideal, however, since the majority of working-class women have always engaged in some form of paid labour indirectly within or at the margins of the formal waged economy. At the same time, through the principle of subsidiarity, some welfare states (for example, Britain and Canada) have tied women more closely into the male breadwinner model by tying welfare entitlements to the family. Freedom from male breadwinners, the capacity to form autonomous households, and to achieve economic and bodily integrity have comprised the more fundamental political objectives for second-wave western feminist mobilisation in relation to the welfare state. However, these demands have also limited the analytical and political capacities of western feminism in ways that have, at times, uncritically mobilised citizenship rights and entitlement claims in ways that are exclusionary and potentially intolerant of difference. As recent discussions about the positioning and activism of maternalist feminists in welfare state history make clear, not all women share the same path to equality in the context of welfare state forms, or narratives of race, demography and empire.

Maternalist feminism was directly implicated in US state formation, in ways that organised difference according to the normative concepts of ‘woman’ drawn directly from the dominant culture of white, bourgeois, performatively heterosexual women. Certainly, recent studies, including Gordon’s history of welfare provision in the United States New Deal administration, have challenged earlier women’s history scholars to identify the racialised and class-based discourses and political objectives that underscored the work of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century maternal feminists. Mink points out that “maternalists serviced women’s inequality but did not contest it” in a policy framework that ultimately substituted services for rights. Women’s economic independence was never an objective of welfare policy. The relationship of women of colour to the state has historically been as subjects of maternalist discourse. The apparent democratisation of welfare, identified in the work of Piven, for example, has been accompanied by intensified racialization of welfare politics and policies. As Mink explains, “the long-standing, structural coincidence of race, gender, low wages, and poverty meant that a democratised welfare would serve disproportionate numbers of women of colour.” Mink’s critique of white bourgeois feminists cuts directly to the core of the latter’s alleged
labour market bias, the defence of women’s right to work outside the home as a principal articulation of women’s social citizenship rights.

Historical studies documenting the work of white, middle-class women in the development of welfare state formations and policy regimes have provided a more critical understanding of how gender has been taken up and gender-relations organised in welfare states. At the same time, these studies have sparked intense debate over their use of normative conceptions of ‘woman,’ concepts which reflect, organise and essentialize racialized and class-based binaries of the white woman and the Other. In her review of studies detailing the reproduction of gender hierarchy and inequality in welfare states, Orloff describes how the concept of social policy regimes has contributed to analyses that consider how state practices in turn transform practices and relations of gender. So, for example, social policies supporting mothering, parenting and childhood can be described as pro- or anti-natalist, taken up and transformed in ways that fundamentally change how gender is organised and gender-based identities mobilised across different welfare state formations. These are, then, institutionalised patterns of welfare state provision establishing systematic relations between the state and social structures of conflict, domination and accommodation. Such patterns refer to the terms and conditions under which claims may be made on the resources of the state. These regimes are to be found in both individual institutions of the welfare state and in common patterns cutting across domains of social provision, such as health or income maintenance.50

Recent studies of pro/anti-natalist tendencies in social policy models have significant implications for studies of welfare state formation and macroeconomic policy, particularly notions of scarcity and national (human) resources and competitiveness of nation-states, singly and in relation to empire/common-wealth; in addition to the development of racialised knowledge and knowledge practices pertaining to birth-rates and related national statistics.51 It is here that we can delineate the boundaries of race and nation that actively organise (il)legitimate social and economic forms of work, of motherhood, sexuality and citizenship, efficiency and productivity. It is also here that the question of ‘woman’ becomes most contested. It is assumed that women’s separate gender interests, and by implication women’s special relationship to the
state, can be read off from policies linked to reproduction and, historically, from activism characterised as determined through the interests of feminist maternalism.\textsuperscript{52}

It is at this point that we must reconsider how gender is taken up in the context of recent attempts to re-theorise welfare state and social policy regimes, in an effort to understand how normative concepts of 'woman' as undifferentiated – and gender-based interests as universalising across welfare state regimes – can in fact reproduce and reinforce the very inequalities we claim to want to overcome. Western feminist attempts to theorise patriarchy and state formation, at least until the 1990s, have been confounded by static concepts of gender and class, on the one hand, and models of economic evolution which posit a straight line of development from pre-capitalist to industrial capitalist regimes. Caught within this theoretical framework, we find little evidence of how social relations have been organised around and been transformative of racial identities across different social policy regimes. Majority debate, in fact, did not concern itself with race at all, but instead with the historic and strategic interaction between patriarchy and capitalism. Race, considered static and discrete (as were gender and class for that matter), was either treated as an additive, or approached within a liberal discursive framework of discrimination and pluralism.

Attempts to make gender do the work of class are found to be similarly limited. For example, Kish Sklar has suggested that maternal feminists stepped into the void left by an absence of class consciousness on the part of the working class in the US. In her study of feminist activists in American welfare state formation, Kish Sklar argues that “using gender as a substitute for class strategies, women championed more than motherhood.” In this way, Kish Sklar substantiates her broader contention that, in the historical evolution of the welfare state, one social movement (rooted in gender) could substitute for another (rooted in class).\textsuperscript{53} She assumes a single road to welfare state formation (with variance only in the ‘path’ leading to the end goal of the KWS): that is, while we may have different historical actors playing key roles, we have all moved along toward the shared common objective, such that “women’s activism served as a surrogate for working-class social-welfare activism.”\textsuperscript{54} From this analysis (one which shares some features in common with Skocpol’s description of white women’s activism and apparent trade union dormancy in the history of state formation in the US),\textsuperscript{55} Kish Sklar traces
the strategic essentialism deployed by women activists operating within and at the periphery of state agencies. Gender clearly did provide, as Kish Sklar states, a wedge through which "freedom of contract could be breached": this was the vital first step toward moderating employer resistance to basic employment standards, like occupational health and safety. However, such essentializing slides from activist strategy to analytic end-goal. From looking at how maternal feminists 'played the gender card' as a strategic choice, we are soon caught up between separate moral universes of male and female activism: "Whereas the predominant moral vision of men's political culture tended to regard the state as a potential enemy of human liberty, the moral vision of women's political culture viewed the state as a potential guarantor of social rights."

The notion of gender-specific cultural values only works, I think, in an historiographic universe devoid of race, of class, a universe looking very much like the eugenic world-view Kish Sklar examines in her study. Certainly, these activists saw themselves as capable of transcending class interests, correcting the excesses of industrial capitalism while cleansing the white race of all manner of impurities (whether manifested as sexual deviance, racial variety, mental and physical 'degeneracy') in the pursuit of their vision of a socially just world. The "dangerous social divisions" which it was in the interests of the state to address were those thought to threaten the white, bourgeois family: 'unskilled' and irregularly employed working men and women; Southern blacks, Asian migrant workers and native people; individuals incarcerated in various state and extra-state facilities, designated as feeble-minded, as criminal, or as simply 'the poor.'

It is necessary to investigate how 'interests' are constituted as such, whether as women's, workers' or, for that matter, those of the nation and the state. That is, it is possible to trace the articulation of interests historically, including the assignment of interests and needs to subject-positions within policy discourses. Pringle and Watson suggest that we understand 'interests' not as self-constituted identities, but as 'differences' whose identity is constituted relationally, constantly dissolving, transforming and redefining in relation to counter/other identities: the outcomes of particular policies will depend not purely on the limits placed by 'structures' but on the range of discursive struggles which define and constitute the state and specific interests, from one moment to the next.
It is important to understand how discourses of citizenship – organised through and constitutive of notions about universality, equality and interests – are historically located also within colonising projects, and to address how rights and relations are comprised through the differentiation and stratification of rights. Nakano Glenn suggests that citizenship cannot be approached as a fixed, legal category. Certainly it is deeply imbricated by class, race and gender, sexuality and ability, subject to negotiation and variance across multiple boundaries particularly in relation to notions of whiteness. Nakano Glenn suggests that we look more closely at variations in state structures, at how the allocation of citizenship benefits and rights have interacted with local and regional governments in order to accomplish racial objectives.

**Welfare state formation as a narrative of nation**

I locate discourses about welfare state formation within hegemonic narratives of nationhood, following Benedict Anderson’s analysis of nation as “imagined community.” I argue that such narratives are structured through economic rationalities as well as cultural forms. Statistical categories such as labour force participation rates and measures of GDP, definitions of full employment and inflation, become central to the quantification and subsequent measure of progress as exercises of governance, processes which are in turn thought to be productive of equality within welfare state regimes. These concepts organise economic reality, and our experience of that reality, in ways that shape our location as subjects within/acting through policy discourses. A leading example here, of course, is access to forms of social provision like welfare or unemployment insurance. From a critical approach to policy – both its formulation and attempted implementation as a set of practices – stems questions about agency and subjectivity. Specifically, how do we do historical policy analysis in a way that allows us to see the historical construction of subject positions through policy discourses? Assuming that it is possible to develop an historical method for deciphering the ‘subject’ of policy discourses, how can we also identify and trace the political agency of people who are positioned in social policy discourses, both as targets and as practitioners of these discourses?

Bergeron introduces the phrase, ‘narratives of exclusivity,’ to describe the gendered construction of the nation in macroeconomic theory, made “visible in the boundaries that
determine the space of the imagined community of the economy." Against this measure, everything outside this space, that is, outside the administrative space and, therefore, bureaucratic capacity of this economic discursive field, is the irrational, unruly Other. If one accepts that economic knowledge in effect calls into being ‘the economy,’ as Rose and Miller suggest, it is also possible to locate economic rationalities, a central component of state formation, within narratives of nation and of empire. How do states create ‘the nation’ within the frame of economic rationalities, as in national labour market, or Gross National Product, or national unemployment rate? The nation which Keynesian macroeconomics called into being was very much an irrational, contingent, unstable entity, capable of becoming known only through the intervention of technocratic experts, deploying a particular set of knowledge practices at the helm of rational – and rationalising – state apparatus. Contrary to those who contend that gender has been left out of macroeconomic theory, Bergeron argues that gender is very much ‘in’:

When neoclassicals and new classicals argue that national economies are inherently stable and self-regulating, they are unwittingly writing the trope of the nation as a masculine subject. The rational economy can achieve equilibrium, the economist’s version of the ‘political harmony of interests.’ These imaginings construct the national economy as a subject that is a unified totality with no internal conflict.

If the nation was inherently unstable, it also existed within fixed borders which had to be monitored and made impermeable to uncontrolled flows of finance capital and people. Keynes did not posit an ahistorical, universal or essential national economy: rather, the national economy was called into orderly, controlled existence, through a scientific expertise that promised freedom through progress. The common good for the common people, the promise of multiplicity within a shared economic discourse: this was the economic rationality that lay at the core of the welfare state. Thus, a decrease in unemployment or inflation, a rise in GDP, the conclusion of a monetary agreement or change in the tariff on herring: these are all framed as positive developments beneficial to all within the population.

Within the framework of citizenship, universality and equality – the principal components of the welfare state – it is important to work through the problematics of difference, that is, the differential positioning of people through policy discourses which actively organise,
seek to fix and transform social relations that are gendered, racialized and class-based. Williams makes a key distinction between diversity and difference, as suggested in the following schema: diversity is a specific-shared collective experience that, as such, need not be rooted in/experienced as oppression or subordination. Difference, as a shared collective experience, can form the basis for resistance "against the positioning of that identity as subordinate." Division, finally, is the formation of identity as a privileged position by/from a subject position of dominance. If we understand these concepts as collectively inscribing economic narratives of national exclusivity – who is really unemployed, who is really a citizen, who is creating social problems which in turn become pathologized through the individualising and totalising effects of policy discourses as deficiencies – then such concepts must also be scrutinised critically, reflexively and historically.

Macro-level policy analyses are part of a broader narrative that, like the evolutionary approach to welfare state formation accounts, cannot come to grips with how people – in particular those whose identities fall outside the normalising and regulatory practices of the state – are positioned by and often negotiate through resistance to social policy discourses. It would be important to demonstrate how the notion of 'incapacity' or the categories 'chronically unemployed' or 'unemployable' are in fact an accomplishment of 'manpower policy' and unemployment insurance policy operating as policy discourses. So, for example, macroeconomic analysis posits an economic rationality as the only purpose of unemployment insurance operating as 'policy instrument.' At the centre of this economic rationality stands the rational economic subject, the unified Cartesian subject, the real worker – the white, male, able-bodied, skilled (and so on) worker – for whom this risk management program is truly intended. The creation of administrative rationalities is another critical feature of understanding how policy discourses work. As Pierson has shown in her studies of the development and implementation of unemployment insurance in Canada, although women are not explicitly mentioned in the legislation, it is clear that gender is written throughout the policies and administrative practices which the legislation drew upon and in turn, set into motion. In this way, macroeconomic policy studies can effectively obscure the discursive operation of employment policy, becoming themselves complicit with the reformulation of those deemed 'incapable' as incapable in both the operation and the analysis of the policy in question.
Mobilising power through policy discourses

Part of the challenge Foucault created for humanist discourses was a critique of what he identified as the privileging of the ‘economic functionality’ of power, conceived of in its role in maintaining the relations of production at the same time as it secures a class domination related to, and brought about through, the forces of production. Foucault was interested in tracing how relations of power produce and incite, are heterogeneous as well as adversarial. This is particularly significant in relation to understanding how surveillance becomes internalised, and how “we” are “remade” in, by and through particular discursive formations, including policy discourses. As Foucault indicated, “the individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle.”

Power is animated through and in discourse in the same moment as we take up the various subject-positions we occupy (are constituted through) in discourse. Through the mode of confession, the ‘speaking subject’ is also the subject of the statement itself: the subject of the discourse is both constituted by that discourse, and subjected to it. As Nicolas Rose explains, we work in symmetry with government:

Technologies of subjectivity thus exist in a kind of symbiotic relationship with what one might term ‘techniques of the self’: the ways in which we are enabled, by means of languages, criteria, and techniques offered to us, to act upon our bodies, souls, thoughts, and conduct in order to achieve happiness, wisdom, health, and fulfilment.

Foucault’s approaches to power and to genealogy can assist in the attempt to develop a model of policy analysis that opens up to historical inquiry questions of agency and subjectivity, that does not revert to economism, to a singular determinism or to the rational humanist subject as the core of existence. As Barrett explains with respect to the project of genealogy, no single oppression or form of existence is necessarily privileged above another:

Recasting origins as ‘descent’ enables one to think of difference rather than resemblance, of beginnings rather than a beginning, of exterior accident rather than an internal truth. Searching for descent is, according to Foucault, the opposite of erecting foundations; it is to disturb the immobile, fragment the unified and show the heterogeneity of what was thought to be consistent.

Similarly, we find that the ‘productive body’ as labour “is only that when also the ‘subjected body’ of a system of power.” Power is animated through systems of dispersion, alternatively termed discursive formations: power does not reside, or collect, in the possession of
any being or thing. These discursive regularities or fields are the systematicities we can study, the genealogies of which we can trace. The point, then, is to consider how ‘truth’ is produced, to examine how truth claims become hegemonic through the techniques, practices and technologies of power within particular discursive formations. The notion of bio-politics — the application of truth discourses to the administration of bodies and the “calculated management of life” — also emerges as the techniques of power are applied to the accumulation of human capital. These are the regulatory procedures organising, specifying and mapping populations, at the same time as discourses of representation specify and target individual sub-categories and micro-populations drawn out as administrative categories from the broader ‘national community’/social body. As Foucault explained,

The adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital, the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and the differential allocation of profit, were made possible in part by the exercise of bio-power in its many forms and modes of application.\(^72\)

To argue that subjects are constituted in discourse as ‘the subject,’ and further that the “authorial subject” of representational discourses (acting as policy-maker, analyst or historian) actively organises, normalises and erases possible assigned identities, is not to signal the death of the subject; nor is it to deny the possibility of agency or the formation of other, even oppositional capacities. Rather, as Dean has argued, such an approach opens up the possibility for examining historically the “forms of specification” of human capacities and the conditions of human agency, to replace the evolutionary model of the rational subject as the author/social-historical actor.\(^73\) The next step is to develop ways of theorising what Jenson describes as the dialectic between agency and structure, to develop ways of acknowledging that people do make their own history by mobilising through political struggle to transform existing hegemonic paradigms, although within constraints determined through objective material conditions and discursive operations. As Jenson explains, “actors are simultaneously subjects of structures and acting subjects.”\(^74\) These struggles are grounded in concrete material conditions, in the daily struggles of material politics. There is, in this sense, no flight from class. Sivanundan provides a clear critique of the selectivity of identity politics in considering the daily life of black youths confronting white cops on any given day. Race and class, in this setting, “cannot just be a matter of identity, it has to be a focus of commitment.”
While discursive categories are clearly central sites of political contestation, they must be grounded in and informed by the material politics of everyday life, especially the daily life struggles for survival of poor people – those written out of history.75

Finding the ‘subject’ of historical policy discourses
Categories of gender, class and race cannot be approached as discrete entities, but need to be understood as constructed and fragmented by each other. Higginbotham exposed the operation of race as what she calls a ‘metalanguage’ which has worked integrally in and through the construction, representation and reproduction of all relations of power: “For black and white women, gendered identity was reconstructed and represented in very different, indeed antagonistic, racialised contexts.”76 It is also necessary to examine categories that lie at the core – as the targets and the products – of social policy discourses. Categories like ‘single mother,’ or ‘the poor’ or ‘unemployable’ take on new modes of representation, are in fact constituted in and by policy discourses in ways that are derivative of, build upon, and transform the multiple fracturing of identities and subjectivities grounded in race, gender and class. How do these categories take on meaning, become naturalised, understood as ‘the way things are’? This needs to be the critical focus of historical policy analysis. Certainly, Little’s studies of how single mothers have been taken up historically in social welfare policy discourses in Canada clearly illustrates both the fact and the broader implications of such treatment, for how the idea of family is mobilised and transformed, where women are differentially positioned and targeted through such policy discourses, and how these identities (as bad mothers and/or sexually deviant women) might be resisted and alternative and/or oppositional political agency collectively organised.77

We are all implicated in multiple discourses all the time. Even more so with respect to the state and our positioning as subjects in the context of policy discourses, at virtually every turn.78 It is in this way, Rose and Miller suggest, that “personal autonomy is not the antithesis of political power, but a key term in its exercise, the more so because most individuals are not merely the subjects of power but play a part in its operations,”79 whether as targets within a given policy or as its practitioners. How policies become thinkable, how knowledge practices come to be developed, and in turn articulated to techniques and technologies of governance, developed to administer this or that social policy or economic problem: these are the leading questions which
collectively inscribe the political rationality of a given policy field. Political discourses, which I see as inscribing policy discourses, are identified by Rose and Miller as the “domain for the formulation and justification of idealised schemata for representing reality, analysing and rectifying it. Whilst it does not have the systematic and closed character of disciplined bodies of theoretical discourse it is, nonetheless, possible to discern regularities we term political rationalities.”

Conclusion

The practice and administration of discursive fields produce power as an effect. The practitioners of these discourses do not hold power, but instead actively produce, mobilise and administer power through the exercise of bureaucratic capacities, through the codification and elaboration of expertise, of new knowledge practices, of a widening apparatus of state formation that draws further subjects within range. Social policies operate discursively, positioning subjects both as providers and recipients – subjects and targets – of policy discourses. In this sense, it is necessary to examine critically the multiple categories in which social policy discourses are grounded. Categories such as ‘dependency,’ ‘single mother,’ or ‘unemployable’ must be approached historically, as features of welfare state formation. In the case of labour market policies in particular, the labour market must itself be approached critically, as a feature of the operation of policy discourses, rather than an objective structure of the economic base that exists somewhere off to the side.

In this way, it is possible to examine how, for instance in the case of unemployment, employment and training policy discourses mobilised during the Depression, the Second World War and the post-war period, the notion of negative dependence has implicated gender, class and racialised social forms to delegitimate citizenship claims and to position groups of people differently in their relation to the state, the formal waged economy and labour market. Policy ‘responses,’ as I shall argue, were particularised responses to problems of the social in the context of the formation of the social security state, programmes provided through state and community agencies to remedy and to regulate (il)legitimate forms and relations of work, of citizenship, of domesticity, in the formation of self-governing subjects. These relations have historically translated for specific groups of people – that is, women racialised as ‘other’
engaged in precarious employment forms or unwaged labour, first nations and refugee communities denied status, or migrant workers whose invisibility is a central condition and feature of their employment ‘contract,’ as just some examples — into the effective denial of national social citizenship,\textsuperscript{81} such that claims to the rights/entitlements of citizenship must be exercised instead through other forms of resistance and negotiation, opposition or silence. A model-driven approach to comparative welfare state analysis tends to posit the welfare state as structurally given, an effect of methodological bias.\textsuperscript{82} This form of bias draws attention away from a study of state formation as a product of historical processes, characterised as much by contingency, variance and political contest as by empirical continuity and sameness. In addition, this methodology limits our capacity to understand how welfare state forms and policy regimes work within the context of race, gender, class, demography and empire.
Endnotes


2 As Gordon has argued, we can see this mode of activity in the establishment first of a “grid of administratively identified regularities” in natural phenomena and processes which are seen to affect, in their turn, relations between people. See Colin Gordon, “Governmental Rationality: An Introduction,” in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Millar, eds., The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1-52.


4 For example, Pal enumerates the four purposes of unemployment insurance as follows: wage replacement; improved mobility and supply of labour; stabilisation of the labour pool, specifically among seasonal labour; and contra-cyclical stabilisation to counter unemployment peaks/troughs in the business cycle. UI is most emphatically not intended for “the poor,” the “chronically unemployed” and the “incapable.” Pal argues for a model of “punctuated equilibrium” rather than the gradualism that an evolutionary model suggests: the former term links the development of employment policy more closely to business cycle peaks and troughs. The notion of evolution remains, however, even with Pal’s qualification that it not been seen as “unidirectional.” Leslie Pal, “Tools for the Job: Canada’s Evolution from Public Works to Mandated Employment,” in Jacqueline Ismael, ed., Canadian Welfare State: Evolution and Transition (Calgary: University of Alberta Press, 1987), 26-7; 33 - 62. The classic text for the Canadian state is Dennis Guest, The Emergence of Social Security in Canada (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980).


6 Ibid., 37.

7 James Struthers, No Fault of Their Own (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1983), 6.


11 Marxist feminist analysis is well illustrated in the work of well represented in the work of
McIntosh: women as a reserve army; as dependent on the male wage; and capital’s requirements – achieved through the state as capital’s executive committee – for the reproduction of the relations and forces of production. See Mary McIntosh, “The State and the Oppression of Women,” in Annette Kuhn and AnnMarie Wolfe, eds., Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 254-289.


14 Ibid., 29.


16 As Cameron points out, the current dismantling of the welfare state – the political conjuncture that has, I think, generated the spate of attempts to re-theorise the KWS in the effort to develop effective strategies to defend it – is exposing the dualism in the gendered base of labour regulations that actually lies beneath the overlay of purportedly universal social programs. Barbara Cameron, “Dualism or Solidarity? Reforming Canada’s System of Labour Market Regulation,” in Cy Gonick, et al., eds., Labour Gains, Labour Pains: 50 Years of PC 1003, Socialist Studies Volume 10, (Halifax: Femwood, 1995), 163-4.


18 Ibid, 300.

19 For further discussion along these lines, see Daniel Drache, “From Keynes to K-Mart,” in Robert Boyer and Daniel Drache, op. cit., 31-61.

20 Discussions of the post-war ‘consensus’ work to reproduce the idea of order, containment, stability and rationality, just as characterisations of ‘social citizenship’ in the following example: “I will examine the implications for Canadian women of the notions of citizenship that inform the new thinking about social-welfare provision, that is, changes in our shared understanding of social citizenship. The post-war consensus changed our common-sense notions of the government-market relation and , indeed, of what it meant to be a Canadian.” Janine Brodie, “Restructuring and the New Citizenship,” in Isabella Bakker, ed., Rethinking Restructuring:
Gender and Change in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 127, 129 (my emphasis).


23 Ibid., 145.

24 Ibid., 160.

25 Ibid., 157.


28 This cedes too much ground, analytically and politically, limiting our capacity to develop alternative ways of theorising and organising counter-hegemonic discourses. As Gibson-Graham (who are two women writing as one composite author) contend, we need to “problematic the singular representation of ‘the economy’ as a pre-eminently capitalist formation located in the non-domestic sphere and unified by ‘the market.’ Gibson-Graham suggest we take the following approach:

By portraying the economy as multiple, or as a site of difference, we are placing another nail in the coffin of the capitalist totality (if that doesn’t seem too optimistic and premature). At the same time, we are specifically (re)incorporating the feminized sphere of the household into the masculinized modern economy, acknowledging the household as an economic site rather than simply as a condition of existence of ‘the economy’ more commonly understood. J.K. Gibson-Graham, The End of Capitalism (as we knew it): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1996): 207.

In another of Gibson-Graham’s reversals, very much along the same lines as their attempt to reconceptualize the household-economy paradigm, ‘industry’ is itself conceptualised as an effect of other social practices. This strips industry of its privileged theoretical stance, and along with it, the social sites and forms of economic/industrial activities subsequently normalised as legitimate. As I was first reading their study, the CAW L222 were in negotiations and one of the leading issues on the table was mandatory overtime. This has, of course, been advanced as a social democratic strategy for collectivising state economic responsibility for unemployment. However, a CAW member informed me that, among the membership, reduced work time was important to many of the men in the plant who were having to deal with child care
responsibilities within their households. Many of the men for whom this had become such an issue were separated from their partners. One, to make the point, had brought his children into the plant with him when his supervisor refused to reschedule his overtime shift. This brought the point home, for him and, from the conceptual argument developed by Gibson-Graham, for me as well.


31 In her model, Lewis gives the example of Britain as strong breadwinner model; France as gender-neutral, with a social security system that partially compensates for child-rearing costs, distributing income horizontally through the wage system; and Sweden as a dual breadwinner state. In the latter, child-rearing costs are fully supported and distributed between heterosexual couples through parental leave provisions and income supplementation programs and where costs are distributed vertically between wealthy and moderate/low income households.

32 Orloff, op. cit., 70.


34 Esping-Anderson (1990), 153 (emphasis added).

35 In contrast, recent work by Sharma and others clearly illustrates how the deployment of migrant labour has worked as a central national economic strategy. Notions like ‘national’ labour markets, like exclusive studies of citizenship, structurally elide these practices at the same time as such elision is normalised. Only ‘real’ workers are included in subsequent studies. See, for example, Nandita Sharma, “Citizenship and the Social Organisation of Migrant Labour in Canada During Late Capitalism,” paper presented at the “Women and Citizenship in the Era of Restructuring” session, Society for Socialist Studies, Learned Societies Conference, St. John’s, Newfoundland, June 1997.


37 In Jenson’s words, “We’ve been taken in by political scientists whose project is to strengthen social democrats and workers.” Jane Jenson, “Gender and the State: Making sure that where you
come down is not simply the result of where you stand,” paper delivered at Comparative Research on Welfare States and Gender, January 31, 1997, University of Wisconsin at Madison.


This line of analysis, predicated as it appears to be on detaching class from any historical materialist foundation at the level of theory, has been taken up in rather interesting ways by some feminist historians who suggest that—at least in the US—gender has been capable/made to do the work of class, in the absence of strong working-class formation. This is discussed below, specifically as it appears in the work of Kathryn Kish Sklar and Theda Skocpol.

39 Esping-Anderson (1990), op. cit., 80.

40 Ibid., 81.

41 Since it is presumed that universal, entitlement-based programmes are administered through a cash transaction, based on a contributory insurance scheme, such programmes are more closely linked with rights derived through citizenship. Stable, labour force attachment, it is further argued, effectively removes any hint of ‘dependence’ from those on the receiving end of such services. On the other hand, welfare-based claims to income support, as non-contributory, means and needs-tested programmes are designed and administered through gendered forms. The difference lies in the extent to which individuals can become less dependent on markets for their survival, through the process of what Esping-Anderson terms ‘de-commodification’:

It is as markets become universal and hegemonic that the welfare of individuals comes to depend entirely on the cash nexus. Stripping society of the institutional layers that guaranteed social reproduction outside the labour contract meant that people were commodified. In turn, the introduction of modern social rights implies a loosening of pure commodity status. De-commodification occurs when a service is rendered as a matter of right, and when a person can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market. (Esping-Anderson cited in Orloff (1993), op. cit., 311.

42 Esping-Anderson (1990), op. cit., 115.

43 Bakker provides the following definition: “Gender relations can be defined in terms of the interplay between historical practices that are distinguished according to masculine and feminine (theories and ideologies, including religious ideas), institutional practices (such as state and market), and material conditions (the nature and distribution of material capabilities along gender lines). Gender relations are social constructions (social forces and historical structures) that differentiate and circumscribe material outcomes for women and men. This definition of gender relations recognises that the interplay of race, class and sexuality underpins the form and structure of actual gender relations.” Isa Bakker, Introduction, in Isa Bakker, (1994), op. cit., 3.

44 Processes which are thought to be the result of apparent globalization test the foundations of welfare state theorising. So, for example, when Bakker lists what she sees as the leading policy questions for how we can go about ‘engendering macro-economic policy reform,’ I find it
instructive to look more closely at how gender itself is thought to reflect and be reflected in welfare state formations:

Are there important constraints and costs of economic change that are usually neglected, such as the intra-household division of labour? What is the nature of economic activity open to women, relative to men? Is the increased participation in the labour market by women a consequence of their disadvantaged position? Has restructuring merely achieved a sharing out of employment between larger groups of women? Is global re-regulation restructuring and/or reinforcing women’s generally segregated, unequal and tenuous place in the labour market? Ibid., 1-2.

As Gordon points out, this principle of subsidiarity was a strategic option taken up by middle-class maternal feminists in the development of welfare programming in the US during the period leading up to the New Deal. Linda Gordon, Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995).

Kornbluh’s literature survey aptly summarises the effects of this knowledge on recent historiography among US feminists, when she observes how the prevailing analysis has shifted “from a fairly confident critique of welfare as ‘public patriarchy’ ... to a sound appreciation of ambiguity. The public patriarchs turned out to be middle-class women, some of whom the late twentieth century would certainly call lesbians.” See Felicia Kornbluh, “The New Literature on Gender and the Welfare State: The US Case,” Feminist Studies 22:1 (Spring 1996), 194.


Piven suggested early on that women had significant gains to make by continuing to make demands upon the state, particularly through the exercise of electoral power in what was referred some refer to as the ‘gender gap.’ Piven deploys an analysis similar to that of E.P. Thompson’s moral economy of the early (industrial revolution) working class in England, when she refers to the traditional moral economy occupied by women, in contradistinction to states and markets. Piven observed how welfare state forms have created the conditions for the production of new solidarities around anti-poverty organising, an important observation, in an overall analysis grounded firmly in a model of social control and gender essentialism. See Francis Fox Piven, “Women and the State: Ideology, Power and the Welfare State,” in Alice Rossi, ed., Gender and the Life Course (New York: Aldine, 1985), pp. 265-287. See also Piven and Richard Cloward, Regulating the Poor: The Function of Public Welfare (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971).

Mink, op. cit., 891.


See, for example, Alisa Klaus, “Depopulation and Race Suicide: Maternalism and Pronatalist Ideologies in France and the United States,” in Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds., Mothers of a New World (New York: Routledge 1993). See also, Ann Laura Stoler, “Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race and Morality in Colonial Asia,” in Micaela di Leonardo, ed.,

The record in France suggests the revival of an older discourse under the influence of 1980s neoliberalism. Natalist discourse submerged women’s identities as autonomous individual citizen-members and workers within the Republic: women’s identity was mobilised principally in their singular capacity as mothers; recognition of family as a entity unto itself in social policy erased women from the policy map entirely.

To explain why socialist Mitterand turned aside from the course of modernising women’s citizenship rights, Jenson and Sineau turn to ideology and the decline of women’s movement strength, together with the weakening of trade union organisation. What is left out, inexplicably given the significance of racialized discourses around birth rate, family formation, nation-building and unemployment, is the significance of anti-natalism in the context of family-building programs within social policy regimes. That is, what might look like pro-natalism for one group of women can, at the same time, work as anti-natalism, proscribing reproduction and family-formation for another racialised group within the same population. Jane Jenson and Mariette Sineau, “Family Policy and Women’s Citizenship in Mitterand’s France,” Social Politics (Fall 1995), 244-69.


Ibid., 44.

See Theda Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992). The question of how to assess, let alone theorise, the relationship of women/feminist activists and state/social policy formation has been the subject of considerable debate. In an exchange between Linda Gordon and Skocpol, some of the more critical points received a public airing – from methodological issues raised by historical sociology, to Gordon’s formulation of differential access to forms of state provision (male = rights-based; female = needs-based). See Skocpol, “Soldiers, Workers, and Mothers: Gendered Identities in Early U.S. Social Policy” and Gordon, “Gender, State and Society: A Debate with Theda Skocpol,” Contention 2, no. 3 (Spring 1993), 139-189.

Kish Sklar, op. cit., 68.

Orloff is representative in her use of the notion ‘women’s gender interests,’ set within what she calls the state-market-family relations dimension. This insight builds on earlier marxist feminist analysis of the sexual division of productive and reproductive labour, in a manner that makes possible the continuance of modes of production and reproduction under, in this case, advanced regimes of capital accumulation. Here, Orloff demonstrates how the provision of social welfare depends upon the distribution of unpaid labour in particular gendered social policy regimes:

“This dimension should be reconstructed based on the recognition of the importance of families and women’s unpaid work to the provision of social welfare, in addition to considering gendered
patterns of work. State provision that helps to shift the burden of welfare from the family to the state, or from women to men within the family, furthers women’s gender interests.” Orloff (1993) op. cit., 312


62 I do not address questions of national ‘identity’ or nationalism, as such: rather, I am interested in the notion of national representations within economic discourses.


64 This point is also made by Bakker in her introduction to the same volume, although she proceeds to outline the three central arguments which would inform a feminist macroeconomics within what I think is the same political rationality that constitutes the problem. These arguments are: 1) markets are not gender neutral institutions but must be understood as reflecting ‘androcentric bias’; 2) those doing reproductive work are “in a state of economic dependence”; and 3) the macroeconomic narrative is an aggregate based on assumptions about how human resources are produced, allocated, reproduced, and maintained.” (my emphasis) Bakker (1996), 38.

I agree on this latter point that this is what such narratives do: what needs to be ‘problematised’ is precisely the notion of ‘human resources’ as part of a counter-hegemonic discourse, which is what I understand feminist macroeconomics to be.


adversarial."


70 Barrett, op. cit., 132.


72 Ibid., 141. Foucault identified the ‘three great exclusions’ as central to how discourse operates within a framework that both incites and suppresses, creates and contains, the body: prohibitions as to who can speak, what can be said and when; reason and madness; and the “will to know” or the “will to truth,” that is, “a shift from seeing truth as a given property of the discourses of those in power to seeing truth as a property of the referent of discourse.” Barrett, op. cit., 143. With this approach, it is possible to make the important break from attempting to apply a given discourse in the “real world” as though it could tell us something about its subject/object (or referent). Instead, we would examine the referent within the same frame as the discourse that incites/creates it, to consider how the truth claims so produced are possible only within that frame.

73 Mitchell Dean, Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault’s Methods and Historical Sociology (London: Routledge, 1995), 56. As the trope of progress (degeneration) of western capitalist imperialism has eroded (and communism has ‘collapsed’ with the dissolution of the USSR), the male working class has been displaced as privileged agent of history. This has deepened the challenge to Marxism, particularly the separation Marxist theory maintains between politics and economics, between ideology and economics, between the individual and the social formation. See Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest (New York: Routledge, 1995).


Understanding how policy discourses organise, or at least attempt to organise, people into individualising subject positions is an important step toward seeing how we might identify and exercise political agency in the development counter-hegemonic discourses. This type of analysis means that we must break out of the liberalist frame with its insistence on conceptualising political autonomy as the binary opposite of the state, of public and private, of government and market. An example of how this might work is found in the day-to-day practices of union organisers, whether considered in the present or historically. Or in attempts to organise unemployed working women and men in an effort to both address the daily needs of living without paid employment, and more broadly to collectivise the language and lived experiences of unemployment.


80 Their definition is as follows: “First, political rationalities have a characteristically moral form. They elaborate upon the fitting powers and duties for authorities. They address the proper distribution of tasks and actions between authorities of different types – political, spiritual, military, pedagogic, familial. They consider the ideals or principles to which government should be directed – freedom, justice, equality, mutual responsibility, citizenship, common sense, economic efficiency, prosperity, growth, fairness, rationality and the like.” Rose and Miller, op. cit., 178-9.


82 For a discussion of this point, see Pringle and Watson, op. cit., 63.
Chapter 2

Scrutinising ‘The Unemployed’: Unemployment Research between 1935-1938

In this chapter, I examine how the categories ‘employable’ and ‘unemployable’ were deployed through social and state agencies concerned with the development and implementation of employment policy during the inter-war period. I consider research conducted by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, in particular the 1938 report, Unemployment: Census Monograph 11. This report broke considerable new ground in unemployment research, building a foundation for future strategies of administration, research and analysis in the area of employment and training policy. Concerns about employment, ability, individual and industrial efficiency were also the subject of careful study, extending from unemployment research. I briefly review the work of employment research practitioners at the McGill School for Social Research [MSSR] and private consultants like Bryce Stewart, whose research investigations positioned them as leading advocates of a comprehensive state-led employment service. I consider in particular the early research work conducted at the MSSR by William Morton and Marsh, work which contributed in no small measure to Marsh’s recommendations for a comprehensive employment system in Canadians In and Out of Work (1940). Through this research labour markets were to be characterised as social as well as economic phenomena which acted in particular and, more importantly, identifiable ways, including churning out those no longer thought to be employable or barring those already so designated. Intelligence and efficiency measures were worked up as key organising and administrative strategies by which to diagnose the social causes of economic conditions like unemployment. These conceptions and practices collectively inscribed the basis for the policy regime of the Canadian state at the outbreak of the Second World War.

Unemployment and the ‘Mentally Unemployable’

In 1937, the Ottawa Citizen printed a story from the Associated Press wire service concerning a study conducted at the Tennessee Eastern Electric Company. The study was conducted by personnel director D. R. Shearer at the company’s psychological clinic. The results were reported at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science held that year. The main observation of the study reported by the press confirmed what so many had already suspected: the unemployed were found to be mentally and physically
unemployable. The Tennessee study was part of a wave of employment research engaged in investigations of the ‘personality’ of unemployed people, part of an emerging discursive regime which articulated the economic and social dimensions of individual employability to the dimensions of the “psychology of the individual.”² For example, the Financial Post carried a full report of the NEC’s 1937 registration of unemployed persons in which the massive unemployment crisis was now also described as the burden of Canada’s “mentally unemployables.”³ The point had already been raised by the Canadian Welfare Council [CWC] in its annual survey of relief recipients released in the winter of 1936. The CWC was alarmed to find that although employment and trade levels were much improved over the same period the previous year, relief lists were actually longer.

The print media echoed the findings of the Council. In fact the Ottawa Citizen went so far as to suggest that “the depression has left Canada with a burden of economic dependency just as surely as the war left her with a $42,000,000 annual war-pension burden.”⁴ But if economic conditions were so improved, why was this not translating into a turn-around in relief figures? The Dominion Bureau of Statistics suggested one explanation: as production increased, the labour pool expanded by drawing into it new entrants, especially youth, from the surrounding rural and agricultural workforce, and, of course, from overseas.⁵ The available pool of labour was not fixed, as some had supposed, but was rather elastic, in constant flux. Employment researchers, for their part, were turning their attention to the effects of unemployment on employment capacity – employability – examining in turn aptitude, intelligence and skill. Was there, as some researchers claimed, a core of unemployed persons who were gradually coalescing – some would say hardening – into a distinct and therefore identifiable population which was more accurately classed as “unemployable,” identified through a variety of factors including defects of individual character and/or obsolete skill which rendered them less fit, less competitive, less efficient? In the case of women, these deficiencies were also taken up within moral regulatory discourse as moral deficiencies. Surely more jobs would do little to redirect this ‘class’ of unemployed women and men into gainful pursuits?

The federal government was under pressure to lead a “concerted attack on re-employment in Canada” on a scale which the scattered and disorganised provincial systems alone were
incapable of overseeing. Employment service administration was in need of an overhaul and employers and communities alike looked to Ottawa to implement the necessary changes, although any new system had to remain "flexible enough to meet local needs along a 3,000-mile front." And what did the sage editors of the business press anticipate? Certainly not a comprehensive unemployment insurance system.6 Instead, the employer community favoured a programme of job-training and work placement. If $40 million could be invested in rebuilding physical infrastructure in the past year on roads, bridges and railways, why could not an additional $5-8 million (over the miserly $1 million proposed by the NEC for its youth training scheme) be spent on the nation’s youth?7 Something had to be done to diminish the volume of workers and their dependants receiving relief. The Financial Post wholeheartedly endorsed the NEC’s work along these lines, pointing out that at least 80% of men and women on relief were employable; however, long-term unemployment had caused so many to become “unfitted to steady employment” because of the combined degenerative effects of enforced idleness and the dependency-creating effects of the ‘dole.’ Canada had a big job to do of “rebuilding men” whose breadwinning capacity was seen to be undermined by a poorly administered employment policy: what was needed was an all out effort to improve “the employability of these men and women by improving their skills, physique and morale” with the “wholehearted co-operation of industry, Government bodies and of the community generally.”

The Winnipeg Free Press also welcomed the results of the NEC’s proposal for a comprehensive register of the Dominion’s unemployed women and men, accompanied by proposals for their reconditioning through training. The editors were sceptical, however, warning that any proposed measures would be productive only if the federal government was prepared to finally take on responsibility for the employable unemployed.8 The “dole” had long been criticised for encouraging able-bodied men, in particular, to refrain from accepting paid work, on the assumption that they could earn more from relief than they could from available low-waged jobs, especially where was a large family to support, a view closely informed by the principle of less eligibility.9 This argument fuelled demands for measures which combined the discipline of compulsory work programmes with character-forming skills training.
Training and employment policies devised during the inter-war period were rooted in a discursive regime which constituted unemployment as a social problem of employability which, while manifested in the economy, did not originate there. ‘Employability’ was to become a subject of remedial policy research, seen as a dimension, a predictor, of unemployment, itself increasingly recognised as a regular occurrence within the labour market. As a remedial policy discourse, employability was directly addressed to the psychology of individual character and mental capacity, both of which were to be organised as vectors, indices and predictors of employment capacity within the regular operation of the labour market.

**Unemployment Research at the Dominion Bureau of Statistics**

Dominion statistician Robert Hamilton Coats presided over the Dominion Bureau of Statistics much as he did over his profession, as a man committed to strong central government and to furnishing practical information to assist and inform, perhaps even to expand the scope of, government. Coats was a key figure in the Dominion government until his retirement from the Bureau in 1942. He was highly sceptical of any approach to statistical work which strayed too far from the classical empiricist framework for which the decennial census was both model and symbol. Statistics mirrored the real world, directly and pragmatically. In the service of the state, the purpose of a statistical bureau was to provide both evidence of and answers to pressing social problems of the day. As president of the American Statistical Association and an active participant in the statistical service of the League of Nations during the inter-war period, Coats was well aware of the potential far-reaching effects of efforts among member states to regularise their statistical services in an international standard for the collection and statistical analysis of social and economic categories. As part of the exercise of governmental statistics, practitioners like Coats were concerned to develop techniques which would enable them to conduct a census of the expanding domain of government. Their technique was increasingly conditioned by, and in turn aided in the exercise of defining the ‘normal population’ with ever greater precision, a project which was directly concerned with asserting the boundaries of the social. Just as the ‘normal’ replaced human nature as the subject of social inquiry, that nineteenth century conceptual object of governance – moral character – was now displaced by the laws of probability governing all dimensions of the social, a move that revolutionised the statistical
work of governance in the area of employment policy, the administration of unemployment, and the deployment of employability discourses in the formation of self-governing subjects.¹³

**Labour statistics and the measure of unemployment**

In the United States, the Social Science Research Council and the American Statistical Association sought ways to reorganise statistical work in order to achieve "continuous and intimate contact" with the populations within their purview. As the Council stated, "Only a watch-tower view can provide the perspective required for fostering continuous advance toward a coherent statistical system to meet the needs of national and scientific progress."¹⁴ The SSRC and the ASA saw an important opportunity in the New Deal legislative programme to achieve such a system, encouraging the Roosevelt administration to adopt a more co-ordinated but decentralised register of unemployment statistics by state unemployment compensation agencies, overseen by the federal Social Security Board. The report proposed a model for central regulation through statistical uniformity, conformity and standardisation, within an otherwise decentralised system which allowed for departmental autonomy. The work of government, if it was to proceed with certainty in an increasingly tumultuous national and international environment, required detailed, accurate and timely statistical information. New areas of inquiry gave rise to new needs. In the absence of such co-ordinated planning, governments would be left with a "wilderness of data which can serve neither the needs of long-range administrative policy nor those of socio-economic research."¹⁵ The consequences of disorganisation had direct implications for the nation and the capacity to direct the work of the state in securing national interests across a range of social and economic issues, which by now included international balance of payments, public and private aggregated debt, unemployment, estimates of national income, production and employment totals, as well as measures of industrial productivity and cost of living indexes. In each case, new areas of statistical inquiry were opening up, creating in turn even further areas for potential governmental activity or, at the very least, inquiry. In calling for a central statistical board, the research council envisioned a central watch-tower which had the capacity to monitor patterns and predict trends in all areas of market and social activity. Particular attention was devoted to the need for a reliable account of labour market activity, concentrating in particular on occupational analysis and the development of training and vocational planning to respond to changes in employment and occupation.¹⁶ Throughout the
report, reference was made repeatedly to the need to balance central governance and departmental autonomy, to guard against the centralisation of authority while ensuring that a central regulatory system of governance was put in place. The practitioners were themselves well aware of the need to avoid falling into routines of agencies detached from the centre, generating knowledges which had no reference or application within what they were constructing as a unified apparatus animated by a coherent statistical agency working at the centre of government.

The statistical movement in Canada, as in the United States, was struggling under the weight of obstinate and cumbersome administrative practices, with collection and analysis conducted by departments for their own internal use. It was early days yet for anyone to speak of a national, let alone comprehensive or coherent system of statistical administration. Governments at all levels – federal, provincial and municipal – were moving in the direction of centralised registries for vital statistics. Ontario by the 1920s had a centralised system for registration of deaths, births and marriages.\(^{17}\)

In his presidential address to the American Statistical Association in December 1938, Coats emphatically defended his classicist’s view of statistical truth against the uncertainties posed by quantum physics with its denial of natural laws as a theoretical vacuum which he compared with the artificial if not impractical realities constructed by economists. “Our job,” he argued, using the opportunity to launch a decisive critique of Keynes, “is to assist the largest of executives on specific, usually pressing, problems – of administration, of social policy – just the field in which Society is falling down, says Science”:

> If a law is general enough it cannot help being right, but of what use is it to governments who cannot summon help from ceteris paribus or wait upon the “long run,” for the ceteri are human beings all with votes – it is majorities not modals that matter. By a categorical imperative government economics are empirical.\(^{18}\)

Coats devoted the better part of his address to the just-released DBS study of unemployment in Canada. The DBS study was conducted to establish what Bureau researchers described as the “rational law governing the natural relationship between the employed and unemployed.” Bureau researchers felt that they had discovered the fundamental principle underlying the constitution and behaviour of unemployment as a discrete statistical and sociological phenomenon:
This principle concerns the purely human side of the problem, which comes out only in census data, and is hidden in data from other sources. In simplest terms, this principle is that there is a class differentiation between the employed and the unemployed and that this is created in part by the industrial structure, in part by extraneous forces.\textsuperscript{19}

DBS staff had been looking into the question of unemployment for some time, most recently to consider the statistical and policy implications of an unemployment insurance programme.

One area of direct relevance to the work of extending government through statistical analysis was the labour market, in particular the development of regulatory practices to administer that market through a network of employment offices to regulate the flow of labour within economic and geopolitical space. This was an issue for policy on both sides of the border between Canada and the United States, with considerable cross-fertilisation of ideas and strategies between jurisdictions. A leading figure in this work was Canadian employment researcher and former head of the Employment Service of Canada for the period 1919-1922, Bryce Stewart.

Dr. Bryce M. Stewart was chair of the Advisory Committee to the US Secretary of Labour from April 1933 - December 1935. He was a member of the Committee on Government Statistics and Information Services from July 1933-January 1936, and a member of the Technical Staff of the Committee on Economic Security during 1934. Throughout this period he was an associate with Industrial Relations Counsellors, Inc. His work was widely cited by employment experts in Canada and the US, in particular his study of the employment policies of Canada, France, Sweden and Switzerland. Stewart had begun his career in public employment policy development while working as a researcher for the Ontario Unemployment Commission in 1915-1916. Frustrated by the lack of responsiveness on the part of provincial and Dominion governments, Stewart eventually moved to the US to work with the federal labour bureau, located outside the state as research director of New York consulting firm Industrial Relations Counsellors, conducting policy research for the New Deal administration as it considered implementing a comprehensive national employment policy of its own.
In their discussions of employment policy, the Social Science Research Council and the American Statistical Association report drew on the findings of an ASA committee investigation into labour statistics conducted by Bryce Stewart and Annabel Stewart. Their recommendations, issued in 1933 as a detailed manual called “Statistical Procedures of Public Employment Offices” formed the basis for the ASA’s Advisory Committee Report to the Secretary of Labour and the Director of the United States Employment Service, defining the foundation for a central statistical service aimed at developing, reporting and analysing labour statistics. This manual was written to assist implementation of the Wagner Peyser Act (1933) that provided for a comprehensive federal subsidy to state-administered employment offices. The manual made it clear, again following the model advocated by British labour market theorist, Sir William Beveridge, that unemployment insurance alone would not accomplish the desired regulatory effects in the labour market. Knowledge of occupational trends was vital to the successful operation of employment policy, channelled back through the employment service to provide “an indispensable basis for the planning of vocational guidance programmes.” The employment office was envisaged as a local site for collecting information and monitoring trends between census periods, although only a full census could provide accurate measures of unemployment. Defined in this way, labour market regulation was described as essential to ensuring the efficient and orderly flow of labour.

The Committee’s memorandum pointed out that employment office statistics serve both administrative needs and economic and social purposes. They rest upon a twofold foundation, namely (1) information related to job openings and applications, and (2) records of transactions between the offices and employers. Accurate information on wage rates must be developed by employment offices if they are to intelligently serve the labour market. Placement statistics provide an indispensable basis for the planning of vocational guidance, but their use for this purpose is yet imperfectly understood in this country. These statistics should be developed in conjunction with the current reports of employment and payrolls to constitute an integrated body of statistical data relating to employment and the labour market.

Unemployment had to be analysed through close scrutiny of labour displacement in relation to industrial productivity, monitored with a view to addressing preventative measures which included vocational counselling and training. But none of these measures could be developed in the absence of knowledges about unemployment, and these could only be generated with precision through statistical technique, including random sampling.
Unemployment was coming to be understood as a regular condition, an event which could be planned for, a normal feature of labour market activity which was itself an index for industrial efficiency and national progress. That this was the case is suggested in the recommendation that further “studies should give attention to the effect of technological change on industrial skills and the types of labour required,” permitting the national service to keep tabs on labour turnover and “normal” rates of unemployment, and to direct labour flows based on accurate occupational forecasting aided by vocational and training programming. Social policy advocate Harry Cassidy was actively engaged in recommending precisely the same approach for the Dominion employment system. His study of the administration of public employment offices in Ontario was deeply critical of the poorly conceived and sloppily administered measures in place in a system which confused the administration of employment with that of poor relief.

“An Unemployment Policy for Canada”

The experience of prolonged economic depression fuelled arguments for a national employment policy since no programme of unemployment insurance would be complete unless accompanied by measures along the lines proposed by Beveridge in England, designed to improve the efficiency of the labour market. The problem was twofold. Unemployment insurance was not designed to reduce unemployment but was instead supposed, as DBS researcher LeNeveu put it, to “provide a rational method for relieving the costs it entails.” Further, unemployment insurance policy was alleged to create new forms of unemployment by altering the behaviour of unemployed persons on the one hand through allegedly encouraging “malingering” and that of employers on the other by removing any incentive for industry to achieve work force stability. In Beveridge’s model, the problem of “malingering” was corrected by a rigorous and efficient system of employment exchanges.

In a memo prepared in response to the proposed 1935 Employment and Social Insurance Act, Bureau researcher LeNeveu argued that the labour market had to be more effectively organised and that every effort should be made to improve the federal employment service. “What should be our immediate policy in regard to unemployment?” asked Le Neveu. Any policy had to proceed by addressing the inefficiencies in labour market organisation, particularly
the pressing issues of "decasualisation, the guidance of juveniles in the choice of careers, transference of men from depressed to more prosperous regions, and the placement of the older worker through co-operation with employers." The casualisation of labour was among the leading causes of occupational as distinct from industrial unemployment, and could be corrected only through measures designed to promote the "intelligent mobility of labour," including vocational guidance, training, and accurate analysis of occupational trends:

It is frequently charged that too many young people are training for clerical occupations; that, with the breaking down of the craft unions, skilled trades are being swamped with new recruits many of whom are in reality only semi-skilled operatives; that women are supplanting boys in a number of fields; and so on. If these charges are true there must be over-crowding in a number of occupations.

At the centre of the system was a programme of labour market research which anticipated an expanded role for the Bureau and co-operation from employers in using the employment service. The labour market may function adequately, but some intelligent intervention was needed to make sure that it operated efficiently. This meant identifying those individuals thought to be at greater risk of unemployment because, among other reasons, some occupations were overcrowded. Unemployment had to be understood as more than a strictly economic event. That is, the labour market could not be approached as a commodity market much like any other, in which unemployment was seen as a temporary interruption of earnings in a system of perfect elasticity wherein workers were interchangeable. LeNeveu began his argument by questioning the "orthodox economic palliatives that the unemployment specialist has to offer," including the proposal of increasing economic activity as a means of alleviating unemployment. Once again, the question revolved around the nature of unemployment itself. Was this a consequence of economic depression, resolvable by increasing consumption and production levels by the methods proposed by Keynes? Or was there something more insidious going on, "an evil which seems to be inherent in our industrial system, and not merely a symptom of the prevailing economic depression"?

LeNeveu argued for a national employment policy: a Dominion-wide employment service designed specifically to organise the labour market through a comprehensive network of labour exchanges responsible for overseeing industrial training and vocational guidance, aided by regular occupational and related statistical analysis of employment trends and patterns. The
proposed employment and social insurance legislation left Canada in the same position as Britain under its first attempt at introducing unemployment insurance. The British labour offices had by default become limited administrative centres for distributing unemployment insurance benefits, leaving undone the more important tasks associated with labour market organisation, specifically those promoting labour mobility, vocational guidance and training. Part II of the proposed Dominion Employment and Social Insurance Act (1935), while outlining the role of the Employment Service, “[did] not contemplate dealing with matters raised by Beveridge as part of the larger task of organising the labour market.” The employment exchange was the linchpin, the critical central point for access and intervention in what was in fact a dual programme: organising the labour market and administering unemployment policy. If the objective was to introduce a legislative programme that would truly address unemployment, then the local exchange had to be given additional powers as a government agency which went beyond the limited role of job placement: government required “an intelligence department on unemployment,” preferably one that would be overseen by the DBS.

Given sufficient powers to do proper field work along the line of its stated duty, and making use of government departments already set up such as the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, so as to avoid duplication of effort and waste of time and procure the maximum of expert advice, the organisation could be an important adjunct to government.

In sum, an unemployment policy would encompass a full understanding of unemployment as endemic to industrial capitalism. Unemployment policy could prevent the “evil of casual labour” brought about by the pooling of labour reserves in resource-based industries like logging. If the problem of unemployment stemmed largely from overcrowding in some occupations, combined with the disappearance and deskilling of others, a trend signified by the disintegration of the craft unions, the DBS had to be empowered to step in with accurate information to facilitate vital preventative education work. In fact, the Bureau was already being called upon to do just that. “What can be done,” LeNeveu asked rhetorically, “to prevent juveniles falling into ‘blind alley’ occupations or training for trades which are becoming overcrowded?”

That something is already being attempted is evident from inquiries received from school boards and technical schools for occupational statistics showing the occupations followed by young persons. In fact one or two have specifically stated that they were engaged in vocational guidance activities and required the census figures to assist them in gauging the probable demand for different classes of labour.
Developing social statistics for governance

If the Dominion government was to administer an unemployment policy it would require a regular statistical reporting service within the employment service, generating statistical knowledges about the labour market. Only the DBS was equipped to oversee such a critical task. The Department of Labour expressed its confidence that the Bureau was well-equipped to handle the statistical demands presented by such a programme:

In addition to the administration of labour placement offices and clearing houses, the bureau was specifically charged with the study and report of unemployment conditions and with the collection and publication of information concerning the state of the labour market. In the discharge of the latter duty an efficient statistical service was developed, which has provided Canada with the most complete and informing statistical record of employment changes, covering the past three years of aggravated economic disturbance, which is available in any country. The record is worth examination, both because of its historical value and because its compilation has contributed to the technique of employment statistics.33

Beyond data collection for administrative purposes, statistical analysis would reveal the operation of unemployment as a social phenomenon, drawing upon various data which, labour department officials contended, when “used in conjunction [would] enable a number of relations to be seen.”34 This work was aided by new techniques and technologies which dramatically altered the role of statistical analysis in the administration of social and economic policy generally. This was to be a new era in census research:

If the machines now used in compiling Census data can be adapted to do this work as well, it would be possible, at no extra expense, to place on file with the [Unemployment] Commission photographic records of nearly all conceivable combinations for intensive study at any time.35

Census-based research supported and extended the study of social trends and in turn gave rise to new forms of data collection. Heading the list was a standardised definition of unemployment and techniques for identifying, monitoring and forecasting labour force patterns of employment and unemployment.36 MacLean took issue with both the free market classical economists who denied that such a thing as unemployment could even exist over the full period of the business cycle, and with the new stock of economic theorists, including Keynes, whose work allegedly neglected the social — the human — dimensions of unemployment.37
The Census monograph clearly demonstrated, at least as far as Bureau staff were concerned, that unemployment was a systemic feature of industrial capitalism which could signal economic progress as well as market collapse. It was vital that government be able to tell the difference. In this research, unemployment was to be defined as a set of social relations, approached at the level of the individual. Unemployment trends were directly associated with occupations, based in turn on skills, aptitudes and employment capacities. Economists, alternatively, only approached unemployment at the level of industry. The report outlined seven key forces external to industry which were related to degrees of unemployment, in effect shaping unemployment as a set of social relations organised around key social variables: age content, seasonality, location, juvenile content, female content, earnings, and the "degree of eradication of the independent worker." These factors accounted for total unemployment, the remaining 55% "being largely made up of differences peculiar to individual industries," and here a major consideration was the employment of women. This was the social dimension lost in economic studies which proceeded by first aggregating unemployment and then measuring its incidence from the vantage of industry and national economy, rather than occupation and population.

Again, as the report's authors pointed out, "What is true is that in the previous month A, B, C, are working; in the next month A, B, D, E are working – what about C?"

We must remember that unemployment is 'worker's unemployment' not the time lost by the industry. When we take this point of view it becomes apparent that the unemployed worker is not the product of any particular industry, i.e., his unemployment can not be directly attributed to any definite industry. We find unemployed persons in every industry but the great bulk of them occur at one end of our chart, viz., unskilled labour and those unattached to any industry. These are the cast-offs from the more stable industries.

In this way, MacLean proposed that analysts engage in occupational analysis as a central feature of labour market organisation. With accurate intelligence, it would then be possible to predict and even control unemployment by implementing elements of the Beveridgean model for labour market organisation and regulation. Tampering with employment levels through short-lived measures such as public works projects or massive construction programmes such as railway construction, while perhaps politically expedient, certainly made for bad policy by exacerbating the problem of temporary, causal labour reserves which then became geographically concentrated, immobilised once the work project was completed. Unemployment was caused not by a shortage of jobs but by the constant flow of workers into the labour market,
where temporary boom conditions only served to attract ever greater numbers from other usually unpaid employment categories, including farm, female and own-account, into what was only now being made visible in policy as the formal economy. MacLean argued that it was absurd to follow some economists in thinking that production could be expanded indefinitely in a model of ever-increasing and accelerating growth and efficiency. It was futile to look there for any solution to unemployment. Surely the increased efficiency (or productivity) of workers would only drive production to impossibly higher levels, but for how long could this dizzying cycle be maintained before the bubble finally burst? As he explained to Toronto economist S. A. Saunders, there was a danger in tampering with the delicate balance among production and consumption, employment and unemployment:

What about the fact that meanwhile the employable are increasing and that efficiency is growing with the increase in production? That production could possibly continue indefinitely to increase at a rate that would keep doubling the output every ten years involves an impossibility greater than Malthus ever dreamed of. But suppose production keeps increasing at this appalling rate for a while. It does not need to shrink; it merely needs to have its acceleration retarded to cause terrible unemployment.

The answer, according to the unemployment experts at the Bureau, was to deploy the array of well-designed policy tools in a comprehensive national programme. Since the issue was one of labour supply and regulation, not one of absolute employment levels, the necessary regulatory forms would not be so interventionist as to interfere with employers and their production schedules.

Regular statistical analysis would generate new knowledges about unemployment, extending the scope of policy concerns beyond that of actuarial administration of the Act, to the study of unemployment as a social and economic phenomenon, while normalising newly constituted forms of work and employability. By defining a corpus, a social body, of unemployment statistics purported to trace/represent new sets of relations and boundaries of the labour market, to assert the allowable range of statistical variance within which those relations took form, researchers could in turn define and map the studied population, asserting and charting regularities and irregularities in the behaviour of that population. Because researchers were interested primarily in understanding unemployment as a social phenomenon, the indices they mapped out were social categories, specifically gender, racial origin, age and occupation.
These categories defined the parameters of study while at the same time outlining the basis for further labour market mapping activities. As bureau staff explained, "With an extended system of employment offices and an unemployment insurance scheme, a statistical service is a natural by-product, while at the same time it serves as a guide for further action."43

This approach gave rise to the two categories of knowledge which themselves embodied distinct but interdependent knowledge practices: administrative statistics and social statistics. Administrative statistics were the stuff of day-to-day procedures, while social statistics framed the domain for future policy endeavours. It was at the level of social statistics that the investigations would be conducted.44 The question, then, was how to gain access to this area of inquiry without overstepping the bounds of legitimate intrusion into the private domain of civil society?

Census Monograph 11: Discovering the Social Relations of Unemployment

Maclean and his colleagues presented two general principles governing the origins and the behaviour of unemployment. First, through a ‘natural’ process of economic evolution, those industries which developed and evolved toward maturity demonstrated an increasing selectivity in the type of worker employed. Second, those workers who were ‘discarded’ by industry over time shared more in common with other unemployed workers from across all industries than with those from their own occupational group, to the point that they gradually coalesced into a class of the permanently unemployed. The two principles worked in tandem with increasing selectivity among industries moving up the evolutionary scale, forcing a deepening bifurcation between those workers who were rarely if ever unemployed and those who, through casualisation, were at greater risk of losing time and more of it. Using language which seemed deliberately Malthusian in tone, the authors suggested that, in the absence of well-designed policy measures, the “only alternatives are for the rejected to die, to emigrate, to become independent workers, or to remain unemployed.”45 None of these trends could be observed if the object of study was industry, as economists preferred, and not occupation, following a sociological method. The Monograph drew on and organised gender and race as central categories mobilised through productivity and efficiency discourses to assess employment trends and, in turn, to define and explain the operation of dominant employment forms in agricultural
and industrial labour markets. The motive force behind job loss was seen not to lie within market-based functions alone. There was a new dimension at work: economic modernisation.

Described as an evolutionary process, efficiency principles in industry translated into a gradual move among some toward workforce stabilisation, with personnel selection emerging as a core feature of mature industries. The enduring features of these industries, now understood as industries which had low rates of unemployment, included high weekly wages, a higher female content, and "an age content which may be termed favourable," i.e. a high concentration of wage-earners whose age coincided with peak wage-earning capacity. The female content, as it turned out, was "merely indicative of what we may call permanent staff such as office employees." Conversely, industries with 'low levels of organisation' were found to have a less stable work force with higher rates of unemployment, low female content and low average earnings. In these industries, the development of personnel or employment office procedures was largely absent. Organisation therefore meant the selection of a "certain type of worker" attracted by stable, permanent employment. Again, DBS researchers were interested in examining the sociological significance of industrial organisation in relation to labour force stabilisation and degree of labour force attachment, together with hiring and personnel practices. As the report's authors explained, organisation in industry encompassed "the effects on the whole working body of the process of increasing efficiency. In other words, our use of the term implies the social rather than the economic effect of this process."

The DBS study set itself a different research objective, one making full use of the census data as a measure of human activities, of populations, of social indices which cumulatively inscribed categories of behaviour and, in turn, forecasted the magnitude and periodicity of social and economic trends well into the future. Only the census data, because it was concerned with the behaviour of populations and organisations such as unions, occupations and industries, was capable of exposing the true working principles of the labour market. In this way, the DBS monograph represented a comprehensive mapping exercise. Its insights provided the foundation for constituting and tracking populations according to discernible trends and "forms of dispersion." MacLean and his colleagues argued that it was important to break unemployment down into its component parts:
In other words, it would seem that unemployment as a social problem, or from the human side of the question, is not measurable by averages or generalities but by forms of dispersion and distribution. The present study, therefore, has set out to deal particularly with the dispersion aspects of the data on the subject.\(^49\)

Unemployment had to be understood along the lines suggested by William Beveridge in his classic 1909 study, *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*. Causality, Beveridge argued, could not be traced to a single source but was instead dispersed across multiple dimensions. Since it was impossible to classify each individual according to the cause(s) of their unemployment, Beveridge suggested that researchers develop a taxonomy of classifications grouped by type and cause including such factors as industry, seasonal industries, age, trade: in short, an array of factors reducible to personal/subjective, geographic and climactic, industrial and so on. Individuals could then be grouped and studied as unemployed populations sharing features, attributes, employment or occupational patterns in common. But above all, the point was to study the behaviour of unemployment as a precisely identified, measurable, calculable category which exhibited discrete patterns and statistical trends.\(^50\)

Unemployment was a real, tangible and measurable social reality even if it had been theorised into abstraction in the modelled reality of classical and neo-classical economics. The DBS report repeatedly emphasised the "human side of the problem" and the "human dimension" as the starting point, to begin investigation "with a discussion of the nature of the facts" as "an alternative to formalistic deduction on old assumptions" after the manner of classical economy.\(^51\)

The problem with all studies to date, the report's authors suggested, was precisely that unemployment was "regarded as an economic rather than a social phenomenon."\(^52\) The artifice of the two-dimensional economic universe not only failed to probe the full human scale of this troubling phenomenon. Standard economic methodology of old and new schools had led researchers entirely in the wrong direction, with the effect of misrepresenting as a temporary occurrence shared equally among all wage earners what was in fact a discernible and therefore predictable condition shared, not among all working people equally in the manner of a lottery, but restricted to a growing and hardening core or class of unemployed, under-employed and precariously employed people who, as a population, shared features, characteristics and therefore risks in common. In fact, "the employed and unemployed are different age classes and are becoming more and more different, the stronger the employment condition of the industry."\(^53\)
This 'class' was hidden from view, its numbers growing in direct proportion as economic conditions drew more people into waged labour from the ranks of 'own account' workers, particularly women, and the agricultural sector. DBS staff echoed prevalent concerns, a theme which would be repeated throughout the period considered here, about the broader effects of rural depopulation, the apparent siphoning-off of labour from the agricultural economy by the expanding and modernising industrial economy. This was a point which Bureau researchers felt they had to drive home, particularly among followers of the more orthodox economic school who held that anything which tended to increase overall employment levels would generate a corresponding decrease in unemployment:

There are unemployed who never appear in the data upon which economic theories are founded ... that they form a class which tends to be increased not only by 'boom' conditions, but by the steady approach of business toward greater efficiency. 54

Alongside the impetus toward economic efficiency and growth lay a related tendency to "cast off" entire occupational groups, pulling workers, skilled and unskilled alike, into an accelerating downward spiral of social and economic instability.

The most startling of the report's conclusions was the paradox of efficiency and human obsolescence as the twin products, not simply of competition, but of evolutionary economic growth. The obvious implication was that labour was not a commodity just like any other, interchangeable and fully mobile, capable of relocating across geographic, industrial and occupational boundaries in response to ever-changing conditions of supply and demand. A variety of factors limited the re-deployment of labour once a worker was dislocated, including ill-advised social policies designed on the basis of knowledge that was either inaccurate or simply incorrect. Current policy measures, including relief criteria, as well as demographic patterns of settlement and urbanisation, had unintended effects, including the "congestion" of large groups of unemployed people in areas where employment levels were the lowest. 55 Added to this was the legacy of relief measures designed to accommodate the features of an earlier stage of economic development, and not those of a market economy in which relief recipients were consumers as well as workers, whether employed or not:
A large body of consumers through immobility of labour further complicated by
the question of relief, is forced to locate or remain where employment, i.e.,
production, is least. Therefore the greater the distance between the two the greater
the cost. This would work against the interests of the producer as well as the
consumer. Ideally a population should be spread as much as possible; only in this
way can the possibilities of the country be exploited. Congestion of humanity,
when looked at in the final analysis, is only a defence mechanism – the banding of
the human being against nature as though the latter were an enemy instead of a
friend.56

Unemployment and “the sex aspect”

Among the most intriguing of the DBS research were observations about female
employment and unemployment, skill and economic modernisation. In response to those who
argued that women were displacing men in the competition for available employment, the
authors explained that their study “[did] not touch the question of whether the male is suffering
more unemployment because of female competition, or the national aspect of deferred marriage
because of this competition. The census data do not lend themselves to an analysis of this
question.”57 The monograph did, however, include a full chapter on the question of the “sex
aspect” of employment. Written by W.C. Tedford, the argument concluded that the presence of
women in industry was more accurately interpreted as a feature of the stability and competitive
strength of that industry. Women were more likely to be employed in industries characterised by
a permanent labour force with low unemployment rates:

... it is not the sex content that causes more or less unemployment in the industry
or occupation; the industries least subject to unemployment happen to employ
larger proportions of females. Females suffer less from unemployment than
males, but this is not because they are females, or because feminized industries
suffer less unemployment. The latter suffer just as much; in the same industries
females suffer as much unemployment as males. The reason for any apparent
advantage on the part of females is because they are taken on by the industries
which are strongest. 58

Researchers identified the question of women’s unemployment as one of the key issues to
address in the study. The study challenged the popular conception that women were less prone to
unemployment than were men, arguing that there was no evidence to support such a view. On the
contrary, it was not that women were less liable to unemployment but that men rarely competed
with women for the same jobs. There was no common employment experience shared between
both groups from which any reasonable inference of greater or lesser liability to unemployment
could be made. If men rarely competed for female jobs, women were in occupations open to men, particularly young men “with commercial ambitions,” upon whose jobs women were characterised as “constantly encroaching and successfully competing.”

In a background memo prepared by Bureau staff, the question of women’s employment in relation to the “unemployment problem” was again broached. The gradual increase in women’s share of the labour force was compared with changes in unemployment, immigration and population for the United States, Britain and Canada. The largest single proportion of women workers was found to be native-born, totalling 74% of gainfully occupied women workers in Canada. These women were acknowledged to be contributing their earnings “very substantially to the purchasing power of the family and so enlarging the market for consumers’ goods” which “must greatly encourage general industrial activity.” Between 1891 and 1921, women’s employment grew by an estimated 6.7%. In Britain, “where unemployment since the war has been most chronic and most prevalent,” the growth in female employment was the lowest of all three countries. Like the census monograph, the conclusion stood that the increased use of female labour was more likely to be associated with new production technologies:

In Canada, the increase in this proportion between 1921 and 1922 is interesting, as it marks the revival of activity following the post-war depression and probably is indicative of the advances made in the use of machinery in industrial production in this country, as well as the growing diversity of our manufacturing industries.

The International Labour Office contended that continuing high unemployment could be attributed to the combined effects of population changes, technological change and economic development, and the DBS study did not disagree. Still, the report argued that, in fact, the population: labour force ratio remained fairly constant in Canada so that any concern about a demographic imbalance which saw an absolute increase in female wage-earners competing against men over a shrinking pool of jobs was unwarranted. The study concluded as follows:

After the [Great] War, the idea was current for some time that this ratio was no longer constant, having been upset by the recent rapid increase in the number of women in employment. But careful research failed to confirm this view.

Women rarely, if ever, competed directly against men for the same job for the simple reason that the former were concentrated into a narrow band of what were dubbed “women’s occupations.”
In those few occupations open to both women and men, the study found that the strategy for competition represented a distinct pattern of ‘feminisation’: women were seen to be moving into a wider variety of industries, “but – and this is significant – once having feminized an occupation [they] receive slight competition from males.”

There was no evidence, furthermore, that women were any less vulnerable to unemployment, even though this conclusion might have seemed “foreign to the popular conception of a lower rate of unemployment amongst females.” Still, women were understood to have a shorter active working life within the waged labour force, since they allegedly had the option of withdrawing from the labour force through marriage while men did not, a factor which contributed to the higher male unemployment rate. Because census researchers were specifically concerned with drawing out gender-based differences in census data, it is noteworthy that two patterns were identified which would have considerable repercussions for any future unemployment insurance programme.

In the first, the study noted that women wage-earners had a more tenuous attachment to the labour force, even though their employment was characterised as more stable. The question researchers wanted to answer was why the percentage of unemployed women was lower than that for men. The answer was explained as follows:

It is hardly likely that there is a tendency for employers to re-hire dismissed females more quickly than males. The most probable explanation is that females cease to consider themselves wage-earners after a year’s unemployment and are recorded in the census, if they are married, as homemakers.

Women had a lower unemployment rate because they were “only suited to employment in the organised industries whose characteristic is stability of employment for such persons as are taken on” and because women tended to self-report as “homemaker” if married, or as “no occupation” if single and residing with parents.

The second pattern concerned differences in the treatment of women who were unemployed due to illness or accident. Here the report noted that women had an innate propensity to illness, most likely an allusion to reproduction. This “greater female capacity to illness” was demonstrated in the “unfavourable disability experience” with life insurance
companies. "At the present time," the study noted, "the practice is to grant women applicants a policy of more restricted benefits than is granted males and at a higher price." 68

Of course, the male breadwinner model was deeply embedded in the constitution of categories, measures and definitions of unemployment deployed by DBS staff in their policy research. 69 Among those excluded from unemployment measures were women engaged in household-based production as seamstresses, dressmakers and the like, described as earning only "small sums of money where it appeared that the economic position of the family rendered it unnecessary for them to be continuously seeking employment." 70 The concentration of women into a narrow band of industries on the one hand, combined with variable patterns of female and male unemployment on the other, was thought sufficient to justify separate analysis.

A primary consideration in choosing data on unemployment is the method of treating the behaviour of unemployment by sex. Should the male and female wage-earners of an industry be considered as identical, insofar as their liability to unemployment is concerned? 71

Since women were found to be clustered into "a few typically female industries and occupations," these data were segregated out while "industry" was otherwise understood as "quantitatively the male content, unless otherwise stated."

"Racial factors" and unemployment

From the "sex factor in unemployment" the Bureau's study moved to a consideration of race. Here the question was not the role played by immigration policy in increasing the overall supply of labour, but instead the assertion that there was a connection between race and the inherent tendencies of certain racial groups to either become unemployed, or to remain employed while other racial groups suffered job loss. The study concluded that this was indeed a vexed question. That is, "common sense" suggested there were at least some differences, for example between persons of Chinese and Japanese origin, or among "Hebrews and Eastern and Central Europeans." The question had first to separate race from country of origin, and then proceed from there to distinguish racial factors from cultural factors associated with climate, demography and degree of economic development. It was, in other words, difficult to draw any clear conclusions, as the following observation was intended to suggest:
It would seem that there is little or no unemployment that can be associated with race as such ... Now when we have similarity of occupation in the case of the same race coming from different countries and dissimilarity in the case of different races coming from the same country it is difficult to dissociate these from racial characteristics.72

The way out of this analytic maze was found, once again, by limiting the question to occupation: certain occupations were racialised in some of the same ways as others were feminized. Racial groups were found to specialise in particular occupations and, while “differentiation in unemployment status may not be entirely occupational,” there was still a link to the extent that occupations were racially distinct. That is, there appeared to be a tendency among “certain races to drift into certain occupations,” making it difficult to decide whether any subsequent unemployment was due to an occupational or a racial factor, “the occupation, etc., being racial.”73 But the matter did not end there. Following the same logic which drew Beveridge to argue that it was impossible to classify all unemployed individuals according to their reasons for being unemployed, but that it was statistically possible to categorise all probable causes of unemployment and then slot individuals accordingly, the census monograph went through logical contortions in the attempt to leave open the question of whether race had any bearing on unemployment.

It is only by taking one by one the features of unemployment commonly associated with race and showing that each is not due to anything else that it could be proven that there is a racial differentiation and obviously this is impossible. As it is, the fact that there is another possible explanation does not prove that there is not a racial differentiation. The question is still open. Meanwhile there is no doubt whatever that features of unemployment are associated with race whether these are ‘racial’ or not.74

Certainly, the fact that racial groups were seen to exhibit varying degrees of “versatility” and that “certain races” seemed more willing to accept lower wages, went some way toward substantiating at least some basis for further inquiry into the matter. And this was the point. To the extent that the census monograph established the framework for subsequent research drawing on census data, on the one hand, and regular employment/unemployment data for labour force surveys between the decennial census on the other, the parameters of study, the questions framing the research agenda, categories and definitions of inquiry: these were all developed within the census monograph through the systematic methodology laid out by DBS staff. And if there was any doubt concerning the status of ‘British’ immigrants, the report hastened to confirm
that “the British are naturally average since the index of [labour] mobility is strongly influenced by the population composing the greatest proportion of the wage-earners and the British immigrants are of the same race as the dominant population.”

**Discovering the Employable Unemployed**

The notion that there might be a permanent class of unemployed people was neither new nor radical. This was one of Coat’s favourite topics, a subject to which he turned with considerable wit in his presidential address to the American Statistical Association in December 1938.

The League of Nations is promising a world look-out, statistical one hopes, and has already got from Professor Haberler a synthetic framework of theory. But tonight I approach the problem from the other end, that of the unemployed themselves, who, though ignorant of seismology know how the earthquake hit them … We overturned a government in Canada in 1930 and held a special session of our Parliament; enacted then and thereafter a long series of relief measures; turned out another government; and finally set up an Employment Commission; in all of which Unemployment was Public Enemy No. 1.

A government lacking any clear comprehension of such a volatile social matter as unemployment was increasingly vulnerable to the whims of an equally volatile electorate. Or so Coats contended, pointing out that, in fact, the reasons for greater unemployment had to do not with any absolute reduction in the number of jobs in the economy than before, but rather with the expansion of the labour force:

It still surprises some that in our 1931 Census we found nearly as much wage-earning employment in Canada, *per capita* of population, as in 1921 when we had no such disturbance. There was vastly more unemployment among persons working for wages, but why? Because there were proportionately more wage-earners. Because in the interval, while population increased only 18 per cent, and the total gainfully occupied only 20 per cent, the number of wage-earners increased 30 per cent. Under ‘prosperity’ the wage-earners curve had siphoned a great ‘hump’ out of workers-on-own-account. When the boom broke this was projected as unemployment.

Certainly, Coats was of the opinion that unemployment was not strictly a recurring economic phenomenon to which all workers were equally vulnerable and in the same degree. His address as the newly-anointed president of the American Statistical Association was no place for untested, controversial hypothesising, from the summit of his profession and his own personal
career as a leading government statistician. Coats challenged Keynes and his supporters by pointing to a crucial trend which could only be discerned through the close scrutiny of a thorough census. In contrast to the view that expanded production lessened unemployment by increasing the number of jobs available, Coats drew upon the results of the monograph to argue precisely the opposite position. Modernisation was not a uniformly positive success story. “Industry as it becomes mechanised, traditionalised, integrated, centralised, increasingly constricts its labour supply; the rejects tend to become casual,” Coats intoned. “This is secular, not cyclical.” And the social consequences could not be ignored, at least not over the longer term:

[U]nemployment is not a matter of all or the majority of workers being sometimes employed and sometimes idle, but of a differentiation (which is hardening) into two classes, the one seldom employed, the other seldom unemployed. The unemployed thus appear, first a sort of human scaffolding cast aside when the building stage of enterprise is over; second, a series of discards made as operating requirements are worked out. 78

Differentiation was a function of industry and of duration of unemployment, the latter having “a direct bearing on relief policy.”  

The Statistical Administration of Employment and Unemployment  

The 1940 Unemployment Insurance Act radically altered the organisation of relations between unemployed individuals and the state, as well as those between employers and workers. This point was made in a memo to Coats from DBS researcher Cudmore, in which he summarised the implications for the work of the Bureau of the proposed legislation. The Act, he indicated, “embodies the principle that provision against unemployment is not merely a concern of the individual employee and his individual employer, nor even of the particular industry and its employees, but fundamentally the responsibility of the nation as a whole.” As such, a new constellation of relations was to be organised: this was truly a “social revolution.” 79 The Act made provision for the Unemployment Insurance Commission to collect any information deemed necessary to the administration of the programme. Individuals were required to divulge whatever information was requested of them, according to section 97, which read in part:

The Commission may require any person to make written returns of information deemed by the Commission to be necessary for the purposes of this Act, and failure to comply with any such request shall be an offence against this Act and
shall on summary conviction render liable any person in default to a fine not exceeding fifty dollars or imprisonment for a period not exceeding one month or to both fine and imprisonment.

As with any such regulatory measure, Coats observed, the section meant “much, little or nothing at all” depending upon the political will of those charged with the responsibility for administrating the policies of the Unemployment Insurance Commission. In fact, which ended up being the case would “depend largely upon the personnel of the Commission, unless the statistics are entrusted to this Bureau.”

Only the Bureau could properly foresee the statistical requirements necessary to ensure the smooth operation of the new UI programme, Coats argued. The concern was not that the well would run dry, but that details of every conceivable sort might be collected, overwhelming employers and employees with all manner of survey questionnaires and forms to feed the insatiable appetite of government for more and ever more information. As Coats quipped, “if Sir William Beveridge were in charge [the Commission] would likely amass a tremendous volume of statistics.” Careful collection and analysis were clearly the responsibility of the Bureau in matters as politically sensitive as the determination of entitlement based on an assessment of risk. Statistics would have to be collected first to determine the precise manner in which the programme was to be administered, to permit regular assessment of everything from normal employment levels for any given industry or occupation, to where to draw the “delicate line between the unemployed and the unemployable.”

The new programme was based on a generalised notion of risk that ignored the critical differences obtaining across industries and occupations. This constituted an area requiring further research to address the breach opened up between the policy logic of generalised risk and subsequent practices of implementation, specifically the administrative logic of excluding specified occupations from the unemployment insurance programme. In his commentary of the legislation, Cudmore argued that it “pays no attention to the differing but uncomputed [sic] risks of unemployment in differing occupations and industries, other than by making a list of excepted occupations,” a practice instituted primarily for temporary administrative reasons. The actuarial basis of the Act was itself predicated upon nothing more than statistics compiled by the DBS.
through the decennial census of 1921 and 1931. These data, together with monthly labour force surveys dating back 20 years, comprised the working corpus of "social statistics," again distinguished from "administrative statistics" of receipts and disbursements. The "uniform statistical procedure" was credited with establishing the actuarial basis for the proposed unemployment insurance program. This system had been consistently maintained under the direction of Dominion Statistician Coats, with results regularly published in the Labour Gazette. Despite the short-comings of the federal-provincial system, the 1937 report identified the development of the national system as a success of government-operated public service in the face of capitalist competition. This observation was in many ways inconsistent with the unceasing barrage of criticism unleashed by employment researchers and policy experts of a system most agreed was ineffective and rife with patronage. Alternatively, as a document intended to encourage and advocate the adoption of its recommendations, the following conclusion could leave little doubt as to which form of administration was to be preferred:

Despite these handicaps, Canada has blazed a trail in this field for the North American countries. Her experience has demonstrated that in the course of a decade and a half a country can build up a public employment service that will render it practically independent of private employment agencies and remove the profit element from the finding of jobs for the unemployed.³²

If administration of the programme held tremendous opportunity to generate additional information for the central state, the legislation also held out enormous implications for the future work of the DBS. Certainly, Coats hoped the Bureau would be given the central authority it required to ensure that all data was collected and reported in a uniform manner. Most importantly, staff needed data that was comparable across industries and occupations. Linking national unemployment and national productivity measures was a central point of the exercise. After all, Western democracies, viewing themselves as confronted by totalitarian regimes increasingly hostile to the 'democratic' capitalist aims of the League of Nations, went to considerable lengths to assert their ranking within the increasingly precarious international arena. Measures of national wealth, of productivity and of unemployment bespoke industrial efficiency, political stability and nationalist resolve. The main point to all of this was to develop a reliable system for labour market analysis, understanding that national progress was directly linked to employment levels. The capacity to address unemployment was becoming an issue for
international debate, particularly as Germany became increasingly vocal about its superior system of employment regulation.\textsuperscript{83}

The folly of British departmentalism was to be avoided at all costs in the Dominion system of statistical administration. The collection of uniform statistics through what DBS staff characterised as an "adequate number of employment exchanges" would go far toward the objective of reducing unemployment and, in the same measure, increasing national income and the administrative efficiency of the Act.\textsuperscript{84} Statistical uniformity would permit central governments to correlate unemployment statistics with those of production and distribution, to show the contribution of industry and labour to the wealth of the nation. Unemployment could threaten the Dominion's status internationally as well as domestically, indicating as it did the poor organisation of its labour force and the inefficient utilisation of labour by industries. The DBS therefore advised that every employment officer in the national employment system be provided with tables depicting the local labour force by industry, occupation and employment. In this way, the employment officer, the internal DBS memo recommended, "should be in a position to determine the industrial and occupational distribution of wage-earners in his [sic] district, and their experience with reference to employment."\textsuperscript{85} The network of employment exchanges to be set up across the country would operate as strategic points for the collection of various data, all of which would be centrally administered from Ottawa. They were, in the words of DBS staff, to work as "the local accounting centre as well as the local centre of statistics of employment and unemployment."\textsuperscript{86}

The decentralised, provincially-run system of employment exchanges had been the target of considerable criticism from various quarters, the most influential of which were Cassidy's report, together with reviews conducted by Bryce Stewart for the US administration. Taking a leaf from Beveridge's plan, DBS staff were firmly committed to a centrally-administered, well-staffed system with emphasis on the co-ordinating function of the public employment office, as the linchpin in the system. This aspect far outweighed the insurance-side of the proposed legislation, itself viewed as the policy response of last resort:

It is to be hoped that the Unemployment Insurance Commission, which has wide discretionary powers, will realise that the primary constructive object of the Act should be as far as possible to eliminate unemployment through the employment
exchanges, while the secondary aim will be to mitigate the effects of residual unemployment through the payment of employment benefits.87

The statistical work of the DBS would extend beyond collecting information on insured occupations, as far as Coats and his staff were concerned. If the system then being implemented was to reach its full capacity, then all aspects of employment had to be considered: "The problems of 'blind-alley' occupations at the beginning of the working life, and of increasing unemployment at advanced occupations, should be given special attention in this connection."88 That is, the involvement of the central Dominion government opened up the labour force to the full investigative powers of the state. DBS staff advised further that the operation of the UI Act would reduce unemployment if accompanied by comprehensive programme of vocational guidance for young workers and those displaced by technological change, through co-ordinated labour transfers by region and occupation, and, finally, "through the removal or mitigation of the handicaps of those who are psychically or mentally ill-adapted to their present occupations."89 If the latter comprised the potential vectors of operation in this new policy area, the mode of implementation lay in the careful selection of sites and personnel to staff the employment offices. Patronage was to be avoided at all costs. Employment officers had to be "trained like personnel managers in some of our larger firms," they had to be "statistically minded" enough to discern occupational trends and "see into the futures" of industries in their surrounding areas:

Only by the careful selection of the communities in which employment exchanges are to be set up, only by socially careful selection of staffs of those exchanges, can we hope that the new system will make a net contribution to the income and prosperity of Canada."90

Developing psyche-based techniques of individual assessment

Leonard Marsh was instrumental in the development of comprehensive policy proposals designed to move the Canadian government closer to adopting a framework for social security within the context of public policy. His key insights and policy proposals were later summarised in his major study: *Canadians In and Out of Work*.91 Certainly, this thorough work summarised many of the central themes of employment research addressed here. Marsh worked as a student with William Beveridge while at the London School of Economics and was in fact recommended by Beveridge for his position at McGill University. The DBS unemployment study shared some similarities with the direction of early research undertaken by Leonard Marsh. In fact both were
early attempts to apply Beveridge’s method, grounded in the rationale that if unemployment was to be understood in any economy, then it had to be broken down. Although unemployment could be measured in the aggregate, this approach did not bring the social researcher any closer to ascertaining its cause or even its true dimensions.

Marsh, like DBS staff, focused his investigations on the involuntary unemployment of those “willing and able to work” and on the casualisation of work generally. In so doing, their work foregrounded employability, widening the gulf between the formal labour market and the marginality of those thought to be most at risk. In their analyses, the labour market was constituted as an always/already masculinist domain from which the domestic sphere was theoretically excluded because it was defined as outside of market space. This conceptual approach tightened the theoretical framework applied to research explaining, while at the same time asserting, the normal operation of that market, principally as a matter of investigating the behaviour of those understood to naturally inhabit that space. As Marsh explained, there were several classes of unemployment among men – and significantly, only one for women, constituted in/by this research model as a single undifferentiated category – each requiring a distinct policy response:

The unemployment of juveniles, of women, of labourers, of skilled artisans, of the man over forty, of the immigrant, of the worker displaced by some technical change in industry, of the disabled man, of the mobile seasonal worker, of the ‘casual’ – to mention only some – are distinct problems, differing in their characteristics, in degree of complexity, in urgency.

Marsh noted that adopting this approach necessarily excluded “those who are unemployable rather than unemployed.” The MSSR adopted a scale or gradation of unemployment, ranking groups according to causality and incidence, both of which were understood to be related. Employability was assessed by calibrating allegedly innate qualities like aptitude and intelligence. The three grades of unemployment developed by Marsh were as follows: (a) the normally steadily employed whose unemployment derived from technological or economic change; (b) “intermediate” groups subject to irregular employment even under normal conditions; and (c) “the lowest ranks of the labour market, and those physically or morally incapable of regular work.” The problem of unemployment and employment, then, was three-dimensional: “fluctuations in industrial activity and business prosperity,” “personal capacity and
employment value" and "organisation of the labour market." Alternatively, economy, individual disposition and capacity, and the social-institutional parameters of the labour market.

The MSSR's first publication was released in 1935 as the Depression entered its sixth relentless year. Classical economic assumptions were challenged by the Depression, especially since the free market was after all supposed to contain its own self-correcting mechanism, adjusting production to consumption patterns, wages and prices without the need of external intervention. Paradoxically, rising productivity had instead ended in devastating total market collapse. What was worse, the institutions and relations which had always been relied upon to bring coherence and stability to society, community and family were themselves seen to be unravelling. As many commentators were beginning to suggest, the events of the past several years called for a radical overhaul of conventional economic theories about the labour market and the policy measures stemming from them. Marsh's programme was directly counter-posed to the classical, free market economists whose theoretical models and flawed policies had ruled the day to the detriment of the vast majority of people. Economics held out only partial insights, he argued, and it was more than time to look to culture, politics and the insights generated through social research for answers.

The economist has no control over his patient. His diagnosis cannot be so precise. He has little or no power of experiment. That power is granted only to statesmen and legislatures. On the other hand, the economic system, no less than its problems, is man-made. Maladjustment is due in the last analysis not to physical, but to human forces, and the remedies are to be found through organised control, given the knowledge and the will power to construct it.

Economic reductionism was only one part of the problem hampering governmental capacity to develop policy responses capable of leading the Dominion out of economic depression. Health and happiness were not reducible to economy, although most certainly all human welfare depended on economic security which in turn was based on employment security, and here the implicit subject was certainly male. Nonetheless, human welfare was also contingent upon a variety of other factors including physical and mental health, education, and ethics. The economic system, as a "man-made" construct, operated along a social as well as an economic dimension and as such was also a matter of social and commercial regulation which encompassing the distribution of products - that is, the social development of markets - and the
distribution of incomes—patterns of consumption. A key component shaping the "social conditions and forces which determine the place and adjustment of groups and individuals" was, of course, the labour market. This was the one area over which the state absolutely had to develop some measure of control, through systematic planning and organisation. Marsh also observed how the principles of rationalisation were becoming more widespread in the organisation of production. Science and the techniques of "rationalisation" in the form of time and motion studies were being taken up in industry to improve productive efficiency and profitability. Why, Marsh and his colleagues wondered, were these same principles not also being taken up and applied in the one area where they could provide such tremendous benefit: the labour market? As Marsh explained: "it has been nobody’s business to rationalise the labour market. But from the viewpoint of social science, the task is a necessary one because it is so evidently everybody’s business."98 Surely the organisation of people, involving as it did the close and methodical study of human behaviour and the organisation of human relationships, was a legitimate domain for research and for governmental administration once the requisite first principles had been apprehended. "Is the systematic survey of social problems very different from these adoptions of the ‘scientific approach’ in the business world?" 99 This was the central question around which Marsh and the MSSR programme of research was to be organised.

This approach to social research held out tremendous promise for social practitioners like those affiliated to the MSSR. Certainly, the idea that seemingly insurmountable problems like massive unemployment were socially derived and not driven by the inexorable forces of natural economic law provided an important strategic opening for policy intervention. Following Beveridge, MSSR researchers accepted that unemployment was in many ways a product of poor labour market organisation in combination with, even exacerbated by, exogenous economic conditions.

Social research was a nascent field of study, at least as Marsh envisioned it, approached as the direct application of scientific techniques of investigation to population, culture and society with the effect of expanding the scope of governmental activity, all with the unifying if not universalising goal of improving human welfare and quality of life.100 Science was never neutral. Even if scientific method held out the possibility of professional detachment and
objectivity, the application of scientific inquiry was deeply conditioned by a combination of cultural and economic factors. As Marsh explained, institutional and legislative criteria, alongside changing notions about public and private, were all implicated in determining the “social dividend” yielded up by the “fruits of science”:

The social implications of biological science are equally clear. Indeed, not only is human life a central part of its subject-matter, but through such branches as eugenics and anthropology it is directly linked to social science. In a sense, all science is social; and not only in products and problems, but in genesis. 101

The university, both as social institution and research institute, was integral to the social research programme envisaged by Marsh. To date, Marsh argued, universities had been approached as repositories for the transmission of knowledge where training, teaching and research were broached as theoretically discrete endeavours. The McGill School, on the other hand, was committed to transforming the practice of social scientific knowledge, linking these three branches in a programme of academic inquiry which would “bring a scientific attitude to social problems.”

The research work to be undertaken by the MSSR was described in a memorandum drafted in 1930 by the McGill Social Research Council. The co-operative programme encompassed biology and medicine under which the following topics were subsumed: eugenics, “public hygiene,” racial and individual immunity, school and industrial hygiene; psychology which was defined to include “individual, sex and race differences in intelligence,” “special aptitudes and defects” pertinent to educational and vocational guidance, effective learning methods in education and industry; education, which also included a focus on vocation; sociology with particular reference to adult education, educational sociology, “preservation of rural community life,” “influence of employment of women on family life” and “social factors in industrial relations;” economics, including a sub-heading addressing “unemployment insurance schemes that will not penalise the industrious in favour of loafers;” and, finally, law and politics. 102 Society was a social laboratory in a model which fostered direct linkages with surrounding communities. The Institute’s approach to research involved social investigations into the surrounding populations, developing techniques, training technicians and proposing policy solutions to a range of social problems. In this way, the MSSR was modelled on the
Social Science Research Council in New York. Marsh also argued that the traditional departmentalisation of universities was wasteful and, in the end, counterproductive.

At the MSSR, technique and its application were paramount. The model for social research was based on the social survey and the clinical case study method. The research model produced verifiable results – social truths – only if it was capable of surviving the transition through direct application in the field by a suitably trained practitioner – these were the important measures of success. But for the veracity of social science research findings to be asserted and acknowledged, the methodology that led to their proclamation – the experiment – had to be reproducible, and the key to such reproduction, as Marsh explained, lay in the "formulation of principles whose inner working is demonstrable." Social phenomena were as subject to rational organisation, investigation and demonstration as were the biological, chemical and physical phenomena comprising the object of study in the physical sciences. Marsh was aware of the significance of the MSSR as part of a broader move that saw the emergence of sociology as a distinct branch in the nascent social sciences. Like others in this field, he was anxious to secure the credentials, the legitimacy accorded the physical sciences in a self-conscious move to appropriate the mantle of scientific expertise for practitioners of these knowledge practices:

The correlative of specialisation is differentiation. A particular area is marked off for concentrated study: more and more becomes known about it, its subject matter is more clearly defined, the principles which govern it are gradually brought to light; and it becomes established as a separate branch of knowledge. The discovery of governing principles permitted direct intervention, prediction and regulation by imposing a rational order on the subject matter, unlocking its 'secrets' to the impartial gaze of the expert practitioner. This was so much more promising than conventional sociological practice with its limited preoccupation with social survey technique, an approach which had only presented the facts of social problems as empirical data, but could not move beyond that to the level of explanation, of causality, of epistemological inquiry. At the same time, Marsh was suspicious of approaches which drew too heavily on statistical analysis as though that alone would lend such techniques scientific credibility. While acknowledging the importance of such inquiry, where human welfare was both the subject and object of investigation, a more theoretically probing technique was called for. Once again, the notion of
first principles, of nascent inquiry, of early stages in the development not only of knowledge, but of technique as well – of knowledge practices – is apparent in Marsh's work and stands out as an example of the active constitution of categories which were themselves vectors for social investigation. Gender, race, and skill were among the more obvious examples, as the following observation suggests:

Some social phenomena (such as trade, prices, or population) lend themselves more easily to measurement by statistical or other quantitative methods; others, (such as occupational skill, industrial fatigue, racial character, the determinants of public opinion, the constituents of 'intelligence') are more qualitative or complex. Their measurement, therefore, must necessarily be more tentative, partial, or akin to 'first approximations.'

The MSSR investigated the psyche-based dimensions of work and employability early on in its research programme. N. W. Morton, a lecturer at the McGill psychology department, took up the question of individual capacities and the relationship of intelligence, skill and aptitude to employment patterns, specifically to determine the capacity of intelligence and related psychological testing methods to work as predictors of employability and employment stability. *Occupational Abilities* was released in 1935, to a research and social service community that was demanding pragmatic solutions for dealing with the mounting social chaos at community and philanthropic agencies across the Dominion. In the midst of debates about the proposed unemployment insurance scheme outlined in the *Employment and Social Insurance Act* (1935), the need for an accompanying network of public employment offices was in danger of being lost sight of altogether. As those who followed Beveridge's proposals were well aware, the labour exchange was a critical feature in any insurance programme. The MSSR study was in part a response to this potential oversight, and proposed a variety of testing and screening methods which Morton claimed were suitable for routine deployment in individual evaluation, vocational guidance, employment selection and placement, and the "adult adjustment work of the better-organised public employment offices."  

In the introduction to Morton's book, McGill psychologist and MSSR executive member Chester Kellogg outlined the three principal research questions answered in the study. First, to what extent was the unemployment problem solely caused by the current economic depression? Second, could psychological testing "discover any measurable differences in intelligence,
mechanical or clerical skills, educational level, or any character traits” between groups of unemployed and employed persons, such that personality characteristics thought to have a direct bearing on employability (“securing and keeping jobs”) could be isolated for separate analysis? The third was the broader application of psyche-based technique through policy:

Can we, by test methods, acquire more exact knowledge of the requirements for success in a wide range of specific occupations – the requirements not merely in general intelligence level (already known to a fair degree of approximation), but in as many aspects of personality as are now readily in some sense measurable?108

As Morton concluded, “it is clear that an orderly attempt to appraise the occupational qualifications of the individual demands in practice the use of clinical psychological methods.”109

Morton’s study was, as the author himself acknowledged, too limited and biased in its sample size to be considered representative of the general population of unemployed workers. While the findings cast “severe doubt” on the conventional view that there was a large percentage among the unemployed who were unemployable, the data did suggest that the “general mental level” and degree of skill were lower overall among the unemployed men in the sample. Although the results were inconclusive, this did not appear to detract from the merits of the research. In a review for the Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, University of Toronto psychologist and CNCMH member S. N. F. Chant commented that like most statistically-based studies it was difficult to draw any hard and fast conclusions from the data itself. The value in the study lay instead in providing a “guide for one’s thinking,” for confirming the validity of psychological testing in employment research, and finally for demonstrating the importance of supplementing “objective test findings” with the clinical interview-based technique.110 The design and methodology of the study was its contribution to the general field, to the extent that it indicated the need for further research. As Chant observed, “certainly the unemployable are largely unemployed, but it does not follow that even the majority of the unemployed are unemployable.”111 Morton followed his study with the publication of a manual for employment offices which proposed a battery of tests for intelligence, aptitude, clerical and manual ability, together with vocational planning measures which reflected the gendered organisation of the labour market.112
The principles embedded in Morton’s plan were reflected in Marsh’s well-received publication, *Canadians In and Out of Work*, an influential study of the Canadian labour market throughout the inter-war period. In it, Marsh repeated his earlier arguments that the Dominion government was best positioned to respond to the devastating effects of unemployment by addressing both its social and its economic implications. He argued consistently that the labour market was national in scope and that governments had all of the tools necessary to rationalise the market through systematic policy measures, including a national employment service and comprehensive occupational training. While agreeing that workers had to be assessed for their different capacities and aptitudes, Marsh also acknowledged the importance of structural market conditions. This was, however, a caveat which would not always gain recognition in the face of gender-based and racialised assumptions about employability. In what amounted to an argument for the recognition of structural conditions of the market as Marsh described it, the state, driven by the dictates of “the character of modern economic society and by considerations of human society” was constructing a “widespread fabric of social provision and social control.” Nonetheless the source of subsequent social and economic inequality was set within the same frame as an individualising psyche-based model for assessing both the cause and consequence of employment capacity, located within the very identity – the psychology – of the individual.

*Canadians In and Out of Work* was a careful and thorough sociological study of trends in demography, occupation, employment and unemployment. Marsh scrutinised a range of social factors in his assessment of leading determinants of employment and unemployment patterns. For example, occupation was singled out as a proxy for economic class, while skill worked as a composite indicator of occupational competence. These factors were thought indicative of security and stability with respect to labour market attachment. Regional diversity and division were assessed for what they might reveal of demographic patterns in settlement and employment, together with the profoundly differing conditions facing urban and rural communities. Race, too, comprised a category in Marsh’s analysis, although he was deeply ambivalent of its relevance as a determining factor in employment patterns. He roundly denounced the “excesses which have been committed in the name of ‘Aryan’ racialism.” This caveat notwithstanding, race was also deployed as a factor in assessing occupational distribution, although other factors were seen to be
just as important: “cultural, educational and economic backgrounds, not simply ‘race,’ account for the representation of various stocks at each vocational level.”

On the matter of gender, Marsh’s observations were similarly reflective of the gendering of ‘female skill.’ In fact, Marsh referred to the “female labour market” as distinct from that for men. In his analysis of “women and juveniles,” Marsh observed that the margin separating skilled, ‘intermediate,’ and allegedly unskilled “jobs for women” was significantly smaller than that for men at each gradation. Two reasons were thought to account for this: women had “less time to develop differentiated skills,” and “the labour market itself makes less specialised demands” upon women workers. On the matter of regular employment trends, Marsh’s observations are noteworthy for how they deepened the conceptualisation of a distinct market for female labour, thus obscuring the sexual and racialised dimensions of the division of labour as central organising features of the ‘labour market’ generally. Marsh observed that the level of female employment (based on the 1931 census) was stationary, with the exception of a decline in clerical occupations and an increase in domestic service employment. The latter was characterised as the female equivalent of the ‘back to the land’ movement for men. Domestic service was approached as inherently unskilled, the only occupation available for women who lacked vocational training, therefore making it a ‘threshold vocation’ at both the peaks and troughs of the business cycle. Women’s employment was conceptualised as a direct response to male unemployment. The “abnormal increase of total workers” observed in the 1931 census – for example, domestic service increased by 7,200 at a time when employment levels across almost all other occupations were declining – was due, therefore, to the influx of women into the labour market “to fill the gap in family income caused by the unemployment of the breadwinner.”

In his study, Marsh was critical of approaches which assumed that the labour market operated efficiently, that is, that markets were ever ‘free’ and therefore best left to operate independently of government intervention. As he pointed out, while individuals may not always be adequately “fitted by aptitude and education” for their occupations, neither was the labour market an effective means for sorting individuals. That is, “nobody who knows the inadequacies of the labour market will push this presumption too far.” His approach closely follows the social democratic model for state regulation of labour markets, one grounded in a recognition of
inequalities of opportunity and the extent to which those inequalities were exacerbated through capitalist markets and relations. His argument, one that would continue to resonate into the post-war period, is worth reproducing in full:

Inequalities of education opportunity; differences in efficiency with which industries organise their personnel; unemployment; demotions; the check to industrial recruitment during slack or depression periods: these and other related matters are not incidentals but often the chief influences which have put round pegs into square holes, set some men and women at work which is below their capabilities, and others at jobs which are ‘too good for them.’ Primarily, a picture of the occupational structure portrays the work people are actually doing, or have done in the past. How far it portrays the people themselves, their capacities and their deserts, is a matter for more careful assessment.\textsuperscript{120}

Assessments of capacities and individuals in relation to employability would become a central focus of inquiry throughout the Second World War and post-war period. How these questions were taken up comprises the major theme of analysis in the following chapters.

Conclusion

During the latter part of the Depression, new ideas about the role of the state in the regular operation not just of economy but of society were the subject of widespread discussion and debate. This process, reflecting the enduring schism in welfare state forms, was characterised by the dualism of economy and culture, conjoined through socially constituted and regulated market forms, and psyche-based approaches to the formation of self and character, of self-governing subjects who were the subjects of employment policy discourses.

Researchers and commentators, particularly those in the business press, observed what they characterised as a disturbing trend: economic conditions were seen to be improving, although this turn-around was having no discernible impact on the length of relief lines. Why was unemployment not declining? The employment and labour market researchers considered here sought to investigate the social dimensions of unemployment. Intelligence and efficiency measures were brought to bear in a programme that purported to investigate the relationship between employability and labour market attachment. Findings of the DBS study factored unemployment into social categories of racial origin, gender and class, as researchers traced broader trends, patterns, and statistical regularities by which government administrators might be
able to predict the ‘normal’ operation of the labour market and normal levels of unemployment among classes of workers.

The conceptual framework informing employment researchers’ observations of female employment scrutinised both the patterns and location of women’s employment within the formal waged economy. Industrial expansion did little to ameliorate unemployment, DBS researchers argued, since it only served to draw ever more workers, young women among them, into the labour market. Not only were women displacing young men and boys: the employment of young women in so-called feminised occupations was also held to signify stability and modernisation. Unemployment, it was argued, was a predictable condition, but it was also a social phenomenon. There was a ‘hardening class’ of workers found among the ranks of unemployed people, an unstable reserve whose allegedly inferior capacities contributed to social disruption and unrest. ‘The unemployed’ had more in common with each other, as an identified sub-population, than they did with other groups within the labour force. In the course of its research, the DBS attempted to develop a theoretical model capable of accommodating the marked increase in women’s participation in the labour force. At the same time, the flip side – female unemployment – was denied any theoretical status: where domestic labour provided a ready outlet, no woman need ever be unemployed.

The significance of psyche-based assessments of employability is considered in Chapter Four in the context of developing knowledge practices and discourses about intelligence and vocational aptitude in employment and training policy. Morton’s study for the MSSR was an important intervention into contemporary discussion about the need for a comprehensive network of well-organised public employment offices staffed by properly trained personnel. Morton’s study failed to produce any conclusive evidence that the unemployed men he interviewed exhibited diminished aptitude or low intelligence, any more than a representative sample of workers generally, but then, that was not really the point of the study. Rather, the principal object was to show the utility of testing generally in predicting and directing the regular movement of normal workers by occupation, revealing the practical knowledges necessary to ensure a smooth fit between individual worker, occupation and, ultimately, the job itself. MSSR practitioners sought to demonstrate that age, nationality, intelligence, length of unemployment
and education, indeed any "personal" factors held to condition character, all had to be taken into account in developing an occupational profile of each individual, and to develop the technique necessary to do this on the much larger scale of the public employment office. Only the trained expert could undertake this exercise, beginning with the controlled study of the sort conducted at the MSSR. Once the technique had been developed and tested, it would be ready for broader application, but only if the method was based on theoretically sound technique.
Endnotes:

1 Leonard Marsh, Canadians In and Out of Work (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1940).

2 My use of this term is adopted from, and deeply informed by, the work of Nikolas Rose, Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self (London: Routledge, 1989); and Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power and Personhood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).


4 "More Work in Canada, but Relief Lists are Longer," Ottawa Citizen December 28, 1936.

5 This, even though immigration had been all but cut off during the depression. See Donald H. Avery, Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995); Franca Iacovetta with Paula Draper and Robert Ventresca eds., A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); and Barbara Roberts, Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada, 1900-1935 (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1988). For a discussion of the role of the eugenics movement in the cultivation of anti-immigration practices, see Angus McLaren, Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990).

6 For a brief overview of the business response to unemployment insurance see James Struthers, No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914-1941 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983).

7 "A Job to be done," Financial Post editorial, October 16, 1936.


The punishing effects of poor relief have, in the New Left social control model of Richard Cloward and Francis Fox Piven, been carried through in a direct line of descent into

For a recent study of the transition from traditional census research to sampling, see Jean-Pierre Beaud and Jean-Guy Prevost, “The Politics of Measurable P: The Emergence of Sampling Techniques in Canada’s Dominion Bureau of Statistics,” *Canadian Historical Review* 79, no. 4 (December 1998), 691-725.


As Ian Hacking argues, one of the decisive conceptual events of twentieth century physics was the erosion of determinism, setting in motion a shift from discerning truth from natural law to probabilistic law, now expressed in terms of normality and, what was often more likely to be the more pressing subject of governmental action, the classification and regulation of deviations from the norm. This erosion of determinism opened the way for chance. Connected to this was an intensive and insistent mapping of people, the creation of populations. See Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance*, (New York: Cambridge University Press 1991).


15. Ibid., 6.

16. Ibid., 15.


21. Ibid., 93.

22. Much of the early work in the US appears to have been funded through private foundations, including the Russell Sage Foundation which worked with the Advisory Committee of the ASA investigating the development and deployment of statistics for governmental use. Margaret Hogg left her work developing cost of living indexes at the Bureau of Labour Statistics to take on the job of developing a census of unemployment. She was responsible for the initial period of this work through 1933-34, when it was taken over by Bryce and Annabel Stewart shortly before her untimely death in August 1935. Her methodology was implemented through the Trial Census of Unemployment, described in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 31 (December 1936), 753-54. Hogg's work was completed and published in the following: Annabel Murray Stewart and Bryce Stewart, *Statistical Procedures of Public Employment Offices* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1933), 83.


was particularly critical in her report of the federal-provincial grants-in-aid programme, a sporadic and piecemeal approach of limited term relief transfers. Gettys observed that the federal government's performance at the very least did little to mitigate the recent unemployment crisis. Like Cassidy's 1932 review of the Ontario provincial employment office network, the Gettys report echoed many of the findings, as in the following:

In more recent years the work of the Dominion Employment Service branch has become routine, and is restricted mainly to the auditing of provincial requests for reimbursement. Various activities have been discontinued: Dominion inspection has been abandoned; research activities have dwindled to nil; juvenile and professional aspects have not been developed. The full possibilities of the service have not been realised ... If the administrative techniques exercised by the Employment Service to deal with the emergency problems of the post-war [W.W.I] years had been continued and developed throughout succeeding years, the Employment Service might have functioned more effectively during the recent unemployment crisis." (Gettys, ibid., 62).

She went on to note, as had Cassidy and Whitton, the serious problem with political patronage in the system: "There has, moreover, been no little criticism of the fact that political influence is effective in securing jobs through the Employment Service." (Ibid., Note 62, 62). The need was not for increased funds but for a "completely national service," a point also made by the NEC; this in preference to any attempts at "refurbishing of the Dominion-provincial employment service" (63). I do not address the dispute over the federal-provincial system of conditional grants, although several historical accounts document this on-going tension within the Canadian federation and constitutional attempts at reform. See James Struthers (1983).

25 NAC, RG 31, Vol. 1418, file "Unemployment." Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "An Unemployment Policy for Canada." Internal memorandum prepared by A. H. Le Neveu, (n. d.), 4. LeNeveu's approach to unemployment – both at the level of research and of administration – was a reiteration of Beveridge's programme as originally proposed in his 1909 study. The view that unemployment insurance gave rise to new forms of unemployment by weakening morale and the incentive to work resonated with Bureau staff. Studies which apparently monitored and examined the intergenerational effects of unemployment proliferated on both sides of the Atlantic and informed the policy research at the Bureau, as instances of the development of 'character'-based research and policy discourses concerned with the formation of self-reliant subjects, the basis for liberal governance at the centre of programmes like unemployment insurance and employment training.

A 1938 study, "The Causes of Unemployment in Great Britain," purported to find strong evidence of a new generation of unemployed youth, limited in mind and body, whose future would be to "stand behind their fathers in the queue." Whether discouraged by the failure to find a new job, or inured to the dependent status of the unemployment assistance recipient, in the end the former was seen to be just as unemployable as the latter. See NAC, RG 31, Vol. 1418, part 1. Donald A. Bain, "The Causes of Unemployment in Great Britain," December 1938. This study intersected with existing concerns about what were increasingly alleged to be the debilitating social and moral effects of relief programmes, only now at issue were these new forms of unemployment created specifically by proposed unemployment insurance, should such a policy actually succeed in altering labour market behaviour.

27 Ibid., 2-3.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.


31 This pattern was discussed in the Census Monograph at great length, and LeNeveu, op. cit., 2.

32 LeNeveu, op. cit., 2.

33 NAC RG 27, Vol. 184, file 614.05, Department of Labour, “Memorandum on Unemployment Statistics” (n.a.) February 12, 1935, 7.

34 Ibid., 2.


36 During the 1930s all unemployment data were collected from two principal sources: trade unions and, for jurisdictions like Britain, unemployment insurance records, prompting DBS researchers to question the validity of studies and subsequent policies based on these limited information sources. This rather sweeping assertion apparently aroused the ire of trade union leaders, some of whom in turn questioned the validity of the 1931 census data. According to Beaud and Prevost, MacLean defended his census data by claiming that any “incidental inaccuracies” would disappear through “averages and trends.” See Jean-Pierre Beaud and Jean-Guy Prevost, op. cit. at Note 20: 699. Few countries even made the effort to collect census data and so relied almost exclusively on national industry-wide figures in which any social trends were totally obscured. Unemployment insurance data excluded fully one-third of the unemployed who were “subjects for relief, etc., who make unemployment a problem.” Monograph, 18

Further, the definition of unemployment excluded those working involuntary part-time or at least earning wages so low as to justify a new category of under-employment. For their part, trade unions shared with industries the unfortunate habit of ‘discarding’ their unemployed members giving the false impression of a lower occupational unemployment rate, at least among craft-based unions: “The unions do not seem to be any more paternal than the industries. The distinction is still maintained between A (the permanently employed) and B (the permanently unemployed). Monograph, 26.

37 For a recent study that challenges the over-arching significance of Keynesianism in Canadian public policy, see Robert Malcolm Campbell, Grand Illusions: The Politics of the Keynesian

38 Monograph, 131-132, 137.
39 Ibid., 174-5, 153.
40 It is interesting to note that this has been identified by welfare state theorists, both contemporary and historical, as precisely the contradiction embedded in the deepest foundations of welfare state models. See, for example, Christopher Pierson, Beyond the Welfare State? The New Political Economy of Welfare (London: Polity Press, 1991)

42 See, for example, NAC RG 50, Vol. 50, file U05. Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee, no. 3. A. D. Watson, Chief Actuary, Department of Insurance. Unemployment Insurance Commission, “The Application of Insurance Principles to the Problem of Unemployment as Exemplified in the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1940. An address delivered to the School of Instructors.” January 9, 1942.

Watson articulated the principles of ‘moral hazard’ in this deployment of actuarial discourses in, for example, the his observation that all unemployed persons were not ‘equal.’ Referring to a 1927 study of unemployed persons in Britain, Watson argued the following: These data show how the disinclination to work may persist when there is even a very moderate compensation for remaining idle; that disinclination necessarily depends upon the personal circumstances of the individual. We should do well to keep facts such as these in the front, not in the back, of our minds in the supervision of unemployment insurance claims. (Watson, op. cit., 9).

43 Ibid., 5.
45 Monograph, 22.
46 Ibid., 154.
Ibid., 154.

Ibid., 18.


A. C. Pigou and Lionel Robbins were among the leading economists of the classical school. Pigou’s view was most compelling to those who championed the free market as the most efficient and rational model for ordering economic activity. In an approach which treated labour as just another commodity. For an account of their influence, see John Garraty, op. cit.

Pigou argued that the flow of labour was solely regulated by wage and price level with the wage-setting mechanism being the only true regulator balancing supply and demand. Wage fixing of course occurred (in particular through the activities of trade unions) under the cultural weight of traditions, and this was a particularly troublesome interference. If the question was, ‘Does unemployment occur naturally in a free labour market?’ then the answer could only be that it did not. If demand was insufficient, wages would drop to accommodate as the market moved inevitably toward re-establishing equilibrium.

Of course, this was a serious point of contention across western industrial democracies experimenting with unemployment insurance programmes and other state regulatory measures designed to counter the effects of depression. At issue was the very question of whether the wage setting mechanism of the market was as Pigou and others contended, or if a state administered programme of social insurance should instead be implemented. Lionel Robbins was even more emphatic on this point than Pigou, arguing that any form of state intervention or cultural and political organising, in particular trade unions, effectively threw up the very rigidities which had culminated in the Great Depression. In this view of full employment, wage levels could easily be depressed to their lowest levels, however there would not, indeed could not, be any such thing as true unemployment in a free market.

As James Struthers indicates, this argument was a central theme in Charlotte Whitton’s report commissioned by R. B. Bennett. For a discussion of her findings, see Struthers, op. cit., 77-79. See also an intriguing study by Harry Cassidy of ‘transience’ and the ‘problem of the single man,’ NAC RG 27, Vol. 3348, file 30. Harry Cassidy, Director of Social Welfare for British
Columbia, “The Problem of Relief, Health and Welfare Services for Interprovincial Transients,”
June 16, 1936 (revised July 11, 1936).

56 Ibid., 31. The spatial distribution of labour was a critical factor in the development of markets
for consumer goods, to the extent that the immobility of labour also meant the concentration of
purchasing power in a region or area.

57 Ibid., p. 32.

58 Ibid., p. 32.

59 Ibid., 172.

60 NAC RG 31, Vol. 1418, file Unemployment, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, “The
Employment of Women in Relation to the Unemployment Problem”, (n.a., n.d.) (typescript), 3.

61 Ibid., 4. See also Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men and Change in Two

62 Wladimir Woytinsky, Three Sources of Unemployment, International Labour Office Studies
and Reports, Series C, No. 20, (1935).

63 Monograph, 86.

64 Ibid., 172.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid., 251.

67 Ibid., 253.

68 Ibid., 250.

69 For a discussion of views of female employment during the Great Depression in the midst of
the growing ascendency of the male breadwinner model, see Margeret Hobbs, “Gendering Work
and Welfare: Women’s Relationship to Wage-Work and Social Policy During the Great

For an analysis of the gendered basis of the design principles informing the Unemployment
Insurance Act (1940) and the mobilisation of gender in debates concerning the unemployment
insurance programme during the period, see Ruth Roach Pierson, “Gender and the
Unemployment Insurance Debates in Canada, 1935-1940.” Labour/Le Travail, 25 (Spring 1990),
77-103.

70 Monograph, 42.

71 Ibid., 117.
72 Ibid., 262.

73 Ibid., 32-3.

74 Ibid., 263.

75 Ibid., 271.


77 Coats, op. cit., 163.

78 Ibid.


81 Ibid.

82 Industrial Relations Counsellors, Inc., Administration of Public Employment Offices with Unemployment Insurance: Canada, France, Sweden, Switzerland. (New York: J. J. Little and Ives Company, 1935), 83. The study of Canada was written by Bryce Stewart.


84 Coats, Statistical Implications of the Act, op. cit., 7 (emphasis in original).

85 Ibid., 8.

86 Ibid., 17.

87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., 12.

89 Ibid., 14.

90 Ibid., 14-15.


93 This observation was initially pointed out to me by Ruth Roach Pierson

94 Marsh, op. cit. (1935), 35.

95 Ibid., 35-36.

96 Ibid., 39.

97 Ibid., 10.

98 Ibid., 14.

99 Ibid., 13.


This was where the inter-departmental committees of researchers and practitioners came into play, bringing together the economists, anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists and political scientists in a rich cross-fertilisation of intellectual inquiry. Where social survey research had effectively generated the empirical data, Marsh pointed out, the “fusion of their results with economic, political and psychological theory is a task that has remained much more difficult and less often accomplished.” (Marsh, op. cit., 27).

Part of the difficulty doubtless lay in the highly unorthodox nature of the model itself, one which quite possibly scandalised Marsh’s more conservative colleagues who may perhaps have thought his proposal heretical in the extreme. For his part, Marsh was keen to forge ahead in his pursuit of an integrated university-based research programme which aimed to identify social problems and “marshal more effectively any investigations which may aid in their solution”, promoting cooperation among research practitioners and others in the community, including “industry, government, social agencies, trade unions, churches, [and] vocational associations.” (Ibid., 31)
For an early account of the advocacy work of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene (Canada) by that organisation’s Canadian director (based in the United States), see Clarence Meredith Hincks, "How Can We Promote Social Welfare in Canada?" Proceedings of the Canadian Conference on Social Work (Montreal: Canadian Conference on Social Work, 1930), 8-10.

For a descriptive account of the 'professionalisation' of social work during this period, and the interactions of 'charity' agencies with corporate interests, see Gale Wills, A Marriage of Convenience: Business and Social Work in Toronto, 1918-1957 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). For a later account of the role of trade unions and central labour bodies, see Shirley Tillotson, "'When our membership awakens': Welfare Work and Canadian Union Activism, 1950-1965," Labour/Le Travail 40 (Fall 1997), 137-170.


Chester Kellogg, "Introduction" in Nelson Whitman Morton, op. cit., xv. The principal researchers were unable to include any employed workers in their sample since private employers were not inclined to co-operate with Morton by opening their factory doors to the MSSR. The unemployed men were all relief applicants.

Morton, op. cit., 184.


Ibid., 235.


Marsh, op. cit. (1935), 6

Ibid., 126-7.

Ibid., 162.

Ibid., 188.

Ibid., 289.
118 Ibid.

119 Marsh, op. cit. (1940), 7-9.

120 Ibid., 27.
Chapter 3

“A course of training cannot convert any and every girl into an efficient houseworker”: 1
Defining Women’s Employability in the Depression years.

The Depression devastated the lives of thousands of working women and men in Canada and in Newfoundland. It was a time of tremendous uncertainty and instability as working women and men and their communities, families, local governments and agencies sought desperately to grapple with the enormous challenge for survival on a daily basis. Faced with an opportunity to respond, the King government stalled and equivocated, engaging in opportunistic and strategic manoeuvres with provincial and municipal counterparts, which, in the end, exacerbated the already unbearable strain of unemployment and underemployment, while endangering even further the lives of people and their communities. The National Employment Commission was finally appointed in April 1936, charged with conducting an inquiry into measures the federal government might consider in addressing the problem of getting people – in particular men – back into gainful employment. The NEC was to study employment, not unemployment, and to advise recommendations for further consideration by the Rowell-Sirois Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations. In no way was the federal government prepared to undertake sole responsibility for unemployment, a tacit declaration which redounded to the detriment of the 400,000 officially unemployed women and men who had turned in increasing numbers to the federal government for relief from the consequences of this most recent crisis of industrial capitalism.

In this chapter, I examine the work of the Women’s Advisory Committee (WAC), subcommittee to the National Employment Commission, appointed in November 1936 to represent the “interests” of women to the Dominion government. I argue that the category of female unemployment was constituted as a problem not only, or even primarily, of economic depression so much as it was a consequence of the instability wrought by industrialisation and urbanisation. Women, and young women from the rural household in particular, were seen to be drawn to the city by the promise of jobs. As a narrative about the dangers of waged work, the WAC 1937 report proposed strategies to arrest the flow of rural female youth into the formal
economy of industrial and service sector employment. In many ways, this strategy paralleled the 'back to the land' plans deployed to address unemployed men, positioning the rural agricultural economy as a 'safety valve,' a means for absorbing labour 'cast off' by industrial urban economies. Stemming this tide, the report's authors claimed, would go far to alleviate unemployment, while at the same time stabilising farm and rural households. Underlying WAC concerns was the objective of protecting young future mothers of the nation, chiefly those of British descent, while at the same time assuring a plentiful supply of domestic labour. In part, the WAC took up employability discourses which constituted women workers as a 'problem of the social.' To illustrate this, I examine a study produced by Ruth Low, appointed to the WAC from her post as Director of Social Services and International Affairs for the YWCA. Low positioned herself as an expert on the problems of the 'unattached woman,' a figure thought to signify of the dangers single women posed for the social and domestic order. The Depression had driven this 'unattached woman' from her place of relative obscurity and anonymity, into the arms of social case workers unfamiliar with the special problems and challenges the 'unattached woman' apparently presented. Low's 'sociological' study illustrates the discursive techniques by which female unemployment was constituted as an individual and social pathology, sexualising ethnicity and race, racialising gender, class and sexuality.

I then turn to the work of the WAC, to consider how women's unemployment was constituted as a local problem for which local solutions had to be developed. The Committee's work was not always harmonious and smooth, however, as members such as Mrs. Walter (Jo) Lindal of Winnipeg, pressed for a more coherent and comprehensive programme of employment and training policy. Notwithstanding the efforts of some members, the WAC could only go so far in altering the political rationality of government during the Depression: women's unemployment did not exist as a discrete policy category; women's employment was viewed, and within policy was defined, as a temporary diversion from woman's true vocation of motherhood and domesticity. I review discussions and recommendations of the committee for a programme of household domestic training. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of the national registrations of unemployed workers conducted in 1936 and again in 1938. These counting exercises were directed at shoring up the federal government's eligibility criteria for unemployment relief. The 'unemployable woman' emerged as a subject of scrutiny,
demonstrating the gendered dimensions of unemployment measures, of employment policy and the development of a two-tiered system for income support. By the time the NEC was formally disbanded in 1938, the unemployment of women was identified as an individual and a localised problem that was primarily social in origin, an area into which the federal government would intervene with only the greatest reluctance.

‘The Unattached Woman’: Securing domesticity during the Depression

In 1935, Ruth Low presented her study of the ‘unattached woman’ to the National Travellers Aid Society of the United States, at a session organised by National Conference of Social Work at its annual June meeting in Montreal. Low conducted her study in her capacity as Executive Secretary for the Toronto YWCA Social Service and International Department. She established her credentials not as a detached and clinical social researcher but as a practitioner whose methods were, however, also informed by methods of scientific case work analysis. Her special expertise, Low asserted, lay in knowledge derived through years of experience working as a professional social worker concerned with the problems of her ‘less fortunate sisters.’ Low explained to her audience that the startling research findings she was about to present were derived through practical empirical knowledge culled from everyday work and practice – no statistics and fancy psychological charts on “reaction times,” no graphs “showing increase or decrease of self-supporting power” were to be found in her study. Low defended the empirical veracity of what she called her ‘simple study’ as a true representation of a discernible population made visible by techniques of observation: “This is a study any interested student of sociology might make – a somewhat sketchy picture of the unattached woman as she is known in Canada.” In this way, Low located her technique, and its implications, as a distinct category of social research, a ‘practical’ sociological guide to the identification of a social group thought to embody a serious social problem: sexual deviance. The point, then, was to make that knowledge available to social practitioners like herself, to claim its techniques and its truth-making capacities as the legitimate domain of social practitioners invested with similar research expertise. The point of investigations like these was to equip social workers with the case study and remedial techniques they needed if they were to successfully meet the challenges embodied by the women entering their agency doors on any given day.
Low joined a long procession of social practitioners who worked up a template of knowledge-making practices by which to study young women, practices which constituted sexuality as a problem therefore as a critical area for investigation. In fact, her reference to “reaction times” and “self-supporting power” was likely an allusion to a genre of psyche-based research into the problems posed by ‘delinquent girls.’ One example, conducted by J. W. Bridges, had been published in the June 1927 issue of The Pedagogical Seminary and Journal of Genetic Psychology. Bridges’ study, conducted in September 1926 among young women incarcerated at the Girls’ College Industrial School in Sweetsburg, Quebec, cited a range of findings using precisely the same terms critiqued by Low. The author conducted intensive mental testing techniques among the young women, the majority of whom had been incarcerated on charges of incorrigibility, immorality, desertion and vagrancy, primarily to identify unique psychological characteristics by which practitioners might characterise this group in contradistinction to ‘normal’ girls on the one hand, and ‘delinquent’ boys on the other. What, in other words, was the predictive capacity of gender in relation to ‘delinquency’? The study was ‘balanced’ by similar assessments of ‘normal’ women and men students from the University of Toronto. Intelligence, as Bridge sought to demonstrate, was a function of both environment and inheritance. “Emotional stability” was mobilised as a central organising category, an elastic categorical identity against which both delinquent and normal populations might be assessed. Bridge’s study not surprisingly found a greater preponderance of sexual delinquency among delinquent girls than boys, but found that its origins derived from “unfavourable home environment.” Conversely, “emotional instability” was to be found among both normal as well as delinquent girls, but less of a factor among ‘delinquent’ boys and ‘normal’ young men. As useful as findings like these might be, Low argued, they did little to assist the hapless social worker struggling under the weight of a massive caseload of growing complexity. Low complained that there was, at least between 1930-1933, “little workable knowledge of [the unattached woman] in society.”

... in our usual way of seeking a cause for every effect, the cry goes up from social workers, “Who is this unattached woman? Where has she come from? Why is she so hard to deal with?” And to our rather slow minds comes the knowledge that this is indeed a different riddle to solve. The whole approach, through knowing this woman, and the technique needed to deal with her, problem or no problem, are only now in the making.
The 'unattached woman' was seen to lurk within the deeper recesses of the modern city, where she would have remained had the Depression not driven her from anonymity. As Low put it: "Her even slight taste of independence, coupled with a woman's natural reserve, usually made grave necessity and actual want her only dictators... The bachelor girl has been too much an individual to turn easily to losing herself in the mass life." The "bachelor girl" had escaped notice thus far, organising among her 'own kind' in "exclusive groupings" of "service, bridge or study clubs" devoted entirely to leisure and social purposes. The problems young single women were alleged both to embody and pose to the rest of society was by no means a new preoccupation among social practitioners. The 'girl problem' had been the subject of moral, religious, educational, psychiatric and correctional investigation, angst and disapprobation ever since women began descending upon the factories, beaches and dancehalls of the modern city at the turn of the century. The 'unattached woman' was a more recent object of social agency attention. Like the 'factory girls' who so challenged mental hygiene practitioners in their investigations of the feeble-minded woman, the 'unattached woman' was alleged to suffer was a spirit of independence thought to reveal a dangerous defiance of conventional femininity and domesticity. Such independence, social practitioners claimed, led invariably to potential sexual immorality. Only the most dire of personal circumstances and financial need could drive the bachelor girl into "the social organisation" at which point she became visible as a troubling social trend and problem to researchers and practitioners alike.

Large modern cities were "where the unattached have congregated," Low informed members of the Travellers Aid Society. Once there, women of all ages were apparently joining the ranks of 'unattached' women on a daily basis. Although massive unemployment had brought the disturbing social phenomenon to the attention of social agencies, the problem was seen to predate the current economic crisis. That is, this was a modern condition which was social, not economic, in origin. Low's account traced the borders of race and class, as she positioned young working-class and racial-ethnic women as the subjects of the sex deviance discourse, identifying their status as single women who worked for wages in those occupations deemed the exclusive preserve of working-class women, women of colour and immigrant women, charting the racial and sexual division of labour. At the same time, Low sought to universalise this category of social/sexual pathology, claiming its trans-class tendencies, thus
making it a threat to any and all young women who challenged the boundaries of domesticity in order to seek their pleasures and independence beyond the safe respectability of home and family. “Foreign born” were singled out as the largest group among this “new population,” particularly young women from Europe who showed a marked tendency toward independence in contrast to the “unattached of British or Canadian birth.” European women were set off from white women of British origin, described in terms usually reserved as masculine qualities, those same qualities which were seen to have motivated women to emigrate to Canada in the first place. This individualising move at once queried their gender identity and transformed migration into an individual act, an individual choice divorced from experiences and material conditions of economic, sexual or racial-ethnic oppression, subjugation or threat. Low described migrant women as possessing “great courage,” “keen desire for adventure,” “stamina,” as being “aggressive” and “self-reliant.”

‘Sex deviance’ and delinquency converged with poverty and unemployment in this narrative about single wage earning women, drawing on psyche-discourses of individual adjustment, social and individual maladjustment on the one hand, and the shifting balance between normal personality and social stability on the other. At the same time, the narrative of deviance intersected with and played out along racial-ethnic lines, sexualising racial and ethnic difference, and racialising class as both a source and an indice of deviance and pathology. Low’s account deployed the pathologising techniques of diagnostic and prognostic psyche-sciences, constituting the deviant ‘type’ as a subject whose agency and identity were transformed through the truth claims of this individualising and totalising discourse. Low cited as her authority on the subject of sexual deviance a list of psychology/psychiatry texts and ‘practical’ handbooks, tools waiting to be taken up and applied by practitioners who might encounter the ‘unattached woman’ as they went about their case work. The problems unemployed women were thought to pose presented important challenges and even more compelling opportunities for social service practitioners anxious to impose their brand of social policy on the problem of female unemployment. Unemployment was articulated through psyche-discourses to a psyche-based register which took as its subject the interior of the individual. Unemployment, that is, was held to be a manifestation of more deeply rooted social and psyche-based maladjustment. Based on the work of William Blatz and others, adjustment theory was being taken up and applied
across a variety of often overlapping, interdependent community and state agency locations during this period. Psyche-practitioners considered that maladjustment was at the root of most social dysfunction, maladjustment itself being the product of insecurity which was, in turn, produced by the inability to satisfy basic needs. Blatz was a leading proponent of this approach, based on a conceptual model of the "normal psyche" and an empirical model of social research. The gendered and racialised application of these techniques are to be seen most clearly here in Low's approach.

The 'unattached woman' came from all social strata. Her status as single might be derived through youth, widowhood, desertion, separation or divorce. She came from all backgrounds, all education levels, had no uniquely identifiable home environment. She was "recruited" from anywhere and everywhere, "from those with all the culture and appearance of refinement [to] the disorganised family, the crude, the intellectually and mentally poor." Sexual deviance was both a pathology of the individual and a totalising identity defining 'personality.' Appearance of respectability was as suspect as the more readily identifiable "waitress of low-type restaurants." What unified all problem bachelor girls was independence, subversion of the standards and conventions of femininity and domesticity. Low included as one of her sociological categories "economic training," again to emphasise what she described as the cross-class nature of this phenomenon.

She has also been recruited from the disorganised family, the crude, the intellectually and mentally poor and those who received little of life's advantages. Daughters of the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, the street cleaner, the banker, the lawyer and minister are found in the ranks of the bachelor girl.14

While acknowledging that highly skilled 'economic classifications' were also to be found among the members of this social group, for example the "highly specialised teacher, nurse and business woman," the astute social worker would also note the presence of the 'lowest' sort of female wage earner. For the latter, Low reserved her strongest warning of the danger to middle-class respectability the 'unattached woman' was held to embody:

The waitress of low-type restaurants, the mechanical factory worker who has stamped price tags all her life or has done nothing but button sewing, the supposed domestic worker who makes tragic mistakes in her cooking as she practices on the family that is paying her a wage, all these and others add their numbers to the group of unattached women.15
While Low characterised this social phenomenon as crossing all known social boundaries, she proceeded to enumerate the unique identifiers thought to describe the population as a social group. Poverty, or fear of it, was a leading characteristic. While Low's description might be read as an apt account of women attempting to meet the challenges and hurdles of living on poverty-level wages, the purpose here was to issue a clear warning about the dangerous consequences of a misguided spirit of adventure and desire for independence among young women. The 'unattached woman' invariably ended her life as a lone older woman, abandoned by family with nothing but years of poverty stretching out before her. Low exhorted her listeners to join with her in the important work of remedial social re-adjustment, through group and case work. The time for "a wagging of shocked heads at the mis-steps and maladjustments of people" had long since passed.

The phenomenon represented by this category, the unattached woman, was more profound than the economic or immediate personal circumstances which had brought her to the attention of social practitioners in the first place. This was a point Low was particularly anxious to make with her audience. The opportunity of prevention had been present long before massive unemployment and poverty had brought the unattached woman to the attention of relief and charitable agencies. Practitioners needed to probe beyond the superficial manifestations of poor social adjustment — of which economic failure was seen as a symptom — to discover the real source of social maladjustment. As Low warned her audience, it was more than time that social practitioners learn through further research and professional training to read the visible signs of this population's presence before the problem became manifest in the multitude of social misdemeanours: "until she became an actual problem woman and landed in jail, in a reformatory or home for unmarried mothers, we did not think of the alone woman as having any real problems peculiar to herself. You and I were asleep at the very time when prevention would have meant so much." And what, precisely, lay at the root of this new category? When that delicate equilibrium of converging social, psychological and economic factors which defined the proper location of all women in the family was disrupted, as it had been by the Depression, the unattached state gave rise to an active but misdirected sexuality Low argued was profoundly disruptive for both the individual woman and of the larger society. She posed an active threat,
even if the dimensions of that threat were as yet poorly understood. Her independence unleashed this latent need. Under the heading, “Physical and Sexual Insecurity,” Low explained that expression of this need, particularly among older women, might take a variety of forms.

The very fact that a woman is without protective attachments means that she must depend either upon herself or upon the community to which she belongs. But there is a more intimate need than that. Because of a woman’s physical make-up and the sexual urges of her mature years she finds it difficult to accept frankly the possibility of no marriage relationships in life .... There develops a tendency to drift, to lack plan or purpose.16

That is, ‘drift’ or lack of purpose drove some women into ‘creativity’ or social service, while among working-class and racial-ethnic women, ‘sexual promiscuity’ was the greater danger. Finally, ‘homosexuality’ was a danger awaiting all women, but most particularly young middle-class women to be found in congregate institutions such as residences and summer camps, neither of which was the usual preserve of marginalised women. Low suggested that recent studies by trained social practitioners like teachers, nurses and social workers revealed that as many as 50% of participants in congregate institutions were known to have “received what pleasure and satisfaction is possible through homosexuality.” These findings, while presented as shocking and scandalous, were nevertheless accorded legitimacy as dispassionate, scientific study. Low backed up her claims by citing the work of expert practitioners, ranked among those “who know considerable about life in residences and camps throughout a number of the Canadian provinces.”17 Therefore, sex deviance among working-class and racial-ethnic women took the form of ‘promiscuity,’ while homosexuality lurked the corridors of the nation’s residences and camps. In either case, any woman might find herself the next ‘recruit.’

The ‘unattached woman,’ then, was a growing social group in the population, a group which was readily identifiable but only if the social investigator knew what to look for. Identification of this population was the first step; of even greater import was acquiring the particular knowledge about what to do with such women once they came to the attention of the social practitioner. She had to be treated, to be rehabilitated: above all, she could not be permitted to slip back into obscurity to continue her lonely and unnatural existence at the margins of social and familial life. Her personality was destabilised, beset by an array of insecurities, “economic, physical and sexual, mental and spiritual” in origin, together with an
unnatural tension which resulted from the clash between “her even slight taste of independence” and her more natural feminine “reserve.” This “baby group” represented a general cross section of the female population, as diverse in makeup as the population of the Dominion itself. What all such women shared, what brought them together as an identifiable group was their singular status as unattached women who existed at the margins of society, sexually, economically and socially. These women were not reproductive agents bound within and by the family, the primary social unit. “Without home ties,” their independence represented a threat to the family and to the reproductive identity of all women: the ‘unattached woman’ was both symbol and agent of gender disruption. Low was intent on making the case that the “unattached woman” was in fact a social phenomenon, the product of a series of broader social trends which converged in the rupture of regular family bonds, consequent upon the breakdown of the family as the primary social, psychological, cultural and economic unit, leaving her alone “without the stakes of the family tent right round her.”

Economic insecurity was most certainly among the leading problems social practitioners needed to take into account as they developed the most appropriate case management techniques. The Royal Commission on Price Spread and Wage Levels (1934) had already pointed to the tremendous disparity between real wages and actual cost of living for Ontario. In Low’s view, unregulated capitalism was itself the most obvious problem, drawing always more of these vulnerable women into exploitative wage dependency with the lure of financial independence, leisurely pursuits and commodities, while failing to provide even the most basic financial capacity for self-sufficiency. And yet, that taste for independence continued to draw young women in particular into this cycle of wage dependence. The prospect of a class of female poor was profoundly disruptive of bourgeois notions of feminine respectability: “Have you met her in your office or public places?” Low asked rhetorically. “We cannot expect healthy, normal, wide-awake women to be tasting of the joys of full life when such an inhuman system prevails.”

Successful and healthy social adjustment required a secure foundation in mind as well as in body. For Low, the only acceptable security capable of responding to women’s needs was the family. Material security was fleeting, as the most recent economic depression made abundantly clear. Even if women could secure an adequate livelihood on their own, the constant nagging
worry of both maintaining material needs and satisfying consumerist desires, of “earning a living and keeping up with the Joneses,” was sufficient to overwhelm any woman, let alone the more physically and psychically vulnerable bachelor girl. Further, Low warned, like everybody, the unattached woman had to satisfy her spiritual needs but was found to be turning away from conventional and more accepted religious organisations in a manner which showed her unique ‘personality’ and ‘individuality’ in this regard as well. Some were turning to questionable – that is socialist or left – politics. The more “aggressive, energetic, self-assertive type” was drawn to “the newer cults of religion and politics.” Clearly, only the home and the stability of a strong, healthy family and home environment, her own or a surrogate, could provide these women with what they most desperately needed: mental, economic and physical security. Female unemployment was approached in this narrative through the trope of psychological disturbance manifested economically, socially and culturally. Sexual maladjustment lay at the root of this identity, against the threat of which the family stood as the first and only true line of defence and, not coincidentally, the first victim. In this way, it is not surprising that Low’s brief but compelling article would be so widely circulated, or that she would be among the first to be appointed to the Women’s Advisory Committee of the NEC. I now turn to the work of the NEC Women’s Advisory Committee, to consider the gendered, class-based and racialised dimensions of its analysis of women’s employment, and the regulatory framework the sub-committee proposed to deal with the multiple problems female unemployment was thought to present to the nation.

Defining Employability: The National Employment Commission and the Women’s Advisory Committee

The NEC was appointed in 1936 to advise the King administration as it negotiated its way through the fractious debate with the provincial and municipal governments over the issues of unemployment relief and general relief-in-aid. The former was the partial – although never accepted by the federal government as the primary – responsibility of the federal government; the latter that of provincial and municipal government. ‘Employability’ was the main criterion for access to unemployment relief and so it was around this term, this category, that intense debate ensued. From the outset, however, the NEC was positioned as a strategic pawn of the King administration. NEC commissioners were carefully selected by King and his Minister of
Labour, Norman Rogers, to ensure that none strayed from the narrow set of political objectives set by the King administration for the resolution of the relief problem. The NEC’s task was to manage the issue of unemployment in such a way as to relieve the Dominion government of any lasting responsibility for unemployment relief, and not to catapult the federal government into the orbit of social insurance states following along the trajectory of Britain or the New Deal administration to the south. Its inquiry into unemployment, as can be seen in particular through the work of the Woman’s Advisory Committee, sought to transform unemployment into a function of individual capacity, and not a function of economy and the material and social conditions consequent to industrial capitalism. Unemployment figured very little in this discussion. Rather, the key questions of policy to be decided upon were framed as administrative problems to be addressed locally through a limited programme of training, administered by a decentralised national employment service and federal-provincial transfers under the grants-in-aid funding mechanism. The question of unemployment was instead taken up as a matter of occupational training and rehabilitation, primarily for young people, through the Federal-Provincial Youth Training Programme. That is, the NEC set itself a research and policy agenda which broached unemployment as primarily an issue of employability resolvable through occupational training, vocational guidance and a limited programme of public works to stave off the ‘debilitating’ effects prolonged unemployment was thought to have upon the morale and physical condition among men. NEC framed its inquiry through the legal, economic, social and psychological implications of the terms – employable and unemployable. ‘Dependency’ took on particular significance at both the level of inquiry and recommendation in the regulatory policies proposed through the NEC’s work. Among women, ‘dependency’ would become a key category of investigation, diagnosis and prognosis for assessing both ‘female unemployment’ and employability, a framework for inquiry which constituted and attempted to mobilise a new category of the social: ‘the unemployable woman’ as a social problem in need of careful remedial attention.

The WAC was comprised of five women who worked under the direction of NEC Commissioner Mary Sutherland, a well-connected BC member of the Liberal Party whom King had appointed as the women’s commissioner to the NEC. All the members of the WAC brought to their jobs strong credentials as professionals, experts and committed social
practitioners who shared in the values and interests of the dominant economic, social and racial-ethnic cultural group, with backgrounds in social and community service. Their experience, education and apparently innate capacities as women was thought to equip them with a keen eye for the conditions faced by working-class urban and impoverished rural women, and the remedial strategies required to 'save' the women who would become the subjects of WAC policy recommendations. The committee was chaired initially by Sutherland and then passed over to Jo Lindal, a graduate of the University of Manitoba (B. A. 1916, L. L. B. 1919). At the time of her appointment, Lindal practised law with her husband, Walter Lindal, in Winnipeg. She was an executive member of the University Women's Club, first Vice President of the Women's Canadian Club, member of the Executive Council of Social Agencies of Manitoba, had reportedly conducted a study of unemployed women in Winnipeg and participated in organising a household training school in the same city. Ruth Low was a graduate of social work and sociology at McGill, and at the time of her appointment had moved to the Kitchener YWCA to become general secretary of that branch. Ida Cormier was a graduate of Notre Dame congregation in Montreal, where she was described as conducting 'charity' and social service work for francophones in the city. Isabel Currie was in her third term as provincial president of the Saskatchewan Homemakers Club. Margeret Fraser Ferguson was a graduate of Dalhousie University, a former school vice principal, and past president of the Provincial Council of Women for Nova Scotia.  

Sutherland worked closely with organisations of white middle-class women across the country to reshape discussions about women's unemployment, side-stepping any direct consideration of the consequences such unemployment might have, for example in the escalation of poverty and homelessness. In fact, discussions of employability took a decisive turn when it came to the question of female unemployment. At this turn, employability discourse was mobilised through the interlocking categories of gender, race, sexuality and class to reshape the question of women's employment as a problem of individual employment capacity in the context of domesticity, specifically household labour. The WAC would restrict the larger share of its attention to a programme of training, retraining and re-employment based on the notion that, in the words of a pamphlet of the Central Women's Training Committee in England, and shared with the WAC, "no domestic worker need ever be unemployed." Under the Dominion-Provincial
Youth Training Programme, the WAC proposed a campaign targeting young women and encouraging them to return to the rural economy and the family farm. Discourses of domesticity and family organised notions about women's employability and dependence as matters falling outside the regular waged economy and, therefore, as matters that also fell outside the domain of federal employment policy.

The committee issued two reports: the first proposed special training initiatives for domestic workers and retraining for unemployed women, recommendations which were incorporated into legislation establishing the 1937 Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme. The second report addressed the broader issue of women's employment. Specifically, the WAC proposed a series of measures designed to intensify regulatory controls which would limit women's access to the formal waged economy. Under the rubric of 'protection,' the report recommended a network of vocational screening, training and placement under the watchful eye of women placement officers in the Employment Service of Canada. At the centre of this proposal stood the domestic worker, a figure in whom the woman as worker and potential mother converged.

The terms of reference guiding the WAC's investigatory rationale were drawn up by Sutherland. Under the heading "Projects for attention Women's Advisory Committee," six topics would occupy the committee's attention. Under the first heading, the "older girl" would be investigated in relation to possible placement, either in "institutions," in a "self-supporting residence unit," or occupied in the household in productive tasks of handicrafts or home manufacture. The "young unmarried Canadian born girl" was a problem because she was apparently untrained, and where trained, she was "inadequate academically" and "inefficient." The status of 'Canadian born' implied dominant race-ethnicity. Alternatively, "overcrowded professions" were seen to cause perhaps the only legitimate form of unemployment among women which was not translated into a problem of individual deficiency of moral and/or mental causality. Overcrowding was, however, limited to teaching and nursing. "Professionalising the "home worker" or domestic household worker was the fourth item in the terms of reference developed for the committee, described as the development of training schools and of strategies which would make such work "attractive and popular." The employment service was to be
considered only insofar as committee members might think about “how to make it a live factor in developing employment in private avenues and advising training for employment.” Finally, under the heading “Employment for women in Canada” the committee was directed to consider only the employment of middle-class dominant racialised-ethnic women, specifically girls attending senior public and high school, colleges and universities. Otherwise, the committee might consider producing motion pictures showing “girls at work” in suitable and efficient employment: as household workers engaged as nursery maids, house maids, waitresses and cooks, even as cheerful inmates working in training schools; in canneries and clothing factories; in “smaller exclusive industry” such as designing, dressmaking and tailoring; in the nursing and teaching professions; or research laboratories, libraries or even executive business, most likely as secretaries. 25

In the end, the WAC concentrated its investigations on household domestic service as the most appropriate employment for the majority of unemployed women. In so doing, the final recommendations of the committee remained well within the narrow parameters proposed by the Ottawa Business Women’s Liberal Club directly to the Minister of Labour Norman Rogers in October 1936:

[T]he National Employment Commission be asked to recommend that a Permanent Volunteer Committee, composed of women with a knowledge of working women’s problems, be appointed to deal with women’s training and employment, in particular the following phases:
1. Domestic Training Schools;
2. Vocational Guidance;
3. Development of Handicrafts. 26

The WAC accepted that the majority of young women would work and in most cases worked from economic necessity, but that they also had to be protected morally and physically, as much from themselves as from potentially unscrupulous and exploitative employers and male co-workers. The difference was that in many cases the women were themselves inclined to resist such efforts taken for their own protection. The safest workplace, then, was assumed to be the middle-class household of white respectability, where young girls and women could labour under the understanding yet firm, trained and watchful gaze of their social, cultural and economic overseers. This, despite the knowledge garnered regularly about exploitative wages and challenging, if not unsafe, working conditions, and the danger of harassment and assault
known to accompany this work, knowledge likely shared by WAC members who also employed household workers in their own residences. The following excerpt from an employment office, filed in 1937, pointed to the challenges of placement deterring women’s employment officers from approving employer requests, the demands for labour beyond that of regular household work, as this example shows, often included medical and related care, together with working conditions characterised by sexual harassment: “It can also be said that the average order for housekeeper is hard to fill. Many times there is an invalid in the home, or a mental case to care for, or in the case of the motherless home, there is some objectionable feature.”

The significance of the WEC’s work lies in how notions about women’s employability were transformed in the mobilisation of gender, class and race. As inter-locking categories, gender, race and class ultimately constructed notions about appropriate location in labour market and household, about social relations of work and the content of that work. These prescriptive categorisations of labour both inflected and reified the gender and racial division of labour. The strategy to recruit principally working-class and immigrant women, rural women, and racial-ethnic women into domestic labour would become the primary focus of employment and training policy. Like the NEC, the women’s advisory committee transformed the multiple structural and systemic pressures of the Depression into a problem of youth and the need to deter delinquency. Drawing on discourses of familialism and domesticity, the WAC argued that female unemployment was largely an urban problem, a problem of congestion in cities and overcrowding in a few occupations. The desire of young women to avoid the rigours of farm life necessitated government intervention, in concert with organisations of white middle-class urban and agricultural women, to arrest the migration of young women to the cities and, once there, into the formal waged economy. Programmes promoted by the WAC intersected with national concerns about civil unrest and urban political organising, demographic pressures, and continuing high unemployment even in the presence of apparently improving economic conditions. If young women needed to work, the WAC would see to it that such labour was consistent with, and not disruptive of, the stability and respectability of family and domesticity.

Unemployment among women was broached as a social problem in which the woman was either in fact or in danger of becoming both morally and mentally compromised, if not
suspect. No woman need ever be unemployed, given the readily available option of household employment. Material location and conditions of poverty and homelessness were in this way seen to reflect the inferior capacities of the women themselves. Homelessness among women and men had risen throughout the Depression to reach an alarming level, and remained the most telling indication of the devastation of individual lives and kin networks, communities and families. The Depression heightened racist allegations against anyone not of the dominant white, British stock. Gender was mobilised along with race, taking the form of allegations that people whose origin was other than white and British, classified as immigrant, and women were taking jobs rightfully belonging to men. The solution to male unemployment, it seemed, was female unemployment. Immigration controls would take care of the rest.

At the same time, social practitioners were pressuring all levels of government and their own professional associations, arguing that the lack of assistance and the consequences of a rudimentary programme of relief and related aid placed considerable pressures on relief agency work. For example, the Winnipeg Social Welfare Commission, an agency in which Lindal was active warned of the hundreds of ‘unmarried women’ being turned away from agencies. Even here, social agency staff were uncertain how much of the problem was economic in origin. The report pointed out how regulatory measures may have prevented family formation, producing or at least exacerbating the problem of unwed mothers. Surely, the report authors implied, this was an inappropriate outcome of any public measure: “there is a regulation of the Unemployment Relief Department that a single man shall not receive relief if he marries while unemployed.” The federal government, through its unemployment relief commission, was seen to be refusing to recognise the problem facing unmarried mothers, “repudiating its responsibility” by leaving the matter of assistance for such women up to organisations like the Salvation Army and the Roman Catholic Sisters in the city. A single woman with young children would be considered unemployable and therefore ineligible for federal relief, a matter which would be the subject of rigorous investigation by the NEC in 1936. “Unless the mother has relatives willing to take her, there is no way in which she can receive help. The whole situation is causing us much concern,” the Winnipeg Social Welfare Commission report warned.
The Single Unemployed Women's Aid Board of Vancouver provides a salient example of how knowledge-making practices transformed the problems allegedly posed by unemployed women into a social investigation of women's employability. A critical dimension of this inquiry concerned the quality of women as potential workers, calibrated to a psychological and a moral investigation of the work habits, home life, and personal capacities of individual women. Any and all instances of 'dependence,' of 'need,' or deviation from the rigid code of femininity, domesticity and maternity, signified moral weakness and/or incapacity. Further investigation might indicate mental deficiency or defect. Throughout, assessments of employability were also organised to shore up a narrowly defined relationship to the formal waged economy. This was not simply a straightforward matter of finding work for those women who needed it. It was also an opportunity to apply case study methodologies, to demonstrate the necessity for and success of such interventions, and, more importantly, the utility of case study investigation for accurately diagnosing the nature of problems unemployed women were thought to pose. In the case studies reviewed here, women were found to have 'failed' as mothers, daughters and wives. Domesticity, women's natural vocation, worked as a prescriptive discourse throughout these case studies. At the same time, the 'sponsorship' model implemented by the board was organised around the therapeutic technique of 'saving' by 'reforming' 'needy' and 'dependent' women. White, middle-class women of British origin were seen to willingly step in, coming to the aid of their less fortunate 'sisters' through individual sponsorship.

The Vancouver branch of the Employment Service issued a detailed report of the work of that office among single unemployed women who applied there for relief. The employment officer, Gladys Church, wrote in great detail of her thorough investigations of each applicant. In December 1936, Church reported her findings to her supervisor, Fraudena Eaton. Eaton promptly forwarded this report to Sutherland at the NEC. In her report, Church observed that many of the women passing through the employment office were "definitely unemployable." The reasons for this classification were variously described as age, as well as physical or 'mental' disability. In one example, caring work within the family, for which women were primarily responsible, precluded waged work outside the home. The woman in question was "tied thro [sic] the care of aged parents," a situation likely confronted by thousands of women throughout the Dominion during the Depression. On the basis of evidence like this, Church concluded that women's
unemployment was not due to economic depression so much as it was a function of limited employability bordering on unemployability. Church argued that the best efforts of beleaguered employment placement staff were being thwarted by young women who refused to accept the domestic placements offered them. Church contended that the situation would continue, even in the face of continued unemployment. Church was not the only expert on women’s employment to comment upon women’s apparent recalcitrance with respect to accepting domestic postings. For example, the combined reports of the Montreal and Toronto Women’s Divisions of the Employment Service in 1937 listed the number of ‘unplaced applicants’ as exceeding placements by an order of 300%, the vast majority of which were identified as stemming from the clerical and industrial sections. Conversely, placement services for domestics were being sought after by women who would otherwise have become, or remained, homeless. The other major source appeared to be among very young women. For the rest, any job other than household labour was deemed preferable. The following entry from the combined report illustrates the primary function of the employment office during this period, that is, as a government service catering to the demand of upper income and middle-class employers for domestic workers to staff their summer and regular homes:

Any suitable vacancies for mother’s help are readily filled, as the young girls who have just left school are still applying in noticeable numbers. Some employers before leaving for their summer homes have come to leave order for the help they will require on their return. An employers from Orillia who has a winter home in the Bahama Islands, secured a houseparlourmaid from us at $35 per month. The applicant was nearly fifty years of age, so needless to say she felt she had been very fortunate in being accepted. A woman was placed on a farm with her sixteen year old son at $15. per month. This applicant had been for the last twenty years in the same factory but on the advice of her doctor is taking domestic work. Another applicant with her sixteen year old daughter was placed on a summer order for two kitchen workers offering $25. month each. An average of twenty-five placements a day was made in the Casual Section during the week.

Women, much like their potential employers, wanted to hold out for the best jobs available, a move which more often prompted policy and employment officials, along with would-be employers and their representatives, to argue that both the skills and expectations held by women workers were inflated. Church’s following entry illustrates both the rudimentary case methods and rhetorical strategies deployed to construct the narratives of deficiency which isolated employment capacity as the central problem to be addressed in the larger issue of female
unemployment. This was a lesson which could only be ignored at the peril of social workers and politicians alike:

In three specific cases of seemingly capable young girls, I have visited their past places of employment, only to be greatly disappointed. One girl interested in book-binding, who had had considerable employment in that line. The Sun Publishing Company foreman told me that she was too slow and could not expect to get a permanent job in a first class company. Another girl who has done cashiering in the Hudson Bay and was at one time on steadily for four years but forced to leave on account of illness. She is now called in for the occasional sale day and I wanted to urge permanent employment for her but was informed that she was an indifferent worker and would never again be given steady work. Another saleslady, with eight years experience in the States had had two months in David Spencer Ltd. but made herself so objectionable there trying to “run” the department, that the manager would not re-engage her and there is not much hope of the employment manager placing her elsewhere in the store. 

Fraudena Eaton was a leading figure on the Single Unemployed Women’s Aid Board, a task she combined with her job as supervisor of the women’s division of the Vancouver Employment Office. She ensured that all board reports were forwarded to Sutherland to provide a template for survey analysis into the problem of unemployed women. Eaton was anxious to demonstrate and publicise the success of the board’s sponsorship model. According to this model, individual ‘needy’ and ‘deserving’ women would be matched with their social, economic and maternal superior in the form of a white middle-class woman, one exemplifying the standards expected of all women with respect to domestic function, position in, and contribution to, family, community, ultimately the nation as well. The sponsor was, as an extension of her femininity, and social, economic and maternal capacity, expected to guide, oversee and educate the woman in her charge. Through personal intervention, the sponsor allegedly cultivated personal responsibility and obligation, the desire to confront and resolve the difficulties she encountered. Personal ‘interest’ in this decidedly unequal relationship revolved around the agencies and subjectivities of both women: the sponsor committed to moral guidance, the sponsored committed to personal development and reformation. The board’s objective, one shared with government, was to reduce relief rates and agency case loads. These practices worked through a discourse of personal reformation and remediation based exclusively on the sponsor’s access to intimate and innermost details of the life, living habits, and individual desires of her charge. She was to lead her less fortunate ‘sister’ from dependency to respectability with the aid of her moral and social oversight, a direct function of her dominant class, race-ethnic, and
sexuality. Gender in this model was an active source of agency, but only in relation to appropriate class, racialised and heterosexual forms and capacities, specifically those invested in the person of a woman sponsor, a white, middle-class, heterosexual mother.

The Women’s Aid Board argued that the major cause of women’s unemployment did not stem from economic depression, but was instead social in origin. As the board reported it, “the majority of the girls who are really seeking work find security in intermittent relief,” but that beyond this group lay a much harder core whose prolonged reliance on relief was alleged to have diminished their capacity to support themselves.³⁴ In response to those who insisted that the depression had driven many women into prostitution, or at least into support through dubious means, the board was even more emphatic in its denunciation. Describing what were referred to as “moral cases,” the Single Unemployed Women’s Aid Board’s 1935 report asserted the following: “we are convinced the depression is not responsible for this type of case and agree that those who are “in business on these lines” should have their cases closed.”³⁵ The personal intervention and ministrations of a committed sponsor could turn around even the most resistant of women, however, and restore them to more suitable and reformative employment, always provided that such women were capable of developing individual initiative. The second Annual Report of the Women’s Aid Board, issued in 1936, was a series of case studies intended to reveal the challenges and successes of the sponsorship model.

The sponsorship model crossed boundaries of class, ethnicity, race, gender and sexuality. Community and voluntary service were thought to provide what agencies located at the periphery of the ‘official’ state could not: personal intervention and moral guidance no agency was equipped to follow through on, at least not where the person in need was a woman. This too was part of the narrative around which the case histories were organised. The following examples from the board report illuminate how the narrative of personal service and oversight was constructed. The message of appropriate personal reform was conveyed through the renewed agency and reformed subjectivities of the sponsored women. These narrative case studies were intended to expose the weakness inherent in the employment service as it was currently organised, and its failure to operate well as either an employment service or a relief agency, a point made by several prominent practitioners, including Charlotte Whitton and Harry Cassidy.³⁶
The case studies identified and then secured the boundaries of race, gender, class and ethnicity of both sponsored and sponsor. The distance between the two women charted the trajectory of deviance, delinquency and dependency which were indices of failed womanhood. In the encounter with dominant race middle-class woman, the sponsored woman was positioned as a subject in need of the remedial protection and moral guardianship of the sponsor. White middle-class women were ideally suited to this task. As the case histories also implied, provincial employment offices were ill-equipped to deliver the personal intervention of which the Single Unemployed Women's Aid Board was eminently capable. In fact, the implication was that such women were out of place in the employment office, that this public space was not a suitable location in which to open up to examination the problems defining the identity of the single unemployed woman. Staff did not have either the discerning gaze or the knowledge required to respond to the unique problems posed by single women adrift in the modern city.

In the case of 'Maureen,'37 below, the personal intervention of the sponsor was instrumental in instilling in her a sense of personal responsibility and initiative, an education of her desires and self-identity. Maureen’s willing compliance was the key unlocking the successful conclusion to the encounter, an assured outcome as she was described as an 'intelligent girl.' The Anglican Indian School was characterised implicitly as an inappropriate employment placement, although no concrete reason was provided. Since there was no suggestion that the woman was unsuited or delinquent in her responsibilities as a worker, the narrative construction positioned the racialised purpose of the school itself as the reason for Maureen’s objection. The success of the encounter lies in the fact that this woman chose domestic labour in preference to a job within the boundaries of the formal waged economy.

DONNEGAN, MAUREEN, age 28, City case.
When the Board contacted this girl she had been on relief for three years, was physically fit and refusing to take work. The Sponsor’s first contact revealed the fact that [Maureen] was very bitter towards the relief office and the Employment Service and was being urged to get work or be cut off relief. She was an intelligent girl and had had experience as a stenographer and in doing various kinds of office work and wished to get employment in her own line. Within a week, [Maureen] was cut off relief but the Board was successful in having her re-instated for a month to give the Sponsor an opportunity to work on the case. [Maureen] was grateful for the interest shown and made renewed efforts to get employment and finally stated that she would take housework. A position was found for her in the Anglican Indian School at Lytton with fare paid. After
accepting this job [Maureen] unfortunately in a few days decided that she did not like the work and returned to the City. However within a fortnight through her own efforts she secured work as a domestic proving that the encouragement and interest given by the sponsor had re-established her initiative and determination.38

In the next example, age, class-derived ‘professional’ identity, and respectability are all operative in the ‘problems’ confronted by sponsor. Reluctance to take up a domestic labour position is characterised as a function of class location and respectability, a condition which, as the actions of the sponsor imply, is understandable given the sponsored woman’s training as a teacher. Reading ‘teacups’ was suggested as a readily transferable, if unique, occupational ‘skill.’

KING, HELEN, aged 48
A refined well educated type of woman, not very strong being a sufferer from arthritis. She had taught school at one time and has literary leanings and latterly read tea cups. She proved a bit difficult as she considered herself quite above taking housework but it is felt that the constant interest of the Sponsor caused her to recently accept a position as tea cup reader in the Hotel Georgia.39

The final example considered here established the woman’s status as a lone parent. The difficulty of raising three children, daughters at that, was amplified in the account by the experiences of the eldest daughter whose agency is first problematised and then denied with the diagnosis of her ‘mental’ pathology by an ‘alienist’ (a nineteenth century term for psychiatrist) as ‘deranged.’ Both terms point to the deployment of moral techniques more closely aligned to nineteenth century psyche-practice than to the psychiatric knowledge practices of the period. The young woman’s sexual agency is directly implicated, by her action of seeking employment in the wilds of the Cariboo Highway – the masculinist frontier of modernity, and there in a tourist camp. That she returned so completely ‘changed’ from this apparently morally debilitating experience suggested incorrigibility and sex delinquency which her mother was clearly incapable of addressing. Incarcerating young women on similar grounds was in no way an uncommon practice. Parental consent may have been secured as an implicitly coercive move on the promise of further relief and related aid, as the arrangement to send the other two daughters to a summer camp suggests. The sponsor acted in a quasi-official and quasi-professional capacity, a position from which she was able to mobilise power in relation to the sponsored woman who was herself attempting to negotiate continued access to the services provided by the relief board. Receipt of such ‘services’ from agencies or from the state meant entering into a relationship through a subject position which included on-going negotiation on the one hand, and compliance on the
other. For forced to choose, the woman in this case was constituted as a ‘grateful’ and co-operative recipient, prepared to accede to the moral, matemaiist and professional expertise which reconstructed her relationship to her daughters to secure much-needed assistance, while also satisfying the Single Women’s Aid Board sponsor’s objective of stable and respectable family and household.

Cartwright, Mrs. City case, aged 45, widow with three daughters, 22, 13, and 12. The eldest girl got employment during the summer at a Tourist Camp in the Cariboo Highway and the Board was able to interest the Kiwassa Club in providing funds to enable the two younger girls to attend the First United Church Camp for two weeks. When the Tourist Camps closed and the eldest daughter returned to her home she had so completely changed that Mrs. Cartwright called on the Sponsor for help. Very practical assistance was given by having Dr. Dobson (alienist) immediately call. Diagnosis proved that the girl was mentally de ranged [sic] and would possibly have to be committed to Essondale. The Sponsor has proved to be a real friend and advisor and Mrs. Cartwright is deeply grateful for all that has been done for her.41

The sponsorship model informed the design of the Household Training Programme recommended by the WAC and initiated under the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme in 1937. Training in domestic service was a lead policy response of the WAC and played a central role in the work of the committee in its organising efforts with organisations of white middle-class women. Through Sutherland, the advisory committee also investigated the model for residential and non-residential training schools for household workers instituted by the Central Committee on Women’s Training of the Ministry of Labour in England. On Sutherland’s request, in August 1936 Miss M. V. Burnham, supervisor of the Women’s Division at the Department of Immigration and Colonisation, Canada, forwarded a package of descriptive materials, detailed accounts and forms used by the domestic training scheme initiated through the Department of Labour in England. Burnham had administered the “Oversea [sic] Settlement of British Women” programme until its cancellation during the Depression. She reported to Sutherland that the majority of this work was now concentrated in South Africa.42 In the model implemented in England, young women and girls were selected by the employment exchange office for referral to household training. They were rigorously screened, and required to sign a pledge declaring that they understood that enrolment would disqualify them from receiving unemployment relief. Young women were to indicate their agreement to the following terms:
... I shall be required to make a weekly contribution towards the cost of an outfit [uniform]. I undertake to ... do everything in my power to enable the classes to be well conducted, and I understand that ... deductions from my Maintenance Allowance at a rate of ... will be made for time lost by irregular and unpunctual attendance, and that should this be continuous or should the Local Employment Committee have other reasons for dissatisfaction with me, the Central Committee reserve to themselves the right to terminate my course of training. 43

The programme recruited unemployed working-class women from throughout England, Scotland and Wales. As described by one of Eaton’s colleagues, no costs were charged to trainees in any of the programmes operated by the Ministry of Labour in England since it was in the recognised national interest to battle incipient ‘dependency’ by reducing the number of people needing public assistance by whatever means might be available. Training seemed an ideal measure:

No payment is made by the trainee or his friends for the valuable privilege of being trained for a skilled trade. The entire expense is borne by the Ministry of Labour; it being argued that it is to the benefit of the nation to changed unemployed unskilled young men who are dependent on the ‘Dole’ or public assistance into self-supporting citizens able to earn the wages of skilled labour. 44

The training programme was characterised as scientifically designed, using a curriculum which covered every aspect of the occupation, including training on the most modern household conveniences with which working-class women would have apparently been unfamiliar. Where so many had assumed that the knowledge required for domestic work was somehow innate to women – a function of gender essentialist thought – the Central Committee on Women’s Training and Employment approached domestic work as a trade to be learned. Given the destabilisation of industrial employment across England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, more young women were seen to be turning to household employment as a possible alternative. But the occupation had to be improved, as the following description made clear:

[Domestic service] has manifest advantages in security and comfort to compensate for the restriction of liberty, which has been its main drawback for many, and in recent years even this disadvantage has been greatly reduced, maids being allowed in many households a freedom which would have horrified the mistress of an earlier generation. Moreover it is at last beginning to be realised that in these days of rationalisation, the old haphazard ways will not do. Slowly but inevitably the domestic worker is becoming recognised as a skilled craftswoman and more brainwork is being expended in domestic work than ever before. 45
But even more compelling was the design of the programme itself. Each woman was required to sign an obligatory contractual agreement with the school—her new 'employer'—entering into a waged relationship with the residential institution, thus signifying her full co-operation and commitment to complete the programme and enter service. Progress through the course was carefully monitored, regulated by an elaborate set of rules each participant was expected to follow. As the programme’s brochure stated, “A trained domestic worker need never be unemployed,” provided she was prepared to aspire to the new professional and moral standard set by her superiors. Co-operation was more important than compliance, particularly as the objective was to produce a “first class domestic servant” who took pride in the occupation and appreciated its social as well as its economic value. In the words of one commentator, the residential centres were “very happy places—busy and cheerful and the girls delight, not only in the jolly companionship of about 40 of their fellows, but also in the work itself. Because it is taught efficiently and scientifically they realise that the care of a home is a far more interesting and absorbing occupation than they have ever suspected.”

Domestic service was in this way portrayed as a viable route to personal fulfilment, satisfying the yearning so many young women were alleged to have for their own home, for domestic stability and security, all of which was to be found within the disciplined and structured life of domestic service. Household labour was characterised as a route to motherhood and marriage, while working for much-needed wages was relegated to an ancillary position, a secondary outcome.

The Woman’s Advisory Committee was described by its members as ‘a group of five citizens’ answering the call to public service “not in any sense as experts but as a group of interested women,” whose identity as women was thought sufficient to lead them to developing the most appropriate recommendations necessary to serve in the interests of all women, specifically those of their less fortunate ‘sisters.’ Committee members appealed to notions of ‘scientific progress,’ explaining that their mission was to bring rational order to bear on the work of the National Employment Service and, more importantly, to that traditional area of female labour, domestic service. Progress could not be left to run its course in unfair and destructive competition, nor could rural youth be permitted to shirk their responsibilities by seeking a life of ease and self-interest in pursuit of commercial amusements in the nation’s cities. Implementation of domestic service policy was understood to be the domain of local councils of women and
similar groupings of dominant race middle-class women of British origin, utilising the same social and political networks for endorsement, recruitment and policy implementation. That is, the WAC counted on the implicit co-operation and shared identification of policy objectives between the state and local councils of women, social agencies and women’s institutes in rural communities, drawing upon the shared gendered, class and racialised interests represented by these groups. The NCWC and its member groups, along with the YWCA, would serve as conduits for Dominion policy, taking up the nation’s interests as their own. The strategy adopted, one which was to be repeated throughout the period considered here, was to approach local women’s organisations and encourage them to pass resolutions urging the Dominion to adopt a particular course of policy action, to prepare the ground for the impending government announcement. In this way, much-needed “community co-operation” could be mobilised, bringing policy advocates one step closer to the ultimate objective of securing the consent of the intended targets of policy, the actual participants. To facilitate this work, Sutherland was keen to organise a network of local committees which could “build up local strength behind the Commission,” develop direct links with potential employers and organise local reviews of all relief applicants and related procedures.

The WAC report argued that women’s unemployment was largely an urban phenomenon. Conversely, there was apparently little if any unemployment to be found in the agricultural economy, a view shared by the DBS and those who promoted the “back to the land” programmes for veterans of the Great War. The logical place to arrest this flow of rural youth was through a programme of vocational guidance in the school, one which recognised the diversity of culture across the Dominion, specifically the importance of the rural community. Unemployment was therefore constituted as a preventable social problem and not an inevitable economic condition of modern capitalism. If the movements of young people, particularly young women and girls, could be arrested and diverted back to the farm, government would stem the tide of unemployment and the juvenile delinquency many thought followed in the wake of urbanisation and all its ills, including unemployment, by the same measure: training and ‘reconditioning’ to direct people into those occupations for which they were best suited and for which the nation had need. The WAC proposed a programme of vocational guidance, taking as its starting point the gender, class and racial division of labour, reifying these divisions in the notion of
unemployment as, first and foremost, a manifestation of ‘occupational maladjustment.’ The rationale is evident in such claims as the following, a criticism of academic education as an inappropriate pursuit when followed for any purpose other than as a route to a ‘professional’ career, an exclusive domain well beyond the reach, and implicitly the capacities, of the young women and men considered here:

Many of our occupational maladjustments are traceable to this tendency to recognise and value only one kind of education — the academic. Most high school courses prepare students solely for entrance to University, but only a small percentage go on to Arts and Sciences. Elimination rather than adjustment has been the chief method which the schools have had in dealing with those who do not conform to the traditional academic patterns.50

The ‘rural girl’ emerged in the WAC report as a rhetorical device signifying both the troubled past and the promising but potentially threatened future of the nation. Here was a tale of tremendous economic and demographic change, of rural families actively investing in the education of their daughters, sending them off to an uncertain future in the city, thus inadvertently contributing to rural depopulation and a declining birth-rate into the bargain. The report had the numbers to prove it: according to the 1931 Census, there were 402,081 rural girls in the 15-24 age group, of whom 310,862 were single “at an age when to be married or to become self-supporting is the main human urge.” Rather than remaining in their own environment, these young women were moving to the cities in large numbers.51 The problem lay in the devaluation of the rural girl’s contribution to the rural economy, a problem which took on significance on a national scale: the rural girl was an embodiment of rural life, an image of nation now devastated by political and economic events of the past decade. The farm signified the stability alleged to characterise white ‘settler’ stock, an image which worked through gender, heterosexuality, race and ethnicity. In this context, ‘farm’ stabilised and secured national identity:

Undoubtedly, some girls leave rural areas because they wish to avoid the more strenuous life of the farm, and because of the appeal of the labour-saving devices and commercial amusements of the cities. Then, too, the farm boy has been considered an economic factor on the farm and the girl has not. It is becoming evident, however, that the girl can become an economic factor and that she should be encouraged therein. How much richer community and national life would be if more girls remained in the country, contributing to its cultural, social, educational and economic well-being. Girls who are adapted to it should be encouraged to seek occupation in rural areas thereby relieving the congestion in the cities.52
Women's unemployment was also approached as a function of age, and consideration was limited mainly to young women. This reasoning followed in part from the observed tendency among older, married women to withdraw from the labour force and not report themselves as unemployed, prompting a round of investigations of employment offices as officials reviewed their records and organised their active files by age and marital status. The Toronto office of the Ontario Employment Service, Women's Division, reported that, from a tally of unemployed women classed as industrial workers, 95% were younger than 40 years, 44% of these being 'young girls' of 16 and 17 years old. Among those on relief, 56% were reported between the ages of 20 and 40. A similar pattern held for those in clerical occupations. This definition also intensified the constituted identity of women as unemployable because morally and mentally 'deficient,' as well as physically 'handicapped' and/or aged.

The WAC drew on current research conducted in the areas of employment and educational psychology, to argue that vocational guidance ought to become a key focus of employment office work. Guidance was approached as a technique through which the individual, in this case the child, "will realise himself most fully and make the best use of his innate capabilities." Such technique could be readily transferred to young women. The school needed to work closely with the Employment Service, even to the point of turning over its student records to the local employment office, both branches working in close co-operation, but always only to ensure that the child could "more intelligently choose for himself" from the range of available options. The report briefly discussed teaching and office/clerical work as two possible vocations for women, reserving the larger share of the discussion for household employment. However, even in the brief space allotted to the discussion of clerical work, the WAC was highly critical of the calibre of young women seeking clerical jobs as the following entry suggests. The multiple dimensions operative within employability discourse assessed 'deficiencies' like language and related cultural knowledges as problems of the individual, while totalising them as descriptive of cultural 'difference.'

Undoubtedly, the supply of girls seeking office work vastly exceeds the demand. Many girls have been trained for this occupation without any consideration of aptitude. In addition to this, unsuitable and inadequate training, poor spelling, an insufficient knowledge of English and the inability to write even routine letters all add to unemployability.
The purpose of the Employment Service was to encourage self-reliance, to restore the ethic of work, whatever form that work might take. The committee's report was shot through with notions about good citizenship, defined as productive contribution to family, community and nation, all in an attempt to recapture an exclusionary imagined past of sturdy self-reliant immigrant settler stock: a past accomplished through the elision of first nations indigenous peoples and cultures, along with the positioning of racial and ethnic diversity as marginalised difference.

Sutherland resisted any move to alter the political objectives the WAC exercise had been designed to accomplish, particularly any proposals which might alter the informal domestic location of women in relation to the formal waged economy. Lindal, on the other hand, took seriously the challenge posed by women's unemployment. Immediately upon her appointment to the advisory committee, Lindal began an investigation into the organisation and internal operations of the public employment office. She drew upon a wide range of sources from England and the US and was particularly impressed by the prospect of combining a vocational guidance bureau with a public employment bureau. Household training was a fine proposal, but it would only go so far in relieving the problem of women's unemployment. Lindal shared the same class, race and gender location as Sutherland to be sure; she, too, was positioned at the nexus of social relations investing her with social and economic power far beyond that of the women in whom she was so interested. Like Sutherland, she understood the necessity of working through 'community' to enact government priorities. For example, she recommended to Sutherland that any proposed household training programme should first be introduced by resolutions from organisations such as the local councils of women, in effect to have these organisations request that such a move be undertaken by government. This strategy, Lindal suggested, would offset any criticism that "we were trying to urge girls into menial work" which would prompt "a reaction, entirely unwarranted of course, but unfavourable." Community co-operation, alternatively, would neutralise such opposition. However, household training would not address the range of problems implicated in the question of women's employment and unemployment. The employment service was identified as performing an important social
function, directing and monitoring women as they moved through the labour force, conducting guidance and placement as well as investigation and analysis of women’s employment.

Sutherland replied to what she described as Lindal’s “very interesting and encouraging epistle,” arguing that local responses were needed for localised problems, a position directly counter to the Lindal’s proposal. While Sutherland claimed to support the idea of a reorganised employment service, she also was well aware that King and his cabinet would in no way condone any move by the federal government to erect a national public employment service. Tom Moore, labour representative to the NEC, was also interested in such a plan, and had moved at the NEC’s meeting in October 1936 that the Privy Council be asked to rule on this matter, the enabling legislation for which was included in the 1935 Employment and Social Insurance Act. The Employment Service of Canada proposal met with no opposition, although Nova Scotia and BC were reported to feel “that a full measure of decentralisation on strictly local measures would be essential.” Lindal all but pleaded with Sutherland to expand the scope of the committee’s work, beyond the narrow frame of household service and limited programming for the ‘rural girl.’ These arguments were rebuffed, however, in what appeared to be Sutherland’s final word on the matter: full decentralisation and local control. In December 1936, she advised Lindal that “a strong local advisory committee can do more than any other single thing we can think of” and that the home-based training for young women in domestic service was the best option available to the federal government. “The more I look at our problem of getting the unemployed women back to work, the more I see it as a local problem that must be undertaken by local communities,” Sutherland concluded. The idea of combining a vocational guidance bureau with a public employment office was “not the type of thing that can be undertaken by the National Employment Commission.” It was up to local communities to identify and meet their own need.

Sutherland’s was not to be the final word, however. Lindal’s next letter to Sutherland likely passed the one Sutherland had just issued to her. Lindal reiterated her position and this time supported it with evidence from her colleagues in Winnipeg and elsewhere: “Every single person I have spoken to … are [sic] emphatic in their opinion of the need for an improved Employment Agency for women,” she asserted. “I sincerely hope that matters will shape so that
we will be permitted to aid in giving that a proper reorganisation.”

Again Sutherland attempted to suppress Lindal’s proposal and, likely seeing the futility of that effort, decided instead to delay further discussion. She claimed that the matters in question—employment service reorganisation, farm girls and training for household work—were “matters of departmental regulations rather than legislative action,” a disingenuous strategy of diversion if ever there was one. On that basis, Sutherland suggested, the matter could be safely deferred until the New Year. By the time the New Year rolled in, however, Lindal was clearly in no mood for further delay. Driving young women into household labour or back to the farm would not address the very grave situation facing the women of Manitoba, let alone the Dominion. If the federal government had any serious purpose in appointing a Women’s Advisory Committee to the National Employment Commission, then it was time to test just how serious that purpose was. She addressed the matter to Sutherland in the most formal tone demonstrated to date:

I may say that my nights have also been spent wondering whether we could or could not do anything to face up to the terrible situation which exists in this city [Winnipeg] as far as unemployed women are concerned. One becomes tremendously shaken in viewing what is happening here in the way of discouragement and deterioration. I am also aware of how little is being done in a constructive way to remedy the position of these girls. No longer can I agree that Manitoba’s main problem is a rural one.

Perhaps as one manner of response, Lindal took over the chair position on the advisory committee later that month. She continued to press for a full review of the employment service and for the inclusion of that review within the committee’s terms of reference. In April 1937, Lindal enlisted Ruth Low to present a joint proposal for a programme of “individualised services” through a nationalised employment service operated by the federal government. Low had already added her voice to this discussion the previous November, when she encouraged Sutherland to give close consideration to the idea of awakening “many more people to the need for real planning in the placement of women.” By this time, Low had moved offices, leaving Toronto to take up her new position with the YWCA in Kitchener, from which vantage she was kept quite busy “spotting Communism” as another “sideline” since “a number of people have developed concern, following conferences on that question.” She would continue, nonetheless, with the question of women’s employment placement.
At the very least, two positions were needed: an “employment officer” and a personnel worker to do case work and oversee training. This was not an uncontroversial suggestion and Sutherland was one of many who resisted any effort to involve the federal government too directly or permanently in the business of employment counselling and placement. However, Lindal and Low were determined that their efforts, and the work of community and women’s organisations who had long been pushing for just such a reform of the employment service, would at least receive consideration before the NEC. After all, it was most unlikely that private enterprise would want to get involved in the work of employment and vocational counselling for women. Where was the profit? That such services were needed there could be no question. While acknowledging that such a proposal to combine a “vocational guidance bureau and an employment bureau” into a single government agency “may sound visionary,” Lindal and Low were confident that if the proposal was at least attempted as an experiment the results might be found beneficial for unemployed women. Lindal was perhaps the most committed of the WAC members to introducing a comprehensive employment service reflecting the principles of personnel development and vocational counselling, building on her extensive network of social research practitioners connected with the Winnipeg Social Welfare Commission. Her investigation of employment office technique drew on the model implemented by the Protestant Employment Bureau in Montreal, the location of the collaborative research conducted at the McGill School for Social Research. The approach emphasised individualised service, based on a preliminary interview, assessment and system of comprehensive testing of each individual, a model which positioned the employment office as a dynamic site for ongoing active social research. The Canadian Association of Social Workers endorsed this model as well, and were eager to bring their expertise as social workers to bear on the task of developing a comprehensive network of employment offices staffed by skilled personnel workers who could address the manifold challenges involved in assessment, interviewing, retraining and placement of the increasingly demanding and diverse workforce. The BC branch contributed its report calling for a completely reorganised national system; a “more aggressive policy of finding work” which extended to those newly entering the labour market, retraining unemployed skilled workers and placement of “handicapped people;” and closer integration between the employment bureau and the educational system. In the end, Lindal and Low’s proposed experiment found its way into the final report of the advisory committee, aided no doubt by the ruling that a national
employment service was well within the scope of the federal authority. The final report combined a decentralised locally-driven structure within the framework of a national service. A well-trained personnel administrator could answer to the problems facing unemployed women using “ingenuity and enthusiasm” to ensure community support, organise training and employment, and integrate the local Advisory Committee with the broader objectives of the National Employment Service network.67

During its two-year existence, from 1936 to 1938, the WAC proceeded to lay the groundwork for a programme which would recondition unemployed women, using the Employment Service to redirect young women into domestic service in order to clear the labour market and, more importantly, to stabilise households and communities struggling to maintain themselves under the burden of poverty, unemployment and homelessness. This could not be done in a coercive manner, however, as women had made it quite clear that they were prepared to vote with their feet. The strategy, therefore, was to discover ways of enticing girls and young women into the occupation by addressing head-on the social stigma associated with domestic workers, viewed as a residual pool for an ‘unskilled’ female labour reserve:

One reason for this lack of social status is the general opinion that housework is an occupation which needs no training or even special intelligence or aptitude. Those who have not the ability for other types of work – the worker who is too slow for the factory or not intelligent enough for the office, is assigned to housework. It is looked upon as a last resort when no other forms of employment are available.68

The answer was to appeal to notions of skill, aptitude and employment capacity, countering the perception that domestic servants were unsuitable for any other vocation – that they were unemployable – by promoting household service as a skilled occupation informed by the most modern and scientific principles of domestic arts.69 Such a view ignored “the infinite variety of the work which calls for a high degree of intelligence and initiative.” In their efforts to replenish the supply of labour available before immigration had been cut off during the Depression, in the cancellation of the ‘empire settlement’ schemes of migrant working-class women from England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland,70 the women representatives to WAC looked upon working-class, rural, immigrant women and women of colour within Canada as a source of available labour to be secured at low cost. The impetus, therefore, for the household training programme was to
recruit domestic labour through government training and employment placement, while rehabilitating these new workers to ensure their smooth transition into middle-class households. But they wanted only the 'most efficient' women who were least likely to oppose, resist or otherwise disrupt the programme. Women on relief, and/or those accustomed to earning a wage in the modern city held little appeal, if only because their independence-loving ways made them too feisty a prospect for domestic passivity no matter how much training they received.

As a discursive strategy, the promotion of training for domestic service went beyond the simple promotion of housework as a noble calling, although it did that as well. The remedy lay in a well-designed programme of training which directly countered the "all too prevalent opinion that housework is an occupation which needs neither special training, intelligence, nor aptitude." The promotional work of the WAC was well underway at the same time as NEC mobilised to publicise the results of its national registration of unemployed persons, launching a national debate which centred on the deterioration of employment capacity allegedly caused by unemployment. As a social problem, unemployment was deployed as a category which captured the notion of diminished employment capacity at the same time as it exposed the problem of unemployability among identifiable segments of the population; the latter in turn were taken up as 'problem' populations for whom specific policy measures and social agency interventions were apparently required. These groups were identified in ways that directly problematised race, ethnicity, gender, class and, for the women considered here, sexuality, as critical dimensions for investigation for what each might reveal of inferior capacity, both physical and "mental."

Training for household employment was introduced under the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme in 1937 as a strategy to professionalise household work as a skilled occupation which held "permanent value." The strategy appealed to gender, racialised and class-based sexual codes of respectability in which marginalised women seeking homes of their own would derive their core identity through domesticity, through motherhood and through pride in household. WAC members sought to regularise and stabilise domestic service, promoting its features of regularity, variety and stability in contrast to the monotony and uncertainty of factory work. Moreover, domestic service was held to offer the advantage of secure housing and, once board and lodging were calculated into their regular payment, wages which were at least
comparable to those paid for unskilled factory labour. This, then, was to be the key strategy for redirecting female labour, stabilising female unemployment and more importantly, reversing disturbing demographic trends which threatened the comforting and pastoral image of rural farm economy and white settler tradition. The Household Training Programme was an employment strategy as well as a population policy, one which embodied critical and enduring notions pertaining to the role of education, of community, and of reproduction in fostering national goals and securing national life.

That domestic work was an occupation of last resort there could be little doubt. A variety of paths led women to this work, including the need to report availability for employment in order to qualify for direct relief. Conversely, the demand for domestic labour reflected particularised notions about precisely who constituted the appropriate “domestic servant,” notions which were deeply racialised, class and age-based. For example, a 1937 analysis of relief applicants included in the registry of domestic workers at the Toronto Employment Bureau detailed the multiple workings of employability discourse. Applicants for domestic positions were explicitly rejected in a combined deployment of racial, gender, age, class and moral typologies, combined with those who could not be placed due to medical condition. Some of the entries ran as follows:

31-35 years - 7 applicants
2 young children under school age
3 Doctor’s certificates - can only take part time work
1 boy 12 years of age who is ill
1 coloured applicant - very little demand for same at present

46-50 years - 16 applicants
1 has infected finger - will be better soon
6 unsuitable for orders on file due to age and types
4 fallen arches - bad knee - getting certificate
2 coloured applicants
1 has mother of 68 to look after

WAC recommendations for the household worker training programme were well in step with developments occurring elsewhere, including England. Programme structure and content in many ways outweighed the overall objective of the actual placement in domestic posts. This is where the significance of the WAC proposal lies, in the intensive techniques deployed to train
young marginalised women, to reshape their identities as workers and as potential mothers through a comprehensive course which was designed to secure their consent and co-operation. Testing, assessment and performance comprised critical techniques, lending a sense of purpose, of structure, and of obligation both to identify with and to achieve the objectives of the programme. In the section, “Standardisation of the Worker,” the WAC outlined three main approaches to such training: 1. Vocational guidance for school girls; 2. Household Workers’ training; and 3. Vocational grading or additional training. All workers were to be referred by the Employment Service to a central school where they would be assessed, classified, tested and provided with a graduated certificate of proficiency. A major obstacle to the programme was the likelihood that communities, particularly working-class communities, might resist efforts to direct young women into what most agreed was a menial ‘blind alley’ occupation offering little in the way of financial security or advancement and much by way of tedium and exploitation. To head off any opposition along these lines, Lindal offered to organise a meeting of missionary workers from north Winnipeg who were in contact with what she described as the “less-fortunate group of our City” to discuss the best strategy for approaching mothers and daughters on the “problem of training for household employment.”

A press report from the period presents an image that draws on the deeply racialised and anti-natalist trope used to describe former relief recipients now being trained as respectable domestic servants. In the news clipping promoting the programme and its remarkable successes with the young women, only two women were foregrounded, to personify both the character and identities of the ‘average’ trainee and the distance they had managed to traverse with the aid of residential training. “Daisy Handy,” who was described as a “dark-skinned, small Jamaican girl,” and “Magdalen Brant,” a “robust Indian girl from Deseronto,” were noted as “two of the industrious ‘trainees’ who graduated with good standing.” The civilising mission of the residential programme was the unmistakable message of the press report. This was the reformative purpose of the schools, and of the profession as well. These young women were being made ready for service in white bourgeois homes: once assessed and properly trained, they would be safe, reliable and respectable domestic servants ready to take up their posts. The press report continued with a description of the regimented and disciplined environment of the school’s dormitory. Here the gendered essentialism of the programme’s design resonated in the characterisation of the ‘personal’ decorative touches
introduced by the young women. Domestic and religious imagery drew some — entertainment and stardom drew others: in either case, the women were portrayed as ‘normal’ young women longing for the stability and security of ‘home,’ not unwilling or incorrigible ‘problem girls’ in a correctional training school:

Three or four girls were allotted to each large bedroom, decorated by their own personal touches. Heavy army sheets with narrow binding of red acted as counterpanes on the neat steel beds. Movie star photographs are tacked to the wall in one bedroom. Pictures of sleeping, rosy-cheeked, curly-headed infants lend a homely atmosphere to the walls in another room while religious drawings showed the spiritual influence of the girls in another dormitory.75

Meanwhile, in a 1938 progress report on the household worker training programme, officials at the Department of Labour pointed to the apparent reluctance of girls and families “in receipt of direct relief to undergo such a course of training,” let alone find work in this area. No matter how insistent the young women and their families might be in their refusal to come forward and volunteer for the programmes offered, however, officials had the remedy in store: “It has been the experience that actual residence in school has contributed to break down such prejudices.”76 Once in the school, however, some of the young women persisted in their opposition, particularly those “problem girls” referred by social work agencies. Practitioners within the residential schools enlisted the psyche-based knowledge practices so readily applied to young women thought to be prone to that category reserved for young women who defied the narrow codes of respectability. The ‘problems’ allegedly presented by the young women were characterised through notions of mental degeneracy and delinquency. That is, resistance was met with a diagnosis of ‘mental deficiency.’ School administrators complained that these were not the sort of ‘girls’ for whom the programme was intended, a claim the Department of Labour official who drafted the report appeared to support, observing that “where a ‘problem’ or ‘dull-normal’ girl is admitted, it has been proven that she requires a somewhat longer period of training and more individual supervision.”77 Too many such referrals might threaten the integrity of the programme, by lowering overall standards and therefore undermining the programme objective, which was after all to improve the employability of unemployed women as future household workers.

On the matter of enforceable labour standards for women, the WAC was both equivocal and vague. For domestic workers the point was avoided altogether, while for factory and other waged workers, recommendations followed the course of special protective labour legislation on
minimum wages and hours. Labour standards put a premium on irregular forms of work including part-time and seasonal employment, while purportedly designed to ‘protect’ women workers. As employment standards, such legislation was manifestly not designed to improve the wages and working conditions prevalent among women working in low wage industries. At the same time, the committee upheld the predominant view that women posed unfair competition to men, as lower cost labour, and so contributed to male unemployment. As a ‘welfare’ measure, WAC recommended the appointment of a “sufficient number of inspectors” who would enjoy autonomy and job security to ensure that they could perform their tasks free of political and other interference. Another reading of this recommendation suggests that the WAC did not think that employers ought to be permitted to replace male workers with low waged female employees.

The WAC invited provincial governments to submit their suggestions for appropriate labour standards designed to address the various problems thought to be associated with female labour/unemployment. Quebec’s proposals were the most stringent. The memo was prepared by Mlle. Cecile Bouchard, Minimum Wage Inspector for the province, and reflected an approach which balanced pronatalist concerns against the desire to secure decent wages and working conditions for women who needed to work. Proposals included a ban on employment of girls under 16; a ban on married women secured by ensuring the payment of a family wage (described as a “reasonable salary of husbands”) except where work was performed in the home; annual medical inspection; “strict laws of hygiene” including a requirement that all women be required to take lessons in personal hygiene from a qualified female instructor; minimum liveable wage; and the ability to organise “professional unions” free of employer interference. An interesting addition – notable for the use of the term “human capital” – was a measure designed to discourage poaching by employers of the inherent labour capacity embodied by workers themselves. The following was likely an awkward translation: “Do so that violations of the Law of minimum wages be severely punished so that it will not be permitted to steal the salaries, [and] consequently ruin the human capital, and get away with only a small fine.”

The market was, in the minds of the WAC report authors, clearly national in scope, even if labour legislation fell within provincial jurisdiction. This point was made obliquely in the call for uniformity of wage standards to prevent, or at least to regulate, the flow of labour from low to
high wage areas across the country. To that end, the report recommended “periodic conferences” among provincial minimum wage officials with a view to working toward uniform labour regulations; national collection and standardisation of cost of living data; and closer work in alliance with the International Labour Bureau to move toward international regulations in the areas of wages, hours and conditions, particularly covering industries producing primarily for “the export market.” Most significant was the call for a “central research bureau on employment of women” to be housed within the Dominion Department of Labour. The terms of reference for such a bureau would include collection and analysis of labour force information preparatory to preparing policy recommendations covering new occupations for women; analysing wage and salary data for comparability with work performed; youth counselling, vocational training and placement, in particular to monitor “the success of the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Projects as they affect women”; and regular information bulletins charting developments within the labour market, specifically trends pertaining to “labour conditions, unemployment and trends in occupations.” Finally, the recommendation stated that the “social aspects of employment for women” were seen to require careful study, which, taken in the context of the rest of the report, suggested that the cultural and demographic implications of women’s labour were of greater import to social than economic policy.

Despite the efforts of Lindal, Low and others, all of whom remained committed to household labour as the major focus of federal employment policy for women, there would be no elaboration of the scope of anticipated labour force participation where women were concerned. When the NEC deliberated over the WAC report at its meeting in April 1937, the commissioners unanimously opposed a recommendation that the farm improvement and employment plan designed for unemployed men also include women, stating that “it was agreed that the matter be dropped as the consensus of Provincial opinion was against this at the present time.” Further, the NEC accepted an amended recommendation from the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders which read: “Unemployable women over fifty and not eligible for Federal-Provincial Old Age Pension are a responsibility of the provincial and municipal authorities.” Thus, the only area in which the federal government would address women’s unemployment was, in the main, through the household training scheme. The Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Plan, passed by parliament in December 1937, included four components: occupational training “to increase the
employability of young persons;" learnership courses to provide theoretical training "concurrent with specific employment;" "reconditioning" work projects designed to restore "loss of morale;" and training projects "of a physical nature" to restore both morale and health. The definition of employability was defined within the context of occupational training, a dimension of employment policy.

In analysing the results of the National Registration from the aspect of degree of employability, the report of the Local Aid authority on the individual case is followed. The Partially Employable Persons are those who, in the judgement of the officers dispensing Aid, are neither fully and readily employable nor yet unemployable, but are rather seriously handicapped, physically or mentally, in accepting work. Unemployable Persons are those who, again in the judgement of the local officers, cannot be expected reasonably to accept work, due to physical or mental difficulties. However, no one is classified as only Partially Employable nor Unemployable because of lack of occupational training, nor solely because of age unless he or she has reached the age of seventy years.

Sutherland did, however, see some potential to expand women's employment in at least one area: home-based manufacture and service production. She was most interested in promoting 'handicraft' production and home-based manufacture to serve two purposes: promote tourism and prevent women from occupying what she and her colleagues agreed were jobs which would otherwise be held by men. She addressed both points in a letter to George Warren in October 1936, one month before the WAC was appointed, asking that Warren send her the tourism report recently issued by the Victoria and Island Publicity Bureau.

In searching for employment for women who are presently unemployed, we are more or less forced to find new employment, otherwise, we merely take work from persons at present legitimately employed and give it to someone else. Eighty per cent of our unemployed women on relief are over 30 years of age. Their age limits their possible absorption back into their old occupations. Many of those older women, too, are physically unemployable at their former occupations.

By 1938, Sutherland's promotion of tourism as a viable employment option for women had blossomed into a veritable campaign in her report to the NEC on new occupational areas for women. Tourism was ideal to the extent that it was constructed on a stable foundation of family and nation, domesticity and a remembered past of white, British pioneering stock forging an identity of stability, prosperity and civilisation in the 'natural' wilderness. Sutherland was not alone in seeing a strong potential market in the form of American tourists and the automobile. Federal and provincial capital investment and construction projects would greatly facilitate the
expansion of this trade, hampered only slightly by "informal and unconfirmed observations" of the tendency to substitute train for motor travel. Highways were described as "romantic" pathways traced along water routes and, presumably, the path of civilisation into the Canadian wilderness. There could be no question of the economic potential residing within this nascent sector, and the service industry awaiting development. As evidence, Sutherland drew on the recently issued Dominion Bureau of Statistics 1936 report on "Canada's Tourist Trade," a study which provided detailed analysis of average per capita US tourism expenditure rates in Canada, number of tourist permits issued to Americans for Canadian travel, and average length of stay per permit. The report on tourist spending was disaggregated to allow projections of potential employment growth for women in the trade, specifically in the principal areas of suitable female employment: food preparation and sales, lodging and handicraft production. The federal government was particularly delinquent when it came to promoting one of its major resources: native 'souvenirs.' As Sutherland explained in her report to fellow Commissioners on the NEC: "The search for native articles, for souvenirs, is never ending, and one of which Canada has not taken full advantage." It was Sutherland's opinion that women had a "bounden duty to contribute to the economic recovery in this manner." Of course this also entailed legislating regular holidays and related labour standards to which Canada was signatory under a draft convention of the International Labour Conference (League of Nations) at its 20th session in June 1936. According to the articles of the draft convention, wage earners had to receive at least 6 annual paid holidays, together with wages enabling sufficient purchasing power for a reasonable level of consumption, implying more than basic subsistence. Sutherland acknowledged that minimum wage laws and statutory holidays would have to be considered provincially. Home-based production, conversely, necessitated no such invention or statutory obligation. Hotels, hunting and fishing in national parks and a booming retail trade would all contribute to the productivity of rural economies and boost national productivity, leading the way to community stabilisation and national recovery.

**NEC's National Registration of Unemployed**

The first National Registration of unemployed persons receiving federal relief had been conducted in September 1936. It set the framework for the follow-up survey of 1938. As part of the project, the DBS mailed out a questionnaire to all employers requesting employment data and
information on a variety of issues including training, changes in employment levels, and employer-sponsored welfare programmes. It was touted as a straightforward exercise of counting and classification, an administrative move which would enhance the government’s capacity to sort relief recipients, moving some into ‘suitable’ employment while disqualifying others. Dominion Minister of Labour Norman Rogers explained that the registration would allow government to classify all unemployed according to the jobs they were best suited for, pointing out that this was the main subject at the federal-dominion deliberations over relief policies: “Eventually it is hoped to have every relief participant classified according to his aptitude for some form of employment,” Rogers explained. Of the estimated 618,000 included in the 1936 registration, 58,000 were classified as unemployable due to some “physical, mental or social handicap.” The government was now ready to address this problem, since “a special classification will be made for those who probably will never be employable.”

The gendered and racialised dimensions of the registration were apparent from the outset: on the one hand, through the mobilisation of ‘family’ as a key category for classification, and on the other, through the systematic exclusion of native people and immigrants groups from the registration by excluding those employed in ‘seasonal’ industries such as fishing, hunting, trapping and logging.

One purpose of the exercise was to establish that except in those limited cases where women were in legitimate need of unemployment assistance, the majority of women collecting unemployment relief were in fact “social cases” and were not a federal responsibility. Officials at the department, in particular Mary Sutherland, wanted to supplement these data with a more substantive examination of women receiving federal unemployment relief. What followed was a systematic province-by-province review, searching out all women receiving unemployment relief, classifying them according to their ‘employability,’ and determining how many were ‘unemployable’ according to a loosely-defined, ultimately elastic standard for the measure of women’s employability. On instructions from Sutherland and labour commissioner Tom Moore, Harry Baldwin, Superintendent of the Relief Division for the NEC, sent out a request to relief officials at each of the provincial labour ministries for an estimate of provincial tallies of unemployable women receiving federal relief. Baldwin claimed that it had been reported in one “centre that of 513 women on relief less than 100 could, even by the laxest standard, be
considered to be employable." This was, of course, a very leading and contentious issue, given discussions between the two levels of government concerning responsibility for relief, and further that the Ministry of Labour already received regular reports on relief recipients classified according to degree of employability. There was at this stage only the most rudimentary system of record keeping in place in most employment offices which, under the tremendous pressure of relief applications, were forced to double as relief distribution offices as well. Clearly, the careful screening and personalised interview procedures anticipated by employment experts were not to be found in the employment service as it was currently organised. Gender-based classification presented no difficulty, however. Most offices reported their totals based on family status; heads of families, dependants and individual cases or single, unattached persons. In the event, the census-taking backfired on the federal officials involved, as their provincial counterparts wrote back wondering what, precisely, the federal Department of Labour was seeking and, more importantly, why?

Definitions of ‘unemployable’ included so-called mental or physical “handicap,” “temperament,” and in some jurisdictions, maternity. The practice of differentiating between employable and unemployable was subject to considerable variation, in some cases based on an assessment of capacity, while in others, for example in Quebec, maternity, no different from the broader relief classification – was the woman as a mother available for employment? The Winnipeg Social Welfare Commission argued that although a young able-bodied woman with one child may not be considered unemployable, if the child was quite young then the mother could be so considered for the purposes of qualifying for relief. This reply, of course, proved the federal government’s point: women with children in their care were by definition ‘unemployable’ for the purposes of receiving federal aid. Why were the provinces providing relief to ‘unemployable’ women? Arthur MacNamara, then assistant deputy minister for the Manitoba Department of Public Works, wrote back to Baldwin explaining that his province had taken a firm stand that unemployable women could under no circumstances be provided with unemployment relief. In his reply, he did not provide a definition of unemployability, which likely did not help clarify the matter. Instead, MacNamara pointed out that relief officers were bound by affidavits taken for each applicant, declaring that in their opinion any person receiving federal relief was employable. Despite this clear declaration of procedure and policy,
MacNamara was compelled to acknowledge that “differences of opinion” continued to arise and that the municipal relief committees had to be monitored “very carefully” on this question.94

Other jurisdictions made no such distinction. For example, PEI Premier Thane Campbell replied that relief officials in his province were in no position to make such detailed assessments as to the employability of relief applicants, but expressed the hope that more accurate information would be generated through the upcoming 1938 NEC unemployment registration.95 More typical was the report from New Brunswick where only women deemed capable of supporting themselves through waged labour were eligible for unemployment relief. There, the majority of women on direct relief were those whose husbands were either dead or absent, leaving women who were in the opinion of relief authorities untrained “to make a living outside of domestic work or charwomen:

The Municipalities have been working on the assumption that if times were normal that these women would get work of that kind and in this way be able to make a living for themselves and the children they are supporting, although I think there [sic] reasoning is a little far fetched and in fact I believe that the vast majority of these women who have been on relief might be considered as unemployables.96

The rationale underpinning the inquiry into women’s employability was quite clear: if it could be demonstrated that most of the women receiving unemployment relief – direct relief – were not considered employable in normal times, then the federal government could prove its case that the provinces, or at least the municipalities, were trying to wriggle out of assuming their fair share of the burden. If, moreover, women’s primary location of employment was at the interstices between the formal waged economy and the household, the federal government was also relieved of any responsibility for female unemployment. The question was a vexing one indeed – one which would continue to cause considerable trouble for employment researchers and policy officials. What was the natural level of female employment in the labour market and what, in turn, was the true level of female unemployment? That matter resolved, the most contentious question of all remained: what level of responsibility did the federal government share for ensuring women’s re-employment as part of a larger national employment policy?
In August 1938, the federal Department of Labour tabled its report on the second national registration of 'recipients of aid.' The 1938 national registration was conducted to generate cost estimates for an unemployment insurance programme, to be tabled at the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations meeting to decide, in part, on the relief question. The question to be answered was: "What proportion of persons on Urban Aid would be removed from Aid, given an unemployment insurance system?" To answer this question, analysts disaggregated the total number of those on relief into three groups: fully employable, partially employable and unemployable. The NEC used family status as the key index for sorting registrants, and included only those deemed fully employable and partially employable, while excluding as uninsurable seasonally employed (24 weeks or less per annum); non-wage earners; persons in normally uninsured employments (including teachers, civil servants); and persons never gainfully occupied. Included were heads of families, individual persons, and 'dependants' of heads of families who reported themselves available for work. Women were automatically included within this category. That left those classed as unemployable all persons considered out of the labour market if they were reported as such in the national registration, even if they had been formerly employed. Into this category fell "housewives, minor children, crippled and aged dependants," following on the same rationale reported in the DBS unemployment study, that married women who became unemployed were considered to withdraw from the labour force and not report themselves as, since they did not perceive themselves to be, unemployed. To come up with the percentage likely to be covered under an insurance scheme, an eligibility rule of 12 continuous months of employment in the 20-month period preceding the national registration was imposed, a period of diminishing but still high unemployment. Interestingly, the NEC estimated that for September 1937, 63.7% of those on Urban Aid (the registration covered only the 10 major urban centres) could be considered fully or partially employable, of whom 59.2% would be presumably insurable. Employability, then, was an elastic category which captured a range of claims regarding the causes of long-term unemployment and the populations thought to be most affected by its effects. Unemployment was in this way constituted as an economic condition seen to affect principally white, able-bodied men. Excluded from any systematic assessment were native people, women and persons marginalised by the racially and sexually divided labour force.
The registration results were tabulated by gender in order to establish how many unemployed relief recipients might be classified as 'unemployable' and therefore disqualified from federal unemployment relief. Department of Labour officials contrasted the duration of relief with alleged degree of employability to demonstrate the need for a bifurcated programme of aid, one capable of clearly segregating recipients on the basis of alleged employment capacity. Women classified as self-supporting were found to draw relief for shorter periods of time: 44% for less than one year; 27% from 1-2 years; and 29% for more than 2 years. In contrast, women identified as “unemployable (solely in the urban group)” were shown to be receiving relief over an extended period of time: 51.3% for more than 2 years, and of these 26.6% for 3 or more years.97 Gender was mobilised as a central organising category in this exercise. The ‘unemployable woman’ comprised a key target for investigation.

The National Registration was greeted as a long-overdue attempt to segregate the unemployable from the employable, to establish responsibility for relief payment among the two levels of government, and to distinguish ‘need’ from temporary joblessness. These categories would over time set the course for a two-tiered system of income support tied to labour market participation and, ultimately, conditioning access to the labour force. In turn, the ‘occupational welfare system’ would reflect and reify the gender and racial division of labour as an enduring institutional feature of the labour market. When the NEC released its findings from the final national registration in 1938, government concerns about employability were articulated around the issue of employment capacity. Unemployment among young people was singled out as the central challenge the federal government, through the NEC, was now poised to address. Long-term unemployment, and/or lack of employment experience altogether in the case of young people, was alleged to diminish individual capacity to find work. In response to this ‘problem,’ the NEC recommended an appropriation of $1 million for an apprenticeship and learnership programme. Although the programme was open to younger unemployed women as well as men, the former were to be channelled into domestic service, where they had access to any assistance at all. The NEC’s concentration on employability was consistent with government priorities: the overriding political objective was to reduce the number of people qualifying for federal unemployment relief. In January 1937, NEC chair Arthur Purvis had communicated this plan to Minister of Labour, explaining that in his opinion the NEC had to expand its scope beyond the
rehabilitation of unemployed youth to encompass trades training for skilled workers with five or more years trade experience, along with “agricultural rehabilitation work particularly for those requiring physical reconditioning, and training for women.” For the rest, Purvis wanted to propose a simplified legislative plan for a new Unemployment Relief Act, “to avoid inflexibility therein, and still more to utilise it as a means of calling the attention of the House to a change in Dominion relief policy, to a definite programme looking to the reduction of relief and rehabilitation of the unemployed.” In this way, Purvis reasoned, the total Dominion relief “load” might be reduced while at the same time “a part of the saving” accruing from reductions in the relief payments to provinces could be flowed into programmes geared toward “increasing the employability of those on relief.” The NEC therefore advised that a new Unemployment Relief Act be developed “limited only by a few general principles:” namely, limited provision for Dominion administration, in the form of a scaled-down national employment service; requisite funding necessary to operate the service; targeted training for the groups specified, skilled trades, agriculture and women; and funding allocated “either by permitting a diversion of direct relief funds, or by naming a specific amount as available.” Finally, anticipating provincial opposition, Purvis suggested the following strategy:

For the necessary co-operative Dominion/Provincial schemes to permit of carrying out of this policy. This course would avoid the necessity for a number of legislative enactments, not apparently connected, which might otherwise awaken controversy.  

Purvis had been under significant pressure from King who wanted to ensure that the NEC chair understood that any discussion of federal financial allocations would be addressed by the Rowell commission and not by the NEC. Purvis had been asked to meet with Rowell ‘informally’ to clarify the point. As the NEC discussed at its final meeting in January 1938, Purvis had been instructed “to ensure that the National Employment Commission final report as filed would not cause any embarrassment to the work of that [Rowell] Commission.” Rowell, as it turned out, had requested changes to the NEC’s final report, in order “to make it clear beyond all question the fact that the National Employment Commission had all along regarded the question of allocation of final responsibilities as coming within the purview of the Royal Commission and not of the National Employment Commission.” In this way, the $1 million appropriation and the limited focus of the NEC, together with that of the WAC, had been decided at the outset.
After the NEC was disbanded in February 1938, the work of data gathering, classification and analysis, all of which shaped and conditioned eligibility criteria and therefore access to income support and services, was transferred as a now permanent function to the National Registration Branch of the Department of Labour. Compulsory registration of all persons had been considered by department staff, but then dismissed as an inappropriate intervention by the state into the personal lives of its citizens. Certainly, the collection of detailed information from relief applicants was well within the purview of the state, democratic or otherwise, and not simply to calculate the number of relief recipients, since this was already being done. The registration was to determine work experience, degree of employability, seasonality of employment, housing conditions and any other aspect of the unemployment experience which might be seen to have some bearing on the social and economic dimensions of the problem. NEC planners were careful to limit the registration only to those collecting relief. To include all unemployed “would develop an expectation of immediate employment,” they claimed, and policy officials were anxious to dispel any perception that federal responsibility for employment policy included securing jobs for those who needed them. The NEC deliberated over the best means for requiring a full registration, including declaring a date on which all unemployed not on relief would be required to register, but this too was dismissed as unlikely to yield anything more than a “partial and relatively untrustworthy record.” Clearly, it was necessary to address this matter of how best to secure a full registration of all unemployed people as a longer term, but vital, issue and to begin developing the procedure to achieve this objective by initiating a complete overhaul of the National Employment Service offices. Educating the public, employers in particular, would follow in time.

As the inter-war period drew to a close, the federal course of action with respect to the position of women in any national employment policy was to be entrenched: since by far the majority of women were not considered part of the regular workforce, they would be summarily dropped from the national labour force tallies. So from a total of 3,375,000 women and girls 15 years and older, those who were married were immediately discounted: an estimated 60% were dropped from the government’s measure of the regular workforce in this manner, followed by
another 20% said to be "living off income or wholly or partially dependent on others for support." That meant that nearly 80% were considered not available for employment, falling into the definition of unemployable, leaving only a very small group considered regularly employed clustered into a limited number of occupations: 33% in domestic service, including commercial establishments, although a definite trend was noted away from this group and into professional and clerical; 17-18% in each of professional and clerical work; 13% in manufacturing; 8% in trade; and 11% distributed across a variety of miscellaneous occupations. Apart from older women who faced limited employment prospects — and for them the NEC recommended a programme of small handicrafts — the only remaining group with which the federal government need concern itself was the "self dependent woman." "Up to now," department officials claimed, "these women have been described as 'single women.' Presumably they are dependent on no one and have no one dependent on them, although in reality some are found to be unmarried mothers with minor children." In any case, this group was small, estimated at no more than 15,000, and highly localised, concentrated into large urban centres. From the initial results of the registration, a series of recommendations were proposed that would limit federal policy in such a way as to clearly differentiate those women who could not be considered self-supporting and whose need was more accurately classified as social, from those who were self-supporting and who fell into the category of unemployed. In this way, two very distinct categories were constituted, each of which called for distinct policy approaches. For women considered "capable of self-support" the objective was to "expedite their discharge from AID [sic] rolls" to gainful employment as quickly as possible. Such women were to be registered at the Employment Service of Canada office, classified as either a female head of family, female dependent over 16 years, or self dependent, and then directed into training if necessary. The scheme proposed by the NEC would require a well-organised administrative network of employment offices, staffed by trained professionals capable of anticipating and addressing the particular needs presented by unemployed women: "Once again, particularly in reference to the aspects of the placement of women workers, the importance of a well organised national employment service emerges, with assurance of the inclusion therein of competent women personnel."

Conclusion
The Final Report of the WAC approached the question of women’s employment as the product of familial and societal transformation, neither of which boded well for the future of the Dominion. On the one hand, the expansion of modern cities was draining young women from the rural economy, uprooting the rural girl from the family farm and sending her off to an uncertain future of new white collar occupations. Families were themselves encouraging this drift into the cities, investing in their daughters’ vocational education and promoting the pursuit of the business career. On the other hand, girls and young women were attracted by occupations which usually demanded skills and training seen to exceed their employment capacities. For this, the educational system was held responsible, in particular the failure of schools to develop a comprehensive system of vocational guidance which could direct girls into vocations more suited to their ability. The WAC developed an approach to federal employment policy which both reflected and transformed class-based, gendered and racialised notions about appropriate work, employment capacity, and the respective roles of state and community in directing the lives of girls and young women. The resulting policy proposals would have enduring effects in both federal and provincial training and employment research and regulations concerning women’s employment, providing the foundation for a distinctive gender-based approach to training, vocational and employment programmes administered by the national employment service.

As a review of the work of the Women’s Advisory Committee makes clear, gender, race, class and sexuality were all mobilised as interlocking categories in the work of the NEC to reconstruct women’s unemployment as a social problem which was closely connected with the disruption of social and familial relations by modernisation, by the lure of the modern city and by the weakening links with the rural family unit. Accompanying these changes was the loss of discipline and a growing individualisation of modern female youth whose self-interest and desire threatened to undermine familial, and ultimately national, obligation. Policy discourses were developed specifically to respond to problems allegedly posed by unemployed women, providing new and compelling grounds for the development of labour market policies which organised notions about the employability of women in terms of domesticity and maternity, whether actual or potential. These policies in turn reflected the problematisation of employment among groups of women, in an attempt to restrict the labour market activity of groups of women and to reshaping discourses about work, conduct, and dependence. In turn, such knowledge-making
practices shored up the boundaries of the formal waged economy, as distinct administrable space governed by the principles of economy and of market, as distinct from the social domain of household and domesticity. Mental hygiene principles surrounding intelligence and capacity – considered leading indicators of occupational skill and efficiency – were taken up into policy discourses, including employment research. Ultimately, these principles were deployed at the level of programme design, incorporated into government-sponsored training programmes which, in their turn, were taken up as part of the apparatus of labour market regulation across the Dominion throughout the inter-war period and into the period of W.W.II.
Endnotes:


2 I would like to thank James Struthers for clarifying this point. The argument is also to be found in Leonard Marsh, Canadians In and Out of Work (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1940). Marsh observed that the increase of young women in domestic labour noted in the 1931 census represented in part "a small proportion of farmers' daughters, i.e. [and was] the equivalent of the 'back to the farm' movement among men." (Marsh, ibid., p. 289). To the extent that domestic labour was — and still is — at the margins of the formal waged economy, this governmental strategy drew upon, and intensified the effects of, women's peripheral location with respect to the labour market. Certainly, however, the deployment of domestic labour strategies has direct parallel with the positioning of migrant workers generally, and migrant farm labour in particular. I would like to thank Anne Healy for helping me to clarify this point. The on-going struggle of the United Farm Workers of America for basic employment rights in both Canada and the United States is a clear illustration of resistance to state-based regulation strategies in the labour market. See, for example, Nandita Rani Sharma, “Citizenship and the Social Organization of Migrant Labour in Canada During Late Capitalism,” paper prepared for the ‘Women and Citizenship in the Era of Restructuring’ session, Society for Socialist Studies, Learned Societies Conference, June 1997.


6 Low, op. cit., p. 2.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., pp. 1-2.


10 See Jennifer Stephen, “The 'bad,' the 'incorrigible,' and the 'immoral': Toronto’s factory girls and the work of the Toronto Psychiatric Clinic,” in Louis A. Knafla and Susan W. S. Binnie,

11 Low, op. cit., p. 3.


13 Among the texts Low referenced were the following: “W. H. Burnham, “The Normal Mind”, L. Weatherhead, “Psychology in the Service of the Soul” and Richard Cabot, “The Way of All Women.”

For recent studies of the working up of heterosexuality and ‘the normal’ among youth and the family in the post-war period, see Mary Louise Adams, The Trouble with Normal (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) and Mona Gleason, “Psychology and the Construction of the ‘Normal’ Family in Postwar Canada, 1945-60,” Canadian Historical Review 78, no. 3 (September 1997), pp. 442-477.

14 Low, op. cit., p. 2.

15 Ibid., p. 3.

16 Ibid., pp. 7, 6.

17 Ibid., p. 6.

18 Ibid., p. 5.

19 Ibid., p. 6.

20 Ibid., pp. 7-8.

21 The NEC was appointed by order in council P.C. No. 1140 May 13, 1936. Arthur Purvis was chair, and members included Tom Moore (labour), A. N. McLean, A. Marois, Mary Sutherland (women), W. A. Mackintosh and E.J. Young. Over the next two years, the commission held 22 meetings. The NEC appointed four standing committees to deal with housing, co-ordination and registration of Aid, public works and agricultural rehabilitation. The Women’s Advisory Committee was appointed in November, and a youth advisory committee in September.


23 Sutherland’s role in breaking ranks with her fellow commissioners over the Commission’s final report is well-known. Once Sutherland discovered that Purvis was going to recommend a
federal unemployment insurance programme, she immediately reported the news to King, who urged her to issue a dissenting report. She readily agreed, and attempted to sway X and Y to adding their signatures to hers, in an effort to weaken what would otherwise have been a strong enforcement of a federal responsibility for unemployment and a permanent federal role in administering UI.


32 NAC RG 27, Vol. 3359, file 26. Reports of Employment Offices, 1937. Reports To (Miss) M. V. Burnham, Supervisor, Women’s Branch All Forwarded To Mrs Sutherland - Department Of Mines & Resources, Immigration Branch - From Women’s Divisions Of Employment Service Montreal & Toronto. For 1937:

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34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.


37 The names of all women listed in the case files drawn upon here are pseudonyms.


39 Ibid., pp. 5-6.


42 NAC RG 27, Vol. 3349, file 4. Training of Domestic Workers United Kingdom. Miss M. V. Burnham, Supervisor, Women’s Branch. Department of Immigration and Colonisation, Canada to Sutherland, August 18, 1936.


Ibid., pp. 8-9.

Ibid., p. 9.


Certainly, Lindal was cautious about overstepping her role as a member of an advisory committee to the federal government in pushing for a comprehensive federally-run employment service, particularly "with the situation so uncertain, in relation to Dominion and Provincial adjustment" and given that then Deputy Minister MacNamara appeared "well-satisfied with the present set-up."

Canadian Association of Social Workers, BC Branch, Jean D. Campbell to Mary Sutherland, NEC, March 25, 1937. In addition, community and social agencies like the Montreal Council of Social Agencies and the local councils of women were increasingly caught up in the advocacy of a comprehensive employment and vocation guidance programme which would directly address what were identified as the unique needs, employment and social, of unemployed women, undertaking reviews of women relief applicants.


For a discussion of this programme, its cancellation and the drive to recruit rural and working-class women from within Canada during this period, see Beth Light and Ruth Roach Pierson, No Easy Road: Women in Canada, 1920s to 1960s (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1990).

For her account of strategies of internal colonisation within interior space of the imperial metropole, the rationalisation of domestic space, and the 'invisible servant,' see Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest (New York:


76 NAC MG 28 F 25 Vol. 74. Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme, Home Service Schools, Report by the Youth Training Branch of the Dominion Department of Labour, Recruiting and Selection of Trainers, 1938. p. 3.

77 NAC MG 28 F 25 Vol. 74. Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme, Home Service Schools, Report by the Youth Training Branch of the Dominion Department of Labour, Recruiting and Selection of Trainers, 1938. p. 3.


80 Ibid., p. 31.


82 Ibid.

83 NAC, RG 27, Volume 3348, file 21. NEC, Annual Report Fiscal year 1936-37. (4) The legislative programme adopted the most rudimentary features of the New Deal CCC programme. See Pierson and Cohen ...


91 NAC RG 27, volume 3349, file 5, “Unemployable Women” Letter sent by Baldwin to senior provincial relief officials, August 21, 1936.

92 NAC, RG 27, Volume 3349, file 5, Memorandum, Harry Baldwin, August 25, 1936. Although it was decided not to pursue the inquiry any further, given the potential confusion which might result, responses from each of the provinces were dutifully submitted and filed. “Information already given to the commission is that a large number of these are definitely unemployable owing either to age, mental or physical handicaps, temperament, etc. The information required is of a different nature to that which has been included in the statistical information sent by the provinces to the Department of Labour.” In a memo Harry Baldwin noted the decision not to follow-up on the provincial responses by sending out a letter of retraction, preferring to defer the entire matter pending further discussion with Charlotte Whitton on how best to proceed.


94 NAC RG 27, volume 3349, file 5, “Unemployable Women.” Arthur MacNamara, Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Public Works, Winnipeg Manitoba, to Harry Baldwin, Superintendent Relief Division, NEC, Ottawa, August 25, 1936.

95 NAC RG 27, volume 3349, file 5, “Unemployable Women.” Premier’s Office, PEI, Thane Campbell to Baldwin, September 2, 1936.


100 Ibid.


The NEC recorded its decision as follows:
“A complete registration could only be fully achieved by the institution of a national card registration system for all Canadian citizens with drastic penalties for non-observance, a system which it believes would meet with definite objection unless for some specific benefit (e.g. insurance benefit), or under war emergency conditions, and which in fact might arouse public indignation and opposition.”


105 Ibid., p. 45.
Chapter 4  

Mobilising the ‘female labour reserve’: The Labour Supply Investigation Project  

In this chapter, I examine governmental strategies devised by policy planners within the Department of Labour and the National Selective Service to mobilise the ‘female labour reserve’ during the Second World War. A major focus during this period was the development of a comprehensive employment policy regime that would enable the government to maintain its military personnel and production commitments as part of the Allied Forces. Recurring labour shortages led government planners to authorise more far-reaching policies to identify and recruit, train and deploy “labour reserves” from across the Dominion and Newfoundland. As exercises of governance, these were incremental steps in the formulation of an employment policy regime that attempted to encompass a national labour market contained within a national economy. Monitoring and developing the ‘quality’ of labour was taken up as a legitimate domain and technology of government. One method for doing this involved the deployment of strategies designed to assess and calibrate skill, together with attempts to prescribe and regulate forms and relations of work as objects of regulatory attention. These practices worked to constitute, and then to normalise the identity of, the idealypical worker as the administrative subject of employment and training policy discourses.  

This chapter begins with an examination of how policy practitioners took up the question of the “manpower policy” through the Labour Supply Investigation Project (LSIP), drafted in 1941 as the government’s initial foray into the work of constructing a comprehensive employment policy capable of sustaining Canada’s war production commitment to the allied forces. I review the final report of the Labour Supply Investigation Committee, a confidential report to cabinet that assessed possible interventionary measures government might adopt in relation to the operation of the labour market. The report was an attempt to get at the defining features of a national labour market, and to outline the steps the central state would have to take in order to meet its objective of implementing a comprehensive employment policy. Planners addressed the range of supporting measures that would be needed to sustain the active and healthy productive capacities of women and men as a feature of employment policy. They also reviewed supporting regulatory measures that broadened the definition of how the labour market
operated, and suggested measures needed to ensure that the market operated smoothly. Skill was taken up as a central organising principle in this discussion in such a way as to secure the employment rights of men and the temporary status of women, leaving undisturbed the patriarchal bedrock upon which the family breadwinner model rested. As a reading of the LSIP report reveals, policy practitioners approached their task by attempting to identify the particular challenges posed by introducing so many women into the paid labour force over a very brief period. For perhaps the first time, women would be foregrounded as subjects in employment policy. I consider the multiple ways in which this construction was accomplished. In what ways were the unique challenges of women workers described? How would these problems be taken up? In addition, I will show that this was an attempt to measure, to gauge with the intent of administering, the quality and calibre of the labour force as part of the project of the state. This was an exercise of governance in which each and all had a role to play: employers, organised labour, women, various levels of government, communities and men. This exercise would have transformative effects, and at the same time evoke resistance from a variety of quarters. The LSIP report approached the labour supply through a new grid of intelligibility based on the allegedly ‘scientific’ calibration of ‘quality’ through assessments of ‘mental equipment,’ skill and aptitude. As discursive categories, aptitude and skill were as much the accomplishment of managerial techniques and technologies as the capacities such techniques purported to measure. Aptitude testing was identified as the hallmark of modern economic enterprise. Assessments of employability and unemployability were racialised, gender and class-based processes that further intensified these relations of rule as individualising effects of policy discourse. I then examine the principal policy instruments through which the Department of Labour tried to resolve the "manpower problem": investigations of the labour supply, vocational training and personnel programming. These managerial techniques centred increasingly on a single administrative site: the public employment office overseen by the National Selective Service during the war and the Unemployment Insurance Commission/National Employment Service after the war.

The Second World War witnessed an unprecedented level of economic and social planning and was, as such, a critical period in the formation of the Canadian welfare state. Officials liked to think of themselves as being in charge of a command economy, giving policy practitioners access to far-ranging experimental interventionary powers across an array of areas
of social and economic life. Recollections just after the war describe the period as one of tremendous experimentation. The infusion of new ideas and new challenges presented unparalleled opportunities for policy practitioners and agencies to develop new and different forms of state regulation, and to expand the activities of government into new areas of civilian life, social services and economic activities. For example, John J. Deutsch, of the Bank of Canada, later recalled his sense of personal challenge and excitement as he looked upon the possibilities for governmental experimentation in the trying days of the war:

It became necessary over a very short period of time to mobilise the entire resources of the country under the direction of a highly centralised administrative machine. On the basis of this overriding national necessity it was possible to make short cuts, to experiment, to adopt expediency, to undertake on a large scale programs that had never been tried before.

Certainly the Department of Labour expanded throughout the war to become a massive bureaucracy of considerable complexity and authority, however fraught its administrative capacity and competence may have appeared as policy practitioners struggled to meet their new responsibilities. Labour eventually took over UIC, labour supply mapping, assessment, employment referrals and military deferrals, and training. The Unemployment Insurance Commission was established September 24, 1940. On September 4, 1942, the NSS, (by OIC PC 7994), assumed control of all UIC and DES staff and operations under the newly established Employment Service and Unemployment Insurance Branch. The Minister of Labour was invested with all the functions, rights and powers of the UIC.

In February 1940, the federal government conducted a voluntary registration through the Employment Service of Canada to determine how many workers might be recruited into war industries. In all, 24,502 workers registered, a total which included only 1,060 women. On June 18, 1940, the federal government announced the National Resources Mobilisation Act, a move that provided for the National Registration, compulsory this time, to occur August 19, 20 and 21, 1940. The registration, carried out by the Department of National War Services, explicitly excluded married women. On March 2, 1942, (OIC PC 1445) further ordered the registration of all employable persons in Canada, carried out under the joint efforts of the UIC and DBS. A few days after that, on March 13, 1942, (OIC PC 1955) required that all employers register with the UIC all persons engaged in insurable employment. Then on March 21, 1942, the National
Registration, which had been housed with the Department of National War Services, was transferred to the Department of Labour (OIC PC 2253). On September 14, 1942 the first registration of women was conducted. On December 1, 1942, authority for the military mobilisation was also transferred from the Department of National War Services to the Department of Labour. On June 23, 1943, the Minister of Labour introduced plans for the Industrial Mobilisation Survey Plan, requiring employers to provide regular reports of all workers of military age, how long it would take to train replacements, and how many women could be hired into these positions as replacements.

The National Selective Service was established March 21, 1942 by OIC PC 2254. King announced the creation of the NSS and the wartime mobilisation plan in Parliament a few days later, on March 24, 1942. Its first director was Elliot Little, former head of the Wartime Bureau of Technical Personnel, established the previous year. Little, however, resigned his position in November 1942, and was replaced by Arthur MacNamara, former Manitoba Deputy Minister of Labour. The “National Selective Service Regulations” were authorised by OIC PC 7595, becoming effective September 1, 1942. Finally, the NSS Women’s Division was established in May 1942 under the direction of Fraudena (Mrs Rex) Eaton. Eaton was named Associate Director by OIC PC 6387 in August 10, 1943, an order that created a system of regional directors and regional advisory boards.

“Is the Individual a potential national asset worth developing?”: Investigations of the National Labour Supply

By 1941 concerns about the productivity of the labour supply had reached a critical point. Shortages were emerging in essential war industries, union-management relations had become increasingly fractious, and productive capacity was seen to be lagging. The Labour Supply Investigation Project (LSIP) was established by Order-in-Council P.C. 14/5484 on July 28, 1941 and issued its final report in October of that year. LSIP drew together individuals who would ultimately be responsible for drafting and marshalling Canada’s employment policy regime. The list of attendees to the committee’s first meeting included Dr. Bryce Stewart, Deputy Minister of
Labour; Dr. W. A. Mackintosh, senior official in the Department of Finance; Alex Skelton and John J. Deutsch of the Bank of Canada; Dr. W. J. Couper from the Department of Labour; and Pierre Waelbroeck of the International Labour Office, temporarily headquartered in Montreal for the duration of the war. They agreed that the Employment Service as presently organised was not up to the task of generating a comprehensive inventory of labour, at least not in the limited time available.7

From the outset, these government planners framed their task as one of cultivating an employable labour supply by focusing policy interventions at the level of the individual, guided always by the question: “Is the individual a potential national asset worth developing?” This question anticipated a stable worker identity whose fixed location linked that individual to the national economy. Human capital would be approached, and increasingly so into the postwar period of reconstruction, as a national resource in which the state was prepared to invest. This move saw the interests of the individual subsumed under the newly articulated public interest. In a climate of war and reconstruction, policy practitioners worked to develop a policy regime that actively constituted community and nation as a stable and unifying entity. The interests of individual women and men would become coextensive with and increasingly defined through those of nation, community and family. As decisions that were also taken in preparation for the postwar period of reconstruction, the policy regime formulated throughout the war directly implicated and mobilised mutually constitutive processes of class, race and gender formation through employment and training policy discourses.

The memories of the recent Depression remained firmly fixed in the minds of government planners and working women and men alike. Employability discourses worked to collapse relations of unemployment into the identity of the individual worker whose unstable or marginal attachment to the labour market was an indice of deficient skill. Skill would become a stabilising force, a vector linking the individual to the market. Training promised a measure of stability, regularity and order. When the Minister of Labour rose in Parliament to report on the success of the new Wartime Emergency Training Programme, he drew explicitly upon the image of the “unemployable man.” This figure of the Depression was not a victim of economic upheaval or the collapse of financial capital markets. The unemployable man symbolised
personal failure, the family breadwinner whose masculinity was compromised by deficiency. That spectre of uncertainty and social dissolution could now, however, be remedied through a coherent program of training and vocational guidance:

As an example of fine achievement, look what has been done for the completely unskilled or semi-skilled man: the man who during the depression was unemployed too long to retain any skill he had or to acquire any new skill. Over 68,000 persons have been trained in industrial classes in the last year to man the thousands of machines in the factories making the tools of war.8

The LSIP report was a significant first step in outlining the measures needed for a comprehensive approach to the administration and regulation of the labour supply. The LSIP report, as an investigation of the national labour market and a prescriptive conceptual map of its proper functions, was also a problematisation of market operations. Who had rights in the labour market? In what ways ought the federal power to intervene in the array of employer rights to hire, to fire, to train or not? The LSIP committee certainly anticipated opposition from private industry to direct state intervention into the operation of the labour market itself. Nevertheless, the LSIP report contended that matters such as who, when and in what quantity an employer would hire – always considered an internal business affair – had to give way before the need of the central government to direct labour to where it was most needed. As a matter which would gain momentum during the war and into the postwar period was well, the LSIP argued the necessity of a comprehensive national employment service, an agency of the state operating in the disinterested but efficient capacity as arbiter presiding over the allocation and balancing of labour supply with market demand. Employers remained wary of relinquishing the power to hire and recruit to the state. Trade unions and central labour bodies also remained ambivalent about this move. Members of King’s cabinet were not so ready to lend their support either, an argument that reflected the dispute of long standing between planners at the Department of Labour and those associated with C.D. Howe, appropriately dubbed the “Minister of Everything”:

Despite lip service to the contrary, the Committee thinks that many responsible persons are concerned primarily about the man-power supply for their own purposes and only secondarily, if at all, about the man-power available for others. This situation has produced a condition in which manpower resources are allocated more on the basis of the competitive ability of various enterprises and less on the basis of national interest. Thus there is competition between the armed forces and industry, between war and non-war industries, and among industrial
concerns generally. The Committee doubts that this situation results in the most effective use of the nation’s manpower.9

The LSIP report contended that the market function could be facilitated through the exercise of state power. That is, the Department of Labour would lead the way, helping industry to develop the managerial function over, if not necessarily in place of, the market function. Markets might allocate, but they did not necessarily allocate well, according to the LSIP authors. Modern personnel planning, assessment and management, and not the market, should be deployed as the primary mechanism determining the allocation of labour – of human capital. This experiment, while touted in some quarters as straightforward, promised to be an exercise of unparalleled difficulty and complication, the subject of considerable debate and resistance from a variety of parties. It was a battle-ground on which the varying rights of citizenship and property would be both articulated and struggled over. The role of NSS and the local labour exchanges would remain a contentious issue into the postwar period, a contested site that met with resistance from employers, veterans organisations, trade unions and individual men and women themselves in a debate that ultimately converged on the employment rights of returning male veterans.

The LSIP was a significant policy event, an exercise in defining the economy as a rational and discrete administrative space, as well as a legitimate domain of governance. The labour market was also conceptualised as national in scope. Committee members approached cultural diversity as difference, a potential source of social and regional barriers in the movement of labour. This was particularly the case in descriptions of agricultural communities and of Quebec as a site of profound cultural difference. The report’s authors deployed gender to illustrate the multiple challenges associated with cultural – and racialised – difference thought to pose obstacles to labour mobility. That is, mobilising women would launch culture on a collision course with economy, producing all manner of apparent social problems, needs and challenges government would have to address. The constellation of relations linking economy, culture and the social was in this way problematised as a further site of governance:

In drawing the potentially available female labour reserve into the market, account will have to be taken of the cultural and economic background of the different regions and of the social problems posed by the introduction of large numbers of women into the labour market and of moving them from rural areas to urban centres and from one region to another. All of these conditions are implicit in the full utilisation of this reserve of labour.10
Researchers proposed a range of policy measures covering everything from public transportation, housing, assessment and training, and welfare. After all, women could not be left to traverse the nation on their own, walking strange city streets in search of appropriate accommodation, let alone travelling to war jobs outside city limits on a limited budget.

The 'manpower shortage' was approached as the product of challenges originating in five distinct areas. The LSIP report singled out lack of comprehensive federal-provincial policy, funding and responsibility on such issues as training and employment placement. The report was also concerned about the lack of statistical knowledge about the labour force and any potential reserves available for recruitment into the market; accelerated turnover and mobility among workers whose wayward habits were disruptive of regular work routines and production planning. LSIP researchers also pointed to the lack of comprehensive progressive personnel policies amongst the majority of employers. Finally, the report turned to the quality of the labour force itself to question the employability of workers of allegedly inferior "physical" and "mental" capacity. In selecting these key policy areas, the committee redefined and deepened governmental scrutiny of labour supply and demand in an exercise that sought to rationalise the labour market as governable economic space. In doing so, the LSIP report articulated a template for future investigations of the labour supply. Studies of labour supply issues would increasingly focus on the apparent quality and calibre of available labour, of the social and allegedly innate characteristics standing in the way of immediate deployment in essential war industries.

The LSIP took up as its main objective the more pressing issue of enlisting the "female labour reserve." Whatever the federal government might be able to accomplish as far as recruiting female labour was concerned, employer co-operation was still needed to make sure that these workers were trained and kept at their posts for the duration of the war. The LSIP was surprisingly candid in its critical assessment of the current industrial relations climate and of employer practices in particular. Stubborn employers and aggressive unionists were characterised as intransigent adversaries whose disruptive practices posed a threat to production schedules. Committee members were quite critical of both employers and labour unions for their respective roles in the recent wave of strike action and industrial unrest plaguing industry across
the country. Observing that in nearly all firms in Canada there was little evidence of enlightened or progressive managerial technique, the Committee concluded that there was no administrative basis for an effective labour management policy. Industrial relations languished at the “master” and “servant” stage, viewed as backward by any modern standard. As the individual bargaining capacity of workers was supplanted by the greater strength of employers, it ought to have come as no surprise that workers would begin bargaining collectively through unions. These social institutions, too, were part of the same evolutionary path of economic modernisation. But left to its own, the industrial relations climate was proving dangerous to the legitimate interests of both parties, not to mention the now paramount interests of a nation at war:

The resentment of employers against unions has led to the adoption of anti-union measures. These measures are met with counter-measures by unions. And a relationship that should be one of buyer and seller becomes one of antagonists more or less openly at odds. Under these conditions, the policies of unions are directed to the task of beating the employer at his own game; and union leaders are chosen with this objective in mind. It is not to be wondered at that aggressive employers produce aggressive unionists.  

Clearly this was a precarious environment into which to introduce so many new women workers. Much of the report was taken up with the vexed question of how to encourage employers to replace their male workforce with women. But if addressing social prejudice against hiring women workers was a problem, the evidence suggested that such prejudice diminished as employers gained more experience as employers of women.

The LSIP anticipated an expanded role for the federal state in its capacity as overseer of a national labour market. Labour exchanges were once again targeted as the central means for administering a national employment policy, notwithstanding their disappointing performance as political patronage tools under the former provincially administered system. According to LSIP researchers, local labour exchanges were woefully under-utilised by industrial workers and employers alike, and the NES was criticised for performing only a minor role in either the hiring practices of employers or the search for work among women and men. To remedy this, their scope and operation would have to be considerably expanded, opening up a new role as public agencies empowered and equipped to monitor, scrutinise and assess the quality and the future employment of women and men. LSIP researchers contended that employment offices were an
important site for reorganising personnel practices, leading by example in an effort to educate reluctant, ill-informed or even recalcitrant employers who had yet to implement progressive personnel management within their own enterprise. The LSIP report observed that the “scarcity of trained personnel managers” was being addressed by a training programme launched by the Department of Labour and conducted by the University of Toronto. Plant forepersons, both women and men, were to be instructed in the more detailed managerial techniques of “job specification and other means of making more effective use of the work force.”

Students of personnel management, even some appreciative employers, were coming to “think of labour relations in terms of human relations.” As placement officers, graduates would conduct job analyses as part of their regular responsibilities. The LSIP recommended that training in personnel management be extended and expanded, a measure which reflected the rationale underpinning the employment strategy overall. The nature of training was seen as potentially transformative of the industrial relations system itself. More efficient use of labour and improved personnel policies, all stemming from the “short practical courses in personnel management” to be provided by the Department of Labour, would slowly but surely turn the tide on industrial unrest. With so many women moving into the formal labour market, plans had to be developed to address the many issues implicated by the tremendous transformation of the anticipated role of women as workers. Officials were well aware that employers might oppose this move. They also were concerned about meeting the responsibilities now falling to the government as trainer and regulator not only of the labouring capacities but of the welfare of these apparently new entrants to the workplaces and factories of the nation. In any case, such reforms were long overdue.

Since their inception during the Depression, employment offices functioned as placement agencies for so-called casual labour, those individuals considered least employable after a manner that customarily equated marginal labour market location/status with inferior and/or deficient innate capacities and work habits of the individual. As placement agencies for women workers, employment offices organised relations of employment and unemployment through the regulatory categories of race, gender and of class, overseeing the movements, bodies and labours of working class women and women racialised as “other.” These were the women who were explicitly directed into domestic service as one of the few employment options available to them. Researchers noted, but seemed unable to account for, the reticence exhibited by women
concerning the public employment office. Women maintained profoundly differential relationships to government agencies like the public employment office—a manifestation of the variable relations among women in relation to public policy, and the interdependent network of agencies, both community and state, through which policy practitioners tried to implement their plans. These variable relations posed a problem to policy practitioners. Officials and their community counterparts would have to find a way to transform the association most people had of employment offices as placement agencies that in the words of Employment Service Associate Director Rutherford, “catered largely to the employers of common labour and domestics.”

**Confronting the challenge of full employment**

As part of their investigations of the quality of labour, the LSIP critically assessed the existing labour supply. Unemployed women and men were, of course, the first potential source to be drawn upon by war industries. However, the LSIP considered this to be a labour pool of doubtful quality. They argued that many of these individuals were able to find work only because of the current tight conditions obtaining in the labour market: it was for once a workers’ and not an employers’ market, a challenging prospect indeed. An important dimension of this analysis was the apparent inverse relation alleged to exist between total employment and productive efficiency. That is, as the economy neared full employment, labour force quality was observed to deteriorate. Training could only go so far to remedy the problem since this was also considered a question of inferior human capacity among workers drawn into the labour market by the sudden increase in jobs:

Already it is evident that the efficiency of workers, taken as a whole, is decreasing. It was reported to the Committee repeatedly that the quality of persons now being taken on to the staffs of plants is decreasing, first because they are, for the most part, untrained in the work for which they are employed, and, secondly, because they have inferior physical and mental qualifications. This condition must, of course, be expected as the economy approaches full employment.

For their part, employers who clung to traditional methods of hiring at the plant gate on a whim and a sight merely contributed to the wandering habits of these apparently inefficient workers. In the absence of a trained personnel expert or, at the very least, an employment officer associated with one of the public exchanges, employers were fated to stumble through the hiring queue.
haphazardly selecting candidates who would continue their inefficient careers at the employer's expense. The toll in lost production time and spoiled goods would continue to rise unless and until government took the lead in order to put an end to such wasteful and unscientific practice. As part of its research, the LSIP sampled 84 firms, most of which argued that labour quality was diminishing even faster than the quantity. As a narrative device, the report encapsulated the litany of problems faced by employers in the experience of a single (perhaps fictive) company in order to expose the inefficiency of all conventional hiring methods. Ethnicity and racialised difference – signified in this example by the dubious "foreign sounding name" – was a clear marker of potential deficiency, positioning such workers as counter to the ideal-typical worker as male, skilled, white and of British origin. That said, it is interesting to note that the employer in question appeared to have been sceptical of fully 100% of the applicants who appeared at his particular plant gate:

One Toronto machinery company employer estimated that 50 per cent of the persons seeking work at his gate carried foreign names, and were not employed by him, that 25 per cent were physically unfit, 15 per cent were employed and shopping around for another job, and another 10 per cent were unemployed persons of Anglo-Saxon extraction. With examples like this, surely there could be no rational reason beyond that of routine convention to explain why employers would not avail themselves of modern personnel technique. Labour turnover was rampant as workers moved from job to job in search of higher wages and better terms, while employers – many of whom were not even manufacturing essential war supplies – freely poached the best workers from their competitors. The problem was therefore framed as one of compromised employability combined with the most ineffectual method of hiring "at the plant gate" without the aid of a comprehensive personnel policy or, better yet, a centralised employment service.

Full employment was therefore seen as a mixed blessing. Under the conditions of a tight labour market hundreds of people were seen to be flooding onto the market who under regular conditions would not have been likely to find work at all. By drawing unemployed people into the labour market first, the tight labour market would result in less desirable candidates gaining employment ahead of others whose mental capacity and work habits might be more pliable and ultimately more conducive to the productivity standards required. Matching workers and jobs the
haphazard way, that is to say leaving the market function to do the job, only exacerbated the problem and led invariably to diminished productivity. Part of the problem lay with individual women and men who were branded unemployable; in particular, employers were helpless to deal with those whose alleged mental deficiency rendered them of little use, unsuited for the task at hand, in jobs well beyond their capacities. Further, these individuals were characterised as typically unstable, wandering from one job to another just as they pleased. Physical incapacity was singled out as a source of limited capacity; however, the more troubling source lay with those whose deficiency was internal and whose delinquent work habits were only revealed once they were on the job, or had wandered off as they were apparently so prone to do. Evidence of the problem was abundant and, as it happened, so was the solution. The method for diagnosing the problem and its remedy lay within the same technique, the same knowledge practices that gave rise to this new category for regulation and labour supply investigation: aptitude testing. LSIP researchers drew on emerging knowledge practices from employment and personnel research to make their case with a clarity that both startled and compelled: “A Montreal concern which gives medical, intelligence, and aptitude tests to new recruits, reports that new employees are testing lower than a year ago.” Personnel technique of this sort opened a new dimension into the calibration and subsequent administering of employees based on the degree to which they conformed with the emerging norm of mental as well as physical capacity. Evidence of undesirable attitude, revealed as wandering habits (or labour turnover), absenteeism or poor performance on the job would now be diagnosed according to a new grid of intelligibility: the cumulative results of employee aptitude tests. The statistical capacity to measure labour quality through aptitude and intelligence testing was heralded as a sign of modern progressive personnel administration. The Committee recommended that testing of this kind be taken up in personnel policy as a regular screening device.

Identifying the “female labour reserve”

Having decided to target the reserves of women, the challenge now was finding ways to identify these potential workers. How was the Department of Labour going to find them? How many women were available for employment? How were policy practitioners to measure a workforce whose existence had been so consistently and so diligently denied, or at the very least ignored as a matter of policy? And this was the point. Officials wanted a regular and detailed
rolling tally of the labour supply that could be amended as new information became available. New “tabulating equipment” was available to the Department of Labour and the Bureau of Statistics to conduct “a perpetual inventory” of the labour supply. Speed in data collection, tabulation and final analysis were central to the exercise. As the LSIP pointed out, any data older than six months was “useless.” Here again the public employment office was seen as an important source of information and an equally strategic site for local administration as a vector into the local labour market. “It is for this reason that the work should be decentralised to the utmost extent possible,” LSIP researchers recommended. But when it came to estimating the female labour supply the conventional method of counting heads was not entirely productive. When LSIP asked the Social Analysis Branch of the DBS to provide a comparison of a random sample of males from the 1940 national registration with those who had registered for unemployment insurance, the DBS set about to ascertain “the direction and extent of change in the composition of the working force,” working on the assumption that its study of insured persons was “typical of all persons working.” But, of course, it was not: the unemployment insurance programme excluded a large proportion of the labour force through occupational and hours of work criteria, thus cutting out from its scope the employment of many women. As LSIP researchers came eventually to realise, estimating the size and predicting the movements of women workers – employed and unemployed alike – was a challenge of an entirely different order.

A major source of labour force data came from the National Registration of men in September 1940. This registration was presented as a straightforward exercise. All men were to present themselves and, much like the decennial census, declare their employment status. Registering as “never worked” was taken to mean they were readily available for gainful employment. Registering women was at first dismissed as an unproductive exercise. Why would women register? Researchers argued that there was “less social pressure on women to enter gainful employment than on men” and so the resulting tallies would hardly have been worth the effort. Registering unemployed women was similarly viewed as unlikely to yield significant results. The category of female unemployment was subject to an intensely class-based, racialised and gendered rationale. First of all, unemployed women were alleged to exhibit qualitatively different features than unemployed men given their very different experiences in the labour market. Researchers at the DBS Social Analysis Branch asserted that unemployed women could
always find work in domestic service. Given the inherently female nature of this work, they assumed that no technical skill development was apparently required. In this way, the domestic household – together with the women who were seen to be its principal occupants – was further reified in policy as a ‘natural’ space existing outside rational economic space, and therefore beyond the sphere of the formal economy except as a site of consumption and a limited one at that. Given, in other words, the “unskilled” status of household work, any woman who could not find paid work as a domestic servant could not be considered employable. LSIP analysts followed the same reasoning when they concluded: “Apparently unemployed women find jobs more readily than unemployed men do. Thus the women who are unemployable are likely to be larger proportion of the total of unemployed women than is the case of men.” NSS Women’s Division head Fraudena Eaton would share these views, suggesting in 1942 that while a national registration of unemployed women was a good idea she doubted if the exercise would reveal a “substantial number of employable women.” This conceptual approach to the relationship between the female unemployment as an economic category and women’s employability as a vector for efficiency, discipline and desirability as worker had important implications for how women would be viewed during the war and beyond.

The problem of locating women was partially resolved when labour analysts decided to conduct a national registration of women between the ages of 20-24, an age at which it was assumed most women were single, least likely to have children and related ancillary domestic responsibilities, and therefore most likely to be available for waged labour. Estimates of available labour among the rest of the female population would simply have to proceed through other means. The registration took place in September 1942, but unfortunately its results were greeted with considerable scepticism. This marked the first time women were formally canvassed in this way by government, apart from the regular census. It was also the first occasion upon which women had been compelled to report themselves as unemployed. The report compiled on the results of the 1942 registration observed that economic and social conditions and the attitudes of women themselves converged in such a way as to cast doubt on the reliability of the data:

All available information about resources of women workers were examined, including the National Registration and the census, but it was seen that such was not dependable, because of the rapid change in the employment status of women
during the past two years and with the speed of such change increasing rapidly within the immediately previous few months. No previous questionnaire had included questions directly bearing on the possibility and willingness of women to change their employment or to accept employment.  

The report on the 1942 registration also noted a pattern among women who appeared reluctant to identify themselves as unemployed. This pattern was noted, although the report’s authors were at pains to explain it:

It was interesting to note that Employment Offices throughout Canada reported hundreds of women seeking work during the time of the announcement of the registration and the day it commenced, in order to avoid being registered as unemployed.  

Women were to report wherever a government office or service was located. When these results were compared to the regular NES reports of job applicants to vacancies, researchers acknowledged an incongruity. More women registered as available for work through the National Registration in September 1942 than were listed as “unplaced applicants” reported by the National Employment Service count. In total, 63,133 registered as available for full time employment in September 1942, compared to 46,000 registered as “unplaced applicants” from the NES tally for the same period. The challenge was to encourage women to identify themselves as available for work without also identifying themselves as unemployed. The 1942 registration also documented the tremendous need for paid work and the considerable regional variation in the proportion of “unplaced applicants” relative to unfilled vacancies. For example, the Maritimes reported a 583% surplus of applicants over vacancies. Quebec reported only a 49% surplus. BC had a surplus of 497%, the prairies 257%, and Ontario 138%. Analysts at the Research and Statistics Branch dryly observed that the Maritimes surplus might suggest a “certain amount of frustration among women” who could not find jobs in war industries. The DBS hastened to add that the figures were “affected to some extent by variations in the proportion of employable women who apply for jobs at the employment offices.” For example, Quebec women might be available to work, although cultural difference would render them less likely than Ontario women to come forward for employment. This observed pattern contributed to a further dimension of policy definitions of employability, one that would have deepening significance during postwar planning. The tremendous disproportion of applicants to jobs might be attributable to the regional concentration of war industries, but there can be little doubt that
the registration was also strong testimony to the devastating impact of the Depression on regional economies, to the considerable concentration of regional unemployment, the disruption and destabilisation of individual, familial and community survival strategies and the need of so many women to find paid work.

Certainly, economic necessity did not figure in any of these official narratives. In her 1943 address to the National Council of Women in the year following the registration, Eaton explained that the labour shortage was best understood as the combined result of the more limited industrial development of the Dominion and its ensuing cultural effects, predisposing women not to see themselves as regular workers. Labour force participation was here characterised as an inevitable function of economy even as cultural distinctions were acknowledged. Hers was to be an appeal to middle class white women, an appeal that would also avoid, by neatly side-stepping, any question of discriminatory employment practices or policies either during the war or after. Eaton’s approach as head of the NSS WD reflected a narrative that subsumed all women war workers within the same universalising discourse of domesticity and nationalism. Women were working, drawn into service in essential war industries as an act of self-sacrifice, prepared to take up their positions in industry and to put aside family and self to serve the paramount interests of their country in the devastating fight against fascism:

In Canada we have not had a great deal of industrialisation such as in Great Britain, where you find mothers whose daughters naturally follow trade or industry, nor had we the industrial development of the United States. We had therefore a natural indifference on the part of women to the needs of industry and in dealing with this problem it was necessary to change the attitude of the women of Canada toward industrial work.28

Eaton described the registration of young women as having had the desired effect, testimony to the prodigious capacity of government to identify and respond to a need with dispatch and accuracy. Not only did it generate “a good sound list of names and addresses with something of the training and experience of each woman,” but it also provoked an attitudinal shift. Women were now coming round to identify themselves as workers: “It immediately made women think in terms of employment. It brought us a success that almost caused us discomfort. We were embarrassed by our own success.”29
As these attempts at defining the female labour supply illustrate, policy practitioners were finding many of their ideas about conventional labour market practice inadequate to their current task. Government planners confronted the complex relations surrounding women’s employment and unemployment. The “female labour reserve” was identified as a distinct population which had to be drawn into and habituated to the rationalities and routines of productive economic space. In this way, the problems women were thought to pose were identified as originating in culture and in the social. As a problem of governance, of population, the LSIP opened up to scrutiny labour market supply and demand functions as new domains to be examined, charted, and governed through a variety of techniques and agencies. The image of a “female reserve” appealed to notions of female domesticity, drawing on maternalist discourses of domesticity at the centre of which stood the prescriptive identity of the middle class white female subject, whose claims in the social were grounded in her domestic and reproductive capacity and not in her paid labour. She was unfamiliar with and out of place in the formal waged economy, except for a slight window in the early years before marriage. What this conception of the “female reserve” accomplished was an elision of the subjectivity and agency of those whose waged labour was a regular, if unstable, feature of daily life. These women, moreover, were even less likely to figure in the imaginings of government statisticians.

The National Selective Service

Mackenzie King described the steps that were being taken to ensure the capable administration of the new-found supply of female labour, in part to allay fears about the indiscriminate inter-mingling of male and female workers and also to create the impression of order in directing women from the household into industry with minimal disruption. The program operationalised the findings and recommendations of the LSIP through an extensive array of social and economic measures all designed to move women into military-industrial and essential civilian production. In his public address delivered March 24, 1942, King presented the government’s 10-point program:

1. Recruiting campaigns to attract women.
2. The provision of appropriate and adequate facilities for interviewing women applicants and for giving them advice and direction.
3. The establishment of competent job information and placement services, specialising in female labour.
4. Advances to cover transportation costs.
5. Provision of hostels or other satisfactory housing arrangements.
6. Provision of nurseries or other means of caring for children.
7. Provision where needed of medical and recreational facilities.
8. The provision in industry, as well as under direct government auspices, of training programs, specifically designed for women.
9. Pressure upon employers who may be reluctant to hire female labour.
10. Changes in civil service and industrial restrictions on the employment of female labour, and, particularly, married female labour.30

With this announcement, Canadians were introduced to what would become a very familiar agency. When the National Selective Service assumed control of the UIC/NES apparatus in March 1942, the federal government was widely criticised for its handling of the ‘manpower’ problem. Shortages and disorganisation were the product of considerable disarray in policy and planning efforts. Estimates of available labour resources varied widely, often missing the mark entirely. According to one critic, writing for *Maclean’s Magazine* in September 1942, Canada stood on the threshold of its fourth year fighting the war and had yet to resolve its most “muddled problem”: a systematic ‘manpower’ programme that could accommodate both the needs of the armed services and of vital war industries. Part of the problem lay in competition between the two sectors for increasingly fewer men. But the larger problem, before finding ways to divert the female reserve into productive purposes and settling the intense competition over scarce human resources, was the complete absence of any central plan under the direction of the increasingly beleaguered “manpower boss,” Elliott M. Little, a former industrialist appointed to head the newly created NSS:

[T]ied closely to the greater use of womanpower, to the competitive scramble for manpower by industry and the armed services, is the lack of any central manpower control at Ottawa. To this can be traced our lack of any clear, precise inventory of used or usable manpower resources; our failure to agree as to manpower needs and “priorities”; our failure to produce a master plan or blueprint for meeting acute labour shortages.31

To date, the only steps emanating from Ottawa were a flurry of attempts by government officials who were working in isolation and at cross purposes, as they “sharpened their pencils to solve their own little manpower problems.” The absence of central authority produced instead a poorly organised system that relied on voluntarism where compulsion was needed. It was to be hoped that the present state of disorder would change in the wake of a series of orders-in-council just
passed by the War Committee of Cabinet. These measures delineated the more extensive scope and administrative capacity of the NSS:

1. Creation of a new manpower mobilisation agency, responsible for co-ordinating the policies and activities of all governmental agencies concerned with the demand for and supply of labour.
2. Provision for setting up within the Department of Labour a running inventory of manpower.
3. A registration of workers under the national Unemployment Insurance scheme.
4. A transfer of the old National Registration machinery of 1940 from the Department of National War Services to the Department of Labour.
5. The freezing of all men on farms as at March 23, except for voluntary enlistment, and the exemption of farmers and essential farm labourers from compulsory military training.
6. The naming of a specified list of "restricted" occupations and industries into which no male person of military age and fitness might enter without the permission of the local national selective service officer.
7. The raising of the draft age limit from twenty-four to thirty (then raised to forty) for men unmarried as of July 15, 1940.
8. Other provisions involving special treatment for technical and professional persons; the reconditioning of recruits not fit for military service; the training of personnel managers.32

Training was integral to the government's employment policy. Vocational training for women was deeply informed by understandings of women's differential skill and learning capacity, grounded in the conceptual framework of the "skills dilution" approach to work reorganisation. In this way, the vocational or "pre-employment" training infrastructure devised for the development of the female labour reserve was from the start conceived of as a second tier within the federal training and employment strategy, a second tier that would also be instrumental in the postwar employment settlement. Pre-employment training was one component within the broader programme designed to turn the female reserve into a viable and productive labour force. Personnel policy and industrial welfare policy also emerged as key knowledge practices in a constellation of employment policy discourses devoted to the production of efficient and compliant female subjects whose commitment to serving the national interest would also keep in check their own financial interests as workers. At the same time, research was underway within the Labour department to find ways to rationalise the work of training, job placement and the movement of women into essential industries.
Policy practitioners and senior officials at the Labour Department argued for stronger control from the centre, in part according to the rationale that since the federal government assumed a greater share of fiscal responsibility it should also maintain greater influence over policy development and implementation. But this was only part of the story. By far the more controversial question lay in an issue of much longer standing: federal responsibility for employment and that more contentious policy issue, unemployment. Embedded within this question was the issue of female employment. To what extent was any level of government, in particular the federal government, prepared to recognise and ‘normalise’ the continuous labour force attachment of women while at the same time assuming managerial control over the labour market?

Training of war workers was conducted under the War Emergency Training Programme (WETP), under the authority of the Youth Training Act (1939) and provided that the federal government would pay up to 50% of training costs carried out by the provinces for the training and ‘rehabilitation’ of unemployed youth. WETP was established in September 1940. Under the programme, the federal government assumed control of all designated technical schools and plant schools and, through war appropriations, increased its coverage to 85% of WETP implementation costs. Training was carried out under this programme in four classifications: war industry training; “upgrading” of supervisors and forepersons; pre-enlistment training of RCAF personnel; and army trades training of enlisted men. The Department described the War Emergency Training Programme as an employer-driven process: all employers had to do was identify their labour requirements and WETP would diligently supply labour to meet the demands. Through the work of training and vocational guidance, a spirit of efficiency and cooperation had “taken hold” of men and women “of all classes, degrees of skill and education” contributing not only to the war effort but to the technical value of the labour force itself. Amongst themselves, policy practitioners at the Department of Labour contended that the role of the federal government in training and employment policy was solely to address the national interest and not individual need. This point was made somewhat emphatically by Director of Vocational Training, A. W. Crawford as he attempted to negotiate through the sticky question of the appropriate division of federal, provincial and industry responsibility for training policy:
The work which has been so well begun under the War Emergency Training Programme should be further developed and extended, always bearing in mind that the primary function or purpose is to serve the needs of war industries, not to educate individuals.\textsuperscript{33}

Of course, individuals were apparently benefiting from training. The value accruing in vocational training could not be ignored and government was keen to emphasise its salutary economic effects. Individuals could certainly become better workers at the same time that the national interest in securing a technically skilled workforce was met.

And what of the content of training provided at WETP centres? For the most part, training appeared to concentrate on the production of normative worker-identities by familiarising women with the routines of work in what was presented as the unfamiliar setting of the modern production facility. The following description illustrated the techniques and technologies of training, addressed to the regulation of capacities, dispositions and conduct as the object of training centre practice:

\begin{itemize}
\item[a)] Familiarises the trainee with workshop discipline and rules.
\item[b)] Accustoms the trainee to working either on night shift or for a period of eight hours per day.
\item[c)] Permits them to acquire basic skill in the occupation.
\item[d)] Enables the training centre to weed out those who are obviously unsuitable. In these ways the period of preliminary training in the school helps the first employer by reducing waste and turnover and giving a higher initial rate of production.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{itemize}

This programme of training was consistent with directives issued by Crawford in July 1941 through the Interdepartmental Committee on Labour Co-ordination. Courses were to be kept as close to 2 weeks of instruction as possible, provided “in the plant without expense to the government” and limited to the most rudimentary introduction to workplace routines, safety disciplines, and basic familiarity with the work at hand.\textsuperscript{35} The WETP was intended to train workers to the semi-skilled or skilled level to meet the demands of war production. Training was approved in response to identified labour shortages and also to maintain employment fitness or to enable the individual “to obtain better or more suitable” employment according to the terms approved by the Labour Minister for training for a skilled and semi-skilled occupation.\textsuperscript{36}
Through WETP the purpose, content and administration of vocational training strategy aimed at producing a productive labour force of war workers. In the early years of the war, at least to 1941, policy practitioners and employers alike assumed that women’s training would be minimal and short term. For example, the *Labour Gazette* in its March 1941 issue asserted that women did not require training for the limited tasks they would be expected to perform: “the number of women admitted to classes has been limited up to the present, and is confined largely to sponsored groups. One of the reasons for this is that the majority of occupations in which women are used requires very little previous training, and as such can be given in industry itself.” Training for women was seen as a lesser priority and then mainly through in-plant training on the job in occupations for which little skill was required. “Up to the present time occupations for which women are being used in war industries are of a nature which require very little training and this training is being given in industry rather than in pre-employment classes established under the War Emergency Training Programme,” McLarty wrote to Minister of Pensions and National Health Ian Mackenzie in May 1941. Pre-employment classes were established only at the direct request of employers. WETP classes were reserved for training in skilled and semi-skilled occupations, with recruiting on the following hierarchy of classifications: a) men from 1914-1918 b) men over 40 c) women and boys over 16.

Where more extensive training for women was called for, instructors seem flummoxed at the prospect. In 1943, the Nova Scotia director of training for the Department of Labour described the problems initially encountered when his department was called on to train a group of women as machine operators. His report proved a familiar narrative of problems instructors encountered as they tried to figure out how they might possibly deal with this unique group of ‘workers’.

The instructors who had had no previous experience with women in productive shop work were inclined to be sceptical of their capacity to learn to run machines and were loath to take on the job of teaching them. Advertisements were inserted in the daily papers asking for applicants and a ready response brought out a large number who were eager to enter the training course. They were subjected to the same psychological tests for intelligence and mechanical aptitude as had been used previously with men. It was found that the latter was of little significance when applied to female applicants probably because they had not become familiar with common tools and mechanisms as they grew up. Through critical
interviewing those were selected who seemed to possess outstanding qualities of teachability and dependability.\textsuperscript{39}

Not only were women deemed more timid in the use of machining tools – given their exposure to mechanical instruments no more complicated than a sewing machine – they were also characterised as less inclined to respond to skilled trades training since they had no apparent aspirations to continue working in an apprenticable trade once the war had ended. Lack of “long-term ambition” reinforced the view that women had only a transitory attachment to the labour force: “Their general attitude showed that they felt their effort was directly connected with war activity and [was] based on a keen feeling of patriotism,” wrote the Nova Scotia Director of Technical Education in describing the progress made by his department in training women as electric welders in the NS shipyards where they would work installing gun mounts and related military weapons systems.\textsuperscript{40} Where training programmes for men proceeded smoothly on the basis of mass-testing and instruction, the limited exposure and differential capacities of women required an individuated approach organised around the “teachability” of the female trainee in the absence of any innate propensity to the work at hand. Women simply possessed no mechanical “aptitude,” or so the story went.\textsuperscript{41} But did they have the capacity to be taught? This too was conditioned in part by their identity as workers. Given their limited labour force attachment, women were observed to have a limited desire to learn the whole trade and so were best instructed on a task rather than a trade basis, an approach that embedded the segmentation of apprenticable trades within the training strategy. The narrative from the Nova Scotia Director of Technical Education made a convincing argument for this approach.

From 1942, emphasis was increasingly placed on recruiting women into training programmes, although the training period continued to be shorter than for men, “owing to the nature of their subsequent employment,” according to the official narrative produced by the Department of Labour in 1943.\textsuperscript{42} The average training period was 3 months, with schools graduating an average of 4000 per month. Direct employer involvement in training was limited, hampering government efforts to keep tabs on training and placement efforts. Efforts to reach women were proving more difficult, leading planners to inquire more closely into the operation of the recruiting efforts of the schools themselves. Another department report noted that part of the problem of poor enrolment centred on “confusion” at the level of the Selective Service local
office where it was reported selection officers were simply directing women straight into industry, bypassing the training process altogether. For their part, women were apparently under the mistaken impression that a permit was needed before they could enrol in a training centre. Those who did were referred directly into employment. These problems led ministry officials to question whether WETP was meeting its training targets. According to a memorandum to Mitchell in June 1941, WETP training was projected to reach a target of 50,000 persons in industry and the armed forces during that calendar year: 14,000 for the army, 8,000 for the air force, and 30,000 for industry. Enrolment levels had reached only 28,00 by the end of 1941, making it clear the training was too important to be left to employer discretion. In addition, a national system was required to ensure consistency on enrolment, content and transfer of trainees to job placements. Provincial control fractured and segmented training, creating barriers that impeded the national flow of labour. Training content and accreditation standards varied between provinces and regions, between public and privately run facilities and schools. Crawford and his colleagues at the Department made a strong pitch at this time to the Labour Co-ordination Committee that the federal authority ought to take over all vocational training, pointing out that neither industry nor private trainers could be relied upon to meet the level, intensity and quality necessary to sustain the war effort. Finally, if for no other reason, department officials reasoned that if the federal government was paying the larger share of the training budget, then the Department of Labour should run the show. Notwithstanding the necessity for federal intervention, education nonetheless remained an area of provincial jurisdiction, a responsibility and prerogative of the provinces, even if the federal government had been pressed to assume a rising share of the financial burden. This was a dilemma that would continue to bedevil federal policy officials at the Labour Department, not least because the preferred route for implementation and administrative governance of training was to leave all decision making to the local level, leaving open a strong impetus for provincial control. Once again, the federal-provincial division of responsibility would remain an issue for postwar planning. In 1944, Wood and Hereford again argued the by now familiar position that if the federal NES was to have any effectiveness during the war and after as a national placement service and if the federal government continued to foot the bill, then surely the federal authority should remain paramount:

It would seem that, if we have the full financial responsibility, we should have a little more say in the selection of the personnel than would seem the case according to Mr Thompson's memoranda. I suppose the question of provincial
rights enters largely into the picture, but if we are paying the shot it would not be too hard to convince the provinces that we should have a greater part in the direction. It would seem to me that this is one of the most important items for discussion at a Dominion-Provincial conference if and when it is to be held.\textsuperscript{46}

At the same time, labour department staff were wary of institutionalising a precedent of directly subsidising training in industry. In a memorandum prepared for the Labour Supply Coordination Committee in July 1941, Crawford enumerated what were becoming very familiar arguments. Training was a shared responsibility among many parties, with no one party bearing the greater share in ensuring that the effort resulted in a trained and employable labour supply. "There has been no prescribed plan or policy to determine the extent of the growth and development of the work," he pointed out, even though the "steady growth" of publicly sponsored training fuelled ever greater demands on the federal treasury. Employers kept no record and could not indicate how many of their employed workforce were trained and to what extent. For that matter, many employers had "failed to develop or even maintain the required training facilities to produce skilled workers," even as they professed little faith or confidence in the ability of "publicly supported schools" to do so. This meant that public training schools were becoming either too "academic" or independent; in either case they were characterised as cut off entirely from private industry.\textsuperscript{47} For their part private training schools, with the exception of commercial business training schools, claimed that their costs could not be recovered from course fees. The conventional view that employers were to bear the cost of training their own workforce would have to change if government was ever to find out what was happening inside war production plants. His colleague, Thompson, supported Crawford's views in a memo of his own to the Labour Minister, pointing to the unfair situation that obtained where some companies diligently engaged in training while others were quite content to accept workers trained at government expense, but did not seem "sufficiently interested in training to carry on any such programme in their own plants."\textsuperscript{48}

No governmental assistance is being given to employers to meet the cost of training new workers. Up to the moment we have adopted the position that the cost of training industry should be borne by industry itself. This being so, we have no control of the activities in this direction and are unable to insist upon detailed statistical reports covering the extent and nature of their training plans.\textsuperscript{49}

Department staff agreed that there was no disputing the need for the federal government to assume total control over the training strategy. Training was an integral component of the
employment strategy and a key means for calibrating and directing the labour force activities of the individual. The question was really an administrative one for the postwar period: would training be run through the UIC or through the NES? These questions were still premature, but one thing was certain: postwar plans should be developed during the war and as part of an integrated infrastructure. B. F. Wood, Associate Director of Essential Civilian Services within the NSS, reminded MacNamara of this late in 1944, suggesting the close administrative link between training and the unemployment insurance programme:

It seems to me that training and employment will be almost inseparable in the postwar period, and for that reason it would seem advisable for our Department to assume as much direct control as possible over the entire training program. You will recall that in a chart attached to the memorandum in which Mr Harry Hereford and I gave our views on the set-up of the Employment Service, provision was made for a Director who would be responsible for training and unemployment grants.50

Training for returning veterans and enlisted personnel, together with civilian war workers, would therefore be run through the UI programme, ensuring that only those included within the programme would stand to benefit and, moreover, would be recognised as having a regular attachment to the labour force.

There was another concern as well. In December, 1942, the Research and Statistics Branch issued a report indicating that less than 25% of women were receiving any WETP training. Chapman, who developed the report, argued that this was a gaping hole in the labour mobilisation strategy. If women were to be effectively deployed, they would have to be trained: "It is also evident that the effectiveness of this reserve as a potential labour supply for war industry, could be greatly increased by expansion of industrial training for women," Chapman advised.51

The image policy practitioners wanted to project was of a well-oiled machine operating at peak efficiency, supplied with and capable of generating all information necessary to move labour from one point to another, a central watchtower capable of ascertaining problems in even the remotest corner of the economy. All employment service field machinery was placed under NSS control by July 1942 after which the UIC/NSS apparatus was rapidly expanded from a total of 1,500 staff and 95 offices in July 1942 to 5,200 staff and 242 offices by 1944 including 5
regional and 4 district offices, 202 local offices, 16 branches and 14 sub-offices. "You will realise that to keep a machine of this size operating requires close and constant supervision," the Labour Minister commented in 1944, defending the considerable achievements of his department in resolving the crisis of 'manpower' by the ready mobilisation of 'womanpower'.

The purpose of building such a machine was to keep a close check on the available manpower supply, to utilise the supply to the maximum in the war effort of the country, to transfer this supply from non-essential industry to the most vital spots, and to do all of this with the least possible disruption to the home life of the nation. We have been criticised (and I do not deny that criticism has been merited in some instances), but I want to assure this House that every complaint which has come to us has been fully investigated through the Regional Offices and into their local fields of activity, and we have found, almost without exception, that such criticism was unmerited and was the result of a misunderstanding of the regulations or came from someone who felt that his own personal welfare should be placed above that of a nation at war.52

Assessing worker capacity was by now a top priority in all job placement work. To those who failed to grasp its significance, the Labour Minister publicly defended the war training strategy by pointing out that jobs could not be filled solely as a matter of matching supply and demand. He argued that calling up thousands of women and men alone would not solve the labour problem; only training and careful assessment of each individual worker would ensure an appropriate match between the person and job. "As the records of any employment office will show ... you cannot fill 100 vacancies with [just] any of the 100 applicants on your books. The skills of the applicant must satisfactorily match those required of the job. If they do not, there is a wall created between employer and worker which can only be broken down by training."53 The WETP held significance for the postwar period of readjustment as well, according to the minister, in proving once and for all that unemployment was a correctable condition, that its roots lay in the use of training to solve the disjuncture between supply and demand by correcting the deficiencies of the labour supply. This was welcome news indeed for now the Labour Department could, through its Minister, confidently declare that "the obstacles to full employment are not real obstacles, and that a partnership of management, workers and the community can make useful work available in time of peace no less than in time of war.

It means that as soon as industry can make its needs known in any detail that through co-operation with the Provinces and by use of machinery now operating
smoothly we can train workers to fill vacancies arising in the changing economic structure at a rate considered impossible two or three years ago.54

“I want you to pick one intelligent girl”: job analysis and industrial engineering

NSS officials turned more and more to the diagnostic and prescriptive expertise of psychologists, psychiatrists, employment researchers and vocational guidance experts, industrial engineers and management specialists to assist in the project of overseeing and adjusting the work habits of women alleged to be unused to the rigours and challenges of regular industrial employment. Personnel policy and training were isolated for particular attention as the means by which to overcome the deficiencies and obstacles inhering in the female labour reserve. To accomplish this, the “skills dilution” strategy was the principal way of conceptualising women’s differential skills and subsequent identity as a worker. Deskilling was observed to be, in part, an inevitable by-product of economic and technological modernisation. LSIP researchers had commented that improvements in production technology were already contributing to the deskilling of production tasks such that “improved mechanical operations have added to the possible uses of female employment since the last war.” In this way, strategies of training were seen to facilitate work reorganisation through job analysis and “decomposition” on the one hand, and the practice of “skills dilution” on the other. Managerial techniques, such as work reorganisation, were thus stripped of any gender, class or racialised content. Skills dilution was broached as a purely technical matter by practitioners expert in conducting job analyses: management consultants and industrial engineers, educational psychologists and vocational counsellors, employment welfare officers and psychiatrists. Skill was the singular category through which policy interventions converged. Skill, moreover, was perceived to reside in the body and the mind of the individual worker.

Psychological knowledge practices such as those articulated in the recommendations of the Stevenson and Kellogg report greatly intensified managerial technique. The application of psychological expertise to problems of industry was heralded as a tremendous breakthrough, but only if the technique was closely adhered to and workers were prepared to accept that the old way of doing things had to give way before the expert advice of “the professor” who entered the plant, closely observed existing work practices and habits, and then presented a new plan for work organisation. For example, in an article entitled “Psychologists go to war,” published in the
popular women’s journal *National Home Monthly* in 1943, the work of “applied psychology” was described with great enthusiasm. The article was a study of the work of the National Institute for Industrial Psychology in Britain, and the case study was of a British munitions plant. The lessons were nevertheless believed to be directly transferable to Canada. “Psychology has come out of the lecture theatre and taken its rightful place in everyday life,” was the enthusiastic view of the article’s author, Luscombe Whyte. Job analysis was described as a process of consolidating and systematising work routines, eliminating individual variation and adaptation in favour of a plant-wide “Standard procedure” each worker was trained to follow. This method, once developed by the analyst was transferred across the workforce through on-the-job training, or, as described in the article: “I want you to pick one intelligent girl to learn it and teach the others.” Where boredom and fatigue were seen to be a threat, attention to details of the work routine like psychical comfort, rest breaks, and optimum hours of work were introduced as scientific techniques designed to achieve maximum efficiency. There was no room in this programme for individual variation or for the disordered routines of the past. With so many inexperienced women entering the manufacturing environment, system and order had to be imposed immediately, before poor work habits were picked up:

> Now, with millions of men and women pouring into war industry – many of them new to any kind of manual work – it is essential that each big factory should develop an efficient scheme for teaching their new workers the best way to go about each job. The old haphazard ways, with novices picking up their methods by watching comparatively old hands at work, simply are not good enough. So in the larger factories “schools” are being established and here are taught and demonstrated the best movements and positions of implements. The reasons for these methods are described, so that the new worker is not tempted to go his own way. He realises that it is in his own interests to follow the “standard procedure.”

The Montreal-based industrial engineering firm of Stevenson and Kellogg was enlisted in 1942 to conduct a comprehensive examination of any labour problems that might be hindering the war effort. They very quickly settled on an in-depth analysis of the unique problems thought to accompany the employment of women, in particular absenteeism and high turnover rates. Efficiency and discipline were to become the essential components of an effective labour deployment plan. The main production problems, according to the Stevenson and Kellogg report developing a template for personnel census of Canadian industries, were organised into a total of 23 classifications covering production and personnel procedures, problems of morale and “the
use of female help." The next step, then, was to develop a programme for personnel research, involving the development of a template for job analysis. This template worked as a prescriptive programme for vocational adjustment, guidance and training. The key components for job analysis procedures were identified as including mental requirements, skill, physical requirements, responsibility and general working conditions. Office and Clerical, an area into which many women war workers would of course be directed, was designated as one of the least important areas of productive labour within an operation: "While there is no intention to give the impression that such duties are not necessary, yet, they must be viewed as essentially non-productive, therefore, employee-hours devoted to office and clerical work must be kept to a minimum under wartime conditions." This was one area in which male labour could be freed up for substitution by female labour.

Job analysis was to proceed first and foremost by separating the worker from the job itself in an attempt to reduce the job to a demonstrable, calculable set of tasks, mapped onto a graded skill matrix. Three principles governed this employment research:

i. What departments are suitable for the employment of women, unskilled workers, etc.?

ii. What jobs in these departments are best adapted to introduce low skilled workers, women, older men, physically handicapped workers?

iii. As a result of substitution by (ii), what workers are readily dispensable?

Only trained personnel could do this work, however, since personnel expertise depended on resisting any exogenous and erroneous bias that might corrupt the analytical process. For example, loyalty, deference to workers' attempts at job and task modification were effects of close proximity to workers themselves and might violate the cardinal rule of job analysis: job experts analysed tasks and arranged them into jobs. Workers executed the tasks assigned them. As the investigators explained when conducting a job analysis "the idiosyncrasies and characteristics of the present operator should not be allowed to influence the answers which are set down." The job analysis questionnaire had only one purpose: "namely, to determine, in any given business, what present jobs can be switched to women workers, and what adjustment, improvement and simplification of existing jobs may be accomplished to make them practical for the employment of women."
Skill and mental requirements were approached as separate categories for analysis. Mental requirements included formal education, special education, mathematical ability, type of instruction – oral, visual, written, blueprints and sketches. Mental effort on the job was calibrated according to such factors as task repetition and variety. Did the job require memory, reasoning and imagination? What were the written, oral and reading requirements in either English or French? Skill, on the other hand, was approached as a function of mechanical aptitude, including the layout, set-up and use of templates and power tools, gauges and measurements. In addition to the physical requirements of the job, the questionnaire included a section investigating alleged personal qualities: “Does the job specifically require any of the following characteristics? Unemotional; deliberate; quick; dynamic; tact; patience.”

Skill was rational and fixed, stable and calculable. Capacity, on the other hand, was personally variable, capable of being thwarted by the psyche of the individual subject. Emotion, impatience, limited self-confidence were all the irrational attributes inherently ungovernable, disruptive and potentially incalculable. This provided the material upon which the personnel administrator had to fix her/his remedial expertise if the subject was to be made part of the industrial enterprise, to become a normative subject, the trainable and self-governable worker.

Aptitude testing was itself not regarded by Stevenson and Kellogg as such a useful tool for assessing women as it was for men. The focus instead was on women’s learning ability and “dependability” more than allegedly innate capacity. Conventional aptitude tests were seen to have limited relevance, given women’s limited exposure to the knowledge-content embedded within the testing instrument. Instructors were instead counselled to apply their technique to learning capacities, effectively positioning women as passive agents who needed to be taught. It was the attributes and not so much the aptitudes of women that were seen to provide the material for vocational assessment and training. Under the heading “Work at Which Women Excel,” the Stevenson and Kellogg report itemised the physical characteristics of particular job tasks thought best suited to women’s more limited physical capacities: “work requiring care and constant alertness,” good eyesight, limited psychical exertion, manipulative dexterity and speed, and “work requiring considerable skill but little strength.” The report listed factors thought to affect women differently than men, such as illnesses married women were thought to be more prone to,
industrial accidents and personal factors attributable to general factory conditions and “domestic burdens.” Industrial fatigue was singled out as a critical factor affecting morale and subsequent productive efficiency. Women were apparently unable to work the long hours to which men were accustomed: where the 12-hour shift had become a norm in many plants, the industrial engineers established that 10-hour shifts were the optimum for continuous employment for female labour. Height, weight, and physical attributes all found their way into this intensified gendering of the female body, remade as a site for potentially productive labour once its inherent limitations had been accommodated through work reorganisation and related engineering strategies, operating now as managerial strategies framed as the product of neutral technological innovation. The female body was opened up to the prescriptive gaze of management engineers and produced anew in the rational and rationalising conceptual framework of capitalist modernity as a site for regulation.

Compulsion or Compliance?

The NSS was responsible for ensuring that the labour force requirements of both the military and the production side of the military-industrial economy were met. In 1942, the NSS introduced a permit system requiring registration of all able-bodied men. Occupations and industries were classified according to their importance to the war effort. Employers could apply for a deferral of military service for employees if their occupation and position within the enterprise were deemed so essential that their skills could not be spared. A system of regional war labour boards was to oversee the operation of the permit system and to ensure that the military call-up proceeded as planned.

The war foregrounded ethnicity and race as men and women could be and were classified according to apparent country of origin, with those originating from any of the Axis powers singled out for intense regulatory measures, up to and including incarceration. Those not meeting the criterion of British descent were denied, in varying degrees, the agency accorded ‘true’ Canadians, variously cast as threat or lesser citizens. Here, compliance was of considerably less significance and the NSS would have less reticence about implementing recruiting techniques that modelled a system of conscription. Through the War Measures Act, scrutiny of and intervention into groups within the population intensified through the interrogative and policing
powers of state agencies working in 'the national interest' of war. In 1941, R. F. Thompson sent a series of recommendations to Bryce Stewart addressing what he saw to be the legitimate, if prejudicial, concerns employers held about hiring workers who were not white, male and of British descent, even if they claimed British citizenship. His solution to this problem is cited in full for the extraordinary intervention he proposed:

In some areas, particularly in the Prairie Provinces, a substantial number of applicants for industrial training come from the sons of non Anglo Saxon parents who, however, have been naturalised, many of them years ago. Our experience is that most firms engaged in war industries are unwilling to take into employment trainees of this type and embarrassing situations have occurred as these trainees are all British subjects. It is difficult to refuse them training as they are all British subjects and yet it is a waste of public money to train them if they cannot find employment on its completion. This refusal of employment also provokes a very bad feeling among such trainees. The programme has no control over the employment policy of war industries, but I would ask that this matter be given some consideration. My recommendation would be that in all such cases a report might be obtained on each individual trainee from the RCMP and if the record was clear they should be accepted for training and also for employment in war industries.

Senior government officials would continue their deliberations over the best course of action to follow regarding the disposition of persons constituted as racialised national and cultural groups, classified by the military as “certain races” excluded from service for “non-medical reasons.” The matter was addressed in a memorandum by Norman Robertson, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Deputy Minister of National War Services in late 1941. Robertson recommended a meeting between MacNamara and the RCMP to determine a “definite policy” regarding the enlistment of Canadians of ‘Asiatic race,’ since, he argued, “in some branches of the services a ‘pure European descent’ or ‘pure white race’ rule exists which excludes men of Chinese, Japanese and East Indian races.” The exclusion rule, while not official policy, was explained according to the rationale that reliability and morale would suffer from the inclusion of such groups, given the effect such enlistment would have on the rest of the service personnel. The practice of racist exclusion was finally exposed through a series of press reports, but it took two years. In December 1943, both the Winnipeg Free Press and the Montreal Gazette reported on a series of surveys in Military District 10 (Winnipeg) which demonstrated that Blacks were consistently being rejected by NSS mobilisation officials assigned to the region. This practice
was in direct violation of NSS Mobilisation Regulations, although, the news reports suggested, it seemed to fit with accepted internal practices.  

MacNamara and some of his colleagues saw the groups rejected for military service as a potential labour source and wanted to find a way to expedite their recruitment. Men rejected for military service, whether classified according to race, ethnicity, political or psychiatric grounds, were approached as an available supply of labour that could be directed into notoriously low-waged industries. "We are faced with a large number of jobs which men do not like to do," MacNamara pointed out. In a tight labour market, groups rejected on racist and political grounds as conscientious objectors could easily be drafted into service in low waged industrial and agricultural sectors. This was MacNamara's strategy: "I am seeking some technique which would enable us to more rigidly direct the alien classes which are not to be taken into the army, whereby we might satisfy ourselves that every one of them is being used to national advantage." He also wanted to secure as potential labour persons classified as possible "enemy aliens." This was by no means a new issue. The employment of people designated as "foreign classification" had been identified as a matter of some concern in the 1942 Stevenson and Kellogg 'case study' of Welland, Ontario. The study set out to investigate the administrative structures of the NSS and the general labour practices of war industries located in the area. The Welland Report explicitly targeted the ethnic Italian population in and around the city, constituting this group as a distinct population, a potentially disruptive force in the local community. "It is to be borne in mind that the manpower (female and male) available and working in this area is approximately 60% foreign classification and as such makes the solution of the problem in the Peninsula area extremely difficult." This was no transient population. The long-term residency of this community was characterised as a challenge; the population was deeply entrenched in the institutional composition of the community, a clear inference that political corruption may be a factor. According to the report, even the police chief and mayor were "sympathetic to this group inasmuch as their political strength is a factor in Municipal affairs." The disciplinary powers of the state were invoked without hesitation: all male members of the Italian population should be registered immediately by the NSS and, further "It is also
suggested that the RCMP assist you in obtaining data relative to these men.” The prospect of placing “foreign elements” in sensitive, essential war industries prompted Stevenson and Kellogg to recommend the tightening of NSS procedures to increase its capacity for disciplinary intervention on the one hand, and to promote the greater use of female labour to replace suspect individuals of Italian origin on the other. This move would necessarily anticipate procedural changes, specifically to forestall charges of discriminatory practice on the recurring issue of equal pay:

More women should and can be introduced to industry in Welland. Some hundreds of women can be absorbed. Both wives of present workers and single women can be utilised. Suitable personnel women should be introduced. Sex differentials [in wages] should be changed to the position of equal pay for equal effort.67

When MacNamara returned to the problem of employing those of ‘foreign classification,’ he was faced with a legal challenge. Under NSS Section 3(2) the following groups were specifically excluded from mobilisation orders: persons of "Japanese, Chinese racial origin"; “Sikh, Hindu, and others of ‘Asiatic origin’”; persons classified as refugees released from internment camps; and persons sent from Britain for “maintenance of surveillance in refugee camps.”68 In June 1943, MacNamara consulted with Major General Riley to work out a way of legally securing this potential labour. Under Secret Circular Memorandum No. 41, they thought they had come up with a way to accomplish their objective: “Inasmuch as this draft circular memorandum goes much further than Secret Circular Memorandum No. 1, I think it is proper that the Cabinet should give us an Order-in-Council authorising paragraph 4 (a) Of the Draft Sec. Circular Memo 41 attached,” MacNamara suggested.69 The extended definition broadened the classification of “declared enemy aliens” in the amended NSS Mobilisation regulations draft dated August 28, 1943 in Secret Circular paragraph 3 (a) to read: “Registrars shall sort into one group all Statistical Manpower Cards and/or Control Cards which appear to cover enemy aliens as defined in Paragraph 2 (c).”70 Paragraph 2 (c) specified nationals, subjects or citizens of Germany, Japan, Italy, Finland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Austria. Presumably, all other identified groups would then become available for recruiting into NSS-designated labour.

In one example, racism directly scuttled the NSS recruiting strategy. In 1944, the NSS was scrambling to find a solution to the chronic labour shortages in the Alberta meat-packing
industry. The work was notoriously hazardous, difficult, and paid at low wage levels. The Vancouver Employment Advisory Committee, through the chair of its advisory committee, Mr. Smelts, pointed out that his committee was quite prepared to work with the NSS to “comb the Chinese vegetable stores for young men of military age and direct them to Edmonton.” Their places in the stores could be filled by Chinese women,” Smelts suggested, while conceding that “one difficulty might be that these young fellows will be considered part owners rather than employees.” The NSS did not wish to be seen to be acting in a heavy-handed manner. A more effective strategy was to elicit co-operation from within the Chinese community itself, using as a conduit a local organisation of Chinese Canadians. Smelts suggested the latter would be preferable, particularly if a local leader from the Chinese community were to be recruited directly onto the NSS advisory committee, thus representing both the region and community in question. And so the NSS regional director for the Pacific outlined the strategy:

any policy with regard to the movement of chinamen [sic], other than by direction, should be made with the head of the Chinese Union, Mr. D. Q. Wong. I understand, but it is not confirmed, that Mr. Wong himself has taken employment at one of the packing plants at Edmonton at $200 per month, and this will no doubt create an incentive for him to procure others."

The Acting Manager of the Edmonton Employment office, however, warned that the placement of Chinese men would not be as smooth as those in Vancouver or faraway Ottawa might think. “If we can keep the white men coming at the present rate from Vancouver and district for the next ten days, together with what local farmers we are getting from the surrounding country, I believe that the labour situation will be taken care of and that the Chinese question can then be dealt with separately.”

Throughout the war, and moreso as labour shortages intensified especially in low waged industries, NSS officials deliberated over the vexing issue of ensuring, without enforcing, voluntary compliance. Too much effort was already expended chasing after errant workers and obstinate employers. Lack of accurate statistics continued to undermine the efforts of field staff to stay on top of the labour shortage, a problem that was frequently observed to stem from the inability of local offices to enforce NSS regulations. “The statistics which we collect on total non-military separations by industry and priority are too crude for intensive analysis of the labour turnover problem,” George Luxton was arguing in some frustration as late as 1944. He
wanted the NSS to conduct an intensive survey of separations by industry “which could then be incorporated into guiding instructions to all local offices on the enforcement of labour freeze regulations.” But once again, no matter how comprehensive the regulatory framework, how could individuals be prevailed on to comply? Eric Stangroom shared Luxton’s exasperation at the complexity of their task, informing MacNamara that were a “highly competent placement officer” assigned to conduct exit interviews, such a person would be sure to find the reason cited for separation was false 15-20% of the time, often with employer complicity. “The worker may be permitted to resign rather than be fired,” Stangroom commented, adding that “with scarcity of labour, persons who have not had an opportunity to move around may wish to do so merely to satisfy years of frustration.” By this point in the war, policy planners were gearing up for demobilisation, and the integrity of the NSS/NES apparatus was still vital since all military and production personnel was to be handled through the NES. Employment offices had to be accepted as legitimate agencies of the state by all parties, so that working women and men would report to and register there, and that employers would file necessary notice of separation forms. Only in this way could the Department of Labour collect the data it needed to compile regular and accurate labour force estimates.

The NSS clearly was limited in its administrative or regulatory capacity or willingness to exercise compulsion over workers or employers, a limitation driven home as the NSS confronted employer opposition to the proposed deployment of women. In July 1943, MacNamara wrote his colleagues, including Mitchell, Walsh, Peebles, Needham and Phelan in exacerbation at the obstinacy of employers against the use of women. “I am looking for a plan to startle employers into taking on more women,” he wrote. One option to be contemplated was that the NSS would refuse to send any more men unless the employer was able to prove to the satisfaction of the local NSS officer that every effort had been made to reorganise the work in order to employ more women. Another alternative was a flat quota system: no employer would get more men until 25% of the workforce was women. Alan Mitchell, Director of the NES cautioned MacNamara against overstepping or over-estimating the regulatory strength of the NSS. Any proposal of quotas or penalties simply could not be enforced, and would expose the limits of NSS capacity.
Mitchell advised against issuing another order cautioning that “the prestige of the Order loses some effect” when it could not really be enforced. Far better, he suggested to have local NSS managers “give out interviews stating that they have been instructed to make sure that all employers are increasing the number of women” by 25% over the previous year. Such a move would “have a very salutary effect.” That is, the NSS could then carry on as though there was an order. “I believe that the increased employment of women is a matter more for Public Relations than for Compulsory Order,” Mitchell concluded. That is, governmental capacity was better directed through incremental administrative and social processes than through legislative/judicial enforcement of the rule of law. T. H. Robinson agreed the NSS would need a much larger staff to enforce any order of compulsion. In any case, he commented “if we had this staff it could be better employed in other ways,” suggesting that the NSS get more data comparing the percentage of women working in war industries in Britain, in contrast to Canada. The information could be included in a letter from MacNamara to all employers detailing British practice; a “leak” to press could be arranged “about discussions among officials of the Labour Dept concerning a requirement to employ a large number of women.”

This ‘leak’ might be followed up by an interview in which you would indicate that you were very much interested in the idea of employing more women but that you did not want to use compulsion since the circumstances involved in each establishment and in each community are such that a blanket Order would be difficult to administer and that it would be much better if employers themselves took the initiative.

At about the same time, he added, MacNamara could instruct local offices to ask employers if women could be placed in their operations instead of men.

The issue of compulsion versus voluntary compliance continued to provoke debate among NSS officials. In addition to the problem of dealing with obstinate employers, the debate also turned on the question of how “satisfactory” and “efficient” a person would be if compelled to work under compulsion. Was there any way to draw workers away from civilian industries not considered essential without both invoking the opposition of employers and making women and men think of themselves as conscripted labour? In 1944, Sheldon Ross, Chair of the NSS Priorities Committee, raised the matter with Harry Hereford, NSS Director of Planning. Ross noted that the US Employment Service had just issued a press release curtailing non-essential occupations and activities. The US War Manpower Commission would now redirect all workers
into essential industries. It is significant that the press release announcing the new regulations legitimised the move by drawing specifically on services in which race was constituted as a source of sexual deviance and delinquency. That is, Turkish bath houses, massage parlours, social escort services and “boot blacks” were the only enterprise explicitly identified in the release. These activities were counter to, if not dangerous to, the national enterprise of winning the war. The Department of Labour in Ottawa followed a similar regulatory model to the one adopted by the US Manpower Commission, controlling occupations and industries through the Wartime Prices and Trade Board, a body which designated industries and occupations according to their essentiality for war production. By this method, the onus was placed on the individual. As Ross explained,

[A] man who is compulsorily transferred, knowing that his more desirable former job still exists and that it probably will be filled by someone else, usually is not the most attractive or useful employee elsewhere. If the jobs in less essential production are curtailed, men and women will voluntarily seek work and may be easily directed by Selective Service to high priority work, and the responsibility of the government to return them to their former jobs, to pay supplementary allowances and wage differentials would be obviated. Objections to transfer, supported by a doctor’s certificate, would also be eliminated.80

Ross noted further that if the businesses in question survived the low production levels of 1935 or 1939 then they would survive this too. This scheme solved two problems at once and by the same method: the burden of responsibility for postwar employment would be shifted to the individual and away from government, obviating the need for government either to keep unwilling workers in their jobs during the war and for assuming responsibility for postwar employment. Anyone seeking work in essential industry would now be responsible for finding subsequent employment should that job disappear once war production contracts were filled.

Conversely, compliance was simply not an issue for certain groups in the population. Psychiatric scrutiny created one such group among men—and later women—who had been rejected from military service due to their alleged unfitness. This group was brought to NSS attention as a potential source of quasi-conscripted labour in 1944 by the Chair of the Regional Mobilisation Board in BC, Justice Adamson. Adamson noted that many men were rejected from the armed forces not due to any physical unfitness but for “illiteracy or for psychiatric reasons.” Surely some consideration could go into tracking men like these “before they are able to get
away from the Barracks and into work of their own choosing. Classification, both on the record and off, by national origin – denoting race – was still another means through which compliance was clearly eroded.

Conclusion

Initial attempts to map the labour supply were conducted by the Labour Supply Investigation Project, a project that involved senior officials in key government agencies. The view that the labour problem was simply one of matching supply with demand was substantially modified as the shortage of labour in key industries intensified. Once attention was turned to recruiting women in mass numbers, the NSS staff took on the task of managing and modifying the quality of the labour force. As the war continued, new challenges developed: the manpower shortage was taken up and reorganised as a campaign to eradicate absenteeism and excessive labour turnover. These issues converged in a much closer scrutiny of the labour force habits of working women. As I discuss in the next chapter, these decisions were carried through by the Women’s Division of the National Selective Service. Plans were also underway to prepare for the demobilisation of women from the national labour force. Employability discourses mobilised gender, race, class and sexuality to develop categorical knowledges about “female labour” and the unique challenges posed by women workers. Such knowledge practices constituted enduring notions of differential skill and human capacity that in their turn provided the foundation for training policies designed to cultivate and improve the quality of labour, by now the regular domain of government. Training policies constructed differential subject positions for women in the form of ‘pre-employment’ training. Prescriptive notions about differential skill and human capacities were deeply rooted in gender, class-based and racialised concepts about intelligence, individual efficiency and social worth. These notions contributed to the mutual construction of the ideal-typical worker as skilled, white and male and the marginal location and status of “female labour” within the labour market. The ideal-typical worker was skilled, maintained ownership rights in “his” labour, and mobilised those rights through gaining recognition of “his” skill. Skill, moreover, was also the basis of the wage relationship, part of a broader set of social relations increasingly recognised in industrial relations policy as constituting the basis for conflict and disharmony and therefore also the potential foundation for democracy and peace in the industrial workplace.
The significance of policy responses to the “manpower problem” lies in part in how the labour market was constituted through policy discourses as an object of regulation by masculinist state power. Groups of women were universally constituted as “female labour,” a category of potential labour that was positioned as always already marginal to the regular labour force. An important policy effect of this work lay in constituting the identity of the ideal typical worker who was seen to occupy the economic space circumscribed by a national labour market. The key figure constituted and mobilised through this policy discourse was signified through the identity of the white, male subject, the worker-citizen whose rights were articulated to his capacity to assert ownership of his labouring capacity, itself calibrated as an index of efficiency and productivity. Employment policies were organised around the model of a national labour market. Policy measures were devised in an effort to overcome perceived deficiencies, themselves conceived of as problems originating in and manifested through culture-as-difference. Articulations of skill and capacity, moreover, increasingly approached problems of labour force attachment as originating in the psychology of the individual.

Policy practitioners sought to develop measures that would overcome and/or remediate such deficiencies, expressed as obstacles to mobility, to facilitate regional, sectoral and occupational movement in response to national priorities. Policy measures adopted to recruit the “female labour reserve” worked in such a way as to intensify the gendering of the bodies and minds of groups of women workers, constituted anew as ‘female labour.’ Occupational skill was taken up through employability discourse as a strategy through which the body of the woman war worker was conceptualised as ‘female’ within the production process, within the social environment of the modern production facility, whether industrial or service sector. In the gendered and racialised bodies of the female labour reserve resided inherent limitations of skill and aptitude and, therefore productive capacity as efficient and employable workers. Employment experts analysed and proposed reorganisation of work practices and job tasks, and training instructors worked to incite the potential labour while/by overcoming and suppressing any obstacles, deficiencies and limits standing between the productive capacity of the individual and the job task to be performed. Culture, ethnicity, social and geographic location, educational background and language – while operating as code for relations grounded in class, gender, and
racialised subjugation and marginality – were constituted as potential hindrances to the otherwise smooth flow of labour. At the same time, policy practitioners worked within what was coming to be understood and apprehended as a market that was national in scope. The still greater challenge lay within the mind: addressing the attitudes of women toward their status as workers would be variously taken up in ways reflective of the anticipated class and racial identity of who that woman was alleged to be. Cultural location produced women who resided principally in middle class homes and whose main occupation was mother and wife, whether actual or potential; young single women lured to the city, leaving behind the ordered security of home and community; immigrant women deemed out of place in the routines and practices of industrial and urban society; women who worked the farm to whose duties were added the work of handicraft production and aid to her farmer-husband. Women were strangers to the modern workplace, unfamiliar with the disciplines and routines of economic modernity. Personnel techniques drew upon the psychology of the individual, opening up the interior spaces of the female labour reserve to fashion the identity of the woman war worker, whose patriotic spirit brought her into the national community to do her part for the war effort.

This approach provided the conceptual foundation upon which was constructed a two-tiered training system that effectively entrenched and reified the marginal location of women in the labour force. The national labour market was conceived of as existing within rational economic space – the site for governmental administration. Throughout the war, however, labour turnover and shortages continued to challenge the work of policy planning and implementation. These challenges were taken up through employability discourses which increasingly centred on problems of worker-instability, expressed as “absenteeism and labour turnover.” These were, in turn, posed as problems that could be remedied through personnel policy as a feature of the broader programme of industrial welfare. Women who were the intended subjects of these policy discourses, however, were also turning their attention to the prospect of postwar employment. At the same time as the NSS Women’s Division channelled women into low-waged sectors of the economy, women were themselves indicating their desire to secure jobs in higher paying sectors. Training strategies developed through the War Emergency Training Program shifted as the postwar planning process got underway. The training strategy introduced to succeed WETP, Canadian Vocational Training, reflected the strategy that would inform the postwar employment
picture for women. Where middle class, white women would be directed into the household, working class women and women racialised as ‘other’ would be directed into those sectors of the economy reserved for low waged ‘female’ labour under the auspices of the ‘pre-employment’ training strategy, the postwar programme that sought to upgrade occupational status by upgrading individual workers.

The administrative rationality of this period suggests a central government that many perceived as governing from the centre, presiding over a vast territory characterised by considerable geographic, economic and cultural diversity. Diversity was a challenge and not a foundation upon which to build a sense of nation. Diversity threatened the coherent exercise of the national interest. Responsibility for matters of employment and unemployment provoked sharp divisions between the federal government and the provinces. Would the federal government maintain an on-going presence in these policy areas after the war had ended? If so, in what capacity? Policy officials at the Department of Labour deliberated over the precise nature of the federal government’s responsibility to provide postwar employment for all who wanted it, at a time when demands for full employment were intensifying in the labour movement and the organised left. For now, the state had moved into the role of overseer of the national labour market. Managerial strategies had replaced the “invisible hand” as the regulatory principle around which the labour market operated: these matters were simply too important to the national interest to be left to govern themselves. Certainly, as the volume of economic activity rose with mounting production quotas, administrative co-ordination took on an even greater significance. The pursuit of profit was of lesser significance than the pursuit of efficiency in management and regulation of labour: that is, “the visible hand of management replaced the invisible hand of market forces.”

The policy rationale followed in particular in the areas of labour market regulation, employment and training drew on the metropole-hinterland model of a white settler colony of the Dominion of Canada. Certainly the image policy practitioners wanted to project was that of a well-oiled machine operating at peak efficiency, supplied with and capable of generating all information necessary to move labour from one point to another, a central watchtower that was able to ascertain problems in even the most remote corner of the economy.
Endnotes

1 As historians such as Michael Stevenson have documented, the view that Ottawa was in complete charge of a ‘command economy’ during the Second World War, at least with respect to the effectiveness and scope of NSS regulatory interventions, is in need of revision. See Micheal D. Stevenson, "National Selective Service and the Mobilisation of Human Resources in Canada During the Second World War," Ph. D. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1996. See also Greg Donaghy, ed., Uncertain Horizons: Canadians and Their World in 1945 (Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1997).


   The UI Act was passed into law through an amendment to the BNA Act on July 10, 1940, adding the words “Unemployment Insurance” to section 91 of the Act, giving the federal government exclusive jurisdiction in unemployment insurance legislation. The Act went into effect August 7, 1940. The Dominion Employment Service, with a network of regional divisions and local offices, was provided for under the UI Act.


5 Previous efforts included the National Labour Supply Council established by OIC PC 2686, June 19, 1940. The Council was an bipartite advisory body, appointed to assist in resolving labour supply problems. The national labour supply council was disbanded by OIC PC 1426, February 24, 1942 and its functions were transferred to the Department of Labour and the National War Labour Board. Similarly, the Inter-departmental Committee on Labour Co-ordination was established by OIC PC 5922, October 25, 1940. The Committee included representatives from finance, defence, national war services, munitions and supply, labour and the national labour supply council. This committee, too, was all but overwhelmed by the complexity of its task. See Micheal Stevenson, op. cit.


7 Ibid., pp. 3-4. Rather than attempting a global estimate of available labour reserves, the Committee concentrated on conducting what it described as a “survey of informed opinion” combined with detailed case studies of strategic industries and geographic regions.


For a study of the implementation of labour-management productivity committees initiated during W.W.II as part of a broader programme to consolidate state intervention in industrial relations and to broker the post war compromise of productivity bargaining and material consumption, see Peter S. McInnis, “Teamwork for Harmony: Labour-Management Production Committees and the Postwar Settlement in Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review* 77, no. 3 (September 1996), pp. 317-352.


Records from earlier placement activities suggest that by far the majority of women placed in domestic service were taken up within domesticity policy discourses that worked to secure the location and subjective identities of bourgeois, white women – on whom the reproductive future of the Dominion depended – while subjugating women domestic workers through subordinated class, racialised and gender identities and material location. The Women’s Section of the Employment Service of Canada served a similar function, working in addition as a moral regulatory strategy that opened up this public space to the ministering attentions of maternalist feminists whose efforts invoked the prescriptive ideals of femininity they sought to impose upon the working class, immigrant and ethnically diverse women attempting to use the services of the employment office. The development of separate facilities, the organisation of the public space and direct practices of the “interview” was also an exercise in prescriptive racial, class, gender and sexual normalisation, itself a central organising theme in the work of the NSS Women’s Division. For analysis of the Women’s Specialised Employment Bureaux established under the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Program specifically to facilitate work of domestic service placement under the Home Service Training plan, see Ruth Roach Pierson, “They’re Still Women After All”: The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986). See also NAC, RG 27, vol. 728, File 12-15-5, vol. 1. Vocational Training for Women - Household Employment. “Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme. Household Service Training Schools. Report by the Youth Training Branch of the Dominion Department of Labour.” pp. 3-4.


Ibid., pp. 77-8.

21 Ibid., p. 50.

22 Ibid., Note 3, Table VIII, p. 27c.


24 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 897, File 8-9-74 part 3, Report of the Labour Supply Investigation Committee to the Labour Co-ordination Committee”, Ottawa, October 1941, Note 6, Table VIII, p. 28c.


26 Shortages were reportedly concentrated in Quebec and Ontario in essential industries as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textile products</td>
<td>4075</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron and products</td>
<td>5032</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable products</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11,220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


27 Ibid., p. 3.


32 Kenneth R. Wilson, “Manpower” Maclean’s Magazine, September 1, 1942, pp. 6-7.


36 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 728, File 12-2-1. Letter from McLarty, 27 November 1941. For the period 1941-1942, McLarty authorised the transfer of $4,760,000 to the provinces for the training of war workers.

37 The Labour Gazette, March 1941, p. 271.


Total enrolments for all Dominion-Provincial Training programmes for the period May 1937 to December 31, 1941 (men and women) were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Enrolments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1937-38</td>
<td>Youth Training</td>
<td>55,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938-39</td>
<td>Youth Training</td>
<td>62,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
<td>Youth Training</td>
<td>46,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
<td>National Forestry Programme</td>
<td>4,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-41</td>
<td>National Forestry Programme</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-41</td>
<td>Youth Training</td>
<td>44,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-41</td>
<td>War Emergency Training</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-42</td>
<td>to December 31 WE Training</td>
<td>43,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-42</td>
<td>to December 31 Youth Training</td>
<td>15,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>302,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NAC, RG 27, Vol. 725, File 12-2-1, “Progress Statement on Training Programmes April 1 - December 31, 1941.”

NAC, RG 27, Vol. 968, File 17, NSS Statistics & Correspondence On Labour Supply MacNamara from B. F. Wood, Associate Director Essential Civilian Services to MacNamara, November 4, 1944.


A. P. Luscombe Whyte, “Psychologists Go To War” National Home Monthly, 34, No. 11 (November 1943), p. 12. The Canadian Psychological Association was formed in April 1939, an act that has since been characterised as a necessary step taken in anticipation of impending war and the need to “provide psychologists with a unified and coherent voice in guiding psychology’s contributions to the anticipated war.” See George A. Ferguson, “Psychology in Canada, 1939-1945” Canadian Psychology 33, no. 4 (October 1992) p. 697.


For a discussion of the deployment of similar knowledge practices through the work of the Tavistock Clinic in Britain, see Nikolas Rose, Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self (New York: Routledge, 1989).


NAC, RG 27, Vol. 897, File 8-9-74, v. 1 Memorandum R. F. Thompson to Dr. Bryce M. Stewart, Chair, Interdepartmental Committee on Labour Co-ordination, Recommendations Regarding Training Programme,” July 19, 1941, p. 3. For a recent collection of studies documenting the practices of internment and experiences of persons incarcerated during the war, see Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin and Angelo Principe, Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).


Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.

NAC, RG 27, Vol. 664, File 6-5-2-1 v.2 Department of Labour Packing Industry Labour Supply, F. W. Smelts to MacNamara, May 5, 1944.

NAC, RG 27, Vol. 664, File 6-5-2-1 v.2 Department of Labour Packing Industry Labour Supply, J. B. Cowell, Pacific Regional Director to MacNamara, August 16, 1944.


NAC, RG 27, Vol. 968, File 4, NSS Field Organisation and Activities of Employment Services Division. George Luxton to MacNamara, July 29, 1944.


NAC, RG 27, Vol. 664 File 6-5-2-1, vol. 2, Department of Labour Packing Industry Labour Supply. Justice Adamson, Chair of the Board, NSS Mobilisation Section to MacNamara, April 29, 1944. According to figures provided by Adamson, between October 1943 and March 1944 a total of 1,452 men were called for service of whom 842 (58%) were rejected.
Chapter 5

Managing Women War Workers: The NSS Women’s Division

In this chapter, I demonstrate how the administrative and managerial practices of the National Selective Service were also attempts to structure and modify social relations of work in ways that would accomplish both the objectives of the national enterprise – fighting the war – and those of domestic policy in attempting to secure the peaceful withdrawal of women workers from the industrial workforce once the war was finally ended. The measures discussed for application through the work of the employment office opened up new domains of knowledge and possible sites for intervention, focused increasingly on the subjectivities of individual women. From there, I turn to the work of the NSS Women’s Division to examine how it took up the “manpower” challenge specifically through its administration of training and industrial welfare programmes. This work established the foundation for plans intended to redirect women from war employment across the industrialised economy into a limited range of occupations, waged and unwaged. I consider a selected range of administrative and regulatory techniques developed through the Women’s Division to redirect women workers in the postwar economy. Throughout, I approach postwar planning in much the same way as did the policy practitioners whose work I consider; that is, as an integral part of the organisational approach to planning for the war itself.

The National Selective Service was established in March 1942 as a division of the Department of Labour charged with responsibility for mobilising women and men for the war economy, and for demobilisation and adjustment measures in preparation for the postwar peacetime economy. Elliott Little, a CEO from industry, was appointed to head up the new agency. He was soon replaced by former Manitoba deputy labour minister, and current federal Deputy Minister of Labour Arthur MacNamara, who proceeded to run the operation as a decentralised bureaucratic structure guided by the protocols of “compromise and conciliation.” In May 1942, Fraudena Eaton was appointed director of the newly created NSS Women’s Division. She was promoted NSS Associate Director in August of the following year. Eaton appeared to have little compunction about implementing a rigid typology of female occupations and labour capacities even in the face of resistance from staff, colleagues and the women who
bore the brunt of NSS policy decisions. But there was no contradiction between these two approaches. What looked like ambiguity and indecision overall was also a reluctance to intervene in the "free market" in such a way as to interpose the state between the inviolable rights of employers on the one hand and the employment rights of male workers on the other. The ideal-typical worker was male, of British origin, white and skilled and, more importantly, was theoretically capable of mobilising ownership rights through the acquisition and demonstration of skill. Skill, moreover, was mobilised as a key signifier in the social relations of work and in the constitution of the labour market as a social institution. Women, as I will argue, were understood from the outset to possess no such rights in their labour and, therefore, had no claims to mobilise through such rights discourses from which they were theoretically, politically and structurally elided. Industrial and domestic strategies pertaining to women workers were closely intertwined. Employability discourses worked through moral regulatory discourses of domesticity and femininity, closely informing the work of policy practitioners concerned with overseeing the development of employment policies for women. Employability discourses worked to organise the differential capacities of groups of women by occupation and domestic affiliation in respect of their positioning within, and access to, the formal waged economy. Despite the tremendous mobilisation of women workers to support the war effort, there would be no comprehensive place for women in the postwar employment policies of the federal government, and no recognised permanence with respect to the position of women in the industrial labour force. The policy regime constructed through the NSS and the employment service would have enduring effects well into the postwar period, constructed as it was on a foundation that reified class, gender-based and racialised understandings of employment rights and labouring capacities.

Mounting a full-scale campaign to accelerate production levels in order to supply the war economy was an unprecedented task that tested the endurance not only of the thousands of women and men in essential war and civilian industries, working for long hours under difficult working and living conditions, but also those who were busily attempting to implement the multitude of policies and procedures issued by the National Selective Service. For some, this was seen as an opportunity to try out new ideas about labour market regulation and organisation along the lines envisaged by policy experts in Britain and the United States. For still others,
however, the war was a temporary break, even if a catastrophic, challenging and at times unendurable one. Once ended, the real task would begin of restoring social and economic order. The challenge throughout was to put in place a series of measures designed to mobilise the necessary labour force as smoothly, efficiently and quickly as possible, always with an eye to the postwar plan for demobilisation and reconstruction. Certainly, men and women, whatever their location, feared a return of high unemployment once the war was finally ended. This fear was never far from the minds of policy planners, particularly women like Fraudena Eaton at the NSS Women’s Division.

The NSS Women’s Division was responsible for overseeing all areas of labour market policies and programming involving the employment of women. NSS training and employment strategies mobilised gender-based and racialised assumptions about female employability at the same time as they constituted women workers as moral regulatory subjects. As concerns about labour shortages intensified, so too did moves to deploy a comprehensive programme of “industrial welfare.” The presence of women in the industrial workplace was, of course, not a new phenomenon. The “manpower shortage” intensified scrutiny of workers’ bodies as disciplinary subjects as well as potentially morally disordered subjects. At the same time, compulsion was to be avoided at all costs. Democracy and the fight to defend it was a central organising precept in this total war against fascism. The Dominion government walked a very fine line on the issue of conscripted labour for either military or industrial purposes, in the case of women’s employment even moreso than men’s. Consent, compliance and better yet, a call and willing response to service closely informed the sentiments policy officials wanted to appeal to as part of the fusion of individual interest and the national enterprise. On closer examination, policy practitioners would discover a disturbing rate of absenteeism and turnover in industries designated essential to the war effort.

Regulatory procedures had to be tightened considerably to ensure that working women, in particular, not only reported to work on time but actually stayed put in their jobs for the duration of the war. Something simply had to be done to discourage women from wandering off in pursuit of higher wages and/or more favourable working conditions elsewhere. Intensification of managerial technique became a key strategy for regulating the labour supply. NSS officials drew on the diagnostic and prescriptive expertise of psychologists, psychiatrists, employment researchers and vocational guidance experts, industrial
engineers and management specialists to assist in the project of overseeing and adjusting the work habits of women alleged to be unused to the rigours and challenges of regular industrial employment. As a strategy of gender-based regulation, NSS officials launched a series of policy initiatives that effectively reorganised and intensified gender coding in the workplace through a programme of skills dilution, a core organising principle underpinning the pre-employment training strategy.

The Department of Labour’s Labour-Management Co-operation Section of the Industrial Relations Branch actively encouraged the development of labour-management productivity committees, enlisting the co-operation of the organised labour movement with the promise unions would be able to secure and consolidate their position as recognised bargaining agents in the workplace.5 But not all unions were not be included, at least not those associated with the organised left.6 Industrial relations was organised through a masculinist framework, drawing on discourses of employment rights, the family wage and collective bargaining. In contrast, industrial welfare was envisaged as a program designed to regulate the bodies of women within the environment of the industrial workplace. Industrial welfare was a gender-based programme of personnel planning, a framework of moral regulatory discourses that addressed women as worker-subjects in need of careful supervision. The NSS WD was charged with the task of overseeing all recruiting, training and placement efforts affecting women during the war, and with implementing plans for the demobilisation of women war workers in the postwar period. Fraudena Eaton worked closely with MacNamara and a field staff that extended across the country, supervising the work of NSS WD staff as employment placement, welfare and personnel officers, together with a network of industry and community-based practitioners.

“Keeping workers in their jobs”

Eaton certainly had her hands full. It was not enough that women were needed in a variety of key industries; having found and placed women where they were most needed, the NSS WD discovered protest incidents were erupting across many of these locations. In August 1942, Eaton reported to Labour Minister Humphrey Mitchell that women were making known their opposition to substandard working conditions through work refusals and related collective action. What was even harder to address were the individual acts of resistance as women quietly
drifted away one by one, draining vital national labour resources. To make her point, Eaton selected three war plants to epitomise the generally poor conditions prevailing in essential industries. In one, Defence Industries Limited in Pickering, the employer faced a serious labour shortage that the NSS WD attributed to inadequate housing and public transportation. Serious as these two issues were, by far the greater problem was the entirely resolvable, and therefore inexcusable, one that clearly exemplified employer negligence. Meals provided by employers were described as poorly prepared and supplied in inadequate quantities. Women had to pay for this substandard fare whether or not the meals were consumed. The “girls” had taken matters into their own hands by staging mass demonstrations in their dormitories against these unpalatable meals served up by an indifferent management. If ever there was a case for the introduction of progressive personnel policy, this was it. In one offending plant that did have a personnel manager, “Mr Russell” was revealed as delinquent in his attention to the serious problems threatening to derail production. “Mr. Russell,” Eaton stated, “unfortunately adopts the attitude that ‘if they don’t like it, they don’t have to stay.’” It appeared that they did not like it. In one month alone, 350 young women were sent to the plant from Nova Scotia; by the end of that month 90 had left.7

In still another case, this time the Cockshutt Plow Company in Brantford, Ontario, women were found to have been left entirely to their own devices. The resulting environment teetered on the brink of anarchy:

There is marked evidence of a lack of supervision and discipline. Employees leave their work at will and girls were found loitering and lounging at their work and in the washrooms. The cloak rooms serve as lunch rooms and as there are no lockers or racks, clothing lies and hangs all over. These rooms and the washrooms are in bad condition and are not kept clean.8

The absence of suitable recreation posed an additional problem. It was not unreasonable for these young women to anticipate that some provision would be made for leisure activities. More than anything else, what they needed was close and careful remedial supervision. In Belleville there was no shortage of female labour, still women were cited as refusing outright to work at the nearby Bata Shoe Company plant. Accommodation was available at a new “staff house” but only a few had taken up residence. Women complained that there was no recreation available. “There is a moving picture theatre, but it has not operated for 6 weeks. There is a recreation room in the
staff house, but it is also the entrance hall. There is no game room where they can play even simple table games." As though that were not enough, the plant cafeteria provided an uninspired selection of food described as "badly cooked and of inferior quality." The situation was described in terms that made obvious the only solution: women required proper health, welfare and recreation facilities to attend to their unique needs as workers in an unfamiliar and inhospitable environment. Proper meals had to be provided, along with wholesome recreation and properly supervised accommodations. The workplace environment itself required careful organisation and supervision under the expert guidance of trained women personnel specialists whose assignment was to safeguard the femininity of their charges.

In contrast, progressive managerial technique had succeeded in solving the absenteeism problem at the John Inglis Company in Toronto and at the nearby Small Arms Limited in Long Branch. In a press release from the Minister of Labour's office dated September 5, 1942, employers were encouraged to follow the commendable example set by the John Inglis Company by introducing similar measures to deal with their own absenteeism and turnover problems. For example, Inglis had appointed a female Welfare Supervisor and a Recreation Supervisor. Arrangements had been made with the surrounding community to provide women employees access to a local swimming pool and gymnasium. A nearby roller skating rink had been converted into a recreation club for the exclusive use of the women at the plant. All of these steps had solved the problem of labour instability at Inglis and would be sure to do the same for other war plants. Expense could not be used as a defence for inaction as this case made all too clear: the community, when asked, had willingly pitched in and made available the necessary facilities in an excellent example of local community and private industry coming together to eradicate the number one threat to the war effort: absenteeism. "Remember," declared the Minister, "absence makes the war last longer."10

For her part, Eaton touched repeatedly on the structural causes of high turnover in lower wage industries, at one point indicating that in the absence of central collective bargaining strategies and in the presence of a tight labour market, workers usually voted with their feet and left in search of jobs with better wages and working conditions.11
So serious was the problem of absenteeism and high turnover that the Minister of Labour, Humphrey Mitchell, invited all provincial labour ministers to attend a special conference in Ottawa in 1943 to discuss the problems women workers might be experiencing. The minister wanted to discuss the “conditions under which women are employed” and looked to the provinces to provide “invaluable assistance in reducing absenteeism” among the female labour force. What the federal labour department most wanted to discuss was hours of work and shift-work. The 1943 federal-provincial labour conference did not set out to conclude any firm plan of action on what future role the federal government might assume in the area of industrial welfare, except to confirm that it had no legislative authority with respect to working conditions and no intention of moving into the area of regulation. Instead, conference delegates debated the question of hours of work, in an effort to secure consensus in the reduction of shifts worked by women to a standard of 10-hours as the optimal level needed to maintain efficiency. There was some suggestion that women might themselves oppose this move in industries where wages were low. In the end, two resolutions were passed out of the conference. One called for a federal committee to study the hours of work issue, the results of which would be passed over to the provincial authorities. The second resolution called for the appointment of a national safety committee to investigate safety in war industries. At the same time, conference delegates confirmed the need to address the worker outside, as well as inside, the workplace, attending to recreation, health, living conditions – anything deemed pertinent to maintaining a healthy and productive worker.

Studies of absenteeism were informed by the work of industrial experts in Britain, notably a recent study conducted on behalf of the British Department of Labour by the Medical Research Council Industrial Health Research Board. The Research Board’s Emergency Report looked at the amount and distribution of absenteeism among women working in ordinance factories. But it is the mode and effects of the report that are of particular interest here: the study provided a template for other employment researchers to follow, one that investigated causality as an individual and not a structural phenomenon. Among its general observations was perhaps one of the key insights that would influence how the problem would be organised, investigated and remedied well into the future. Absenteeism was seen as an individualised expression, the source of which originated in, and was therefore reducible to, the individual worker herself.
The study proceeded by searching for any pattern that might reveal statistical regularity. Finding none – except for the taken-for-granted category of gender (i.e. the study found that married women lost more time than did single women, and that the rate was lowest on pay-day and highest on Saturday) – researchers at the Medical Research Council were forced to conclude that since women were absent for varying lengths of time, the reasons for such absences were “as varied as individual needs and desires.” This led invariably to the remedy: while some attention ought to be devoted to the “general conditions of work” this preliminary investigation called for “a study of the personal causes of absenteeism, and for an individual method of treatment.”

These findings were confirmed by a further investigation conducted in 1943 by R. J. Bishop and C. H. Fraser, of the Stevenson and Kellogg firm. The report’s authors recommended that every worker and every employer be required to report to the same employment office, pointing out that “to a great degree labour drift was wasting manpower.” Effective “manpower planning and control” would only come about once a national plan for “continuous centres,” – i.e. routing workers through local employment offices – permitted the continuous tracking of labour. Their report created the category of “vocational instability,” a condition they alleged was traceable to two distinct problems: “ineffective vocational guidance by the local UIC office” coupled with the “condition of vocational instability (casual labour) or a “work dodging” attitude on the part of the person.” To these two distinct sources – the one a matter of administrative governance and the other a condition of the psychology of the individual – could the NSS trace most of its ‘manpower’ problems. The NSS needed to increase the efficiency of its local offices if it ever hoped to institute a comprehensive plan to keep people in their jobs: instilling good work habits was opened up to the local techniques of governance of the public employment office.

When MacNamara announced that he wanted to bring Stevenson and Kellogg back to update and extend even further their Welland study of the previous year, John Grierson at the Wartime Information Board disagreed, arguing that the department itself “should develop staff capable of undertaking similar surveys or related functions on kindred subjects, labour turnover, labour management committees, etc.,” in order that it might show that the department was intensifying its initiatives and interest in industrial relations matters.
Stevenson and Kellogg was proposed at a meeting of the department’s Advisory Committee on Absenteeism Studies, the ensuing discussion revolved around two sets of arguments, both moving toward the same outcome: that government ought, through the Department of Labour, to begin moving into this area of work as part of a broader industrial welfare promotion and research programme. Adjusting the behaviour and work patterns of individual workers really was a legitimate domain for the department. It was more than appropriate for government to take on such a role, especially since business might not want to impart confidential information of a potentially proprietary nature to private firms. On the other hand, committee members thought that business managers would probably not mind sharing such information with government. Furthermore committee members speculated that organised labour might resent hiring a firm of industrial engineers.20

The Department of Labour did both: Stevenson and Kellogg conducted another investigation for the NSS, and, the Department took up the issue of absenteeism through an informal investigation of its own, the findings of which were released by Grierson’s Office of War Information as part of its campaign to boost productivity during 1943.21 These results were compiled from a census of 18 war plants. Again married women were found to have the highest number of absences, followed by single men, single women and married men. “New residents of a community” were absent more frequently than “regular residents.” The study problematized women according to marital status in an attempt to draw out any difference between the attendance patterns of single woman and married woman, therefore bringing attention to bear on the effect of marriage and child-bearing on women’s capacity to be reliable workers. Management was enjoined to reassure women, assisting them that they might overcome their handicaps as women through appeals to self-confidence and community assistance. Organising results by gender and marital status opened up both dimensions as categories for regulatory intervention, while allowing for the more obvious identification of factors like day-care and assistance with domestic chores like shopping and food preparation, to free up women to at least some extent from the burden of the double day.

Based on these results, the OWI report made 8 recommendations, outlining the industrial welfare platform that would be taken up by the Department:
1. Fact-finding machinery should be established in each plant to discover causes of absenteeism.
2. Support and confidence of workers should be sought through unions and labour-management committees, which will carry out phases of the programs.
3. Ease the burdens on working wives and mothers by extending shopping and other hours and providing child-care facilities.
4. Improve bad plant conditions, such as poor heating, inadequate locker and wash-room facilities, slow and insufficient medical attention for accidents.
5. Safety rules and full-time use of safety devices are important.
6. Provide hot, nourishing meals at reasonable prices.
7. Help workers to adjust themselves to new jobs and communities by bettering in-plant training, and provide adequate housing, transportation and recreation. Management needs to convince employees that it is all-out for production and does not discriminate in promotion and up-grading.
8. Prevention and remedy are better than punishment.22

The first two recommendations would define the population through which the ‘problem’ was to be identified, its causes assessed and resolved. Items 3 through 6 addressed the workplace as the domain of the social, accommodating without structurally altering the problems working people would confront as their lives in and out of paid employment converged. Remedial measures for women intensified the effects of the gendered division of labour. Dangerous health and safety conditions would be “improved” but would not be subjected to penalty and/or eradicated.

Finally, the principles of modern personnel management were invoked to address the interior of the subject, to enlist personal identification with goals and objectives, routines and rituals of the enterprise, the pursuit of which were held to satisfy personal as well as corporate interests.

While the Department of Labour was gearing up for its productivity-boosting campaign, Eaton decided to investigate the structure and operation of the modern personnel work more closely. She wrote to Mary Anderson at the US Department of Labour Women’s Bureau to inquire about their guidelines for companies interested in setting up internal personnel departments. Anderson replied that, although the Women’s Bureau did not issue guidelines, she would happily refer Eaton to International Harvester in Chicago, and to AT&T’s former personnel department, now absorbed into the US War Department. Eaton corresponded with Laura Smith of the Civilian Personnel Division at the US War Department, explaining that such work in Canada “has not been developed to the extent that we have sufficient trained and experienced people to meet the present demands.”23 Smith provided her with an organisational
chart depicting the “set-up of a typical personnel department,” a plan for employee counselling used with great effect throughout many government offices, a collection of studies of “Women in War Industries” from the Industrial Relations Section at Princeton University, and finally, a study conducted on behalf of the US government by Industrial Relations Counsellors. This was the managerial consulting firm with which Bryce Stewart, now Deputy Labour Minister in Canada, had worked as Director of Research throughout most of the 1930s, working closely with the Roosevelt New Deal administration to develop the US Employment Service and Manpower Commission. Finally, Smith indicated, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company was at that very moment “engaged in making a very comprehensive study of the principal personnel problems in connection with the increased employment of women.”

NSS Women’s Division staff co-ordinated their work through an elaborated network of local community and women’s organisations and increasingly professionalised associations of women’s personnel practitioners. This was by no means a compensatory measure filling a perceived void in government inspection. Local councils of women worked in close collaboration with community welfare agency workers to provide an extended network of localised and individualised governance, working in concert with the centralised NSS Women’s Division network of offices and regional staff. This network sought intimate contact with individual women, monitoring, supervising and guiding women throughout their tenure as war workers. It would moreover play a crucial role in the postwar programme of rehabilitation and demobilisation. From the outset, the local councils of women were called upon to take up once again their familiar role as local sponsors. In her correspondence with Eadie, the Toronto NSS WD supervisor, Mrs Stephens, local council president of the Toronto chapter, acknowledged the importance of collaborating closely with the NSS office. Eadie reported this satisfactory arrangement with the Toronto local to Eaton, stating that Stephens “saw the wisdom of working through Government channels both so far as the present time is concerned and for whatever experience we can gain to help us with post war employment difficulties.”

There was more than ample evidence attesting to the need for precisely such a programme of community and individual sponsorship. The NSS WD was after all responsible for the welfare of thousands of women, many of them young women brought from rural
communities to large urban centres such as Toronto and Montreal. The NSS WD supervised and investigated what were characterised as instances of moral delinquency. In some cases these allegations were the product of calls for intensified regulation and policing of young working-class women’s sexuality, supervising their conduct off the job, in leisure and community. Questionable use of leisure brought charges of delinquency to which the NSS WD’s intrepid moral sleuths responded with discretion and dispatch. In still other cases, however, sexual harassment both intensified the marginalised status and incited the policing, disciplinary capacities of the NSS WD, while at the same time these charges challenged the capacity of the NSS WD as an agency of state regulatory practice. Two instances are considered here: in the first, the investigation of moral delinquency centred on the apparent opposition to the NSS WD’s attempts to mobilise women workers in Quebec. In the second, a woman brought complaints of offending advances made by her male supervisor to the attention of the local NSS office. As it happened, her agency – demonstrated in her attempts to address the situation herself, and then in bringing the problem to the attention of the NSS – was elided in order to undermine her claims.

In the opening months of 1943, Eaton was confronted by increasingly urgent appeals of the Quebec NSS WD representative for assistance in dealing with the campaign of a “hostile press,” sparked by opposition to the federal government’s campaign to recruit young women into industry and service work as part of the war effort. Eaton directed one of her staff to undertake an investigation into alleged incidents of “moral delinquency” in war plants. In describing the purpose of the investigation, Eaton referred to “many sordid details of events that had occurred amongst women in war industries.” While the allegations were later described as “greatly exaggerated,” it was nevertheless thought advisable to assign NSS Women’s Division Junior Welfare Officer, Renée Morin; to follow up with a complete investigation, if only to demonstrate the efficacy of the industrial welfare programme overseen by the NSS WD and to show how well it worked in the interests of all parties: employers, government, community and the women themselves. Such an investigation had apparently to proceed by stealth. Eaton acknowledged that conventional research methods would prove unhelpful and could in fact draw attention to what might be a political minefield for the NSS. Any publicity would pose a set-back for government, playing into the hands of those who had already made their opposition to the employment of women quite well known. “Certainly it would be more than difficult statistically,” Eaton
commented, to document cases of moral delinquency. Morin was described as best suited to the task since she established her contacts with the personnel divisions and social welfare agencies "in such a way that no public comment is aroused."

Eaton addressed the question more directly in a memo to MacNamara in March 1943. The supply of workers was plentiful enough for the present, Eaton explained, although the "type of worker now applying tends to be of lower qualifications for industrial work." Martel, the Women's Division Quebec representative, expressed her concerns that the interventions of the Quebec press were discouraging women from applying at NSS offices for work and suggested that the NSS consider mounting a publicity campaign to offset the growing opposition. An example of such statements was forwarded to Eaton's attention, an article by the Catholic Confederation of Workers, which argued that industrial labour was "incompatible with French Canadian philosophy of family life" and that such work posed "physical and mortal dangers" to women.27 How should the NSS respond to such criticism? Eaton and Phelan both cautioned against "argumentative" advertising designed to meet the critics head-on, and instead advised taking a low-key approach until it appeared that the campaign against women's employment began to have any discernible impact (i.e., until women workers stopped applying for war work). In the meantime, the NSS should step up its training of personnel workers in Quebec industry and intensify the industrial welfare programme.28 Department staff went as far as reproducing a brief detailing the employment policies for female labour of the Nazi regime, prepared by the UN Information Centre in New York, and forwarded to Eaton by the Wartime Information Board with the comment that "[i]n view of the pressing and hostile representations made by French-speaking groups in respect to the employment of women in industry, this document ... may be of some use as a buffer exposing conditions under which German women are mobilised for war work."29

By March 15, 1943, Morin had prepared her report, a copy of which was also sent to the Chief Commissioner of the UIC, Mr. L. J. Trottier, "on the moral situation of men and women workers." Several hundred young women had been sent from New Brunswick to work at the plant Morin investigated. The situation did not measure up to the morally deleterious conditions recounted by the opponents of women's employment. Not even close. "From what people have
told me,” Morin wrote, “it seems that the conduct of the employees of the two sexes in the factory is irreproachable.”30 Such problems as had occurred were addressed and readily resolved. One such problem was the apparent proclivity among some of the female work force “to seek solace in alcohol” at a village beverage room during their off-hours, there being “few amusements” in which they could occupy their leisure times more appropriately, in more productive and wholesome pursuits. The mere suggestion that women were engaging in any morally delinquent behaviour in the local village was enough to arouse the ire of the local cure, notwithstanding Morin’s painstaking attempts at investigative discretion:

[I]n reality Brownburg does not present a more sombre picture than other industrial municipalities. In spite of the fact that I used in making this little inquiry, M. le cure was a little offended by the very fact that there was some suspicion about the conduct of his parishioners. Personally, he seemed very satisfied with the situation at the factory.31

The company in question treated its employees with care, maintained a recreation room and conducted its business appropriately. What the workers, men and women, did during their own time may be the business of the local church, but was clearly off limits to NSS officials.

Concern for the welfare of the young women working in Brownburg did not end there, however, as the matter was again the subject of discussion at an NSS industrial relations conference at Dalhousie University held in June 1943. The Chief Employment Officer for Moncton, identified only as Miss Mary, took up the matter with Renée Morin, who was scheduled to speak on the issue of women’s employment at war plants. She confided to Morin her grave concern about the women at the Brownburg plant since word had reached her about the problems brewing there.

She thinks they are very lonesome and she believes that the supervision of the girls in the residences in Brownburg is rather loose. That is to say that the company sees that employees follow the discipline in the shops and in the residences, but outside of [that] girls are entirely free; leadership and counselling is [sic] lacking.32

Perhaps more to the point, many of the Brownburg women were agitating to return home to Moncton to get jobs at a recently opened aircraft plant just outside the city.
In another example of ‘moral investigation,’ in February 1944 the NSS WD was called upon to investigate complaints brought by a woman working at Canadian Airways in the north end of Montreal. In this example, the complainant was no young woman from rural New Brunswick in need of moral guardianship from the NSS, but instead a married woman, Mme Morinville charging her male supervisors with ‘misconduct.’ From the outset, Morin’s notes constructed the woman making the charge as the source of disruption. Mme Morinville explained, according to Morin’s report, that she had had to quit her job because she “had not accepted a ‘certain invitation’ from a foreman.” She had, moreover, proceeded to accuse another foreman of “being the cause of much trouble with female employees.” The NSS WD could ill-afford any scandal and most certainly not in Quebec. Morin’s report was a documentary construction of Morinville that worked consistently to deny her any agency by imputing her incapacity for rational discernment and judgement. Morinville was characterised as incapable of conducting herself in a manner appropriate to the workplace environment, guilty of introducing problems originating in the marital sphere that were deemed out of place within the workplace. The “facts” of the case were introduced as follows: “Mme. Morinville has been a difficult case of placement; she was never satisfied with the jobs offered; she is not attractive and it is believed she is jealous of her husband who works at Canadian Airways.” A critical stroke against Morinville was that she had brought her complaint to the NSS office and then made her charge in writing. There the local NSS officer had conducted a “conversation” with the foreman against whom the accusation was made. The latter’s claim that the accusation was unjustified was accorded greater weight, as was his opinion that Morinville was “a frustrated person who does not get all the attention she would like.” In this way, Morin consistently organised the “facts”-based narrative, positioning Morinville as a subject incapable of exercising rational judgement and discernment, without which capacity no injury and violation could be claimed in this masculinist discourse of the “frustrated,” “jealous” and “unattractive woman” seeking “attention.”

Conversely, Renee Morin did find legitimate grounds for concern about the safety of women workers. Women at the plant stated they were afraid to walk through the grounds around the plant at night since the area was poorly lit. Even here, plant management was cited as acting immediately on the complaint, a move constituting further evidence of the employer’s
responsible attitude toward the women workers. And so Morin did the job she had been sent in to do: protocols were adhered to on the part of the employer and the male supervisors, and the integrity of the NSS was safeguarded.  

**Developing Women’s Personnel Work**

As Director of the NSS WD, Eaton worked closely with the YWCA and the local councils of women extending the sponsorship approach to women’s job placement and employment bureau work developed by these middle-class white women’s organisations over the previous decade. For example, Eaton encouraged the formation of associations such as the Women's Personnel Group of Toronto which drew together the YWCA, the local welfare councils and women’s personnel staff from industry. These local formations were one of the many instances at which state and ‘community’ could be seen as co-extensive, as women personnel supervisors worked with welfare officers and employment placement staff from the NSS to consolidate each other's position. An important focus of their work was to encourage industry to establish personnel departments to oversee recreation, housing, day nurseries, health and welfare for women workers. In 1943, Eaton drew on the experience of the Stevenson and Kellogg study to make the case for such a development as a logical extension of her department’s work:

> Miss Hall and Mme Martel have had direct contact with a large number of war industries and their reports show clearly that the best conditions prevail where the personnel department is well developed and in the confidence of management, whether the industry is large or small. In the reports on absenteeism and substitution of women for men, prepared by Stevenson and Kellogg, a strong emphasis is placed on the value of personnel departments, in connection with these problems.  

The Stevenson and Kellogg report had also outlined the prescriptive functions of the modern personnel department in considerable detail. The report’s authors recommended the following: a management-employee committee; personnel plans and priorities; vocational training and industrial training; monitoring for labour turnover; social security, health, welfare and safety. In what is here viewed as an exercise of pastoral power, the personnel expert invited the employee to enter a confessional relationship. In their “Exhibit VII” the management consultants explained
the steps leading to full implementation of this aspect of personnel programme, including the following:

8. Let each and every employee in the organisation realise that he has the right to discuss his own particular personal problems, without prejudice, with the Personnel Manager.
9. Move ahead slowly ...
11. Be a good father confessor
12. Keep a close watch on the health, safety, security and financial worries of your patients.\(^37\)

These recommendations would find their way into the organisation and operation of the NSS WD and the NSS field organisation, as employment officers attempted to take up the challenge of job analysis and screening in their job placement work. Through the NSS WD a parallel system of women employment officers, personnel experts and industrial welfare officers grew up through the NSS apparatus, informed by the knowledge practices outlined in reports like the Stevenson and Kellogg job analysis study.

"I think we should give further service to industry in connection with personnel departments," Eaton argued, consolidating the presence of women's personnel work as a regulatory device by encouraging the formation of personnel associations, a measure supported by the resources and educational expertise made available by the NSS WD.\(^38\) Women, at least those conforming to the criteria of British origin, whiteness and middle-class location, were looked upon as particularly well-suited for personnel work. Women possessed a special expertise, attributed directly to gender, while eliding the mobilisation of class, race and sexuality in this identity, which they might apply to the problems peculiar to women workers, specifically in matters requiring discretion and supervision. Women were best left to supervise other women, particularly in matters of moral guidance and guardianship. For instance, physical and mental examinations practised upon the bodies and minds of women workers opened up a critical area of specialisation, revealing problems calling for greater discretionary and interventionary powers. On the question of medical examinations, some employers were seen to be loosening their standards and practice, so great was the labour shortage. This matter was to be addressed by the NSS regional women's division heads, the NCWC and the Toronto Welfare Council at an NSS conference in June 1943. They agreed that close monitoring of all travel and
accommodation was necessary, in keeping with the broader moral regulatory measures instituted through the VD campaign during the war. Employers could not be relied upon to enforce mandatory medical inspections of all women employees. Moreover, it would be a difficult measure to implement with any tact or discretion. Eaton saw to it that the Toronto conference pass a recommendation calling for the medical examination of women in their home communities. In preparation for the conference, Eaton advised her colleague Mary Eadie to put the following case to NSS Women’s Division supervisors:

You might state that one of the reasons for the calling of the recent conference of the heads of the Women’s Divisions was to clarify this matter of transfer of workers and upon the advice of the conference to write a directive in order to safeguard any future transfers which might be less carefully made when the shortage of available workers might reduce the precautions at present taken by the employing firms. This directive will make it mandatory to have medical examination before the girl leaves her own community ...

I am unable to say, until approval is formally given, that every girl will be required to have twenty dollars in her possession or that no girl under 18 will in any circumstances be transferred.... Good luck in all your public relations which now seem to be manifold whether you have the time for them or not.

The work of personnel placement was steadily expanded in a network that drew together the efforts of the local employment office with those of the personnel department in industry. Labour shortages underscored the necessity of ensuring that workers placed in jobs would remain in them, a task that very often concentrated on assessing the quality of the woman applicant. The “problems of placement” were reduced to those of careful screening and selection, a technique that aimed to look beyond external credentials to address the innate capacity of the individual, thus opening up the interior of the subject to techniques of governance. Eaton explained to her colleagues at the Department of Labour that securing accurate labour force estimates was only part of the challenge facing the NSS WD. Global statistics were all well and good, but as Eaton quipped, “in the matter of supplying women for industry, we are interested in the individual.” Delegates to the Women’s Personnel Conference in Montreal in 1942 had already been advised that placement work was a detailed undertaking in which so much depended on the initial interview with the applicant:

Placement meets now with great difficulties as there are wide discrepancies in the general field of employment. Available applicants, when experienced, are often very critical of jobs; when inexperienced [sic] they often lack the required
qualifications. The Employment Officers are confronted with such problems as: controlling distribution of workers, bringing together the right applicant and the right job, setting up suitable offices for placement, obtaining competent staff. The solution of these difficulties depends much on the co-operation between employer and government and the constant feeling on the part of the employee that there is first a war to be won. While women might be described by the National Association of Manufacturers as making poor supervisory staff given their greater propensity to “throw their weight around,” when placed in charge of ‘girl munitions workers’ a “cheerful, competent” supervisor could accomplish a great deal with the women under her charge. In 1942, Maclean’s Magazine ran a lengthy article about Canada’s new woman power. Thelma LeCocq, the author of this exegesis about the new industrial “woman power,” explained how the personnel supervisor cheerfully lobbied for improved wages and working conditions at her plant:

The manager of [an aircraft manufacturing] plant has women draughtsmen on his staff and says they’re swell. As personnel manager he has a cheerful, competent woman who worked the floor herself for three weeks so that she knows what it’s all about. It is she who got the girls a fifteen minute break both morning and afternoon and proved to the management that they work better for it. It is she who encourages girls to fit themselves for men’s jobs and is going to get them men’s pay for it if it’s humanly possible.

Not all employers could be counted on the see the benefit of this work. Sara Southall of International Harvester in Chicago warned Eaton that, no matter the size of the company, some employers remained obstinate in their attitude toward women staff generally, and would continue to discount the importance of personnel work:

Many women are being added to the Personnel Divisions in both Government-owned and privately operated companies. They are doing more interviewing, employment selection, etc. In some of the plants, the pattern is developing in what is known as Counsellor. This can be almost anything, but in some instances, the employer has conceived of it as almost a kind of function where the girls can come and cry on someone’s shoulder. This is a very definite job for counsellors who are well-trained and know the plants they are working in, but I, personally, have tried to discourage the counsellor being used simply as a “weeping wall.”
Finding ‘the most appropriate applicant for the job’: the NSS WS and the employment office

NSS WD staff relied increasingly on the public employment office as both a conduit and a point of convergence at the local level, an official public space where state, community, employer and worker met as subjects and practitioners of employment and training policy discourses. The employment office was the central site at the local level charged with the work of recruiting, screening, assessment and job placement – a key function that anticipated the considerable volume of redeployment awaiting the NSS as part of the postwar rehabilitation programme. The blueprint for employment office work was outlined in a proposal to centralise all screening and placement functions in the one location, as recommended in the Stevenson and Kellog study. As described in the DVA Army Course on Veteran’s Rehabilitation, “[t]he Employment Service and the Veteran,” the employment service had made great strides since its days as a provincial placement service for allegedly unskilled, casual labour and domestic workers. Now it was run much like the most efficient personnel operation in modern corporation. Like a stock exchange however, it was impossible to trade in unlisted securities, and so it was incumbent upon employers and job seekers alike to register with this new public service:

The Labour Exchange or Employment Office is designed to bring all jobs to one centre, and all job-seekers to that same centre. There is no need for the worker to walk from factory to factory looking for a job which may or may not exist. The employer will have referred to him the most suitable applicant for a particular job.45

Its managerial role was therefore extended through a centralised programme of interviewing and job placement following on the recommendations of the Stevenson and Kellog study. That study proposed linking local office records (NSS forms) with UIC cards to provide for local management control. In this way, workers could be matched according to a continuous work history with permit releases detailing training and vocational guidance efforts, a measure that would become a regular feature in the placement activity of local offices. Further, Stevenson and Kellogg recommended expanding internal personnel procedures such that “internal manpower practice and program” would enable the continuous monitoring of employees. In this way any workers who demonstrated “promise of development toward skilled work” could be targeted for upgrading and further training.46 Monitoring and documentation of this kind provided an example of governance ‘at a distance.’ NSS inspectors responded favourably to the proposal,
arguing that an employee census should become a regular feature of the work of the Research and Statistics Branch and that it was more than time that the department move toward uniform occupational groupings in all further census work.47

Regular intelligence testing was investigated as an integral function of screening and placement. Screening was itself approached as a separate function, introducing the added dimension of moral regulation, a strategy for diagnosing maladjusted workers and remedying the inappropriate fit between worker and job that was all too often manifested in frequent absenteeism and turnover. Training provided an ideal opportunity for systematic screening, interviewing and testing. One such plan considered by department officials concerned a central employment bureau for the Toronto area, a plan that drew on the emerging knowledge practices popular among personnel and employment research experts. According to the proposed plan for the newly reorganised employment office, interviewing and testing of applicants would become a critical part of the work. Applicants would receive a preliminary interview “to determine whether or not the individual is employable.” At this time, basic data would be recorded to be brought together into a central registry for use by the employment service, with another copy accompanying the applicant if a final placement was made. The second step of the interview and assessment process involved detailed aptitude testing, described as follows:

In this second step, the applicant would be put through a series of tests to bring out his natural abilities to work efficiently under various conditions. Some of these tests would be mechanical, some oral, and, possibly, some written, but the entire battery of tests would enable the bureau to place a man or a woman in a position for which he was definitely fitted and avoid placing applicants in jobs not suited to their abilities and temperaments.48

Tests for those claiming particular skills, specifically those in crafts, would be conducted to “prove his claim to proficiency” and for those who were “partially trained” testing would “determine the degree of efficiency” achieved.49 The next step was Investigation: to collect any data from previous employment applications and placements, and to conduct routine reference checks. Should any questionable information be discovered, the applicant might still be placed with a confidential warning that the employer “keep an eye on him.” The final phase, assignment, would bring together the results of interviewing and the prognostic determination of the aptitude testing in the selection of an appropriate occupation and job by the trained
interviewer. This blueprint brought together the advantages of standardising all testing and interviewing work, while systematising the internal operations of the employment office to prevent bottle-necks and related problems that really attested to poorly designed work routines. A central registry would assist in all future placement work and create a documentary history of the employment record of all applicants. Moreover, records of aptitude tests would provide a statistical index by which to monitor labour quality and facilitate differential ranking for selection purposes. As the proposal explained, “Pre-selection of trainees by means of aptitude tests would result in a higher percentage of usable graduates... In other words, one of the definite functions of the central bureau would be to find and tap new sources of labour.”

“She has no chance of developing poor work habits”: Training and personnel management

Surveillance was a constant feature of descriptive and prescriptive narratives detailing the advantages of the combined effects of training and proper personnel planning. Articles appearing in the popular media underscored key objectives in policy planning, conveying the message that the best way to impose order and stability in the labour force generally was to implement a close system of scrutiny and monitoring that began at the level of the individual worker. This message was the central theme of a magazine article describing the WETP at Central Technical Collegiate in Toronto. The school operated on a 24-hour schedule, turning out war workers ready to take up their positions in essential industries, all the while under the “watchful eye” of the personnel planners, plant superintendents, inspectors and instructors. The classroom was a microcosm of the developing continuum the NSS was so keen to replicate within its own regulatory infrastructure: screening, training, recruitment, employment placement and continuous tracking. The classroom was transformed into a transparent public space of order and predictability, its internal routines open to public view, its occupants displayed as potential labour, and its techniques readily transferable to other locations, provided the carefully developed knowledge practices around which it was organised were closely adhered to. Surveillance and inspection were the signature of modern personnel development, in stark contrast to the haphazard and impressionistic practice of plant gate hiring. Through the deployment of psychological knowledge-producing techniques, the interior of individual ‘trainees’ was made available to governance in classroom, workplace, even community, through assessment, calibration and
regulation. These techniques worked best when they were taken up as techniques for the development of the ‘self’:

Personnel executives, shop foremen and plant superintendents are constantly inspecting classes sponsored by their firms, seeing for themselves the progress made by each individual – or the absence of it. At any given moment the man in training is likely to find himself under critical scrutiny by the man he expects and hopes to be working for in a few weeks’ time... Every two weeks the school makes a written report to the sponsoring firm on each student, with special attention to his or her accomplishments, demonstrated adaptability and mental attitude toward the work in hand. Slackers or misfits are eliminated ruthlessly – something that cannot happen to regular students.52

Mingling amongst the potential misfits and slackers were “baldish oldsters,” “dignified white-haired matrons” and “pert misses”: those groups specifically identified as the potential labour reserve. Skill capacity was taken up in these descriptive narratives as taken-for-granted indices of gender, as the following example made clear:

Average length of [industrial training courses] is from ten to twelve weeks, but some highly technical subjects take longer. The industrial chemistry and machine drafting courses cover twenty weeks. On the other hand, three weeks instruction is sufficient to teach most women to run a power machine or to work efficiently on assembly jobs requiring only a single main operation. Women are particularly suited for certain operations. Meter assembly, for example, requires the accurate weaving of twenty-six strands of wire, each wrapped in a different coloured covering. No men need apply here. The male sex, it seems, is affected with colour blindness to a much greater degree than are women.53

Given their greater ‘natural’ proclivity for such mundane but precise tasks, and apparent tolerance for boredom and fatigue, women’s training requirements could be characterised as minimal, often requiring only a few days, provided the woman possessed the “natural qualifications of dexterity, patience and keen eyesight.”54 In the fordist model of industrial production, all knowledge and production technique was seen to be already embedded within the technology itself, both in the physical machinery and managerial technologies organising the work of production, for example through time-motion studies and related engineering studies. Engineers designed the equipment, organised production schedules and developed job tasks and sequences: workers executed assigned tasks. All of this work had been conducted long before the woman worker set foot in the production shop.
The potential for immediate employment in a job that paid decent wages was the key message promoted through a variety of similar articles written for popular media. The following snippet illustrates the general tone, while alluding to what might lie in store for women once the war was over:

Apart from their innate enjoyment of their new work, and blithely innocent of what it may prophesy for their reluctance to give up their big place in industry when the war ends, Canada's girl munitions workers are undoubtedly delighted by their fatter pay envelopes.\textsuperscript{55}

The special aptitudes women were deemed to possess, if not monopolise, were more often described as attributes, more a function of gender than of innate intelligence that could be developed as skill. In fact, any interest in machinery at all was characterised as ‘queer,’ and queer, as everybody knew, was most certainly not feminine. LeCocq implied as much in her article:

Being a stenographer wasn't her idea of a career, so she got a job with a typewriter firm doing repairs. That was the best she could do in a world where a woman interested in machinery was regarded as queer. Then the gun plant called for women workers. .. Not many women have that particular passion for machinery, but because they are deft-fingered they excel at a variety of jobs.\textsuperscript{56}

Narratives like these actively constituted female subjectivity as unlikely to survive intact unless the closely delineated normative standards of feminine identity were adhered to: it was the task of industrial welfare and pre-employment training to ensure that they were.

A further advantage of systematic training was the introduction from the outset of good work habits instilled in the worker as s/he learned the job; in this way, work routines were embedded through the training process in the organisation of the work tasks to be learned. In a 1944 article from the business press, these advantages were explained to management through a description of the introduction of women into the work organisation routines of virtually any production process. Training held out tremendous benefits as a process of orientation to routines, rules and procedures of work: “One of the big advantages of this training is that the new employee starts off on the right foot and learns how to be a good operator from the beginning. She has no chance to develop poor working habits.”\textsuperscript{57} Absenteeism and turnover could in this fashion be prevented from the outset, through a programme of training, the scope of which was
greatly enhanced by mental testing. Management at the plant described, the Small Arms Limited facility in Long Branch, was so impressed by the results of the new managerial techniques introduced to facilitate the employment of women war workers that they intended to make these methods a regular feature of their personnel work:

When, on the third morning, Mary graduates from the school and takes her place on the production line, she doesn’t feel at a loss. Nor is she left to the tender mercies of the foreman – two “patrolling instructresses” watch new operators at their work, offer suggestions, and, if more instruction is needed, give it on the spot. This supervision continues until Mary and her friends are quite able to carry on alone. Occasionally a girl can’t make the grade; she goes back to school again and an attempt is made to find a job for which she is better suited. As time goes on, the management plans to branch out into job placement and aptitude tests for all their workers.58

A key focus of progressive managerial technique therefore became the capacity of the individual worker. Where the individual subject was found to be delinquent in any way, a corrective program could be instituted. Employers were encouraged to adopt the procedures instituted by the Great Western Garment Manufacturing Company in Edmonton. This company had instituted an important program in its attempt to deal with the high turnover rates that had been plaguing the needle trades industry, a programme that would be taken up in the redeployment of women after the war as part of the pre-employment training strategy. The program was favourably noted in Eaton’s regular report in December 1944 to MacNamara, one of the most promising developments to cross her desk in recent months. Aptitude testing was deployed by GWG both as a screening mechanism to weed out women deemed unsuitable, and as a method for monitoring the developing work capacities instilled through the occupational training program itself. These measures worked in combination with a regular wage increase tied to successful completion of training. The result was described by the company as a comprehensive employment policy that upgraded the occupation in order to stabilise the labour pool:

The most important change has been in their employment policy. They now pay no girl less than $12.50 per week and expect her wage to rise to $16.00 within 5 or 6 weeks – many are earning much more than this amount. They exercise great care in choosing applicants, using aptitude tests and careful supervision during the learnership period, and are thus able to chose the girl suited to their operations … The management is trying to improve the 1st aptitude tests in order to reduce the nos. who do not make good during training. Mrs Lyons, Supervisor, Women’s Division, has taken a keen interest in this development and I believe that some of the smaller firms in the area are making inquiries concerning the experiment.59
The "housewives shift": a case study of work reorganisation

The importance of personnel planning and careful supervision were illustrated in the campaign to encourage employers to implement part-time shifts in their plants, another strategy designed to overcome labour shortages. The campaign for part-time workers specifically targeted older, married women with children, in order to free up younger single women for regular war work. So-called housewives shifts, modelled on the Victory Shifts in Britain, were intended to fill the gaps in less remunerative work such as domestic employment in hospitals. In this case, the part-time worker was approached as a distinct subject posing a distinct challenge due to her identity as housewife and mother and her tangential relation to the waged labour force. The part-time worker was unused to the patterns of authority, guidance and behaviour that characterised the normal employment relationship. Through personnel technique, the women who were the target of the 'housewives shift' had to become imbued with a new 'worker-identity,' an example of 'labour as dressage.' NSS policy directives drew on these conceptions to constitute the unstable identity of the part-time worker, a process that was also constitutive of its obverse, the normal, stable worker whose attachment to the labour force was known and therefore calculable. As would become clear, the woman at the centre of this narrative was a white, married, autonomous middle-class figure whose labours were motivated by a sense of patriotic duty, an affinity with the national purpose that was nonetheless potentially undermined by the distance she would have to traverse from her domestic location to the unfamiliar space of economic modernity signified by the modern workplace. Discipline, power, agency and identity were the operative terms in this discursive field. Domesticity and employability intertwined through the documentary practice of the NSS advisory, to repeatedly invoke the temporary, marginal and therefore ambivalent location of women workers generally and part-time workers in particular. For instance, an NSS circular, prepared in August 1942 by Miss E. R. Cornell, Regional Advisor in Montreal, detailed the special problems of employing part-time workers as a function of unruly, possibly irrational subjectivity in need of discipline and order: women had to be made to "feel" that they were regular employees. The circular offered advice to employers, or more likely their personnel staff, and to NSS field staff advising them.
Employers were advised to defer to the expertise of their personnel supervisors (and if they did not have such staff, the implication was that they most certainly ought to) whose task would be to encourage the part-time worker to “feel welcome and a necessary part of your organisation.” There remained the ever-present danger that this woman might degenerate to the status of the transient worker whose interests were increasingly removed from those of her employer; that she might treat her work and her employer in the “off-hand inconsiderate manner of a casual or temporary employee.” A note of challenge pervaded the prescriptive policy literature on this question: the women whose aid was to be appealed to were also described as far more independent and therefore more likely to resist poor treatment. For such women, the patriotic appeal was strong but unlikely to withstand employer indifference or exploitative working conditions. Supervision by trained, preferably female personnel, was critical to the successful deployment of this segment of the female work force, given their stronger identity as older women with home, family, independence and responsibilities. Together, these factors made such women unused to the subordinated status of regular employee:

They are serious of purpose and more apt to be critical of careless or remedial mistakes. Although bullying or nagging will be keenly resented by the older women, their remedy is more likely to be to resign on [some] superficial reason rather than to stand their ground and fight it out. As a rule, these older women know exactly why they are working and what for and their purpose is usually an unselfish and self-sacrificing one. This attitude, together with better judgement and sound commonsense can often be used to good effect in providing leadership to younger and more impressionable workers.63

Thus at one and the same time, the older woman as part-time worker was both driven by self-interest and compelled by her natural patriotic duty, itself a function of her role as mother, wife and guardian of the middle-class home. She was more responsible, imbued with an agency that permitted greater freedom of movement to come and go, to enter the labour force but just as readily to leave rather than “stand her ground and fight.” Identification with national purpose through patriotic spirit, an unselfish attitude of self-sacrifice in combination with “sound commonsense” were all pointed to as advantageous features accompanying the introduction of the older part-time woman into the workplace, where she might provide a good example for younger and more impressionable women to follow.
Conversely, the autonomy that was so important to the maintenance of a healthy household was here hindrance to that other subject of industrial welfare policy discourse: the productive worker capable of submitting to the sterner realities of the workplace. In fact, on closer examination, the individual household was seen to be more removed than ever from the structured space of the modern workplace. The part-time worker was described as likely to request time off for “trivial matters,” to which supervisors had to respond with a firm but sympathetic attitude. The part-time woman had to be taught that responsibility to employer and to country demanded unflagging personal sacrifice and commitment. All regulations, those of the employer in the workplace and the NSS, comprised a undifferentiated, continuous field of procedure and obligation that simply had to be adhered to. “By constantly stressing the regular rather than the casual nature of their duties, these women must be continuously reminded of their obligations,” intoned Miss Cornell. In a passage detailing the necessity of supervision to ensure punctuality and regular attendance, NSS employment officers were advised to be vigilant and firm in dealing with the older woman, recognising that “her domestic obligations weigh heavily with her” and would likely affect work attendance and performance. “Careful and sympathetic consideration” in helping her deal with such problems went firmly in hand with a close eye to her extreme individualism:

Emphasis on the need for punctuality and attendance is more likely to be needed by housewives than younger workers. They should be urged to accept and adhere closely to the rules of the organisation in this respect for in managing their own homes for years they have become thoroughly individualistic as a rule. If the discipline of fixed schedules and punctuality has ever been known, it is likely to have been forgotten.64

“I want to get a postwar job”

By the spring of 1944, the NSS WD staff began attributing the labour turnover and regular shortages they encountered to ‘war weariness.’ Eaton and MacNamara discussed sending a circular to all NSS offices advising that NSS regulations would be tightened to prevent women from leaving essential war industries and services. NSS staff were directed to encourage women to stay in their jobs by appealing to their patriotic duty of service and sacrifice:

Try to change the attitude of mind represented in the words: “I want to get a postwar job.” Or “I am tired of making munitions.” We need to remind ourselves
and others that the war has yet to be won and completed. It is too early to express other ideas. Service and sacrifice are yet the key words.\textsuperscript{65}

A critical dimension of the recurring shortages and continuing high rate of labour turnover might also be seen as stemming from the efforts of women themselves to find employment that could take them into the postwar period. "Looking for a postwar job" was not an activity women seemed inclined to leave to the end of the war. This was a tendency Stevenson and Kellogg had noted in their 1943 report, under the section heading "Keeping Workers in Their Jobs." What employment researchers characterised as excessive labour turnover and policy practitioners understood as the shortage of personnel in key, low-waged industries, may therefore also be approached as an expression of the need of many women to secure postwar jobs that afforded decent wages and working conditions, at least at rates and terms that were a considerable improvement over what was available during the years immediately preceding the war, conditions to which many did not want to return in the postwar period.

Shortages were reported as early as 1943 in such low wage industries as textiles and needle trades. For instance, Mary Eadie, Supervisor of the Toronto Women's Division, reported in May 1943 that her office was doing the best it could as staff struggled to keep up with employer orders. All domestic service placements had been frozen, a move that prompted a "belligerent" response from the good citizens of the city. But the greatest challenge lay in devising strategies to keep women in their current jobs when higher wages beckoned:

The shoppers for jobs with more money are many. We will not, of course, discuss new work until the employer consents by means of a notice of separation. These persons seem to wear out many employers and since there are many different basic rates, there are always jobs available at higher rates.\textsuperscript{66}

The lower wage industries including textiles and needle trades, along with services such as laundries, restaurants and hospital cleaning, were all reporting labour shortages. At the same time, Eadie insisted that business school teachers had to join the campaign to persuade their women students to come forward for war jobs and not seek the job offering the best wage. Eadie suggested that Eaton organise a special broadcast with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, a general appeal to women to recommit to the national cause of winning the war:

We should appeal to all Commercial teachers to impress upon their graduating students the importance of the war office job these days. The writer spent twenty
minutes persuading three graduates to go to Small Arms for office work for which they were qualified. The apathy of the girls was painful. The report is that the girls are now thoroughly enjoying their jobs.

May I reiterate previous suggestions re telling the women of Toronto our needs by means of the broadcast. We, in this office, are confident that there would be a response if the women knew the true detailed picture. It should not be necessary to import girls from far places.  

In her speech to the NCWC in June 1943, Eaton had stressed the importance of recruiting more and ever more women into jobs that, while certainly not challenging, were nonetheless essential to the prosecution of the war. These were not the new opportunities of operating machines and working in the armed services; rather these were the “prosaic, ordinary, every day jobs” that had to be done in laundries, dry cleaning establishments, hotels, agriculture and lunch rooms. “It will be work without glamour and no great incentive of high wages,” Eaton advised her audience, but it was nonetheless vital to the war effort.

By 1944 women were seen to be expressing other priorities that would test the capacity of the NSS WD to contain and redirect the postwar employment aspirations of so many thousands of women. During the summer of 1944, it became clear that war industry lay-offs were provoking anxiety about securing future employment possibilities at comparable wages. Occupations targeted by NSS employment officers for postwar placement were being spurned. The Toronto office reported the following September that hundreds of vacancies in Finance, Insurance and Real Estate, were being rejected by applicants who were waiting for “higher priced opportunities.” Service sector employment in laundries and restaurants were lower-waged choices to which many women would eventually turn, but not if better pay and conditions might be available elsewhere. Eadie seemed unable to conceal her exasperation at the task ahead, readjusting women’s expectations to the reality of a return to, if not pre-war economic conditions, at the very least a considerably reduced wage scale in jobs considered more suitable for women:

We are meeting a problem very often of trying to place a woman in a new job at her present high wage scale. It would seem as though women will have to learn through experience that they cannot expect to continue at the high present level of wages paid by some of the war plants. There is still the tendency for women to desire to change jobs, to get away from shift work on the one hand, and to get into the postwar job on the other.
NSS WD officials asserted that women would return to their domestic stations and the pre-war pattern of women's employment in suitable occupations would be reasserted. This view was directly contradicted by the actions of women themselves, much as it had already been through internal research conducted by the Women's Division the previous year. A 1943 survey conducted by the Toronto NSS office of women job applicants in Ontario highlighted the likely postwar employment situation the Women's Division might very well be faced with. The questionnaire canvassed married women over 35 years of age who applied through the NSS offices for war employment. Ninety-five percent responded that they were solely responsible for carrying on domestic work, while 85% stated that their husband was not on active service. Three quarters of the women interviewed indicated that they had no children in the household, 10% reported supporting 2 children and 5% had three or more children. Women were asked the question: “What type of work have you done before?” The following distribution was reported: factory - 30%, domestic - 27%, office work - 14%, laundry - 5%, sales - 12%, and “not previously employed” - 12%. Women were asked to indicate the areas of employment they sought work in. None indicated domestic service, confirming what must have been on the minds of many employment office personnel: convincing women to take up this sort of work would be a difficult if not futile task. Again, the results were not likely to have surprised many who were regularly involved in directing women into paid employment:

“What sort of work has the married woman in mind when she comes for a job?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factory</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Office</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>War</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
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<td>Laundry</td>
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The questionnaire addressed the perception that women were reluctant to present themselves at NSS offices for fear of compulsion to accept work in areas they might not want to accept. But the question, “Were you reluctant to apply or disturbed by the thought of an interview with [the] Selective Service?” failed to substantiate any such concern over compulsory service. Only 5% said they were, while 94% said they were not, reluctant. Another 1% indicated they were “afraid of compulsion.” The report was sent to Eaton by B. G. Sullivan, Ontario Regional
Superintendent, UIC. Sullivan drew Eaton’s attention to Question 5: “What is the prime object in your securing employment?” Included among the possible responses women were invited to select from were reasons such as “patriotic,” “desire to supplement family income” and “personal needs.” The question generated the startling finding that 59% of women indicated they were seeking paid employment to supplement household income, while only 9% reported a patriotic motive as their reason for doing so. Another 32% indicated “personal reasons.” Sullivan suggested that these results “express the most interesting highlight” of the overall survey.

And yet even as discussion turned to the postwar aspirations of women, of maintaining the gains made by women, Eaton held to the theme of self-sacrifice and service. The themes she presented in a 1943 national news release would continue to inform the official policy position of the Women’s Division into the postwar period: “Bold indeed would be the person who attempted to predict with any certainty the place of women wartime workers in a peacetime world,” she commented. There could be no question that women had “earned the right” to full recognition of their needs in any planning for postwar adjustment, rehabilitation, and retraining. To those who hoped women would “gracefully withdraw and yield their places to men,” the director of the WD chose not to issue any challenge to her national audience. Instead she advised that the WD would make its purpose one of ensuring that “the place of women in employment must be made secure and dignified with the door of advancement wide open” and that the negative freedoms, freedom from want, fear, poverty and frustration, would be secured as general human rights. As to the thousands of women in war industries, their training and experience were identified as only relevant in their role as war workers. “They cling to the thought that they would like to continue in the industry for which they have been trained,” and while there was no way to predict whether this hope would be realised, certainly training and opportunity should be made available to permit postwar employment for all who wanted it. As if to signal where those opportunities might lie, Eaton pointed to the “natural professions” of health, social services, teaching and welfare where women’s “organising genius” had a real opportunity to shine. And then there was the domestic service to which thousands would return “provided wages and hours were reasonable and all social stigma removed.” Any concrete gains for women in the manufacturing and services workplace, however, would have to be fought for and secured through trade union representation, since the federal government would clearly not take a leading role:

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There is a good deal of old-fashioned thinking still existing about the duty of women to be acquiescent and forbearing about their right to earn a living — their right to equal pay with men for their work. The greatest hope is that organised labour with thousands of new women members will lead the average citizen to accept a fair and liberal approach to the future employment of women.72

What would the postwar economy look like for women? NSS staff, media and working women began turning their attention to what the postwar period would bring. NSS staff began planning in earnest by 1944 for what many anticipated would be a rapid demobilisation of the war economy. Requests for labour force studies were coming in from all over as field staff, women’s and community organisations and media prepared for the end of the war. In one such case, the WD supervisor in Winnipeg complained that the employment figures she had were unsatisfactory and inaccurate. She needed current statistics and a breakdown detailing occupational and industry distribution. This was not an area in which the NSS wanted to commit itself, but was instead a matter for the political staff in the Minister’s office to deal with. Eaton replied that the Minister would soon be tabling complete figures in Parliament, with a “limited breakdown into trades and occupations.” Until that occurred, it would be “impossible” to release any figures: “In the meantime, I think it would be advisable to withhold any statement on total figures,” Eaton directed her subordinate.73

The issue of labour force data prompted some careful political managing when Margaret McWilliams, appointed chair of the Sub-Committee on the Postwar Problems of Women, a sub-committee of the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction, placed total female employment at 1,200,000. While the analysis and recommendations of the report are discussed in Chapter 7, the political arithmetic occurring behind the scenes revealed a strong ambivalence within the labour department and the NSS WD to the prospect of how postwar employment for women would be managed. The figure McWilliams cited was indeed accurate as an estimate of women’s labour force participation as of November 30, 1943; however, issuing a public statement as McWilliams was reported to have done provoked an alarmed response from senior officials at the Department of Labour. As Peebles explained to MacNamara, the recently calculated Estimated Manpower Distribution table dated February 14, 1944 cited a much lower figure for women’s labour force enrolment and it was this lower total the department wanted to go with. “No problem would have
arisen,” Peebles stated, had McWilliams not used the 1,200,000 figure to describe the number of women gainfully employed since this raised expectations for postwar female employment to an extraordinary degree.74 Peebles advised substituting the new table with its lower figures. “Some critic,” he conceded, might still compare the old and the new, but this was a slight risk the department would have to take. Sooner or later the tables would have to be switched: “We think now is the opportune time to do so. We have an explanation for revising the table now. We shall not have a valid reason six months or a year from now,” he continued.

When the transition from war to peace occurs, if not before, there will be decreases in the number of women employed. These decreases will have to be computed by applying the percentage changes in employment as computed by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics to our gross figures. The larger the number of women we now estimate as employed, the larger will be the estimate of women who become unemployed. That is, by using the larger and less accurate figure now, we are letting ourselves in for difficulties later.75

Not long after this exchange, McWilliams was advised by Eaton that it was better to refrain from issuing any further public statements on the matter of women’s future employment. “So much depends upon the attitude of the National Selective Service to these lesser problems,” Eaton wrote, concluding that it was better to wait until postwar plans were well in hand. “We should be in line with what is sound policy for the postwar.” Sound policy for the postwar reconstruction plan meant deciding how much of the current female workforce would likely remain in paid employment and what responsibility the federal government would be expected to assume for women’s postwar employment. Decisions on postwar employment policy for women were already being taken at the most senior levels of government through the Economic Advisory Committee, the General Committee on Demobilisation and Rehabilitation and the Inter-Departmental Committee on Postwar Employment.

In addition to higher women’s employment levels, high wages sparked no small measure of concern among employers as well as policy planners who feared that wage competition worked to draw women away from industries that paid lower wages. The labour shortage that opened up in the traditionally “female” occupations presented NSS with a vexing problem. For example, the Chrysler plant in Windsor paid a general starting hourly wage of $0.83, rising to $0.93 after a short probationary period. Would not such wage rates attract women from as far
away as Toronto and from other lower-waged industries? Should women be paid the same the same starting rate? Chrysler requested a ruling on the matter from the Regional War Labour Board for Ontario, suggesting that while the company would be “satisfied to carry out any ruling of the Ontario Board,” were the board to rule that the same wage rates ought to be paid, company officials felt quite strongly such a measure would most certainly draw female labour away from other industries and geographic locations where it was also needed in order to sustain the war effort.76 Certainly, the hundreds of thousands of women who moved into the formal waged economy were able to earn a significantly higher wage than was obtainable in the pre-war period. The wage and employment picture had changed dramatically since 1939, when over 400,000 women and men were unemployed according to official estimates.77 Women’s average industrial earnings were 54.1% of men’s in 1939, an earnings gap which was perceptibly reduced to 69.3% by 1944. The hourly wage gap had also diminished: in 1939 women earned 47.9 cents for every male dollar, a margin which closed to 71.2 cents by 1944.78 Employment patterns shifted significantly as well. In 1939, domestic service was the largest occupational sector for women. By war’s end, manufacturing was. The percentage of women working in domestic service plummeted from 18.6% in 1939 to only 9.3% by 1943, while for the same period, as a proportion of women in the labour force, manufacturing employment rose from 27% to 37%.79 Average weekly wages, meanwhile, rose from $12.78 in 1939 to an average of $20.89 by 1944, while for the same period women’s labour force participation rate climbed from 24.4% to 33.5%.80 Finally, the number of women working in the formal waged economy doubled from 600,000 in 1939 to 1,200,000 by 1943, as McWilliams’ report had accurately indicated. Of this total, approximately 250,000 were working in essential war industries; 439,00 were in the services sector; 373,000 in manufacturing; 180,000 in finance and trade; 31,000 in transportation and communications; and 4,000 in construction.81

In March 1944, a research plan was presented to the Committee on Postwar Employment by NSS officials in which they outlined the priorities around which postwar employment would be organised.82 Demobilisation was anticipated to take place in three distinct phases, depending on the cessation of war in both the European and Pacific regions. The first phase involved a transitional period following the anticipated German and Japanese capitulations that would immediately result in “substantial reductions” in the production of war materials and in the
numerical strength of the armed services. The second phase would entail a transitional period after the Japanese capitulation by which time all war contracts would be completed and the armed services reduced to ‘regular strength.’ In the third and final phase, the economy would undergo a full transition to the “normal” postwar period following conversion of military-industrial production and services to civilian activity. Calculating actual, let alone permissible, unemployment levels would be an impossible task since so much depended on production of goods and services for export as part of the work of rebuilding the devastated former theatres of war through the work of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) and other affiliated agencies. Personal decisions of people recently demobilised and/or laid off also had to be taken into account and would in turn prove difficult to estimate in advance, the NSS officials declared. Some might wish to take “extended holidays before seeking work,” while others might withdraw from the labour force altogether. To assist in the work of planning and policy development, opinion polling was recommended as an excellent opportunity to supplement employer surveys. Opinion polling would emerge as a significance tool of local governance, a method for shaping the perceived question or issue, as well as for extending governmental priorities into the domain of ‘public opinion.’

In the absence of concrete production data, Peebles and Luxton, the authors of the postwar employment research plan, suggested a series of localised, intensive labour market surveys. This “concrete employment research” was anticipated to assist in framing reconstruction policies, in part by organising redeployment priorities. A critical dimension of this proposal was that the focus of policy research and priorities would now be localised. Community employment surveys of postwar employment possibilities were to be conducted in co-operation with local employment advisory committees, identified as “focal points for local planning on postwar employment.” Results would be analysed to look, in particular, at the effect of conversion on civilian employment, isolating the impact on the “industrial distribution of women and older age workers.” The Research and Statistics Branch of the Department of Labour would of course assist by supplying the local committees with intensive labour market surveys, but all conversion decisions and employment priorities would be left to the local employment advisory committees. The advantage to government was that these committees were comprised of business, labour and
‘public’ appointees. Therefore any decisions made by them would be a matter of local accountability and would not be viewed as policies imposed from the centre.

At the same time, training would again be an integral component of the postwar employment programme. The War Emergency Training Programme (1940) was replaced by War Emergency Training Agreement for the period 1943 to 1944. Schedule K of the Agreement provided training for either “workers or prospective workers” under a preferential system of pre-employment industrial classes. Men of enlisted age would not be admitted to training unless they had been rejected for medical reasons. Courses were to run for not less than two weeks, and on averaged extended over three months, at which time trainees received a certificate denoting successful graduation. Workers attending courses of less than eight weeks, the majority of whom were women, received instead a ‘certificate of attendance’ showing the number of weeks and the ‘nature’ of the training.\(^4\) In February 1944, Canadian Vocational Training was established as the federal government’s training agency. The CVT Act provided the federal legislative authority for postwar employment and training provisions extended to both civilian and enlisted personnel. Where WETP had been organised around a two-tiered infrastructure, CVT closed the circle, delimiting women’s access to the formal waged economy through a tightly organised system of vocational guidance and training. CVT outlined other forms of training considered necessary for the postwar period, specifically training for domestic service under the Home Aides Plan. This was on the advice of Crawford, who had confirmed that vocational training plans should not be finalised until policy practitioners had a clearer picture of what the postwar employment situation might be and what level of government obligation to the employment settlement would be required. That is, once plans for demobilisation were settled and a blueprint for the employment strategy had been devised to address the job needs of returning veterans, only then should government commit itself through legislation. Crawford had recommended that “the Youth Training legislation and the Vocational Education Act of 1931 be replaced by a new Act which should not be drafted until the policy and procedure for the war period and postwar period have been agreed upon.”\(^5\) While unemployment was anticipated to follow in the wake of demobilisation, Crawford and his colleagues had argued that the level of vocational training would be substantially lower than that required after the Great War given the thousands being
put through training this time around. Their arguments informed the drafting of the Canadian Vocational Training Act of 1944.

By May 1945, the decision was made to relax all NSS regulatory controls. The regulations would not be changed just yet, however; administrative procedures would be altered to allow women to seek alternate employment without having first to obtain a NSS permit. The system was to change from a permit system designed to keep workers in their war-time jobs to a reporting system requiring voluntary registration by both employers and workers at local employment offices. This was an ideal time to relax controls, according to Eaton. It was “psychologically” an opportune time to permit women to leave their war jobs and seek other opportunities while there was still some employment available. But there was also a strategic reason for the timing: the controls on women were lifted first – “just at that time when the war industries were well manned and were to be curtailed rather than expanded” – in order that reports from the local women’s divisions could be fed back, giving the NSS an opportunity to prepare its network for the lifting of controls on men. The NSS expressed its hope that the experiment would “provide an illustration of what may happen in many of the men’s offices when controls affecting men are lifted.” As a confidential NSS circular described it:

The Regulations have not been amended to bring these changes into effect, and accordingly for the present, the relaxations are purely administrative and may be changed at any time depending on circumstances. Furthermore these relaxations will be regarded as experimental, and may later indicate the pattern of relaxation in the administration of regulations as they effect men. Local offices will be expected to be in a position to report at any time upon the effect of this relaxation of the Regulations as they apply to women.

Would employers and workers alike co-operate with the local branch? Would employers see that their hiring interests were best served by a local employment office administered by the federal government as a national employment service? And perhaps most pressing of all, would individual women turn their employment futures over to be decided by a local employment officer? Certainly Eaton was leaving nothing to chance. Every effort was made through press campaigns, radio broadcasts and the intimately persuasive powers of employment officers to encourage employers and women alike to trust in the expertise and guidance of the employment service, the most efficient system available for matching supply and demand. As Eaton explained
to the WD Superintendent in Vancouver, "Our women's divisions and all the officers will have to make a good showing on what can be done when we are selling a 'service.'"*

Early reports suggested that the experiment seemed a success. The diligent war-time efforts of the NSS WD were paying off since employers and workers who had been compelled to depend on the NSS office were now turning willingly to the employment service as a regular feature of the postwar labour market. Or were they? J. S. Brown, supervisor of the women's division in Hamilton, reported a telling incident just after the regulations were lifted in May 1945, likely intended to illustrate how integral the local employment officer would be in transforming women's resistance into ready compliance with the objectives of the new employment service. Brown's story was framed as a recounting of the "apparent dependency of the average employee" on the employment service. The National Steel Car Corporation had just announced that it was to lay off 650 women workers. When the employment officer arrived at the plant, she found the situation threatening to deteriorate into total anarchy, not just for the employer but for the local community:

On arrival at the plant, yesterday morning, our Officer faced about 250 employees, many of whom had already been given their Notice of Separation, assembled in the lunchroom, demanding information on the lifting of the Regulations, and some were stating very loudly and emphatically that they would now do what they pleased in looking for new work. Our officer phoned this Office for moral support, and it was suggested to her that she call the people to order, advise them of the new Regulations, pointing out that we are in an excellent position to serve them, if they would avail themselves of our help. Our Office made such a favourable impression, that not a single applicant asked for an Open Permit, and everyone in the group was referred to work. The sequel to the above is that our Officers were invited as guests to a farewell party arranged by the employees, which was catered by a downtown restaurant. This was a bit of good will advertising for our service, don't you think?*

"The future of the employment service must necessarily rest on the confidence inspired in the employers and employees by the efficiency of the service of the Local Officers," was the official position. Efficiency would replace central control and compulsion. The objectives of the new employment service required information and for that, full co-operation from employers and applicants. In order to be efficient, the local office would require a complete picture of local
supply and demand. Information would be generated through the registration of unemployed persons and through employers filing separation notices. A great deal rested on the co-operation of employers and the willingness of workers to register. At the same time, the NSS WD would oversee the placement of female labour, only now all women’s divisions at local offices would stress “the careful selection of applicants to fill the requirements of the vacancies existing.” And this was to be the key focus of local women’s divisions across the country: screening, testing and placing applicants in ‘suitable’ occupations. Vacancies would be sought through the careful organisation of the NSS WD, in particular through the preparatory organisational work of the Pre-Employment Training Survey, discussed in the following chapter.

The NSS conducted a survey to assess the postwar employment situation, regarded here as a preliminary attempt to organise the “problem” of postwar employment through categorical knowledge practices that drew on techniques of personnel planning and vocational guidance and, increasingly, on remedial discourses of rehabilitation. The pre-employment training strategy worked to reorganise the problem of postwar female employment as a problem of employability in a narrowly defined range of occupations. What began as a question of jobs became a problem of employment preparedness and occupational upgrading within a narrowly defined range of occupations. The PTS was a survey of occupations rather than employment opportunity. Eaton had been supplied with suggested formats for a job opportunity survey, but rejected such a move as “too complicated” a matter for employment offices to conduct. The Pre-Employment Training Survey categorically organised the anticipated employment policy regime around a strategy of vocational training. Embedded within this strategy were knowledge practices that constituted women’s employment capacities as a function of gender, of race, and of class. At the same time, women were the subjects of moral regulatory discourses that targeted occupational aptitude and skill as critical determinants of future employability. The capacity to succeed in a pre-employment training program as a textile worker, garment worker, waitress or home aide was no longer considered a function of material conditions like wages, working conditions, or even job availability. Instead, the interiority of the subject, the innate capacities of trainees would become the principal register through which these limited occupations could be remade as viable, preferable, even desirable occupations women would freely and autonomously choose.
Conclusion

Employability discourses worked to organise the differential capacities of groups of women by occupation and domestic affiliation in respect of their positioning within and access to what came to be constituted through these same discourses as the regular, formal waged economy. Industrial welfare and personnel programming operationalised knowledge practices drawn from the expertise of employment researchers, psychologists and management consultants in a programme of managerial technique. The public employment office became a strategic public space through which techniques for managing, assessing and calibrating groups of women would be developed and their deployment attempted. As workers, women were constituted as capable of only partially achieving and maintaining desired productivity levels: as mothers, whether actual or potential, in need of careful scrutiny and regulation through industrial welfare programs; as targets of domesticity discourses to be redirected into preferred occupational categories in preparation for their proper task of maintaining the home front as mothers, as consumers, as educators of young citizens in preparation for the postwar era of peace and prosperity, or as labourers within the homes of other women under whose watchful eye they would be educated to recognise and accept their obligations as potential citizens. These policy discourses collectively articulated the boundaries of nation, of the labour market as the productive site of national strength and security, and of the differential citizenship capacities of those called upon to secure the interests of the nation on the domestic front.

For their part, many women appeared to begin thinking during the war about their chances of getting a postwar job. And so the challenge facing the NSS WD was to find ways of keeping women in their wartime jobs while quelling anxieties about postwar unemployment. This was a challenging undertaking, however, particularly as the jobs themselves often involved long hours under difficult working conditions. But as these jobs began to dry up in 1944, the alternatives were even less compelling. The few occupations open to women in the postwar economy were at pre-war wage levels in services like cleaning, food preparation and serving, textiles and needletrades: in short, the roster of "female" occupations in low wage industries. It was here that employment policy would take on a new twist. As preparations began for the postwar programme of demobilisation and rehabilitation, under the direction of Fraudena Eaton
at the NSS WD plans for a new training strategy were being laid down. The emphasis would now be placed on upgrading the occupation by upgrading the worker. As planning for the transition to the civilian economy of the postwar period got underway and restrictions were lifted on women workers in essential war industries, plans were shaping up to direct thousands of formerly integral women workers into a narrow occupational band within a fragmented localised labour market – if not entirely out of the ‘formal’ waged economy. The NSS Women’s Division would seek to redirect women through a network of employment officers whose job it now was to counsel them in making the transition from the strategic economic rationality of war to the domestic passivity of peace.
Endnotes


2 The capacity to mobilise the rights in one’s labour through the workplace and the labour market comprises the basis for much of liberal contract theory, the underpinnings for industrial democracy, collective bargaining and the industrial relations system in Canada. See Carol Pateman, The Problem of Political Obligation: A Critique of Liberal Theory (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). For a discussion of the notion of skill as property, and the systematic exclusion of women from equivalent rights in pay equity disputes, see collected articles in Judy Fudge and Patricia McDermott, eds., Just Wages: A Feminist Assessment of Pay Equity (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1991).

3 For a comprehensive review of labour policies surrounding the mobilisation of women during W.W.II, see Ruth Roach Pierson, They’re Still Women After All (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986).


The issue of “absenteeism” comprised the subject of a labour management discussion segment for the CBC “Labour Forum” series that spring in which both groups took issue with the Department of Munitions and Supply’s allegations that workers were largely to blame. In contrast, labour – and management – representatives to the Committee on Industrial Morale pointed to the following causes: lack of a “comprehensive survey” investigating cause and effect; illness, accident, strain and lengthy shifts; “indifference to the war” prompted by fear of postwar economic insecurity; problems stemming from housing, transportation, married women with “housekeeping responsibilities,” inadequate time to shop for basic necessities and problems with child care.” The Committee, on the basis of these arguments, therefore recommended a government survey “to get at the facts of absenteeism.” See Minutes of Committee on Industrial Morale, June 11, 1943, p. 2.

On the basis of this work, the Department of Labour Labour-Management Co-operation Section of the Industrial Relations Branch issued the brochure, “Absenteeism” suggesting the Labour-Management Productivity Committees could take on the problem and work toward its resolution. A Labour Management Productivity Committee study, the pamphlet read, “can change the negative ‘absentee’ into a positive work attendant.” NAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, File 6-18. Department of Labour Labour-Management Co-operation Section of the Industrial Relations Branch. “Absenteeism” (n.d. likely 1943.)

5 Peter S. McInnis, “Teamwork for Harmony: Labour-Management Production Committees and the Postwar Settlement in Canada,” Canadian Historical Review 77, 3 (September 1996): 317-352. As McGinnis states, Paul Martin, parliamentary assistant to the Minister of labour described the emerging industrial relations climate as the harbinger of a “new democratic citizenship” for the postwar industrial era. McGinnis, p. 322.


12 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, File 6-18, Memorandum from V. Phelan, Director of Information, Office of War Information to Dr. Alan Peebles, Deputy Minister of Labour, February 1, 1943.


17 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, File 6-18, “Absenteism”, A. MacNamara, Memorandum to Dr. Howland, August 24, 1943 and John Grierson, WIB Office of the General manager to A. MacNamara, Deputy Minister of Labour, September 8, 1943; Report of Informal Meeting of
Advisory Committee on Absenteeism Studies” September 3, 1943. The recorded minutes of meeting noted the poor attendance of committee members, all claiming absence due to the pressures of work. See also NAC, RG 27, Vol. 897, File 1-10-1, NSS – Administration.


19 The move to contract the outside expertise of the consulting firm initially in 1942 had prompted another department official, T. H. Robinson, to comment that he for one looked “forward to the time when any of the work Stevenson and Kellogg can do for us could be done by members of our own staff.” NAC, RG 27, Vol. 897, File 1-10-1, NSS – Administration.


20 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, File 6-18, “Absenteeism”, A. MacNamara, Memorandum to Dr. Howland, August 24, 1943 and John Grierson, WIB Office of the General manager to A. MacNamara, Deputy Minister of Labour, September 8, 1943; Report of Informal Meeting of Advisory Committee on Absenteeism Studies” September 3, 1943.


33 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, File 6-24-1 pt. 2, Morin to Eaton, February 2, 1944. The discourse of ‘sexual harassment’ did not exist at this time and so was unavailable to Morinville. I would like to thank Ruth Roach Pierson for clarifying this point for me.

34 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, File 6-24-1 pt. 2, Morin to Eaton, February 2, 1944.


39 For an account of the VD scare during this period, see Ruth Roach Pierson, op. cit.


NAC, RG 27, File 987, “NSS Administration, Employment of Stevenson and Kellogg.” E. P. Laberge, Supervisory Inspector, NSS, Memorandum to A. MacNamara, October 26, 1943.


Ibid., “Some of the Advantages of the Plan.”


Ibid, p. 17.

Ibid., p. 22.


Ibid., p. 40.

Ibid., p. 10.


Ibid.

60 For a discussion of the campaign to increase part-time war worker, see Pierson, op. cit.


63 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, File 6-24-1, pt. 2. “NSS Employment of Women – General.” Department of Labour Employment Service and UI Branch, Ottawa August 24, 1943. NSS Circular Number 277, “Part Time Workers” Allan Mitchell, Director of Employment Service and UI, “Planning for Part-Time Workers” by Miss E. R. Cornell, Regional Advisor, Montreal, pp. 3-4. As a carrot, women would also be reminded that they would only be required to pay UI contributions if they worked more than 4 hours per day and that they were exempt from paying income tax if annual earnings were $660 or less. p. 5.


67 Ibid., p. 2.

For an account of the postwar return to domesticity in Britain, see Denise Riley, *War In the Nurseries: Theories of the Child and Mother* (London: Virago Press, 1983).


Department of Labour News Release, Address of Mrs. Rex Eaton, Assistant Director of National Selective Service to National Council of Women, June 17, 1943, pp. 4-5.

Mrs. E. W. Gerry, Supervisor of the Women’s Division, UIC Winnipeg to Eaton, March 1, 1944; Eaton to Gerry, March 15, 1944.

Peebles to MacNamara, February 18, 1944.

The new table was based on the 1941 census “and other sources”. Estimates of “women gainfully occupied” showed an increase from August 1939 to January 30, 1943 of 347,000. The old table showed an increase over the same period of 402,000.

Memorandum to MacNamara from J. S. M. of I. R. O., October 7, 1942. Letter to Peter Heenan, Chair of the Regional War Labour Board for Ontario, from A. Mitchell, October 9, 1942.

Peter S. McInnis, “Teamwork for Harmony: Labour-Management Production Committees and the Postwar Settlement in Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review* 77, no. 3 (September 1996), p. 319. A measure of underemployment and forced withdrawal from the formal waged economy would no doubt have yielded a higher count.

Ruth Roach Pierson, op. cit., p. 117.


Chapter 6

‘An aptitude test is in your best interest’: Rehabilitation planning for ex-servicewomen

The challenge of converting economy and workplace, family, community and citizens from war-preparedness to peace was formidable, a task that would test the limits of thousands of community volunteers and state-based personnel. This task fell to a series of government departments, supported by the inter-departmental policy committees and advisory bodies which comprised the rehabilitation administration. The success of rehabilitation programming depended upon a second level of voluntary local citizens’ committees, business service clubs, veterans’ organisations, and local councils of women. In addition, training and employment advisory committees associated with local employment offices of the National Employment Service worked closely with veterans’ welfare counsellors and employment placement practitioners under the direction of both the Department of Labour Canadian Vocational Training and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. By V-E Day on May 8, 1945, demobilisation in Europe was well underway. War continued in the Pacific region although many expected that the Japanese capitulation could not be far off, even if the catastrophic conditions surrounding the conclusion of that surrender remained the secure knowledge of a small, secretive political elite.

Approximately 250,000 Canadian military personnel had already been discharged by V-E Day, climbing to 395,013 by the end of the year. Throughout 1946, another 381,031 personnel were released from military service. In short, a massive governmental effort was underway to ensure that the errors and injustices committed against the survivors of the Great War would not be repeated. In this effort, the boundary between official state and community was both porous and shifting. Rehabilitation was a task in which each and all had a part to play. This was not an exercise limited to government or even to the armed services. Rehabilitation work involved the mutually constitutive interests of state, citizenry and industry: securing the peace by rehabilitating ex-service personnel into civilian life as part of the transition to a peace-time economy, domestic stabilisation and a revitalised national economy converted to meeting domestic consumption and international trade. Government was portrayed as an “instrument of the public” in the pamphlet, “The Role of Information,” released by the Rehabilitation
Information Committee, a machine providing the legislative, financial and administrative means. The real work was up to employers, trade unions, churches, service clubs and individuals themselves who would all carry the objectives of rehabilitation into their day-to-day lives and work: “Each city, town and village must do its part to help provide for the economic and social re-establishment of the returning veteran so that they enter fully into the life of the community.”

In this chapter, I examine the development of personnel selection and assessment to consider their implementation in rehabilitation programming during the postwar period. Personnel assessment was a major focus of work within the armed services and provided an excellent opportunity for educational psychologists like Olive Ruth Russell, William Line, S.N.F. Chant, S.R. Laycock and J. D. Griffin to put into direct practice the research and advisory work they had conducted consistently during the pre-war and W.W.II period, work which first focused on the ‘human tragedies’ of unemployment and juvenile delinquency and then on establishing sound procedures for vocational counselling and personnel practice. The application of educational psychology – psychological discourses about individual mental and emotional capacity, under the rubric of scientific objectivity – in the military setting, to military problems of recruitment, placement and training had opened up limitless possibilities for psychologists at war’s end. They looked to the project of civil re-establishment and reconstruction as an exercise of individual and social rehabilitation, an exercise in citizenship formation with broad application across a growing continuum of institutional relations.

Rehabilitation was an important component of the postwar programme for reconstruction. Its main object was the successful re-integration of discharged military personnel into civilian life. Historical research has taken up the theme of rehabilitation largely as a discussion of the range of services and programmes provided to assist in the re-settlement of women and men uprooted from their geographic, economic and personal locations by the lengthy war. Rehabilitation programming provided a range of vital services, benefits and direct grants to returning veterans, making it one of the most comprehensive programmes among the allied forces. Canadian rehabilitation programming also worked as a set of policy discourses. By examining the practices surrounding vocational counselling, I consider how mental hygiene discourses operated to transform and broaden the scope of rehabilitation policy, positioning its
intended subjects as citizens to be reintegrated into civil society, reshaping potential problems of employability through procedures of psychological assessment, testing and placement. I examine the ways in which practitioners associated with the rehabilitation programme at the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) drew on knowledge practices developed within educational psychology, looking ever more closely to the critical constitutive elements and dynamics of such concepts as psychological 'security' and 'adjustment' as important, but – as they contended – largely unrecognised dimensions of civil rehabilitation and social reconstruction. I consider how the re-integration of ex-service men and women was discussed as an opportunity to deploy systematically the techniques and technologies of psyche-based knowledge practices, specifically aptitude and intelligence testing, as the most effective and, so they claimed, objective means by which to screen and organise the labour force, organised through the dispassionate gaze of science. Mental hygiene practitioners hoped to extend these personnel selection and assessment methods to the civilian population as well. Personnel techniques, however much their advocates claimed them as rationale and objective, were deployed to shore up the sexual and racial division of the labour market. Intelligence and aptitude, while treated as scientific 'fact,' worked as discursive categories and reflected the class, race and gender-based conceptions of these historically contingent categories. The home became a key site of governance. Existing in non-market space, it was considered a formative site for developing and ordering the practices of citizenship. Happy democracy depended upon happy homes.

I begin by examining the work of Dr. Olive Ruth Russell at the Directorate of Personnel Selection during the war. Captain Russell served as one of two army examiners responsible for conducting mental testing and interviewing techniques with all women applying to join the Canadian Women’s Army Corps (CWAC). Personnel selection and assessment revolved around and reorganised notions about employability through the calibration of aptitude and capacity. As the prospect of reintegrating thousands of ex-service personnel, men in particular, loomed ever larger, conceptions of ‘suitability’ were inserted into this discursive frame, further deepening the individualising effects of these practices. Confronted by growing pressure from veterans’ organisations and advocates for the right to immediate re-instatement in civilian employment, practitioners would turn to vocational assessment and counselling as a personnel selection strategy that ought to be deployed as a regular feature of personnel selection within the civilian
labour force, having proven its efficacy as a powerful tool within the modern military. The role of the state in personnel assessment was a question around which Russell increasingly organised her work as an army examiner. I consider Russell's work following her transfer to DVA in 1945 to the position of Executive Assistant to the Director of Rehabilitation Planning, S. N. F. Chant. There she oversaw postwar rehabilitation, vocational counselling and assessment procedures for ex-service women. In this capacity, Russell's pre-war work gained greater prominence. I review the material she used in training vocational counsellors, in which she drew on much of her pre-war work, now integrated with the knowledge practices she developed as Army Examiner and Personnel Selection Officer for CWAC. I argue that broader mental hygiene discourse sought to frame the work of rehabilitation, led largely by the work of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene (Canada). Broadcasts such as the CBC radio broadcast series developed by the NCMH for the inter-departmental Economics and Research Rehabilitation Information Committee, "The Soldier's Return," made it clear that rehabilitation was a responsibility in which each and all had a part to play. This was a responsibility that extended well beyond the individual veteran to encompass the formidable yet essential task of rebuilding home, community, and nation to permit the Dominion to assume its rightful position within the new international order. Russell drew increasingly on these themes, often incorporating similar objectives, in her capacity as executive assistant in charge of women's rehabilitation programming until she left the department – and the country – in 1947. This chapter concludes with an examination of Russell's arguments concerning the equality of women and her views concerning legislative means by which to secure the gains made by women during the war. Throughout her tenure at DVA, Russell remained caught within the tension between equality for women and difference among them, in what she described as the move to consolidate the gains of the 'postwar woman.'

Raising the Psychological Bar: Establishing the programme for Rehabilitation Counselling

Preparations for re-establishment in civilian employment were underway as soon as the war started. Officials did not want to repeat the disastrous demobilisation following the Great War. These fears combined with the expectation that pre-war conditions of depression and high unemployment might again return with the return to a peacetime economy. Some officials called for a general tightening of controls. At the same time, officials like Robert England, William Line and Olive Ruth Russell were convinced that modern design principles informed by
Beveridgean social planning might rationalise the labour market through a well-organised, intelligently administered national employment service. Both approaches were reflected in an intriguing memo sent by UIC Commissioner R. J. Tallon to Woods in October 1941. Tallon was concerned that "loitering" in NES employment offices was contributing to a climate of indolence and lassitude. Where applicants were permitted to "loiter" aimlessly "it became impossible to keep the offices clean." Left unchecked, the employment office had come to be regarded as local "clubs for unemployed persons rather than as efficient placement offices." This was precisely the breeding ground for social and individual dissolution that had apparently led to the corruption of the provincial employment office, Tallon argued. Moreover, "clubs" for unemployed persons could easily become a staging ground for political agitation and certainly the Dominion had seen more than enough of that in the aftermath of the Great War. The implication was that prolonged unemployment led invariably to dependency: lack of supervision, Tallon ominously warned, "impairs efficiency and leads to other abuses." In the context of direct comparisons drawn to the Great War, Tallon's warning would not go unheeded. The employment office would undergo a form of discursive retrofitting. The veteran who now crossed the threshold into this new public space would immediately apprehend its seriousness of purpose through the disciplinary controls designed into its internal architecture and organisation. The "efficient placement office" was created. Counters were installed. A regular regime of appointments and systematic record-keeping was to be instituted. The purpose, the focus, and the organisation of bodies moving through this rationalised public space would be closely and carefully scrutinised and monitored, transformed as part of a scientific discourse of objective efficiency integrated into the architectural design and relations transacted within. As described in a popular handbook distributed to service personnel on discharge, the National Employment Service was an effective job placement operation for every 'class' of worker across the country, "a kind of employment market" capable of transferring workers to any job anywhere, all "with a view to securing the proper distribution of workers in relation to jobs available." The veteran came to the employment office to register for work, not to 'loiter.'

As comments like Tallon's suggested, Great War veterans were seen by some as a group apart, standing in potential opposition to former friends, family, co-workers and communities, having lived through trauma few could begin to conceptualise let alone directly confront. Some
policy practitioners, however, argued that there was an important difference between the veterans of the CEF who fought in the Great War and the group of veterans now awaiting discharge. New psychological and psychiatric knowledges and the technologies created in their name were alleged to have created a new form of soldier. In this way, the “fighting man” was invoked as a distinct identity in psyche-based discourses, one whose subjective capacities and aptitudes were calculable, known, honed and directed into the best possible application within the modern military apparatus. This, at least, was the thoughtful opinion of Robert England, Executive Secretary of the General Advisory Committee on Demobilisation and Rehabilitation (ACDR). The ACDR Sub-Committee on Employment took up the more critical challenges surrounding the job placement of ex-service personnel in part through a programme of vocational training and counselling. In a confidential submission to ACDR tabled in 1942, England contrasted the problems confronted in the aftermath of WW I to the very different conditions obtaining now. It was, he contended, a very different, very modern war. Where the Great War had been fought by recent “immigrants,” this was a war being conducted by Canadians:

Born and educated in Canada, selected by a much more effective medical screen, engaging in the training and service of modern mechanised armed force, they are becoming accustomed to modern techniques of personnel selection; they are being subjected in the army and the air force to intelligence quotient and aptitude testing; and selection for types of training is being made along psychological lines as never before ... In consequence the demobilised serviceman will have become familiar with wide opportunities for training in skills, and may in many cases have become accustomed to objective tests of his capacity for training. England’s assertions of the ‘superiority’ of the W.W.II veteran drew upon a range of discursive constructions of ‘intelligence,’ of ‘scientific objectivity,’ and of the alleged neutrality of mental testing technologies. In part, his arguments were closely informed by the exclusionary practices of army recruiters, as evidenced by the “pure European descent” or “pure white race” practices of military selection. At the same time, England’s comments may be understood within the context of experiences stemming from the inter-war period, located in the broader deployment of racialised conceptions of the intelligence of so called “inferior races” that ensued from mass testing by the United States Army during the First World War. Educational psychologists in Canada made liberal use of the fallacious conclusions drawn from US Army testing data, to articulate a racial template of intelligence and then to deploy this template as scientific proof that “intelligence” varied according to the “biological” fact of race. Peter
Sandiford, head of the Ontario College of Education at the University of Toronto, and Olive Ruth Russell’s advisor during her tenure as a research associate at the college, was one of the strongest proponents of this position. Sandiford drew his material directly from the United States, in particular Stanford University psychologist Lewis Terman. As evidence of the considerable power mobilised through intelligence discourse, Terman’s guide to IQ testing, originally published in 1919, remained in wide circulation as the major authority on intelligence testing and its application in education and personnel selection throughout the period considered here. The guide was named, appropriately enough, *The Measurement of Intelligence. An Explanation of and A Complete Guide for the Use of the Stanford Revision and Extension of the Binet-Simon Intelligence Scale*. Terman described the primary purpose of testing as follows:

> It is safe to predict that in the near future intelligence tests will bring tens of thousands of these high-grade defectives under the surveillance and protection of society. This will ultimately result in curtailing the reproduction of feeble-mindedness and in the elimination of an enormous amount of crime, pauperism, and industrial inefficiency. It is hardly necessary to emphasise that the high-grade cases, of the type now so frequently overlooked, are precisely the ones whose guardianship it is most important for the State to assume.  

There was a national purpose to testing as well, a purpose that would assume greater significance as the priorities of labour force organisation gained prominence. National measures of intelligence were what mattered most to Terman and to later advocates of mental testing: the only question that really mattered was the quality of the national population itself, not the particulars of individual defectives:

> How high is the average level of intelligence among our people, and how frequent are the various grades of ability above and below the average? With the development of standardised tests we are approaching, for the first time in history, a possible answer to this question.

Testing received a massive boost during the First World War. The Alpha and Beta tests used in the US Army purported to measure such functions, operations and capacities as literacy, mathematical and spatial reasoning, and mechanical aptitude. R.M. Yerkes gathered together his colleagues Goddard, superintendent at the training school and social laboratory for alleged mental defectives in Vineland, New Jersey, and Lewis Terman from Stanford, to collaborate in developing the Alpha and Beta tests between May and July 1917. Yerkes gained a strategic position within the US Army which would permit him to oversee the administration of tests.
among recruits. Yerkes' subaltern, C. C. Brigham, took the test results to yet another level of application when, in his capacity as secretary of the United States College Entrance Examination Board, he launched the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The fallacy of the tests, one which Brigham eventually acknowledged, was the unreliability, if not the absurdity, of the army test data on two counts. First, the Alpha and Beta could not be combined into a single score as they each measured different things and were in any case internally inconsistent. Second, the tests did not measure supposedly innate intelligence as Yerkes and his colleagues alleged, but instead assessed familiarity with American language and culture. 11

During the inter-war period, Sandiford became a leading spokesperson on the subject of intelligence and immigration restriction. Sandiford received press attention under the mantle of academic respectability and scientific objectivity. He assumed centre stage in the debate over immigration during the 1920s, when he declared that intelligence and race were directly linked. He contended that intelligence levels conformed to a racial hierarchy, a reflection of the natural biological order. Race, he continued, was a biological fact. Social ‘problems’ were in turn traceable to those ‘races’ pronounced to be of ‘inferior stock.’ For example, at a Toronto gathering of the International Council for Exceptional Children in 1928, Sandiford cited the results of US Army Intelligence tests to argue, much like his counterparts in the US, that these results were all the evidence needed to introduce stronger quotas and more stringent restrictions in Canadian immigration law. The army tests were widely publicised as objective scientific proof of the links between race and intelligence level. Sandiford cited the US army test results, along with his own research, explaining to his Toronto audience that the very survival of Canada depended upon its capacity to attract and retain the right stock of white British ‘settlers.’ Sandiford tapped into the apprehension that too many of this preferred group were leaving Canada to seek their fortunes in the United States, while so-called inferior races were thronging at the borders and ports, filling prisons, asylums and houses of correction, and relief lines. His race-based analysis, as the following makes clear, ran dangerously parallel to the genocidal anti-Semitic and racist claims which were at that time fuelling the Nazi mobilisation in Germany:

Whether or not a nation’s intelligence, health and morals shall be permanently raised or lowered by the immigrant groups admitted to its citizenship, transcends in importance the more transient difficulties connected with tariff, transportation or economic difficulties… A mistake with these lesser problems can be rectified
by subsequent legislation, but once an inferior people are settled as citizens
nothing on earth short of extermination can remedy the state of affairs.12

As population policy, Sandiford argued that immigration law was central to the racial
identity of the nation and of the quality and calibre of its labour force. The distance between
biological and social heredity illustrated the multiple ways in which “race” as conceptual
strategy and practice was mobilised. When so-called “inferior” races outperformed preferred
“superior” races on IQ tests, culture was mobilised as a racialised category to account for the
difference, and to stabilise the racial superiority of white population groups. Sandiford had
conducted precisely such a series of tests on the “mentality” of students in British Columbia, and
found that Japanese and Chinese students scored the highest respectively. Undaunted, he asserted
that intelligence was universal, but development and civilisation were culturally contingent such
that one would expect to find individuals of purportedly high intelligence even among more
“primitive” cultures. As he explained in his university textbook, Educational Psychology: An
Objective Study, published in 1938, “A Beethoven born in the depths of an African forest or in
the wilds of Patagonia would never compose beautiful sonatas and symphonies, although he
might, and probably would, become the best tom-tom beater of his tribe.”13 Sandiford’s work
exemplified the deeply-rooted racialised discourses underpinning educational psychology during
this period. The race-based, gender and class-based typologies which comprised the foundations
of these knowledge practices would continue to be deployed wherever mental testing was
implemented.

The confidence invested in the testing programme was as profound as it was absolute:
here was an administrative tool that could be deployed with ease and efficiency, provided always
that it remained in the hands of a trained technician. In his review of mental testing procedure,
England was particularly excited by the new perspective these techniques offered for resolving
the vexing question of re-instatement in civil employment. Like so many others who
contemplated the possible applications of modern personnel selection methods to industry,
England looked to the obvious benefits of objective testing and personnel selection procedure.
These procedures explicitly opened up the interior of the policy subject to techniques of
governance, a way of mapping populations within the modern labour force according to new
grids of intelligibility, constituting emotional stability, suitability and interests, as effects of
discursive categories around which employability would be organised – aptitude, intelligence and capacity. The military had proven the efficacy of such methods. The point now was to encourage employers and government to adopt the same. According to England, here was an objective, scientific method by which to quell the pressures of nepotism, to eradicate the patronage of personal networks – those conventional and clearly inefficient methods of job placement favoured primarily by those having all the right connections. The view held by some uninformed individuals in business and community, that military service created problems, that it "unfits the man for civil life," would have to give way in the face of what England described as "a new concept" of the "carefully selected group," habituated to the rigours of psychological testing. Test results were seen to generate objective documentary evidence – empirical proof – that these individuals were "better men that [sic] those who remained at home." The patriotic contribution these veterans had made to the defence of their nation was unquestioned. But now, their psychological stability provided an additional dimension to the "sentimental appeal of having fought for the country in which they now seek employment."14

Personnel selection and placement proceeded within rehabilitation programming according to the same sets of knowledge practices that had informed military recruitment and personnel selection. Assessment standards were characterised as objective and therefore far more reliable in their predictive and administrative capacity. This was the only way bias could be eliminated and the "best man for the job" be given a credible opportunity for employment. Veterans had been torn from their communities, in some cases for several years and for many, well before they had had the opportunity to establish an employment record, making it unlikely that any employment references would be forthcoming. In the event, the Post-Discharge Re-Establishment Order only applied to 35% of the total enlisted service personnel.15 The only way to surmount this "handicap of the lack of associational and neighbourhood influence" was through a modern placement service guided by a programme of objective testing and counselling. In this way, the best suited applicant would get the job "irrespective of whether the employer happens to know his uncle or not."16

In his report to the ACDR General Advisory Committee Sub-Committee on Employment, England outlined the framework for a placement programme that proceeded on the basis of
objective knowledge about individual employment capacity. Aptitude and capacity were seen as measurable and, once assessed, could effectively displace so-called personal idiosyncrasies to provide a more accurate documentary representation of occupational suitability and overall employability. Every occupation, personnel employment experts believed, demanded a verifiable level of "physical and mental equipment." Mental testing represented both technique and strategy. Intelligence was its accomplishment, reified as a universal reflection and assertion of the natural order of things, of society and biology as these were manifested in the social order.

Intelligence was that elusive quality, the substance and strategy which embodied the potential to harness human capacities, now recast as human resources, as the basis for a new, more efficient and productive, even harmonious social order. This ideal-typical world was articulated as such by the earliest architects of intelligence measurement, Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon, in 1908:

Of what use is a measure of intelligence? Without doubt one could conceive many possible applications of the process, in dreaming of a future where the social sphere would be better organised than ours; where every one would work according to his known aptitudes and in such a way that no particle of psychic force should be lost for society. That would be the ideal city. It is indeed far from us. But we have to remain among the sterner and the matter-of-fact realities of life, since we deal here with practical experiments which are the most commonplace realities.  

Individuals could be examined, and their capacities calibrated according to occupational requirements identified through employment research. Employability was articulated to this new grid of intelligibility. For this reason, England isolated the significance of determining the current skill and, in particular, the learning capacity of each applicant. England summarised the broad conceptual framework developed by employment researchers and educational psychologists over the past decade, as follows:

(1) Ability to learn and alertness. There are certain definite standards of intelligence necessary for certain types of employment and objective tests have been devised to cover these ...

(2) Academic standing. This means that the content of knowledge is sufficient to meet the needs of the job. The candidate may well have a high intelligence quotient but if through lack of opportunity or application he has failed to reach the requisite academic standing, the job for which he applies might well be out of his reach ...

(3) Aptitude. This is the power to acquire a skill. Much work has been done in developing mechanical and other aptitude tests in relation to types of
employment which have been analysed in order to determine the characteristics or symptoms governing success in each specific employment. Furthermore, attempts have been made to measure the interest of the individual in the various types of occupation as it is realised that interests correlate closely with aptitudes. Interest inventories are useful as indicating whether the individual would find certain types of employment congenial.

(4) Attitude and adaptability. To some extent these relate to questions of temperamental adjustment and very often the ability to learn, the academic background, and the aptitude when backed by interest in the occupation determine the attitude to the work.¹⁸

Personal subjective influences were in this way seen to be eliminated entirely, leaving behind an accurate and objective assessment – a reliable documentary representation – of the employability of the candidate in question. No one could predict what that individual might do at any point in the future. The predictive capacity of objective assessment lay in its application as a normative calibration of probabilities, as a tool relating the measure of individual human capacities to averages defined within the broader population. England summarised this aspect of the testing apparatus in the following way:

It is important to recognise that aptitude tests do not directly measure future accomplishment. They can only indicate potentialities and estimate, therefore, probabilities. Behaviour in response to the testing is symptomatic and can only be taken in conjunction with other data relating to physique, character, and experience.¹⁹

“Symptomatic response” opened the space for the cultural and the social, transforming relations of gender, of class, sexuality and race into features of individual personality, thus intensifying even as they elided the material and subjective effects of racialisation, and of the constitution of gender and class-based knowledges already deeply embedded within the testing technologies. Class, race, gender and sexuality were reduced to the conceptual status of individual variability – a function of difference. Further, this framing of an apparent inter-mingling of supposedly innate propensities and alleged symptomatic behavioural variation was, as England himself acknowledged, a restatement of the nature-nurture controversy which continued to fragment and destabilise the truth-telling claims of psyche-based knowledge production. England’s summary of the literature was another instance of how testing, as a technology of educational psychology discourse, worked through the interstices of the hereditarian-environmental tensions which constituted the category of intelligence and the operationalisation of that category through mental testing technologies and techniques.
The knowledge-making practices of educational psychologists associated with the CNCMH worked to create a strategic, indeed an opportunistic, balance in the ongoing controversy between hereditarian and environmental biological and psychological research. Educational psychology worked through the interstices of hereditarian and environmental tendencies within the mental hygiene movement. Sandiford's work conformed to the key tenets articulated by hereditarian biologists and their psyche-based colleagues in the United States and Britain. Biological science actively constituted the 'fact' of race as a central focus and critical object of analysis of scientific research. Environment was enlisted through the educational enterprise to remediate, direct, develop and administer biological 'inheritance.' This view had been articulated as well by Terman, one closely informed by the campaigns during the immediate post-W.W.I period against so-called "feeblemindedness," and the association of that pathology with working-class, immigrant women and men whose origins as other than white and British marked them as dangerous populations responsible for "race suicide." Terman was a strong advocate of how scientific testing might resolve the relation of heredity, environment and the production of social problems once and for all, using testing to move into the interior of the subject and, in doing so, mark the minds as well as the bodies of the tested subject:

Is the place of the so-called lower classes in the social and industrial scale the result of their inferior native endowment, or is their apparent inferiority merely a result of their inferior home and school training? Is genius more common among children of the educated classes than among children of the ignorant and poor? Are the inferior races really inferior or are they merely unfortunate in their lack of opportunity to learn? Only intelligence tests can answer these questions and grade the raw material with which education works.20

This was where Sandiford found his strategic compromise and where, as an interventionary strategy for associates of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, educational psychology was to make an enduring contribution. For Sandiford, heredity and environment were "correlative factors" which, taken together, produced the dynamic relation of "social heredity." This was a prescription for population policy, a programme tempering the claims of hereditarianism through the liberalist project of education, a strategic move which opened up the domain of both to the expert interventions of educational psychologists. As Sandiford summarised it, "Children are born with a biological heritage. They are born into a social
heritage."\textsuperscript{21} Education and parenting were the obvious cornerstones of social inheritance, while capacity and intelligence were deployed as vectors into the biological contribution.\textsuperscript{22} Blatz summarised the compromise position as follows: "A child is born with a capacity that is high or low or intermediate; what he does with it depends on his motivation and persistence."\textsuperscript{23} Heredity had not entirely left the scene however. As Blatz explained: "One can never leave one’s heredity behind; one can never remain unaffected by one’s environment ... In so far as heredity, over which we have no influence whatever, is stamped upon us at birth, it is apparent that the individual reaches whatever heights and depths the future holds through environmental factors."\textsuperscript{24}

Gender, on the other hand, was a less stable category as constituted within mental testing discourse. Terman reviewed the relation of sex differences to IQ scores. In analysing the results of tests conducted among school-age children, he found that there was a "fairly constant superiority" of girls until the age of 13, after which the curve of boys’ test results rose above the girls'. Other than this slight difference, the "distribution of intelligence" appeared equal between the sexes and ages within both groups. There was little variation to report. When looking at results from individual tests, practitioners claimed to note more specific aptitudes – boys were better at "arithmetical reasoning, girls at aesthetic comparison and tying a bow-knot" – but these differences hardly substantiated claims of greater or lesser "amounts" of intelligence between the sexes. So how to account for such tremendous variation in social performance, which was after all the subject matter to which testing was devoted? Terman was forced to admit that perhaps sexual differentiation could only be accounted for through "wholly extraneous factors." His speculative conclusions, of which there were four, are worth noting in full:

(1) The occupations in which it is possible to achieve eminence are for the most part only now beginning to open their doors to women. Women’s career [sic] has been largely that of home-making, an occupation in which eminence, in the strict sense of the word, is impossible. (2) Even of the small number of women who embark upon a professional career, a majority marry and thereafter devote a fairly large proportion of their energy to bearing and rearing children. (3) Both the training given to girls and the general atmosphere in which they grow up are unfavourable to the inculcation of the professional point of view, and as a result women are not spurred on by deep-seated motives to constant strenuous intellectual endeavour as men are. (4) It is possible that the emotional traits of women are such as to favour the development of the sentiments at the expense of innate intellectual endowment.\textsuperscript{25}
Here was as good a case of grasping at straws if ever there was one. Gender difference was naturalised as a function of emotion and reproductive capacity, a biological ‘fact’ written on the body, and therefore the minds, of women.

Mental testing was to the administrative regime of congregate social institutions like schools, armies and factories what intelligence was to the psyche-based practitioner: the technology of mental hygiene discourses, the embodiment of the truth-claims generated by its practitioners, the proof, a testimony for the veracity of those truths. Blatz encouraged parents to have their child tested, advising that this procedure would alleviate disruption over the longer term. He argued that the best organised, most modern schools systematically and regularly tested all pupils, to ensure that they were directed into the most beneficial course of study, and did not find themselves slotted into a programme that was either too difficult or not challenging enough. Streaming in schools was just the first stage in a lifetime of sorting. Blatz advised that it was best implemented by the age of seven years. Once a child reached that age, the “accomplishments, interests, and capacities should be accurately known,” Blatz suggested, “and a division of pupils into at least two groups – academic and non-academic – should be made.”

At the centre of this constellation of power-knowledge relations stood the subjectivity of the individual whose intelligence was problematized, caught up within a controversy that traversed both historical and evolutionary time, a product of culture and of biology. This was the unstable terrain over which the struggle between hereditarians and environmentalists would contest the meaning and significance of intelligence as an index for social planning and national productive efficiency.

Students at the Ontario College of Education were taught that there were three main applications for intelligence tests: calibration, or institutional organisation of pupils according to alleged capacity and ability; diagnosis of deficiencies or “feeble-mindedness;” and prognosis, or “forecasting the intellectual or vocational future of young persons.” Intelligence approached in this way was the “raw material” on which the educational programme worked. The test was not a crystal ball through which to forecast the destiny of its subjects. Parents and teachers alike were repeatedly told that they would do well to avoid overstating the significance of the test score: “Intelligence tests will not tell us which pupil will succeed at school, but only which pupils will succeed providing they work hard, and remain relatively free from disease, and from mental and moral degeneration.” In this, Sandiford was echoing a point made repeatedly by Lewis Terman.
that testing had no predictive capacity beyond the actual measure of intelligence. This was not
some new phrenology dressed up to improve upon the vulgar measures of nineteenth-century
cranium expert Caesar Lombroso. On this point, Sandiford was emphatic, cautioning his
readers against overestimating the capacity of testing. “An intelligence test, like any other form
of examination, is judged by its validity, reliability, objectivity, ease of administration and
scoring, and by the satisfactoriness of its norms.” These were the standards by which to test the
veracity of the truth claims made by any “test.” But the foremost problems associated with such
tests were twofold: their design and the interpretation, together with implementation and
application of their results. Once again, the capacity to make truth claims, to establish one’s
authority to assert these claims to be true and to assert the methods by which such claims were to
be accepted as true: these were closely scripted and carefully guarded capacities to be
appropriated only by trained practitioners within the discipline.

Testing, because derived from statistical norms, was seen as a “neutral” tool assisting the
practitioner in a scientific ordering of population: difference emerged as the distance between the
averaged norm and apparent deviations from that norm. The rest – performance and development
– was the domain of policy, of education, vocational training and employment policy. For
example, vocational tests according to Sandiford, were “still in their infancy.” Many such tests
failed to meet the required standard because the problem to be tested was not well-defined.
Defining a problem along the psychological dimension was a matter of calculating its
mathematical probability. As Sandiford explained, the calculation of chance explained all:

Every known variable trait (speed in addition, ability to memorise, general
intelligence, general morality, speed in typewriting, ability in handwriting, size of
leaves, length of tentacles), whether of human beings, animals, or plants, is found
to be distributed among unselected members of any homogeneous group
according to the curve of chance. Once again, environment and heredity were correlative factors, which in the measurement of
traits including intelligence generated correlation coefficients distributed along the curve of
chance with predictable ease and administrative grace. Taking a leaf from Mendelian genetics,
Sandiford contended that factors or genes were in fact the “true unit-characters in inheritance”
and notwithstanding that genes could not be visibly apprehended as concrete entities, “the
factorial hypothesis accounts for every known fact in heredity.” Failure to understand this
technique meant that the object to be tested, the social problem to be inquired into would not be properly identified, rendering the test design inadequate and subsequent results flawed. In other words, this was an exclusive club of expert practitioners, limited to those properly schooled in the application of mathematical techniques like factorial analysis and the calculation of coefficients of correlation, a loyal company of experts committed to the science of mental testing. 33

In his summary presentation, England also drew on the civil service admission interview, suggesting that its checklist might serve a useful purpose in the work of rehabilitation counselling. The list included an assessment and ranking of the following: appearance, bearing, social and moral qualities, alertness, judgement, presentation of ideas, vocabulary and general speech. Whatever the merits of the current compromise, the Dominion Civil Service Commission made extensive use of intelligence and related tests and if it was good enough for the civil service then surely it was good enough for DVA. In this way, England drew upon work already well underway within the Directorate of Personnel Selection, to which I now turn.

Developing the psychological techniques of personnel assessment

Knowledge practices developed within educational psychology discourses would have tremendous implications for the work of personnel selection and placement in both the military and labour force generally. Techniques surrounding vocational assessment and counselling were developed and expanded as part of the work of the Directorate of Personnel Selection within the Department of National Defence, under the direction of Colonel William Line, a member of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene (Canada) (NCMH) and former psychology professor at the University of Toronto. Olive Ruth Russell’s work extended well beyond the administration of mass tests to the hundreds of women presenting themselves for military service. She agitated continuously for improvements to personnel assessment and selection procedures, an active engagement with policy development through which Russell and her colleagues attempted to secure – to formalise and institutionalise – the systematic application of this work as a regular feature of vocational training and employment policy. Like so many of her colleagues in the field of psychology, Russell had a tremendous opportunity to apply these innovative and increasingly powerful tools during the Second World War, and through the postwar programme of veterans’
rehabilitation and reconstruction for peacetime. I now turn to a closer consideration of her work in the Directorate of Personnel Selection in DND, assigned to work with CWAC.

As an Army Examiner, Russell administered the "M" test to appraise the psychological calibre of women applying to enlist in the Canadian Women's Army Corps. According to the departmental policy guide, the objective of personnel selection was to assess the "total personality of the individual soldier – his [sic] abilities, capacities, and skills, his desires and worries, his attitudes and interests, his emotional stability and his social habits." The purpose of the M test, and one of the main tasks of the Directorate, was to assess recruits for any signs of susceptibility to 'battle exhaustion,' or what had in the Great War been labelled 'shell shock.'

The examination consisted of a series of tests designed to gauge everything from mechanical aptitude to vocabulary, arithmetic reasoning – then considered a proxy for "intelligence" – to spatial reasoning. The results were compiled into a single score based on the linear-scale measure – the "M" score – itself used as a designation of intelligence and learning capacity. Scores were ordered according to a hierarchical ranking of human capacity, from the lowest level of 'private' through to what was considered 'officer material.' Results were grouped according to the following six classifications, the predictive capacity of which would determine the applicant’s future placement, promotional and, as it happened, postwar civilian opportunities as well:

GROUP I (total score 175 or better). Very superior intelligence and learning capacity (within the top 6% of the recruit population).
GROUP II (total score 160-174). High ability, though not up to the standard of group I. Learning capacity sufficient to enable them to assimilate Officer training (if qualities of leadership are present).
GROUP III (total score 130-159). Above average intelligence. Able to undertake most work of a complicated sort, or to learn all but the most technical of Army trades.
GROUP IV (total score 100-129). Average intelligence. Able to carry out ordinary duties with minimum of supervision.
GROUP V (total score 70-99). Limited ability. Able to perform simple routine tasks under supervision.
GROUP VI (total score 0-69). Definitely below normal; falls within lowest 8% of recruit population. (Some of the men scoring in this group will be feeble-minded).
But test score alone was not thought adequate. "Every soldier," stated the policy handout "has a different type of personality and an individualised approach is absolutely necessary for a true and useful size-up." What other factors had to be taken into account? Again, the handbook described characterising signs to be watchful for:

In using such descriptive terms, it should be kept in mind that the intelligence of the man is not the only factor which enters into the production of a certain score. If other factors are present (language handicap, illiteracy, illness, etc.) they should be taken into account in deciding the terms to be used.37

Language and literacy were code for cultural, racialised and class-based signifiers, subsuming social relations and their material effects as categorical knowledges within the techniques and technologies of individual psychology, vectors by which to classify and calibrate individual capacity, efficiency, individual and social worth. As would become evident among assessments of women, additional social indices opened up further dimensions of 'personality' thought to require further scrutiny. In an application of moral regulatory discourse, leisure and work activity, domesticity and familial status were scrutinised for what they might reveal of inappropriate activities concerning dance halls, theft, alcohol consumption, and 'dependency.' All were addressed within the same conceptual continuum as instances requiring closer examination for what they might reveal of maladjustment. Appraisals of intelligence were deemed incapable of penetrating through to the core of the individual, to reveal the personality of the inner self – the interior of the subject. Personality, after all, was a dynamic quality, one not so easily captured by the uni-dimensional score generated by the M test.

"The psychiatrist at war" was a visible figure, a signifier of a modern army – military and industrial – deploying the full range of expertise and insights of psyche-science. At the same time as psychiatry and psychology were seen to be benefiting industry, science was seen to be contributing substantially to military success as well. Everyone knew that the German army made extensive use of psychologists and psychiatrists in order to reach its current strength. Military and therefore national superiority was based not on size so much as it was on the "quality of human material" that could be drawn out of the broader population. In 1942, The Washington Post published an article about the Mental Hygiene Unit of the US Army to publicise the importance of mental hygiene and the tremendous contribution of psyche-sciences to the war effort in the US. The Mental Hygiene Unit deployed psyche-techniques for assessment
and treatment; but its main purpose, according to the news story, was preventive — to weed out those alleged to be mentally unfit for military service through regular use of aptitude and intelligence testing by psychologists and intensive interviewing and examination by psychiatrists. These practices were found to have increased efficiency and returned considerable financial dividends. Techniques like these permitted much closer examination and more accurate diagnoses of those who, in the Great War, may simply have slipped through the net and into that vague category of doubtful masculinity, “mama’s boy,” or that expansive and infinitely more challenging category, the “outright psychopathic case.” The critical distinction between the Great War and now was that so much of psychiatric science formerly approached problems encountered in the military as “shell shock” — a misnomer that attributed all cases of maladjustment to an organic condition, thus overlooking the “mental side” entirely. This error was corrected by the Mental Hygiene Unit as science moved to occupy the interior of the individual, assessing social problems as a manifestation of maladjusted psyches, disordered personality and defective character. Examples found noteworthy enough to recount to the press included: 20% ‘drunk,’ 20% listed simply as ‘maladjusted,’ 13% ‘worried about families,’ and 10% ‘involved with a girl.’ The article portrayed the clinic as an integral part of the military experience, having gained acceptance among enlisted personnel: “A large number of the soldiers, nearly a fourth of all those seen at the mental hygiene unit, have requested help. This is significant, for it shows that the men do not look upon the clinic as an outfit that is searching for ‘nuts.’”38 The larger issue, however, concerned the problems enlisted personnel were seen to bring with them into the modern army. The high rejection and discharge rate experienced in both Canada and the US — although the Post article looked only at the US — could be attributed not to the experience of military service but to lifestyle and problems of maladjustment which had occurred long before enlistment. Inadequacies of character, ‘defects in adaptation,’ or questionable lifestyle may well escape notice in civilian life but certainly could not withstand the “iron mould of discipline” that was the military norm.

A central question for Russell and her colleagues at the Directorate concerned the issue of how to organise and implement the special knowledges generated about women who came before the Army Examiner. To Russell, every recruit examination was also an inquiry into the social and every woman an embodiment of all which was held to threaten the social order. So-
called illegitimate pregnancy, venereal disease, poverty, drinking, dancing and sex topped Russell's list of social and individual pathologies. Screening for the CWAC was also screening for society generally, and Russell would take every opportunity to propose that every regulatory measure initiated within the CWAC would also be initiated within civilian society. If a recruit was found to constitute a problem — real or potential — in the armed service, Russell claimed, then surely she must have been a 'problem' in civilian life? Examinations of women drew on that more elastic category, social maladjustment and 'emotional instability,' a category which was invested with considerable diagnostic, explanatory, pre- and proscriptive powers. Russell wanted to put all information to the maximum possible use as part of a comprehensive screening policy capable of extending back in time and space into the civilian life history of the subject, to compile a documentary record of the individual subject. This longitudinal case history reconstituted the subject as a 'problem case,' providing a permanent public record — an official identity — which might well accompany her beyond discharge and into her resumption of 'private' life as a citizen. Work of this kind added a profound layer of regulatory intervention into the personal lives of women caught within its ambit, since such a "case history" might be deployed to condition access to public assistance, to a more intense degree of scrutiny and regulation through state and community social welfare agencies. To Russell, such measures were positive developments in an elaboration of supervision by state and civil society, an opportunity to demonstrate the efficiency, the predictive and therefore administrative power of educational psychology, of its associated techniques which, if applied correctly, extended the scope of government, of social agency and educational practices in the resolution of real social problems. "Excessive individualism" was the real problem according to Russell: the failure of young women to observe their place within society. Her evidence was consistently directed at young women whose independent lifestyles and habits, particularly their proclivity for dancing and drink, were characterised as "selfish" and irresponsible, giving rise to all manner of social problems. Comprehensive social planning was the true purpose of sound public policy. And that meant ensuring that no woman, once identified as a "problem case" would be permitted to maintain any independence, privacy or anonymity.

In 1942, Russell found herself stationed in a tent on the frequently muddy grounds of Toronto's City Hall, accompanied by an army brass band to herald the presence of recruiters
from CWAC. After only two months at her new post as Personnel Selection Officer in MD2 (Toronto), Russell forwarded a list of policy recommendations to her Director of Personnel Selection, Colonel William Line at NHQ Ottawa, in which she outlined her serious concerns regarding the lack of comprehensive measures for screening out ‘unsuitable’ personnel. These were the women to whom Russell and her colleagues would devote much time and energy, devising techniques by which to locate, identify and remedy “problems” which were most likely passing undetected through the mass-testing technique deployed throughout the regular and women’s services.  

The war represented a call to national service and a commitment to professionalism Russell shared with many of her women colleagues in and out of the armed services. If anything, the war only exacerbated and accentuated social problems that had existed well before the democratic nations of the allied nations confronted the Nazi challenge. Women deemed undesirable for the CWAC were thought to have been ‘problems in civilian life.’ Russell persisted in arguing that “undesirable” women were now availing themselves of the shelter offered by the services as a means of escaping “the ordinary duties of living or the consequences of some misdeeds, even the professional thief and prostitute.” She maintained that careful supervision was required to direct young women from wasteful and potentially harmful leisure pursuits and instead into activities designed to stimulate mind and body in productive and wholesome enterprise, of benefit not only to themselves but also to community and nation.

The incidence of “maladjustment” encountered among military recruits was seen to reflect in microcosm the much greater challenges confronting modern urban society. Women in particular were thought vulnerable to the lure of incipient consumerism, succumbing to a malaise of indifference to personal development, together with a disregard for truth and personal responsibility. Russell reserved her more scathing criticism for those whom she felt had sought out the military to avoid their responsibilities in civilian life. Her narrative reports targeted all that was seen to be wrong with modern young womanhood – the litany of pregnancy, dancing, sex, and drinking. The possibility that so many women, and in particular those who had grown up through the Depression, were able to apply to the CWAC, in particular because of the less stringent entrance requirements, in order to find a good job at decent wages and better working
conditions than many would have known, figured little in Russell's writing on the subject. On the one hand, Russell drew on the trope of patriotism and nationalism, explaining that women were eager to serve their country and the British Commonwealth. She deplored the failure of the army to draw on the considerable commitment and skill demonstrated by the majority of CWAC women. On the other hand, she invoked a stringent moral regulatory standard that pathologised as deviance any behaviour or condition in life that did not conform to a rigid measure of appropriate sexuality, class, race, ethnicity and culture.

Russell's determined investigation of women applying to the CWAC was closely informed by the "whispering campaign" against women in what was historically regarded as the military as an exclusively masculine preserve. By 1942, an all-out campaign was underway to root out any woman deemed to be of "undesirable character" in an effort to shore up the image of feminine respectability the Women's Services were so anxious to project. Predictably, sexuality was the central focus of the campaign. "Illegitimate" pregnancy and/or venereal infection were identified as leading indicators of sexual immorality among women. So was "incorrigibility." Mounting concerns over out-of-wedlock pregnancies among women, particularly by the 1940s, were taken up increasingly as originating in psychiatric maladjustment. In the United States, these narratives played out along race and class lines: black illegitimacy cast as cultural pathology, white illegitimacy being cast as individual pathology. In 1942, the CWAC launched a general campaign of mass recruiting in an all-out effort to encourage women to sign up, thus making as many men available as possible for service in the fighting forces. The CWAC was accessible to women who did not have trades training, high school or vocational education. On the one hand, the CWAC was more open to women seeking good wages, training, security, not to mention work experience in a range of occupations unavailable in civilian life. On the other hand, applicants and recruits would find themselves the subject of intense scrutiny and investigation of their personal lives, experience, "suitability" and "emotional stability" both in their former civilian lives and, if they were accepted, their military lives as well. As Russell's work indicates, the categories of "suitability," of "incorrigibility" and a variety of related terms were deployed to single out as "undesirable" women whose social locations were already marginalised through relations of class, gender, nationality, race and ethnicity. These terms were themselves laden with conceptions about appropriately feminine behaviour, particularly among
women who worked for pay. A young woman who rose up in defiance of the rigid standards of femininity and efficiency, who challenged parental authority, or who resisted an increasingly stringent code of moral and sexual respectability, might easily find herself labelled "incorrigible." In combination with legal misdemeanours, such a finding might be accompanied by a sentence of incarceration.  

Russell’s regular reports concerning recruits who were rejected from the CWAC detailed the standards which were used to constitute a woman as “undesirable.” In addition to M-score, education, occupation and narrative comments constructed the prognosis and therefore confirmed the finding. One woman, whose education had reached grade ten and whose M-score was ranked highly, had been a domestic worker, an occupation considered unskilled. She was described as a “little tramp” and a “superb liar,” but was most suspect for having collected money – a total of $10 – from her mates before leaving. Several women, like this one, were described as having histories of “continuous incorrigibility.” One such case was described as a “possible pregnancy” who “would probably be quite incorrigible.” Another working-class woman, whose education was identified as grade 8 level and “special vocational school” was diagnosed as undesirable. Her lack of secure employment and housing were all the evidence Russell needed of a “flawed moral character”:

Had had a difficult time living in various institutions and seemed never to have learned to settle to a steady job. Was badly groomed and nails bitten to the quick.  

Many of these “problem women” ought to have been identified as such in civilian life, Russell alleged, and for this reason every effort ought to be made to implement comprehensive measures designed to ensure that, upon discharge, they not be permitted to slip back into the civilian stream and subsequent anonymity, there to continue to pose a threat to society. The women in question were thought to be of “undesirable character,” described as “social and moral misfits” whose deviant ways all too often went undetected until it was too late. They exhibited no evidence of “neurosis” or “psychosis”: no condition, that is, which would be readily identifiable as psychiatric in either its origin or manifestation. In many of the “cases histories” cited, sexual agency in combination with physical appearance indicated a socially maladjusted character. Intelligence offered no certain guide in cases such as these. An IQ test might be generally
thought an important index of capacity, however, studies of character and personality required more sophisticated and probing techniques to generate an accurate “personality” assessment. Russell advocated a broader and more probing screening method, noting the “folly” of relying on test scores alone when of a total ten applicants subsequently rejected, 6 had an “M” score higher than 100. The following entries illustrate the narratives Russell constructed in her regular reports. The numerical entry is the “M” score. The characterisation of women as ‘problems’ was juxtaposed in the case study narratives with intelligence score to confirm the accuracy and the alleged objectivity of the examiner’s diagnosis. The following entries belied the “objectivity” of the accounts Russell so carefully constructed.

In the following case study, occupation signified working-class location:

Score 89 - age 29 – helped at home. Packer: A woman with a 5 year old boy; was wearing fox furs and had a general air of superiority. She was quite unwilling to do any work for which she might have been qualified and was not truthful.

Wearing “fox furs” or, for that matter, any symbol of middle or upper class respectability of any kind obviously ran afoul of Russell’s standard of appropriate apparel for an Irish working-class woman. That, coupled with an “air of superiority” marked the woman as one who neither accepted nor understood her inferior ranking in the social order. That she asserted her agency, demanding more than the general domestic labour to which Russell generally assigned working-class women, was sufficient ground for rejection. The final entry, that she was “untruthful,” was the final blow, the denial of her agency and capacity as confirmation of her undesirability and her gender disruptiveness.

Similarly, the following young woman from Windsor was assessed on the basis of her class background.

Score 95 – age 19 – Various jobs: Seemed unreliable. Gave a confused account of herself. Husband is in jail, trial pending etc.

In this next case, the woman’s M-score was well within the acceptable range. She had recently come from the United States, and had a clear idea about what she wanted to do in the women’s services. Once again, her refusal to accept any other job assignment would mark her as undesirable, unfeminine and potentially disruptive.
Score 134 – age 18 – helped care for mother-in-law: Seemed unreliable and I felt was trying to conceal some bad record. She seemed unwilling to do anything but be a driver and she was only 5'1" in height, and altogether could not be recommended for that; she then wanted to back out. 48

In the majority of cases reviewed, nationality and ethnicity were not identified. And so when it was, it was clearly a factor, evidence enlisted to support a diagnosis of “undesirability.” For example, in the following case entry, Russell’s narrative merged with taken-for-granted characterisations of francophone women as less advanced, culturally bound by inherent, backward religious conservatism. That the woman had applied and was conversing – and being tested – in a second language, was obscured; instead Russell described her in psyche-based terms, for example the characterisation of “shyness,” which stood as code for a “personality” which was not forthcoming, a sign of “maladjustment.” In this woman’s case, job stability was turned against her, an indication of passivity, of a femininity that did not meet CWAC standards of efficiency and productivity.

Score 85 – age 18 – Packer: A shy little French-Canadian who has never done any work but sit as a packer. She seemed to have nothing to condemn but little to contribute to CWAC. 49

When Russell examined a group of young women from Newfoundland, ethnicity and class worked through sexuality to position the young women as potentially acceptable, but only with close supervision and guidance. Their rural cultural origin, according to Russell, made them a more likely prospect than their urban sisters of industrialised Ontario.

I believe the Newfoundland girls will provide much good material if properly handled. There are many in the group who are very lacking in initiative and will be easily led, but they respond to good influences as readily as to bad, and will likely serve well if wisely guided. There are fewer of the “little flapper” or “hard boiled” types who are unwilling to do the tasks for which they are qualified, than in Ontario centres where I have worked.” 50

In a passage from her personal correspondence, Russell revealed profoundly racist and class-based beliefs and practices, the foundational conceptualisation of subordinated racial and class groups as always already inferior and “undesirable.” 51 In this case, she positioned a native woman as the embodiment of “unsuitable material” for the Women’s Services, to signify all that was wrong with mass recruiting methods: “I think the girl is an Indian – appearance given which is not surprising [since she] has had dirty jobs etc. [I] don’t know what I’ll do if she finally
passes medical board." Like her predecessors, Lewis Terman and Peter Sandiford, Russell deployed intelligence testing and now the more sophisticated methods of personnel selection to consolidate a racial and class-based typology of intelligence, in this case working through gender and sexuality, and to use the knowledges generated against any woman CWAC thought might constitute a "problem case."

Measures of intelligence were not sufficient, in Russell’s view. She actively extended the range and scope of her investigations to scrutinise all dimensions of social and emotional lives of the women appearing before her. Appearance, any indication of consumer-related taste in clothing or attitude was immediately equated with "loose" standards and immoral behaviour. Sexuality was clearly the target:

> It frequently happens that girls with border-line or low average intelligence are well groomed and smart in their appearance and totally unsuitable for general duties. I am inclined to think that they should be viewed even more critically than those with the same low “M” score who may have a less attractive appearance but seem good steady workers. The low grade “flapper” type is less likely to be satisfied with general duties and more likely to be a problem.53

"It seems important," Russell recommended, “that we screen out social and moral misfits who would not normally likely be sent to the Psychiatrist."54 Women who “tend to be of questionable character” should as a matter of course be referred for psychiatric examination, especially where their “M” score was above 70 (of a possible 211) and/or there was no evidence of neurosis or psychosis. As it was, Russell regularly referred women scoring below 70 on the “M” test for psychiatric assessment as a provisional measure. She went even further to propose that the names of women applying to the CWAC be cleared first by the Social Service Index in their city of residence. Under this proposal, all CWAC applications would be cross-referenced against the records of relief and community agencies, local police and so-called ‘mental’ hospitals. This “new experiment,” was soon underway, prompting Russell to report that she was “delighted that any plans for follow up of the kind will apply to CWAC."55 Conducting a reference check with the Social Service Index would clearly establish a pattern of immorality, dependence, or even worse, incorrigibility and criminal behaviour.
In her investigations, Russell claimed she had found many cases of women registered with the Toronto Social Service Index for relief or assistance from one of the many social service agencies in the city. Many women were identified as having a dependent child. Russell recommended that a trained social worker be brought on staff to conduct a “further enquiry and follow-up study.” The move, she explained, would more than pay for itself, since a routine check of police and mental hospital records would save the longer-term cost of having to deal with “these problem people” who would otherwise have been accepted into CWAC for training. She explained her rationale as follows:

In view of the considerable number of seemingly unsuitable applicants with whom I had to deal, but for whom there was no medical or psychiatric grounds for rejection, I sought the co-operation of the Social Service Index in helping me get further information on some of the persons whose reliability I seriously questioned. Of the first 8 persons about whom I enquired I found 6 listed with the Index for one reason or another. This inquiry revealed instances of women who had dependent young children for whom they were responsible as well as some with a history of almost continuous incorrigibility.58

In January 1943, her superior and later colleague at DVA, Mary Salter, directed Russell to proceed with setting up a referral network as indicated, but to exercise all due discretion both in “making the inquiries and making use of the information.” Russell would later return to this issue, stating that approximately 50% of all women applying from the Toronto district were found to have registered for relief or other assistance at a social agency at some time prior to their attempted enlistment with the CWAC. In Russell’s view, registering at an agency constituted “dependence” and “unreliability,” considered an undesirable trait in a CWAC recruit which constituted grounds for rejection. As she reported her investigation: “Some had court records, others had dependent children or records of incorrigibility while some were registered merely because their families were on relief.” But others within the CWAC were not so keen to proceed with a programme that would document the personal and intimate details of the lives of potential recruits, at least not as official policy. The ‘stigma’ associated with psychiatric assessment proved sufficient to convince DND that it was better not to have on file information considered “too confidential, discreditable or libellous.” Discretion was the preferred approach, reliance on the ability of commanding officers to “read between the lines” with potentially troublesome or “problem” personnel. At the same time as Salter advised Russell to proceed with the social investigation registry check, she also outlined her position on the proposal of
expanding the scope for psychiatric assessments. Salter had discussed Russell’s recommendation with Dr. Jack Griffin, consulting psychiatrist with the RCAMC and NCMH member. As a strong proponent of the mental hygiene agenda, one who was convinced that the expansion of psychiatry and of the psychiatrist’s scope within public policy and social planning could only prove a boon to society, if not all of humankind, Griffin thought Russell’s proposal a fine and sound one. He insisted that “in this day and age” surely it ought not to be considered a “disgrace” that a “girl” had a psychiatric referral on her record.\(^6\) Griffin’s opinion notwithstanding, Salter reiterated her earlier position, explaining that DND did not want to commit itself in any way on the matter, and most certainly not when it came to discharging recruits found to have failed to meet a loosely defined psychological bar. “If she doesn’t get into difficulties it does no good to have a report following her around which may discredit her, despite her good behaviour,”\(^6\) Salter advised. If trouble were looming, surely the specifics of each individual case would generate the necessary grounds for punitive action, if any were warranted.

But this did not entirely satisfy Russell. So many applicants were introducing problems from civilian life into the CWAC and, confidentiality notwithstanding, the Corps had to equip its personnel selection officers with the means to document and act on the basis of their scientific diagnoses. What was the point of all these endless examinations and case interviews, after all, if not to deploy these insights through the accumulated expertise of the Army Examiner and her staff? If written regulations were one matter, practices associated with recruiting examinations were another. Certainly, issuing ‘dishonourable’ discharges to already-enlisted personnel would be a sticky business, involving possible dis-entitlement to military rehabilitation benefits, credits and pensions. The CWAC and its members were under intense scrutiny, and so public attention of this sort was to be avoided at all costs.\(^6\) Canada’s women were now in uniform as part of the fighting services of the Dominion. But it was precisely because of the sensitivity associated with the newly established status of the women’s services that Russell determined it necessary to press ahead. She argued specifically for “a higher standard” for CWAC than for men “in screening out unsuitable personnel,” in particular to address the tendency for army psychiatrists to accept into the corps women whom the CWAC’s own officers felt should have been rejected.\(^6\) Difficult though the experience might be, rejection of unsuitable applicants and the discharge of “problem personnel” was deemed absolutely crucial to securing and maintaining the
"prestige of the Corps and the happiness of its members," according to Russell. This was a position with which many officers and others, including Mary Salter, agreed. The majority of CWAC Company Commanders would likely share the position that far too many "potential problem cases" had been permitted to join the women's army corps. The presence of so many "undesirables" was seen to be hindering the best efforts to attract the very best of Canadian womanhood. The tragedy, mused Salter with perhaps a note of commiseration for Russell's efforts to institute a more rigorous screening policy, was that this small percentage of troublesome cases might have been "screened out without great difficulty."

For now, however, Russell had to content herself with a decidedly cautious approach. According to the Office of the Personnel Directorate, the question of the "rejection of unsuitable material" was dubbed a "rather ticklish matter," which the Director – Colonel William Line – wanted to enact "with proper authority." Staff were to await further instructions before taking any decisive action. In other words, the armed services would not commit to an explicit statement of policy which clearly instituted a differential policy for entrance and examination standards with the intent of searching out and discharging vaguely defined "unsuitable material" – at least not as official written policy. Procedure in this area was seen to be based on administrative practice and not on verifiable, clearly articulated regulatory guidelines.

In December 1943, Russell conducted a survey of all CWAC personnel stationed at Halifax, a total of some 700 women, the results of which were very favourably received by Line and CWAC commanding officers. It was this survey that would consolidate Russell’s position as a key policy advisor whose expert knowledge stood to contribute substantially to policy discussions concerning personnel assessment, guidance and placement. The verification procedures implemented through the Halifax survey generated concrete empirical evidence that individual behaviour and work performance were not only linked, but could be systematically assessed through the predictive and diagnostic capacity of testing and interviewing. Tests of skill, aptitude and intelligence, important as they were, had to be supplemented through access to other personal, more intimate knowledges relating to general behaviour. In the case of "problem personnel" early detection was deemed crucial and a referral network bringing social and policing agencies into the frame was once again recommended.
As an experiment to test the reliability of the Army Examiner’s judgement and to provide evidence of the need for doing more careful screening of recruits, permission was obtained by the writer to enquire (unofficially) at the Social Service Index (which lists all persons registered with any of the Welfare agencies in Toronto) about applicants considered to be of doubtful suitability for C.W.A.C. ... Many notable instances are on record which vindicate the judgements of Army Examiners, and show the desirability of obtaining specific information about the reliability of persons whom they consider doubtful.67

The survey stood out from the rest of Russell’s work as a reassessment of already placed personnel. Where her earlier work had concentrated on initial screening of CWAC applicants, the Halifax survey set about to verify the accuracy of army examination techniques, testing the veracity of the tests themselves to corroborate their predictive capacity. The standard of assessment was now the “happiness” of personnel, as demonstrated by their capacity to find personal fulfilment and satisfaction in their assigned work. Where Russell found dissonance and discord, she invariably attributed such negative results to a mismatching of occupation and test score results: individuals had been placed in occupations which were either too challenging and therefore beyond personal capacities and aptitude, or not challenging enough. In focusing on such qualities as satisfaction, happiness and individual interest, Russell opened up the category of personality and character – of subjectivity – while offering a means of systematic assessment and placement through a rigorous review of occupational requirements matched to a standardised and objective scale of human capacity, while at the same time recalibrating employability on the basis of individual psychology. This approach transformed occupational problems and work-related discord through a verifiable and readily transferable administrative technique. “Problem cases” were even further marginalised within the population of tested subjects: they had been problems in their civilian life and were most definitely out of place within the military population. Line heartily endorsed this latest instalment in Russell’s work, writing that the Halifax survey had been read at the Directorate with considerable interest: “It represents a very complete and thorough study, and should assist immeasurably in effecting more suitable placements.” Russell’s’ recommendations for systematic assessment and regular follow-up to ensure that personnel assignments were conducted according to test-score results and case study interviewing would become regular procedure at the Directorate. These techniques were equally applicable in the reallocation of existing personnel, an area of expertise which informed the
organising principles of rehabilitation programming, specifically vocational assessment during the postwar period.

**Vocational assessment and the mental hygiene programme**

Russell was a member of that large and growing body of expert practitioners who steadily advanced their claims as knowledgeable and instrumental to the broader aims of the military, of education and industry, and of society overall. Their goal as articulated by the NCMH was that this work find acceptance as indispensable to social modernisation and progress, the twin objectives of liberal industrial democracy, and that, as policy subjects, citizens would see the pursuit of mental hygiene as desirable, and social maladjustment as a "normal" condition to be corrected, not feared. As the practice of personnel assessment in the services became regularised, its strategic significance to the postwar rehabilitation of enlisted personnel emerged. From its inception as a practice designed to 'screen out' unsuitable recruits, practitioners like Russell and Line hoped that personnel assessment would become a key technique guiding the placement of ex-service women and men in civilian employment in the postwar period. Russell’s work encompassed a transformation in the development and application of knowledge practices of educational psychology, specifically assessment and counselling techniques embodied in the practice of vocational guidance. This work centred on the constitution of the counselled subject, a key figure animating and operationalising the discursive technique of counselling and assessment. Personality and character were seen as categorical knowledges about the counselled subject. Exposing these knowledges contributed to the constitution of identity and subjectivity, a practice in which both counsellor/assessor and subject participated. This subject of vocational counselling discourse was in many ways an accomplishment of discursive technique, embodying the implementation of psyche-based knowledge practices through which the subject position was initially mobilised and, in practice, the acceptance of those techniques by the counselled subject who would act upon the knowledge achieved. A critical moment in the development of the discursive practices of vocational counselling was the constitution of "personality" through testing technique, marking a shift from the tested subject as the object of testing practices, to the constitution of ‘normal personality’ as the objective of counselling.
Vocational counselling provided a crucial conduit through which the mental hygiene programme could merge with the liberal education project to promote good citizenship and social order, and to prevent mental illness, seen by the NCMH as the source of so many apparent social ills. Much of Russell’s pre-war work reflected the policy agenda articulated by the NCMH. The merging of mental hygiene and education was a heartfelt desire of Dr. Clarence Hincks, director of the NCMH (Canada), a vision he shared with readers in the foreword to a 1940 publication of the American Psychological Association, *Mental Hygiene: A Manual for Teachers*, written by his NCMH colleagues: Dr. J. D. M. Griffin, Associate Medical Director, NCMH (Canada), later consulting psychiatrist for the RCAMC; Dr. S.R. Laycock, professor of educational psychology, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, and later Director General of Rehabilitation for the Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. W. Line, associate professor of Psychology, University of Toronto, later Director of Personnel Selection at the Department of National Defence. Mental hygiene discourse organised the category of intelligence as a key vector into personality. According to Griffin, Laycock and Line, intelligence lay at the root of all manner of problems of the social: criminality, unemployment, delinquency, poverty. Delinquency was characterised as the product of poor guidance and inadequate guardianship, not the product of “a criminally perverted moral sense.”68 Griffin and his colleagues specifically targeted working-class parents, who were seen to be shunning the vocational training for their children were allegedly best suited. Healthy attitude, in particular toward work, could not be maintained, let alone developed, unless a person felt satisfaction at his or her personal achievements. Working-class parents were singled out as misguided guardians, prone to dispensing inappropriate advice to their children, often in compensation for their own apparent shortcomings, encouraging their children to pursue an education for which they were ill-equipped. Compulsory education, specifically the tendency for children to remain in school longer, exacerbated this trend:

Often, even when suitable facilities are available, parents have a pathetic belief in the efficacy of the formal high-school course. They insist that their children make an attempt at it irrespective of their [the child’s] interests or abilities. To these parents, matriculation has been persistently upheld as the only gateway to business opportunities. Sometimes, in forcing a high-school education upon their children, they are really compensating for their long-since-thwarted ambitions for an education themselves.69
The NCMH had deep roots in the area of schooling and work, a domain which these expert practitioners wanted to claim for their brand of educational psychology. The NCMH’s work in the area of educational and industrial psychology was launched in earnest at its annual meeting in 1920 with the appointment of a committee to undertake research in these areas. With private funding from Lady Eaton, the CNCMH set out formally to examine “the educational and industrial systems from a mental hygiene standpoint.” Bott, psychology professor at the University of Toronto, was appointed to direct the study which resulted in a detailed outline of the interdependence of educational and employment policy, a plan that anticipated much closer integration between the school in loco parentis, the home and the employer/industry in an interventionary programme of comprehensive vocational guidance and personnel policy. A key focus for the study was the apparent inefficiency accompanying the constant turnover in industry, the product of apparent freedom of youth to drift from job to job as they pleased. The study was an examination of these phenomenon interpreted within mental hygiene discourses, in ways that both constituted and reified class, race, gender and sexuality as explanatory and causal factors. The following provides a illustration of the technique at work:

... in the case of elimination to go to work [i.e. leaving school before graduation], which is a more complex situation, certain causes will be operating from outside the school system, others may be operating from within as a consequence of certain exigencies in the public school organisation, or again psychological difficulties between pupils or between sexes or races may be important. At any rate it is our duty to note such peculiarities as exist in the distribution of the employment group and to discover if possible the causes which produce them.

Not surprisingly, the key recommendation from the study was the application of group and individual psychological testing as a preventive exercise in “educational stock-taking,” along with a series of recommendations designed to improve and enhance administrative efficiencies within the school, all with a view to preventing problems before manifested in the “sterner school of industry.” All aspects of capacity, proficiency, physical health and “personal qualities and traits” thought to have some bearing on “adaptability and success in all walks of life” were none the less defined as psychological in origin. The psychological dimension was coextensive with the fixed ordering of the biological universe as articulated in social form: that is, the social order of racial, class-based and gender inequality. Bott’s investigation was organised to assess
performance in school and work precisely as a function of gender, race, and class, as the following example makes clear:

Proficiency in special subjects ... the amount and reasons of absence ... repetition of grades, racial composition of the entire enrolment have been discussed ... in connection with employment elimination, but the norms for these are not yet ascertained. Upon all such points differences between the sexes, different nationalities, different school communities [i.e. class], different grades, etc., would assist toward a more accurate understanding of the employment problem. These are matters of educational research in which the University [of Toronto] and organisations such as the National Committee for Mental Hygiene might with propriety assist.73

As a discursive category, “intelligence” was constituted as a new site of intervention by experts, a key site of regulation, and a vehicle through which specific groups would be further marginalised through preconceptions of race, class and gender, working now through the category of “intelligence” and the domain of educational psychology. Similarly, educational psyche-experts insisted that their definitions of “intelligence” were not the dismal hereditarian-based theories of their predecessors. The mental testing promoted by NCMH associates was pure science: objective, rational, dispassionate and, above all, true. Griffin, Laycock and Chant argued that general intellectual growth was predictable, peaking between the ages of 14 and 16, at which time development ceased. Intellectual calibre was distributed fairly consistently across the population, tracing a regular pattern of distribution which meant that very few people were to be found at either end of the curve, registering either very high or very low intelligence. Diagnostic procedures such as tests of ability, intelligence and aptitude would, the authors confidently asserted, generate not a “mass of unrelated data” but a “unified picture of a living person.”74

Cumulatively, these measures charted an entire population, national and institutional. Notwithstanding these claims, racial typologies were clearly evident in the teacher’s guide. The references to “primitive” and “emotion” in association with religion suggest that the child in the following example was Black. The treatment he received from other children at his school implicate his race as the target of “sneers” and “jeers.” And yet, “race” is nowhere identified as such in the account. Instead, the authors implicated difference-as-deviance as a problem of the individual, one which the individual could surmount, given the right intervention of expertise:

Thus, a boy whose father was a minister in a primitively emotional evangelical church usually found himself on the school grounds tagged with the nickname “Preacher” and followed by jeers of “Amen” and “Hallelujah.” Sneers and jeers
developed in him feelings of inferiority and diffidence that were likely to distort his personality ... Fortunately, before avoidance reactions and feelings of social insecurity had become definitely crystallised in his personality, the principal of the school became aware of the situation, discovered superior intelligence in the boy, and by public recognition of the boy’s ability, gave him a place in his own esteem and that of other children that quickly alleviated an undesirable effect.75

Teachers were advised to address, not overt racism and practices of race-based oppression as the boy cited above was the target of, but the “psychology of the individual”: to work through and simultaneously to reduce to the level of individual behaviour, belief and attitude, systemic and material conditions of oppression.

Griffin and his co-authors also approached class as a source of personality maladjustment and disintegration of the home. They asserted that maladjustment was frequently the product of those “qualities of mind that produce poverty.” Delinquency and mental disease were seen to be correlates of what the authors dubbed “disorganised” sections of society, “slums and areas of deterioration.” These experts did not want to be trapped in a fallacy of their own design, however: they had already pointed out that intelligence was normally distributed across the whole population. How, if that was the case, could all residents of such districts record a uniformly low IQ? Ever agile and in a manner reminiscent of Sandiford, Griffin and his colleagues argued, not altogether convincingly, that culture and social conditions were also determinants of intelligence in the “broadest sense.” The example they provided introduced gender into the equation, and sexuality along with it. After providing an account of a young man embarrassed by the manner of dress, speech and “deportment” of his “uncultured” parents, the authors turned to the tale of how such maladjustments were manifested in young women and girls: “One young lady, as a direct result of such influences, transferred her filial embarrassment into an aversion toward motherhood, and so clouded an otherwise lively and generous life.”76

But this was not a call for the rigid application of mental testing solely in order to fit the child for his or her most appropriate vocation within industry. The authors were scathing in their criticism of this narrow application of vocational guidance, focused as it was solely on bending the public education system to meet the needs and interests of the ‘industrialist.’ Where education was conceived of narrowly as training for “life after school, giving the pupil the right
skills so that he may fit into a workaday world and make a living,” the results were only too apparent in individualism and extreme ‘freedom of individual action.’ Such a system produced competition, serving the brightest while neglecting all others. Instead, Line, Laycock and Griffin advanced their view of the school as a vital social institution, linked to home and community as well as industry and church. Its role was to foster a “sound mental outlook” in the child, to facilitate healthy adjustment within community, to encourage participation in ‘social progress’ and ‘good citizenship.’ The school as a social institution was a ‘character-building agency’ responsible for fostering human psychological development and adjustment, working alongside other social institutions including the family. In this way, vocational testing and guidance as it was developed by its leading proponents, many of whom were located at the University of Toronto psychology department, the Ontario College of Education and the NCMH, sought to constitute normative psychological standards for citizenship.

Russell shared the challenge confronted by her colleagues in the mental hygiene field of examining the human psychology as a dynamic constellation of quantifiable factors, reduced to ‘personality.’ Her doctoral research was an attempt to trace the shift from single factor/unilinear measure of intelligence to multiple factor analysis, a move which, she hoped, made possible the dynamic constitution of the psychology of the individual as a psychological matrix of individual human factors. Social factors were reorganised through this discursive field, defined anew through the lens of the individual approached as a psychological entity – as personality. Environment was conceived of as a multiple set of relations to be assessed for their discrete and cumulative effects upon the psychological subject. Individual personality was mapped against the normative distribution of these effects within the broader population. In this way, social maladjustment was meticulously charted as a manifestation of psychological abnormalities which, if diagnosed correctly, could be addressed through remedial measures. But the first order of business was to develop the multiple factor approach and, more importantly, the technology through which this new approach could be deployed as a practical regime for examination, assessment and remediation in work and school, family and community. The problem, as Russell framed it, lay in assessing whether mental ability was reducible to a single factor or if it was instead a composite of a variety of abilities, each requiring separate measurement. The contradiction in this approach lay in conceptualising social categories like gender, a “factor”
Russell problematised in her study, as a factor at the level of individual psychology. Russell’s study investigated alleged differential mental capacities which she considered to be a function of age and gender. In this way, she hoped to extend the predictive capacity of multiple factor testing since “attempts to differentiate mental abilities are highly important from a practical standpoint of Educational and Vocational Guidance.”

If psychology is to render satisfactory service in diagnosing human individuals it is necessary to know whether mental ability is of such a unitary character that it may be measured in terms of a single score, on a so-called general intelligence test, or whether it is composed of abilities of various kinds, each requiring measurement.78

This work was part of a move to a broader psychological assessment of human capacities. A key dimension of this approach was counselling. The counselling function was an active extension of the case study/interview technique in which the practitioner entered the field with the subject, eliciting the truth and the application of that truth in concert with the subject, inviting the willing participation of the subject in a remedial strategy based on the truth-claims elicited through the technique itself. The conceptual frame of “personality” was therefore a development of considerable significance and power, of even greater application as it promised ever-greater precision in the practitioner’s ability to address her/his technique to the institutional relations of rule across a range of social – and economic – locations. For example, psychological knowledge practices were seen to be infinitely applicable in the rationalisation of managerial technique, ordering a variety of social institutional relations devoted to the education and labour of the “whole person,” educating children, directing the future labours – paid and unpaid – of each individual, as worker, as mother, as “incorrigible” or delinquent, as citizen or soldier, informed now by the accuracy, precision and veracity of scientific knowledge practices.

Russell was following a general movement that sought to open up to closer scrutiny the status of ability and capacity as psychological categories, in an effort to develop a better understanding of mental abilities and, more importantly, of the technique necessary to act upon those findings in a range of policy areas. She argued that since there were multiple factors in mental ability, the practice of single factor measure could no longer be defended:

[It is] necessary to abandon the practice of measuring ability in terms of a single score or IQ obtained from a heterogeneous battery of tests or test-items, and to recognise that various component abilities must be measured and seen in their
relationship to each other and to the total setting if psychological diagnosis of the individual is to be worthy of the name.\textsuperscript{79}

The challenges of economic depression threw into question the wisdom of relying on the free market to allocate human capacity according to its best and most efficient application. A well and truly governed society demanded a comprehensive programme of citizen-formation, commencing at the earliest stages of child development in the classroom and extending beyond that into the labour market through a programme of vocational assessment and guidance. Teachers required a thorough grounding in the new principles of educational psychology, particularly since so much of their work went beyond the mechanics of academic instruction, to include as one of its objectives the formation of self-regulating subjects, or in Russell’s words, “to help boys and girls to consider and develop their individual capacities to best advantage ... to develop in them the self-discipline and perseverance to perform necessary duties well, whether they like them or not.”\textsuperscript{80} Penetrating and monitoring the “psychology of the school child” ought to comprise as regular a part of the work day as grading tests and cleaning the chalk board, psychological techniques of administration as mundane a tool in the teacher’s repertoire as pencil and textbook. Much of this technique was developed through child-study research which set about to define the constitutive formative principles and stages of personality development, and what was more important, to explore the conditions concerning adjustment of human personality to insure applications in normal, healthy and efficient pursuits.\textsuperscript{81} This new psychological knowledge of the individual – of individual and normative subjectivity – promised an array of positive applications, redirecting effort from the disciplinary work of correction to the investigation and identification of causality and the constitution of ‘normal personality.’ The objective of these endeavours was in part a programme for rehabilitation, cultivating responsible citizenship through the formation of self-governing subjects.

As part of the broader shift from the investigation of individual pathologies to the study of the conditions of ‘normal’ personality development, psyche-practitioners attempted to isolate those factors in personality which they thought might be classified as examples of faulty or mal-adjustment and then to institute the programme needed to correct the newly-diagnosed “personality disorder.”\textsuperscript{82} This represented a substantial and substantive change in direction from the rigid classification of abnormality and pathology which had so strongly characterised the
eugenic focus on mental degeneracy and feeblemindedness during the earlier part of the century. The potential of this new more positive approach encompassed and further implicated an array of programmes and policy areas governing human relations and human conduct. “The emphasis on environmental factors,” as William Blatz and Helen MacMurchy Bott explained in a standard text for the period, Parents and the Pre-School Child, “tended to break down the vicious and artificial distinction between ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ ... No longer could the community be thought of as divided into two great classes, the normal and the abnormal, the former at large functioning in society, the latter shut off by themselves and denied the activities of everyday life.”83 Studies of “self development” opened up a strategic space for the expert practitioner, raising as it did that pressing question – What is ‘normal’?84 The technique of adjustment encompassed the problem, its diagnosis, and the remedy all within the same frame. As Blatz and MacMurchy Bott confidently asserted, only the expert clinician could develop the necessary technique: “to define the range of deviation that may be considered ‘normal’ is a highly technical matter involving research upon numerous cases with due account taken of the possibility of modification in these trends.”85

Individual citizens could either secure or subvert the principles of liberal democracy. In what was shaping up to be a fight for the very life-blood of democratically ordered society, the first line of defence was to be the careful work of forming responsible self-governing citizens. In a 1936 article for The Torch, the publication of Canadian Girls in Training, Russell outlined the central organising principles which would continue to guide her work in the coming years:

The New Education movement of to-day may be said to be characterised by four main features, the first two of which are adaptations of earlier philosophies, and the last two of which are new to this century. They are: (1) A philosophy of individualism which demands that we train youth – not to be mere automatons, but dynamic, creative personalities; (2) An emphasis on the necessity for social planning and the creation of a new social order; (3) A philosophy of internationalism and world-mindedness; (4) A scientific method of approach to the study of education, and the incorporation and utilisation of what psychology has to contribute to the understanding of the nature of the child and his training.86

Russell was particularly inspired by the assessment and counselling techniques deployed in Germany during the Weimar Republic. She had the opportunity to witness this work first-hand in the summer of 1932, although she feared the threat posed by the Nazi frenzy which was
rapidly consuming that nation. The “splendid efforts of the socialist government” were soon to be jeopardised by the Nazi regime, although the successes of the vocational movement, she observed, had already spread well beyond Germany. The deployment of a rigorous regimen of intensive testing, assessment and observation through a network of state employment boards and a central federal state board was most impressive for Russell, and likely informed her commitment that a similar programme be implemented in Canada. The centralisation of this work through the federal employment office during the 1920s had permitted practitioners to achieve the “highest peak of efficiency” in their work of occupational assessment and vocational guidance, both integral components within the educational and national employment systems. The subject of this policy discourse was, once again, the psychology of the individual, understood to be a composite of multiple factors with multiple effects. The difference was that the focus of these investigations was the ‘whole person,’ rather than a fragmented compilation of test scores so favoured by American behaviourist psychologists:

In all phases of Education and Guidance Activities there is a definite disapproval of the Psychology of Behaviourism and its attendant faith in scores on standardised tests. The influence of Gestalt Psychology is felt practically everywhere. The result is that Germans are persistent in emphasising that each individual is a dynamic unity, an integrated whole, and that the total personality in relation to the total environment of which he forms a part, must be considered by any who would attempt to classify or guide human beings.87

Russell campaigned vigorously to have similar techniques implemented in Ontario using the open discussion of employability and unemployment of the pre-war period to advocate for a more comprehensive system of vocational guidance in education. But there were not enough trained practitioners to go around, and those who did find themselves in the guidance chair too often had found their way there more because of “pleasing personality” rather than any professional training or expertise.

In a 1939 lecture to the North Toronto Neighbourhood Worker’s Local Council, Russell suggested that the day was not far off when every school principal would require at least minimal training in the techniques of vocational guidance and would, moreover, supervise such work as a routine part of the educational work of the school. In fact, all teachers would soon “be trained in methods of psychology and mental hygiene,” as an integrated practice of provincial educational policy.88 In this framework, the focus was not skill or academic performance, those discrete
quantifiable entities which so preoccupied the crude psychometric imaginations of “charlatans” whose testing instruments promised so much but delivered so little. Russell’s attentions were instead concentrated on the more difficult but infinitely more productive – albeit costly – assessments of personality, an exercise which, if implemented as a measure of public policy, would generate a longitudinal record of each individual compiled throughout their tenure at public and high school, and beyond.89

The ‘social’ was problematized in such a way as to leave little doubt about the discursive domain through which these techniques would circulate and of the problems they would transform anew as social problems located within the psychology of the individual. Foremost among these were the “tragedies of unemployment and vocational maladjustment.” The only real question was how much longer these issues could be left unattended and at what escalating cost? At the time of Russell’s speech to the North Toronto Neighbourhood Worker’s Council, the fear of rising fascist movements in pre-war Canada added considerable urgency given the ominous appeal such movements were thought to have for younger, unemployed people.

To those who would say that we cannot afford the machinery necessary to provide such service, perhaps the best reply is to ask, Can we not afford it? Dare we go on year after year spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in training thousands of boys and girls in our schools, only to have them go out to be misfits or dependants? One might also point out that the expense of a constructive guidance programme including equalisation of the labour supply and demand would appear insignificant compared with the tremendous amounts we have to spend now in providing for those on relief and in reformatories, prisons and mental hospitals, to say nothing of the vast waste due to labour “turn-over” and the inefficiency of workers who are unsuited to their tasks.90

Any accurate and complete assessment had to take account of home, family, school and community, the full range of environment and experience encountered by the tested subject. In her work, Russell drew on the findings of practitioners at the British National Institute for Industrial Psychiatry who, unlike their counterparts in the United States, approached the full range of human capacities as quantifiable and categorical measures that were not amenable to reduction to a unitary linear-scale statistical measure. In her review of the Birmingham experiment conducted by Dr. Myers of the NIIP through the London Advisory Council for Juvenile Employment between 1925 and 1929, she noted that data was generated from each of the following areas:
(1) home conditions (2) physical conditions, (3) mental conditions as revealed by intelligence tests and tests of special abilities, (4) interests, temperament, character and general type, including general appearance, manners and social poise, (5) school progress.\textsuperscript{91}

These categorical knowledges, combining as they did the techniques of interviewing and mental testing to constitute a complete ‘case study’ of the individual, would closely inform the approach taken by Russell in her work for the Directorate of Personnel Selection. US practitioners were roundly criticised for the practice of compiling results from series of disparate tests to generate standardised intelligence scores which Spearman had so much earlier dismissed as “the acme of meaninglessness.”\textsuperscript{92} The point, after all, was to determine whether some correlation existed between differing human capacities and, in aggregate, to establish the significance of any factors thought to underlie those correlations. When these two opposing techniques met in the context of mass army examinations during the war, Russell went to great lengths to argue that no single measure could accurately reveal, let alone diagnose, the subject for psychological maladjustments in all of their variety.

Where the American testing movement claimed scientific authenticity through objective and efficient methods of mass testing, Russell argued instead that the objective of the psychologist was to obtain “a more intimate knowledge” of the subject, an exercise in which the subject’s participation was actively elicited. It is noteworthy that even Binet and Simon had drawn attention to this most crucial aspect of the exercise, commenting that “in its last analysis, an examination of this kind is based upon the goodwill of the subject.”\textsuperscript{93} As Russell advised, “If Mary Jane does not behave well, the question for the teacher or the parent is not, ‘How shall I punish her?’ but ‘Why does she not behave well, and how shall I help her to make adjustments that will cause her to want to be a co-operative citizen contributing her best?’”\textsuperscript{94} Parents had to be educated to rear their children through a newly enlightened regime of discipline through regulated development of their child’s personality as the most effective way of ensuring that the standards of child behaviour would conform to broader societal aspirations. Likewise should teachers and other agencies and institutions involved in the central task of educating children – or for that matter, guiding workers – to the standards of citizenship and democracy, adhere to the framework of internalised regulation by eliciting obedience and compliance in their charges, through the cultivation of the self whose aspirations, desires and interests became consonant with
those of the surrounding society. Students were to be encouraged/guided to understand and accept their alleged limitations, capacities and aptitudes and, more importantly, to act on the basis of this new knowledge, this newly revealed inner truth about themselves. Accepting both diagnosis and prognosis meant entering into and occupying the subject position assigned within the field of this educational policy discourse. Individual choice was a vital component of progressive policy; however, uninformed individuals required expert guidance so that they too could be brought to understand and accept the responsibility of choice. This was the essence of educational guidance, according to Russell. “Guidance should not be thought of as ‘an attempt to see through Johnny and to see Johnny through.’” The point was “to help Johnny see through himself and see himself through.” In so doing, practitioners like Russell sought to encompass other social capacities and social forms within this emerging discursive field, transforming and mobilising, even as the discourse of the “psychology of the individual” worked to elide and obscure gendered, racialised and class-based conceptions in the knowledge practices of psychological assessment. This was a crucial development for the vocational counselling movement, devoted as it was to forging a social order based on responsible citizenship, a category which was always already the presumptive “preferred” white and middle-class, skilled male of British origin. That Russell sought to extend this category to educated middle-class white women, as I examine below, was confirmation of the exclusionary knowledge practices deployed in her work.

As a psyche-based category, as diagnosis and as prognosis, ‘maladjustment’ was an elastic and dynamic tool applied to constitute both condition and identity. Russell drew on the approach developed by her former supervisor at Columbia Teachers College, Dr. Esther Lloyd-Jones. According to Lloyd-Jones, maladjustment was classified according to four distinct categories. “Infants” were characterised as those who had ‘never grown up.’ “Timid Souls” were those who exhibited shyness and fear, who tried to escape the challenges of daily life in daydreams or alcohol, insanity or suicide. “Frozen people” were paralysed by prejudice, convention, fear and conflict, particularly in matters of ‘religion’ or ‘sex,’ driven to mental illness by their inability to resolve conflicting beliefs. Finally there was the ‘fighter’ who was not so much to be deplored since such a type could be either an “obnoxious and pathetic member of society,” or, if such energy were turned to social injustice, “a great social benefactor.”
Understanding these forms of maladjustment and acting upon them would go far in preventing the development of mental ill health and its manifestation in social form. "It is now a well established fact," Russell asserted, "that most delinquency and crime and mental illness too could be prevented if only the normal, physical and psychological needs of the individual were understood and provided for early enough."98

When the topic of Russell's transfer over to DVA arose in the spring of 1944, Line confided that he shared the hope that the techniques Russell had developed within CWAC might be preserved, and while the army would miss her considerable contribution, her expertise would be readily implemented within the rehabilitation programme, "whenever the time is appropriate for you to swing into action on the civilian side of the fence."99 Consolidating the work of personnel selection for the postwar civilian labour force presented a formidable challenge, although Russell remained undaunted and optimistic. As she explained to Line in 1944, in the context of her anticipated transfer to DVA:

Now that more and more attention is being given to problems of rehabilitation and reconstruction after the war, I find myself venturing to hope that some progress will be made toward the realisation of my dream for systematic personnel selection work for Canadians in peace time, and that I may have some share in it. I am enclosing copies of a couple of articles I prepared before the war. I thought they might interest you and I can't help feeling that there can be real progress towards achieving the objectives set in the article, "Vocational Guidance for Canada" if the efforts of the National Selective Service and the Directorate of Personnel Selection are pooled and incorporated in one national scheme. You see I still cling to some of my dreams even at the risk of being branded an idealist.100

Line was himself an acknowledged employment and personnel "expert," equally as committed as Russell to instituting a national programme of mental hygiene improvement – a national standard of mental health paralleling that of physical health. Like his colleagues at the NCMH, Line saw a tremendous opportunity for the elaboration of the as yet largely untapped potential of psyche-based knowledge practices in the service of state, community, industry and family life. No social institution had been more neglected in this regard than the modern workplace. Line wanted to consolidate and transfer the techniques developed at the Directorate for the postwar reconstruction and rehabilitation of civilian life. Employability discourses intersected in Line's work with masculinist discourse of work, of which the white, skilled male breadwinner was the principal subject. Notions of "career" comprised a vector – a strategic space
— for professional intervention of the employment expert, the personnel manager. This discourse was mobilised through the agency of the individual worker, whose "desire" for self-expression and learning through and in work constituted the point of convergence, the point at which the interests of employee and employer became coextensive. Line argued that to neglect these relations was to consign the majority of the population—and in his view that population was clearly male—to a life of potential maladjustment, with all of the ills that allegedly followed. Clearly implicated within this definition of "maladjustment" were the political, social and economic effects of workplace mobilisation, union organising and broader labour movement struggles for workplace democracy and employment rights, which directly challenged the authority and power of business and government throughout the period considered here.

Line had taken a leave of absence from his position as psychology professor at the University of Toronto to assume his posting in DND during the war. As a member of the NCMH, he actively promoted the use of psyche-based techniques and advanced the profession of psychology as reputable science, the full benefits of which, he contended, had yet to be fully utilised. In April 1944, he jointly initiated the Inter-Service Conference on Psychiatry. 101 He was also a founding member of the Canadian Psychological Association in 1945. Earlier that year, Line joined a panel of experts assembled by Dr Ewen Cameron, as part of the lecture series "Studies in Supervision" at McGill University. 102 The lecture series consolidated the results of employment research organised through the principles of educational psychology and industrial psychiatry, outlining the basis of these techniques as central to the successful re-adjustment of civilians and military personnel alike once the war was finally ended. McGill Principal and chair of the General Advisory Committee on Reconstruction, Dr. Cyril James wrote the preface to the published collection of lectures. These lectures, James suggested, were compelling evidence that a successful programme of national reconstruction had of necessity to begin in recognising that most basic fact: the goal of re-establishment was "satisfactory personal readjustment for the individual." 103

Line wanted to push the envelope of postwar rehabilitation policy and the definition of successful readjustment, arguing that personal satisfaction was a critical indice of adjustment, defined now as rehabilitation of the serviceman/woman. In this way, like England, Line
articulated governmental techniques of rehabilitation to the interior of the subject. Moreover, Line approached private industry as an important social institution, with an organisational responsibility to promote and cultivate the learning capacities and activities of its labour force. Industry, that is, had an important governmental role to play in the formation of responsible and satisfied citizens. The ‘learning process,’ Line explained, was a more appropriate focus for successful rehabilitation. Learning had become a “time-honoured battleground” between psychologists and psychiatrists. Where the latter tended to concentrate more on problems of emotional maladjustment, psychologists approached questions of learning as a mechanistic process through which “intellectual learnings” were reduced to a functionalist level of mechanical skill. In this argument, Line revisited many of the points articulated in the earlier Mental Hygiene Manual for Teachers. He was critical of the narrow functionalism of psychological technique when applied to facilitate fordist production methods. The only purpose served by this approach was to reduce human skill to segmented sequential job tasks. Harnessing learning capacities was a remarkable achievement to be sure; even women had been brought into the production process as vital contributors to the war effort:

Where complex inventions demand complex construction, job analysis has produced a simplified Henry Ford conveyor belt, so that men, women, and children may give concrete reality to the brainstorms of inventive genius. The world can be spanned in forty seconds with John Doe, or even Mary Joe, doing the spanning.¹⁰⁴

For all of the benefits accompanying production planning and personnel organisation methods, this was not the route to follow if industry ever expected to see the peaceful and successful re-integration of demilitarised personnel. “You have all wondered what will happen when the one-time elevator boy or filing clerk returns to you as a major or squadron leader,” Line told his McGill audience. How would industry—indeed how would society—cope?

Postwar planners were gravely concerned with the potential explosion of civil unrest, spreading into industry in the form of militant strike action, industrial sabotage, even open conflict between unionised workers and returning veterans. Line’s solution was uncompromising. The responsibility and the opportunity to cultivate “human worth” lay within the grasp of industry. Indeed, there was no such thing as private industry when approached socially and psychologically. Industry was as much a social organisation as were church, family,
community and school. That is, the factory was also a ‘learning environment’ and the learning that occurred within its walls was as much social as it was task-based. The learning process was therefore as integral to social activity as the satisfaction of more fundamental and therefore more commonly recognised needs. “Learning,” Line concluded, “is synonymous with living.”

Too much attention had gone into the ‘how we learn’ problem, concentrating on simplistic technique for improving efficiencies, all the while deskillling the worker by simplifying tasks. Such an approach would invariably contribute to conflict in the workplace and, most likely, society in general. These conditions, although an improvement over the depression period, were held responsible for the manifold problems confronted by the military during the war. It may have come as a surprise to the McGill audience when Line made the following observation: “I would say that personal maladjustment is evident in the civilian case-histories of some 40 per cent of our soldiers and I would also say that this, by and large, reflects poor vocational adjustment as the main contributing cause.”

This approach drew on an expanded definition of vocational adjustment, beyond that of the ‘round peg in a square hole.’ Instead, Line was interested in the problem of identity, the cultivation within the individual of an active agency as the vehicle for achieving a sense of belonging and acceptance, personal fulfilment and team-work. Too much of policy, whether in government or private enterprise, ignored, overlooked or subsumed ‘personality.’

Some of you may be worried about soldiers because they will be returning to you soon, and you may well be worried if you regard the learning process as something that has to do with the elements of skill that have to be acquired. In your desire for over-simplification and mechanical efficiency, you may decide that you can put a human being, as one cog, in a chain of operations, doing the same thing over and over again, without much reference to the meaning of that operation in the entire scheme of things.

Employers ought not to begin with the question, “What do I need him to know?” but instead, “What does he need to know?” Line explained that all military recruiting began with the medical examination, psychological testing and intensive interviewing to assemble individual profiles and case histories. But the more important phase was that of reception “in which the recruit is now a partner.” That is, the agency of the individual was appealed to, brought into the process as an active participant, in which the interests of institution and individual were seen to be mutually constitutive. The experience of the military was directly transferable to private enterprise in
Line's view. Indeed, it had to be. Discontinuity in experience, as would inevitably follow if the squadron leader was shunted into the back room to once again take up his position as filing clerk, was the gravest danger of all. The veteran both wanted rationally and longed emotionally to return to civilian life. Successful rehabilitation meant that employers – and any other civilian agents with whom he would have contact – had to make "his" needs their starting point. "It is not enough for you to build up team work within the factory itself; the factory has to become part of his own life – of his conception of himself and his team." Accommodation was the first phase: "You start with him as he is and try to gauge, not what you want him to know, but what he himself needs to know – how he needs to develop. He must first be accommodated to you, and he wants so to be, in that he is seeking his vocational expression through you."

Assimilation came next, but here again the locus of action lay with the agency of the individual – individual subjectivity – as the veteran actively assimilated "himself" into the group through coming to share the common values and interests of the whole enterprise. "Once he has this picture of common activities and purposes, his own initiative will lead to depth of understanding." The conditions of learning, in other words, took precedence over the content to be learned.

Desire to learn was intimately associated with the cultivation of identity as a member of the team. This was the essence of a successful corporation. Other techniques, from profit sharing to company picnics, "non-directive counselling" and "bull sessions," careful personnel selection or even promotion policies: these were the various tricks adopted in varying degrees through joint labour-management productivity committees during the war. They were fine as far as they went, but all too often these were adopted piecemeal or worse, imposed from above with no sense of direction, continuity or ingenuous strategy. This was "selling" the company to the workers and was a strategy about which Line had little positive to say. What he had in mind was a more comprehensive social unit along the model of the masculinist state in which each member knew his place, wanted to be there and found happiness and fulfilment, accomplishment and pride in being there, knowing that her/his interests were best accommodated from that location. This was a huge responsibility resting with industry. And so far, it had not borne up at all well. "The general manager must become the father figure and behave as such; the enterprise must be his, the worker's, and not something he does for you, for which in return you give him wages." This was not a form of enlightened paternalism, however. The general manager stood
in relation to the worker as male parent to male child, as commanding officer to enlisted soldier. Hierarchy was not only natural, it was essential and desirable. The success of the team depended upon it. Authority and responsibility were centrally allocated, as were obligation and reward. “Be as business-like as a parent or a commanding officer should be. Being business-like is the essence of being human, of understanding human needs and development, and that is the greatest tribute in our language to industry.”

There was no reason why individual potential and human worth could not comprise the basis for vocational assessment and placement within private enterprise. “Industry really has the greatest of all possibilities and responsibilities in cultivating human worth; for, for most of the life span, you are given that opportunity in the case of the majority of our citizens.” In fact, citizenship training lay directly within the purview of the corporation as a social institution: “A large corporation can be, if you like, a university of citizenship training. If you train your men to their fullest responsibility and they leave you, there are always others to come along, and, I repeat, the policy will pay dividends.” Line cautioned his listeners to avoid the piecemeal approach of “applying psychology to the details” — and then concentrating on rooting out pathologies rather than cultivating the healthy adjustment of ‘normal’ personalities — and not at the level of overall policy. “You have asked psychology to come in only at the detail level — when you have a stutterer, or a recalcitrant worker, or a delinquent.” The point was to interweave psychology throughout all educational policy, to entrench the principles of psychological technique directly within the recruitment and training process. In the end, the worker ought to feel pride in his company and his employer.

Can you intrigue him to become a member of your corporation — to accept your corporation as his society? Can you sense at every step what he needs to know — how he needs to develop? Can you draw him into your field of active partnership? If you can, he will dignify your enterprise. If you cannot, he will be a constant rebel.

This, then, was the approach Line intended to adopt for all rehabilitation programming falling to his department: “In so far as these cases can be got at within the Service before they come out, it is our intention to see that every individual soldier gets to thinking about an appraisal of himself in terms of what he needs to know.” Certainly, for far too many of those recruited into the military during the war, no matter how many obstacles they had confronted during the
depression – across a continuum encompassing everything from “broken homes” to adult unemployment – they remained “fine specimens of personality” in Line’s assessment. Hope for a meaningful future was a powerful motivation for the adult just as it was for the young child, “no matter what pain and grief and squalor he endures” a belief in better times ahead, the knowledge or hope that life would be pleasant, the opportunity for personal development – these were all indicative of what Line defined as the “learning instinct.” If private enterprise took that as its starting point, industrial peace, prosperity and a flourishing citizenship would comprise the collective benefits in which all could share. The economic boost this represented for industry was incalculable, provided employers knew how to avail themselves of this opportunity. And of course few would dispute the notion that a benefit to industry was in equal proportion a gain for the rest of society.

‘Back to civvy street’: Rehabilitation and the Veterans’ Counselling programme

The Veterans Welfare Division was established by Order-in-Council 6282 in 1941. The key policy objective was civil re-establishment, defined as re-employment. In his July 22, 1941 Confidential Letter to District Veterans Welfare Officers, Woods advised that the Dominion [National] Employment Service, once it became fully operational, would be responsible for conducting all registration and placement work. Welfare Officers would be stationed at each local employment office and were expected to develop a co-operative and harmonious relationship with NES personnel.113 Woods cautioned against any perception that returning men would be automatically entitled to a job as direct compensation for military service, a reflection of his adherence to nineteenth century liberal discourse of individual responsibility in which the principle of ‘less eligibility’ was also anchored.114 As Woods put it, “It must be clearly understood that the efforts of the Government in placing such a specialised service as yours at the disposal of discharged men is in no sense a guarantee to provide a job for every man who has been in the Service,” Wood advised.115 The message was again repeated in a confidential letter issued in January 1942 to all District Administrators and Welfare Officers. The Post Discharge Re-establishment Order was designed to overcome any ‘economic hardship’ consequent of military service, defined as the effects of ‘dislocation from private life.’ While the order was not to be administered in a ‘narrow or parsimonious manner,’ neither was it intended to provide indefinite support to any person – principally any male person – who had worn a uniform.
Payment of out-of-work benefits was restricted therefore to the following eligibility criteria: a) capable of work; b) available for work; c) capable of obtaining suitable employment; and d) “and (not or) follows such course of training or instruction, if any, as the Minister may have prescribed, to fit him or to keep him fit for employment or for re-employment.” In other words, entitlement was not among the design principles informing re-establishment programming.

In short this means physical capacity for work; secondly, some effort on the part of the applicant to secure work, and thirdly, he may be required to take some training under authority of the Minister. The terms here of the Order indicate quite clearly that it is not the intention of the Government to subsidise idleness and in so far as such idleness is encouraged, the war effort is impeded.116

In this way, the question of re-deployment was organised through a masculinist discourse of employability, in which the key subject was the white, skilled male breadwinner of British origin whose location within economic space, within the labour market was unquestioned; whose employment rights and ownership of his “skill” formed the basis of his citizenship entitlements; and whose wage earning capacities, articulated to the “family wage” system, precluded the autonomous wage earning and household formation capacities of women as always already wife-dependent. The problem to be averted if at all possible was the obverse of employability, ‘dependency,’ permitting out-of-work benefits provided for under the re-establishment order to ‘degenerate’ into a form of “dole” or a “relief measure.” As described in the Confidential Letter 11 directive, “The longer they [ex-service personnel] are permitted to rest on out of work benefits, the more difficult it will be to handle them later on.” Aptitude testing was addressed in Clause 30 of Confidential Letter 11, physically highlighted in the document to foreground the significance of this technique as a reliable administrative assessment tool. Should any doubt exist as to the best placement of the individual in question, welfare officers were advised to refer the subject for an aptitude test “as a matter of course.” Occupational history forms accompanied each person as she/he journeyed through the post-discharge process. Where there was any evidence that the person in question had been a “social problem case” before the war, staff were instructed to permit these “cases” to revert to “their former status” as a “charge upon the municipality.”117

The principles of rehabilitation training, outlined in the Office Manual on Vocational Training, explained that any training provided under PC 7633, the Post-Discharge Re-
Establishment Order, was intended to assist the veteran in securing any position he or she might have otherwise attained “if his career had not been interrupted by service.” Suitable occupation was defined according to need, abilities, and “personal characteristics of the individual.” The interest of the state “from an economic and social point of view” was to assist the veteran to return to “the pre-war occupation or the position the person might reasonably have expected to have occupied.” 118 Skill was the only guarantee to “preference in employment,” not government, not legislation, not prior right or entitlement. Training was in no way to be regarded as a right or reward for “service to the state.” Finally, rehabilitation officials were advised, “it should always be remembered that training grants are intended for those who are willing to help themselves.”

DVA oversaw a massive apparatus which drew extensively on local citizens’ rehabilitation committees, working in conjunction with the Department of Labour through its training programme, Canadian Vocational Training, and the employment service, NES. Within the first month of discharge, women and men would visit a DVA Rehabilitation Centre. The largest of these centres were located in Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal. The heaviest volume was recorded between the late autumn and early winter of 1945-1946, winding down considerably by the spring of 1947. A total of 553,431 people were discharged from the services by the end of March 1946, leaving another 184,838 still to be discharged. 119 Hitting the labour market during the seasonal low of winter meant that many veterans experienced problems locating a job. Where only 824 were recorded as receiving out-of-work benefits in April 1945, that number climbed to 43,524 in March 1946. 120 Honourably discharged veterans qualified for out-of-work benefits for up to 12 months, if applied for and approved within 18 months of discharge. Ex-service personnel – in particular, men whose access to insured employment through insurable occupations greatly exceeded women’s – were provided with an additional incentive of seeking insurable employment since, if they were able to find work in an insured position and remain there for a minimum period of 15 weeks within a twelve month period – worked consecutively or not – they were deemed to have been in insurable employment from the time of enlistment to the date of discharge, for the purposes of UI eligibility. A veterans welfare officer was placed at every NES office. Similarly, the Department of Labour placed a veterans’ employment advisor at all district rehabilitation centres. Out-of-work benefit payments were administered through the UIC.
Veterans were encouraged to enrol in vocational training in preference to remaining out of the labour market, once again on the assumption that employability diminished in direct proportion to the period unemployed. A total of 23,618 women and men were enrolled in vocational training as at March 31, 1946. Of the nearly 49,000 women who had enlisted in the armed services, 36,000 had been discharged by the end of the 1946 fiscal year. Approximately 3500 were engaged in vocational training during the same period. By March 1947, this number shot up to 11,685, or 24%, considerably exceeding the proportion of men enrolled in training, a fact that did not pass unnoticed by the DVA annual report. Another 55% were employed in the formal waged economy, while 20% had withdrawn from the formal waged economy. The rate of unemployment among this group for the end of the 1946 fiscal year was 2%, lower than the average for civilian women and for enlisted men. By March 1947, 2,625 women had registered for and received out-of-work benefits for varying periods, a total of 5.3% of all enlisted women. DVA encouraged training on-the-job, for which the government did not pay any financial assistance, and by January 1947 approximately 22% of training was delivered by this method, while 69.7% were receiving full-time training through a school or institute. To qualify for training, a veteran had to apply within one year of discharge and, in any case, before December 31, 1947. In all, approximately 130,000 men and women received training in one of over 60 thousand university or 85 thousand approved vocational training courses, most passing through during November 1946, when enrolment peaked at 34,806.

The Veterans' Welfare Division was established in 1946, at which time the Social Services Directorate was transferred from Departmental Administration to Rehabilitation Services, providing services at rehabilitation centres under the auspices of a rehabilitation review board. The majority of services were devoted to vocational counselling, directing veterans into appropriate training and education programmes. Rehabilitation programming therefore drew on a moral regulatory discourse of “honest labour” rooted in the principle of ‘less eligibility,’ as well as discourses of gender and racialised citizenship which cumulatively positioned the ideal citizen as white, skilled male of British descent. In 1945, once the rehabilitation programme was operationalised full-scale, S.N.F. Chant, Director General of Rehabilitation, observed that it was more important to concentrate on bolstering the confidence of returning veterans, “to quiet the
fears and concerns” they might possess while at the same time candidly anticipating and addressing the challenges they could expect to confront. There was nothing to be gained in “minimising the very real difficulties they will have to face.” Every effort would be made to provide the tools and the techniques to move veterans as directly as possible into remunerative employment. The best adjustment programme, all agreed, was a job. It was at this juncture, through the intersection of managerial techniques of personnel selection with re-establishment planning, that the discursive techniques of psychological testing would find such fertile ground. Through the work of vocational counselling, the minds of men and women would be opened up to the administrative and governmental techniques of educational psychology. Testing, interviewing and counselling techniques would encourage individual women and men to participate in an exercise that aimed to discover, to bring to the surface, to open to documentary representation subjectivity, normatively calibrated as capacities and aptitudes, in an exercise that was both diagnostic and prescriptive.

“The Best Adjustment Plan is a Job”

While applied educational psychology was acknowledged as a useful and important part of rehabilitation work, not all agreed with its near-exclusive concentration on the ‘psychology of the individual.’ The Rehabilitation Information Committee [RIC], was established by Order-in-Council P.C. on October 17, 1944. Its main task was to co-ordinate the information activities of all government departments connected with the work of demobilisation, rehabilitation and civil re-establishment. When the RIC met on December 6, 1944 to consider the CBC radio broadcast, “The Soldier’s Return,” prepared by the NCMH, some members expressed alarm at the fact that the narratives developed in the series discussed demobilisation as a matter of social and psychological adjustment. Some members of the Committee argued that there was “at present in the psychological field perhaps a tendency to stress too much the re-orientation, if not the re-conditioning of men’s minds, and perhaps to stress too little the change from one kind of job to another.” A better approach, they suggested, was “to deal with psychological readjustment in terms of jobs rather than in terms of minds as such.” Discussion circulated between the relative merits of psychological re-conditioning and that of ‘honest labour.’ Which approach should comprise the focus of rehabilitation policy? Some members were concerned there was perhaps too much emphasis being placed on “the psychological aspects of civil re-establishment”
and not nearly enough on normal adjustment which they thought could best be accomplished by placing (male) veterans as quickly as possible directly into jobs. A good job would go much further in benefiting the veteran, equipping "him" to re-enter civilian life than would any dabbling in the murky interstices of 'personality,' suggesting as it did a psychological "reconditioning" of (a man's) mind. The series was not to "leave the impression that men returning from active service would generally need psychiatric treatment." 127 As England's comments addressed earlier had made clear, there was little to be gained in possibly alarming prospective employers, family members and communities at large by insinuating that veterans had become psychologically impaired as a result of their war-time experiences.

"A Soldier's Return" was a who's who of the mental hygiene community, a line up of "outstanding Canadian authorities" that included such luminaries as Clarence Hincks, Director of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene (Canada); Colonel William Line, Director of Personnel Selection, DND and formerly Department of Psychology, University of Toronto; Roger Myers, University of Toronto Psychology; William Blatz, Director of the Institute of Child Study, University of Toronto; Miss Joy Maines, President of the Canadian Association of Social Workers and Secretary of Community Chests, Ottawa; J. D. Ketchum, Director of Reports, Wartime Information Board "on loan" from University of Toronto Department of Psychology; Colonel J. D. Griffin, Consultant Psychiatrist RCAMC Directorate of Medical Services DND and Medical Director of NCMH; and Brigadier J. Rees, Consulting Psychiatrist to the British Army, and head of the Tavistock Clinic, London England. Speakers from industrial personnel selection departments also appeared as part of the broadcast series, notably Miss Grace Hyndman, wartime Director of Women Personnel for The General Engineering Company, and G. A. S. Nairn, president of Lever Brothers. 128 Whatever concerns the RIC expressed, the series revealed a close adherence to the mental hygiene programme for rehabilitation as a process of 'adjustment,' psychologically, emotionally, domestically and vocationally.

On January 17, 1945, G.A.S. Nairn, president of Lever Brothers (Canada) delivered his talk in the series, entitled "Speaking for Industry." Nairn praised the tremendous gains made by the military services in their application of human psychology to the work of personnel selection and placement. It would be a considerable step backward were private industry to revert to the
flawed methods of the “old-fashioned employment office” as the vehicle for integration into the labour force. For that matter, the civil re-establishment order with its promise of re-employment in former jobs was probably just as flawed as the haphazard method of employment office or plant gate hiring. Military reports like those provided by Colonel William Line for the McGill lecture series made it clear that far too much wasted human potential and social disorder followed in the wake of these self-selecting and unscientific methods of personnel placement.

Nairn used Line’s research to argue that, as service psychologists demonstrated, upwards of 40% of the workforce, or at least the male workforce, were poorly matched in their jobs. With the looming prospect of peaceably integrating the former elevator boy-turned-squadron leader back into the workplace, here was an outstanding opportunity for employers in private industry to reap the benefits of the military investment in human potential. Like England, Nairn also explained that the armed services had developed systematic psychological profiles of its enlisted personnel. Would employers not stand to gain from such a well-organised, well-documented system of personnel assessment? Consider, Nairn told his listening audience, the “psychological wonders” in which the nation might share were the labour force to be organised to the same standard as the military. A system of psychological testing, assessment and job placement would work as both a preventive and a productive strategy. Society would avoid the symptoms of occupational maladjustment – the “square peg in the round hole” phenomenon – which took that all too familiar form of unemployment, union agitation and industrial “misfits” who engaged in anti-social acts in the workplace, or who were alleged to waste productive resources by chronic absenteeism and high turnover rates. On the positive side of the balance sheet, industry stood to benefit from the new ground broken by the military in developing a comprehensive system of personnel assessment, identifying and deploying human resources in the most productive and efficient locations across its vast apparatus.

There is social as well as psychological importance in this matter of the placing of returning servicemen in really suitable jobs, where they can find full employment for both their time and their talents. It can shape the whole course of social development in the postwar era. It can help reduce unrest and agitation, by multiplying the number of contented and productive citizens. It can also be a means of increasing the wealth of the country. After all, wealth is created by the people, and increased by the more efficient use of their strength and skill.129

“Am I intelligent enough to do this job?”
Employment was increasingly taken up as an individualised set of relations at the nexus of which stood the constellation of aptitudes, capacities and personal temperament which cumulatively positioned the policy subject as potential employee. Who was the ideal employee? The policy subject constituted by employability discourse was white and skilled, heterosexual and male, whose personal desires were deemed to find fullest expression through a vocational "career" and in family. This was the ideal citizen, one whose sights were now firmly settled on peace, prosperity and consumerism. "Failure" to negotiate the process of adjustment was, in this frame, a symptom of individual maladjustment. At the centre of that was the failure to identify appropriate vocation according to individual capacity, aptitude and learning potential, the essential elements of any successful career — always already a proxy for class, race and gender in a racially and sexually divided labour market. In rehabilitation literature, issued in the form of "self help" guides which usually followed a question/answer format, women and men were encouraged to consider their future employment as a function of personal aptitudes, capacities and interests. As a rehabilitation manual issued to veterans put it: "An aptitude test is in your best interest."¹³⁰ The answers here would reveal the right vocation. As one such guide put it: "What is the level of intelligence of people who "go places" in this field? Can I measure up to that level? Does the occupation require any special skills or aptitudes? How do I rate in this respect?"¹³¹ Intelligence and personality could only be assessed through the ministrations of expert knowledge practitioners whose studied expertise produced the 'knowledge of self' that revealed true vocational aptitude. Women and men were assured that they would be provided with all of the tools and techniques needed to find their own individual path back to 'civvy street,' accompanied at every step along the way by assistance and direction from a raft of professionally trained and knowledgeable practitioners.

Servicewomen were advised that all rehabilitation programming was equally available to them. One of the more popular guides was the 1945 booklet issued by the Canadian Veterans' Publishing Company, What Happens Now? A Veteran's Guide. The 79-page guide included a brief one and a half page section, entitled "What About the Service Woman?" Where all images throughout the rest of the guide — including advertisements, itself noteworthy for the "joint" business/community-government effort characterising the rehabilitation and reconstruction programme overall — depicted white men in either military dress, business suits or occasionally
coveralls, in this the only depiction of a woman, the image portrayed a white woman in decidedly non-military, stylish (in a tailored fashion) feminine pose, complete with a decorative nosegay. Servicewomen’s pensions, the manual explained were on the same scale as men’s, although “for obvious reasons, a dependent wife or pensioned widow of an ex-serviceman is not eligible for out-of-work benefits.” “Frequently one hears the remark,” the guide continued, “that the rehabilitation problems of the ex-servicewomen can be summed up in a single word – marriage.”

Like all exaggerations this one has a grain of truth in it, but far from the whole truth. There are thousands of Canadian girls – CWAC’s, WD’s, Wrens – volunteers all – who are married or engaged to service and ex-servicemen. But the Canadian people feel that all servicewomen by their wonderful contribution to victory have earned in their own right, the honours and privileges of those who have served.132

Women were advised they were entitled to everything “from soup to nuts,” including clothing allowance, rehabilitation grant, medical care and pensions, dependant’s care, training and education allowance. Preference in employment law applied equally as well, provided of course that the woman was not married. By implication, an ex-servicewoman could not apply for a land grant under the Veteran’s Land Grant Act. Title would be readily conferred on her ex-serviceman husband; women were instead advised that their re-establishment credit would not be affected, a credit “which may be used, for example, to help furnish their home.” But clearly, women did not, and under a male family wage and citizenship entitlement structure would not, enjoy the same eligibility as men. This, too, was encoded within the descriptive passage, limited as it was, outlining rehabilitation entitlements for ex-service women: “In short, girls, you have just about the same rights and privileges in your rehabilitation as have the ex-servicemen.”133

In the employment section of the guide, veterans, men and women alike, found descriptive anecdotes recounting their lives and experiences and the policies developed to accommodate their needs, as articulated through the rehabilitation programme. The following passage illustrates the prevailing language and technique of adjustment, under the heading “What Sort of Job?”:

Many service men and women enlisted right from school. They have no employment background upon which they or a prospective employer can determine their temperamental or mechanical fitness for a position. In such cases,
the services of Department of Veterans’ Affairs and local rehabilitation committees are all co-operating to provide aptitude and trade tests and consultation with employers in the field you are interested in.134

Simultaneously, in a booklet issued for employers, unions and citizen rehabilitation committees, readers were encouraged to find out all they could about employment provisions, including reinstatement in former jobs, training, job creation, industry, union and government cooperation, and finally, the following: “personnel management, with particular relation to the study of the abilities, skills, personal qualities and problems of veterans.”135 A central theme running throughout all of these guidebooks was individual responsibility for making the rehabilitation programme a success. Counselling technique worked through the agency of the counselled subject. Veterans were invited to enter the counselling process as equal participants who, with the benefit of expert guidance, could discover their innate capacities and find the best route to civilian adjustment. In Back to Civil Life, veterans were advised that rehabilitation services were equally available to both women and men. It was clear, however, that veterans would be entering a sexually divided labour market. The veteran was offered this advice as one of the first tasks to be undertaken even before being issued discharge papers:

Vocational Guidance Available
13. Perhaps the Service man may not be sure what type of work suits his abilities best. Tests are being developed which give a pretty clear idea of the fields of work in which a man or woman is most likely to be successful.136

Participation in the labour market was as much a matter of psychological matching as it was an economic necessity. There was no question about it: the guides drove home, over and again, the “scientific truth” that women and men had different aptitudes. In this way, the sexual division of labour was constituted as not only natural, as the way things are, but also rational. Whatever the experiences of wartime waged labour, however many women may have moved into the skilled trades and occupations in the industrial – and military – labour force, service personnel were now being told that this temporary aberration was past, well behind them. They should put their trust in science, and what could be more objective, more reliable than a scientific test? There was a great deal riding on finding the right job, service men were told. Who wanted to return to the insecurity of unemployment? The guides promoted a lifestyle of responsible consumption, of success, security and stability in work, community and home life. But none of this was
obtainable without a job. And men were the primary wage-earners, the primary actors in the market for jobs.

Personal success was determined by tapping the psychological resources inherent in each individual, approaches which transformed the employment relation, that is, successful labour market attachment, as one that required expert intervention, guidance and diagnosis, mediated through psyche-based technologies. For example, a booklet developed for the RCAF, “Procedure for Personnel Counselling,” presented aptitude testing as the first and most important step along the way to a successful, rewarding and exciting career.\textsuperscript{137} The illustrations in the booklet told the story of the successful path to civilian readjustment. All characters in this narrative were male and white. One such illustration denoted a series of walls posed as potential barriers. At the base of each was an open door through which passed the initially perplexed but increasingly informed and relaxed male service personnel, arm-in-arm with the trusted male counsellor. The “procedure for personnel counselling” in this masculinist depiction was implicitly organised into four phases: assessment, revelation, selection and placement, each coinciding with the discovery of inner personal capacity, matching to the appropriate jobs, finding the right opportunities and securing expert assistance.

Identifying the “person” was represented through four constituent components, each representing a distinct area of knowledge “about” the individual. Agency, and with it individual subjectivity, was therefore mutually constituted: science and the expert diagnostician, unseen but clearly present, guiding the individual candidate through an exercise of unfolding revelatory knowledge of the self. In the first, aptitude, the drawing depicted a human head (white male) with a calliper positioned at the side, a hand holding a magnifying glass and, at the bottom, the ubiquitous square peg/hole and round peg/hole, signifying the correct fit. The next panel depicted a young person (also white male) surrounded by the interests of childhood: paints, books, mechanical tools, car, canon, beakers, aeroplanes and, a hint at the relevance of the other images, money. The message here was that interests developed early in childhood as ‘play’ were, in fact, clues to adult work capacities, an all too often untapped lode of potential knowledge about true character and employment capacity. The adult realisation of these childhood interests was signified through the militarised images of the final two panels: service experience and civil
experience, each representing identical figures in military and work uniform, respectively. Security was the unifying theme in this cartoon, security in employment through a career for which the individual was always already ideally suited, personal interest now discovered and confirmed, made intelligible and rational by scientific technique. Once realised in employment, the subject would enjoy the rewards of security: a satisfying job and the consumer goods to follow. By the end of the booklet, the now happy ex-serviceman is seen rolling up his shirtsleeves, eager to rejoin civilian life, while, unbeknownst to him, an equally keen bespectacled ‘president’ of industry is seen leaning over his desk, fixing an excited sight line directly on the veteran. The key to such a happy ending lay in unlocking the inner capacities for learning, the aptitudes of skill in a given occupation, and participation and commitment to the occupational programming developed by DVA and NES.

DVA followed a procedure similar to that adopted by the US Veterans’ Administration. The latter issued a “Manual of Advisement and Guidance” in 1945 for circulation through the Vocational Rehabilitation and Education Service.” The guide was intended to standardise counselling procedures throughout the service, to ensure that the same questions, practices and testing procedures came together as a systematic counselling record, generating “knowledge” which in turn predicted normative standards: testimony to the accuracy and expediency of the practices and to the veracity of their prescriptive and diagnostic claims. Based on the information generated through each interview, patterns of responses effectively created a normative scale against which the counselled subject was assessed. Individual variance (or deviation) from that scale constituted the space/margin occupied by the counsellor and his/her subject.

Women’s Rehabilitation

On January 4, 1945, Russell was appointed Executive Assistant to the Director of Veterans’ Affairs, S.N.F. Chant, where she would specialise in women’s rehabilitation. In the news release announcing her appointment as the first senior woman to join DVA, Russell was presented as an expert in vocational guidance, an educational psychologist whose post-graduate and professional work had proven a tremendous asset to the women’s armed services. Russell’s work, particularly her pre-war work, found a far more receptive audience in the postwar period of rehabilitation planning than it had during the tumultuous depression years. The June 1945
issue of Saturday Night Magazine carried a lengthy article promoting her work as part of a broader strategy of publicising the work of veterans’ rehabilitation generally. Russell was an ideal emissary for the scientific remedial work of rehabilitation, given her extensive academic credentials, her class and white British identity, and her background as an educational and employment expert. Throughout the period, Russell was featured in press reports and magazine articles, her photograph accompanying nearly every story. Her views of women and waged work were revealed in each of these accounts as consonant with those of her counterparts at the NSS Women’s Division: some women would work for pay, and would be directed into occupations thought suitable for them. Russell went one step further in her advocacy on behalf of women much like herself: university educated and “professional.” In the main, however, Russell not only never questioned, but through her work entrenched, the received “naturalness” of a racially and sexually divided labour market and social order.

Rehabilitation concerned much more than demilitarising and reintegrating a designated population: this was a programme that potentially redefined the values and practices of democratic and responsible citizenship, beginning with the attributes and capacities of individual citizens themselves. The Saturday Night article recounted Russell’s advocacy of systematic vocational guidance for all individuals at all ages. The petition of the Ontario Vocational Guidance Association, drafted by Russell and presented to Mackenzie King in 1938, was reviewed as evidence attesting to her considerable expertise and tireless advocacy for a system of comprehensive personnel assessment which, if only it were implemented, would resolve the multitude of social problems which inevitably trailed in the path of the maladjusted individual. This was the promise of rehabilitation. For perhaps the first time, government was committed to scrutinising the conditions of civil formation, monitoring the progress of civilian adjustment, and investing in the development of responsible citizens, happy homes and healthy communities. So much of juvenile delinquency – including sexual improprieties of dissolute youthful leisure activities, unemployment, familial discord and social conflict manifested in political agitation – was attributable to malformed and misdirected personality. The following excerpt from the magazine article reconstructed Russell as a leader in the movement to remedy such ills, one who brought her expertise to bear in the constructive programme of rational guidance:
The petition urged the Dominion Government to take immediate steps to give leadership in the promoting of adequate guidance service for the trainees for war emergency industries, the youth in school, the unemployed and the misplaced and maladjusted workers. It further recommended a program for vocational guidance in which the governments of the Provinces would cooperate through their Departments of Labour and Education with the Dominion Government providing reliable information about occupations and trends in Canada. Needless to say, the article and the resolutions were drafted by Olive R. Russell. Today, she is seeing some of them come true; she is lecturing to counsellors who have magnificent opportunities to give vocational guidance to thousands of returning veterans; she is watching the appointment of trained vocational experts to positions in employment and in training offices sponsored by the Dominion Government. 140

The article was written by Lieutenant F. E. Whyard of the WRCNS Naval Information service. In a letter to Whyard, Russell provided her with background material culled from her personal files, ending with the familiar lament for the obstacles she and her mental hygiene colleagues confronted at virtually every turn in their work, so much so that Russell remained convinced she had suffered in her own career development and was compelled, after doing graduate research in Europe, to accept a teaching position that paid less than the job she had left in order to take up graduate studies in the first place. “Yes, I was a victim not only of the depression but of the fact that Canada lagged so far behind in developing Psychology and Guidance. Perhaps that experience has only added to my desire to see to it that young people get the encouragement, opportunities and help needed to develop their talents most effectively.” 141

Russell’s job was largely concerned with carrying the work of rehabilitation into a network of community, service and related governmental relations, linking women’s organisations into the day-to-day operations of both DVA and the NES. She spoke regularly at national conferences of the NCW, working closely with the leadership of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, the YWCA, the Canadian Welfare Council and the Community Chest and related civic organisations across the country. At every turn, she encouraged closer liaison with local citizens’ committees, social and state agencies, in a comprehensive effort to secure successful re-integration of all citizens through the work of rehabilitation. At the same time, she continued the work of developing a body of vocational expertise, and the development of consistent and comprehensive tools to aid this work, including a systematic assessment of occupations and required vocational skills assessment techniques in conjunction with the
Research Division of the Department of Labour. In 1945, soon after V-E Day, the Training Division of DVA joined the Department of Labour in establishing an Occupational Information section and a three-digit coded classification of all occupational skills, based on the United States Dictionary of Occupational Titles. This material was supplemented during 1946-47 by a survey of 70 selected occupations examining occupational trends and vocational training requirements, providing a foundation for regular bulletins and reports by which counsellors were intended to organise their work and advise veterans. By 1949 the Occupational Information Service was transferred as a regular service to the Department of Labour. This work complemented the findings of the Royal Commission on Veterans’ Qualifications, the so-called Bovey Commission appointed in 1945, in part to review the training received by enlisted personnel within the services and recommend a systematic method for accrediting such training in civilian employment.

To each of these policy locations she carried a consistent message: women had demonstrated their employment capacity throughout the war in both a military and civilian capacity and educated, skilled and professional women could no longer be denied equal access to the labour market. Otherwise, Russell, like her colleagues at the Department of Labour, worked to restore and secure the racial and sexual division of labour, within the household and the formal waged economy. As proof that these efforts were being put to good use, Russell reported that by the end of 1947, 24% of all ex-service women (11,685 women) had claimed training benefits, a much higher proportion than men. Of these, 9,205 had enrolled in some form of vocational training in over 100 occupations. What she did not indicate was that the vast majority of these women were concentrated in some 30 occupations in what were conventionally designated women’s occupations. Employment of ex-service women was not viewed as a problem – even though 5.3% were registered as receiving out-of work benefits as at March 31, 1947, which if viewed as an official unemployment rate was certainly higher than the national average for the period – a position which became a well-entrenched claim in the official narratives produced in the ensuing postwar period. Equal pay, however, remained a serious concern, a vestige of the sex discrimination against which Russell and some of her colleagues continued to agitate, with limited success. Even before the process was completed, the rehabilitation programme was judged an outstanding success, due in large part to the enthusiasm
and commitment of service women themselves, their adaptability and discipline in readjusting to civilian endeavours. Notwithstanding such a stellar record, Russell remained deeply concerned for the prospects of on-going discriminatory practices, fearing a backlash which would most certainly threaten these hard-won gains.

Russell was a lead instructor at the DVA Counsellors Training courses starting in 1945. All counselling staff were sent to Ottawa for a one-month training course in vocational counselling. Women were seen to present a unique and particular set of challenges, enough to justify specially designated services and personnel equipped with the correct knowledge and expertise to attend to the need for “personal attention and follow-up.” However, at the time Russell joined the department, there were no designated women Welfare Officers within DND. The National Selective Service was not equipped to address the special rehabilitation needs of service women, nor was the Department of Pensions and National Health. She began calling for the appointment of officers specifically assigned to and responsible for personal intervention and supervision of discharged personnel in 1944. The NSS was ill-equipped to address the “peculiar needs of our service women,” Russell reported, and so was incapable of providing the personalised service so necessary to the successful rehabilitation of ex-service women. This work was not limited to service referrals, but was directly implicated in the formation of responsible citizens. As Russell wrote, it was the responsibility of the women’s welfare officer, should any be appointed, to “do the follow-up needed for persons who have proved unable or unwilling to accept the responsibilities of citizenship in the army or in civilian life.”

Even before moving over to DVA, Russell had wondered when and how, if at all, the rehabilitation needs of service women discharged from the services would be addressed as a policy matter. This was a pressing matter during her tenure at CWAC, concerned as she was that ‘unsuitable personnel’ not be permitted to slip back into civilian life where they might resurface as ‘problems’ in the postwar. Certainly welfare agencies were not up to the task even to take on the problems presented by “persons who have proved unable or unwilling to accept the responsibilities of citizenship in the army or in civilian life.” Rehabilitation was more than a matter of ensuring satisfactory individual adjustment. It was a crucial policy challenge for a liberal state emerging from total war. Rehabilitation was about securing the welfare of
democratic society by ensuring that each and all took up their responsibilities of citizenship, as self-governing and self-regulating subjects. She instructed counsellors that their role was to ensure women received full counselling services, including regular use of intelligence tests to avoid the employment problems which all too often became manifest as the “square peg in a round hole.” Women had equal access with men to all rehabilitation services, including vocational assessment, counselling and, if necessary, training, all of which included referral to appropriate employment through the NES. Nonetheless, as I discuss in the next chapter, training for women was restricted at every turn to a limited range of occupations deemed “suitable” for women. The home and household were considered women’s primary location above all else. Word did not appear to be not getting through, however.

By January 1946, concerns about the differential access to rehabilitation services and programmes had reached the office of E. L. M. Burns, Director General of Rehabilitation for DVA. In a strongly worded circular, Burns advised DVA and NES staff that it was absolutely essential that services for women become more closely integrated into the rehabilitation apparatus. Far too many women were not receiving access to training “which would be desirable for their most effective rehabilitation into civilian employment,” Burns contended. Burns was responding in part to the criticisms raised by women like Russell, concerns having more to do with the notion that women were best counselling other women and that it was inappropriate for ex-servicewomen to have to jostle their way through throngs of men in public spaces like veterans’ centres or employment offices. Women’s occupational counsellors would finally be appointed to all districts, a move that Russell thought was long overdue. Furthermore, the practice of determining the availability of training options as the preliminary step toward placement – in either domestic or waged labour – would be reversed. Here, Burns promoted an approach which reflected the decentralised and localised planning procedures concerning employment policy for women well underway at the NSS Women’s Division. Employment officers were to proceed on the basis of a set range of “suitable” occupations for women, to canvass employment levels within these occupations locally, and then to determine whether or not training was available. “The Counselling should be directed primarily toward choice of occupation rather than toward training as such,” Burns directed. Throughout, the language of “individual choice” and “individual desires” closely informed the operation of counselling.
discourse. Women were to be made to feel, to think, if not to believe, that the decisions taken were their own and, therefore, were in their own best interests. Service women were to receive counselling about their occupational “choice” based on individual suitability “in light of her own wishes, her past training and experience, her ability to absorb further training, and last but by no means least, with a view to the employment trends for women in the community in which she intends to live.” Burns was sharply critical of the direction policy had taken in the matter of women’s training, of channelling women through available training first, and from there into employment. That practice, he stated, must stop:

It is feared that with the women, even to a greater extent than with the men, the emphasis has been reversed. First consideration has been given to training opportunities known to be available, and if none of these known opportunities suits the plan of the individual either an attempt is made to fit her into one that is inappropriate to her needs or to abandon the thought of training altogether. This has been the common thought in the minds of ex-service women and Counsellors alike, and the ex-service women themselves are thereby deprived of full benefits of the rehabilitation programme.

It was the job of the counsellor to determine a feasible plan with the ex-service woman based, not on the availability of training opportunities but on the desires of the service woman. Far from discouraging an individual training plan, the counsellor was directed where necessary to “extend the range of thinking of the ex-service woman” and work toward the satisfaction of her personal plan. It was “ironical,” Burns observed, that so many ex-service women had taken to describing themselves as “unskilled” and were presenting themselves as such to potential employers, who in turn hired them into entry (or “beginner’s”) level positions.

Meanwhile, numerous semi-skilled and skilled positions, for which women could easily be trained, remained vacant. Training, if it was to be effective, had to respond to shortages in the labour market. Burns cited UIC Rehabilitation Circular No. 11, May 15, 1945, i.e. UIC/CVT policy to point out that departmental policy empowered employment officers to refer a veteran into training “to equip him for suitable employment” before proceeding with placement in employment, and to advise DVA of the reasons for so doing. The procedure comprised an “excellent foundation for co-operation between the two offices,” Burns pointed out before proceeding to speculate, perhaps tongue in cheek, that it may not have been generally acknowledged that the same procedure ought to apply to women. Either that, or employment
officers thought the responsibility for authorisation of training lay exclusively with DVA and washed their hands of the matter. It only stood to reason that the NES employment officer would take more initiative in such referrals since this was, after all, the first point of contact for the ex-service woman. There was no reason Burns could ascertain why training referrals could not be initiated directly at the NES office. Whatever the case, employment officers were to begin referring women who came through their office over to DVA for vocational counselling and referral into training; only in this way would ex-service women receive the full rehabilitation benefits to which they were entitled.

Finally, too many ex-service women were being “bounced back” after unsuccessful job placements. The reasons for this likely varied in direct proportion to the number of women who were seen to “bounce”; one view held that perhaps these women lacked the “proper attitude” toward civilian employment. That being the case, Burns tabled the suggestion that CVT consider a short programme of training in what can only be identified as the performance of female gender: “correct deportment, grooming, approach to the public or whatever seems necessary to enhance her employability.” In sum, Burns directed newly appointed DVA Occupational Counsellors (female) to work closely with the following branches for the purposes identified:

1. The In-Service Counsellors of the three Women’s Services to emphasise essential counselling towards choice of occupations, and to put at their disposal all available information with respect to occupational trends and the range of training opportunities already available.
2. The Veterans’ Employment Advisor in the DVA Rehabilitation Centre to obtain information with respect to occupational trends for women, and to encourage referral to DVA of job seekers who require further training to equip them for suitable employment.
3. The Women’s Representative of Canadian Vocational Training to request provision of training to meet the rehabilitation plan of the individual, to obtain information with respect to training opportunities, and to encourage a three-way liaison and referral between NES, CVT, and DVA for training-on-the-job.

As follow-up, S. H. McLaren of the UIC issued a statement instructing NES Employment Officers to strengthen their liaison efforts between the veterans’ employment advisors (VEA’s) stationed at the rehabilitation centres and NES Women’s Division staff, concluding with the comment unless the NES and CVT could do “at least as good a job” as the DVA, “we cannot
hope to win the confidence of either the employer or the ex-service woman." At a meeting of citizens’ rehabilitation committees held in North Bay in July 1946, the woman representative responsible for ex-service women’s rehabilitation in that area claimed she was entirely unaware of any legislated training provisions for women.

Welfare officers for women veterans were finally appointed late in 1946. In part responding to Burns’ allegations that women were not receiving the full benefits due them, Russell acknowledged that there would be no separate women’s branch within the rehabilitation apparatus. While she made no further comment on the matter, except to indicate that the appointment of women counsellors was underway, it was likely thought that the women’s section of the NES would be more than sufficient to handle ex-service women’s needs.

Like so many of her colleagues, Russell was certain that once capricious practices of ‘sex discrimination’ had been reversed through legislative provisions of the rehabilitation programme, those women whose individual capacities were deserving of greater opportunity in new professions and emerging occupations would actually break new ground. She advised counsellors that an important part of their responsibility was to safeguard the integrity of the professions by not referring into training any whose capacities, abilities and suitability might be considered ‘doubtful.’ The counselling function not only opened up opportunities and actualised equality claims; it also worked in reverse, securing the legitimate equality claims of those meriting such advancement through careful screening and, in effect, gate-keeping. This was perhaps one of the most critical functions of the work, an accomplishment of the discursive practices which had constituted intelligence and capacity as key indices by which to constitute and calibrate populations according to employability, as administrative problems requiring governance, specifically through the remediation of the individual in an effort to counsel them toward rational choice as responsible self-governing subjects:

[T]here may be a tendency for some women of below average general ability to seek training and employment for which their intelligence ill-equips them. Counsellors, therefore, need to be on the alert, for few things are more certain to lead to unsuccessful rehabilitation than the proverbial “square peg in the round hole.” No one remains happy long in work that is either too easy or too difficult for his or her general level of ability. It is in appraising that general ability that intelligence tests can be of such assistance in the hands of a skilled counsellor.
DVA women's counselling staff had exclusive authority to determine and secure what they considered an appropriate training referral. Russell remained consistent with the principles of educational psychology discourses which constituted the agency of the counselled subject as central/integral to and coextensive with the successful implementation of the counselling process: rehabilitation counselling would have succeeded where its results had been equally decided upon by the ex-service woman together with the counsellor. Women would require the considered advice and expertise of counselling staff, learning to appraise "their own capacities and suitability for certain types of training and work" under the guidance of staff "skilled in the best psychological techniques." Testing and the relations mobilised through such practice were viewed as equitable because they were objective. Interpretation of its results, through which the knowledge of the individual was constituted as "appraisal" was, however, subjective according to Russell - it was an art. "It is true that tests may be dangerous in the hands of unskilled counsellors and caution must be taken to safeguard any misuse that could easily be made of them," she argued. The counsellor could no more attempt to conduct a thorough appraisal without the aid of testing instruments than could a medical practitioner read the knowledge of the body without a standardised gauge or tool - stethoscope or thermometer - capable of penetrating the body's surface.

The counsellor had to be fully conversant with the "unique" aspects of women's employment and training, a gesture toward the on-going tension between CVT and the NES so pointedly criticised in the Burns memorandum. Russell shared with her colleagues at the NSS Women's Division, the objective of directing skilled women into domestic employment as a viable solution to the problem of finding suitable waged work for women. Compelling women into training and placement in the occupation would accomplish the opposite effect, she argued, of driving the "desired type" of woman away. In her view, this meant that only the "least employable pool" remained available as potential domestic workers.

It is time for us to stop trying to force unwilling, untrained and incompetent young women into household employment, and find ways and means of raising the status of this occupation so as to attract intelligent willing workers to want training for this important work. I believe the difficulties involved are not insurmountable. 153
Skill and capacity was organised through gender-based deployment of “special aptitudes” thought to characterise the unique contributions and the occupational capacities of women. Once again, these aptitudes were reduced to emotive qualities of skill, patience, conscientious care and the like.

Problems encountered in rehabilitation counselling were invariably cast as a function of personal maladjustment. In the report of the Chief Women’s Counsellor, Edna Whinney, this message was portrayed through the vehicle of two case studies, held to summarise the leading aspects of counselling work and its ultimate success in satisfactory adjustment of the individual. In the first, a clearly qualified and stable young woman was able to satisfy her ambition to take up post-graduate studies in Home Economics at Columbia. Her chosen career was appropriate, her pre-enlistment service as a dietician at a hospital and then a department store reflected the steady pursuit of a stable and promising career in this feminine profession. Her “outstanding service and personality” made her a fine officer, reflecting diligence, discipline and deportment: everything a professional “girl” needed to succeed. Case number two, on the other hand, was a tale of a very different, but regrettably all too common, sort. In this case, the 36 year-old woman worked as a music instructor assisting her mother. This was her “pre-enlistment” history, the first entry in the case study Whinney presented to her attentive audience. She then trained as a registered nurse, but that was cut short after 18 months because she had a “nervous breakdown.” Following that, she worked “at numerous hospitals” as a practical nurse. In these few lines, the woman was constructed as unmarried, largely under her mother’s care, unable to complete skilled training in a professional capacity, perhaps artistic but decidedly emotionally unstable – of which some artistry may have been an indication – and incapable of maintaining steady employment, even at a less skilled vocation within the same field of nursing. Her service and post-discharge history read in much the same narrative frame:

Service Experience:
1 year service as Sick Berth Attendant in Wrens. Discharged “unsuitable” because of nervous breakdown. Psychiatrist’s report made at time of discharge, confirmed a neurosis largely due to insecurity. Mother, father and grandparent who lived with the family, all died within a few months of each other. Only brother left home and there was no close contact.
Post-discharge experience:
A summer fruit picking on a friend's farm. A few weeks demonstrating and selling sheet music in a chain store, replacing a girl on holidays. Six months clerk in Civil Service.

A counsellor advised that she return to nursing and suggested she take a temporary assignment to determine "suitability and interest." However, once the experience proved too 'strenuous,' she returned and asked to be trained in stenography. She was then referred to the DVA psychiatrist who advised that training was unnecessary, that the application was only being made "as a further search for security." The intrepid counsellor, after four interview sessions, outlined several options, including piano teaching, clerical work and, once again, practical nursing. In fact, the counsellor even went to the music store where the woman had worked previously, and investigated another store before concluding that this was unlikely to yield employment. Instead, and against the psychiatrist's considered judgement, the counsellor prepared an application for review by the Training Board, outlining the following rationale, each point referring to training as a stabilising and remediating effect which was sure to lead to security in employment and in personality. The gender-based assessment equating piano-playing ability with technical typing skills was a classic, if breathtakingly absurd, move:

1. The veteran would be happiest and most efficient in a routine job which would allow some scope for her imaginative talents.
2. Her skill as a pianist would assist her in learning typing.
3. Additional skills would promote self-confidence.
4. Applicant was obviously conscientious and sincere, although immature for her years.154

Russell joined her colleagues in constituting the identity of the "emotional cripple," a figure in whom resided the psyche-based signifiers of maladjustment, normalised through mental hygiene discourses as a condition to be accepted and assisted through expert knowledge practices, rather than a figure to be shunned and feared. Russell drew on the reports from American personnel surveys for evidence: 45% of all those rejected from service on medical grounds were discharged because of 'emotionally instability,' 'psychoneurosis' or 'other psychiatric conditions.' There was no physical evidence of interior instability or illness, contributing to the tendency of most to regard these persons with aversion and fear, or at the very least, incomprehension. However, Russell argued that every individual had his or her "breaking point": "the sturdiest personalities can break under strain beyond human endurance." Sympathy,
understanding and referral to experts equipped to diagnose and prescribe were the appropriate public community responses to the suffering encountered among fellow citizens, civilian or veteran. The knowledge that even the most 'normal' individual might break under the strain of daily life would become a consistent message of mental hygiene proponents, a discursive technique deployed with particular success through CBC radio lecture and advice programming and the popular mental health drama, "In Search of Ourselves." The programme was launched in 1949 fuelled by the outstanding success of a similar series conducted over the 1947-48 broadcast year. The programme drew upon the same themes and strategies organised initially through the NCMH-CBC collaborative series, "A Soldier's Return," inviting listeners to scrutinise their problems in daily life as instances and challenges of personality adjustment, of mental health.

The following summary illuminates the programme's approach and appeal, promising not only relief from personal troubles, dissatisfaction, conflict and insecurities, to achieve happiness and personal growth through successfully resolving marital, familial and personalised conflict through the intervention of psyche-based technique:

Some listeners complain that they have found some of the case histories too sad, but most write that they have encountered similar problems in their own or other people's lives. All say they find the comments of Dr. J. D. M. Griffin of the National Committee of Mental Hygiene, at the end of each drama, of great help in understanding why people sometimes act and talk so strangely.155

Each instalment in the series featured a "case study" of characters embodying and dramatising the key events signalling the presence of breakdown or the deterioration of normal and healthy adjustment. These were problem-solving events in which audience was invited to enter and participate through 'listening clubs,' 'discussion groups' and letter-writing. The signifying events could then be taken up as markers, clues, early warning signs alerting sympathetic and compassionate friend, family, teacher and employer, and colleagues to exercise vigilance in searching out similar indicators in themselves and those around them. Griffin legitimated and normalised such practice as a regular feature of healthy living, as prosaic a form of wholesome life as was proper nutrition and daily exercise in the pursuit of the healthy physical and mental self. The DVA publication, Veterans Affairs, carried a feature article in its May 1947 issue about the considerable contribution made by mental hygiene clinics in the work of the Veterans' Administration in the US. Although reflecting a stronger Freudian approach than was apparent in much of work conducted by mental hygiene practitioners in Canada, the message
was the same. Problems, whether derived from poor adjustment, insecurity, or ‘the unconscious mind’ were common: “it doesn’t mean you are crazy or wacky but just darned unhappy with your life.”

“I trust you will not think I am a feminist …”

Russel argued consistently throughout her tenure with DVA that the legislative acts which collectively comprised “the Veterans’ Charter” were more consistent with the principles of women’s equality than any other area of Dominion legislation. She considered that women’s equality claims were best assured through the rehabilitation programme, embedded within which was the recognition that women had full access to all governmental services and programmes offered on equal standing with men. In her many speeches to women’s organisations, citizens’ committees and service organisations, Russell actively constructed a narrative of equality achieved by women steadily throughout the war. As an example of the significance of these gains, she pointed out how women who first enlisted into the newly established women’s divisions of the services initially received only two-thirds of the equivalent male wage and were denied access to benefits for dependants. Russell felt the status of all women in society would improve on the basis of the considerable achievements of women in the services. As proof, she pointed out that women were eligible for all benefits and credits legislated through the ‘Veterans’ Charter.’

Women were accorded formal equality with men in every area of rehabilitation legislation, except for the treatment of married women. Robert England’s recently published compendium detailing the principles and purpose of rehabilitation programming, *Discharged* (1944), concluded that the best route to successful re-integration into civilian life was through secure employment at a reasonable – male breadwinner/family – wage. The same held true for women, Russell contended. This was the best way to ensure that the significant gains made by women throughout the war might be secured and become the foundation for advancement and prosperity well into the future. This “hard-won economic independence” brought with it the recognition that women needed to work. Russell’s articulation reflected a close adherence to liberal choice theory, a recognition of rational economic choice as a cohesive organisation of relations through which women and men, as equal citizens, drew from and contributed to social
and economic production and consumption activity through rationalised market space. Freedom of choice was the central unifying principle that made these markets democratic and, therefore, defensible. This was what women alongside men had fought for. The prospect of returning to the pre-war era of entrenched sex discrimination was a troubling one to be resisted, even if that meant risking political challenge from those predisposed to misinterpret Russell’s position. It was, then, women’s freedom of choice which Russell chose to defend, since without this there could be no happy home and an even less happy democracy. As she explained in her personal correspondence, her interest in rehabilitation programming lay in using that legislative base as a vehicle by which each and all would accept that citizenship included “protecting women’s freedom of choice in regard to her home life and occupation.” She repeatedly disavowed any affiliation with feminism, a political tendency she associated with the exclusive advancement of interest based only on gender. As she put it: “I trust you will not think me a feminist thinking only of advantages for women.”

Russell was intent on advancing the equality of choice that largely informed her understanding of the origins and irrationality of “sex discrimination.” Access to and pay in employment ought to be limited only by capacity, ability and suitability, each of which could be determined through the judicious application of psychological personnel selection and placement techniques. The denial of employment opportunities to women not only ran counter to the tenets of liberal democracy: sex discrimination in employment consigned thousands of women to poverty and, as depression, war and totalitarianism had already demonstrated, “poverty anywhere in the world constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere.” Those who ignored the tremendous contributions of service and civilian women to the war effort, arguing that women ought now to cede their place in the labour market to men, advanced a straw argument against the growing movement for full employment. She made newspaper headlines following an address in Vancouver in March 1946 when she claimed there was little to be gained by attempting to force ex-service women into domestic work. They simply would not comply, nor should they. These women had consistently exceeded the level of most women in civilian society by every standard, Russell argued: IQ tests, level of education, percentage of skilled trades women – whatever the measure, ex-service women surpassed it and merited better than household employment in their postwar career. But there was more than merit at stake: there was
also desire. Veteran women needed jobs which not only matched their qualifications but also permitted them to ‘realise their desires’ and, as she told the Vancouver Council of Women, this was the challenge facing women’s organisations. Those few “unfortunate persons” who had managed to get into the services and had done so much to damage the otherwise excellent reputation of the women’s divisions in no way reflected the overall superiority of the ex-service women who had served so well. Russell acknowledged the consistent support of local councils and other women’s organisations in assisting the women’s services through the very difficult and trying period of breaking this new ground.

In this way, Russell joined in an emerging narrative which constructed the postwar woman as a signifier of all women had gained during the Second World War. Her public speeches and policy advocacy actively constructed the postwar world as one inhabited by women who were now fully integrated in legislation, in the labour force, and in their own households. “Women tomorrow” had “invaded man’s last domain” by going to war. According to this narrative, ‘Winnie the welder’ and ‘Rosie the riveter’ had replaced the ‘shop-girl’; their overalls, lunch pails and production charts had replaced ‘bridges’ and ‘teas.’ The question was: was this a permanent trend? “The housewife who has stayed at home is war’s ‘forgotten woman,’” according to Russell. The postwar woman of this world was gaining financial independence but what was more important, she was gaining a psychological identity grounded in new-found ‘self esteem.’ She was secure in her identity as feminine, as mother, as skilled and/or professional. There were less positive changes, too. “Standards regarding sex relations” had altered, prompting fears of an apparent escalation of venereal disease and illegitimacy. The “increased tempo of money and fast living” were cited to support claims for greater vigilance to ensure the heedless materialism and excessive individualism of the pre-war period did not return. The massive changes wrought by the war had opened up the labour market to women and, in Russell’s view, this was the sure route to women’s equality. At the same time, women were characterised as ‘vitally important’ in the work of home-making and as “rearers of the Nation’s children,” a task she characterised as both science and art. The science lay in the work of understanding human nature, a sphere in which women excelled if properly trained. Workers in the household were also critical, a task Russell had already made clear did not
include the women of tomorrow, the postwar woman. Nonetheless, there was no disputing women's right to work "on the basis of merit," free of 'sex discrimination.'

Dependence upon government was to be studiously avoided, particularly in the context of a programme positioning counselling staff to screen and decide the assistance they could offer in the remediation of legitimate needs. If the services of "specialists" were called for, then such would be provided, but only to ensure that the individual would, as a process of self-development, come to recognise both the source of "need" and its remediation lay within – to "help Johnny see Johnny through." Civil society would be enlisted in a generalised effort to make good the objectives of re-integration, through housing assistance, personal shopping advice, even the correct and satisfactory use of leisure time, all with a strong emphasis on responsible citizenship, through service clubs, women's organisations, church, independent business, psychologists and social agencies. Such a programme was best achieved through the public education system. Reminiscent of the mental hygiene programme worked out by Griffin, Laycock and Line, Russell told her audiences that it was more than time that education be implemented to its fullest potential, addressing human need and human psychological development. In a report of one such address in the Globe and Mail, she contrasted the acknowledged expertise of the medical profession in pursuing national health, or of psychical sciences in the cultivation of national resources: why was the same expertise not invested in teachers so that they could take on the vital and challenging task of cultivating the nation's human resources?

While bold plans for research and development have gone forward in the physical sciences, costing billions of dollars – and this is as it should be providing it is directed toward the welfare of mankind rather than its destruction – departments and boards of education quibble over a few hundred dollars, or even a few dollars for research and experiment in the fields of education, psychology and the social sciences. 167

The war had strengthened community and national identity as well, opening up the opportunity for social reconstruction on the secure footing of psychological science, a society ordered on the recognition and satisfaction of human need. Her speeches and correspondence repeatedly pointed to 'sociological changes' which had stripped away regional, cultural and class barriers. Canada was poised to take its place in the emerging international order and participate
in the expansion of markets through organised international trade and co-operation agreements. Ensuring prosperity and democratic security through models of westernised economic development was a far more effective strategy than the “thunderous declarations of the rights of man.” That is, Russell was now turning to a co-operative model for “world” economic development, under the leadership and on the model of the United States-dominated United Nations. “Development” in this model was a civilising mission of the West. For example, Russell cited the UNRRA slogan, “a pint of milk for every Hottentot” which, while allegedly “poking fun” at the postwar reconstruction (development) programmes initiated under the auspices of the UN, presaged a model of western development, cultural and political security as a strategy for demobilisation and depoliticisation of independence movements and autonomous cultural, economic and political self-determination models.

This was in recognition of the fact that world conditions had a direct bearing on national security and prosperity. In Russell’s view, Canada was the ‘land of milk and honey,’ a land of promise looked upon by “the hungry millions of Europe and Asia with longing eyes.” These sentiments closely reflected the hegemonic model of international and domestic policy the postwar government, and its “peacemaking” successors, would actively construct in the scramble for position within the newly constituted international bodies of the UN, the IMF, and the even more hotly contested race for position in postwar trade agreements through GATT and the Marshall Plan. The West held the promise of democratic growth and prosperity against the “backwardness” and the obvious threat posed by the impoverished. Russell cited the popular Wendell Willkie who argued for the leadership of the US in “freeing” the world politically and economically. National problems could only be resolved through the international order. This was the discourse in which Russell grounded her view of gender equality, positioned through the racialised, cultural, political and economic superiority of the ‘West,’ signified by the United States. Through the hegemonic western model of free market production, consumption and economic prosperity in the postwar world there was no longer any basis for presuming a predetermined limit to employment in the domestic economy. Full employment planning, therefore, must include [white] women equally with men:

As long as there is human need in the world there is work to be done, and if we tackle the job of meeting human needs in the world, whatever and wherever they may be, with the same determination that we have exhibited in conducting the
war, there will be opportunity for full employment for all for a very long time to come.\textsuperscript{169}

This position was grounded in and actively mobilised gendered, class-based and racialised knowledge practices which foregrounded a universalised category of woman as presumptively white, educated, heterosexual; whose interests and aspirations were co-extensive with the interests of nation and the organising precepts of the postwar international order, itself constituted as the collective security interests of western industrial states; whose rights in citizenship were articulated as legitimate in the context of a recognised and shared national and cultural identity; whose reproductive and productive capacities were legitimately practised, but only through either domesticity or skilled occupation, profession or business. Poverty, delinquency, racialised difference, inferior capacity and illegitimate need were the obverse of this universal liberal female subject whose equality claims Russell sought to articulate. The purpose and the tremendous potential of rehabilitation programming, according to Russell and her colleagues, lay in its capacity to forge responsible forms of citizenship: this was the essence of the social security state.

Russell shared her views with many of her colleagues in both DVA and Labour, women who, like her, had reached senior positions overseeing policy programming for women. In their efforts to advance equality claims within the state, such efforts directly implicated their own position as senior policy practitioners presiding over the emerging policy regime of the social security/welfare state, in which domesticity discourses were deeply entrenched. These women promoted policy discourses which destabilised and fragmented gender-based equality claims, reifying racialised and class-based articulations of rule, even as they argued for an equality of position and access to be enjoyed by all women. In the next chapter, I examine the policies and deliberations surrounding postwar rehabilitation training for women. The gains of the ‘postwar woman’ would not, nor were they necessarily intended to be, shared by all women. As liberal equality claims, claims which were mobilised through the racialised, class and gender-based identity of ‘the postwar woman’ – this universalised articulation of women’s right to choose was firmly anchored within the postwar liberal and imperialist world order. Russell’s ideas about the citizenship rights of this new category of woman were grounded in the key organising and design principles of both ‘social’ and ‘collective’ security as the political rationalities informing an
elaboration of democratic responsibilities of citizenship purportedly facing all women in the emerging postwar world. But it remained clear that the women leading this universalised democratic reconstruction of the postwar social, political, cultural and economic order were the daughters of the current elite whose members would find their place among the ranks of the NCWC, the YWCA and the newly formed groups of business and professional women: middle-class, white, educated, and heterosexual. This was the ideal postwar woman eager to take up her new position in the postwar world.
Endnotes:


3 For a recent discussion of this process, see Jeff Keshen in The Veterans’ Charter, op. cit.


5 Canada, Department of Labour, Dismiss... but What of a Job? (Ottawa, 1945), pp. 15-17.

6 The Advisory Committee on Demobilisation and Re-Establishment, renamed the Advisory Committee on Demobilisation and Rehabilitation (ACDR) – a telling shift – was chaired by Walter S. Woods, ADM of Pensions and National Health. In 1944 the latter department was reorganised into the two new ministries of Veterans’ Affairs and National Health and Welfare. At this time, Woods was appointed deputy minister for the Department of Veterans Affairs.


8 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 1486, File 2-162-9, “NSS Exceptions to Regulations. Certain races not accepted to army for non-medical reasons.” Norman Robertson to Deputy Minister of National War Services, December 15, 1941. This question is discussed in Chapter 4.


By 1919, Terman had finalised the Stanford-Binet scale of intelligence, the prototype for all intelligence tests to follow in the massive testing industry and proceeded to circulate his views from his post as professor of psychology at Stanford University. From the outset, Terman’s target was population screening to identify and segregate the allegedly “feeble-minded” population from the apparently normal.

The policy recommendations accompanying this programme were republished verbatim – a claim to their authenticity and veracity – in a 1944 guide to the Stanford Revision of the Binet-Simon Intelligence Scale. Foremost among them was the call to more systematically apply the test in order to segregate out “dull” and “border-line” adults from those who were truly “feeble-minded.”

10 Ibid., p. 65.


15 For a discussion of the struggle surrounding veterans’ right to re-establishment through a system of preferential hiring see Micheal D. Stevenson, “National Selective Service and Employment and Seniority Rights for Veterans, 1943-1946,” in Peter Neary and J. L. Granatstein, eds., *The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998), p. 102. It is unclear, however, if this figure applies to women ex-service personnel as well.


17 Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon, “The Development of Intelligence in the Child,” *L’Annee Psychologique*, 1908 in *The Development of Intelligence in Children* (Nashville, Tennessee: Williams Printing Company, 1980) (orig. 1916), p. 262. Binet and Simon also directly addressed the predictive capability of mental testing in their 1905 study, in which they proposed the model for measuring ‘mental age,’ the basis for the Intelligence Quotient measure. They argued that in no way could their scale be taken as a proxy for a tangible ordering of ‘intelligence.’ Having said this, they left the matter open with the caveat that practical application would doubtless tend toward precisely such a move:

This scale properly speaking, does not permit the measure of intelligence, because intellectual qualities are not super-posable [sic], and therefore cannot be measured as linear surfaces are measured, but are on the contrary, a classification, a hierarchy among diverse intelligences; and for the necessities of practice this classification is equivalent to a measure.


19 Ibid., p. 7.


22 Sandiford remained loyal to his eugenic roots, arguing that in the battle between biology and environment, biology would always remain paramount. Education policy clearly had its limits: "Education can and does produce wonders in one generation; its effects, however, are mostly limited to one generation. To improve human stock permanently, it must first be bred and then educated." (Peter Sandiford, op. cit., p. 49).

Not all education subjects would benefit from a standardised strategy given the disparate capacities of people generally, a disparity that could be traced back to its genetic source. "So far as education is concerned, intelligence and capacity to learn are practically synonymous ... but the learning is easy if there is good nerve material to work with." Ibid., p. 143.


24 Ibid., p. 36.


27 Peter Sandiford, op. cit., p.163-4.

28 Ibid., p. 164.

29 The intelligence men were anxious to distance themselves from the work of phrenologists like Lombroso. Protestations aside, much of this work took a leaf from the measurement of skull size which comprised the foundational principles of racial typologies, the most "scientific" of which was the cephalic index, the empirical basis for anthropological studies throughout much of the first two decades of the century.


30 Peter Sandiford, op. cit., pp. 27-8.

31 Gregor Mendel, an Austrian monk, is credited with researching and documenting the transfer of characteristics from one generation of garden peas to the next, classified as dominant and recessive genes. This group of insights – described as Mendelianism – was recorded and circulated in the 1860s, and was "rediscovered" or rehabilitated, as part of eugenic discourses. See Barkan, op. cit.. See also Evelyn Fox Keller and Elisabeth A. Lloyd, *Keywords in Evolutionary Biology* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994). Mendelians
also drew upon the work of August Weismann whose theories of germ plasm also stressed the continuity of inheritance over the longer term. This approach stood in direct contrast to the more orthodox Darwinian evolutionists, whose stance stressed sudden breaks, chance, contingency and discontinuity as the way of things.

32 Peter Sandiford, op. cit., p. 39.

33 The methodology of intelligence testing has generated considerable debate, not least because of the slippage between application of mathematical technique leading to the subsequent “discovery” of biological fact. Factor analysis was a prime tool in the arsenal of the mental testing practitioner. According to Gould, “Spearman invented factor analysis to study the correlation matrix of mental tests and then reified his principal component as g or innate, general intelligence. Factor analysis may help us to understand causes by directing us to information beyond the mathematics of correlation. But factors, by themselves, are neither things nor causes; they are mathematical abstractions.” Gould, op. cit., pp. 245-5. Burt, official psychologist for the London County Council from 1913-1932 (where he spent most of his time measuring and ranking school children), whom Gould has anointed the “greatest reifier of them all” went so far as to attempt to fix in the brain the physical location for mathematical factors which he had drawn from his “correlational matrix of mental tests.” Ibid., p. 290. Even as Spearman’s g was refuted by later work, specifically that of Thurston and the concept of multiple factors of intelligence, the fundamentals of testing, reification and hereditarianism, survived virtually unchallenged. Some children were good at some things, others not. Identity was still seen to be rooted in intellectual capacities which collectively defined the essence of the individual and these essences were still seen to be subject to calibration, manifested in relation to averages and norms, deviations and maladjustments. Again, as Gould has argued, “To the statistician’s dictum that whatever exists can be measured, the factorist has added the assumption that whatever can be “measured” must exist. But the relation may not be reversible, and the assumption may even be false.” Juddenham, 1962, as cited in Gould, op. cit., p. 310. Among the oldest prejudices stemming from modernist discourses, upon which discourses of intelligence have drawn, are: ladder of progress as model for organisation of life and reification of abstraction as criterion for ranking. As Gould puts it, “[e]volution then becomes a march up the ladder to realms of more and more g.” Gould, op. cit. p. 318.


36 NAC, MG 31, K13, Vol. 2, File 13, “Personnel Selection and The “M” Test: Policy,” (typescript, n.d.) p. 2. According to instructions to technicians charged with administering the “M” test, examiners were to occupy two positions: that of educator, drawing the tested subjects attention to errors in completion “in a most quiet and kindly manner”; and that of state official admonished to “Remember the note at the top of the booklet that it is an offence under the Official Secret’s [sic] Act to communicate any of the subject matter of these tests to any person,
either in or out of the army." See also NAC, MG 31, K13., Vol. 1, "Information for N.C.O.'s Regarding the 'M' Test," p. 2.


39 For a discussion about the differential moral standard set for CWAC personnel and the anti-VD campaign conducted during W.W.II as an instance of sexual regulation, see Ruth Roach Pierson, op. cit.


41 Ruth Roach Pierson, op. cit., Chapter 5, 6.


49 Ibid., p.2.

51 For a discussion of the racism characterising the mental hygiene movement generally in this era, see Angus McLaren, Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945 Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990).


54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 The practice of compiling case files to produce longitudinal case histories of individuals and populations – an outgrowth of this work – would have important implications for the postwar period and echoed a similar call for longitudinal referencing of case files processed through local employment offices.

Certainly, the Toronto Social Service Index operated as a central clearing house of information generated through the Toronto social work/social service agency network, all geared toward what its directors claimed was the general welfare of the individual in whose name such information was compiled in the form of an individual and familial ‘history.’ Confidentiality became an issue of increasing concern in transferring information of such a personal and intimate nature over to an outside agency, even to the armed services, although as Jean Walker, executive secretary of the Index acknowledged, “the only real protection is in the judgement and integrity of those who use the Index.”

Russell was adamant that the confidential nature of the records generated in work of this kind be protected as an indication of the professional integrity she was anxious to secure for her profession overall. For example, she noted in one of her reports, in a hand-written addendum, a situation recounted to her by a “civilian” in which an unnamed male “A[rmy] E[xaminer] had gone out of his way to look up a man’s A. card [in which was recorded all examination and interview results, diagnosis and recommendations] and had talked about it very freely and disparagingly with a group of civilian friends.” NAC, MG 31, K13, Vol. 2, File 13, “CWAC Report #4 by Olive R. Russell, Lieut., Toronto, Ont.” December 11, 1942 to The Director of Personnel Selection, National Defence Headquarters, “Some Observation [sic] and Recommendations regarding CWAC Personnel Selection Work. Policy in Regard to Unsuitable Personnel for CWAC,” p. 4.

Where the interests and remediating intent of the Index and its users was driven by the formative principles of professional social work, there could be no question but that the highest principles of integrity would ultimately redound to the benefit of the “client.” The information lodged at the
Index could do as much potential harm as good to the individual client, however such concerns were allayed in the confident assertion that the trained professional social worker could be depended upon to discern the longer-term effect of such dissemination and weigh any danger against the best interests of the alleged individual client. Embarrassment and “immediate disappointment” were often the price to be paid at the level of the individual, Walker explained, necessary sacrifices to the “ultimate good of the individual and the community — as we social workers have learned, too!” NAC, MG 31, K13, Vol. 2, File 13, C. Jean Walker, Executive Secretary, Social Service Index (Member of the Federation for Community Service) Toronto to Lieutenant O.R. Russell, December 16, 1942.

No single agency, even an agency of the state, could address itself to all “phases of a client’s life,” although such an all-encompassing gaze or net could eventually be achieved where all agencies and more importantly those working within such agencies, understood themselves to be working as part of the broader network. This is what the Index was intended to symbolise and to activate: a unifying and consolidating repository, an active agent receiving and transmitting information from a variety of disparate points which cumulatively organised and presented a composite documentary representation — a profile — of the individual client. Knowledge produced there represented the professionalising effects of social work: “any community servant will feel that his or her work is not isolated but part of a closely interwoven network. It is to assist in making this network an effective community support, rather than an entanglement that the Index exists.” Such a central agency greatly facilitated the regulatory project of the welfare state.


58 Ibid.


60 NAC, MG 31, K13., Vol. 2, File 13, Report to Brigadier R.D. Sutherland, Atlantic Command Headquarters, Halifax N.S., July 24, 1944, p. 2. Interview detailing work of CWAC Army Examiner, typescript, n.d. probably 1944. In her letter to Sutherland, marked ‘Personal,’ Russell explained the purpose of her report as follows: “On the occasion of my interview with the Officer Appraisal Board, you did me the honour of requesting that certain remarks which I made at that time embodied in a memorandum for your personal use.” She acknowledged moving far beyond her purview as Army Examiner to comment on an important subject related to the welfare of the CWAC, namely the importance of personnel work to preparing women for their citizenship duties in the postwar world.

61 NAC, MG 31, K13., Vol. 2, File 14, “Dr Olive Ruth Russell, DND 1942-1947.” Correspondence. Dr. Mary Salter, Lieutenant, Directorate of personnel Selection, NDHQ Ottawa to Russell, January 8, 1943. The record referred to was M.F.M. 196. All confidential information, Salter avowed, was better recorded on M.F.M. 238. See Salter to Russell, January 12, 1943.
At issue was the question of whether the customary M.F.M. should be expanded to include notations of a more detailed nature, including a psychological assessment report completed on women thought to embody potential difficulties, or whether such information was best left off the report and only included where the more detailed and more confidential M.F.M. 238 was requested by an individual officer.

See in particular "Ladies or 'Loose' Women" and "VD Control and the CWAC" in Ruth Roach Pierson, op. cit.


Salter to Russell, May 13, 1943.

Ibid.


Ibid., p. 120.

Canadian Medical Association, The Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene: Report of a Survey Made of the Organisation in 1932 (Ottawa: Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1932), p.13. The principal authors of the report were J.G. FitzGerald, Chairman [sic] of the Public Health Committee for the CMA and Grant Fleming, Associate Secretary of the CMA.


E.A. Bott, ibid., p. 15.

Ibid., p. 78.


Ibid., p. 184.

Ibid., pp. 184-5.
Russell’s dissertation was an attempt to develop a viable testing technique, one that addressed the perceived weaknesses of the single measure of intelligence proposed by Spearman, the so-called “g” factor for general ability.


Ibid. pp. 80-81.

NAC, MG 31, K13, Vol. 2, File 13. Olive R. Russell, letter to the editor, “Co-operation in Cause of Education Urged on School, Home and Community”, press clipping, n.d. According to Russell, it was absurd to criticise as many were the educational reforms introduced under the auspices of the “new Education” or the Haddow method” of permitting greater freedom of selection in academic curriculum if these changes were introduced without any additional training for the teachers whose job it would be to implement, oversee and monitor the outcomes of the new method. One should no more criticise a new educational philosophy any more than one would “condemn Packard cars because some people run them into the ditch” or even “a Steinway piano because a novice plays it hopelessly.”

Ref. B. Baker in Poplecwitz and Brennan, Foucault and Education.

This approach drew on the research programme of Wilhelm (later William) Blatz whose work at the University of Toronto-based Institute for Child Study, informed the training of this new generation of psychologists. Blatz worked alongside Hincks and Bott at the psychology department at the University of Toronto, before moving over to direct the Institute for Child Study on a multi-year grant from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Foundation where he remained until 1960, finally retiring his professorship in 1963. Adjustment to the surrounding environment – and the psychological causes of maladjustment – was a central focus of Blatz’s research. As Richardson has observed in her study of the mental hygiene movement in both Canada and the United States, Blatz exemplified the individualisation of psychological practice. “While the specifics of the generalisation about developmental processes have changed, more important than the specific content of the message about normality and abnormality was the institutionalisation of the idea that we can scientifically validate standards of normal physical and mental functioning.” See Theresa Richardson, The Century of the Child: The Mental Hygiene Movement and Social Policy in the United States and Canada, (State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 127.

Blatz, as one researcher, used this criteria in a very contemporary sense to individualise education as a form of self-development.


Freudian psychoanalysis was viewed with a scepticism bordering on ridicule, as the following by Blatz to the adherents to Freud’s methods suggests: “If one does not arrive at their findings or conclusions, it is said to be because one is not fully initiated into the proper technique, or perhaps because one first requires to be analysed oneself.” William E. Blatz and Helen MacMurchy Bott, op. cit., p. 11.


As it turned out, the Toronto Board of Education began to implement vocational guidance programming in collegiate institutes under its jurisdiction. Students were instructed in how to select a vocation, assessing their own and other’s personality characteristics, researching occupations and identifying their own interests and abilities, assess their own failures, conducting interviews, all in relation to occupational choice. Teachers were instructed in the importance of administering and interpreting mental tests, including tests of IQ. Students and teachers participated in staging ‘playettes’ on the themes of vocational guidance, organised student groups including one called the “progress club,” compiled resources for the school library and scrap books for classroom use. See Toronto Board of Education Archives and Records Centre, Manuscript Collection, Reports by Board Officials, 1937-1962. Report by Dr. Cecil Goldring, Director of Education for Toronto on the Vocational Guidance Programme in Secondary Schools, March 8, 1943. For a slightly different examination of Goldring’s work in relation to his growing concern over the delinquency of young women in particular, see Mariana Valverde, “Building Anti-Delinquent Communities,” in Joy Parr, A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), pp.19-45.


and Fascist Politics in Canada: 1920-1940 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) and Angelo Principe, “A Tangled Knot: Prelude to 10 June 1940,” in Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin and Angelo Principe, Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internes in Canada and Abroad (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000). For a fascinating contemporary study, a review of ‘ethnic’ press conducted by a former agent of the Federal Department of Justice, charged with the ‘handling of interned aliens’ during the Great War, 1916-1919, see Watson Kirkconnell, Canada, Europe and Hitler (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1939). Kirkconnell advised against viewing all ‘foreign’ residents in Canada as de facto sympathisers with either the Nazi regime or the fascist regime of Mussolini.


92 From the behaviourist camp came the confident assertion that all behaviour was capable of quantification as well as reduction to biological causes. However, this was not an uncontroversial or uncontested claim. For example, a 1935 text by David Wechsler, challenged the prodigious capacity of science to measure any human capacity based on the two central propositions: 1) all human capacities are either physical or “psychophysical” quantities and, therefore 2) as such all are capable of measurement. Conversely, Wechsler argued that there were multiple capacities which were distributed across a broad continuum, and could not be organised as discrete entities the one separate from another. The real issue then lay in the validity of statistical methods which attempted to transmute “scales of relative position” into gradations of equal units.

What was in fact being measured in mental tests was the degree of “deviation from the performance average of the group” against which the individual was being compared, such that the “deviation itself is expressed as some fraction or multiple of some statistical measure of variability.”92 The real problem lay in grappling with the thing to be measured itself, that elusive quality of human capacity. Wechsler devoted a book length study to conclude that in fact, differences derivative of sex and race were negligible with respect to their relative impact on “range ratios” or matrices of factors which formed the basis for correlation coefficients, the statistical science of mental measurement. He despaired of ever being able to obtain the needed data even if all of the tools were ready and waiting: “In many instances, our knowledge of a trait or function with which we are concerned is as yet so vague that we are not in a position to measure it at all.”92 The example to which he turned was a standard among those who disputed the relevance of racial typologies, that no one could say with any assurance “that our whites do not include very light mulattos who have “passed”, thus undermining any notion of homogeneity upon which so much of this work relied.92 Difference lay at the other end of the exercise of assessing and quantifying human capacities. Difference and the significance of deviation from the statistical norm or average. Wechsler was among the minority in the United States who, from within the discourse of mental testing, questioned its veracity and, indeed, purpose: “The facts which we have gathered to show the range of human capacities ... should do much to make us suspicious of those who, in order to glorify some of the selected members of our species, find it necessary to misinterpret the facts altogether.” David Wechsler, The Range of Human Capacities (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1935), p. 126.
93 Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon, "The Development of Intelligence in the Child." L’ Annee Psychologique, 1908 op. cit., p. 44.

94 Olive Russell, “The Philosophy of the New Education,” op. cit., p. 5. See also “Persistent Human Needs: An address given at the Parent-Teacher Meeting on Fathers’ Night, Moulton College, February 16, 1942 (Day after fall of Singapore).”


97 This was a movement rooted in both philosophy and psychology, in securing the rights and responsibilities of individual citizens, mobilised through enlightened social planning across a broad spectrum of social institutions including community, family, workplace and school. Russell traced the lineage of individual rights as articulated within the broader cultural and political totality through the emerging educational programme of the state, following a trajectory which extended in a seemingly linear descent from Plato’s Republic through to Rousseau’s Emile. It was time to defend the inherent promise of the new international order signified by the League of Nations, a promise which was challenged by the rise of totalitarian movements, embodied in particular by the fascist states of Germany, Italy and Spain. Her hopes for the new education translated into a blueprint for national citizenship in which all share equally in the club of western democracies, as part of an international movement for liberal democracy.


101 Also on the organising committee were Hincks, Blatz, J. C. Meakins of McGill and G. Humphrey of Queen’s University. The second Inter-Service conference was held in 1945, organised by J. D. Griffin, Brock Chisholm and Ewen Cameron, professor of industrial psychiatry at McGill University. That same year, the Psychiatry section of the CMA was organised. Line was a member of the US-based Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, an exclusive 150-member body devoted to advancing the application of psychiatric knowledge practices. The Canadian Psychiatric Association was formed June 1, 1951. See Theresa Richardson, op. cit., p. 164.


Ibid., p. 77.


Colonel William Line, op. cit., p. 88 (my emphasis).

Ibid., p. 90.

Ibid., p. 94.

Ibid., pp. 92-3.

Ibid., p. 95.

Ibid., p. 92.

NAC, RG 38, Vol. 184, Department Of Veterans Affairs – Rehabilitation File Confidential Letters Vol. 1. Confidential letter 1, from W. S. Woods, Associate Deputy Minister, Department of Pensions and National Health, July 22, 1941, p. 2-4. Contrary to Woods’ desire, an atmosphere of harmony and co-operative did not always prevail in relations between DVA Welfare officers and DES/UIC staff. The objectives of the DES were closely informed by the necessity of placing the most suitable applicant, while those of DVA were to execute the terms of the Re-Instatement in Civil Employment Order. Numerous disputes appeared to plague the work of both groups, prompting a flurry of circulars and reviews of the respective jobs and responsibilities of the two staff groups.

I would like to thank James Struthers for clarifying this point.

NAC, RG 38, Vol. 184, File 1, Department Of Veterans Affairs – Rehabilitation File Confidential Letters. From W. S. Woods, Associate Deputy Minister, Department Of Pensions And National Health. Confidential Letter #1 To District Welfare Officers, July 22, 1941, p. 5. For a discussion of this aspect of civilian re-establishment, see Don Ives in Veterans Charter


Ibid., pp. 2-4.

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It is important to note that this figure covers only those in receipt of training benefits for full-time enrolment in an approved school or training institute, and does not include those placed in on-the-job training for which no financial assistance was allocated and therefore no benefits received.

The termination date for the war, for the purposes of the Veterans’ Rehabilitation Act, was set at December 31, 1946, under the terms of Order in Council P.C. 5333. This meant all applications for training benefits had to be made within one year of discharge or within one year of the termination date, whichever was later. Ibid., p. 22.

For a description of the broadcasts, see report by Andrew Cowan, Report to the Rehabilitation Information Committee on CBC Re-Establishment Programmes” October 17, 1945 in NAC, RG 27, Vol. 3575, File 11-8-9-9, pt. 1. Economics and Research Rehabilitation Information Committee. For an overview of the broadcasts, see The Soldier’s Return. A Digest of talks heard on the CBC trans-Canada network during the winter of 1944-1945 on Wednesday nights, after the national News Bulletin. (Toronto: CBC Publications Branch, 1945). For sound recordings of the summary of broadcasts series, “J. D. Ketchum of the Wartime Information Board comments on 20 talks.” CBC Archives, Accession and Item number 450502-01/00, Location number 450422-01, May 2, 1945.

By this time, the CNCMH had merged into the US umbrella, National Committee for Mental Hygiene, with Hincks at the helm. The organisation traversed the Canada-US boarder as a single entity with a single program for legislative lobbying and organising strategies and tactics. Joining the broadcast series, in illustration of the collaborative approach adopted more generally was Dr.
A. H. Ruggles, Superintendent of the Butler Hospital in Providence Rhode Island, a member of the Surgeon General’s Advisory Committee and a recognised expert on the mental hygiene concerns associated with veterans’ re-establishment. The Soldier’s Return. A Digest of talks heard on the CBC Trans-Canada network during the winter of 1944-1945 on Wednesday nights, after the national News Bulletin. (Toronto: CBC Publications Branch, 1945), pp. 48-9.


130 Source - Columbia Teachers College manual - RCAF manual etc.


133 Ibid.

134 Ibid., p. 28.


136 Canada, Department of Pensions and National Health, Back to Civil Life. Prepared To Inform Members Of The Armed Forces And Canadians Generally Of The Steps Taken For Civilian Rehabilitation Of Those In Uniform (Ottawa, June 1944), p. 9.

137 NAC, RG 27, Accession. No. 71/98, Vol. 2, File 22-5-7-1. RCAF, Personnel Counselling Programme ... In Brief


In 1945, DND published Army Employment – Civilian Jobs in which 250 army occupations were analysed by skill, and graded alongside equivalent civilian occupations. See Department of National Defence, Army Employment – Civilian Jobs (Ottawa, 1945).


140 NAC, MG 31, K13, Vol. 2, File 14, “Article For Saturday Night” (typescript) June 19, 1945, p. 7. See also NAC MG 31 K13, Vol. 1, File 7, “Ontario Vocational Guidance Association to the Prime Minister of Canada.” Included among the concerns enumerated in the petition were the following:

   Item 3. A fundamental cause of world unrest and the present war is the frustration of young people who, finding no normal and healthy outlet for their natural urges and ambitions, are attracted to activities like the Nazi movement of Germany.
Item 5. The lack of adequate planning for the vocational guidance, training and employment of youth results in an inestimable economic loss due to the inproductivity [sic] of hundreds of thousands of workers; and in vast expenditures for government relief, increased illness and crime; and a lowering of standards of living and in decreased morale and in human suffering second only to the tragedy of war itself.

The petition recognised that unemployment, labour turnover and general worker inefficiency were symptomatic of deeper social problems and could therefore not be broached as temporary conditions derivative of short term economic cause. In fact, a 10% rate of idle workers had become a regular feature of the Canadian labour market, a sure indication of the deeper problems thought to be productive of such human waste. The OVGA therefore argued for the comprehensive deployment of Canada's human resources through a programme of efficient planning, through the guarantee of employment opportunity for every citizen in a job for which they were suitable and qualified; careful and comprehensive planning through vocational guidance in preparation for postwar rehabilitation of both war workers and “the men” of the armed services; development of a vocational guidance service to assist war workers, youth, “the unemployed,” the “misplaced” and the “maladjusted”. The petition proposed a regular programme of labour market research, analysis, monitoring and services as part of a comprehensive regime of governance in which state agencies extended their programme and scope through co-operation across all levels of government and between separate departments, bringing schools and the NES into a closely aligned apparatus working toward the same policy objective. This regime called for accurate labour market information addressing occupational trends and requirements, co-operation at all levels of government, regular vocational guidance in schools and closer liaison between these services and the NES.


143 Canada, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Annual Report, 1948, p. 25.


147 Ibid.

148 Ibid., p. 2.


153 Ibid., p. 3.

154 Digest of Rehabilitation Conferences of Delegates of Ontario Communities, Ottawa Conference, p. 225.

155 See “Mental Health Dramas Draw A Big Response,” CBC Times, (week of February 20, 1949).

156 Greer Williams, Special Consultant, US Veterans Administration, “Don’t try to solve conflicts with fear of going crazy.” DVA, Veterans Affairs, 2, no. 9 (May 14, 1947), p. 2.

157 “Veterans’ program said best of lot – Dr. Olive Russell comments,” The Leader-Post, Regina (February 27, 1946).


162 “No Migration to Home or Housework for Majority of Women Veterans,” The Vancouver News-Herald (March 6, 1946); “Few Servicewomen Will Be Domestics Local Council Told,” The Vancouver Daily Province (March 6, 1946).


"Education Stressed at Teachers' Meeting," *Star* (November 5, 1946).


Chapter 7

From Strategic Asset to 'Unskilled Reserve': Postwar training and the return to domesticity

The postwar period was unsettled and uncertain. Security and stability became central themes in postwar policy development. Women had made a tremendous contribution to the war effort and not just in the area of production. Mobilising as consumers to maintain inflationary controls, as volunteers in clothing and war material collection drives, as workers and as producers: across a wide range of areas, women were credited with self-sacrificing commitment to nation, community and family. In the context of the new equality the iconographic figure of the 'postwar woman' was alleged to epitomise, there could be no question but that her freedom of choice would be critical to the successful reconstruction and stabilisation of social, domestic, economic and national life. Meanwhile, employment and policy experts deliberated over whether, and in what capacity, women would continue to participate in the formal waged economy. The war had accentuated fundamental demographic changes already underway and promoted anticipated market expansion and geopolitical transformation through the postwar international order. Were those changes here to stay?

The direction postwar employment and training policy for women would take was in part organised through the final report of the Postwar Employment Problems of Women (1943) and by the 'findings' of the Pre-Employment Training Survey (1945). These reports were policy events, constituting a cumulative body of evidence upon which to develop policy governing women's postwar employment and training programming and access. As such, these reports were used as significant planning documents. They defined the social and economic challenges women were alleged to confront and in what measure. They contained appropriate prescriptive policy responses to the realities the reports were alleged to convey, the problems they were held to identify and remedy. As investigations of employment activity and of domesticity, these reports were also critical institutional organising and lobbying opportunities. As official inquiries and investigations, organising provided both pretext and context for collaborative intersections among state planners and organisations representing the hegemonic elite of white, middle-class,
professionally-identified women. Included among the members and those with whom these committees worked, were for example the National Council of Women of Canada, the YCWA and the Big Sisters Association, along with social practitioners whose interests in social reconstruction were indelibly associated with a distinct approach to citizenship anchored in the principles of social and collective security of the emerging postwar state. As a reading of both reports suggests, the ranks of women’s organisations which were drawn into and strengthened through affiliation with these exercises were exclusively comprised of the social, political, professionalised and economic elite.

These reporting processes and the activities generated through them brought community, volunteer and lobbyist organisations, social agencies and government planners to problematize the social in their assessment of the challenges allegedly posed for and by the thousands of women who had been drawn into the formal waged economy as a result of the accelerated programme of military industrial production. Promoting a diversity of training for postwar employment was not the answer. Too many young women were seen to be roaming the streets of downtown cities, sipping cocktails and dancing with uniformed soldiers, availing themselves of all the allurements and pleasures of modern urban life. There were apparent dangers associated with providing a range of training that might lure young women into “city-based factories” and away from the safety of the rural home. Given the close association within policy circles between both stabilising the home and averting postwar unemployment, and given the at least formal equality provisions contained within rehabilitation legislation, the question of women’s equality of access both to state programming and the labour market was consistently in the foreground of discussion. At the same time, however, where the vast majority of women had been approached in the early years of the war as a lucrative reserve of ‘female labour,’ the identification and deployment of which presumably held the key to resolving the wartime labour shortage, by the postwar period, the challenge now was what to do with the massive reserve of ‘unskilled women workers.’ The ‘female labour reserve’ had gone from strategic economic asset to liability or worse – a disruptive force capable of destabilising the wage-setting mechanisms of the formal labour market. The rationale, then, was to encourage women to withdraw from the formal waged economy without at the same time overtly violating the gender-equality provisions to which
Canada was signatory, within international conventions at the UN and the ILO, and in its own domestic rehabilitation legislation.

In this chapter I begin by examining how women’s access to the formal waged economy was contextualised in domesticity and liberal equality discourse in the Report on the Postwar Problems of Women. I argue that the report worked through two competing rationales. On the one hand, the report’s recommendations foregrounded the formal equality claims of women within employment, as rational agents in the labour market whose ownership rights in their labour were to be acknowledged and respected. This was a discourse of liberal choice, grounded in the individualising frame of contract, a frame that worked through the elision of the material effects of oppression grounded in race, class, and gender. On the other hand, the household was positioned as the primary social unit in which the state had considerable interest. Happy democracy depended for its very survival on happy homes. In this domesticity discourse, the first and true vocation of women lay within the household.

I then turn to a discussion of the Pre-employment Training Survey (PTS). This survey deployed a narrow framework through which women’s access to postwar training and, more importantly, the formal waged economy, would be organised. While some may have argued – motivated either by eager anticipation or even fearful trepidation – that employment trends and social changes evidenced by the war would indeed endure, the PTS reflected persistent efforts among Department of Labour officials to hasten the return of women to what they saw as their prescriptive social and economic locations. The PTS was a survey of training opportunities within a clearly demarcated cluster of ‘suitable’ vocations. Its ‘findings’ comprised the basis not only for postwar training policies and programming, but for labour market research, mapping exercises purportedly charting the ‘normal’ patterns of female employment. As such, the survey shaped the activities and priorities of the National Selective Service and Employment Service Women’s Division (NES WD), the ‘problems’ for which training was the apparent solution, while restructuring women’s access to security in employment, childcare, education, income support, unemployment insurance benefits, labour standards protections and, finally, the formal waged economy.
Next I review the activities of officials concerned with women’s training and employment policy and programming at Canadian Vocational Training (CVT), the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) and the National Selective Service & Employment Service Women’s Division (NES WD). I review how training was projected as a strategy to organise and regulate the employment needs and challenges of women in the postwar economy. I discuss the proposed deployment of pre-employment training strategies to redress chronic labour shortages in the constricted range of occupations deemed ‘suitable’ for women. Specifically, I consider domestic training, needle trades and hospital workers. The training anticipated for women in the health care sector as hospital ward aides, I argue, reflected a response to concerns about increased union density in the sector on the one hand, and intensification of work among nursing and related staff on the other. My discussion of needle trades training concerns the move by employers – with union co-operation – to develop what was in effect a sectoral training strategy as part of the broader move to modernise the industry and chart a course for economic development and market expansion, based on a standardised programme designed to achieve labour force stability. In household or domestic training, I review deliberations within the Department of Labour concerning the shortage of domestic workers and consider how training was anticipated as a strategy to overcome women’s resistance to this employment. I discuss the development of two strategies: the Home Service programme for ‘war brides,’ a product of mental hygiene discourse; and the Home Aide course. In these examples, training was taken up as a strategy to overcome labour shortages, to stabilise labour supply and to suppress worker resistance. In each case, the ‘quality’ of labour was targeted as the central problem to be addressed by screening for ‘suitable women and girls’ through pre-employment training.

Report on the Postwar Problems of Women

In January 1943, the General Advisory Committee on Reconstruction established a sub-committee on the Postwar Problems of Women. The Sub-Committee issued its final report in November of that year. The Report on the Postwar Problems of Women framed the issues purported to reflect the experiences, priorities and needs of all women as they entered the postwar world. The report mobilised a limited rights discourse, as well as pro- and anti-natalist domesticity discourses, drawing upon racialised, class-based and gendered visions of liberal maternalism. The report argued for the right of every woman to work at whatever occupation she
might choose, framed as the right to comparable working conditions, equal pay and “opportunity for advancement.” The postwar problems of women had to be integrated into the postwar challenges confronting the rest of society, the report’s authors contended: “In the work and sacrifice of the war years women have played their full part as responsible citizens and expect to be treated consistently as such in the coming years. Their hope is to be full members of a free community.”

So began the “Report on the Postwar Problems of Women.” The report articulated a rights-based argument for the recognition of women’s position within the paid labour market. It was an even stronger bid to recognise the economic, social and political identity of the married woman in the home, and moreover, of the importance of her voluntary labour to community, state and nation. Her status was seen as integral to successful postwar reconstruction, to the maintenance of a free and democratic society, principally in the rearing and education of healthy and productive future citizens. “Happy homes” were after all in the national interest. Who could oppose such a claim?

Committee members devoted much of the report to an analysis of household labour, ending with a variety of proposals to improve the occupational status of domestic work. This discussion shaped the prescriptive identity of the ideal household worker, suggesting that through induction into this occupation she might gain “craft pride.” The ideal household worker was trope for stability in the maintenance of the middle-class household. As a central proposal, the “rehabilitation of the household worker” was a programme for the redistribution and reallocation of female labour, one that addressed the racialised class interests of educated “professional and business women” by positioning household workers as a “reserve of unskilled woman-power” in need of improvement. Embedded within this analysis was an understanding that, while domestic service had traditionally provided an outlet of paid work for most women, labour market changes had disrupted and destabilised this supply. The chronic shortage of domestic labour seen to have resulted from labour market expansion – the expansion of commercial production into so many areas of social life – had disrupted conventional living patterns particularly in rural and agricultural communities. So many other occupations had now opened up to young women. Only those thought least capable, least desirable, least skilled or
adept were left behind as potential domestic employees. This at least was how the subcommittee members rationalised the problems associated with the chronic shortage of domestic workers. The report's authors would invariably subsume the material conditions which came together to make this work so adverse, so dangerous for so many women with respect to potential sexual and racist harassment and assault, unsafe working conditions, and wage exploitation. Committee members refused to move beyond the more superficial issues of limited autonomy and privacy in order to address the structuring of their households or the racialised, class and gender-based relations of oppression which positioned workers in this sector as structurally marginal in the first place. Instead, the problem was taken up within employability discourse: the question being framed in terms of attracting the 'right type of girl.' Household workers, committee members contended, had to be better trained. With careful screening and selection, "well-trained intelligent girls and women" would ideally be drawn to the occupation, particularly were its status increased to the "dignity of a vocation." Furthermore, and this was important, increasing the number of suitably trained young women in this occupation would enable "highly trained professional and business women" to return to the labour market — thus apparently strengthening the occupational status of all women — there to "make an adequate return to the state for their expensive education." For those women who chose not to enter the labour market, having access to a reliable and highly trained household worker would increase the capacity of middle-class women to contribute to community and society through volunteer work. This was both a pro- and an anti-natalist argument, one advanced under the rubric of the allegorical figure of the "postwar woman" whose agency was mobilised through her white identity, class respectability, and heterosexuality, whose advancement, moreover, was held to signify progress for all women.

The report's authors warned that if women war workers attempted to continue working for pay, the consequences to the labour market would be dire. The concern, one shared by researchers at the Department of Labour and the NES WD in the months leading up to demobilisation, was that these workers would flood the market, disturbing its wage-setting mechanism. This was a clear statement that the 'reserve' of women formerly seen as a lucrative national resource, was now seen as a liability, a threat to the otherwise orderly operation of the market and, implicitly, a socially disruptive force to be contained through regulatory policy. The answer lay in drawing as many surplus war workers into domestic labour as possible, a move
informed as much by market-driven concerns as it was by moral regulatory objectives. Domestic labour was therefore a strategy to avert female unemployment, a problem never identified explicitly in the report:

i. Prior to the war, there were more workers in this category than in any other and many present-day war workers could be reabsorbed into the peacetime economy through this channel ...

iv. The level of the economic life of the community is depressed by a large reserve of unskilled woman-power. Other groups of workers will have greater security if the status of household workers can be raised.6

In the discussion of women’s right to choose – marriage, work, education, or all three – the right to choose was made contingent upon the stability of the household, best accomplished by the rational deployment of ‘unskilled womanpower.’ The respectability of the ‘postwar woman’ was secured socially, culturally, economically and reproductively by positioning the household worker as obverse, as culturally, socially and economically ‘other.’ Recognising a woman’s right to work was a significant departure from the legitimization of women’s position within the paid labour force as the manifestation of economic necessity alone.

Nowhere was this inequality more clearly demonstrated than in the prohibition against married women. The introduction of part-time work as a strategic measure during the war had proven to be a feasible and effective response to labour shortage. Surely there could be no reason to continue such discrimination? For that matter, in a revealing rationale, the report’s authors alleged that they were asking no more than recognition already extended to the middle-class woman’s apparent social and economic subordinate, embodied in the figure of the lesser-skilled ‘charwoman,’ a move which sought to transliterate economic need as it existed for working-class women into a right of citizenship for middle-class women:

Even more important is the need for recognition of her right to work at whatever employment she chooses, provided, of course, she is qualified for that employment. This right has always been conceded to workers in the lower economic ranks, such as laundresses and charwomen. It is only when we come into the ranks of the better-paid women that the weight of public opinion creates difficulties for her, as for example, in the teaching profession where in our judgement the married teacher would really be of great value.7

The right to work existed in a precarious balance, however, articulated more by default as the right not to be driven into marriage as the only route to economic security. Were such rights
secured, the report's authors reasoned, there was no need to fear that women would leave their domestic station. On the contrary, those women who were the apparent subjects of this rights discourses were not compelled by economic necessity to seek paid employment. That is, they could choose to create "happier homes" and a "happier democracy" in a society that did not force them into unwanted marriage. In contradistinction to the image of the 'charwoman' whose legitimate claim to occupational status was, on closer examination, found to be based primarily on economic need, and not on the basis of her contribution to community or society, the report's authors positioned middle-class women as the vanguard of a stable postwar social order. Their claims were those of an emerging universal liberal category of "woman," and pertained to professional and business women of the middle-class. It was in their name and interests that employment rights discourse would be mobilised.

The report's authors were chary of denigrating home as mere household, however, and went to great lengths to argue the social and political importance of mothering and caring work. It was precisely this same valuation that positioned women who had to work differentially. The right to choose to enter the labour market did not diminish the considerable social, political, economic and "personal" value accruing to home-making and the skills of the home-maker. These arguments were conceptually distinct from those regarding household labour as paid work. In this way, the report mobilised a class-based defence of middle-class women's employment rights as coextensive with the shared interests of democracy, community and nation. The real concern here was that stable marriage contributed to healthy citizenship and democracy, concerns of the state, to the extent that family was a central category of citizenship discourse, expressed as healthier and "happier" democracy. To support this claim, the report cited Beveridge's recent report in which he recognised that the market wage was only also a family wage where women performed unpaid domestic responsibilities in the household. This was the foundation for the male wage as family wage:

In any measure of social policy in which regard is had to facts, the great majority of married women must be regarded as occupied on work which is vital though unpaid, without which their husbands could not do their paid work and without which the nation could not continue. 8
The report adopted a most conservative estimate of how many women might be expected to need jobs in the postwar period, of anywhere between 180,000 and 200,000. This figure was arrived at through the following calculations, reproduced in full from the report:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women now working</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women required for normal employment at the end of the war</td>
<td>750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving to be taken care of</td>
<td>450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From these may be deducted the expected number of women returning to their homes or marrying</td>
<td>270,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45% of 600,000</td>
<td>270,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving to be taken care of</td>
<td>180,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By asserting that marriage and domesticity would accommodate the majority of women, the report approached full employment within a narrow conceptual framework, an erasure of the material conditions confronting the majority of women who required regular and stable access to the formal waged economy. Of course, some would work on an infrequent, temporary or partial basis. And single women would be expected to work of necessity, lacking if only temporarily, attachment to a male provider. Women at the margins of the formal labour market failed to find any presence in the report’s pages, except as they secured and stabilised the aspirations, the potential and the status of the ‘postwar woman.’ In general, marriage would resolve many of women’s postwar problems.10

This was not, however, a policy argument for the remuneration of household labour. The labour market and the household were separate, and it was the task of policy to ensure a clear line of demarcation between the two. There was no plan to alter the redistributive income policies of the state through a programme of family allowances, tax credits, or day nurseries as entitlement-based measures. These proposals were clearly intended to secure the domestic sphere as a preserve of both middle-class respectability, and a site of consumption. The report strategically endorsed the social security measures in the Beveridge and Marsh reports, including public health insurance, but not as an articulation of citizenship rights, as claims upon state-based entitlement provisions. For example, the sub-committee proposed a limited programme of children’s allowances, framed as a pro-natalist measure designed to support, but not fundamentally alter the distribution of labour within, the postwar household.11 The children’s allowance would be a non-contributory graduated allowance necessary to maintain a minimum
standard of health and education, to supplement the market-based family wage. The allowance would offset the loss of a second income which would result from the withdrawal of women from paid employment. Committee members argued that this was an opportune time to introduce the measure since it would provide a "psychological" boost, an "alleviating factor in the mental attitude which may result from the surrender of a double income."\textsuperscript{12}

Wartime day nurseries, as Fraudena Eaton had already made clear from her post as head of the National Selective Service Women's Division, were no longer going to provide day-long care. And so the report recommended replacing the wartime day nursery with a system of part-time nursery schools, a "natural centre" through which women might learn how to be better mothers learning about the progression of their children through successive developmental stages.\textsuperscript{13} Nursery schools were seen as a service that would potentially free up some women to perform their household responsibilities. They would provide part-time care for the children of women who had of necessity to work, but only on a part-time basis, or still others who would be better able to perform "valuable community service," and "spend more time with their children." In this way, committee members tried to straddle the divide, balancing limited rights discourse against the prior claims of domesticity.

Layoffs following the wind-up of war production could only be handled efficiently through the National Employment Service. The NES had to be able to gain the confidence of both employers and women generally. The report proposed a comprehensive programme of vocational guidance geared toward a "wise and efficient placement" by highly trained staff. The NSS ought to be absorbed into the NES, the report recommended, and the Women's Division continue in its capacity as overseer of employment policies concerning women. The country was in grave need of more women trained in vocational counselling, personnel and social work, women whose special expertise would enable the state to regulate and monitor the labour market activities of working women.\textsuperscript{14} On this point, committee members were both surprised and disappointed that no plans had as yet been announced for vocational training of women in the postwar period. They argued that all training should be made available to women equally with men, according to the same terms and conditions, but not, the report's authors hastened to add, in the same occupations. Training should be available only in occupations "attractive to women" or
those in which employers were most likely to hire women. Finally, the report observed the threat allegedly posed by poor housing, overcrowding, deteriorating neighbourhoods and child labour — the combination of factors thought to produce juvenile delinquency and social unrest. In the search for stability and security among the ranks of the middle-class, self-contained and distinct working-class community life was a threat best remedied through the techniques and technologies of social planning and engineering. Training, with its regulatory capacity and developmental content, promised order and rationality, predictability and the potential for self-improvement, to the undisciplined ranks of so many young working-class women, particularly those whose cultural and racialised identities were constituted as different, as threatening, unruly and potentially delinquent.

The report found its way into broader circulation as an articulation of what the postwar woman might want once the war was over. Would women happily trade their coveralls for aprons? Cede office desk and job to male veterans in exchange for cradle and kitchen? The subject of women’s postwar employment was taken up in a variety of articles for the popular and business press. Many, including the article “Situations Wanted: Female,” which appeared in the November 1944 edition of *Canadian Business*, reflected the contradictory recommendations contained in the Report on the Postwar Problems of Women. Author Janet Keith took her measure of the report, while at the same time challenging the continued elision of women’s unemployment among those in government. Keith, too, pointed out that the right to work was never disputed when applied to, as she described, women in “lower economic ranks, such as laundresses and charwomen.” Did postwar planners intend to include women in their calculations of full employment? Keith drew on recent ILO studies of women’s employment to argue that the ill-advised policies and practices adopted by governments and employers served to “drive women out of employment” during economic recessions. Such practice had only succeeded in concealing real levels of female unemployment. This was the real issue, as far as Keith was concerned, one which would have to be carefully monitored. As planners deliberated over the postwar problems of women she argued, they would do well to remember that women’s ‘problems’ were precisely the same as men’s. Keith took up the call for a comprehensive National Employment Service, for occupational retraining and vocational counselling, even ‘low interest loans’ to cover training costs incurred by women war workers who now wanted jobs in
civilian industry. Women had now joined the “workers’ army” and the country only stood to benefit from the contribution of their proven skills and productive energy, much as it had during the war. While Keith agreed in part with the subcommittee’s recommendations, her position recognised the needs of women-as-workers, a departure from the report’s positioning of the vast majority of women as mothers above all else. For Keith, then, whether postwar jobs were plentiful or scarce mattered little if the government really intended to guarantee that all who wanted to work for pay could.

The Pre-Employment Training Survey

The PTS was conducted to advise the Committee on Postwar Training of the Department of Labour. The survey was distributed by the UIC in June 1945. As Eaton would later explain, the framework for vocational training had been determined through the careful and impartial research of her department, guided by the results of the national survey. The survey purportedly reflected objective local and regional employment trends. Survey results were forwarded to CVT to provide the basis for further research and to inform the policy planning and decision-making process. Eaton’s report was also sent to the UIC Training Committee in the same capacity. Thus the findings, the organisational approach, and administrative priorities all reflected in the PTS, comprised the foundation for employment and training policy for both ex-service and civilian women. The survey organised the question of women’s postwar employment as a regulatory matter of containment and control. Occupational categories and classifications of ‘female employment’ would be narrowly constrained. Racial, class and gender-based prescriptions closely informed prescribed social location and labour market access. Moreover, even as the rhetorical device of ‘choice’ was articulated over and again in the policy and programming work of the NES WD, for the vast majority of women who were the subjects of these policy discourses, choice figured little if at all. Material location and conditions were taken up and reconfigured as indices of individual deficiency or potential, measures of social, domestic and economic worth. In this way, vocational training, counselling and placement became vehicles for sorting the labour supply and for regulating the social order under the guise of measuring and calibrating individual employability. The ‘market’ for women’s labour was approached as decentralised and regionally fragmented, such that any subsequent policy, while centrally developed and administered, would be local and not national in scope, access or implementation.
As committee chair, Eaton informed regional NES WD supervisors that they were to survey pre-employment vocational training opportunities for women, and not canvass available employment or local labour market conditions. While employment office staff were welcome to provide a “running commentary” of local conditions influencing employment, they were to restrict any observations to a narrow band of occupations. S. H. McLaren, Acting Chief Executive Officer for the Employment Service and Unemployment Insurance Branch, issued a circular outlining instructions for implementation in which he argued that, given both the apparently high costs associated with establishing separate training facilities for women, and the strong likelihood of limited employer participation, planners would invariably conclude that training-on-the-job would seem a more “reasonable” course of action in those few cases where women required more than pre-employment vocational training. That is, the Department of Labour was in no way committing itself, nor would it be likely to commit itself anytime soon, to a separate budget allocation for training women. In preparing their survey reports, regional staff were instructed to restrict their recommendations to a prescribed list of occupations designated as priorities for pre-employment vocational training—and not to recommend any other forms of training. All observations and recommendations were to be guided always by the prospect of continuous employment. Above all, supervisors were asked to concentrate on the availability of domestic service as the preferred vocation for those women who insisted on working.

As McLaren’s directive made its way through the NES, its focus became increasingly narrow and its scope decentralised. For example, in his correspondence with Ontario managers of local employment offices, B. S. Sullivan explained that the purpose of the survey was to review training opportunities “which might be practical in relation to available employment in local areas.” “Being only a survey,” he continued, “it does not commit the Department to any definite policy or action.” Sullivan directed his staff to “ascertain those industries and occupations in your locality which guarantee a measure of continuous employment in the transition and postwar period.” The following occupations were identified as suitable areas in which the NSS & ES would be prepared to field proposals for training:

(1) Household Employment.
   i. Hourly and daily work specialising in general household cleaning; household catering (teas, dinners); mending, et cetera.
ii. Cook – general.
iii. Care of well children

(2) Hotels and Restaurants
i. Hotel room service (short course)
ii. Waitresses (a) restaurant, dining room (b) counter service

(3) Hospitals
i. Ward aides.

(4) Sales Work
(5) Stenography (Refresher course only).
(7) Hairdressers.
(8) Dressmakers.²⁰

As a vehicle through which policies surrounding training structure, format, purpose, content, delivery and access decisions would be developed, communicated throughout the NES, and ultimately implemented at the local level, the PTS began with the express intent of decentralising the training and employment infrastructure across the country. All decisions pertaining to training for women were to be made locally, determined expressly and exclusively by local employment conditions, again always within the circumscribed range of occupations deemed suitable for women. In light of the considerable movement within populations and regions during the war, the pressure for access to training was likely intense, patterned after the regional sectoral concentration within the war economy. These intensities were of course reflected in the reports submitted to Eaton from employment offices across the country. The significance of such decentralisation also may have been reflected in the conceptualisation of the market for female labour as fragmented and localised. Certainly, training policies were so patterned, and thus contributed to the destabilisation of labour market access and participation for women.

The PTS worked to reorganise both the purpose and the anticipated outcome of pre-employment vocational training within this narrow scope of acceptable occupations. Employability discourses were mobilised around a new set of concerns about the suitability of women as employees in occupations demanding proper deportment, attitude, appearance and personal hygiene. On the one hand, the female labour reserve that had been such a vital concern
and solution to the shortage of labour during the war was now represented as a “flood of untrained workers,” as it had been in the Report on the Post War Problems of Women. On the other hand, the availability of so many trained women war workers raised concerns among placement officers about their unreasonable wage expectations and refusal to accept lower-waged jobs in so-called female occupations. As a reading of the regional survey reports suggests, these contradictory discourses found an uneasy strategic balance in the remedial strategy of pre-employment training. This would be both a moral regulatory practice and a rehabilitation strategy, attempting to ensure that only the “right type of womanhood” was selected for training, that through such training she might be upgraded and so, in turn, might the occupation. In this way, vocational training discourse took up material and social relations as indices of individual employability.

As moral regulatory practice, pre-employment training was intended to direct women into jobs they might not otherwise choose. Policy officials argued that necessity and lack of choice would eventually compel those holding out for a better wage finally to accept lower waged jobs. At the same time, ‘quality’ was taken up as a key category and programme objective in training, an individualising effect of employability discourse. This move is illustrated in the following regional survey report:

A pre-employment course which might be given to waitresses would improve the quality of persons doing this type of work. It is in this group we have the largest number of vacancies and this situation will, no doubt, continue until girls are compelled by necessity to accept such employment. A course would be of advantage in turning this group from an unskilled group into one with a definite occupation at their finger tips.

The language of choice worked through policy discourse, a pretext that both legitimised market function and mobilised techniques of governance. Women could not, after all, be forced into a job and still remain a proficient employee. Women would have to choose it for themselves as a vocation. For example, the Winnipeg employment office reported that if women there were dissatisfied with wages in placements on offer, they would simply go elsewhere. “A recent example may be cited,” wrote the supervisor of the Winnipeg Female Employment Division, Mrs. Gerry, of “two Discharged girls [who] received the Canadian Vocational Training course in Hairdressing. After receiving the training, free of charge, and also $60.00 a month, they would
not consider $10.00 or $12.00 a week as improvers, with the result that they are both employed at present by the T. Eaton Company, one as an office clerk at $15.00 per week – the other as an elevator operator at $16.58 per week."

Some commentators reflected upon structural market conditions and argued for legislation to improve hours and wages; however, the discourse of ‘choice’ and individual improvement was pervasive. Those who did argue for a legislative response to improve wages and working conditions – a strategy clearly grounded in the recognition that material conditions at least had some bearing on choice – nonetheless came round to proposing such measures to attract better workers, but not necessarily improve the work:

Until girls with former experience in industrial employment, especially war plants, realise that their financial returns at lunch counters are less, they would not be successful. Again the thought was expressed that the individual must choose this type of work, and training on the job is all that is required. Provincial regulations in regard to hours and minimum wages ... [have] a large bearing on the type of help which can be attracted to tea room and lunch counter service."

Women working in the Toronto Junction area appeared to have little compunction in asserting that high wages were what they expected and high wages were what they would get. A significant proportion of the Canadian defence aircraft production industry was located there, including Victory Aircraft, employing a work force of 3,300; DeHavilland Aircraft with its 2,500 member workforce; Canadian Acme Screw and Gear, with 430 workers; and York Arsenals. The narrative report from this office depicted a female workforce that was if anything overpaid, accustomed now to an inflated wage rate obtainable only because of the temporarily over-heated conditions of a labour market operating at ‘full employment.’ Once the new reality sank in, however, these ‘girls’ were expected to drift out of the labour market altogether, given their proclivity to shun low-waged work. The implication was that women neither needed to work, nor were they the right type of employee any employer would want to hire. The use of the term “leisure” by the report’s author is most suggestive as a rhetorical device, attesting to dubious character and to the notion that individual choice was indeed operative, moreso than financial necessity and resistance to exploitation in low wage industries like the needle trades or occupations like domestic labour:

The work in these plants has on the whole been light, in some cases one might almost say leisurely, and the wages have been extremely high compared to other
plants. These workers will undoubtedly create a problem as they will be reluctant to accept the working conditions or the wages prevalent in the smaller and non-war plants. The present attitude of most of these girls is that upon completion of their present employment in war work they will be altogether disinclined to consider employment at substantially lower wages in non-war work. Their attitude seems to be that they will take a good holiday, survey the employment field at their leisure and will only accept employment at a lower rate if compelled to do so. These girls are definitely disinclined to consider any re-training unless the ultimate result would be earnings equivalent to their present income. This reluctance on the part of some of the girls to accept a lower wage rate will tend to reduce the volume of job seekers incidental to the closing down of the large war plants.24

Employment experts seemed quite prepared to wait it out, anticipating that the problem of laid-off women war workers would largely resolve itself. The Toronto Junction employment office certainly shared this view, arguing that anywhere from 15-50% of women who were about to receive their notice of layoff would most likely leave the labour market through marriage. Similarly, women who had moved into the area in order to work at the war plants would have no choice but to return to their home towns. Low employment levels would take care of the rest, since women would become discouraged and withdraw – or enter domestic service. In this way, employment planners reached the conclusion that only the ‘least employable,’ least productive and least desirable women would remain, making up the ranks of the ‘reserve of unskilled womanpower.’25

Meanwhile, low wage industries like garment had suffered throughout the war from the chronic shortage of labour and of production materials. Employers and employment experts alike contended that the best workers had all gone elsewhere, leaving behind those who were ominously characterised as “unfit,” a proxy for racialised and class assessments of individual capacity expressed through prescriptive notions of gender, race and class-based respectability and suitability. According to Sherbrooke Employment and Counselling Officer Annette Coderre, “pre-employment training would be a good thing in that it would allow immediate elimination of those who are unfit, and would give a chance to others who are more favoured with skill to succeed better and more quickly.”26 This view, not surprisingly, resonated positively among a wide range of employers. Pre-employment training was positioned by NES staff as a most excellent screening mechanism, a practical and innovative service government ought to provide.
The survey in this way worked as a discursive strategy positioning the NES as the central agency mediating between demand and labour supply on behalf of employers. Regional directors used the survey to “canvass” the opinions of employers, foregrounding the employability of applicants, and proposing as the immediate object of governance the means by which to assess, screen and place applicants based on what they regarded as scientifically sound knowledge practices. Surely employers had enough to do without taking on this onerous task as well? How, the regional directors asked employers, might the NES best serve their needs? In what ways would aptitude testing and regular screening through pre-employment training facilitate and expedite the work of NES as an efficient placement service? Pre-employment training of this kind would not actually train women in job-related skills and knowledge, but would instead screen and sort women workers, scrutinising individual employability as an object of governance that was well within the purview of public policy. In the context of pre-employment vocational training, ‘employability’ expressed as aptitude and capacity, suitability and personality was an accomplishment of this policy discourse. Once placed, the employer would provide job training, as so many had suggested was their preference. Reports culled from the survey indicated that all the latter wanted and welcomed from the NES was ‘suitable material’:

Many of the employers consulted stressed the importance of obtaining workers well adapted to their employment. One of the valuable aspects of pre-employment training was that it facilitated the weeding out of workers unsuited for the particular occupation. On the other hand an employee well suited for her future work could be quickly trained and easily adjusted to her employment.27

The Kingston report took up this question of screening directly, arguing that the practice was indeed the purpose of a public employment service. ‘Suitability’ operated in this context as a discursive category, positioning the potentially disruptive effects of worker resistance and workplace regulation as objects of training policy. According to the report, a programme of screening, selection and placement, approaching the ordering of labour market regulation at the level of the individual, would permit closer monitoring by the NES: “Job interest would thereby be created, opportunities offered by each local industry would be made known, unsuited learners in each field could be eliminated by such pre-employment training to the advantage of both employer and employee.”28 The Hudson’s Bay Personnel Department in Winnipeg lent its support as well, agreeing that the NES ought to test the aptitudes of all job applicants, while at the same time observing that the Hamilton office did just that and, apparently, with great success.

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Regular reportage of the aptitudes of those placed in training would permit those thought to be unsuited to be “weeded out,” these employers alleged. Similarly, Miss McIrvine, local employment advisor for the Women’s Division in London, speculated that aptitude testing might be just the ticket to ensure that only the right type of ‘girl’ was placed in that district’s textile sector. The NES, and employers generally, no longer thought any woman ought to remain employed in a higher paid job, if she remained in the formal waged economy at all. In fact, the strategy isolated women who were marginalised by race and by class within the social constitution of the labour market, as the explicit targets of ‘pre-employment’ screening.

In the industrial heartland of Ontario, employers in St. Catharine’s also agreed that the NES should do the work of selection, thus saving them the time and expense involved in screening out ‘unsuitable’ job applicants or, what was worse, investing time and resources in training ‘inferior’ workers. Bell Telephone also liked the idea. “They [Bell Telephone] were not criticising our selections now as they realised we didn’t have much from which to choose,” reported the St. Catharine’s office. A systematic application of testing through the NES would be a significant improvement of the service and an appropriate postwar role for the federal agency. Vocational guidance was already integrated as an administrative assessment and placement tool in the work of the St. Catharine’s office, through the collaborative efforts of its own staff and the St. Catharine’s Board of Education Director of Vocational Guidance. The practice was intended to “get the right youngster for the job,” and well-captured the leading concerns of education and employment experts. Problems of the social, specifically targeting an apparent rise in ‘juvenile delinquency’ and unemployment, comprised the rationale for this work. The answer, according to the educators and employment experts at the board, was to instil in young people a sense of personal responsibility, of self-improvement based on accepting their individual capacity, aptitudes and limitations. In this way, unemployment and poverty were characterised as self-correcting conditions, in the same way as the material effects of oppression, themselves the result of social relations of class, race and gender-based relations of rule, were subsumed within the individualising effects of employability discourse.

Employers responded favourably to pre-employment training since they envisaged it as a way of producing ‘good’ workers. Work practices and labour market conditions during the war
were characterised by the employers consulted in the PTS as having disrupted regular work routines and disciplines. As evidence, some employers pointed to absenteeism and high turnover, indices for conditions of character thought to be symptomatic of the disinterested attitude many women workers were now alleged to share. Mr. Grier of the British America Bank Note Company in Ottawa emphasised that “some form of training in discipline and prevention of absenteeism” would go a long way toward remedying this apparent problem.\(^3\) Approached in this manner, pre-employment training was well on its way to becoming a new condition of employment enabling employers to impose more rigorous standards for personnel selection, while inflating hiring criteria. For example, the spokespersons for Dominion Rubber and BF Goodrich stressed that the advantages of pre-employment training lay in cultivating desirable qualities, including the correct “attitude towards employment, individual responsibility, [and] sincerity of purpose.” Their extensive wartime experience as employers of women in the Prairies, Newfoundland, Quebec, the Maritimes and Ontario was seen to lend greater credibility to their claim that in general women, particularly the “younger generation,” were not “work conscious” or interested in their jobs.

Occupations involving direct contact with the consuming public, in particular retail sales, called upon a dimension of respectability which directly reflected the performance of whiteness and of ‘feminine’ respectability as a further aspect of gender performativity, integrated in this case into work routine and the production of “service” as commodity. For example, several employers identified the necessity for sales staff to present appropriate ‘feminine deportment’ and ‘personality’ while serving customers and selling products. Women needed to understand the “psychology” of the sale. New Glasgow appeared to be suffering from a city-wide epidemic of less-than-courteous women sales staff: “This area offers great opportunities for qualified Salesclerks but it is the opinion of employers and we might say the public in general, that the general run of salesclerks now employed lack greatly one essential need, which is courtesy.”\(^3\) A representative from the retail trade council in Ottawa stated that if sales staff understood the “psychological idea that selling was a job to do” then perhaps they might dedicate themselves with more zeal to this new career opportunity for women.
If the survey was intended to identify ways of compelling working-class women into domestic labour, Eaton and her colleagues must have viewed the results with disappointment. One region after another recounted a familiar refrain: there was little if any interest at all among women in taking up this type of work. From Kitchener came the report that employment officers had not even bothered to survey household training opportunities in light of its unregulated status: “Until the Provincial government brings in legislation with regard to hours and wages, we see no future for domestics in the home” as a viable alternative employment for women, let alone ex-service women. The principal of the London technical school held much the same view, as he singled out working-class parents whose aspirations for their daughters, however inappropriate, were nonetheless a force with which the NSS & ES would nonetheless have to contend. Even if young women were successfully counselled to select a training course of this kind, there was every reason to anticipate that parents would object, since they perhaps unwisely preferred to see their daughters enter office or sales occupations. Mrs. E. W. Gerry of the Winnipeg Female Employment Division only just managed to contain her exasperation on the matter. The Winnipeg office had interviewed all women applicants in an effort to encourage them to agree to household placement, but had failed to turn up a single candidate who “would definitely commit.” Kate Lyons, supervisor of the WD in Edmonton was more blatant in her ethnocentrism. While she remained critical of the notoriously inadequate wages paid by employers of domestic labour, she wrote that far too many “new Canadian settlers” required higher wages and better working conditions to support their larger families, than were afforded by domestic work. Perhaps it was a good thing that women had been deprived of the services of domestics during the war, she mused. It was to be hoped that the “enforced simplicity of wartime housekeeping” had driven home to the employer that she would have to provide much better working conditions if she ever hoped to attract efficient and trained workers. Government could certainly amend the Unemployment Insurance Act to include this occupation; a negotiated federal-provincial labour code could include the occupation under provincial minimum wage legislation; and provincial workers compensation acts could be similarly amended. Finally, any proposed training programme would have to operate in the same manner as apprenticeship training, conforming to a national standard of proficiency that would, on graduation, entitle these workers to the same recognition by employers and governments alike as other skilled workers. Taking a leaf from the report on the “Postwar Problems of Women,” Lyons agreed that
household training "should develop a uniform standard of practice of proficiency and a craft pride comparable to that obtained in other skilled trades."\textsuperscript{36}

Employment officers and policy planners alike appeared to be scrambling for a legislative solution to overcome the resistance they encountered among the intended subjects of domestic training policies. Legislation would, however, constitute a new dimension of state regulatory practice in the private domestic sphere, a move employers, that is, private middle and ruling class householders, manifestly opposed. Regulatory measures were extended to cover designated occupations, based on skill and more importantly on the status of the worker: the closer such a worker was to the ideal-typical white, skilled male of British descent, with ownership in his labouring capacity, the more clearly did regulatory enhancements secure the status and labour market attachment of the occupation itself, through state-based measures such as inclusion as an insurable occupation for the purposes of the unemployment insurance act, under workers compensation, and as a floor, inclusion in minimum wages and hours of work legislation at the provincial level. Collective bargaining increasingly provided more comprehensive, if privatised, means of regulatory direction and, on the part of workers, some means for improving employment security under reasonable wages and working conditions. None of these means was available to domestic workers, nor would they be. Policy practitioners remained chary of undertaking a course holding such potentially dramatic and far-reaching implications, especially for the positioning of female domestic labour in relation to both the private household and the formal waged economy. Any move to recognise domestic employment as falling within the formal waged economy would also position the household as an explicit site of regulation, a move most certain to expose the multitude of other relations equally implicated and, most agreed, best left off at least the labour policy agenda. This dilemma was captured in an intriguing entry in the Winnipeg report about NSS attempts to place Canadian women of Japanese descent in domestic employment during the war:

The uncertainty of the economic status combined with low social status are the two main arguments against taking this employment. To successfully establish and operate such a school, it appears that Provincial legislation must first provide some control of wages, hours, and working conditions. It could then be in an insurable category. This would involve inspection in the homes, and we understand that this was a decided obstacle in the satisfactory placement of Japanese girls in household employment.\textsuperscript{37}
A further dimension to vocational training of household workers implicated its pre-war moral regulatory frame as a programme designed to “produce” worthy citizens whose familial histories, sexually and morally errant or dangerous ways had brought them to the attention of correctional and/or social service agencies. Residential placement and extended regulatory supervision in the community – under the guise of vocational training – melded well with the professional remedial aims of programmes like the Children’s Aid Society or the Big Sister’s Association. Certainly this was the view of social agencies like the YWCA. In the joint PTS report from the Maritimes, the YWCA issued a most enthusiastic response to a proposed training centre for household workers. Such a scheme would provide an excellent placement programme for girls under their care. The Children’s Aid was most “anxious” to place its wards “in good homes requiring trained household workers.” Miss A.M. S. Ward added, however, that it would be advisable to include domestic work as an insurable occupation under the UI Act and even, she added, a “union.”

By August 1945, once the PTS results were assembled and final recommendations forwarded to CVT and NSS & ES, Eaton was far less certain that household employment would ever again constitute a major employment sector among women. Improvements in hours, wages and related working conditions could only be made through provincial legislation and were, Eaton and her colleagues argued, beyond the scope of local employment officers and the national employment service. “Our officers” in the employment placement service, she stated, “are somewhat hopeless about the attitude of the applicant” toward household work. Planners did not want to be accused of forcing women into an unregulated occupation with no government protection. Could household employment continue to serve as a solution to women’s unemployment? At the same time, officials expressed serious reservations about investing in training for an occupation which paid so little. As CVT Director R. F. Thompson put it, “[I]t is an open question as to how far the Government should go in spending public money to train anyone over a six-month period for an occupation which at the end of training might only bring in wages of $15.00 or $20.00 per month.” According to Eaton, “While no claim is made that the Home Aide Plan is all-embracing, it is definitely a first attempt to put household employment on a level comparable to other lines of work with regular hours and minimum rates of pay.” On the one hand, Eaton and her colleagues were well aware that employment for women was to be
considerably restricted and that public policy would facilitate the constriction of labour market access for women. This would undoubtedly translate into high levels of female unemployment. On the other hand, women policy and programme officials knew that they had minimally to acknowledge the government’s public pronouncements regarding formal equality in respect of labour market policies and programming interventions. One way around the dilemma was found in liberal “choice” discourse. Here the NES and its official position regarding counselling and placement, guiding women toward a reasonable, feasible, if narrow, choice about their own future employment, accorded well with formal equality provisions. The roster of ‘suitable’ occupations for ex-service women was drawn up, overlapping with pre-employment training as the strategy of choice for both them and civilian women.

Schedule M and Access to Training for Civilian Women

Vocational training for women laid off from war industries was handled separately from rehabilitation training for ex-service women, although the basis for both was developed through the PTS survey. Schedule L provided for CVT training access for ex-service women. Schedule M was intended “to fit for gainful employment persons directed by Unemployment Insurance Commission to attend a course of training.” To be eligible, applicants had to have been formerly ‘gainfully employed’ although the provision was not restricted to former workers in designated essential war industries. Access to CVT training, including women who were not eligible for unemployment insurance, required first that each province agree to accept Schedule M of the Re-establishment Training Agreement. Brigadier J. E. Lyon, Superintendent of Rehabilitation Training, acknowledged in February 1946 that, while the legislative authority was now in place in each of the provinces, no training had been approved for civilian workers under that schedule. Meanwhile, postwar lay-offs and retooling of production facilities were already well underway by 1945. Schedule M specifically provided training whether individuals were eligible for unemployment insurance or not. In 1945, the majority of women war workers were working in insurable occupations. Training for women generally, however, was limited by the use of ‘re-employment’ as a screening device: approval of training being contingent upon the likelihood of re-employment in the surrounding region, a criterion that was circumscribed by notions about suitable occupations for women. For civilian women, there was another hurdle. Manitoba, PEI and Ontario all refused to sign Schedule M during the period when it would have had the greatest
impact: in the months following the cancellation of war contracts, when hundreds of thousands of women were considering the likelihood of finding a postwar job. Ontario in particular had encouraged thousands of women to move to the province, and within the province to its main industrialised regions, to take up war work. These women now faced uncertain futures, and many were likely left with little choice but to return home, often to regions faced with high levels of unemployment and underemployment.

Certainly, one obstacle to concluding the bilateral training agreements concerned the prospect of provincial expenditures in the training of out-of-province workers, that is, ex-war workers who had taken up residence in any given province to undertake war work, but who were not otherwise normally considered residents of that province. McNamara raised this issue in his early correspondence with provincial ministers of education in 1944, as he attempted to open negotiations on the disposition of plans to implement the lay-off and/or transfer of war workers. In his communication to Ivan Schultz of Manitoba, he contended that the retraining of women and men from war to peacetime production might “represent a problem of some magnitude so far as numbers are concerned,” although the federal Department of Labour did not anticipate “a very extensive period of retraining would be required”; that is, related costs were expected to be minimal. Most certainly, the majority would qualify for unemployment insurance, a federal responsibility. The issue was tabled for discussion at the upcoming federal-provincial conference, with the federal government pressing for a 50-50 cost-sharing arrangement.

By March 1946, the matter was still unresolved. Manitoba joined PEI and Ontario in refusing to sign off on Schedule M, agreeing only to Schedule L training for discharged service personnel. McNamara was advised by senior officials in his department to press ahead in an attempt to secure the agreement of the hold-out provinces, on the rationale that training for civilian workers was consistent with the general vocational training responsibilities of the federal government. The Dominion government was fully within its jurisdictional authority in encouraging provinces through grants-in-aid training for the labour force, and had every reason to expect the co-operation of the provinces in sharing the cost, all of which appreciated the strain on provincial capacities in their efforts to meet the costs associated with veteran re-establishment. The Manitoba position was that vocational training did not fall within provincial
jurisdiction as it was related solely to employment, as a strategy to alleviate unemployment — and unemployment, as all agreed, was solely a matter of federal responsibility, not to mention a national concern. J. C. Dryden, Minister of Education for Manitoba in 1946, explained the subtleties of his government’s argument to Mitchell as follows:

... the maintenance of full employment is an important issue in the Dominion-Provincial negotiations now in progress. A decision on a measure intending to assist in keeping employment at a high level, such as retraining, should, in our opinion, be reached only after its true relationship to the employment problem is agreed upon and not included with purely vocational projects.46

The matter did not end there. Manitoba continued to withhold its agreement until June of 1948, by which time most postwar training had long since concluded, and the federal government was now moving to a Consolidated Training Agreement, combining training for insurable and uninsured unemployed persons, together with Apprenticeship, Youth Training and Student Aid. Failure to agree at this time would have effectively resulted in the termination of all federal training in the province, with the exception of limited veteran training.47

As of April 1947, the following provinces had signed Schedule M training agreements with the federal government: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Training for women under this provision was underway in Saskatoon and Calgary, both conducting courses for nursing aides and home service training. Maple Creek had a nurses aide course. Regina conducted a laboratory technicians course. In May 1947, Moncton opened a course in practical nursing. In other words, Schedule M training was deployed selectively, responding to identified areas of labour shortages in designated occupations, primarily health care and domestic labour. In Ontario, Manitoba and PEI, there would be no Schedule M training for any civilians;48 among the rest of the provinces which did sign the agreement, only BC and Alberta provided designated CVT training for civilian women, in the area of home service training, laboratory technicians and nurses aides, starting in 1946.49

Postwar Rehabilitation Training

Senior defence staff anticipated that demobilisation of service women would be delayed in part because so many were assigned to clerical work where the demand for their services would continue until the machinery of war was fully dismantled. Certainly, the view from the
War Cabinet Office in Britain was that the timing of the demobilisation of women depended at least in part on "whether women should be employed after the war" in either a civilian or military capacity. As these officials made clear, there was far less urgency in the matter of discharging service women since, in the rush for jobs all knew would follow from demobilisation, in all likelihood women would resume their pre-war domestic locations. Some of the women in charge of rehabilitation training for ex-service women took a decidedly different view, among them Olive Ruth Russell, who felt that the education and professional credentials of middle-class service women ought to at least entitle them to employment in an appropriate civilian occupation. Otherwise, for the vast majority of both civilian and ex-service women, few disputed the notion that most women would resume domestic labour, paid or unpaid, or if they insisted upon it, paid employment in suitable female occupations.

Women discharged from the armed services were not eligible for rehabilitation training benefits until 1944. In his postwar narrative, Rehabilitation: A Combined Operation, Walter Woods, Deputy Minister of Veteran’s Affairs, acknowledged the “considerable resentment of this discrimination.” His gesture to move for formal equality allegedly taken to correct this discriminatory practice was, however, just that—a gesture. It was clear that training would remain a strategy to reinforce and stabilise the social construction of the labour market according to racialised, gender and class-based relations of oppression. For example, Woods went on to explain that the pattern of shorter training periods for women than those approved for male veterans was a discrepancy easily accounted for since, as he put it, “there was a great demand for female help in all industries which did not require much skill other than dextrous fingers.” According to his account, one that would effectively stand as the official narrative about rehabilitation policy, unemployment among ex-service women was never a serious problem. A “test check” conducted in December 1947 indicated that of the “few hundred” found to be registered as unemployed, “ninety per cent were without skills and consequently were hard to place in jobs that were acceptable to them.”

Woods described DVA rehabilitation training policy in the following way: “Vocational training was to be made available to any honourably discharged person who required such assistance for his immediate re-establishment in civil life or to fit him for a new occupation
better suited to his physical and mental capacities and his economic needs."

Protestations of gender equality notwithstanding, the purpose of training was to reinforce the existing social order within both the labour market and occupational structures, a patterning of labour market activity and access that was fundamentally rooted in the male ‘family wage,’ domestic stabilisation and a racialised and gendered typology of occupational classifications. Rehabilitation officials had concluded that the best adjustment plan was a job and so every effort would be made to train the veteran for a ‘suitable’ occupation as both a civil readjustment measure and against the risk of unemployment should there be another economic recession. Training was set to a maximum of 12 months and had to be applied for and approved within 18 months of discharge. Policy objectives made it clear that the purpose of training, and of placement in employment, was to ensure that the veteran received a reasonable living wage by the end of the period. Finally, the principle of means-testing was said to have been formally expunged from employment-related rehabilitation policy, placing all benefits on the footing of universal entitlement within an insurance-based programme of income support. At least formally. According to Woods, no account was to be taken of additional money received by the veteran or his “dependants” from so-called “casual earnings or outside employment which did not adversely affect the training programme,” again on the principle that vocational training would comprise the veteran’s main activity until he was finally placed. The principle was at least partially undermined by yet another directive instructing Veteran’s Welfare Officers to determine benefit entitlements according to the wage-earning status of the veteran’s female spouse. If the female spouse was found to be “self-supporting,” the veteran was to be registered and benefits rated “on the basis of a single man and not on the basis of a married man.”

Meanwhile, marital benefit entitlements were calculated to include costs associated with household and dependants, reflecting the principle of the so-called family wage.

These provisions would have significant repercussions for ex-service women and for women employed in the civilian economy generally. The occupations designated appropriate and suitable for women maintained differential access to the occupational welfare programme instituted during this period. Domestic labour was only the most glaring example of structural exclusion from the formal waged economy. Part-time work, self-employment and the systematic exclusion of women from the majority of unionised sectors traced a systematic pattern of
differential access. At the same time, access to training was differentially structured and administered. The drive was on to move as many women as possible into domesticity and/or low wage industries under the guise of pre-employment and domestic training programming, combined with the disentitlement of so many women to services designed to facilitate regular access to employment, principally child care. Employment placement procedures were approached for the most part as exercises in screening and assessment, to determine ‘suitability’ through a conceptual framework grounded in notions of female ‘respectability’ and ‘femininity,’ approached through notions of appropriate location in economy and domesticity while policing for sexual deviance, delinquency and incorrigibility. Finally, ‘female unemployment’ was elided as an economic category from conceptions of ‘full employment’ or even stable employment.

Training for ex-service and much later for civilian women, was provided through CVT. Employment referral was the domain of the NSS & NES WD. The Vocational Training Advisory Committee had already advised CVT that training provided to ex-service women follow so-called ‘suitable’ women’s occupations. In fact, Thompson had little compunction about backing up the CVT policy objective of minimising and restricting women’s postwar employment. In response to the Winnipeg Advisory Committee’s report on rehabilitation training for ex-service women, Thompson refuted several of the report’s recommendations. The committee’s report began by stating that the segregation of rehabilitation from civilian training was clearly in error. Moreover, training could not be separated from opportunity for employment if the objective was to assist women in finding work and “obtaining a higher degree of satisfaction from their work.” The report adopted many of the key recommendations made by the Report on the Postwar Problems of Women, although it went much further by extending the range of occupations beyond that of household service. The Winnipeg report recommended that all training be offered through a technical institute with full accreditation. In response, Thompson stated that CVT would not sponsor separate training classes established in a training institute. Neither would CVT sponsor courses for laundering and dry cleaning, fur trade, bakery and confectionery, and laboratory technicians. Thompson stated that he personally doubted such training would yield significant results, that it would be inappropriate to establish any such occupational training within the context of a pre-employment programme, and that CVT would not supply the necessary equipment and supplies. On the matter of establishing a special
placement bureau to ensure that ex-service women were referred into employment, Thompson asserted that he was “very definitely opposed to any such plan.” This was the jurisdiction of the NSS. Finally, on the proposal that a supervisor of women’s training be appointed in each province, CVT approved the idea provided a “technically qualified” woman could be found and provided also that there were enough women interested in training to justify the effort. His personal recommendation for Manitoba clearly revealed his understanding of the purpose of CVT training: Miss Speers, whose “previous experience with the rural home making courses in Manitoba would be of great value.”

NCWC president Mrs. Edgar Hardy, who on Eaton’s recommendation had been appointed chair of the advisory sub-committee to guide CVT in the development of training ‘suitable for women,’ did not disagree. R. F. Thompson explained to her that CVT was prepared to receive recommendations for training programmes of a minimum duration of two weeks and then, only in the area of vocational training. The sub-committee was not to consider courses of academic education or occupational training. While training should relate to jobs, he pointed out, CVT had no purview over employment placement. “Our programme is not responsible for the placing in employment of men or women discharged from the Forces, but only with their preliminary training,” Thompson directed. Employment, both its determination and referrals, was the responsibility of the NSS & ES, specifically of Eaton’s Women’s Division. The government’s position, as it was developed in the postwar planning exercises in 1944, was that pre-employment training was to be used as a method a directing women into ‘suitable’ occupations, restoring the gendered structure of the labour market as a social institution. As Thompson explained to Hardy:

As you already know, our programme stands for equality of training opportunities for women as well as men, subject of course in both cases to the suitability of the individual for employment in the occupations selected and subject to the further provision that the members being trained for any occupations must bear some relation to the prospective employment opportunities.

By 1946, ex-service women began to move in large numbers back into the labour market. They also began to encounter the conditions of an employers’ market, as employers’ expectations for job requirements increased. Reports were forwarded to the Department of Labour of employers claiming that job applicants lacked the ‘necessary qualifications.’ For
example, the Pacific Regional Advisory Board reported at its meeting in January 1946 that women in both Victoria and Vancouver were having trouble finding jobs. The largest number of unemployed ex-service-women were registered as clerical workers, followed by sales clerks. Clerical workers were regarded as unqualified for jobs according to employers in the private sector – some of whom had been canvassed for the PTS – while sales clerks were told they did not have a ‘regular background.’ The criterion among employers, with which the NES agreed, was the ‘suitability’ of the applicant. NES officials followed a similar rationale: “It is useless ... to train women if they are not potential sales people and many of the women registered with us as being desirous of being sales clerks are not suitable material.”61 Careful screening of any selected for pre-employment training would, the argument went, likely meet employers’ rising expectations and demands.

NES conducted all employment referrals, based on employment trends predicted through departmental research. The NES WD controlled all information regarding employment opportunities for ex-service-women and civilian women alike. This information comprised the basis for decisions taken by the Veterans’ Employment Advisor, the key personnel charged with the task of deciding if a veteran should be referred for CVT training, referred directly into employment, or in the case of women with children, discouraged from seeking paid work outside the home. Veterans’ employment advisors were instructed that CVT training was not an automatic entitlement.62 Under the Re-Establishment Order, all veterans were entitled to resume their former employment, even where that position had been occupied by a civilian worker during their absence. In the case of ex-service women, many of whom had indicated their plans to return to pre-war jobs as I discuss below, it was left to the Veterans’ Employment Advisor to ensure the provisions of the re-establishment order were acted upon. At the same time, VEA were to be notified of all job vacancies and to refer a veteran ahead of a civilian, where both were deemed equally qualified and suitable. Although this procedure was conducted, with regular complications, among male veterans, the record for women is not as clear. According to a circular issued by S. H. McLaren, Acting CEO for the UIC, clarification that this procedure was indeed to be applied to ex-service women was deemed necessary. In McLaren’s directive, however, it was left to the discretion of the employer to indicate that an ex-service woman was
"preferred," and, as the directive stated, "care will be taken to so indicate" on the notice of vacancy filed at the local employment office.63

Training for ex-service women was organised through vocational counselling discourse, within the framework of rehabilitation. Criteria for approval rested on 5 conditions: physical condition, previous education, occupational experience prior to enlistment or while in service, preferences and aptitudes, and employment opportunities. Each of these criteria was grounded in gendered, class-based and racialised conceptions of employability, and suitability regarding appropriate social and economic location. Aptitude and employment opportunities were explicitly organised on the basis of racist and sexist codes about ‘female labour’ and social capacities. ‘Personal choice’ – which did not appear in the written criteria – was mobilised as a justificatory rhetorical device, subsuming the objectives of policy into a process of co-determination in which the ex-service woman in whose interests these policies had after all been devised, participated fully and equally. The techniques and technologies of vocational counselling were purported to ‘provide’ – not generate – neutral and detached “information” and to bring the counselling subject to recognise and acknowledge her interests and herself as reflected within the counselling technique. As an articulation of power-knowledge relations, rehabilitation discourse actively constructed the agency of the participating subject as central to the exercise, legitimating its outcomes as the product of individual choice. Edna Whinney, Chief Women’s Counsellor at DVA Ottawa, delineated the commitment to liberal equality in counselling and referral practices in the following way:

Our counselling procedure includes study of service documents, and the recommendations and conclusions of In-service Counsellors; arranging outside interviews; recommending and arranging mental tests. The procedure is finalised in one of two choices, (a) recommendation for training, or (b) placement in suitable and satisfactory employment ...
An important feature of occupational counselling is that the ex-service women [sic] herself must make the final decision about her future. We never influence a veteran towards a particular type of employment or training. It is our job to give all information possible to enable her to make her own decision.64

Whinney’s rhetoric was meant to reassure. If there was any problem with the civilian re-establishment of women, for example any opposition or even resistance among ex-service women themselves, perhaps vocal or even passive resistance expressed through a refusal to sign
up for courses like household training, such practices were portrayed as the product of an unrealistic or unco-operative attitude on the part of women themselves. The Chief Women’s Counsellor enumerated the key trends observed by DVA staff, in this example for the Ottawa area where a large number of service-women were now awaiting discharge:

1. Few women seek re-instatement in former employment.
2. Women who performed domestic duties in the Service tend to seek training in new occupations.
3. A large number of girls from other parts of Canada, who served in Ottawa, have grown to like our city and plan to seek employment here.
4. There is no unemployment problem. The only women workers who are difficult to please are the General Clerks who are not qualified typists or stenographers.
5. Stenographers are in great demand both in Government and commercial offices.
6. Return to civilian life of officers and senior N. C. O.’s may be difficult. They have become accustomed to wielding authority ... The prospect of returning to civilian employment where they may be relegated to comparatively unimportant duties, will present a problem of readjustment.\footnote{63}

This view was echoed at a DVA meeting held in Montreal the following April, 1947. By this time, approximately 50,000 women had been discharged and, based on a follow-up survey conducted by Helen Hunt, now Supervisor of Women’s Rehabilitation and her colleague Marion Graham, almost 50% of all service women had married and withdrawn from the formal waged labour market. While the tendency among employers to favour “youth and pulchritude” above maturity and experience was roundly deplored, conference delegates overall deemed that the rehabilitation programme for women was going along swimmingly, there was little if any unemployment to speak of, and women were gaining access to training and suitable employment. As reported in \textit{Veteran’s Affairs}, surely intended to alert other rehabilitation personnel, there was the occasional “problem” with the “odd ex-service woman,” but it was generally found that “these veterans had been problems prior to enlistment.” That being the case, DVA was not responsible if it could be demonstrated that service work had in no way contributed to “their present difficulties.”\footnote{66}

Officials at both DVA and CVT argued that the real measure of rehabilitation was civilian re-adjustment and, in this, their expertise as counsellors and placement officers would guide the personal or subjective preferences articulated by women veterans. That is, while the
best adjustment plan for a male veteran was a job, for the woman veteran, 'personal adjustment' was the more important determinant of success. Employment, while significant, was also personally variable. This view was expressed by Dr. Mary Salter, Superintendent of Women's Rehabilitation for DVA, when she emphasised that the most important aspect of rehabilitation was not employment but civil re-establishment, defined as reintegration into the community, there to resume a normal and stable home life. Every effort ought to be made to ensure that each individual ex-service woman, and man, Salter contended, be re-integrated into the community as an "effective, happy and well-adjusted citizen." Of course, girls seemed to prefer taking up hairdressing. Still, home service was a viable option also. Although few had availed themselves of domestic training, perhaps, Salter speculated, once all training centres were up and running, more might be prepared to apply. Determining 'suitability' for employment and occupation was the most important criterion employment and training counsellors were told to address:
suitability defined as the interest and capacity of the individual and the needs of the community.
The objective of rehabilitation, framed in this way, was not a 'search for what is available' so much as it was a "determination of what a veteran needs."67 'Need,' in rehabilitation discourse, subsumed material condition and was instead articulated to a psyche-based register, itself deeply rooted in the social totalities of class, race and gender, however much its proponents professed the neutrality and objectivity of the expert knowledges they deployed.68 Needs-based determination was the principal organising technique of vocational training and employment referral. Salter's directive illustrates how rehabilitation discourses worked at positioning the female subject — the woman veteran — in relation to domesticity and community. Individual interest and community need had after all to be brought into alignment if successful re-integration were ever to occur. The social order, and the middle-class household, would be stabilised, and the labour market restored to its predictable patterns, reflected in the trends charted by the employment experts at the Department of Labour.

In February 1946, the Supervisors of Women’s Training gathered for a national conference in Ottawa to review training and employment programming. In his opening address, CVT head Thompson told delegates that the conference was organised primarily to impress upon all concerned with rehabilitation that women and men enjoyed “equal rights and equal privileges” in all federally sponsored training. Lest anyone misunderstand what this meant, the
The rest of the conference agenda was devoted to a careful review of all progress made in training and employment, based on pre-war employment patterns. Economic and employment research generated empirical proof that the labour market followed predictable trends which were closely and carefully monitored by government and academic experts. The role of training was to facilitate these trends, not to disrupt or challenge them. It was for this reason, conference delegates were told, that all training was developed to reflect and complement local labour market conditions, to respond to local needs, to mirror the organisation of community and region as closely as possible. If the government’s position was that women would have full and equal access to training, the only question then was what programmes she might choose from.

Conference delegates were treated to lengthy presentations in the key priority areas: programmes available to the ex-service woman included Home Service Training, practical nursing, dressmaking, commercial training in office work for the clerical group of occupations, hairdressing, and on-the-job training. These were the areas of employment thought appropriate for ex-service women, although technically all CVT courses were open to women. Although demand continued to be highest in commercial and hairdressing courses, CVT and NSS & ES discouraged further enrolment, delegates were advised. The reason was that these occupations were becoming overcrowded. It is also likely that CVT wanted to fill other courses, particularly household service.69

Thompson believed that the numbers likely to request training were insufficient to warrant any expansion of existing facilities or programmes, a conclusion he said was based on surveys conducted by CVT. Of a total 45,430 women in the armed services, 15,769 were still awaiting discharge, most of whom would likely be required for clerical work until demobilisation was completed. One month after the conference, in March, 1946, Kerr, Regional Director for CVT Toronto, asked Thompson whether it might be possible to supplement the dwindling numbers of ex-service women in CVT programmes by starting to enrol civilian women, specifically in courses for needle trades, waitressing, homemaking and practical nursing. Unless this could be done, Kerr indicated, it would be very difficult to justify maintaining these special training courses.70 At the same time, layoffs among women in war industries were escalating, throwing thousands of women out of work. Officials like Kerr wanted to recruit women into training, to keep the courses full until ex-service women enrolled, and then direct
them into low wage industries where there was a chronic shortage of workers. But Ontario, where most of the training was needed, had yet to sign Schedule “M” of the federal-provincial Re-Establishment Training Agreement, the provision permitting the extension of training to civilians. Many, including Thompson, opposed the recalcitrance of that province, arguing that civilian women laid off from war industries were denied access to training. And it was becoming difficult to fill these classes which nonetheless had to remain open for ex-service women.71

Thompson responded to Kerr that while Ontario agreed to Schedule L of the Re-Establishment Training Agreement, Schedule M was “definitely excluded.” “Personally,” Thompson confided to Kerr, “I am very definite of the opinion that the above limits is [sic] a mistake particularly insofar as the training of women is concerned.” The province, he continued, should sign the agreement and permit training large numbers of unemployed women in critical areas of labour shortage, specifically needle trades, home service and practical nurses, thereby “utilising the classes which have been set up for discharged members of the Forces if and when the enrolment of ex-service women is not sufficient to fill these classes.”72 Thompson advised that after reviewing the subject of demand for training with all of the women’s services, all three indicated they expected the number of women wanting to register for training would soon increase. Until Ontario agreed to sign a federal-provincial training agreement, there was nothing Ottawa could do about training laid-off war workers.

What were the postwar intentions of ex-service women? Marion Graham, supervisor of women’s rehabilitation training for CVT, asked the women’s services to survey their members about their postwar plans and to develop a rough estimate of training volume. At a time when so many assumed that few women would in fact want training, the results of these surveys suggested otherwise. CWAC reported that only 17% intended to return to/enter marriage and therefore withdraw from paid employment. Another 11% were uncertain of their future plans. That left 72% planning to return to former employment and/or seek training and another job somewhere else, probably somewhere better. Similarly, the survey conducted among WRCNS indicated that 6% planned to return to their homes, 13% had no plans. The remaining 81% wanted training and/or paid employment. The RCAF women’s service reported that 11% of their members would enter marriage and not seek paid employment; 12% were uncertain about their future activities; and the remaining 77% would enter paid work with or without the assistance a
Certainly each of the women's services argued that it would be essential for training and related services to remain available to their members. Overall, at least 30% of women awaiting discharge were prepared to take some form of vocational training, with the rest indicating academic or on-the-job training. In all of the survey reports, the reports' authors pointed out that many of the women gave as their main reason for uncertainty the possibility that their male partners would likely object if they wanted to enter training or an educational programme. Several also indicated that they did not have enough information about services available to them.

Graham also conducted an informal survey of employment opportunities for ex-service women. The response confirmed the diminished opportunities for employment in the postwar period. For example, the report from Alberta Crandall, women's supervisor for the Maritimes, indicated that ex-service women would likely find little awaiting them in that region. Training on-the-job had little to offer. Crandall investigated a variety of manufacturing firms, including textiles, boot, shoe and leather, and related light manufacturing industries believed appropriate for female employment. To become an expert chocolate dipper required at least 2 years' experience, with a wage of $25 per week at the end. A machine operator in the textiles industry might make $40.00 per week as a weaver, but took up to 3 years to reach that wage on piece rate. In any case, women who had formerly been employed in domestic and factory labour were making it quite clear that they did not want to return to these low wage pre-war jobs. Employers agreed, saying that very few women were returning to their plants. Certainly, Crandall appeared perplexed by what rehabilitation counsellors described as "apathy" among ex-service women about the rehabilitation programme overall. It did not seem to occur to her that such apathy was the expression of women who now saw the sure elimination of any opportunity they might have anticipated to participate in regular employment at comparable wages and working conditions. W. K. Tibert, Director of Vocational Education for New Brunswick, was more candid on the matter of women's employment opportunities in New Brunswick. As he explained to Thompson, with 7,000 unemployed men looking for work, "industry will be able to secure all the men they require" and would, therefore, have no need to look to women to meet labour requirements. That is, preference in employment extended first to male veterans, then to civilian men and after that, perhaps, to ex-service and civilian women. In the interim, he assured Thompson that Miss
Crandall would continue to pursue the possibility of practical nurses training as an alternative. Home service training was always an option although he doubted there would be any demand for training “unless the attitude of the girls being discharged changes materially in the near future.”

Of the nearly 50,000 women in the services, approximately 25% activated their rehabilitation training and education benefits. Approximately 10,000 women took a CVT vocational training course. However, as Ruth Roach Pierson and Marjory Cohen demonstrated in their study, by 1947, 85% of these women were concentrated into the top 5 of a possible 91 occupations for which CVT approved vocational training. Nearly 50% were enrolled in commercial training in the clerical group of occupations. The remaining 50% were distributed across hairdressing, dressmaking, nursing and pre-matriculation.

In 1947, a total of 334 were enrolled in dressmaking, the leading choice for trades training – and the only one promoted – among ex-service women. According to the Department of Labour, dressmaking and design were promoted so that women would “be better equipped to undertake the sewing required in the general round of Homemaking or with the idea of supplementing their husbands [sic] salaries.” While household labour and home-working were the clear priority of this programme, placement in the formal waged economy – an ancillary objective – was possible, but not encouraged. Another 371 women were listed as taking CVT-sponsored pre-matriculation training; departmental reports also indicated that 1200 women veterans overall engaged in this programme to raise their academic standing for university enrolment or to prepare for trade training. Few women were identified as opting for training on the job. The reason for this, according to CVT officials, was that little training was in fact required and so women could be referred directly into employment, there, presumably, to learn from co-workers. This form of training was, as indicated earlier, favoured by government since any associated training costs, such as they were, would be absorbed by the employer, or what was more likely, assumed by the worker and her co-workers. Another reason for the limited uptake of this form of training, however, as reports from citizens’ rehabilitation committees suggested, was that the programme was severely under-publicised.
Hairdressing courses drew an enrolment of 194 women, a number that led officials at CVT and at the NES WD to conclude the occupation was ‘overcrowded.’ The Hotel, Restaurant and the Domestic group of occupations showed 121 women in training. The largest concentration by far remained the Home Service programme, promoting placement in household employment. Home service training centres were opened in Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Quebec City for ex-service women. The Calgary, Saskatoon, Toronto and Vancouver schools were also open to civilian women. NES was directly responsible for ‘screening’ applicants for the programme. Still, despite the “all out” effort, by 1947, CVT argued that the numbers did not justify continuation. “It was most disappointing, CVT officials complained, “that more veterans did not make application for training in this field,” particularly given the redoubling of efforts to make the programme “attractive and beneficial.” By now, labour officials were convinced that if the occupation was to be preserved, and they took note of the “paramount interest” expressed in this goal by “various women’s organisations across Canada,” it would have to be covered under workers’ compensation legislation and the Unemployment Insurance Act. While note was made that submissions to that effect had proceeded through local women’s councils to various provincial governments, there was no mention of any intent by the federal government to proceed with any changes to the UI Act.

Enrolment in training was one thing. But how many women applied for and completed training? Although records on this question were not as readily available, in April 1946, Marion Graham did include this breakdown in her regular report to Thompson. By this point, 36,558 women had been discharged from the services, of whom 3702 were enrolled in CVT courses between April 1, 1945 and March 31, 1946. A total of 180 were engaged on OJT; 3188 were in institutional training, and 334 were taking pre-matriculation or correspondence courses. In addition to the 10% taking CVT, another 54% were in commercial training, 11.5% were taking professional training including pre-matriculation, 17.4% were in personal service, 11.5% were in semi and skilled occupations and 4.7% in so-called semi-professional work. Of the 3702 women in CVT sponsored training, 782 (21%) had graduated. However 679 or fully 18% were listed as having “withdrawn” for a “multiplicity of reasons, personal and circumstantial.” Applications for training were also, it appeared, regionally concentrated and, therefore, likely subject to considerable fluctuation based on regionally variant local economies. For example, 44% of
women discharged in the North Bay Ontario region in May 1946 applied for training. This high percentage suggests that CVT was dragging its feet when it came to establishing courses for ex-service women, a concern that likely prompted the earlier survey of women’s services. Despite the survey effort, CVT officials concluded that the PTS results were not so far off after all. In April 1946, Thompson communicated to all Regional Directors within the system that the following types of training were to be made available: business and commercial, hairdressing, dressmaking and designing, practical nursing, merchandising and “salesmanship,” the latter two of which might just as readily be provided through training on-the-job. Home service training would remain within the existing centres already identified, even if few expressed any interest in it.

Courses were limited on a regional basis. For example, Salter investigated the situation in Edmonton and found that the only courses available were CVT commercial, privately provided hairdressing with little follow-up in job placement. The only other course available in the city and therefore the region was homemaking. Approval for out-of-province training was difficult to obtain. Poor co-ordination between CVT and NES further compounded the problems faced by women once they had completed training. In Vancouver, pre-matriculation courses were filled beyond capacity and women were turned away unless they indicated that such training was applied for preparatory to university enrolment. Hairdressing had a long waiting list. The majority of training was otherwise concentrated in the areas of commercial, dressmaking, and power-machine operating for garment manufacture.

The Return to Domesticity

Eaton was determined that the disruption of women’s ‘normal’ employment wrought by the move to wartime production was temporary and even minimal, and that the pre-war occupational distribution and domestic status of women would once again be restored, and soon. Of the 4,000,000 women registered in 1946 as being of ‘gainful occupational age’ at 14 years or older, 2,400,000 were engaged in ‘homemaking,’ as Eaton thought most appropriate. That is, life was well on its way to resuming its regular course. Of the 1,350,000 women not seen to be ‘homemakers’, Eaton calculated about 700,000 were in gainful occupation, leaving 650,000 to be accounted for. These women were not be to considered unemployed, Eaton hastened to add,
since only 100,000 of them were actually looking for work. Who made up the other 500,000 women? “Slack.” Young women and girls who, under any normal circumstances, ought to remain at home among their families of moderate income, a few in cities, but in the main the young womanhood from farms, villages and small towns for whom no ‘vocational opportunity’ was apparent. This “slack” had been rapidly drawn into war industries, escalating the number of women registered in “gainful occupation” by 1944. In fact, 275,00 were so employed, with another 150,000 working in non-essential industries. Canada, Eaton asserted, was able to withstand the “intensive invasion of the home” experienced by other countries, England most of all. After 1944, approximately 150,000 married women moved into household service. Eaton and others inferred that these married women had taken up positions vacated by younger single women, and that the latter had left domestic service and moved into industry. Further, as Eaton characterised it, “a very large number of young married women, many with husbands in the Services, mostly without children, swarmed into industry, planning to earn and save against the day of setting up their own homes.” At every turn, Eaton stressed the temporary, even epiphenomenal character of women’s war experience in the formal waged economy, motivated as much by the desire to perhaps earn some extra money and/or supplement their husband’s incomes, as by patriotic spirit. Eaton joined her colleagues in promoting the notion that changes in labour force composition were merely temporary adjustments and not the early marker of a deepening much less a permanent trend. In total, Eaton anticipated that the volume of employment for women would be 150-200,000 more jobs than were listed in 1939. Of every 10 women, she argued, 6 or 7 would respond to the ‘tugs of home life’ and take up homemaking or ‘just living at home’, leaving 2 or 3 in gainful occupation. This news should not disturb, however, since many of these women would be employed in the newer electrical, chemical and radio industries – along with garment manufacturing – which “prefer the dexterity, cleanliness and painstaking patience of women workers.” Eaton chose not to elaborate on the more challenging questions of known occupational health and safety risks workers might also confront in these industries.

The bar against married women in employment represented one area in which formal equality statements directly contradicted actual public policy. On the one hand, the NSS had worked closely with employers during the war, encouraging them to institutionalise the practice
of part-time employment in the form of the “house wife’s shift.” But now, Eaton would oppose any such move to recognise the employment rights of married women, even the liberalist recommendations contained within the McWilliams committee Report on the Postwar Problems of Women. The place for the married woman was clearly in the home. Of course, primary responsibility toward the home was one thing; working from the home for remuneration was another. Home-based production was promoted by the NES WD, effectively positioning the federal government as supportive of women’s need of a second income while avoiding any endorsement of stable labour market access or rights in employment. This option was promoted in particular to support the growing handicrafts and related tourism industry. In August 1945, Eaton outlined the problem and its solution to McNamara:

Is there, through counselling, a way by means of which the Employment Service can influence married women with home responsibilities to refuse employment and yet without involving the Government in harsh discriminatory policies which will create injustices? There is a fine approach to this based not on the “right of married women to work” but rather the responsibility toward home. On this angle women’s organisations are willing to assist. There is always the practical argument that a woman has to earn a good income before it pays financially to take paid employment. Counselling on self-employment, sales commission work, etc., should be reviewed as possible advice for married women.89

Two programme proposals to the NSS WD and CVT illustrate the direction this approach would take. In the first, a proposal developed by Donald Cameron, “Tentative Outline for Vocational Training Programme in Arts and Crafts, Under the Department of Extension of the University of Alberta,” the programme was described as having both potentially salutary aesthetic as well as economic effects, not least of which was a ‘citizenship development’ programme aimed at instilling cultural respectability, while at the same time encouraging cultural cohesion within a given community.90 Handicraft production, Cameron explained, was all the rage among sociologists. Souvenir manufacture was envisioned as economic development, contributing to the growth of what would become a thriving tourism trade, a process which had profound implications for national and cultural identity, not least of which would be the deepening commercial appropriation and degradation of first nations cultures.

The second proposal was drafted by Renee Morin, of the NSS, under the title “Rehabilitation of Female War Workers Originally from Rural Districts.” Morin was absolutely
convinced that the federal government should encourage the revival of handicrafts in Quebec as a strategy that would secure the cultural and economic future of rural Quebechoise. Les Ecoles menageres provinciales were leading the way in conferring these indigenous skills in a manner consistent with their civilising mission to protect and preserve local cultural integrity. The "possibility of selling these goods at their door to American tourists" was drawing "village women" back into handicraft production, Morin observed. The point then was to secure and deepen potential markets in order to create viable employment across rural Quebec for women artisans working within the household. As a strategy for gender-based cultural and economic production, for Morin the future lay in home-based artisanal handicraft production.

'Homemaking' was a major focus of women's rehabilitation programming. Grace Arrell, senior counsellor for DVA Hamilton, explained that as a matter of administrative procedure married women were explicitly discouraged from pursuing employment. As she told her colleagues at the national rehabilitation conference as late as July 1946, "we try to counsel married women to make the home and raising their children their real life's work." Those who persisted in trying to exercise their right to rehabilitation benefits, presumably taking at face value the assurance that access to training and employment was equal for both women and men, were met with a very different practice. Women who attempted to register in a CVT course were advised that they would have to make "satisfactory" childcare arrangements before DVA approval would be granted. Conversely, unmarried women with children were actively assisted in pursuing CVT courses, on the grounds that they would have to support both themselves and their children. In this case, the 'failure' of households was attributed to desertion. Such women were expected to work, even consigned by law to low-waged work with no assistance for child care. As officials repeatedly acknowledged in their efforts to discourage married women from seeking employment, only a high rate of remuneration could possibly justify employment outside the home. For those women whose economic survival depended on their income alone, it was clear that employment was to be preferred to 'dependency' on income support. The limited income support provisions anticipated in the Postwar Report on the Problems of Women, after all, only addressed a minimal supplement for child-rearing, and even there was expressly designed to provide a 'psychological boost' to offset the loss of the 'second', i.e. woman's, income. The NES WD followed an identical rationale, in that WD staff refused to refer women
into employment if, in the opinion of NES personnel, they “appeared to be neglecting their home and family.”

For women with children, the only hope of obtaining a training referral was if they could prove that their children were registered in a day nursery.

This was a double-edged sword in the case of unemployed civilian women. Federal officials approached child-care as a wartime provision only, a temporary measure designed solely to secure the labour of women for war industries. In a departure from the original intent of the draft day nursery agreement, Clause 11 of the final Dominion-Provincial Wartime Day Nurseries Agreement, authorised on July 20, 1942 by OIC 6242, extended child-care services to women not working in war industries, although such enrolment was not to exceed 25% of total capacity at any facility. Employment office staff diligently investigated the NSS-operated childcare centres to ensure that only the children of women working in essential war industries were registered there. NES staff complained that regular surveillance was made considerably more difficult once the NSS permit system was lifted in the spring of 1945, leaving employment office staff uncertain from one week to the next of the current employment status of women using the day nursery service. The strategy of choice, therefore, was to deny an employment referral to married women with children when the former registered for postwar jobs following layoff, shifting the burden of proof over to the woman applicant. This procedure was adopted in concert with the NES WD publicity campaign to encourage women and employers to register at the NES office. In this way, Eaton reflected, there would be a check against “unduly influencing women to accept employment,” a practice the NSS WD had little intention of pursuing.

By VE Day, the NSS WD set out to dismantle the Wartime Day Nurseries Service and to disqualify women from eligibility for childcare. Eaton and McNamara, knowing the resistance this move would provoke, deliberated over the most appropriate date to set for terminating federal sponsorship of the programme. Eaton suggested April 1, 1946 as the best date. She also suggested the programme be ended 4 months earlier in Ontario on the understanding that the province might be pressured into taking it over. The longer the federal government postponed termination, the longer the province would procrastinate over assuming responsibility for the burden. Eaton argued that in no way could employment of women be considered “essential for work of national importance” now that military production contracts had all but ended. On these
grounds, McNamara agreed to write to Goodfellow, Ontario Minister of Public Welfare, which he did in February 1946, pointing out that the rationale for federal involvement was the essential designation of war worker. "As you know," McNamara told Goodfellow, "the Dominion share of financing this project was undertaken as a war measure for the reason that women whose children were in day care centres were engaged in work of national importance." Goodfellow replied directly to Mitchell, agreeing that the programme might be continued on a cost-shared basis with municipalities, asking only that the federal government extend the programme until June, the end of the school term.96

The anticipated closure of day nurseries was met by petitions to the NSS and the Department of Day Nurseries, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, from women who clearly wanted and needed these services, based in part on their intention to continue working in the postwar economy. In April 1945, Eaton received such a petition addressed to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare asking that the programme be extended into the "necessarily unsettled postwar period."97 The petition was drafted by a group of women from Toronto, in which they argued that access to childcare benefited home, family, parents and children. What was interesting about the petition was that, although women clearly benefited as mothers as well as in their capacity as workers, they mobilised precisely the same arguments used originally by the federal government in order to mobilise women with children, to recruit them into war industries. In the Toronto petition, women drew attention to the educational and social benefits of childcare. The provision of these services by child experts, knowledgeable in issues of childhood development, health and education, provided an important resource for parents. The women pointed to the following: improvement of child health; education of young children in habits of personal cleanliness, behaviour, "care of self" and relationships with other children. Far from destabilising home and family, these women pointed to how the nurseries strengthened the bond between parent and child, not least because parents had more patience and appreciation of their children "if they are not with them the whole day." On the other hand, accessible and reliable childcare obviously enabled women to work, even to sustain low wage jobs.

Meanwhile, applications for day nurseries continued to come in, particularly in Toronto, in the months following VE Day, prompting Eaton to instruct her colleague, Margaret Grier, to
visit that city and discover what was behind the “seemingly unreasonable situation.” In her report, Grier took the position that many of the women with children registered in the programme were precisely those for whom some recognition of the need to work might be extended, since many of them were women who had been deserted by their enlisted husbands. Individual need notwithstanding, Eaton was more interested in ensuring a solid foundation underpinning ‘sound’ public policy. Provision of childcare services to working women within federal labour market programming simply did not figure in any sound policy framework. The only basis upon which childcare services had been provided was to secure the national objective of mobilising the female ‘labour reserve’ for wartime production. With the ending of the war, so ended that federal prerogative. The administrative route to systematic disqualification was initially straightforward. In order to qualify for access to a day nursery during the war, women had originally to produce their NSS permit showing employment in a designated essential war industry, a requirement that was revised after meeting with considerable opposition.

With this in mind, Eaton advised Grier that her department would issue instructions through the local employment offices cancelling Circular 291, under which women had been encouraged to register their children in the day nursery programme in order that they might themselves take jobs in war industries. Circular 291 would be replaced with the following:

The Dominion/Provincial agreement for day care of children in the Province of Ontario will be terminated on June 30th [1946]
From now until that date the Employment Offices will continue to accept applications for the registration in day care centres of children of employed mothers...
It will not be necessary to compile and forward statistical reports except on request. Circular 291 is cancelled.

By not collecting statistics on the number of women requiring access to childcare, Eaton and her colleagues signalled the federal department’s intent that the existence of childcare needs of working women was excised from the policy research and development process in all future labour market planning and programming.

‘Finding the right girl’: Needletrades, hospital workers and domestic service training

Training was a vehicle for the gendered regulation of labour market structures. At the same time, however, employability discourse was deployed to position training as responding to the vocational and skill deficiencies of its intended policy subjects. Problems encountered in the
form of inadequate wages, unsafe working conditions, resistance to placement in low wage or unwanted employment, in particular in domestic labour, might be expressed by individual women through the simple act of leaving a job, staying away from work, or refusing a job referral. Whether in response to unsafe work conditions, harassment, or low wages, such actions were taken up in measures of labour turnover, absenteeism, or an 'unsuitable' or unrealistic attitude toward work status. In all these cases, employability discourse transformed the actions of working women, opening them up to scrutiny as indices of individual deficiency to be addressed and remedied through pre-employment vocational training. Problems associated with insecure or unstable labour force attachment was positioned in this way as a method by which to improve the employability of the individual. This, at least, was how it was argued by UIC staff who claimed they could not find suitable employment for unemployed women unless such training courses were made available.\textsuperscript{100} Separating training from employment placement, as Thompson insisted was the task of CVT, also fragmented training within employment policy, while even further undermining any relevance it might have as a viable response to work reorganisation and redistribution, new production technologies and management techniques, and new occupational skill requirements, all of which were constant changes confronted by working people. Such fragmentation intensified the individualising effects of pre-employment vocational training where it was deployed to 'upgrade' individual workers.

In the final section of this chapter, I examine how training practitioners and employment experts anticipated deploying pre-employment vocational training as strategies to attract 'suitable' workers to stabilise and improve the 'quality' of labour. This, it seemed, was an appropriate elaboration of the scope of state policy, operating through labour market regulatory discourses to secure the social and economic boundaries of the labour market by intensifying state regulatory practices with respect to women workers.

**Needle Trades**

The needle trades sector confronted chronic and persistent labour shortages throughout the war, in large part due to the conditions of employment as a low wage industry. The industry, with the support and participation of the craft and industrial unions in the sector, began to organise for a sectoral strategy and drew upon pre-employment training as a labour stabilisation
scheme. As a reading of the steps taken to organise a Winnipeg Needle Trades Training Institute suggest, the employer organisation and unions within the sector deployed the pre-employment training strategy as a vehicle for achieving stability within the industry. In so doing, both parties focused upon improvement of labour quality as the route for occupational upgrading.

In July 1945, the Garment Manufacturers Association of Western Canada (GMAWC) presented a proposal for a sectoral strategy of government-sponsored pre-employment training for workers in the industry to the NSS & ES. The apparent shortage of “trained experienced help,” argued the GMAWC, meant that garment manufacturers would be unable to meet production commitments to the following: Department of Munitions and Supply Orders; orders from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agencies; and finally, domestic consumer markets. Garment production was a labour intensive industry and a large employer in the region. The GMAWC itself claimed to represent 24 plants in its organisation, employing 1500 workers, while the sector overall employed 4000 industrial sewing machine operators alone in the Greater Winnipeg area. The employer organisation indicated that its consultation with the newly formed Employer Relations section of the NSS had failed to secure suitable workers. The NSS claimed that it could not supply girls and women to the industry and, even when it was able to do so, many moved on after a short period of employment.

The association proposed a three-point programme to deal with the problem. First, a publicity programme through the Consumer Branch of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board, the NFB, CBC and Canadian Press to emphasise the national importance of the sector as employer and manufacturer. Second, a public campaign tying the clothing shortage to the chronic shortage of labour, promoting the sector as a large employer in a peace-time economy. Third, a training institute to be established in Winnipeg – government to assume responsibility for securing and training workers on behalf of the sector. The wording of this proposal underscored how training would be approached in relation to its remedial effects on producing the stable workforce:

It would be the purpose of the Pre-employment School to afford preliminary training in Production methods and particularly through a lecture system to condition psychologically entrants to the industry. The Pre-employment school, through a careful selection system, would be instrumental in eliminating a great proportion of the turn-over of help which at present exists with regard to beginners.
The industry contribution to the proposed institute would consist in a committee appointed to work with a jointly appointed board of directors to develop curriculum, and supply of equipment and materials for instructional purposes. Trainees would receive income support from government during the 6 weeks of instruction; industry would provide subsidised work placements at an hourly wage floor of 30 cents for a 44 hour week “with the possibility of earning even more on our piece work incentive.” At the end of a 6-month probationary training period, trainees would receive a $50 bonus paid by the Dominion government as an incentive to complete the programme and commit to remaining in the position. This inducement, the employer organisation argued, would have a pronounced “stabilising effect,” thus resolving the original problem of high turnover rates. Further, the bonus would actually increase the wage rate by 5 cents over two successive 8-week periods, suggesting that it would be paid out by employers as an hourly increase every two months and not paid in a lump sum.

The proposal sat with the NSS for another year, while piecemeal plans were attempted and the federal department of labour haggled with the Manitoba government over Schedule M. In August 1946, plans were ready to launch a major industry training effort in the form of a jobs ‘contest’ to attract workers into the sector. The meeting, sponsored by the NES, was organised by the Winnipeg Needle Trades Training Council, chaired by Neaman, the employer representative. The rest of the council was comprised of S. Herbst, representing the unions organised in the sector – the International Ladies Garment Workers (AF of L), the Fur and Leather Workers (CIO), the Amalgamated Garment Workers (CIO), the United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers (AF of L); and H. Stephens as secretary, representing the NES.

The Winnipeg Free Press made its boardroom available for this well-publicised event, a ‘contest’ to draw workers into the industry. The Council and NSS & ES argued that the “sweat shop” label was a thing of the past. The meeting was well attended, with representatives of 84 employers, the four labour unions from both the industrial and craft sides, the provincial department of education, and provincial Minister of Labour, the Winnipeg School Board, the NFB and the NES. “No one,” reported the NES, was “more concerned than the employer and his [sic] union about maintaining and even improving this present high standard” of employment and production. Once the sweatshop “fallacy” was removed, the NES argued, its efforts, along
with those of the provincial ministry of education, would mean that the NES could work full time on "dispatching workers to jobs, instead of acting as a selling agency."

Employers were encouraged to organise hiring practices in association with the NES and were availing themselves of the opportunities offered by a close association with the Employer Relations branch of the UIC. For example, the Montreal Needle Trades Institute developed strong institutional linkages with the Quebec UIC. Industry there expressed its general 'alarm' at the costs of high turnover, estimating that the training costs associated with training every new employer ran as high as $75 per worker. The model used for the Quebec construction trades, while perhaps attempting to undercut the hiring hall system of the unionised building trades, sparked enthusiasm for the architects of the Winnipeg Institute. Local employment officers selected 'suitable persons' through their aptitude and screening practices for referral into training and from there to employment:

These persons are being trained in all the construction trades and as vacancies occur in the classes, our "designated officer" in the Montreal Labour Office is notified and he selects suitable unemployed persons, who are then referred to the school and if acceptable to the Principal, are enrolled for the appropriate Apprenticeship Course. As you might see, this has proven of very great assistance to the building trades in these areas, also to the local offices, particularly Montreal, where a very considerable number of persons have been taken from the unemployed ranks and guided into useful and remunerative occupation.

The system was a closed hiring hall, with selection and referral at the sole discretion of the employment official in collaboration with the employer and the director of the training programme. "Suitability" could be determined almost exclusively on the basis of employer demand.

As the plan began to take shape, interests of the various parties involved galvanised. The proposal allied economic development with employment development policy objectives: Winnipeg had a large and growing garment sector. Rather than developing a competitive strategy with Montreal and Toronto, the Winnipeg sector saw itself as a gateway to western markets. As part of its modernisation and development strategy, the sector would shift from work clothing to the broader market of consumer fashions. The industry was a large regional employer. NES looked forward to routing unemployed workers, particularly women, through the proposed institute and into the sector, starting with unemployed workers who were UI-eligible. Employers
would have access to government-provided training, wage subsidies and employment referral – that is, the NES would assume full responsibility for labour supply. For its part, the NES would establish its credibility as an employment agency working in the direct interests of capital through its Employer Relations branch. As a sectoral adjustment programme, workers who successfully completed their training would be recognised by all garment employers in the region, a design feature intended to offset competitive ‘poaching’ among employers, varying standards in employment conditions, and flexibility in the labour supply. Employers would be assured of the “quality” and credentials carried by centrally trained workers. Moreover, workers would be taught consistent production methods and work routines, in which were embedded managerial techniques, through a standardised industry curriculum which reflected the employers priorities for work design and competitive work performance. And what was in it for the unions? Jobs. And recognition by employers and government as the legitimate bargaining agents for the industry.

The employers’ urgency was compounded by the anticipated effect of the up-coming change to the Income Tax Act. During the war, the income of married women was tax-exempted up to $660 per year, a move intended to draw more women into the labour force. That exemption was lowered to $250 in 1946. Employers argued that they were likely to lose between 80-90% of the 1500 married women then working in garment plants in the Winnipeg area in consequence of this change.108 The NES officials confidently asserted that a strategy of vocational guidance and pre-employment training, backed up by a programme of careful screening, would have greater effect in stabilising the workforce: “We feel that more success will be obtained by placing an applicant who has chosen the needle trades work as a vocation in preference to having been converted.”109 The Council received the assurances of the Minister of Education, Dryden, that needle trades training would be included in the Manitoba Training Institute. However, the Council wanted an institute of its own. Dryden directed the Director of Technical Training for the Manitoba Department of Education, R. J. Johns, to conduct a survey of technical and vocational training for the Council. The survey began in January 1947, when the Council travelled to Ontario and New York City to study the joint labour-management training activities conducted in a variety of programmes, plants, vocational institutes and schools. Stephens, Employer Relations Officer with the NES Winnipeg Office, accompanied Johns and the
employer and union representatives, Neaman and Herbst. After visiting companies, schools, unions and training institutes in Woodstock, Toronto and Hamilton, Ontario, the committee proceeded to New York City. The committee was pleased with the interest in Winnipeg demonstrated by business people interviewed, although one commented, “That’s in Australia, isn’t it?”

Committee members promoted education as a vehicle for promoting industrial stability and workplace harmony. It was seen to be the ‘common meeting ground’ which brought together labour and management in pursuit of a common goal. For its part, labour sought to ‘improve the educational status’ of its members, and was prepared to provide both ‘moral’ and financial backing to its membership. Employers shared the ‘moral’ and financial commitment to training, while contributing their managerial ‘expertise’ based on ‘practical experience’ in the area of personnel management. As a vehicle for securing, improving and consolidating the gains education might bring to labour-management relations, the survey committee recommended the establishment of industrial advisory committees composed of three representatives each from the labour and management side, and one seat for the public education sector. The NES would assume the role of ‘impartial public body’ on the committee, contributing its expertise in analysing and predicting employment trends and acting as liaison among labour, management and education. Students would be recruited into the industry through the public education system and the NES on a co-operative placement basis. Finally, all assessment, hiring and placement functions would be assumed by the NES, deemed “well equipped to relieve industry of this burden.”

The report of the Needle Trades Training Council Educational Survey Committee was released at the end of January 1947. The report is noteworthy not only as a study of industrial training within the sector, but also for how training was mobilised through key knowledge practices of managerial technique: namely, mental testing, vocational training, and ‘human resource management.’ The survey established as its main research objective determining the cause of high labour turnover. Possible reasons were identified as follows: applicant induction (personnel interviews), training, human relations, working conditions, personal conveniences, and wages. Material conditions, likely determinants of job safety, security and satisfaction, were
readily discounted. Wages and working conditions were found to be 'reasonably favourable' and therefore unlikely to contribute to 'excessive turnover' in the industry. This could only leave issues of labour force quality, with special accommodation to the needs of a female workforce - 'personal conveniences' such as lunch room, rest area, appropriate washroom facilities and the like. But the more serious matter was quickly identified as the principal concern of the educational committee's investigations: "deficiencies in applicant induction, applicant training" and "human relations." The plan for modernisation of the industry was therefore organised to investigate and develop the following: educational films, a training school for beginners, re-education of workers, part-time training on-the-job for students, and plant visits for school students.

The first stop on the survey tour had been the York Knitting Mills in Woodstock, Ontario. There the committee had met with Dr. H. A. Grant, production engineer; Ralph Pasgrave, industrial engineer; H. Woods, manager; and Miss M. Robinson, personnel manager, whose presence suggests the mill employed predominantly women. York Knitting Mills had learned well the lessons of employment and personnel experts, and outlined a full programme of personnel assessment, scientific management, mental testing and strategic deployment of 'human resources' according to the most modern methods of work design, just-in-time training and work distribution. "Before entering company service" every applicant was subjected to and had to pass a series of tests: (a) General Health, (b) Eye, (c) General Knowledge, (d) I. Q. rating, and (e) Manual Dexterity. The test of general health was 'visual'. Any doubts revealed there would be followed up by a complete medical examination. The company team did not indicate who paid for the examination, although no doubt refusal by the applicant to either pay or co-operate would likely have ended the 'applicant induction' process right then and there. The eye test was to determine 'visual efficiency' in short range vision, horizontal and vertical focusing, all using equipment provided by the Visual Engineering Institute of Guelph, Ontario. Again, costs were not alluded to. The general knowledge test did not warrant any comment, given its 'elementary' nature, failure of which would also eliminate the applicant from the running. There followed a review of 'general knowledge' tests then in circulation in Ontario which assessed for literacy, in linguistic as well as cultural and 'moral' codes, to screen systematically and systemically for prescriptive and proscriptive racialised, cultural, class and gender-based criteria. If and when the
applicant passed that hurdle, it was on to the I. Q. test, a test designed to assess aptitudes in various ‘occupational skills’ and classifications. Again, the process opened the door to prescriptive knowledges, forms and practices. For example, applicants were asked to identify misplaced or missing items in a picture of “a well known piece of merchandise,” a practice that assumed familiarity with an item bounded by culturally specific knowledges and presumed location in social and economic relations. The manual dexterity test required agility in both left and right hands, separately and simultaneously. Women, of course, were thought to have a particular proclivity for such dexterity. Testing apparatus was designed explicitly to screen for productivity. All results — ‘ratings’ — were interpreted by an outside firm of industrial engineers, specialists in the field. As evidence of their success, company representatives claimed to have conducted an experiment in which 350 applicants were hired ‘irrespective of their rating.’ Company records were produced to demonstrate that, had the company used the rating system, it would have saved $6200 in wages paid out to workers who were incapable of reaching even the lowest production quota.113

Meanwhile, some Department of Labour officials were sceptical of the claims made by the Council. The industry had already received considerable funding from the federal government during the war to help meet its labour requirements, particularly through direct wage subsidies. Plant schools had been established under the War Emergency Training programme in at least 6 Winnipeg plants under contract to the Department of Munitions and Supply. The experience, Thompson told the department’s solicitor A. Brown, had been neither a happy nor an entirely satisfactory one. What most disturbed Thompson, it seemed, was the distinct trend that had emerged in employer use of the wage subsidy programme:

With one exception the main interests of the companies seemed to be in receiving government subsidy for the wages of new employees, the majority of whom left the companies, or were released, when their training period finished, and a new group were taken in. The result in most cases was no net increase to the working force of the companies concerned. As a result we discontinued operations of these plant schools.114

As far as Thompson was concerned, industry turnover could not be accurately assessed on the basis of a cursory review of global statistics alone. Much closer scrutiny was called for. Certainly the Department of Labour was by now more than adept at scrutinising and classifying the
activities of workers; perhaps it was now time to consider employer practices more rigorously as well, particularly in cases like these where employer councils were keen to see that public funds might continue to provide them with a trained stable labour force.

Within the context of these allegedly scientific managerial techniques, the various unions involved participated fully in the training strategy as a legitimisation process, to secure a place in planning and decision-making, within the production process overall, at both a sectoral and company level. This strategic positioning was accomplished through the transformation of the key problems facing the sector as one of the quality of the work force. For example, Item 14 of the report detailed a meeting with representatives from the New York Fashion Institute of Technology. The report cited one of the institute instructors, a Mrs. Kapt who, in addition to her expertise, also professed a “Canadian background,” presumably indicating her knowledge of conditions confronting the garment sector there. Kapt viewed the industry as what she termed a “vocational dumping ground.” Conditions were gradually improving, provided her Canadian colleagues might “get our Canadian girls to realise the future that lies ahead of them in this industry.” Training – operating as policy discourse – carried with it profound individualising effects which disallowed recognition of material conditions besetting women and men working in the industry as problems of equal if not greater significance: low wages, dangerous working conditions, industrial speed ups, racist and sexual harassment, intensification of work load, managerial control over work and job design, gender, racial and ethnic segregation in work distribution and so on.

In the summer of 1947, the Council developed its plans with the NES for a Winnipeg Needle Trades Training Institute, modelled on the Montreal Needle Trades Institute and similar training schools in New York. UIC and NES worked closely with the Council, shepherding the proposal through successive stages of development and lobbying with the Prairie Regional office of UIC. The obstacle standing in the way of the Winnipeg proposal was that Manitoba had yet to sign off on Schedule M, and so access was limited to those already UI-eligible.

The Ward Aide Programme
Like the Home Aide programme, the Ward Aide course was seen as an appropriate occupational training programme that would accomplish the twin objectives set by the NES WD: moving women into areas where there was a high labour shortage, and ensuring that CVT programmes were seen to be responding to the training requirements of ex-service and civilian workers alike. Once again, the shortage of labour was characterised as a shortage of ‘suitable workers,’ and not a rational response by women to seek higher paying jobs under safer and more favourable working conditions. The strategy of upgrading the occupation by upgrading the worker was therefore well exemplified by a proposed training course for hospital ward aides. The first step was to change the name of the occupation from ward aide to nurse’s aide, thereby adding to its prestige and its status as an occupation women would freely choose.

Ward aides were among the lowest paid staff in hospitals and sanatoriums. Few women willingly took on this type of work if other jobs were available, a pattern of labour force activity which contributed in no small measure to chronic labour shortages in the sector throughout the war. At the same time, nurses were increasingly vocal in their opposition to having to assume tasks which were, after all, more in keeping with domestic work than the skilled labour for which they had been so extensively trained. It was this same feature of the work that kept so many others away, at least where there was any substantive choice in the matter. At the same time, the Canadian Hospital Council was increasingly concerned about increased union organising in the sector. Many nurses and other hospital workers had left the sector during the war and, it seemed, many were now refusing to return. Certainly, in the area of ward aides, layoffs in war industries were not succeeded by any appreciable increase in employment among the hospitals. Hospital workers were not coming back. Even the CHC was forced to admit that ‘old conditions of employment’ were no longer acceptable to many workers. This recognition, however tentative, was also encouraged by the presence of union organising, a pattern that made its way into regular NSS sectoral reports on employment patterns, conditions and requirements, particularly when the discussion made its way to the flow of the CHC AGM in 1945:

The increasing tendency on the part of hospital employees to form unions was discussed. Some hospitals, notably the Vancouver General Hospital, suggested that a well-qualified personnel officer would relieve the hospital superintendents of many hours of work in dealing with the employment of staff, and that such an officer would carry on the employment work more efficiently.
The occupation was therefore ideally suited to the policy objectives of the pre-employment training programme envisioned by Eaton and her colleagues in the WD. At the same time, the ward aide vocation reflected considerable changes occurring throughout the nursing group of occupations. As part of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Veterans’ Qualifications, or Bovey Commission, a new category, practical nursing, was also created to respond to the shortage in that occupation, on the one hand, and to deploy the services of trained ex-service women without engaging opposition from the Canadian Nurses Association (CAN) on the other. The CNA designed the courses for practical nursing which would be delivered by CVT under the rehabilitation training provision. Meanwhile, the Mother Superior presiding over the Sherbrooke Sanatorium took a decidedly stringent view of the problems confronting the hospital administrator. In her opinion, the problem with ward aides was not a structural one of low wages, poor working conditions and better options elsewhere. On the contrary, the problem derived from “lack of competency and skill” among the workers who ended up in the occupation. In the Mother Superior’s view the inefficiency of ward aides had exacted far too great a cost to her institution. The views of the Mother Superior were generally widely shared among those who customarily approached wages and working conditions as an accurate reflection of individual efficiency and social worth.

In either case – improving efficiency of workers or compelling women to accept work they manifestly did not want to do – policy planners again anticipated that the decline in available jobs would eventually bring women round to accepting this type of work. With that in mind, Eaton and her colleagues deliberated over a round of proposed training programmes that would concentrate on both upgrading the status of the ward aide and improving the calibre of the worker herself. Occupational upgrading effectively subsumed the material conditions characterising this work as a function of the imputed inferior capacities of the woman, the categorical subject, of postwar pre-employment vocational training policy discourse.

The plan to train ward aides was based on an initial proposal from the Regina Employment and Selective Service Office. The office planned an extensive training course that set about to reform the “character” of the trainee. The “better type of girl” was seen to have left this work for more interesting and more “remunerative” employment elsewhere. Those who did
enter the occupation were allegedly devoid of training and appropriate education, unprepared for the “duties assigned them,” and largely “disillusioned” by the work. That is, the problems thought to beset this category of worker were characterised as having originated in the psychology of the individual, manifested in poor attitude, unruly behaviour and unrealistic expectations. For example, consider the following description attesting to the value and necessity of training as a remedial strategy designed to identify and correct the deficits of the ward aide. The successful trainee would understand and accept her place as subordinate, a stable work identity produced through the training discourse:

With previous training and tactful instruction, a girl undertakes her job under no delusions that she will be personally assisting the nurses or [be] indispensable to the successful operation of the hospital, but she does find out that such workers as she are a very necessary part of the staff, that her job will be respectable, satisfying, and worthwhile.119

As part of the course of instruction, the attitude of the trainee toward her fellow workers and future employers was as much a focus for the production of the idealypical pedagogical subject as the curriculum content. But it is the articulation of this approach to the interiority of the training subject that is of particular interest here. Women were trained in the particulars of cleaning, changing linens, arranging flowers and feeding patients delineated in instruction modules. Integrated throughout were techniques emphasising individual performativity of the ideal ward aid, invoking standards of compliant femininity, of competence and attentiveness. Instilling such qualities, forming the ‘character’ of the ideal employee modelled on notions of female subordination and respectability, cumulatively assessed as personality, in effect defined the prescriptive occupation requirements and conditions of employment. Managerial technique was in this way integrated into the training programme, while character formation was an integral organising concept delineating necessary character and skill for this inherently feminized occupation. Character formation took the form of instruction in the elements of “Personal Hygiene”: Posture, Cleanliness, Appearance, Care of hands and hair. “Ethics” comprised a separate area of instruction and included the following subjects:

1) **Department:**
   - Respect authority
   - Courtesy
   - Attitude toward fellow workers
   - Cheerfulness
   - Business-like manner
Organisations like the YWCA, the NCWC and the Big Sisters expressed considerable interest in and support for the course and appeared pleased by its results. Women trained through this programme were reportedly "conscientious" and "dependable," according to their new employer. When the Weston Ontario employment office decided to run a 3-month course for "nurses aides," officials there asserted that the fact of training was itself sufficient to convince "the girls" that they were "learning something worthwhile." Overall, the experience of training was alleged to have instilled a new sense of "self-confidence" and interest, a clear indication of character reformation and rehabilitation that was productive of a more appropriate feminine worker-identity now invested with an internalised sense of obedience and compliance, of self-government. Training of this kind, that is, was seen to facilitate the capacity to be taught, integrating the managerial techniques which would position the future employee within the routines and rituals of the workplace, as the following testimony to the allegedly positive effects of courses of this type suggested: "Such pre-employment training seems to have a definitely stabilising effect on the girls, as well as providing a foundation of training on the job later." 

The Home Aide Project

Occupational suitability was an intensely gendered, racialised and class-based articulation of how work for women was thought to be organised. Household work was viewed as the lowest rung in the ladder of economic evolution. Occupations which involved some measure of domestic labour were similarly cast as inherently unskilled and therefore most suitable for women seen as unskilled, uneducated, whose employment capacities were defined as inferior, specifically working-class women and those whose racialised or ethnic identities marked them as 'other.' This view was articulated by Eaton in her 1946 address to the National Rehabilitation Conference, where her characterisation of domestic labour drew upon a civilising discourse that posited the social and economic forms of western industrialised democracies as inherently superior, natural and modern. Those associated with the household, specifically those labouring
there for pay, however meagre, were cast as “primitive” and subordinate. In the so-called “primitive organisation of production” women engaged in “housewifery” as occupation. Those who transferred this labour into the market, working in the homes of their alleged superiors, were seen as culturally, socially and economically ‘under-developed.’ Some moved ahead through what Eaton characterised as “public housekeeping” in hotels and institutions as an apparently natural extension of their less-developed capacities. The next step in this cone of increasing diversity was personal services, followed by business services and so on. Household training, therefore, reified and normalised the subordinated status and marginality of such labour in public policy planning and programming. As a normal feature of any modern society’s cultural and economic development, in fact an elaboration of that development, such labour secured the respectable bourgeois household.

Eaton’s understanding of what constituted suitable women’s employment, a view shared by the NCWC, the YWCA and related women’s service organisations, began with her definition of the relationship between the household and the formal waged economy. Household employment had always been and would remain the first and last choice for women’s employment policy, a position Eaton and her colleagues vigorously defended. Her correspondence turned on the challenge of persuading women to accept the work. As she commented in March 1945 to McNamara, several months before the results of the PTS began to flow into her office, “It has always seemed such a sad thing to me that domestic work with its endless possibilities for women has never been put on an acceptable basis either socially or with regard to conditions of work.” The domestic shortage could not be resolved through unofficial, voluntary channels as the failure of the pre-war domestic service programme under the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Plan made evident. If the Employment Service could take on the work of “maintaining standards through placements” and, even better, if the provincial governments could see their way clear to co-operating with the federal department by revising their labour standards legislation, then perhaps, just perhaps, women might be enticed into this most suitable of female vocations. But this was still so much wishful thinking. Eaton would apply herself to the task with all diligence on behalf of the elite organisations of women whose lobbying for household labour continued unabated so that women would take up this vocation, in
the belief that the occupation would be reformed and that this was the most appropriate role for the federal government in formulating its response to women's postwar employment needs.

Plans for household service training were pushed ahead through the Home Aide project, so named to distinguish it from the pre-war household service training programme administered on the recommendations of the Women's Advisory Committee of the National Employment Commission. The Home Aide plan was conceived of as a solution to the reluctance of women to enter a longer-term programme of residential training. Local employment offices were instructed to encourage ex-service-women, and later women laid off from war industries, into the training and placement programme. Policy officials at NSS wanted to see a short training course followed by direct placement on the grounds that, as Eaton explained to McNamara, a longer programme of instruction might deter women from pursuing an occupation to which they had already expressed opposition. Training introduced the notion that household labour was indeed an occupation. The NSS WD position was that in the absence of improved provincial labour standards, a training programme would give the impression of occupational security and status. As Eaton put it, "If, however, a short course could be provided it would not impose too much upon the applicant and would serve to introduce the idea of training being a necessity." The plan would be held up in part because provincial training agreements were still not in place in each province, thus preventing CVT from moving ahead immediately on training programmes for displaced industrial workers.

Efforts to draw ex-service-women into the Home Aide programme were challenged at every turn, both by employment officials who complained that women refused to co-operate, and by ex-service women themselves who steadfastly resisted these efforts. For example, CVT staff in Alberta argued that they did not want to participate in carrying courses in household service, since their programme was in the business of providing relevant vocational training leading to regular employment. Household service simply did not fall within that category. Moreover, the Alberta CVT office contended that the proposal would likely stir up resentment among women. Finally, promoting household service in the roster of CVT courses might effectively disallow other options and in that way deny women, in particular ex-service women, access to longer-term vocational training in other occupations. A memo to that effect made its way from
the desk of the Calgary NES manager to Eaton, who promptly forwarded it to Marion Graham with the comment that, in view of women's reluctance to take up this work, a shorter course might circumvent opposition. Perhaps, Eaton reasoned, CVT might offer a longer course once further interest developed. Although the dispute with Alberta officials was explained as having originated in confusion between the Home Service course and the Home Aide course, as Graham clarified with Eaton, it is also quite likely that Eaton, Graham and their colleagues counted on diminishing employment in other sectors to compel ex-service and civilian women alike into household employment.

The Home Aide programme did not operate successfully even as a reserve to which women apparently considered unsuitable for other occupations could be referred. For example, Calgary officials indicated that they tried to implement the programme in this way, in the knowledge that many women registering at their office might just be desperate enough to enrol. According to Miss E. Clark of that office, screening and classification reflected the growing trend of toward credentialism, that is requiring training, experience and qualifications as criteria for an NES WD referral:

As you suggest there are a considerable number of girls asking for employment for which they have no qualifications. Retail selling is one classification that many girls show a preference for, even though their personality, appearance, and experience are not suitable. We will certainly try to interest these applicants in becoming Home Aides, provided they can qualify.127

In Vancouver few women signed up for the home aide programme, although Morley, the employment officer, remained confident of its long-term success: "There seemed to be some misunderstanding that these women are replacing charwomen," she observed, most likely referring to employers. "They do not seem to realise that these women are qualified workers."128

As lobbying to promote the Home Aide programme intensified both inside the Department of Labour and from organizations like the NCWC, the debate over domestic labour as a prescriptive source of employment for women — a default position inasmuch as the main rationale was that domestic labour was a remedy for female unemployment — some policy practitioners took a closer look at the reasons behind women's persistent refusal to take on such employment. The sharp class divisions among women were foregrounded in the course of
programme implementation. Grier, Associate Director of the NSS, went so far as to observe that the programme was of benefit mainly to its more prominent advocates, namely middle and upper class women whose organisations were its most avid proponents and who were the main political agents with whom government consulted. Grier was among the few senior policy staff to question the appropriateness of committing public funding to what was clearly a class-based programme that benefited only "wealthy homes." Perhaps it was more appropriate to leave such training and placement to commercial agencies? Grier recognised that many women did require assistance in the productive and reproductive labour of the household, and recommended that the scope of state policy in this area be extended. That is, social welfare agencies could address the household labour needs of low income urban homes. Government might encourage Women’s Institutes to develop programming to assist farm households. As for the lobbying of local councils of women and their national umbrella, the NCWC, well that was a different matter entirely: “[T]he women’s organisations do, after all, represent the women and homes of ‘better than average income’ on the whole,” Grier reflected.  

The shortage of domestic household workers was the product of economic and social changes which were likely permanent. On the one hand, Grier argued, supply and demand conditions had changed considerably. Women were turning away from the occupation, joining an exodus already noted in the well-circulated special report on the subject in the September 1946 report from the US Women’s Bureau and the November 1946 issue of the US Employment Service Review. Women would look to any other alternative than domestic service, an observation shared by virtually any [western] country studying women’s occupational trends. On the demand side, it was clear that those middle and lower income households which may have hired domestic workers in the past would no longer do so due to a range of changes including the redesign and restructuring of labour within the household. The preponderance of evidence was therefore all on the other side. Huge vacancies in other occupations, dubbed unskilled or semi-skilled, indicated that women who might formerly have worked in domestic service were now seen to be working in other sectors. Rising unemployment in these other occupations suggested that they intended to remain there rather than return to domestic service, even at the risk of unemployment. As evidence of this trend, Grier pointed to the clerical group of occupations,
where applicants outnumbered vacancies by a margin of 2:1 nationally: that is, 10,500 applicants going after a total of 5000 jobs. A three to one ratio existed in textiles.

And what did this suggest to Grier and her colleagues? These observations notwithstanding, Grier mobilised prevailing domesticity discourse and made no recommendation of intervention, offered no remedy but to wait. The fact that women’s unemployment levels were rising indicated that there was as yet insufficient pressure on women to accept the ‘reality’ as the Department of Labour saw it. If there were, then surely women would have already begun to return to the fold of domestic employment. As Grier explained in her regular report to McNamara in December 1946, it was best to wait, prepare the domestic service programme, and they would come, eventually:

All these facts suggest to me that there is little heavy pressure or urgency on thousands of women workers and that unskilled and semi-skilled workers are still hopeful of getting back to the factory or office openings that are just not going to open, but until this is very evident they are not going to (1) train for more skilled work or enter low paid training on the job or (2) enter housework or train for it.\(^{132}\)

If women were not entering training for housework, surely it behoved the Department of Labour to give the matter further study in an effort to determine why this was so, and to publicise training in such a way as to get the ‘public’ on side. Failure to do this would simply waste money and effort. In fact, Grier continued, it was likely that further study of conditions of supply and demand would indicate that the problem had little to do with upgrading. If government was really serious about the matter, why not look at the needs of rural women? That was where the true problem lay. Designing an urban solution to attend to the needs of wealthy urban women did not seem to be an exercise to which Grier wanted to devote much of her time. “Raising standards” through “expensive training” might seem reasonable to the women of higher income groups, but it was not appropriate to design public policy based on the exclusive urban views of “the city woman.” However, if better than average income households wanted trained domestic assistance, why could they not contract with a private agency? Farm and rural women would gain nothing from such a programme. In fact, domestic assistance might be even more inaccessible than it already was.\(^{133}\) The “family type of girl” might easily be lured by a “high-powered city training unit.”
Grier raised the spectre of public opposition if public funds were channelled into a special training programme exclusively designed to meet the needs of this group: “real hardship has been caused all across Canada by its attraction of competent help away from the farm and low income home.” Instead, the Department’s efforts would be better spent in encouraging this girl to exchange her low paying factory job for a wholesome life with cash and good living accommodation in a town or suburb, those “small homes with children where really a ‘hired girl’ is needed.” Practical training, assisted by the network of Women’s Institutes and provincial education departments would surely do a better job in promoting this form of training, given their closer links to the rural home. And what about low income women? Surely a programme of community home visiting, sponsored by welfare services, family agencies, even women in trade unions, would be preferable to the vast sums of money currently on the table for supplying wealthy households with ‘the right type of girl.’ Perhaps the Home Aide programme might assist in the provision of day workers and part-time assistance for the “stable income home of the business and professional group.”

Grier presented her arguments to McNamara. She proposed analysing this occupation using precisely the same research methods applied to all other occupations: an analysis of labour market supply and demand conditions which encompassed a model of the market for ‘female labour’ in which the state had a legitimate interest. The true market for female labour was decentralised, localised, circumscribed by community and household, and limited to the pro-natalist framework of domesticity: marriage, reproduction, child-rearing and household labour. As Grier presented to McNamara, rather than dither around with yet another training and placement programme which would do little to redress the real problem – urban female unemployment – the department should commit itself to the study of the labour market supply and demand criteria that encompassed the rural economy, extending to agricultural regions the same attention habitually accorded urban economies, examining need in relation to household income:

(a) the types of demand for household workers, (b) the supply probably available for recruiting into each of these, (c) the difference in locale and nature of training called for for each type of demand, (d) the use, to the fullest of existing community and provincial facilities, in providing this, (e) what lines, in recruiting, training and placement might sensibly seem to be in other than governmental responsibility (whether commercial or community less-than-cost provisions).
Here was a position, clearly articulated, with which Eaton could finally agree. Of course, wealthy city women required assistance in the household: but those whom she preferred to see the Home Aide programme service were precisely the groups identified by Grier – farm and rural women, and low income households. In contrast, the Home Service programme, proposed by Olive Ruth Russell as a more appropriate programme for ex-service women, seemed an inordinate misapplication of public policy and resources. As a programme designed to encourage women to face up to the challenges of domestic home life, the Home Service programme was an attempt to turn public policy to the task of reconstructing the household as a social unit, making it a location in which women might find fulfilment and satisfaction, while at the same time promoting the objective of ensconcing them safely back in the domestic sphere. I now turn to a discussion of the Home Service programme.

“The Mental Hygiene Aspects of Homemaking”

While at DVA, one of Russell’s first major projects concerned the development of a ‘home service’ training course for (soon to be) married heterosexual couples. This course was productive of interminable debate over the purpose of CVT training and the breadth of governmental responsibility for individual and social rehabilitation. As the debate concerning the status, objectives and design of the home service course twisted its way through the departments of Labour and Veteran’s Affairs, the objective of CVT training courses was taken up in increasingly narrow terms as a strategy for re-employment, particularly where female eligibility for training benefits was the subject of discussion. CVT and NSS & ES had no interest in any programme not leading, or substantially contributing to, employability. Resistance to the programme provides an intriguing illustration of the multiple rationales operating during the period as state officials attempted to compel women to withdraw from formal waged employment while at the same time promoting the formal equality of government-sponsored training. The Home Service programme was designed to accommodate ex-service women as a pro-natalist policy promoting domesticity and citizenship, not employment.

The Home Service programme in part took up themes addressed in the CBC broadcast series, “The Soldier’s Return,” developed by members of the National Committee on Mental
Hygiene (Canada) [NCMH]. Russell shared in the views expressed throughout the series to the extent that rehabilitation was more than an economic matter of re-assimilating discharged military personnel into the civilian community through appropriate occupation in the labour force or the household. Life had changed because of the war, and it was folly to anticipate that women and men would settle down quietly into their former lives as though the events of 1939-1945 had never happened. For that matter, many commentators appeared to think there was every reason to fear a return of the “evils” which had characterised Canadian life in 1939, of which unemployment was only the most obvious. Marriage rates had climbed from a steady 9.7 per 1000 between 1941-1945 to reach 10.9 per 1000 population in 1946. But so too had divorce rates more than tripled since the war began, rising from 2,068 in 1939 to 7,683 in 1946.136

In an address to the Ottawa Business and Professional Women’s Club on March 13, 1945, among the first of many similar speeches she would deliver as part of her work with DVA, Russell enjoined her audience to adopt a broader understanding of the real tasks and challenges lying ahead. While thousands of civilians eagerly anticipated the return of family, friends and community members from military service, many, and most particularly many women, looked upon these reunions with some trepidation. Some even feared the return of male family members, Russell indicated, and for good reason.137 It must seem ironic, she told the business women, to think that in the midst of tearful reunions and the flurry of planning for victory celebrations, that “the joys of homecoming may easily be turned to quarrels and bitterness.” Nonetheless, substantive changes would have occurred among all the partners in the household, both in relations outside the home and those occurring within. Marriage and parenting might be natural roles, the knowledge for which could be acquired solely through experience, but expertise was needed to guide women and men, to develop a comprehensive understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities in an equal and healthy partnership.138 At the same time, she counselled apparently conventional ‘feminine’ attributes of nurturing, love and patience as the most appropriate response among women to the challenges and unexpected behaviours returning men might exhibit. Where these failed, there remained the expert counsel of psychology. Many of these themes were also addressed through the CBC series, “The Soldier’s Return.” The Home Service course was Russell’s proposal to develop a programme which would
instruct women — and men — in the mental hygiene programme for healthy heterosexual marriage and home life, in keeping with the notion that happy homes were vital to liberal governance.

The family living component of the Home Service programme represented a direct extension of the NCMH campaign for an improved national standard of mental hygiene. Parenting and child-development were linked by the twin themes of personal psychological adjustment and responsible citizenship. The family and its conduct were simply too important to democratic citizenship to be left to muddle through the challenges of growth, development, discord and challenge among and between parents, child, community and employment. When Russell was approached by members of the Etobicoke Board of Education, specifically by the principal of the Etobicoke High School, Gordon Kidd, following her address there to the Women's Teacher's Federation in November 1946, she immediately agreed to assist Kidd in developing a course for parents and teachers on child guidance. She wrote to Line, who was by then back at his post in the psychology department at the University of Toronto, asking that he consider leading the course. At the same time, she activated the NCMH network, proposing Mrs. Clarence Hincks, Dr. J. Griffin or Dr. Blatz as additional resources. Russell returned to this theme throughout her work as a policy analyst and advocate in DVA. She actively promoted the principles espoused by the NCMH, arguing that conventional psychology and psychiatry in Canada was limited as long as it remained fixated on encouraging individual conformity to external conditions/impulses as a strategy of avoidance of mental ill-health. By contrast, the mental hygiene programme advocated by the NCMH was interested in inculcating individual psychological development of healthy attitudes and interests, working through the internal environment of the individual to external social obligations and responsibilities. The difference lay in constituting the notion of individual interests as consonant with the responsibilities accruing to social location. As she explained to Line, this was a subtle yet crucial distinction:

I have been deeply concerned over the recurring setbacks that psychology and mental hygiene have received, particularly in Canada, due partly to the fact that various psychologists and psychiatrists ... have given the impression that the way to avoid mental ill health is to obey one's every impulse and conform to the mores, rather than risk being inhibited or different. I consider there is urgent need for less emphasis on the individual adjusting to his environment and more emphasis on the necessity of developing in youths and adults attitudes which give them the drive to strive to adjust the environment and
the mores (and themselves) to conform to what Plato describes as the highest good.139

This theme echoed her advice to Canadian Girls in Training readers concerning “Mary Jane” – externalised regulation and discipline would always already begin outside and apart from the individual, an imposition to be either resisted or obeyed. “Wanting to be good” was entirely a separate act from “trying to be good” and perhaps failing in the attempt.

The original outline for the course, likely developed by Russell, included considerable detail pertaining to the history of the family, family and social change, the modern family and contemporary problems. In fact, she proposed a thorough analysis of the family as primary social unit, as democratic institution, as integral to community and friendship and the healthy formation and adjustment of personality. These topics were all consistent with an understanding of family as indelibly associated with democratic and responsible citizenship and, moreover, the first line of prevention and diagnosis in a national standard for mental hygiene. Allegedly unemployable individuals were seen as the psychological products of maladjusted families. The division of labour within the household, allocation of decision-making capacities, process and procedures, budgeting, growth and development of family as a viable unit: Russell proposed to address the full range. In addition, she included lengthy sections addressing proper nutrition and food preparation, clothing, and household management, the latter comprising a detailed study of the household as a site of labour reorganised according to the principles of scientific management. Curriculum for these sections was to be developed by Doris Runciman of the Canadian Home Economics Association.140

The course outline covering the “Mental Hygiene Aspects of Homemaking” was developed by Dr. Jack Griffin. The course was organised into five topics: Out of Uniform – the transition to civilian life; People and Personalities – understanding human relationships; What makes a good marriage; Childcare and Training; and finally, Understanding the Adolescent. Griffin and Russel were convinced that this part of the course had to be taught by a mental hygiene expert, since this was the only way to secure the mental hygiene component intact, as integral to the overall course objective, “in order to ensure continuity, integrity and uniformity of point of view in the mental hygiene part of the proposed course.”141 The course took up the
central organising strategies and notions of the psychology of the individual: heredity, environment, satisfaction of basic needs, adjustment, desire for approval and success and “desire to be like others.” Human relationships were characterised as the interaction, sometimes smooth but often not, of personalities. Development of personality, women were to be told, was a natural and healthy, if fragile, process driven by satisfaction of basic needs and healthy adjustment to one’s fellow citizens, one’s community, home and responsibilities.

Their greatest concern was that the course would be altered from instruction in family living to a course in “homemaking” of the type proposed by the Canadian Legion Educational Services (CLES). The challenge for Griffin was instructing those of “indifferent” educational background in the complexities and intricacies, what he called the “cardinal principles,” of mental hygiene. Relations of class, race, gender and sexuality informed the deployment of mental hygiene knowledge practices, the targets of problems thought to originate in the social, such that working-class women, women racialised as ‘other’ whose ethnicity was marked as difference, were always already constituted as productive of possible deviance, delinquency and threat. The NCMH had a problem: those positioned as embodying the greatest threat to the security of the nation were precisely the ones who were alleged to most need the educational services for which the NCMH so consistently lobbied. Here was a golden opportunity to instruct young women whose mental capacities had been so thoroughly vetted by the work of people like Russell, who were or would soon be mothers and wives, responsible for rearing future citizens who might so readily turn to juvenile delinquency. But how to simplify the complexities of educational and human psychology to a level Russell had often indicated rarely exceed a grade 8 education, to what Griffin dubbed the “simplicity and practicality” required by the general population?

The initial proposal included a film and series of film strips along with a series of 4-hour lectures over a period of 10-12 sessions. According to the Griffin’s draft curriculum, “Mental Hygiene Aspects of Homemaking,” the mechanics of household work might well be left to pictorial representation, but the “more subtle social, emotive and psychological components of home and family living” were far too central to be left to mere passive display through film. “The emphasis,” according to the proposal, “is on attitudes and feelings, rather than mechanical
rules and recipes.” The interior of the educational subject constituted the true matter to be addressed, thus requiring the active intervention of the psychological expert as instructional intermediary. Griffin proposed a list of possible instructors: Mrs. F. Johnstone, Director of Parent Education, Institute for Child Study at University of Toronto; Mrs. R. Davis, psychiatric social worker, Toronto; and NCMH associate S. R. Laycock, professor of educational psychology at the University of Saskatchewan.142

Marriage was constructed as a rational extension of healthy and successful adjustment, provided one understood the importance of being suitably matched with one’s mate with respect to personality and character. In Topic Three of the course, women – and men – were to receive a series of 6 lectures on “What makes a good marriage? – Social, Emotional and Physical Aspects of Marriage.” Marriage had a definite psychological dimension which was thwarted by such trite popular notions as “romantic infantalism,” “disillusioned cynicism,” or even “determined idealism.”143 The important thing to understand about marriage was reconciling the compatibility between partners. The key areas to address included the following: personality and character; backgrounds, that is, class location expressed as education, occupation and activities of parents and so on; aims, interests and careers; religious and racial differences. The course included a component dealing with family planning, information and practices associated with conception, pregnancy and childbirth, and, in the same module, a section called “psychological differences between the sexes.” That is, in each area of heterosexual marital and familial organisation and practice, “common” knowledge and comprehension was disrupted and transformed, calibrated to the psychological dimension.

The original plan was to develop the home service programme as a jointly sponsored course with CVT and DVA. From the start, CVT expressed considerable scepticism in its purpose and likely outcomes. There was only one question: Where was the employment component? Faced with such opposition, Russell floated the proposal as a “special information project,” as a collaborative effort involving the Wartime Information Board [WIB], the National Film Board, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Canadian Vocational Training, the armed services and the Department of Health and Welfare. The curriculum would be developed and continuously updated by expert practitioners, with the assistance of adult education
organisations. At this time, the Canadian Association for Adult Education [CAAE] had an organisational co-operation agreement with the NCMH, whereby each provided access to the other’s institutional and community networks, academic and governmental contacts and research. The course drew on a variety of multi-media technologies and methods of instruction to be delivered by a rotating series of lecturers. In this way, planners thought that the course would continually expand by enlisting participants from the households and organisations in the surrounding community, identifying new problems and areas for remedial instruction and expert advice.

The course was intended to supplement the work of rehabilitation counselling, not to substitute for rehabilitation training through CVT. Russell outlined this caveat in her proposal to Andrew, chair of the Rehabilitation Information Committee of the WIB, pointing out that there was no intention of allowing the Home Service course to be used in any way to pressure women into household training for domestic service and so disentitle them from other occupational training and/or labour market access to the formal waged economy. Women could and ought by every available means be encouraged to both oversee healthy households and participate in waged economy if that was their choice, subject always to their ‘suitability’:

It should be clearly understood ... that this emphasis on the importance of homemaking and the encouragement for women to take further training for it must not be regarded as a reason for Counsellors or Rehabilitation Boards to exert pressure on women to take such courses, nor be used as grounds for refusing them other kinds of training or opportunities suited to their individual capabilities, skills, and interests.124

In any event, at the meeting of the Rehabilitation Information Committee on July 9, 1945, the full committee reviewed and provisionally approved Russell’s proposal. DVA argued in support of the idea, strategically positioning the proposed course and potential demand for it against the much eschewed domestic service training proposals – the Home Aide Programme – CVT seemed intent on foisting upon service women. In contrast to the resolute opposition of women to the latter, many ex-service women and Citizen’s Rehabilitation Committees across the country were alleged to be interested in homemaking. At a time when virtually every other career but the one most likely to provide employment for women was being promoted in the most positive and “attractive” terms conceivable, argued the DVA representative, perhaps there was a compelling
need for such a sensible course of instruction? The Department of Health and Welfare also spoke strongly in support of the proposal, from an equally strategic standpoint: at a time when considerable public expenditures were being channelled into the household through the new Family Allowance programme, what assurance did government have that this money was being used wisely, let alone efficiently? Using this rationale, Health and Welfare staked out its regulatory and disciplinary interest in the course.\textsuperscript{145} Health and Welfare argued for a much broader programme that would be opened to the general civilian population, not one limited to delivery to service personnel immediately prior to discharge, along the lines proposed by Russell. From RIC, the proposal was turned over to a working committee including the armed services, Labour, Health and Welfare, DVA, CBC, and NFB to take it through to the next phase. In a further meeting held August 21, DVA, Health and Welfare and Russell agreed to enlist Griffin, NCMH, and Doris Runciman of the Canadian Home Economics Association to prepare their respective segments of the course. As Russell explained to Thompson of CVT, Griffin had been invited expressly by Health and Welfare to advise on the “psychological aspects of family living.”

By October, DVA appeared to be prepared to pull out of the course debacle and turn the whole problem over to CVT. Salter summarised the status of the course proposal for Graham, making it clear that her comments in no way reflected the Department of Labour’s support. The film project was abandoned altogether on the grounds that demobilisation had proceeded too rapidly to justify DVA involvement. That is, most service women would soon be under the umbrella of CVT, and CVT intended to focus only on programmes with a clear employment component. That meant, if anything, domestic service training. Health and Welfare meanwhile intended to proceed with a general film project given its concerns about regulating transfers into the household through the family allowance programme. At the same time, a Household Science course and text were being developed by the Canadian Legion Education Services. This curriculum, which was sent to Russell for review, contained no mental hygiene content at all, prompting her to reject it on the grounds that it was precisely the mental hygiene content which had been “repeatedly emphasised as desired by the service women who have been requesting the course.”\textsuperscript{146} Russell drafted a letter to Thompson, signed by DVA training director W. R. Wees, which, while it was never sent, clearly reflected her exasperation with the entire matter and with
CVT's on-going opposition. Whatever the final outcome, by the time a decision was taken one way or the other, demand among service women would have considerably diminished from a peak of between 1000-2000, she pointed out. Certainly there was evidence to suggest that women were not interested in such a course. A survey of CWAC in September 1945 turned up only 133 potential applicants, although among the reasons listed for not pursuing this option were: insufficient information about the course and concern that male partners would "accept no further separation while the wife is on course." On the other hand, Edith Scott, Matron and women's rehabilitation supervisor with the WRCNS, took an entirely different view, suggesting that the course was precisely what service women stated they wanted. She felt it would secure the interests of stable peace-time society. Women were specifically interested in learning of the "practical and psychological aspects of the care of home and family," Scott reported to Marion Graham. The women's air force division was similarly enthusiastic to see a course on the successful establishment of a home, although there was no mention that such a home might include a psychological dimension in need of careful attention. She also seemed ready to concede that women could sign up instead for household training in lieu of a more comprehensive programme in home and family living.

Salter formally turned the fate of the course over to Graham. The home economics portion would go ahead as developed by Runciman. As for the fate of the mental hygiene component developed by Griffin, that was entirely in the Department of Labour's hands. Elaboration or elimination of the material was for Graham to decide. In the interim, a bulletin would be issued to district rehabilitation centres outlining all current CVT courses. Counsellors would be instructed to gather names of any personnel interested in a homemaking course and local CVT representatives would arrange for a local course or a suitable alternative elsewhere. DVA had "relinquished any active participation in planning" but still wanted to register its willingness to co-operate. By the time the programme was finally launched in Toronto on February 18, 1946, content had been scaled back considerably to conform to the curriculum originally proposed in the CLES home economics programme. Women enrolled in the course were inducted into a programme of budgeting, interior redecorating and design, shopping for the home, and instruction in meal preparation and nutrition in "the laboratory" at 216 Huron Street, site of the Training and Re- Establishment Institute Annex. All was not lost, however, as students
would attend one lecture each week in “Family Relations.” The press release issued to promote the programme singled out the study of Child Care scheduled to proceed in a specially prepared “pink and blue nursery” – should there have been any doubt that children tended to arrive in two quite distinct genders. The course description, signed on behalf of Labour by Vince Phelan indicated that qualification included both the suitability of applicants and an intention to either use the training in one’s own home or “as a means of livelihood in someone else’s household,” an accommodation to CVT employment criteria that considerably altered the original purpose of the programme. Preparations for the course were underway across Ontario by December under Schedule L of the Re-Establishment Training Agreement, taking the form of a residential programme not unlike the model adopted for pre-war domestic service training, adding to the inevitable confusion over how it was to be distinguished from the NES Home Aide programme. To add to the general confusion surrounding the course, the Home Aides programme was run from the same location.

By early 1946, concern about the home service course had reached its peak at the Department of Labour. Senior policy staff expressed “serious reservations” and concerns about CVT’s involvement in a programme which clearly had no employment objective. Training for domestic service might be a preferred demand of potential employers, but this was most emphatically spurned by women. Home service training – training of housewives as it was characterised by senior staff – had little if anything to do with the objectives of the Department of Labour and certainly did not seem consistent with the immediate rationale for rehabilitation planning, in keeping with the view that the best adjustment plan was a job for men and marriage and/or employment, if such was insisted upon, for women. Family development and marital harmony were simply not arenas in which public policy and state services had any place. Margaret Grier communicated as much to McNamara in March 1946, citing a recent letter from Eaton as an apt summation of her own opinion that the course appeared to be a “very expensive method of training a small number of girls and women from the Services as housewives”:

As you know, I have never been sold on the value of the Home Service class, believing that for all practical purposes the fact of marriage is the required adjustment. However, it may be that the Department of Labour can through these classes, bring a greater stability and happiness in home life, if such is its function.
Such, as Eaton well knew, was not the Department of Labour’s function. And problems associated with its status would not go away. If anything, CVT and employment office personnel were instructed to promote the Home Aide course as a preferable alternative, not least because of mounting concerns that other employment opportunities might soon disappear. Pressure for household workers, of course, continued from employers and women’s organisations. The Department of Labour had already issued a clarification distinguishing among the household training courses. In Eaton’s view, promoting happier homes was not the business of the state and was better left to the YWCA, adult education groups like the CAAE and university extension courses. The Department of Labour concerned itself with vocational training and the stability of the labour market, not the stability of the household. She was somewhat disconcerted that Russell had pressed ahead with the course over the objections of herself and others, meeting with and securing approval from the WIB, consulting with ‘eminent’ household economists and other experts in the development of course materials, even ignoring Eaton’s advice that a one-year course was entirely too long for the subject matter. In fact, Eaton acknowledged herself to have been an obstructionist, albeit a very well intentioned one. Under her lobbying, the section dealing with adolescence was removed and the mental hygiene content excised, leaving a short programme of instruction in household economics. Men would not be encouraged in any way to enrol. The residential component would likely detract from any appeal the course might otherwise have, and most certainly it would “seem an extravagance to those who find it is not open to their own daughters,” she argued. Eaton and others were most provoked because in their view, the purpose of government service was twofold: to promote the government of the day by promoting its services and programmes; and b) to respond to the problem of female employment through regulatory means. Her arguments were summarised in the following way to McNamara:

The proposed publicity will not educate any group to take advantage of Government facilities such as is the purpose of the NES publicity, nor solve any employment problem such as Home-Aide and other projects are supposed to do. The purpose of the publicity will be to bring credit to the Government. With only two classes operating perhaps it is a little early to claim it. As you can see I have not been sold on this course of training as a project for the Department of Labour. Probably I am a bit too practical about it.

Eaton could not resist concluding that all was made ready in Vancouver by way of equipment, facilities and staff: no students registered.
By November 1946, concern had reached Eric Stangroom who was advised that the confusion surrounding the course was not helped by the reluctance of women to register for the legitimate CVT programme, the Homes Aides training course for domestic service, introduced in Toronto in September 1945. “It is quite possible that pressure from DVA and various women’s organisations forced CVT to develop this [Home Service] course which contributes little to the employment picture,” Stangroom was advised. McNamara told Stangroom that he did not think the plan would “prove attractive to young ladies” and did not support the federal government’s involvement. The Home Aide, alternatively, was more in line with where CVT and Labour might commit resources, if only young women would agree to give it a try.

Conclusion

The Pre-Employment Training Survey was a planning process to develop recommendations for CVT and the UIC regarding training and employment policy and programming for rehabilitation training for ex-service women and training for civilian women. The survey transformed the question of women’s postwar employment into a problematisation of women’s employability. That is, as women were further subdivided based on assessed capacity, aptitude and suitability, the resistance encountered among women workers to low wage postwar employment was taken up by policy practitioners as evidence of the need for intensive scrutiny of individual employment capacity, expressed as ‘suitability.’ This was work for which the NES was thought to be ideally suited. Training was envisaged as a screening and assessment technique, a process through which the best ‘girl’ might be identified based on her alleged aptitude and respectability, appropriate personality and suitability. Resistance to low wage employment in prescribed female occupations would be overcome by a programme of pre-employment training. Rather than upgrading employment conditions through regulatory measures such as wage improvements, hours of work, workers compensation, even unionisation, the preferred approach was occupational upgrading through vocational training. Upgrading the worker would be the best route to upgrading the occupation.

Eaton and her women colleagues worked steadily to entrench women’s employment and training as a distinct policy stream within the Department of Labour. They anticipated that such efforts would continue, perhaps through a women’s branch within an Industrial Welfare Bureau.
As a reading of their plans for women’s training and employment within the immediate postwar administration indicates, many feared that the access to public policy planning and implementation WD personnel had lobbied for within the department might easily be lost once the wartime planning administration was dismantled. When the Canadian Vocational Training director, R. F. Thompson, was appointed, Eaton pressed Deputy Minister of Labour, Arthur McNamara, to appoint a woman at least to the position of assistant to the CVT federal training director. She justified this proposal on the grounds that women’s unique status within the labour market, the labour force and the workplace required special knowledge and oversight, in particular on matters pertaining to the question of suitable employment. Failing the appointment of a woman to such a position, at the very least an advisory structure ought to be established, much like the bipartite UIC advisory committee representing the particular positions on policy matters of business and labour. “There is no reason,” she advised McNamara, “why the advice of women should not be sought” as a feature of labour policy administration. In fact, she concluded, any training director or policy official “should be pleased’ to have the opportunity to secure regular and sound advice from representative women. The number of women registering with NES was dropping at a time when, if anything, it should be growing, prompting Eaton to renew her calls for a publicity campaign and outreach through local advisory committees, maintaining the supervision and monitoring capacity of the NES to ensure that women would be directed into “appropriate” employment. Maintaining a comprehensive statistical record and profile was also a good way of assuring that the expertise of the women’s division would continue to be recognised.

Planners recognised and endorsed the marginalised locations of women in low-waged industries like textiles, garment and related needle trades, along with cleaning and personal services. Across all of these sectors, pre-employment vocational training followed a strategy for occupational “upgrading” by positioning policy subjects – primarily working-class women – as an ‘unskilled reserve’ to be upgraded. At the same time, pro-natalist domesticity discourses were taken up as part of the programme for a national standard of improved mental hygiene. This standard in part reflected newly articulated terms for social security programming and citizenship formation directed at fortifying the middle-class home as integral to postwar reconstruction. Women may have had to assume full responsibility for parenting during the war; however,
mental hygiene discourses pointed to rising levels of juvenile delinquency as all the empirical evidence needed to suggest that women had not and could not possibly fulfil both parenting roles equally well. The prospect of combining motherhood and paid work threatened the stability, indeed the viability, of the middle- and working-class home, an integral social unit of community and nation – one of the cornerstones of liberal democracy. Domestic stability would become a central organising principle of pro-natalist policy planning for middle-class, white, heterosexual women in the postwar world. Motherhood as occupation became an integral if implicit theme of employment and training policy. Domesticity discourse worked through two channels. Pro-natalist discourse secured and stabilised identities of middle-class whiteness of women as mothers of the nation’s future citizens. In anti-natalist discourse, working-class women and women racialised as ‘other’ were positioned as mothers who were also labourers, or as single women whose proper location was in the familial home within the rural agricultural economy. Marginalised in social and economic locations, working-class women, women of colour, ethnically diverse women were understood to enter paid employment through economic necessity but only in the absence of a responsible male provider. Waged work in this way signified failure of home and household, perhaps desertion, but nonetheless a potential source of neglect. These were the women absorbed into the category of the ‘reserve of unskilled women’ always already the possible source of disruption, deviance and challenge in the social: women in need of expert intervention and regulation. Their presence posed a challenge to the stability of the formal waged economy and the workplace. Training was envisaged as a strategy to restore stability and order.

The homemaking programme advanced by Russell, meanwhile, exemplified the pro/anti-natalist discourses of citizenship and domesticity around which the mental hygiene programme was organised. The NCMH took up social relations of rule, a prescriptive social order grounded in class, race, gender and sexual order, as fundamental to the stability and health of the national character. Marriage, therefore, would be subject to scrutiny as a domain of governance, to ensure the reproductive, social, economic consonance of heterosexual partners, articulated to the psyche-based register of ‘compatibility.’ Compatibility was transformed through mental hygiene discourse as an index for differential aptitude, intelligence, capacity – cumulatively represented as personality and character. There was a clear racial, class and gender dimension by which
difference and discord, sameness and harmony could be readily apprehended. Basic
physiological needs, if addressed and satisfied, translated into mental health; if neglected or
denied they became manifest in deviance, unhappiness, delinquency or worse. Here was the new
terrain of citizenship formation in the home, the domain of marriage, parenting, homemaking.
The ‘family living’ component of the course reflected the desire of the NCMH to institute a
national standard for mental hygiene, or mental health as it became known by the 1950s. For too
long, the mental hygiene of citizens had been neglected as a critical component of public policy
and human relations. Problems of the social were taken up through tropes of deviance and
disruption, as incorrigibility among girls, as juvenile delinquency, unemployment, criminality,
sexual deviance including prostitution and homosexuality — all were taken up as psychological
manifestations of mental ill health and, what was more, all were positioned as amenable at least
to remediation if not prevention through the expertise of the psyche-practitioner. Instruction in
citizenship, parenting and healthy home life provided a considerable opportunity for these
experts, and their desire to implement a comprehensive programme to reshape the home and
women as wives and mothers.
Endnotes

1 PAO, RG 7, VII-1, Vol. 9, Marion Findlay Papers, Reconstitution of Postwar Reconstruction Advisory Committees, “Report on the Postwar Problems of Women.”


The Advisory Committee on Reconstruction, appointed in March 1941, was chaired by McGill Principal Cyril James. It included Hon. D. G. McKenzie, Chief Commissioner of the Board of Grain Commissioners for Canada; J. S. McLean, President, Canada Packers Ltd.; Dr. E. Montpetit, Secretary-General, University of Montreal; Tom Moore, President of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (replaced by Percy Bengough in 1943); and Dr. C. R. Wallace, Principal of Queen’s University. Leonard Marsh was the Committee’s Research Advisor. The Sub-Committee, finally appointed in January 1943 after intense lobbying, was given eight months to prepare its report. Committee members included committee chair Margaret Stovel McWilliams, a graduate of the University of Toronto and wife of R. F. McWilliams, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba as of 1940. Included among other members were Marion Findlay of the Ontario Ministry of Labour and Grace McInnis, CCF member for Vancouver-Burrard, together with other representatives of professional and philanthropic women’s organisations. For a complete account of members and their activities on the sub-committee, see Gail Cuthbert Brandt, “‘Pigeon-Holed and Forgotten’: The Work of the Subcommittee on the Postwar Problems of Women, 1943,” Histoire Sociale/Social History 15, no. 29 (mai-May 1982).

4 Where women were compelled to work, their economic status derived from the inability to select marriage as an option. Marriage, nonetheless, was the natural state: We believe that the right to choose is not going to operate to make every woman, or even much larger groups of women, want to leave their homes for the labour market. It is the right to choose which is demanded. Happier homes, and, therefore, a happier democracy, will result from the recognition that woman [sic] choose or do not choose marriage as their vocation. It must be remembered that for many single women marriage will be an impossibility because of the casualties of the war. (PWPW, p. 9).

5 Ibid., p. 6

6 Ibid., p. 7. Here was a good case of upgrading the occupation by upgrading the worker. Trainees would first be carefully screened for suitability and reliability, and then put through a programme of training provided on a part-time as well as a full-time basis, together with a programme of short-term evening instruction and continuation course for the experienced household worker. The focus of training, an apparent improvement over the pre-war training provided under the Dominion Youth Training programme, was an emphasis of the proficiency and accreditation of the trainee on the one hand, and on the training of employers on the other. Government-sponsored training, and there was no doubt that this proposal would be integrated into the broader postwar training strategy, would conform to a “uniform standard of proficiency” just like the standardised outcomes achieved through other apprenticable skilled trades. As for employers, the implication was that if women – that is, those whose stolid middle-class
households were not only the anchors of democracy, happy or otherwise, but also the future workplaces of this 'reserve of unskilled woman-power' – took a dim view of the value of their own household work, then how could they be relied upon to enjoin their potential employees to look upon their own labours with a "craft pride" and a true skilled vocation. How, moreover, could they provide the guiding hand of citizenship education to their social inferiors? This was held to be the true reason for the failure of pre-war training efforts; it was also believed to be the reason so many women shunned domestic service as the employment of last resort: A necessary condition for success in the rehabilitation of the household worker and the raising of her social status to a place commensurate with the vital importance of her vocation is a change in the attitude of employers. Unwillingness to recognise the value of the houseworker's service and to give her adequate remuneration both in the form of wages and good working conditions has been the stumbling block in the way of improvement in this field (ibid., p.8).

7 Ibid., p. 16.
8 Ibid., p. 5
9 Ibid., p. 4
10 Ibid., p. 12
12 PWPW, p. 1
13 Ibid., p. 11.
14 Ibid., p. 13
15 Ibid., p. 20
17 Ibid., p. 154.
18 The following regions sent back reports in response to the survey:
  Pacific Region: Vancouver, Victoria
  Prairie Region: Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Fort William
  Quebec: Montreal, Sherbrooke, Quebec City
  Maritimes: St. John, Moncton, New Glasgow, Sydney, Halifax


20 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 1516, file 0-26-1 NSS Correspondence with UIC Re: Vocational Training Pre-Employment Courses. Pre-Employment Vocational Training for Women Survey – May 1945. Memo to Arthur MacNamara from Fraudena Eaton, May 19, 1945. Department of Labour Employment Service and Unemployment Insurance Branch. Employment Circular, May 17, 1945. Ruth Pierson and Marjorie Cohen have observed, a list of [30] occupations was provided, to ensure that “continuous employment” was understood to mean employment in the narrow band of designated so-called ‘female occupations.’


25 See, for example, NAC, RG 27, Vol. 1516, file 0-26-1. S. B. Nitikman, President, Garment Manufacturers Association of Western Canada, Winnipeg Manitoba to Mrs. Gerry, NSS Winnipeg, July 11, 1945. This view comprised a key theme in the organisation of Postwar vocational training in the case studies discussed below.


Sections 1-7 included space for personal information, health and “occupational handicaps” and information thought pertinent to a construction of character: “activities, talents, interests, hobbies.” Examiners were to rate the subject as excellent, above average, average, below average or poor in assessed abilities and aptitudes. Learning capacities were segregated into “school learning,” mechanical aptitude and clerical aptitude, a gender-based differential. “Personality development” comprised a ranking of the individuals “industry,” “reliability,” and “accuracy.” Finally, a small section of the form provided space for the construction of an employment history, place of employment, nature of the work, job name and tasks, and “follow-up visits.” At the bottom was a space for “remarks” by the examiner.

This usage of origins makes clear the racist exclusion of “Japanese” from the concept of Canadianness, as ‘race’ and the racialisation of difference superseded all other identity-signifiers.


43 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 742, file 12-14-7-1. MacNamara to Honourable Ivan Schultz, Minister of Education, Manitoba, July 29, 1944.

44 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 742, file 12-14-7-1. Thompson to MacNamara, March 14, 1946.

45 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 744, file 12-14-7-1. A. H. Brown, Department of Labour to MacNamara, April 9, 1946.

46 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 744, file 12-14-7-1. J. C. Dryden, Minister of Education, Manitoba to Hon. H. Mitchell, Minister of Labour, Ottawa, Canada, April 24, 1946. While officials at the federal department finally decided the time had come to throw in the towel, they also discovered to their chagrin that, in the course of the back and forth of correspondence with Winnipeg, Ottawa had actually lost its copy of the signed agreement, absent the ill-fated Schedule M.


50 NAC, RG 38 Vol. 187. DVA Rehabilitation. Strictly Confidential. Twelfth Meeting, may 27, 1941. Sir George Chrystal, War Cabinet Offices, Great Britain, citing Brigadier Pigott, Minutes, p. 2

52 Ibid., p. 257.

53 Ibid., p. 73.

54 Ibid., p. 73-96. See especially p. 96 for discussion of problems arising from means-testing.

55 NAC, RG 38 Vol. 184. DVA – Rehabilitation. Confidential Letter 11 to District Administrators and Welfare Officers, January 24, 1942, p. 2. “Where it is clear that the wife is self-supporting, any assistance granted should, in such circumstances, be on the basis of a single man and not on the basis of a married man.”


60 NAC, RG 27 Vol. 744, file 12-14-16-12, vol. 1. Thompson to Hardy, October 19, 1944.


65 Digest of Rehabilitation Conferences of Ontario Communities, Ottawa Conference, July 23, 1946, p. 223.


Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, Toward A Genalogy of Dependency


NAC, RG 27, Vol. 744, file 12-14-16-12, vol. 1. W. M. Taylor, Royal Canadian Air Force to Marion Graham, March 29, 1946. D. I. Royal, Lt. Col. Staff Officer, CWAC to Graham, March 18, 1946; Adelaide Sinclair, Captain, WRCNS, Department of national Defence Naval Service to Graham, March 23, 1946. The RCAF survey was conducted on a sample of 382 women stationed at Rockcliffe and at Toronto. The CWAC survey represented a sample of 350 women stationed in Ottawa. Figures for the WCRNS were not provided, although Sinclair indicated it was conducted on their largest representative unit stationed at Ottawa.


Ibid.

Pierson and Cohen, op. cit., p. 90.


86 See also Cohen and Pierson, op. cit.


90 NAC, RG 27, Volume 1516, file 0-6-21. NSS Correspondence with UIC Re: Vocational Training Pre-Employment Courses. Edmonton Report of Mrs. Kate Lyons, July 13, 1945. Donald Cameron, “Tentative Outline for Vocational Training Programme in Arts and Crafts, Under the Department of Extension of the University of Alberta.”


95 For discussion of the extensive debates surrounding the development, implementation and dismantling of the wartime day nursery infrastructure, see Ruth Roach Pierson, op. cit., pp. 48-61.

Petition to Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Department of Day Nurseries, April 20, 1945. Signed Nora Gilhooly and 20 others. For a discussion of the day nursery programme see No easy Road and Commachio.

Pierson, op. cit.

Eaton to Grier, April 4, 1946.

General Advisory Committee on Demobilisation and Rehabilitation, Sub-committee on the Special Problems of Discharged Women, Minutes of Meeting May 17, 1944.

S. B. Nitikman, President, Garment Manufacturers Association of Western Canada, Winnipeg Manitoba to Mrs. Gerry, NSS Winnipeg, July 11, 1945.

Ibid.


NSS Needle Trades Industry, Report of industry meeting, August 27, 1946.

Ibid., pp. 5-6.


Ibid.


Ibid., p. 2.

Needle Trades Training Council. Educational Survey Committee Report of Needle Trades Educational Survey, Item 9. "Impressions Gained While In New York.” The survey report described in considerable detail the operation of training institutes in New York, in particularly the Central High School of Needle Trades which are not described here. The visit to the Toronto meeting and visits to vocational schools all focused on trades in which men were employed and included none for women in this highly gendered division of labour. A description of the meeting is included in Item 5 of the report.
RN’s Association Of Ontario (Education Committee). The proposed training course developed by nurses association included an aptitude test and a series of medical examinations, including a test for VD – the Wasserman Reaction. Psyche-testing included an assessment of ‘personality.’


Arthur MacNamara, “Tells Training of Nurses’ Aides,” Veterans’ Affairs, Vol. 2, No. 10 (June 1, 1947), p. 3. The Bovey Commission was the site of considerable contestation between unions and employers on the question of veteran’s qualifications and preference in employment. The question of superior training, capacity and suitability intensely politicised the question of employability and employment security. Labour centrals and individual unions argued instead for a shorter work week as the means to ensure full and stable employment. Employers, fearing wage demands a trained and experienced workforce might make, legitimately, disputed the relevance of the trades classification certificates issued by the service, on the grounds that they inflated the skills of their bearers, giving “an exaggerated idea” of their capacity. NAC, RG 27, vol. 3575, file 11-8-9-9, vol. 2. Rehabilitation Information Committee, Press Survey on Rehabilitation for January 1946.”


123 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 748, file 12-15-5, pt. 1A. Speech delivered by Eaton to National Conference, Vancouver Region section, organised by Dr. Mary Salter. See also Eaton to Grier, February 22, 1946 in the same file.


126 NAC, RG 27 Vol. 748, file 12-15-5, pt. 1A, Joe H. Ross, Regional Director, Alberta CVT to Mr. J. Smith, Manager Calgary NES, December 13, 1945.


133 Ibid., p. 2.

134 Ibid., p. 3.

135 Ibid.
Mind and family citizenship formation, including growth, instruction; sex interests and questions; and guidance, Regrettably, as distinct dimensions of human family and recreation divided into the commercial and the module took up "typical adolescent problems" through two main

Canada, thought to accompany this. Information specialists euphemistically discussed this. If addressed this way, such problems would not go on to become more serious troubles. It is unclear from the minutes whether this matter was taken up in any substantive way. See NAC, RG 27, Vol. 3575, file 11-8-9-9, vol. 1. Demobilisation and Rehabilitation Information Committee, February 28, 1945.

See also Mona Gleason, "Psychology and the Construction of the 'Normal' Family in Postwar Canada, 1945-60," Canadian Historical Review 78, no. 3 (September 1997), pp. 442-477.


NAC, RG 27, Vol. 748, file 12-15-5, vol. 1. Mental Hygiene Aspects of Homemaking, p. 4. Topic 5 of the lecture series took up the category of adolescence, reorganising the challenges thought to accompany this phase of development through the following categories: physical growth and development which included the key terms of psychological, emotional and social aspects as distinct dimensions of growth; mental development, divided into the slow and quick mind and ancillary educational implications; work and responsibility, the nascent phase of citizenship formation, including distribution of household chores, vocational interests and guidance, first job and responsible use, along with its obverse, the "misuse" of money; leisure and recreation divided into the phased progression from child to adult forms of play, opposed commercial versus family recreation, and "friends and companions" as areas of scrutiny. Finally, the module took up "typical adolescent problems" through two main groups: evasion of "reality" and delinquency. The last section addressed "attitudes towards sex" as a leading challenge meriting separate and careful scrutiny. This section was organised around three themes: sex instruction; sex interests and questions; and "social and family problems related to sex." Regrettably, a full consideration of this component of the lecture series is beyond the scope of this chapter. Nonetheless, the principal and categorical knowledges around which the home and family living course was organised -- responsible citizenship, domesticity, and the calibration of human capacities to achieve a higher standard of mental hygiene through the reorganisation of
the home, are equally compelling, in this case in the transformation of "adolescence" through mental hygiene discourse and subsequent knowledge practices as a site for regulation and remediation.


The NCMH and its policy proposals were not lost on senior officials at the department of health and welfare. In fact, the NCMH had long maintained a close relationship with officials in health & Welfare. Hincks, Griffin and their colleagues were called upon regularly as a consultative capacity with the department.

146 The CLES Planned Reading Series included a booklet entitled Child Psychology as a possible reference, although the topic was not integrated into the curriculum outline. NAC, MG 31, K 13, Vol. 1. F. K. Stewart, Superintendent, Rehabilitation Courses, Canadian Legion Educational Services, Ottawa to Russell, October 5, 1945.

147 NAC MG 31, K13, Vol. 1. W. R. Wees, Director of Training, DVA to R. F. Thompson, Director CVT, October 18, 1945. Russell wrote on the letter that she had drafted the letter and, although it was never sent, did arrange for Graham to see it “unofficially.”


151 NAC, RG 27, Vol. 748, file 12-15-5, vol. 1A. “Homemaking.” The only person identified in the release was its instructor, Miss B. Lucille Bridges, former RCAF officer and former Director of Home Economics, Agricultural School, Kemptville, Ontario.


155 Ibid.

Conclusion

In this study, I have traced the work, analyses and knowledge practices of employment policy practitioners associated with the Canadian federal Department of Labour for the period 1935 to 1947, from the final years of the Depression through to the postwar period of rehabilitation and reconstruction. I have analysed the range of knowledge practices concerning how women, on the one hand, and the administrative category of 'female labour,' on the other, were constituted in and through discourses of employability and domesticity.

Configurations of policy discourses describe historically contingent social policy regimes that regulate and reproduce citizenship entitlements. These are the regulatory procedures that collectively characterise forms of treatment and conditions of access within the national social body. Welfare state policy regimes constitute and organise conceptions of the 'social' and the pathological. This process is bound up in state formation generally, in the case of Canada as a white 'settler colony.' In fact, the apparent postwar consensus, as an exercise in social bargaining, is very much a reflection of the formative articulation of 'the social' within welfare state formation, expressed in state and social forms through policy discourses and practices. I have placed this process within the context of nation-making practices, located within the broader historical context of welfare state formation and the production of historical and theoretical knowledge about nation-states. As such, the materiality of race and the racialisation of gendered knowledges and class-based relations are all to be found within economic and social forms, taken up and administered through economic and political/cultural rationalities and through policy regimes that are deeply embedded within welfare state formations.

I have examined the multiple ways in which the labour market is historically constituted as a social as well as an economic institution, as a category of policy discourse, an imagining of 'nation,' as well as a series of economic relations and events. Measures of the national labour market also trace the boundaries of nation and nationhood. Just as national boundaries comprise a perimeter – the possibility as well as the limits – of nation, so too have the contours of the formal waged economy enabled and delimited citizenship capacities: deciding, for example, who is really unemployed, who is really a citizen, who is creating social problems which in turn
become pathologised as individual deficiencies. This too has been an accomplishment of the Canadian welfare state.

From 1935, the period of Depression during which this study begins, researchers at the Dominion Bureau of Statistics sought to ‘discover’ the ‘natural laws’ governing unemployment, employment, occupation and industry. The Bureau was deeply invested in elaborating its capacity as a statistical agency, one coextensive with the elaboration of state-based practices of rule, of administration – of governance. Government, as Dominion Statistician R. B. Coats argued at every opportunity, needed a watch-tower view of the economy, beginning with the labour market. Researchers at the Dominion Bureau of Statistics conducted a series of preliminary studies, culminating in the extensive *Census Monograph 11: Unemployment*. The analysis, techniques and observations developed for the census monograph also informed Bureau research staff recommendations concerning both the *Employment and Social Insurance Act* (1935) and the *Unemployment Insurance Act* (1940). Drawing on the Beveridgean model for labour market regulation, Coats argued that if a programme of unemployment insurance was ever to succeed, then it had of necessity to be accompanied by a comprehensive network of public, not private, employment offices within the framework of a national employment service. Like his colleagues in the United States and as president of the American Statistical Association, Coats was a key figure in the statistical movement of western industrial democracies.

Through international organisations such as the League of Nations, and professional associations such as the Social Sciences Research Council and the American Statistical Association, state-based statisticians and their colleagues outside of government steadily advanced the programme to broaden the statistical capacities of the state. The development of administrative statistics – measures of demography, trade and finance – comprised one feature of statistical practices of rule. Developing the conceptual framework for social statistics, however, was a dynamic and far more challenging practice which brought with it the identification and administration of population as both a problem and an objective – a legitimate domain – of government. Unemployment was now recognised as a regular feature of modern industrial economy. It was now also constituted as a measurable social condition for examination, diagnosis and administration.
Unemployment, as a barometer of employability, was now conceptualised as a set of social relations and a condition of individual deficiency. Only census-based research could reveal the intricate details collectively comprising unemployment as a social category, by exposing the human dimensions leading to irregular labour market attachment, to the casualisation of labour not only through technological changes but also as a feature of individual employability. This work led to the identification of groups within the population, identifiable ‘classes’ of ‘unemployed,’ irregularly employed’ and ‘unemployable,’ as those thought to be at greater risk of unemployment in the modern labour market. Apprehending for the purposes of remedying the broader characteristics of classes of employed and unemployed persons meant defining the characteristics of regular labour market attachment with ever greater precision. DBS investigations of the labour market were diagnostic and prescriptive exercises which collectively constituted employability discourses. Employment researchers mapped out the characteristics thought to define employability, while at the same time tracing the risk, the predisposing features, of unemployment among groups of workers.

The employment exchange played a key role in the successful and rational operation of the labour market and for this, some measure of state intervention was required. Markets might operate effectively, but some intelligent administration was required to ensure that they operated efficiently and in a manner consistent with the interests and objectives of state, of nation and of population. Labour market researchers mobilised preconceived notions of race, gender, and class to trace vectors of employability, working up new measures, new techniques as knowledge practices for constituting and calibrating employment capacity. Female employment trends were conceptualised as qualitatively distinct phenomena within the operation of the ‘normal’ labour market. In this way, women were seen to have, and were positioned through policy as maintaining, a different relationship to the labour market. This relation was conceptualised as the product of two patterns: women’s differential employability, on the one hand, and the differential innate capacities for skilled labour associated with gender. That is, women were seen as itinerant, temporary sojourners within the labour market, as likely to withdraw from it upon marriage, as they were to identify themselves as ‘housewives’ rather than as unemployed when interviewed by census takers.
In other words, women were uniformly cast as dependent at the level of theory and policy. Further, when women did enter the labour market, they were seen to be more likely concentrated in large numbers in 'feminised' occupations, concentrated within modern enterprises, those deploying a mix of modern personnel practices in combination with new production technologies. In occupations, that is, which had been subjected to skills dilution and segmentation through techniques of management. This specification of female labour as inherently un- or at the very least, less-skilled was rooted in a gender-based conception of differential skill, aptitude and, therefore, employability. Occupations dubbed 'feminised' were defined by Bureau researchers as more stable, modern and organised: they also employed a higher proportion of women. Modernisation brought with it an elaboration of personnel practice at the firm level, and a barometer of this higher degree of specialisation and internal organisation was the degree to which the industry was 'feminised.'

Conversely, domestic service was viewed much as it always had been, customary employment, even if one of last resort. Employment researchers therefore argued that unemployed women were more accurately classified as unemployable. Unemployment, in other words, was only a regular feature of the market for male labour. Among women, in the context of the male breadwinner regime, there would be no such equivalent measure or location within either the labour market or employment policy. This observation had enduring effects throughout the period considered here, well into the postwar period. As employment practitioners were apt to quip, 'No domestic servant need ever be unemployed.'

Skill, ability and aptitude were the subjects of employment research at the McGill School for Social Research under the direction of Leonard Marsh. The knowledge practices developed at the McGill School opened up the interior of the subject, the psychology of the individual, as a new domain of governance through the techniques and technologies of mental testing. Unlike economists, social researchers contended that they had the capacity to intervene at the level of the individual. Social phenomena were as amenable to rational analysis and, therefore, organisation, verification and investigation as any phenomena found in the physical sciences. Sociology was a distinct brand of knowledge, containing its own laws of truth, of the verification
of those truths, and the rules by which the techniques of social investigation might be demonstrated, applied, transferred and, where necessary, modified in response to the emergence of new problems, new challenges. This was the research programme to which Marsh and his colleagues were so deeply committed. The intersection of techniques of social investigation and psyche-based knowledge practices proved to be a dynamic union, the potential of which seemed limitless.

At the same time, the application of psychology to pressing problems such as unemployment brought with it a practicality and a pragmatism which secured the position of the McGill School as a centre for the production of relevant knowledges and techniques that promised to be of considerable service to community, industry and government alike. For example, Morton’s study of the psychological capacities of unemployed men, *Occupational Abilities*, was published in 1935. Here was a study which demonstrated the potential of mental testing as a systematic technique capable of extending and rationalising the administrative practices, internal organisation, and substantive regulatory scope of the public employment office. Fitting individuals to the labour market was now to be effected through the assessment of capacities and aptitudes, scrutinising intelligence as a technique of individualising and totalising psyche-based discourse. Work of this kind was considered preventative and remedial.

The Depression devastated and disrupted the lives of individual women and men, their families and communities. While provincial and municipal governments agitated for greater assistance, the Liberal administration of Mackenzie King dithered and equivocated over federal responsibility for unemployment and for relief aid as a federal transfer programme. Employability emerged as a central organising principle in the assessment of relief assistance and in the formulation of criteria for eligibility for such assistance. In this matter, federal responsibility for female unemployment further constituted the relationship of women to economy as secondary, ancillary to the main subjects of employment and unemployment policy: the male breadwinner whose position within the formal waged economy was unquestioned.

Women’s employment was taken up as an area of careful scrutiny and prescriptive policy analysis by the Women’s Advisory Committee to the National Employment Commission,
appointed in 1936. The WAC drew upon the phenomenon of women’s participation in the formal waged economy as a troubling and potentially disruptive social trend. As a member of the committee, Ruth Low of the YWCA made the ‘unattached woman’ a special category of social investigation. In her 1935 study, Low pathologised the single wage earning women as an agent of gender disruption: a signifier of all that was wrong with the modern city and its expanding market for labour. Low’s sociological study of single wage-earning women deployed a range of discursive techniques which constituted female unemployment as both an individual and a social pathology, sexualising ethnicity and race, while at the same time racialising gender, class and sexuality. These techniques informed the work of the WAC, in which women’s unemployment symbolised the disruption the Depression had wrought upon the rural economy and the rural home. Women’s unemployment was constituted as a local problem for which local remedies were required.

At the same time, the WAC was concerned to protect young future mothers, in particular those of white, British origin, while assuring a plentiful supply of domestic labour to stabilise respectable middle-class households. As a narrative of nation, of pro- and anti-natalism, the WAC’s final report (1937) elided the material conditions and effects of women’s unemployment, arguing that industrialisation and urbanisation were disruptive of the mutually constituted national interests of domestic stabilisation and family formation. The advisory committee’s recommendations both reflected and transformed class-based, gendered and racialised ideas about the suitability of particular occupations for women, about women’s differential employment capacities, and the appropriate role of both state and social agencies in overseeing and directing the lives of women and girls. The WAC worked through local organisations of women of the dominant culture, in particular the YWCA and the National Council of Women. The boundaries between state and civil society were fluid, porous and shifting, as white, middle-class, educated and professional women were enlisted in the work of overseeing their less fortunate ‘sisters.’

The WAC drew upon the knowledge-making practices of education psychology, arguing for the deployment of techniques of vocational counselling, of mental testing and of employment research within a national employment service. Intelligence and aptitude were considered leading
indicators of occupational skill and efficiency, concepts which were seen to be as central to training and employment placement practices as they were to discourses about work, conduct and dependence. As taken up by the NEC, the advisory committee’s recommendations would have enduring effects at the level of federal and provincial employment research on apparent employment trends of women, and regulatory approaches to the labour market. In both policy areas, groups of women were positioned as always-already marginal to the formal waged economy, following the trajectories of the racial and sexual division of labour.

For its part, the NEC deployed a range of statistical techniques and technologies, the mapping exercises of the labour market developed by staff at the DBS and the federal Department of Labour, in particular through the exercise of national registrations of unemployed women and men. The 1936 and 1938 registrations of unemployed women and men were conducted in order to reduce the numbers of persons receiving federal relief by invoking more stringent criterion for eligibility, one based on a narrow definition of employability. Women, as dependants, were systematically excluded from these registrations, following a failed attempt to conduct a census-taking of the ‘unemployable woman.’ Discourses of dependence and of employability deepened the racialised and gendered contours of the formal waged economy, of work and of access to unemployment relief. As knowledge-making practices, measures of labour market activities, of employment research into occupational and broader employment trends, sought to shore up the boundaries of the formal waged economy as governable administrative space which was conceptually and ontologically distinct from the social domain of household and domesticity.

When Canada entered the Second World War in September of 1939, its role as a major supplier of the allied forces would soon test the limits of the Dominion’s labour force capacities. The strategic economic rationality of war profoundly transformed the business of government, of production, of household and community. Despite the persistent efforts of employment policy practitioners and experts, Canada entered the war and a range of military industrial production commitments without a comprehensive national ‘manpower policy.’ The pressures of military industrial production soon exposed deep fault lines within the labour market as it was understood and framed by policy practitioners. At the same time, regional and inter-provincial barriers to
labour mobility, recalcitrant employers and profound regionalised poverty in areas devastated by the recent Depression further confounded the efforts of Labour Department officials to secure necessary labour supply requirements.

The confidential report of the Labour Supply Investigation Project was completed in October 1941, as federal officials at the Department of Labour grappled with the deepening crisis of labour shortages in critical production areas. The LSIP was a substantive investigation of the national labour market and supply, of the quality of that supply, of employment practices and labour-management relations, and an assessment of policy interventions needed to identify, and then mobilise human resources for total war. As such, the report was deeply critical of the disjointed system of training, of employment placement, of private employment agencies and the current fractious climate of industrial relations. The report was particularly critical of employer opposition to hiring women workers. Researchers proposed a comprehensive programme of personnel management on the one hand, and a national employment and training system on the other. A key recommendation of this report was that the federal government deploy what many saw as a massive reserve of untapped female labour. But there was a problem. How were policy officials to go about measuring, let alone recruiting, a supply of labour the existence of which had been structurally elided and systematically denied as a matter of federal policy?

Government planners authorised broader and more far-reaching techniques by which to identify, recruit, train and deploy the female ‘labour reserve.’ The labour market was conceptualised as national in scope. The quality of the labour supply, moreover, was foregrounded as a concern of government and an object of governance, both within state agencies, and among community, social agencies, individual workers and employers. Techniques of management replaced the ‘invisible hand’ as the regulatory principle around which the national labour market was organised.

Winning the war was a business in which each and all had a role to play. Nowhere was this more crucial than among women, first young single women and by 1943 married women as well, all of whom were the targets of National Selective Service Women’s Division recruiting efforts. From counting the potential supply of women workers, the attention of federal
department of labour officials turned to outlining the necessary steps thought necessary to enable the federal state to implement a comprehensive and coherent employment policy. A range of supporting regulatory measures was envisaged, positioning the public employment office as a linchpin within a national employment service. Skill was a central organising principle and strategy in employment policy discourse, a category which positioned the ideal-typical subject of employment rights discourse as male, white, able-bodied and of British origin.

Women were foregrounded for the first time as central subjects of employment policy discourse, thought to present unique challenges within the labour market and the workplace. The labour supply was approached through the lens of employability discourse, through a new grid of intelligibility which opened up the interior of the subject as a legitimate domain of governance, and a site of intervention. The ‘scientific’ assessment of labour force quality drew upon a range of discursive techniques of mental testing, techniques which were part of the regular apparatus of personnel management. Aptitude testing was held up as the signifier of the modern economic enterprise, a practice employers were enjoined to adopt within their own internal organisation in order to improve the efficiency of personnel and, what was after all the main objective, the productive capacity of the national economy mobilised for total war. Deficiencies in labour force quality were conceived of as originating in and manifested through gender, class and race, articulated through culture-as-difference. Problems of labour force attachment were similarly approached as originating in the psychology of the individual, as deficiencies of skill and capacity.

Populations were singled out for particular scrutiny, constituted as potential problems on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, culture and education – code for class, gender and racialised subjugation and marginalisation. Similarly, departmental officials constituted the recruiting practices of the NSS along racialised lines. For white men and women of British origin, the NSS prevailed upon patriotic duty, positioning women in particular as serving home and nation through their selfless identification of the national interest as coextensive with their own desires as wives, mothers and daughters, and above all as citizens rallying in the total war for democracy and national security. The war also foregrounded race and ethnicity as the state classified women and men according to apparent country of origin, of descent, of blood line.
Those not meeting the criterion of British descent were singled out for intensive regulatory intervention, including incarceration. Compulsory practices of recruiting and deployment in low wage industries were reserved in particular for men excluded from military mobilisation orders, including those of Chinese, Japanese or East Indian "racial origin." The disciplinary powers of the state were invoked without hesitation as department officials proposed RCMP surveillance and investigation of specified national groups.

Vocational training and personnel programming were central to policy work at the National Selective Service. These techniques were key to the administrative work transacted through the official space of the public employment office as strategies to rationalise the flow and deployment of labour within the national labour market. NSS director Arthur MacNamara, NSS WD associate director Fraudena Eaton and their colleagues drew upon the expertise of management consultants, educational psychologists, employment researchers and policy experts to assist them in the formidable challenges of full labour force mobilisation, training and employment placement. Throughout the period of the Second World War, the number of women in the labour force doubled from 600,000 in 1939 to 1,300,500 by 1945. Notwithstanding the massive presence of women within the formal waged economy, the patriarchal bedrock, upon which conceptualisations of work, of employability and domesticity were based, remained undisturbed. Policy officials remained clear that the 'full employment' policies of the postwar period would not include women.

Industrial and domestic strategies deployed through the NSS WD worked to structure and modify relations of work and household on the basis of the twin rationales underpinning the policy regime of the Canadian welfare state during this period: the national enterprise of winning the war and the domestic enterprise of securing the peaceful withdrawal of women from the formal waged economy at war's end. Training for women war workers was rooted in differential notions of women's skill and aptitude, a gendering of the conceptualisation of skill, of the design and distribution of work as the domain of managerial practice. Design and allocation of job tasks reified gender essentialism, mapping the minds and the bodies of women as always-already female within the production process and therefore marginalised within the rational space of the modern industrial enterprise. As subjects of training policies, women were positioned as out of
place in, unfamiliar with and requiring habituation to the disciplines and routines of economic modernity.

Employment experts like Montreal management consulting firm Stevenson and Kellogg, together with a new raft of industrial psychiatrists, analysed and deployed work reorganisation schemes designed to improve productive efficiency and output. 'Absenteeism' and labour turnover were cast as problems of worker instability, problems to which women were thought to be particularly prone, and which directly implicated the rationalising and regulatory possibilities of comprehensive personnel programming. The NSS WD devised a programme of industrial welfare, in contradistinction to the masculinist programme of industrial relations. Industrial welfare programming comprised a regulatory strategy designed to place women in wartime employment and then to keep them there for the duration. The industrial welfare programme worked also as a programme of moral regulatory intervention, organising the social relations of war workers as the subject of sexualised investigation and supervision. As moral regulatory subjects, women war workers were constituted as requiring careful and close supervision by women personnel practitioners.

This was not an exercise for the state alone, however, notwithstanding that the NSS had temporarily assumed the role of overseer of the national labour market. Policy officials worked diligently to counter mounting criticism of its handling of the 'manpower crisis,' projecting an image of the government at the helm of the well-oiled NSS machine, identifying and remedying problems in every corner of the national economy. Their best efforts were challenged at every turn, not least by women war workers. Managing women war workers proved to be a daunting task. Recurring labour shortages, particularly in low wage industries characterised by difficult and hazardous working conditions, intensified the regulatory effects of industrial welfare policy discourse. NSS WD investigations of complaints of what we today would identify as sexual and other forms of harassment cast women as agents of disruption. Resistance of varying forms was met with intensified scrutiny and programmatic measures designed to structure and regulate women's relations and interactions during leisure as well as working hours. Industrial welfare programming was a gender-based strategy for personnel programming in which women workers were positioned as the subjects of moral investigation and regulation.
The majority of women and men both anticipated and dreaded the return of high unemployment once the war was finally ended. Many women, moreover, needed and wanted to remain in waged work and seemed unprepared to abide by the prescriptive designs of the NSS WD to move them into low waged industries, if not out of the labour market altogether. By 1944, women began to turn their sights toward the postwar period. "I want to get a postwar job" became a familiar refrain, as employment officers at the NSS employment office took up the task of directing women out of wartime employment and either into a narrow and narrowly prescriptive range of occupations designated as 'suitable' for women or out of waged employment.

Planning by federal department of labour policy practitioners for the transition to the postwar economy was well underway by 1943. Statistics were deployed as a tool of governance in this planning exercise. They were also a site of contention, as officials deliberated over how to project the number of women to be expected in an economy operating under 'normal' conditions in a manner which would neither create expectations of federal responsibility for female employment nor raise awareness of high numbers of laid-off women war workers who might now be classified as officially unemployed. In this exercise, the labour market for women was conceptualised as localised and decentralised, subject to highly regionalised variance. Strategies for the re-deployment of women in the peace time economy followed suit, with employment policy developed and implemented through a network of local employment advisory committees, made up of volunteer representatives of business and women's organisations, in a move which further marginalised women's access to and location within the formal waged economy.

When NSS regulatory controls over the movement of labour were revoked in May 1945, the employment office took on a new significance as an administrative site for redirecting women from the strategic economic rationality of an economy mobilised for total war, to the domestic passivity of peace. The 'problem' of postwar employment was approached through the techniques of vocational guidance, most clearly exemplified in the strategy of pre-employment vocational training, a programme designed to redirect women war workers into a handful of
occupations. What began as a question of jobs in the postwar economy became a policy matter of employment preparedness and occupational upgrading.

The NSS WD Pre-employment Training Survey was a survey of occupations and not a survey of postwar employment opportunities for women, one that instituted and entrenched a two-tiered training system as a formative feature of the Canadian welfare state. Occupational aptitude and skill were approached as critical determinants of future employability in a strategy that sought to upgrade ‘female’ occupations by upgrading women as subjects of remedial training policy discourses. The survey was a formative strategy for the development of postwar employment policy for women, one which entrenched the sexual and racial division of labour while at the same time constituting women’s employment capacities as a function of class, gender, sexuality and race. As workers, women were constituted as marginal to the formal waged economy, only partially capable of achieving desired levels of productivity and skilled capacity. While women might have an innate aptitude for various forms of work, psyche-based practitioners and policy experts alike argued that skill was beyond the capacity of the average, the ‘normal’ woman worker. As subjects of domesticity discourses, women were to be redirected into the postwar household, there to take up their proper vocation as mothers, consumers, or as labourers in the households of other women. These discourses articulated the boundaries of nation, reifying the national labour market as the prescriptive domain of men, the site of national security and strength, while asserting the differential citizenship capacities of those enjoined to secure the interests of nation on the home front.

By V-E Day on May 8, 1945, peace in Europe was finally at hand. Most people anticipated that the Japanese capitulation would not be far behind, although none could have known exactly how and under what catastrophic conditions the population of Japan would be so decisively and horrendously defeated by the United States government. The work of rehabilitation and national reconstruction was well underway, following a programme which enlisted the full participation of employers’, community, women’s and business organisations, trade unions, veterans’ organisations, and individual women and men, along with a host of state officials and policy experts. Rehabilitation work involved the mutually constitutive interests of nation, citizenry and industry, in a process which consolidated and sought to stabilise civil
society within the transition to a peace-time economy. Rehabilitating ex-servicewomen and men was accomplished through a series of discourses which centrally positioned home and family on the one hand, and employment stability, consumption and national security on the other.

Rehabilitation deployed the full range of psyche-based knowledge practices developed and implemented through the unprecedented opportunities for research and practice made possible by the war. Practitioners associated with the National Committee for Mental Hygiene (Canada) were integral to this work, strategically positioned throughout the services and, for the postwar period, those state agencies concerned with overseeing the transition to peace. Mental hygiene discourses broadened the scope of rehabilitation work, opening up the application of psyche-based concepts such as security and adjustment as largely unrecognised dimensions of civil rehabilitation and social reconstruction. Aptitude and intelligence testing, these expert practitioners claimed, were objective and transparent methods by which to screen, calibrate and organise the labour force.

Work conducted by the Directorate of Personnel Selection at the Department of National Defence was directed by mental hygiene experts. There, the systematic deployment of mental testing was argued to have brought substantive gains to the military, indeed the nation, making possible the rationalisation of recruitment and deployment, the assessment, calibration and regulation of military personnel. Practitioners envisaged similar gains for the civilian population as well, and advised that these techniques be taken up within industry, schools, even the home. Intelligence and aptitude were made visible through allegedly objective scientific techniques of observation. They were, in this way, discursive categories constituting the interior of the subject as a site for regulatory intervention.

Deeply embedded within the techniques and technologies of mental testing lay the organising precepts of scientific racism and sexism. The racial and gender-based typology of intelligence constituted through mental testing technologies dated back to W.W.I with the deployment of mental testing techniques in the United States army. Educational psychologist Peter Sandiford was instrumental in deepening the practices of racialisation which largely how intelligence was conceptualised and deployed within educational practice. The principles of
scientific racism and sexism comprised foundational knowledge practices of mental hygiene discourse.

Nowhere was this more apparent than in the work of Dr. Olive Ruth Russell who had worked with Sandiford as a graduate student and research associate at the Ontario College of Education before the war. Throughout the war and postwar periods, Russell worked as a CWAC Army Examiner and later director of Women’s Rehabilitation for the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. Her work typified the deployment of racialised, gender and class-based conceptions of women, of who was a legitimate mother, worker, citizen or, for that matter, suitable material for acceptance into the women’s armed services. Forms of resistance, of sexual agency, indeed any behaviour held to defy standards of acceptable and ‘suitable’ feminine identity, were pathologised in Russell’s work for the Canadian Women’s Army Corps, signifying the likely presence of incorrigibility, sex deviance, dependency, delinquency, even criminality.

As an educational psychologist, Russell was deeply immersed in the formative principles and knowledge-making practices of the mental hygiene programme. Vocational counselling provided a crucial point of convergence, a conduit through which the mental hygiene programme joined with the liberalist project of education to promote good citizenship, and social order. Associates of the NCMH (Canada) hoped to instil a national standard of mental health and to promote mental health and prevent mental ill-health. Happy democracy depended upon happy homes. Much of Russell’s work as an educational psychologist during the Depression gained far greater strategic significance during the war. The focus of this work was in part the formation of self-governing subjects, ‘helping Johnny to see Johnny through.’ This work gained considerable resonance and relevance as part of the postwar work of rehabilitation and civil reconstruction.

Self-help guides distributed to ex-service women and men emphasised the importance of avoiding the ‘square peg’ in a ‘round hole’ phenomenon, a mismatch between individual and vocation thought to signify individual and therefore social maladjustment. That road ended in unemployment, individual unhappiness and even family breakdown. Intelligence, personality, ability and aptitude: these were the secrets, the truths of the self awaiting discovery but only with the aid of the expert practitioner. As ex-service personnel were advised, ‘an aptitude test is in
your best interest.’ Participation in and stable attachment to the labour market were as much a matter of uncovering and utilising psychological resources – the hidden but discoverable truths of the self – as they were a function of economic conditions. And that was not all. Satisfaction and fulfilment of personal desire, of individual potential, were every bit as important as the mere satiation of basic needs. Or so the psyche-experts and personnel officers claimed. The model of male wage earner/female dependent stood at the core of rehabilitation and reconstruction programming. Individual choice was deployed through rehabilitation policies for ex-service women as a rhetorical device. DVA officials repeatedly argued that rehabilitation counselling, training, employment placement and related services were not imposed upon ex-service women – or men – but were the product of the ex-service woman’s choice. Veterans’ counsellors were advised regularly to include the individual counselled subject as a full participant in the counselling exercise. In this way, the individual agency and subjectivity of ex-service women comprised the vehicle for counselling discourse.

DVA policy worked within the framework of, and effectively reinforced, the fixed parameters of the racially and sexually divided labour market. The individualising effects of liberal choice discourses worked through the interior of the subject to actively form self-governing subjects who would take up their positions as responsible citizens in postwar society. For men, DVA policy revolved around one central point: the best adjustment programme was a job. This was a clear articulation of the employment rights accorded men within the model of the family wage system. The ideal citizen was one whose sights were firmly set on peace, prosperity and consumerism. Full employment meant stable employment and income for men, while women were residual, much as they were within income and related policies of the emerging social security state, positioned as dependants of male wage earners.

Even as rehabilitation legislation reputedly formalised equality rights of women, training and employment policy followed similar paths for ex-service and civilian women: a narrow range of occupations considered suitable for specified groups of women, while the preferred location was the allegedly natural one of motherhood, of child rearing, of domesticity and community service. Russell sought to consolidate the gains made by women much like herself during the war. For professional, educated middle-class women, occupational equality was the
goal to be sought through rehabilitation programming. This was a screening process as well, however, and those women whose class location, those who were racialised through employability and domesticity discourses as unsuitable and/or less productive, would find no place within Russell’s liberal framework of individual choice. Freedom of choice made markets and society in general democratic and therefore defensible. With her repeated disavowals of any affinity with feminism, Russell joined with an emerging narrative of the postwar woman as the universalised signifier of all women had gained during the Second World War. This was a model of Western superiority, of democracy and prosperity set within an emerging international order that was presided over by the United Nations.

Russell’s model for social order was premised upon the racialised, cultural, political and economic superiority of the ‘West’ as signified by the United States, most notably in the form of free market production, consumption and economic prosperity in the postwar world. In this world, women’s citizenship rights were constituted through gendered, class-based and racialised knowledge practices which foregrounded a universalised category of woman as presumptively white, educated and heterosexual, one whose interests and aspirations were co-extensive with those of nation, whose citizenship capacities were legitimated in the context of a shared national and cultural identity, and whose reproductive and productive capacities were legitimately practised through domesticity or suitable occupation. Poverty, delinquency, racialised difference, deficient and inferior capacity, illegitimate need and pathologised dependency: these were the obverse of the universal liberal female subject embodied by the ‘postwar woman.’

The final report of the advisory committee to investigate the Postwar Problems of Women, issued in 1943, mobilised a similar trope of the postwar woman as a universalising figure of Western progress produced through liberal democratic choice. This report and the 1945 Pre-employment Training Survey conducted by the NSS WD worked together as key policy events, comprising a cumulative body of evidence signifying the problems women were alleged to confront in the postwar period. Both documents, and the knowledge practices mobilised in their development, contained prescriptive policy responses to the realities the reports were alleged to convey, the problems they were held to identify and remedy. Both documents, moreover, provided a critical institutional organising pretext and context, drawing organisations
of white middle-class, educated and professional women within the ambit of state formation activities and practices of governance. Organisations which had always been held to represent the interests of women included the National Council of Women of Canada, local councils of women, and the YWCA.

Policy and social planners, community agencies and voluntary organisations were preparing to address the prospect of hundreds of thousands of women who would be laid off from essential war industries. Certainly, the spectre of thousands of young women trooping along urban streets in search of work and housing, as well as amusement, held little appeal for policy practitioners at the NSS WD, let alone the ranks of respectable citizens eager to facilitate the transition to domestic peace. Programmes and practices deployed by the NSS WD effectively screened out as many women from the formal waged economy as possible. The range of training options offered to civilian women through the Canadian Vocational Training Programme was explicitly narrow, localised and fragmented, on the rationale that women were to be discouraged from seeking employment in city-based factories. Stabilising the household and averting postwar unemployment among men were the twin priorities governing the design and implementation of postwar employment policy. From strategic economic asset, a viable source of labour – a human resource – women were approached in postwar employment and training policy as a disruptive force capable of destabilising the wage-setting mechanism of the labour market, and as a residue of largely unskilled ‘female labour.’

Pre-employment vocational training was deployed as a strategy to constitute and then regulate the differential employment needs of women in the postwar economy. Throughout, the ‘quality’ of the labour supply was the central problem to be addressed by screening for ‘suitable’ women and girls through pre-employment training. Training strategy was designed to stabilise labour supplies across low wage industries and sectors subject to chronic labour shortages, particularly domestic service, needle trades and hospital ward aides. Training was also a strategy to suppress worker resistance. As moral regulatory practice, pre-employment training was intended to direct women into jobs they might not otherwise choose. Screening for the ‘right type of womanhood’ was at the same time a technique of psyche-based knowledge practices, eliding
material conditions and social relations by taking up manifestations of racism, sexism and class-based oppression as indices of individual employability.

Domestic service was considered the most viable outlet for female employment, despite the repeated opposition expressed by women and by employment officers charged with the task of directing women into this occupation. Plans for household service training were pushed ahead nonetheless, a move which sparked increasing opposition on all sides and ultimately exposed the sharp class division separating its promoters – in particular organisations representing mainly middle-class white women – and the intended targets of the programme. In an alternative proposal, Olive Ruth Russell developed the Home Service programme for ex-service women. Russell’s programme was a product of mental hygiene discourse, an example of pro-natalist policy designed to promote domesticity, partnership and good citizenship, not employment. The programme was not implemented, however, as the Department of Labour balked at the idea of instituting a course for which there was no employment component. It was not the business of the federal government to train women to become ‘housewives,’ however much the Department of Pensions and National Health welcomed the course as an opportunity to monitor and extend its regulatory capacities over women who were recipients of family allowance. In the end, home economics replaced the mental hygiene component of the Home Service course, in a blended programme for household service training.

Domestic stability was a central design principle underlying postwar employment policy. Stability and respectability closely informed pro-natalist planning for white, middle-class, heterosexual women within a policy regime that took up motherhood as the integral, if implicit, policy objective. Domesticity discourse in this context worked through two channels. Pro-natalist discourse secured and stabilised white, middle-class and heterosexual identity of women as mothers and rearers of future citizens. Anti-natalist discourse positioned working-class women, native women and women racialised as ‘other’ as mothers who were at the same time labourers, understood to work of economic necessity, but only in the absence of a male provider. Work for an hourly wage that was ‘unskilled’ signified a threat to household, home and motherhood. This ‘reserve of unskilled female labour’ was taken up as the subject of employment and domesticity discourse as a potential source of disruption and deviance. Resistance to low wages and
hazardous working conditions, whether expressed through turnover, absenteeism or other forms, was taken up as further evidence of the need to instil appropriate work habits, and closer adherence to gender, class and racialised norms, as employers and policy practitioners backed up by community organisations like the NCWC, pressed the need for ‘good workers’ and improved labour quality.

Domesticity and liberal equality discourses were balanced through a strategic accommodation, mobilising racialised and class-based interests, while at the same time seeking the gender-based aspirations embodied within the postwar vision of white, bourgeois liberal maternalism. Categorical knowledge practices generated through these intersecting discourses mobilised a series of identities within public policy: mothers/wives, actual or potential, who were or would be employers of household workers; professional or business women in whom the state had invested and whose potential economic and social contributions were accorded greater recognition and value; as professional nurturers in emerging occupational sectors of the social security state; purportedly unskilled or semi-skilled workers within a limited range of manufacturing and service industries; and, finally, workers in the homes of white, middle- and upper-class women of British origin.

Women thought to be ‘unsuitable’ would be directed into low wage industries as part of a broader strategy of low wage competition. At the same time, women racialised as ‘other’ were the explicit focus of anti-natalist domesticity strategies, to be drawn into the domestic labour force. In this way, pre-employment training was positioned as a strategy for the assessment and calibration of potential women workers, a way of screening out those deemed “unsuitable” and a programme through which the practices of vocational guidance might be used to direct women into the occupation for which their particular aptitude apparently indicated they were best suited. Pre-employment training was therefore a strategy to upgrade the occupation by upgrading the worker. Training was deployed in this exercise of governance to facilitate the formation of self-governing and self-regulating subjects, workers who knew and accepted their responsibilities within the routines and rituals of work, women who had ‘freely chosen’ their vocation.
Working through discourses of employability and domesticity, training and employment policies devised for women operated cumulatively as a strategy for decentralisation, shifting the deliberation and implementation of a limited range of policy options to the local level and thus dispersing responsibility for postwar women’s employment across a diverse range of local advisory committees. From a labour market that was conceptualised as national in scope during the Second World War, the market for women’s labour was now approached as a matter of local diversity and highly regionalised variance. This was the governmental strategy for regrouping female labour and channelling it into a considerably narrowed range of employment options, under the guise of a comprehensive program of vocational guidance and training. As women would soon discover, while their brothers, fathers and sons might be positioned as allegedly ‘free agents,’ able to move with some autonomy and capacity to mobilise their rights in their own labour through the ‘free labour market,’ women were the subjects of a considerably straitened employment policy. For them, the labour market was anything but ‘free.’
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