

**FAIR ENOUGH? HOW NOTIONS OF RACE, GENDER, AND SOLDIERS'
RIGHTS AFFECTED DEPENDENTS' ALLOWANCE POLICIES TOWARDS
CANADIAN ABORIGINAL FAMILIES DURING WORLD WAR II**

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

During World War II, 2,400 Aboriginal soldiers' families received the dependents' allowance from the Canadian federal government. Utilizing "race" and "gender" as the main categories of analysis, this thesis aims to investigate how specific ideas about Aboriginal soldiers' families were employed, enforced and undermined in debates about dependents' allowance policies. These debates mainly took place among bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board and the Indian Affairs Branch, representatives from non-government organizations, social workers, soldiers and their families. The central tensions in each of the policy debates revolved between the recognition of soldiers' universal rights and the belief that Aboriginal people had certain "innate" racial characteristics that made them unable to receive economic benefits under the same terms as non-Aboriginal recipients. Within these debates assumptions about "race" and "gender" intertwined in complex ways around issues of morality, sexuality, "class," and cultural beliefs. Bureaucrats' positions were affected by such variables as their attitudes towards soldiers, their position in the bureaucratic hierarchy, their cultural beliefs, whether or not they perceived the policy as a threat to their authority and the pressures they faced from other stakeholders. First Nations soldiers and their families attempted to influence policy debates by questioning bureaucrats' actions and by presenting alternate understandings of their rights. Debates about dependents' allowance policies reveal that paternalistic assumptions about Aboriginal people's inability to manage their own affairs were coming under criticism as Indian Affairs Branch administrative practices were increasingly scrutinized and ideologies about "race" began to fracture.

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INTRODUCTION

During the Second World War from 1939 to 1945, the federal government of Canada offered financial support to the families of Canadian soldiers. This support called the dependents' allowance was a monthly sum of money provided by the federal government directly to soldiers' families, mostly wives and mothers. Almost as soon as the Dependents' Allowance Program was launched at the beginning of the war, the receipt of the allowance by Aboriginal soldiers' families sparked controversy. In a letter to the Deputy Minister of National Defence, the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources (the Department responsible for Aboriginal affairs) expressed his concerns about the amount of allowance Aboriginal soldiers' families received. He commented, "This is a great deal more money than these women have been accustomed to, and is more than they require for their immediate needs. It has been our experience that this condition may result in the demoralization of the individual or family concerned..."¹ In a letter to an Indian Agent regarding the Agent's refusal to provide a woman with a portion of her saved allowance money, a lawyer from Duck Lake, Saskatchewan offered another perspective on the allowance. He stated that "...where a soldier is serving his country in the Army and an allowance is allowed to his wife it should go to her and it is up to her to do what she wishes with it."² These two quotations illustrate the different perceptions that formed the core of the debates about the dependents' allowance and Aboriginal recipients. The belief that all soldiers, no matter what their racial origin, deserved certain economic benefits from the government was complicated by notions that Aboriginal

¹ Library Archives Canada (LAC), Records of the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB), RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources to Deputy Minister of Department of National Defence, 1 November 1939.

² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File: 452-747, J.J.F. MacIsaac, Barrister and Solicitor, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan to S.H. Simpson, Indian Agent, Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, 19 May 1943.

people had certain “innate” racial characteristics that made them incapable of receiving economic benefits under the same terms as non-Aboriginal soldiers’ families. The stakeholders, ranging from bureaucrats, politicians, lawyers, to representatives from nongovernmental organizations, social workers, soldiers and their families, all attempted to negotiate policy compromises based on their understandings of the meaning of military service and the role and responsibilities of the federal government.³ Various meanings of race and gender held by these stakeholders were central to the debates about the allowance policy as it applied to Aboriginal communities.

The Dependents’ Allowance Board formed under the Department of National Defence ran the allowance program and, although a history of its administration has been undertaken, the influence of race and gender on allowance policies has not been studied.⁴ Focusing on these categories is relevant. As historian Adele Perry has observed, “Canadian historiography which, while possessing a rich literature on the relationship between gender and class, is only beginning to develop its analysis of gender and race.”⁵ This observation is particularly true of social benefits programs. The studies on the Canadian Patriotic Fund during World War I, old age pensions, unemployment insurance, mothers’ allowances, and family allowances have examined assumptions about class and

³ The names of the key bureaucrats have been provided for reference purposes. See Appendix A: A List of the Names and Positions of Key Bureaucrats Mentioned Frequently within the Correspondence.

⁴ Beryl M. Kalmanasch was a former employee of the Dependents’ Allowance Board (DAB) who wrote a thesis on the Board for her Masters degree in Social Work at McGill University. Her thesis is an administrative history of the DAB. She focuses on the establishment of the organization, the duties of staff members, and the regulations regarding eligibility, “illegitimacy” and common law cases. In addition to summarizing the regulations, she provides case studies of how the regulations were applied. In her study she does not mention Aboriginal families. See LAC, Records of Dependents’ Allowance Board (DAB), RG 36, Volume 7, File title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents’ Allowance Board.

⁵ Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 9.

gender, but have not explored in detail how assumptions about race influenced these programs.⁶

Most of the studies that do utilize race and gender as the main categories of analysis focus on the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries.⁷ Work on the mid-twentieth century is limited. For the 1920's to 1960's, Joan Sangster has considered how race and gender affected the treatment of Aboriginal women within the judicial system.⁸ A full length study of Aboriginal families' treatment in an emerging welfare state program during World War II, however, has not been undertaken.

This study may also contribute to scholars' understanding of the administrative practices of the Indian Affairs Branch and the relations among bureaucrats within the Branch. Scholars' work on the bureaucratic structure of the Indian Affairs Branch has emphasized that it was a hierarchical organization largely isolated from other departments.⁹ Studies on the Indian Affairs Branch have emphasized that there was a

⁶ See Desmond Morton, *Fight or Pay: Soldiers' Families in the Great War*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), Dennis Guest, *The Emergence of Social Security in Canada*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1980), Kenneth Bryden, *Old Age Pensions and Policy Making in Canada*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974), Leslie A. Pal, *State, Class and Bureaucracy: Canada Unemployment Insurance and Public Policy*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 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, 1998), and Dominique Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State: Quebec Families, Compulsory Education and Family Allowances*. Translated by Nicola Danby. (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2005.)

⁷ See Carol Devens, *Countering Colonization: Native American Women and the Great Lake Missions, 1630-1900*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), Karen Anderson, *Chain Her by One Foot: The Subjugation of Women in Seventeenth-Century New France*, (London: Routledge, 1991), Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), Jean Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power, and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900," *BC Studies*, 115-116, (1997-98): 237-266, and Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*.

⁸ Joan Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁹ Hugh Shewell, *'Enough to Keep Them Alive': Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 14, Robin Jarvis Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye: Indian Agents, Government Power, and Aboriginal Resistance in Ontario, 1918-1939* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003), 31-32 and R. Scott Sheffield, *The Red Man's On The Warpath: The Image of the 'Indian' and the Second World War*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 40.

great deal of consistency in the overarching themes and goals for the branch.¹⁰ Most of the books studying these policies have examined their development over a long period of time.¹¹ This approach has been effective in identifying patterns in the policies over time. Generally, these scholars have found that Indian Affairs Branch policies promoted the assimilation of Aboriginal people through the adoption of the nuclear family model, individual property ownership, Christian religious beliefs, and Euro-Canadian values and cultural practices.¹² Officials believed that Euro-Canadians were superior to Aboriginal people and that, as a result, it was their paternalistic duty to control the affairs of Aboriginal people.

Since the allowance policy was administered by the officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board under the Department of National Defence with the co-operation of the Indian Affairs Branch, the Dependents' Allowance Program is one of the cases where the Indian Affairs Branch was not isolated from other departments. Studying this program allows for an examination of how upper level bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch reacted to the suggestions of bureaucrats from other departments. Analyzing this program also allows us to investigate whether the Indian Affairs Branch administrative practices were being questioned. Moreover, the focus on the World War II period will allow readers to see how changing ideas about race were beginning to affect bureaucrats' long held attitudes towards Aboriginal people. In addition, the focus on the relatively small period of the duration of the program, from 1939 to 1947, will allow for the intricacies of the bureaucrats' arguments to be examined in more detail through inter-

¹⁰ Shewell, 'Enough to Keep Them Alive', 328 and Sheffield, *The Red Man's On The Warpath*, 112.

¹¹ Shewell, for instance, examines a hundred year period. See Shewell, 'Enough to Keep Them Alive'.

¹² *Ibid.* 14-16 and Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, xxii.

departmental correspondence, memorandums, procedures, minutes from meetings, and notices to Indian Agents.

Examining the above sources will allow for an investigation of any differences between upper level bureaucrats and local officials' attitudes and approaches. The previous studies of Indian Affairs Branch policy have tended to focus on upper level bureaucrats' policy decisions.¹³ Indian Agents are portrayed as dutifully carrying out the policy directives of high ranking officials and rarely questioning their superiors.¹⁴ According to Noel Dyck, for instance, Indian Agents were organizational men who only reiterated racist ideas purported by the Indian Affairs Branch.¹⁵ Under this system, it was not possible for Indian Agents to question the government's actions or blame anyone other than Aboriginal people for problems on reserves.¹⁶ Other scholars have suggested that the role of Indian Agents was more complex. If they did not support a policy, its prolonged success was unlikely.¹⁷ Indian Agents would question policy decisions and indeed suggested alternatives. This latter approach is more relevant when studying the dependents' allowance policy. Although some Indian Agents may have agreed with the general idea of a policy, they questioned its practicality based on their understanding of reserve conditions. Indian Agents also protested certain policies because they believed they would jeopardize their relations with First Nations' communities.

¹³ *Ibid.* and Sheffield, The Red Man's On The Warpath.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 102 and Noel Dyck, What is the Indian "Problem": Tutelage and Resistance in Canadian Indian Administration. (St. Johns: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991), 3.

¹⁵ Dyck, What is the Indian "Problem," 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Sarah Carter, "Two Acres and a Cow: 'Peasant' Farming for the Indians of the Northwest, 1889-1897," in Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada. J.R. Miller, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1991), 368. Also see Vic Satzewich, "Indian Agents and the 'Indian Problem' in Canada in 1946: Reconsidering the Theory of Coercive Tutelage," The Canadian Journal of Native Studies XVII, 2 (1997): 228 and Sarah Carter, Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 13.

A study of the Dependents' Allowance Program will also potentially contribute to our understanding of how individual Aboriginal soldiers and their families dealt with federal bureaucracy. So far scholars discussing Aboriginal people's involvement in World War II have emphasized their military experiences. The compulsory military registration program and conscription have been the major themes investigated.¹⁸ In analyzing the arguments First Nations made against compulsory military registration and conscription, the opinions of the Aboriginal leaders such as Chiefs, band council members, or representatives from Aboriginal political organizations have been the focus.

Studying the dependents' allowance policy allows readers to investigate how soldiers were treated once they enlisted and whether ideas about race affected soldiers' access to benefit programs. Aboriginal soldiers and their families sometimes wrote to the Indian Affairs Branch or to the Dependents' Allowance Board to convey their concerns about bureaucratic errors and the interference of Indian Agents in their financial and family affairs. Based on these letters, it is possible to explore the viewpoints of some Aboriginal community members, who were not Aboriginal leaders. Moreover, analyzing families' reactions to the allowance policies can also potentially reveal how they perceived their family relationships differently than local officials and upper level bureaucrats involved in administering the Dependents' Allowance Program. This subject needs further exploration, not only for Aboriginal families, but for the whole Canadian population. As Cynthia R. Comacchio has noted, "The relationship among ideals about

¹⁸ See Michael D. Stevenson, "The Mobilization of Native Canadians During the Second World War," *Journal of Canadian Historical Association New Series*, Volume 7, (1997): 201-230, Sheffield, *The Red Man's On The Warpath*, and Janet Frances Davison, "We Shall Remember: Canadian Indians and World War II," Masters Thesis, Trent University, 1993. Work dealing with World War I has also been completed on these issues. See James L. Dempsey, *Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I*. (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1999) and James W. St. George Walker, "'Race' and Recruitment in World War I: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force," *Canadian Historical Review* 70, no. 1 (1989): 3-19.

family, actual families, and the evolution of the welfare state needs further study.”¹⁹

Examining the dependents’ allowance policy will also provide a context for the comparison of Aboriginal families’ treatment in later welfare state programs such as the Family Allowance Program.

Other scholars studying World War II have noted the importance of trying to link military and family history. Magda Fahrni in her study of Montreal war veterans and their families believes that historians should seek to examine “military and family histories as linked, rather than isolated, experiences.”²⁰ The dependents’ allowance case files allow readers to make such links because readers can see Aboriginal military families on a more personal level. Enlisted men are not only seen as soldiers, but as husbands, sons, or fathers. Rather than merely dependents, soldiers’ family members are seen as wives, mothers, and children. Readers see, through the letters written by soldiers and their families, their struggles to define their roles and responsibilities and their attempts to confront the interference of the Indians Agents in their personal family affairs.

Studying Aboriginal families and the dependents’ allowance policy can also provide readers with insights about federal officials’ attempts to regulate marriage and families. Historian Jeffery Keshen in his book on Canadian society during the war years discusses the issues families on the homefront faced such as infidelity and “illegitimacy.”²¹ However, Keshen does not examine Aboriginal families whose

¹⁹ Cynthia R. Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 10.

²⁰ Magda Fahrni, “The Romance of Reunion: Montreal War Veterans Return to Family Life, 1944-1949,” conference paper presented at Canadian Historical Association, Annual General Meeting, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, June 1998, 2.

²¹ Jeffrey A. Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).

experiences were complicated by federal officials' inability to agree with First Nations' communities on the very definition of marriage, "illegitimacy" and family. Readers can see how the very requirements of the dependents' allowance policy exacerbated longstanding tensions between the federal bureaucracy and the Aboriginal community over the definition of these terms.

It is important at this point to consider some of the theoretical approaches that can be applied when studying race and gender and when examining bureaucratic relationships. These approaches influence the questions to be asked. This thesis sees categories of race and gender as socially constructed concepts. As Perry argues, "...both race and gender are not inevitable and fixed categories, but rather historically constructed ones that are not created through biology as much as they are normalized through biological discourses."²² By seeing these categories as constructions, it becomes possible to assess not only the ways in which, within a particular context, they were assigned meaning, but also how these meanings were being challenged, refuted, and undermined. Ruth Roach Pierson has suggested that analyzing these categories together is beneficial because it allows readers to see "the interlocking and mutually constitutive character of social categories."²³ According to Perry, the aim must be to see "social identities and cleavages as intersectional rather than separate or serial."²⁴

Attempting to explore the interconnections between these categories can serve as a basis for exploring a series of related themes. As James W. St. George Walker found in his study of four Supreme Court cases where minorities tried to challenge discriminatory

²² Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 5.

²³ Ruth Roach Pierson, 'Introduction,' in *Nation, Empire, and Colony: Historicizing Gender and Race*, Ruth Roach Pierson and Nupur Chaudhuri, eds. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 1998), 2.

²⁴ Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 8.

laws, using “‘race’ as an orienting notion” can reveal “the complexity and range of the relationships infused with this concept.”²⁵ A study of race may include an examination of morality, sexuality, class, cultural beliefs and the structuring of family and community relationships. Walker concludes that race deserves a discrete treatment as it operated in ways “more subtle than colour antipathy, more complicated than a capitalist plot, more pervasive than working-class protectionism. It was a strand in political, economic and moral networks raveling the social process, and for analytical purposes it cannot be separated from its context.”²⁶

Gender as a category is equally complex. Its importance has been widely acknowledged. The initial assumption that gender can be studied alone, without paying attention to the ways “gender is classed, raced, and sexualized,” has been refuted by recent scholarship.²⁷ Gender must not be examined in isolation, but scholars must explore “how gendered experiences, identities, and structures were produced and reproduced in intimate partnership with other social divisions.”²⁸

Historians promoting the use of the category of gender have insisted that it cannot be seen as category only relating to women, but a category “that gives shape to the identities and experiences of both men and women. Masculinity, like femininity, is a historical phenomenon deserving analysis.”²⁹ Analyzing the ways in which men’s and women’s roles were influenced by notions of “femininity” and “masculinity” is particularly important in understanding family history. Idealized views of “femininity”

²⁵ James W. St. George Walker, ‘Race,’ Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies. (Toronto and Waterloo: The Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History and Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), 322.

²⁶ Ibid., 323.

²⁷ Perry, On the Edge of Empire, 8.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

and “masculinity” affected how bureaucrats shaped their policies and the basis upon which local officials assessed families. Gendered understandings of men’s and women’s roles and responsibilities within the family influenced how family members defined their obligations to one another. Analyzing gender can give us a more complex understanding of the idealized expectations imposed upon families by bureaucrats and family members’ own expectations.³⁰

To employ these categories as tools of analysis in a study of an emerging welfare policy calls for a sensitivity to the specific ways notions of race and gender affected the rules and regulations that determined recipients’ eligibility. More precisely, the analysis of regulations, case law, application procedures, cheque distribution procedures, administration forms, savings forms and questionnaires, reveals how notions of race and gender affected from the start the very terms of the relations between the federal agencies and beneficiaries. This approach is useful because, as Walker has suggested, examining the way the “rules” were “designed, applied, explained, avoided and resisted” can provide insights into how power relations are “ordered and rationalized.”³¹

In this study, it is the bureaucrats who had the authority to establish the rules and procedures that affected Aboriginal families. Politicians, for the most part, did not make the policy decisions that affected Aboriginal families. Although some decisions were debated by the Ministers and Deputy Ministers of each department, the Prime Minister’s office was generally not involved in the decisions that bureaucrats made. Debates in the House of Commons about the allowance rarely referred to Aboriginal families.³²

³⁰ See Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family*, 10.

³¹ Walker, ‘Race,’ *Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada*, 322.

³² See Canada. Parliament. *House of Commons Debates*, 1939-1945. The debates for these years were examined, but very few references were found to Aboriginal dependents’ allowance recipients. One

Because bureaucrats for the most part devised the rules and debated the policies, it is essential to think critically about what approaches to studying bureaucratic relations are useful.

In analyzing such interactions it is important to examine how bureaucrats' positions changed and why, on what basis bureaucrats claimed to speak authoritatively, how local officials' experiences and comments influenced upper level bureaucrats and vice versa. Studying the work of scholars examining colonial power proves useful in understanding these dynamics. They have noted that, in most work, the dichotomy between the "colonizer and the colonized" is too one dimensional. In order to examine the complexity of these relations, Ann Stoler and Frederick Cooper, in their article "Between Metropole and Colony," suggest scholars need to go beyond the perception of the "omniscient colonial apparatus" to examine the conflicts and differences between local officials and policy makers.³³ Stoler and Cooper argue that too often scholars in anthropology and history:

...have assumed more coherence to colonial enterprises than they warrant. Neither discipline has sufficiently explored how the rulers of empire reexamined their own hegemony and altered their visions when faced with cleavages within their own camp and challenges from the people they were trying to rule. Colonial regimes were neither monolithic nor omnipotent. Closer investigation reveals competing agendas for using power, competing strategies for maintaining control, doubts about the legitimacy of the venture.³⁴

For these historians examining the Dutch and French colonial regimes and African governments an approach which focuses "...on the contingencies and contradictions of

politician did bring up Aboriginal soldiers' families in reference to the reductions in allowances that were imposed upon them. This reference will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

³³Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 21.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 6.

colonial rule emphasizes that political possibilities do not just lie in grand oppositions but in the interstices of power structures, in the intersection of particular agendas, in the political spaces opened by new and renewed discourses and by subtle shifts in ideological ground.”³⁵ Stoler and Cooper suggest historians in their research should “...focus on the forms of power lodged in particular institutions and worked out in particular colonial projects, on the conflicting visions and practices of settlers, corporate leaders, and colonial officials, and on the struggles within plantations, mines, and factories in which economic and cultural power was deployed and deflected.”³⁶

It is understood that to fully apply Stoler and Cooper’s theories to the Dependents’ Allowance Program one would have to examine the economies of local reserves, local band politics, and the cultural beliefs and philosophies of individuals in more detail. Such inquiries would allow readers to identify various community members’ agendas and how they attempted to shift the nature of debates to reflect their interests. These types of studies would reveal a multitude of other power dynamics that could be considered such as relations among community members and businessmen, neighboring townspeople, and municipal and provincial officials. As well, studies of individual First Nation communities would allow for the specificity of each First Nations’ cultural traditions to be examined. A limitation of a study focusing on federal officials is that terms such as “Indians” or “Aboriginal people” are commonly used. For some First Nations these terms have little meaning because it puts all First Nations people in one category and does not identify the specific First Nation that a person is from or acknowledge their unique cultural beliefs. When possible, readers have been provided

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

with glimpses of these local conditions and the different First Nations' cultural beliefs, but, for the purposes of this project, Stoler's and Cooper's theories have been utilized to understand the complexity of the relations among the various stakeholders already mentioned. For the most part, these stakeholders were federal officials. In the case of the dependents' allowance policy, focusing primarily on federal officials is justified, despite the limitations, considering they formed the policy and implemented it.

Historians studying the welfare state in Canada have also found that in exploring bureaucrats' debates it is important to recognize that the final policy outcomes were not inevitable, but were a series of negotiated decisions where alternatives were offered, but for various reasons were not followed.³⁷ As historian Dominique Marshall observed in her examination of the Family Allowance Program in Quebec:

...the rigidity of the Welfare State's regulations, the assurances of its advertisement and pamphlets, its inspectors' confidence, the solidity of its structures or even the anonymity of its cheques are not the products of simple and inevitable advances. Rather, they are the result of painstaking meetings between multiple groups or society as a whole, with varying degrees of influence.³⁸

In an attempt to employ the above approaches, it was important to ask questions that allow for an exploration of the nuances involved. The following questions have framed the analysis: How did upper level bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch negotiate between the demands of the upper level bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board and the Indian Agents? How varied was the advice Indian Agents received from the different sets of officials? Did conflicts within departments intensify as a result of these interactions? On what issues did bureaucrats agree or disagree? Did

³⁷ Walker, 'Race' Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada, 7.

³⁸ Dominique Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State: Quebec Families, Compulsory Education and Family Allowances. Translated by Nicola Danby. (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2005), Introduction, 4.

bureaucrats challenge one another's arguments or did they reinforce each other's views? To what extent were their positions based on their understandings of race, gender roles, the law, morality, and citizenship? Were the patterns of paternalism and control that scholars have observed present or were these notions being questioned by Indian Affairs Branch and Dependents' Allowance Board bureaucrats? How did various factors such as a bureaucrat's position within the department's hierarchy, and past administrative practice, affect his arguments? What pressures were placed on bureaucrats by politicians and by nongovernmental and private business organizations? How did such pressures affect their arguments? Considering these questions is useful when trying to understand the relationships amongst the various stakeholders and when attempting to explore how various notions of race and gender were given meaning within the day to day functioning of the bureaucracy.

It is the correspondence exchanged as a part of the daily operation of the program that forms the core of the archival evidence used for this project. The archival research conducted was based upon an analysis of fifty-six volumes of Dependents' Allowance Board records and ninety-seven Indian Affairs Branch files located at the Library Archives Canada. Sixty-four of the Indian Affairs Branch files were case files for individual dependents' allowance recipients.³⁹ The other thirty-three files were general files on the World War II period dealing with a range of topics including employment, rationing and enlistment.

The first five chapters are based on correspondence among the following groups: the Dependents' Allowance Board Chairmen, upper level Indian Affairs bureaucrats, middle level Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats, Indian Agents, social workers, and

³⁹ All soldiers and their family members' names have been changed to protect their confidentiality.

representatives from nongovernmental and private business organizations. The majority of the correspondence written to Indian Affairs Branch upper level bureaucrats or to the Indian Agents was signed by Arthur MacNamara, Dependents' Allowance Chairman from 1940 to 1941 or R.O.G. Bennett, Dependents' Allowance Board Chairman from 1941 to 1945. An exception to this pattern is the debate about the legality of tribal marriages examined in Chapter 5. This correspondence was written by Dependents' Allowance Board members, the Dependents' Allowance Board secretary, and lawyers from the Department of Justice. Correspondence written by middle level or lower level bureaucrats who worked at the Dependents' Allowance Board was not found in the records examined.

Based on the archival materials available, the main group of lower level officials who wrote letters were the Indian Agents. Out of the one hundred and fourteen Indian Agents employed in agencies across Canada during the war years, sixty-three wrote to the upper level bureaucrats concerning the dependents' allowance. Whenever possible, the geographical location of the Agents has been identified.⁴⁰ Correspondence was located from nine provinces. No correspondence was found on cases from the Yukon or Northwest Territories. Although the Indian Affairs Branch Annual Reports recorded that some men from those areas had enlisted, it is possible that the soldiers were not eligible to receive the dependents' allowance. As Table A below illustrates, correspondence was located from approximately fifty-five percent of all Indian Agents. All of the Indian Agents from Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick wrote letters. Over half of the Indian Agents from Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia wrote

⁴⁰ When the location is not identified, this indicates that the location was not stated on the archival documents examined.

letters. Less than half the Indian Agents wrote in from Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Alberta. It is unclear why this variation occurred. One possible explanation is that there were no enlisted men from certain agencies. Some Indian Agents also noted that men were not reporting their enlistments to them. Although upper level bureaucrats expected Indian Agents to write reports on every allowance case in their agency, some might have chosen not to write in because the recipients' families were not causing them any concern. Also, the areas where the families lived may have been isolated from the Agents' offices. Finally, it is possible that the letters were misplaced and not sent to the archives.

TABLE A. Provincial Breakdown of the Number of Indian Agents whose correspondence with the Dependents' Allowance Board or Indian Affairs Branch was located, 1939 to 1947

Provinces	Number of Indian Agents whose letters to the Dependents' Allowance Board or Indian Affairs Branch were found in the Library Archives Canada	Number of Indian Agents	Proportion of Indian Agents studied (%)
Prince Edward Island	1	1	100
Nova Scotia	5	20	25
New Brunswick	6	6	100
Quebec	6	18	33
Ontario	17	24	71
Manitoba	6	7	86
Saskatchewan	7	9	78
Alberta	3	10	30
British Columbia	12	19	63
TOTAL	63	114	55

Source: LAC, Records of the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB), Volume 6522, File: 1-A-1000

Analyzing letters from Indian Agents across the country allows readers to identify commonalities in the types of arguments they made and the stereotypes that affected their statements. These similarities help readers understand how notions of race were being constructed and applied. At the same time, comparing the various letters reveals the differences among the Agents. A limitation of this approach is that individual Agents' attitudes in allowance cases cannot be examined in the context of other issues such as band politics, access to resources, land management and policing on the reserves. As a result of this limitation, a picture of an individual Indian Agent's management style as a whole does not emerge.

The fact that Indian Agents were usually writing to their superiors in the bureaucratic hierarchy may have affected the tone in their letters. Indian Agents were constantly emphasizing their own specialized knowledge of the situation on the reserves and trying to enhance their position of authority. Many of the comments by upper level bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board and Indian Affairs Branch reinforced and legitimized Indian Agents' authority. However, upper level bureaucrats also used their higher position in the hierarchy to warn and direct the Indian Agents if they believed the Agents were deviating from official procedure. Indian Agents' desire to protect their own self interests and the power dynamic among various levels of officials must be considered when attempting to critically assess their comments.

In the last chapter of this thesis, the main sources are letters written by Aboriginal men and women. There are not enough letters for them to be representative of the majority of men's or women's opinions, but they do give us a sense of how some individuals attempted to influence and, at times, challenge the rules and regulations of the

dependents' allowance policy. In a study that, for the most part, discusses Euro-Canadian officials' impressions of Aboriginal recipients, analyzing at least a few of the recipients' own views is important. In total, approximately 2,400 Aboriginal families living on reserves received the allowance.⁴¹ This number included married soldiers who typically assigned the allowance to their wives and unmarried soldiers who assigned the allowance to other family members. Out of these cases, sixty-four individual case files on dependents' allowance recipients were located at the archives. Out of these sixty-four case files, twenty-two letters written by Aboriginal people were located.⁴² In the forty-four other case files examined, letters were written by Indian Agents and other bureaucrats about the recipients, but letters written by the recipients themselves were not found. It is unclear from the archival records examined how these figures compare to the number of Euro-Canadian people who wrote letters.⁴³ For comparative purposes, some letters written by Euro-Canadian recipients protesting dependents' allowance policies have been used, but the total number of letters written was not calculated.

Among the letters there is a fairly even distribution between men and women. There is a scattering of letters from across the various provinces. Nine letters written by Aboriginal men were found. The letters were from the following provinces: two from New Brunswick, two from Manitoba, one from Saskatchewan, and four from British Columbia. No evidence was found to indicate why this particular regional breakdown

⁴¹ A number indicating how many Aboriginal families were receiving the allowance off the reserve was not found.

⁴² Many of these letters written by Aboriginal men and women contained grammatical errors. The letters have been transcribed as accurately as possible. All the original errors were included in the quotations. Since putting "sic" for every error would be too distracting for the reader, it has been left out.

⁴³ In the archival files, there were some "Letters to the Editor" newspaper clippings that were found. There were also some letters written by recipients to the DAB found in a file titled "Complaints." See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 29, File: DAB 5-6, File Title: Complaints. It is presumed in both cases that most of these letters were written by Euro-Canadian recipients.

occurred. Four of the letters were written by soldier husbands. Three were written by older male relatives including fathers and uncles. One was from a younger man from British Columbia who did not want to enlist in the army. The majority of the letters written by the men are advocating for more political rights. There are also letters where the men questioned Indian Agents' interference in the management of the allowance cheques.

Thirteen out of the twenty-two letters were written by women. There was one letter each from New Brunswick, Quebec, and Manitoba. There were five letters from Ontario. There were two letters from Saskatchewan. Once again, it is unclear why this particular regional breakdown occurred. In three cases it was not possible to identify the origin of the letter. All but three of the letters were written by wives. Two were written by mothers. One letter was written by a daughter of a soldier. The women's letters usually dealt with requests for allowance money from their savings accounts. Some of the letters made inquiries about bureaucratic errors.

These letters from various provinces highlight some of the similar concerns Aboriginal people had about their limited political rights and Indian Agents' interference in their affairs. These shared concerns are worth identifying because they influenced the agendas of national Aboriginal political organizations in the post-war period. Conversely, a limitation of an examination of letters from a number of different provinces is that the unique cultural traditions and community histories of each First Nation cannot be examined in detail.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ An advantage of Brownlie's study is that she examines two First Nations. As a result, she can examine the traditions unique to the First Nations and is able to situate each First Nation in the economic circumstances of the surrounding community. See Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*.

There are a number of possible reasons why more Aboriginal people did not write letters. Illiteracy may have been a reason. Some scholars have noted that a lack of reading and writing skills prevented some Aboriginal men from being accepted into the army.⁴⁵ Some people may have had verbal discussions with Indian Agents about the allowance. Indian Agents may not have discussed these conversations in the written correspondence.

If Indian Agents let the family manage their own allowance, perhaps some families did not think it was necessary to write letters. Some Indian Agents were not as eager as others about interfering in families' personal affairs. Some of them, in fact, wanted to avoid getting involved in inter-personal disputes. The location of some Indian Agents' offices may have also made it difficult for Indian Agents to contact the family easily. Other people, based on past experiences, might have distrusted the bureaucratic system. They might have believed that there was no point in writing a letter because Indian Agents typically dismissed or ignored Aboriginal people's complaints.

The organization and structure of the analysis of the archival material centers around the major policy debates. This section indicates how the thesis will be organized and why particular debates were chosen. Each chapter will attempt to examine the arguments put forward by stakeholders, what traditions their arguments emerged from and upon what basis they claimed to speak authoritatively on various issues. With the exception of the first chapter, every chapter will contain an assessment of relevant scholars' arguments at the beginning. These sections will describe in greater detail many of the concepts and ideas mentioned briefly in the introduction.

⁴⁵ See Davison, "We Shall Remember."

The first chapter provides general information about the two departments involved in the implementation of the allowance program for Aboriginal families: the Dependents' Allowance Board under the Department of National Defence and the Indian Affairs Branch under the Department of Mines and Resources. The structure and goals of the two departments, the duties of the bureaucrats, an outline of the major procedures and eligibility requirements gives readers a sense of the historic, legislative, and structural differences between the departments which are essential to understanding the various traditions that influenced bureaucrats' attitudes and approach to the Dependents' Allowance Program.

Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 each focus on a major policy debate. Chapter 2 explores the debate around the distribution of allowance cheques and the administration of the allowance by Indian Agents. Chapter 3 analyzes the debate in 1942 about whether to reduce the allowances provided to Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean families. It is here where logics applied to these racial groups based on similar and different notions of race can be compared and contrasted. When bureaucrats decided not to reduce the allowances, they agreed that Aboriginal recipients would be encouraged by Indian Agents to save a portion of their allowance. The subsequent debate about the savings program is the subject of Chapter 4. The policy debate examined in Chapter 5 addresses the legality of "tribal marriages" and the cases of "illegitimate" children. Bureaucrats grappled with defining the nature of a "legal" marriage and under what terms a child was defined as "legitimate" or "illegitimate." These issues show how race was linked to issues of morality, sexuality, and "respectability." This examination is important because it reveals how certain family models and culturally specific definitions of marriage and

“legitimacy” influenced policy decisions. Bureaucrats implementing the allowance program simply did not dispense cheques, but promoted cultural ideals.

The focus on the policy debates allows for an examination of how bureaucrats influenced and responded to one another’s ideas, especially when considering the notions of race and gender. Such an analysis also allows for a study of the interactions among various levels of bureaucrats. Analyzing each group of bureaucrats separately would falsely imply those bureaucrats’ attitudes and ideas were distinguishable based only on their place in the bureaucratic hierarchy. Examining these policy debates as they took place chronologically allows readers to examine how they developed. Understanding why certain ideas were rejected and on what grounds helps readers to understand the compromise that was finally made.

These policy debates are also worthy of examination because they determined how families were materially affected by bureaucrats’ decisions. The primary purpose of the program was to alleviate soldiers’ financial concerns about their families. If this purpose was being undermined, the justifications provided for the different treatment should be examined in order to further understand how the intentions behind the program differed from how the policy was implemented.

Finally, Chapter 6 examines Aboriginal soldiers’ families’ responses to the dependents’ allowance rules and regulations. Now readers hear the voices of the soldiers and their families whose own statements undermine many of the assumptions that bureaucrats made when justifying their policy decisions. Their statements allow for an exploration of how various family members defined each other’s obligations. They persistently questioned the logic of the dependents’ allowance procedures and the actions

of Indian Agents. A chapter on Aboriginal responses also allows for a discussion of the alternate conceptions of citizenship that some Aboriginal people presented. For instance, some Aboriginal soldiers and their families believed that military service entitled them to individual rights, such as the right to vote and to receive benefits, as well as what are now referred to as collective rights. These collective rights included recognizing treaty agreements and the special status of Aboriginal people as the first peoples of Canada. This definition of citizenship challenged the liberal democratic definition of citizenship that emphasized the primacy of individual rights.

Although the dependents' allowance was just one, temporary program, among the many that would be eventually implemented within the welfare state, studying the debates about allowance policies allows readers to examine the fundamental issues facing Canadian society in the mid-twentieth century. As the quotations by the Deputy Minister and lawyer referred to at the beginning suggest, debates about allowance policy brought forth major issues such as the prevalent assumptions about race and gender, the government's role in implementing policy and what rights should be accorded to soldiers' families. While grappling with these broad questions, examining one policy also allows readers to recognize the nuances involved. Exploring the various arguments presented in specific debates allows readers to see distinctions among the groups of players involved, especially between upper level bureaucrats and local officials. Analyzing the forms and procedures enables readers to investigate how particular assumptions about race and gender became a part of the documentation used in the day-to-day operation of the bureaucracy. A study of the Dependents' Allowance Program is then right at the nexus of questions about the role of the state in social welfare and the meaning of citizenship.

CHAPTER 1 CONFLICTING VISIONS: THE DEPENDENTS' ALLOWANCE BOARD AND THE INDIAN AFFAIRS BRANCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The major policy debates that form the core of this thesis created tensions among bureaucrats from the Dependents' Allowance Board and the Indian Affairs Branch. Why was this so? To explain the sources of these tensions, this chapter will examine the structure and goals of each department, the duties of the bureaucrats involved and the traditions that influenced their thinking. This chapter contrasts the historical development, mandates, and departmental practices of the two departments. Understanding the different philosophies of each department and bureaucrats' attitudes towards military service and enlistment are central to explaining the tensions that took place around the distribution of the allowance. Finally, the forms, the general eligibility requirements, and the procedures studied here are essential if readers want to try and assess the ways in Aboriginal recipients were treated differently from the majority of non-Aboriginal recipients. Studying these forms, eligibility requirements and procedures also shows how assumptions about race and gender became part of the very fiber of the program.

1.2 THE DEPENDENTS' ALLOWANCE BOARD

A. TO MAINTAIN MORALE: THE PURPOSE OF THE DEPENDENTS' ALLOWANCE PROGRAM

As Canada was preparing for war, the federal government was faced with the dilemma of how it would provide for soldiers' families. How would the lessons from the government's experience in World War I be applied? Did politicians and bureaucrats

sense that public expectations had changed? On February 10, 1939, the Minister of National Defence presented a brief to the Governor in Council on the general mobilization of the country for war. The provision of allowances for soldiers' families was considered sufficiently important to be included in this brief where it was recommended that a Dependents' Allowance Board be set up.¹ The Board, created through an Order in Council dated September 6, 1939, was described as "an administrative agency which is created to ensure that every application for an allowance receives prompt and efficient consideration."² Money for the allowances was provided through the War Appropriations Act,³ which stated that money from the Consolidated Revenue Fund could be paid to cover expenses relating to "the conduct of naval, military and air operations in or beyond Canada."⁴ It indicated that the Governor in Council could "by order or regulation...determine the rates of pay and allowances of officers and men of the naval, military and air forces of Canada."⁵ A significant portion of the federal government's budget was being allotted to dependents' allowances. (See Table 1.A) These high figures suggest that politicians believed that maintaining soldiers' morale was enough of an incentive to spend large sums of money. The formation of the Board and

¹ Library Archives Canada (LAC), Records of the Dependents' Allowance Board (DAB) RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 12.

² Ibid. The Board operated from 1939 to 1948. As of April 1, 1949, the control of the Dependents' Allowance Board was transferred from the Department of National Defence to the Department of Veterans' Affairs. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Chairmen's File Annual Report, L.J. Carey, DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario to Unidentified, 9 May 1949.

³ An exception to this was the Royal Canadian Navy which had a different system for paying allowances for wives and children from the rest of the Armed Forces. The Royal Canadian Navy had had its own regulations since before the war that applied for wives and children. Allowances for mothers or other relatives were handled by the DAB and no distinction was made between Navy cases and the other two services. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-D, File Title: Speeches, "Canada Cares for her Fighters' Families" by Major Thomas Wayling, Not dated. In August 1943, the Navy allowances came under the administration of the DAB. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 63.

⁴ See Canada. Statue of Canada. "An Act for granting to His Majesty aid for National Defence and Security," assented to April 4, 1941, 4-5 George VI, Chapter 11. Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1941.

⁵ Ibid.

the absorption by the federal government of the total costs for the allowance program represented an increase in the federal government's responsibilities towards soldiers and their families in comparison to World War I.

TABLE 1.A: Total Amount of Dependents' Allowance and Assigned Pay Issued by the Federal Government, 1939-1947

Fiscal Year	Total of Dependents' Allowance (\$)	Total of Assigned Pay (\$)	Total Dependents' Allowance and Assigned Pay (\$)	Total Budget for the Department of National Defence (millions of dollars) Only certain years were available	Total Net Expenditure for the Federal Government (millions of dollars) Only certain years were available
1939-1940	8,970,446	6,102,861	15,073,307	127	636
1940-1941	46,027,671	36,840,345	82,868,016	1,253	1,807
1941-1942	80,458,917	73,802,987	154,261,904	NA	NA
1942-1943	121,635,427	124,244,356	245,879,783	4,016	5,080
1943-1944	177,955,035	220,522,184	398,477,219	NA	NA
1944-1945	201,571,727	276,113,801	477,685,528	NA	NA
1945-1946	155,411,759	188,320,739	343,732,498	2,517	5,076
1946-1947	28,604,705	30,797,320	59,402,025	466	2,158
TOTAL	837,791,955	955,475,988	1,833,267,943	NA	NA

Source: LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 54, File Title: Booklets on the Board, "Annual Report," Dependents' Allowance Board, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 31 March 1946, LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File: Chairmen's File Annual Report, "Annual Report," 31 March 1947
 Note: For the first year the totals were from September to March. All other years go from April to March of the next year. Years 1939-1940 to 1942-1943 include Army and RCAF. In 1943, the Navy stopped administering its own allowances and were included under the Dependents' Allowance Board. From 1943 onward the figures include Army, RCAF, and Navy.

In the interwar period, the public's expectations had changed and the provisions for soldiers' families made by the federal government in World War I were considered insufficient by the start of World War II. In World War I, the allowance program had been run by a combination of government officials and volunteers. There was the paid staff working for the federal government who handled the distribution of allowance cheques at the Separation Allowance and Assigned Pay Division and the volunteers who ran the Canadian Patriotic Fund.⁶ The organization existed from 1914 to 1935 and was responsible for providing money to help soldiers' relatives pay for additional expenses relating to such costs as bringing up children, high local living costs and medical expenses.⁷ This national association had co-coordinated the work of the local committees who raised money, assessed soldiers' families' claims for assistance and determined who received money and in what amount.⁸ In his book about the Canadian Patriotic Fund, Desmond Morton finds that by the end of the war, this organization was finding it increasingly difficult to raise donations from the public. There were growing concerns that relying on public funds was an inconsistent and unreliable method to provide continual support for soldiers' families.⁹ For instance, in 1918, the Toronto York Annual Report for the Canadian Patriotic Fund accounted for the decline in donations by stating that the public generally believed that the federal government should take over the

⁶ Desmond Morton, Fight or Pay: Soldiers' Families in the Great War, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 48. For a more detailed examination of the World War I allowance program and the Canadian Patriotic Fund see Morton, Fight or Pay.

⁷ Ibid., 55.

⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 15.

⁹ Morton, Fight or Pay, 203.

administration of the Fund.¹⁰ Morton concludes that, “By 1918 there was a widespread feeling...that the days of patriotic charity were over.”¹¹

These changing attitudes were reinforced through the implementation of provincial social benefits whose formation, in part, was influenced by the experience with the Canadian Patriotic Fund. The Fund had shown that a system whereby direct payments were made to citizens could work.¹² Subsequently, many provinces had set up programs in the 1920s, such as the mother’s allowances. Such programs enforced the idea that the government had a responsibility to provide citizens with financial support when they needed it. The existence of these provincial benefits created expectations on the part of citizens that they had legally defined entitlements.¹³ By World War II, the majority of citizens would no longer accept the idea that soldiers and their families should have to rely upon the charity of others.

Accompanying the decline in volunteer donations and citizens’ changing attitudes, were protests by a variety of veterans’ associations in the post World War I period. Organizations such as the Great War Veterans’ Association began to criticize the federal government’s neglect of soldiers’ families. Wives and mothers of soldiers played a prominent role in these protests by voicing their concerns about the inadequate amount of money provided to soldiers’ families.¹⁴ This type of agitation continued in the 1920’s and 1930’s when veterans, dissatisfied by the federal government’s pension and disability programs, began to join organizations such as the Canadian Legion. The Legion alone by

¹⁰ LAC, Records of National Defence, RG 24, Volume 4286, 34-1-10, “Toronto and York Annual Report, 1918,” 10 October 1918 as quoted in Morton, *Fight or Pay*, 203.

¹¹ Morton, *Fight or Pay*, 240.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 206-207.

1930 had over 70,000 members.¹⁵ Politicians recognized these growing concerns. By 1930, veterans' demands were identified as one of the key political issues in a pre-election session in Parliament. In the same year, Senators and local Members of Parliament met with veterans' organizations and agreed to reform the pension program in order that more veterans and their families could qualify for pensions.¹⁶ The organization of veterans made it harder for the federal government to ignore their collective demands. Thus, citizens' changing attitudes and expectations, the leverage of veterans' organizations, the precedent set by provincial programs and the federal government's management of veterans' benefits were all factors that ensured that the allowance program in World War II would operate very differently than in World War I.¹⁷

In accepting more responsibility for the economic provision of soldiers' and their families, federal officials had come to believe that they had to relieve the financial pressures soldiers faced. As Article 98 of the "Financial Regulations and Instructions for the Canadian Active Service Force" outlined, "The allowance is for the purpose of prompting the well-being and efficiency of the Military Forces of Canada by providing a means to alleviate the financial anxieties of temporarily enrolled members with respect to the domestic welfare of dependents while they are in the service of His Majesty."¹⁸ The

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 235.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 236. A discussion of the administration of allowances for Aboriginal families and their experiences with the Canadian Patriotic Fund does not appear to be featured in Morton's book.

¹⁷ For a further discussion of veterans' demands, changing attitudes regarding military benefits, and links between citizenship and entitlement see Lara Campbell, "We Who Have Wallowed in the mud of Flanders: First World War Veterans, Unemployment and the Development of Social Welfare in Canada, 1929-1938," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 11, (2000): 125-149.

¹⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 8, File Title: D.A.B Rates of pay and allowances, Financial Regulations and Instructions of the Canadian Active Service Force Articles 61-122. See also in file Financial Regulations and Instructions for the Royal Canadian Active Service Force (Overseas), Financial Regulations and Instructions for the Royal Canadian Air Force on Active Service (Canada), Financial Regulations and Instructions for the Royal Canadian Navy.

precedent for providing the allowances had been established in World War I,¹⁹ when a “separation allowance” was provided by the federal government “to assist members of the force while serving, therein providing and maintaining a home for their respective dependents.”²⁰ One fundamental belief underlying the design of both allowance programs was that men were assumed to be the main “breadwinners” in the family. Increasing women’s wages, subsidizing child care, and ensuring women had adequate training so they could access better paying jobs were not seen as alternatives to allowances. Although the rationale for providing the allowances was similar in both wars, the main difference between the programs, as already indicated above, was the fact that the federal government interpreted the extent of its financial obligations to soldiers’ families as more far reaching than in the first war.

Increased federal spending on allowances during World War II was justified on the basis that, in a civilian army, soldiers’ concerns about their families had to be addressed if morale was to be maintained. Major General R.O. Alexander remarked, in a speech to a meeting of the Vancouver Welfare Federation, that there were “Three things troops need—courage, training (which includes discipline), and morale. Napoleon said that the morale is to the physical as three to one. What affects the morale of the men most is the concern for the welfare and future of their families.”²¹ Similarly, Captain S.A. Sutton,²² in a Memorandum to the Minister of National Defence, quoted an opinion

¹⁹ In World War I the allowance received from the federal government was referred to as the “separation allowance.” See Morton, *Fight or Pay*, 22.

²⁰ See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents’ Allowance Board, 12.

²¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Liaison Committee, “Excerpts from address by Major General R.O. Alexander, D.S.O., General Officer Commanding Pacific Command to 11th Annual Meeting of Vancouver Welfare Federation,” 16 February 1942.

²² Sutton’s qualifications, background, or the extent of his responsibilities were not described in his report in the files examined.

survey on morale which indicated that “one soldier in every three worries ‘very frequently’ about his family and an additional 20% worry ‘quite often.’”²³ Military units were asked to submit reports on the state of soldiers’ morale in each of their units.²⁴ Based upon these reports, Sutton deduced that men who had family worries were likely to be “irritable, ineffective and difficult.”²⁵ He reported that some soldiers went absent without leave and asked for compassionate leave because they wanted to go home to deal with a personal situation.²⁶ In assessing the importance of the Dependents’ Allowance Program, Sutton also remarked that maintaining morale by taking care of soldiers’ families was crucial to the future of the country:

It should be recognized that our whole social order depends upon the willingness of men in the Armed Forces to eventually return to their homes and reassume their responsibilities and obligations as husbands and parents. It would therefore be dangerous as well as impractical in a citizen army to adopt the attitude that men should, even if they could, forget their concern over their dependents.²⁷

Politicians, military officials, and bureaucrats at the Department of National Defence also believed that there was a link between the receipt of the allowances and men’s behavior in the military. According to these officials it was “common sense” to provide an allowance that would put men “in a frame of mind to give good service” and avoid “creating a body of discontented troops.”²⁸ Comments by James Layton (J.L.) Ralston, the Minister of National Defence, and R.O.G. Bennett, the Dependents’

²³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Liaison Committee, “Opinion Survey on the Attitudes of Soldiers,” included in Memorandum by Captain Sutton, 26 October 1942.

²⁴ Sutton did not state who wrote the reports in the military units. He did not consult with non-military organizations who may have dealt with soldiers with personal problems. He did not state why he did not consult with these organizations.

²⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Liaison Committee, “Opinion Survey on the Attitudes of Soldiers,” included in Memorandum by Captain Sutton, 26 October 1942.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-D, File Title: Speeches, “Speech for Rotary Club,” 16 September 1940.

Allowance Board Chairman, indicate that they further believed the threat of losing the allowance was an incentive for soldiers to adhere to the military regulations. In a debate in the House of Commons on dependents' allowance regulations, Clarence Gillis, a member of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation for Cape Breton South, opposed this conception of the allowance. He argued that wives should not be punished by not receiving the allowance if their soldier husbands went absent without leave or committed another offence.²⁹ Ralston responded that if the families of soldiers who disobeyed orders were still allowed to receive the allowance, soldiers who were well behaved might decide to break the rules.³⁰ He stated that the allowance was not based only on the principle of need, but on the "welfare of the service."³¹ Bennett agreed with Ralston's assessment. As he stated, "The purpose of the allowance is that the service man, if and while he is doing a good job for his country, will be relieved of worry and anxiety as far as possible."³² According to Ralston and Bennett, the allowance was a benefit that could be taken away if soldiers did not fulfill their obligations. Bennett stated it was possible to stop the allowance because the allowance was a "gratuitous award," not a right.³³ There was no legal obligation to provide the allowances. As we will see in later chapters in this thesis, this stipulation had a

²⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-30, File Title: DAB Press Notices and Clippings, "Grants to Troops' Dependents Are Criticized in Commons," Ottawa Journal, 25 February 1944.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-30, File Title: DAB Press Notices and Clippings, "Send \$1,000,000 a Day To Fighting Men's Kin," Unnamed newspaper, Not dated.

³³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, R.O.G. Bennett, DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario to J.W.G. Clarke, Director of Public Relations, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 6 April 1942.

significant impact on Aboriginal families because it allowed federal officials to alter the amount provided to them.³⁴

Some journalists expressed frustration with such a position. A. Clifford Archer of the Montreal Standard believed that the allowance “should be guaranteed by Act of Parliament or by the un-democratic but politically popular mode of today-order in council.”³⁵ Archer argued the allowance “should not be left to the fickle devices of changeable policy and Governmental whim.”³⁶ Archer implied that the allowance was a right and as a result, should be subject to less bureaucratic interference. Archer’s comments were reflective of the shift in the public’s perception discussed by Morton that the federal government had certain obligations to its citizens.

B. RUNNING THE PROGRAM: THE BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURE OF THE DEPENDENTS’ ALLOWANCE BOARD AND THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ITS EMPLOYEES

In order to run the allowance program, a bureaucratic structure had to be put in place with a staff who would handle policy and administrative matters. (See Appendix A for a list of the names of key bureaucrats). Since the Dependents’ Allowance Board was set up under the Department of National Defence, the highest ranking official in the bureaucratic hierarchy was the Minister of National Defence. This post was occupied from 1940 to 1944 by J.L. Ralston.³⁷ Ralston, who was a World War I veteran, was a

³⁴ See Chapter 3 for an examination of the debate bureaucrats had on whether or not to reduce the allowances.

³⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, “Soldiers’ Allowances and Government Responsibility,” The Standard, 25 April 1942.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ralston was a Barrister who represented various ridings in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Ralston had previously served as the Minister of National Defence from 1926 to 1930, the Minister of Pensions and National Health in 1930, and the Minister of Finance and Receiver General from 1939 to

member of Liberal Caucus from 1926 to 1935 and from 1940 to 1945.³⁸ He was described by William Lyon Mackenzie King, the leader of the Liberal Party and the Prime Minister of Canada at the time, as a fiscal conservative who wanted to keep expenditures, especially on social spending, to a minimum.³⁹ He was considered one of the strongest members of King's Cabinet.⁴⁰ Underneath Ralston in the Department of National Defence were the Deputy Ministers. From 1932 to 1939, this position was held by Major-General L.R. La Fleche.⁴¹ When La Fleche took a sick leave in September 1939, two Associate Acting Deputy Ministers were appointed in his place—one representing the Militia and the other representing Naval and Air Services.⁴² For our purposes, Henri Des Rosiers,⁴³ the Associate Acting Deputy Minister for the Militia from September 1939 to August 1942 and the Deputy Minister for the Army from September 1942 to August 1945, is the most significant.⁴⁴ Des Rosiers corresponded with the Indian Affairs Branch regarding the dependents' allowance policies in Aboriginal cases.

1940. See Library of Parliament, "Senators and Members-Historical Information," http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/SenatorsMembers_house consulted on July 18, 2005.

³⁸ See Library of Parliament, "Senators and Members-Historical Information," http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/SenatorsMembers_house consulted on July 18, 2005.

³⁹ J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975), 253.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 107. King was the leader of the Liberal Party from 1919 to 1948. He was the Prime Minister from 1921 to 1930 and then again from 1935 to 1948. See Mackenzie King, Library of Parliament, "Senators and Members-Historical Information," http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/SenatorsMembers_house consulted on July 18, 2005.

⁴¹ Thor Thergrimsson, "Report 11 The Office of the Deputy Minister in Departments Responsible for Canadian Defence," Directorate of History Canadian Forces Headquarters, Ottawa, Ontario, August 22, 1996, 28.

⁴² A third Associate Acting Deputy Minister for Air Services only was appointed in April 1940 splitting the Air Service and Naval Service duties between two Deputy Ministers. See Thergrimsson, "Report 11," 2, 16, 19, 20, 29.

⁴³ Des Rosiers had previously been the Vice-President of Imperial Tobacco Company of Canada. He had served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during World War I as a Captain and then a Lieutenant Colonel. See *Canada Parliamentary Guides*. A. L. Normandin ed. (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1941), 668.

⁴⁴ After September 1942 another Deputy Minister for the Militia was appointed and the title was changed from Associate Acting Deputy Minister of the Militia to Deputy Minister for the Army. See Thergrimsson, "Report 11," 2, 16, 19, 20, 29.

The highest ranking official within the Dependents' Allowance Board was the Dependents' Allowance Board Chairman⁴⁵ appointed by the Minister of National Defence. The position was to be held by a senior civil servant.⁴⁶ The first to hold this position was S.H. Hill⁴⁷ who served as Chairman from 1939 to 1940. A. MacNamara⁴⁸ followed, from 1940 to 1941, and R.O.G.⁴⁹ Bennett held the position of Chairman the longest. He remained in the position from 1941 to 1945. Prior to his appointment, Bennett had worked as a Chief Inspector for the Bank of Montreal in Western Canada. Although, as will be discussed below, many lower level staff members had backgrounds in social work or education, Bennett's appointment indicates that financial management and business skills were perhaps valued more when determining who would receive leadership positions.⁵⁰ Like Ralston, Hill and Bennett were also World War I veterans.⁵¹ Most of the correspondence examined from the Dependents' Allowance Board was signed by MacNamara or Bennett.⁵²

In addition to the Chairman, there was a Board comprising of seven members appointed by Order in Council on the recommendation of the Minister of National

⁴⁵ It is unclear if the Chairman was a full time position or if the Chairman had other responsibilities. It is assumed due to the amount of work involved that the position was full time.

⁴⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 29.

⁴⁷ Biographical sketches of all the Chairmen were not located.

⁴⁸ MacNamara formerly was the Deputy Minister of Public Works for the Province of Manitoba, Chairman of the Manitoba Minimum Wage Labour Board and Deputy Minister of Labour for the Province of Manitoba prior to becoming the Chairman of the DAB. After being Chairman, he became Associate Deputy Minister of Labour, Acting Chief Commissioner for the Unemployment Insurance Commission, the Director of the National Selective Service for Canada and the Deputy Minister of Labour. See Canadian Parliamentary Guide, A.L. Normandin, ed. (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1947), 721.

⁴⁹ The archival records examined did not indicate what these initials stand for.

⁵⁰ Tim Krywulak makes similar conclusions in his thesis. See Tim Krywulak, "An Archeology of Keynesianism: The Macro-Political Foundations of the Modern Welfare State in Canada, 1895-1948," Ph.D. Dissertation, Carleton University, 2005.

⁵¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-30, File Title: DAB Press Notices and Clippings, "Send \$1,000,000 a Day To Fighting Men's Kin," Unnamed newspaper, Not dated.

⁵² In 1947, G.W. Dunn was Chairman and L.J. Carey was Chairman in 1948. It is unclear who was Chairman in 1946. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 34.

Defence.⁵³ There were two representatives each from the Navy, Airforce, and Army. Out of the Army representatives one had to be English and the other French.⁵⁴ It is not clear from the correspondence if there were any tensions between the English and French representatives and if there were any distinctions between these representatives on issues relating to racial discrimination.⁵⁵ There was also a representative from the Treasury Board.⁵⁶ In addition, the Board had its own Secretary, who made inquiries on behalf of Board members when they needed additional legal or policy advice. This position was held by K.M. Macdonald.⁵⁷

Generally Board members met three times a week at the main Dependents' Allowance Board office in the Dominion Building, located near the Experimental Farm in Ottawa.⁵⁸ Board members did not discuss every case, but they did confer on special or unusual cases.⁵⁹ These cases involved situations where dependents' eligibility was questionable, where an investigation had occurred, or where an exception to the

⁵³ See DAB Annual Reports in LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Chairmen's File Annual Report. Also see LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 34. It is unclear if being a Board member was a full time position or if Board members had other responsibilities in addition to their work for the DAB.

⁵⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts "Dependents' Allowance Board," Not dated.

⁵⁵ James St. George Walker has noted that both English and French discriminated against people from other racial groups during this time period. Nativist movements of the 1920's combined with the economic depression of the 1930's made the French hostile to people considered to be "foreigners" who were not white, who did not speak French and who did not practice Roman Catholicism. Walker notes, however, that Quebec was not necessarily unique in its treatment of racial groups as many English speaking Canadians also practiced discrimination. See James W. St. George Walker, 'Race,' Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies. (Toronto and Waterloo: The Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History and Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), 141-142.

⁵⁶ As the activities of the Dependents' Allowance Board declined after the war, the number of members was reduced. In 1946 the Board consisted of five members including the Chairman; by March 31, 1948, there were only 3 Board members. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 35.

⁵⁷ No additional information about Macdonald's background was found. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts, "Dependents' Allowance Board List of Board Members and Secretary," 8 August 1942.

⁵⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-D, File Title: Speeches, "Dependents' Allowance Board, 14 Point Memorandum," Not dated.

⁵⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 35.

regulations was required.⁶⁰ Board members aimed to “provide fair and unbiased treatment” and to evaluate each case “strictly on its merits.”⁶¹ To do so, they were “to give the dependency claim the benefit of any doubt wherever possible.”⁶² Officials reported that “the wishes of the Service Man, as well as the requirements and interest of his Dependents, are held paramount.”⁶³ They emphasized the importance of obtaining the soldiers’ or family members’ consent when making decisions about the allowance. These general rules, however, had limits. When faced with situations which forced Board members to favor the soldier or the family member, Board members tended to favor the soldier. The fact that Hill and Bennett were World War I veterans, and that the majority of Board members’ were military representatives may account for their attitudes.⁶⁴ Throughout the existence of the Board all the Chairmen and members were male. The possibility of having a social worker or a female member from a military wives’ organization on the Board as representatives of families’ interests does not appear to have been discussed based on the records examined.

A senior officer from the Deputy Minister’s office attended all the meetings of the Board.⁶⁵ If Board members had any concerns, they were supposed to report them to the Deputy Minister’s office. The subsequent opinions provided were “binding upon the

⁶⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-D, File Title: Speeches, “Dependents’ Allowance Board, 14 Point Memorandum,” Not dated.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid. Hill and Bennett’s status as veterans from World War I was mentioned in the following newspaper article see LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-30, File Title: DAB Press Notices and Clippings, “Send \$1,000,000 a Day To Fighting Men’s Kin,” Unnamed newspaper, Not dated.

⁶⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 54, File Title: Booklets on the Board, “Report of the Department of National Defence,” 31 March 1946.

Board.”⁶⁶ This statement reveals that the Deputy Minister’s office was involved with the Dependents’ Allowance Program on a regular basis.

Under the Chairman and the Board members, were the staff members. These staff members were civil servants, not volunteers as in World War I.⁶⁷ Most of them had backgrounds as social workers, teachers, or nurses.⁶⁸ The majority of the staff members were located in Ottawa, but there were also thirty-two field representatives in the military districts to assist local officials with soldiers’ applications.⁶⁹ These men were officers of the Pay Corps in the Army, Navy, or Air Force. They worked full time for the Board and were paid by the Board.⁷⁰

As illustrated by Table 1.B, the staff at the Dependents’ Allowance Board represented a relatively small proportion of the employees hired by the Department of National Defence. In 1942, the staff at the Dependents’ Allowance Board was composed of 319 employees.⁷¹ This number increased to 476 in 1943/1944 and to 500 in 1945. As the responsibilities declined after the war, the staff was reduced. In 1948, the remaining thirty-five staff members were transferred to the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Board ceased to exist.⁷²

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents’ Allowance Board, 35.

⁶⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-D, File Title: Speeches, “Dependents’ Allowance Board” by B.W. Mendelssohn, Not dated.

⁶⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents’ Allowance Board, 48. Generally these military districts with recruiting stations were not set up on reservations. Recruiting stations were most often set up in towns or cities. There does not appear to have been any field representatives assigned to reserves. For a further discussion of recruiting see section B in 1.5 The Indian Affairs Branch and Aboriginal Soldiers in World War II in this chapter.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 46-47A.

⁷² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Chairmen’s File, Annual Report, Dependents’ Allowance Board, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 31 March 1947.

The increase of employees during the war years reflected the overall increases for the Department of National Defence. The biggest increase for the Department of National Defence occurred between 1941 and 1942. The number of employees increased from 1,079 to 22,921.⁷³ Although the numbers of employees after the war decreased, the Department of Defence continued to exist whereas the Dependents' Allowance Board was basically a wartime agency only. These increases in the Department of National Defence are reflective of the overall increases in the federal bureaucracy during this time period. As Table 1.B illustrates, the number of employees working for the Canadian federal government increased from 46,106 to 115,908 during 1939 to 1945.⁷⁴ These figures continued to increase after the war.

⁷³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board 46, 47A and LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Chairmen's File, Annual Report, 31 March 1947.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

TABLE 1.B: The Total Number of Employees working for the Dependents' Allowance Board, Department of National Defence and the Canadian Federal Government, 1939-1947

Years	Total Number of Employees working for the Dependents' Allowance Board	Total Number of Employees working for the Department of National Defence	Total Number of Employees working for the Canadian Federal Government
1939	NA	1,424	46,106
1940	NA	3,592	49,656
1941	NA	1,079	66,937
1942	319	22,921	83,781
1943	476	31,047	104,055
1944	476	30,801	112,658
1945	500	28,137	115,908
1946	345	19,273	120,557
1947	35	18,670	125,337

Source: LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board 46, 47A and LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Chairmen's File, Annual Report, 31 March 1947.

Among the higher ranking bureaucrats within the staff at the Dependents' Allowance Board were two social workers. One of them acted as the Social Welfare Advisor to the Board. This position was filled by Ruth Harvey, a graduate of Columbia University and the Montreal School of Social Work.⁷⁵ As the Social Welfare Adviser, Harvey dealt with cases such as desertion or unfaithful wives. She also handled the correspondence with local social agencies which were called upon to do some investigations for the Board.⁷⁶ The second social worker was the Supervisor of the

⁷⁵ See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Chairmen's File, "Annual Report of the Dependents' Allowance Board," 31 March 1943.

⁷⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Chairmen's File, Annual Report, 31 March 1944. See also LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 38.

Administration of the Allowance Section.⁷⁷ This section dealt with all the administration cases where recipients who were deemed “incompetent” had their money managed by a third party such as a representative from a local social agency.

The awards section at the Dependents’ Allowance Board hired the most employees. In the awards section, there were fifteen sub sections. Each of the subsections had a supervisor and readers who would review the applications, check for the correct clerical information, and establish whether the application conformed to the regulations. In some cases, these readers requested investigations.⁷⁸ Readers would write a *précis* that provided the main facts of the case. The writers of the *précis* had to “develop an objective attitude,” so that their reports would be “reliable, trustworthy and [provide] a fair presentation.”⁷⁹ Once a *précis* was complete, the case was passed on to the supervisor of the subsection who would review the readers’ work. If, after the review by the supervisor, everything was considered satisfactory with the application, no further work was necessary.

In cases deemed “special” or “unusual” including applications for relatives who were not wives, “illegitimacy” cases, alleged sexual infidelity, or financial mismanagement, the readers had to request an investigator to make additional inquiries into the financial and personal circumstances of the family concerned.⁸⁰ Readers sent

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* See also LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents’ Allowance Board, 47A. The name of social worker and their background has not been found.

⁷⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents’ Allowance Board, 47A.

⁷⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 10, File Title: Course of Study for Reviewers, “A Study of Précis,” a talk by Elsie Lawson, Chief Reviewer, Dependents’ Board of Trustees (DBT), Ottawa, Ontario, 20 January 1944.

⁸⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-D, File Title: Speeches, “Dependents’ Allowance Board, 14 Point Memorandum,” Not dated.

their requests for investigations through the “Investigation Section,”⁸¹ whose employees were to make the arrangements for an investigation to be conducted, either through the Department of Pensions and National Health⁸² or a local social welfare agency. (See Appendix B for a list of social agencies used by the Dependents’ Allowance Board). Many of the local social welfare agencies were private or provincially funded organizations. By using these agencies the Board meant to utilize existing services rather than having to hire its own investigators.⁸³ Once the investigator’s report was received and assessed by a reader, Board members would review and discuss the case and then make a final decision.⁸⁴

The reliance on such networks of social agencies by the Dependents’ Allowance Board was not new. However, despite this continuing pattern, we will see that there were changing ideas about the type of training and qualifications investigators should have, due, in part, to the emerging field of social work. This was a significant change from past programs. During World War I, most of the investigations had been carried out by volunteers who were a part of women’s organizations usually associated with the Canadian Patriotic Fund.⁸⁵ Volunteers with the Fund had believed that the “friendly, personal, and helpful” relationship they established with soldiers’ families was one of the

⁸¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents’ Allowance Board, 44.

⁸² The Department of the Pensions and National Health was abolished and the Department of Veterans Affairs and National Health and Welfare were created by Statute 8 Geo VI, c. 19, assented to on June 30 1944, and Statute 8 Geo.VI, c. 22 , assented to on July 24, 1944, respectively. Both Acts were proclaimed in force on October 18, 1944. See Government of Canada, Privy Council Office, Guide to Canadian Ministries Since Confederation, Sixteenth Ministry, www.pco.-bp.gc.ca/default.asp?Page=Publications&Language=E&doc=min/min_e.htm., consulted on July 6, 2005.

⁸³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations-General, “Memorandum” by Arthur MacNamara, DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario, 22 April 1940.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid. 17.

main advantages of the Fund.⁸⁶ These volunteers had claimed that they were helping families plan their budgets and plan nutritious meals.⁸⁷ After the First World War, however, volunteer investigators were increasingly perceived as not having the appropriate skills to assist soldiers' families. Women from auxiliaries who commonly did investigations were seen as moralistic, patronizing and voyeuristic. Relief investigators who were hired by the provincial government also did not have a good reputation. They had been accused of being "untrained" and "patronage appointed." Their administration was further characterized by "partisanship, inefficiency, and corruption."⁸⁸ By 1942, Jack Pembroke, the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Department of National Defence, could note that in many people's minds, relief investigators had "a definitely harsh and unsavory connotation of 'charity' doled out under protest and in as small amounts as possible."⁸⁹

The profession of social work which was emerging in the early twentieth century sought to distance itself from these types of investigators and began to pressure the federal government to hire social workers with university or college training to do the investigations for the Dependents' Allowance Board.⁹⁰ In 1939, representatives from the

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁸⁸ James Struthers, "A Profession in Crisis: Charlotte Whitton and Canadian Social Work in the 1930s," in *The Benevolent State: The Growth of Welfare in Canada*, eds., Allan Moscovitch and Jim Albert, eds. (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1987), 112, 115.

⁸⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 6, File Title: Board Correspondence-Chairman, "Memorandum to Ralston" by Pembroke, 10 October 1942.

⁹⁰ The profession of social work started to emerge through the establishment of programs at universities and the formation of professional organizations. Schools of social work were created in Canada in the early part of the twentieth century. The first school social work at the University of Toronto began in 1914. McGill University started its own school in 1919. Social workers from Canada also started attending conferences for social workers in the United States during this time period. The Canadian Association of social workers was eventually formed in 1926. On the emergence of the social work profession in Canada see James Pitsula, "The Emergence of Social Work in Toronto," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 14, 1, (1979): 35-42 and John R. Graham, "A History of the University of Toronto School of Social Work," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1996, Sara Z. Burke, *Seeking the Highest Good: Social Service and*

Board, the Department of Pensions and National Health and the Canadian Welfare Council met to discuss what organizations should do the investigations.⁹¹

Representatives from the Department of Pensions and National Health⁹² were generally against having social workers do the investigations. They argued that social workers were “not sufficiently detached” to investigate a wide number of cases involving the “expenditure of public funds.”⁹³ It was feared that “investigators not being disinterested Civil Servants, might be unduly sympathetic to the dependent rather than the taxpayer.”⁹⁴ The representative implied that civil servants were somehow more “objective” and were more conscious of expenditures than social workers. These statements indicate some government officials were somewhat skeptical of the emerging social work profession. The fact that the majority of social workers were women may have also contributed to their uncertainty as women were seen as less capable than men of being prudent and “objective.”⁹⁵

Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888-1937, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), and Ken Moffat, *A Poetics of Social work: Personal Agency and Social Transformation in Canada, 1920-1939*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001). There is also a useful chapter on the history of social work in Canada in James Gripton, *A Study of the State of the Art of Social Work Research in Canada*, (Calgary: James Gripton, 1995). For a discussion of the emergence of the social profession in the United States see Roy Lubove, *Professional Altruist: The Emergence of Social Work as a Career, 1880-1930*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965)

⁹¹ The debates around what organization would conduct the investigations are based on materials that were found in the DAB files. An additional investigation to trace correspondence on this issue in the Department of Pensions and National Health records and the Canadian Welfare Council records may reveal further insights. See LAC, Records of National Health and Welfare, RG 29, Volume 43, File: 35-3-17, File Title: Dependents' Allowance Board, 1943-1947.

⁹² The names of the representatives were not provided in all cases.

⁹³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations - General, “Recommendations by the Dependents' Allowance Board for the Conduct of Investigations required by the Board in respect of Applications for Dependents' Allowances,” Author not identified, Not dated.

⁹⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations - General, S.H. Hill, DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario to Adjutant General, Ottawa, Ontario, 30 October 1939.

⁹⁵ James Struthers finds that in the early twentieth century, men were sought out to enter social work positions because the public image of social work as a female job was seen as detrimental to the development of social work as a profession. See James Struthers, “‘Lord Give Us Men’: Women and Social Work in English Canada, 1918 to 1953,” *Historical Papers (Canada)*, (1983): 96-112.

Some background information about the employees at the Department of Pensions and National Health suggests another possible reason that they were against social workers doing the investigations. In 1928 when the Department of Pensions and National Health was formed,⁹⁶ the largest number of employees in the newly created department came from the Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment. If by 1939 the majority of the employees were still from the original Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment, their attitudes towards the allowance program could possibly be influenced by their experiences in implementing the veterans' pension program.⁹⁷ Their focus in this program was to ensure soldiers received the appropriate amount of money; it was not to rehabilitate families. The employees from this department may have been particularly adept at defending themselves because they had already faced severe criticism from politicians and veterans' families during the 1920's and 1930's when the administration of the veterans' pension program was scrutinized.⁹⁸ As a result of this background and past experience, these employees may have resented the fact that social workers were claiming they were better able to investigate and address the needs of soldiers' families, a responsibility that had previously been their domain.

Representatives from social agencies argued that they should have the opportunity to contribute to doing this "patriotic work." Major-General E.C. Ashton was one such representative. Ashton was the Dominion Branch President of the Victorian Order of

⁹⁶ Although the Department of Health and the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment were the main departments added, the Board of Pension Commissioners, the Federal Appeal Board, and the Military Hospitals Commission were also included in the Department of Pensions and National Health. In 1944, the Department of Pensions and National Health was replaced by National Health and Welfare. See Canada. Library Archives Canada, "Department of National Health and Welfare Biography/Administrative History," <http://data4.collectionscanada.ca>. consulted on July 6, 2005.

⁹⁷ A break down of the number of employees from each division in the Department of Pensions and National Health was not found.

⁹⁸ Morton, *Fight or Pay*, 240.

Nurses and the Health League of Canada, in addition to being a member of many social service organizations. He was approached by members of these organizations who were concerned about the Department of Pensions and Health doing the investigations.⁹⁹

According to Ashton, the problem was one of skill and neutrality: if the department did the investigations, it would hire untrained personnel whose reports would be “worthless” and there would be the possibility that “patronage or pressure will be utilized to appoint thoroughly incapable people.”¹⁰⁰ Ashton suggested that the social agencies were better able to do this work.

Representatives from the Canadian Welfare Council also expressed concerns that the Department of Pensions and National Health investigators lacked the necessary training to conduct investigations. S.H. Hill, the Chairman of the Board at this time, reported that the General-Secretary of the Canadian Welfare Council from 1926 to 1941, Charlotte Whitton, “stressed the desirability of having none but trained investigators undertake the delicate inquiries in respect of domestic, financial, moral or other matters...”¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Ashton did not name the specific organizations whose members brought their concerns to him.

¹⁰⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations-General, E.C. Ashton Major-General, Ottawa, Ontario to Adjutant General, Ottawa, Ontario, 21 October 1939.

¹⁰¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations - General, Hill to Adjutant General, 30 October 1939. A closer examination of the Charlotte Whitton papers, the Canadian Welfare Council files or the National Health and Welfare records may provide more insights into the views of officials at the Canadian Welfare Council. See LAC, Charlotte Elizabeth Whitton, Fonds, R5071-0-5-E, Volume 18-21, Canadian Welfare Council, 1918-1959, LAC, Non-Profit Organization Papers, R4210-17-2-E, Volume 36-44, Canadian Welfare Council / Canadian Council on Social Development, 1935-1987, and LAC, RG 29, Volume 97, File 156-2-2, Canadian Welfare Council 1921-1949. Whitton had made similar arguments for the use of trained social workers in the Mothers' Allowance Program. See Veronica Strong-Boag, “‘Wages for Housework’: Mothers' Allowances and the Beginnings of Social Security in Canada,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Volume 14, No. 1, (Spring 1979): 28 and James Struthers, “A Profession in Crisis: Charlotte Whitton and Canadian Social Work in the 1930s,” in *The ‘Benevolent’ State: The Growth of Welfare in Canada*, Allan Moscovitch and Jim Albert, eds. (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1987), 111-125.

Despite the protests, it was ultimately decided that the Department of Pensions and National Health would conduct most of the investigations and that the services of local social agencies would be used in a secondary manner.¹⁰² As this department had local offices only in cities and towns, the Soldier Settlement of Canada would handle rural cases and cases in towns with fewer than 3,000 people.¹⁰³ The reason for the ultimate decision was not provided, but the federal government seems to have wished to use its own employees. As stated in the bulletin of the Canadian Welfare Council, the Dependents' Allowance Board in its set up "sought to avoid the creation of new or unnecessary machinery, using all existing resources, to the maximum."¹⁰⁴ Officials especially wanted to minimize the amount the Board had to pay to provincial social agencies for expenses incurred in conducting the investigations.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, the social workers at the local social agencies insisted throughout the war that they should be paid more money for each investigation they did conduct.¹⁰⁶ To provide an example of the degree to which some agencies' resources were taxed, Magda Fahrni has found in her research on Montreal that during the war the Bureau d'assistance sociale aux familles, a

¹⁰² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File: 4-5, File Title: Conferences and Inspections, Ruth Harvey, DAB Social Advisor, Ottawa, Ontario to Bennett, 31 October 1941.

¹⁰³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations - General, H. DesRosiers, Acting Deputy Minister (Military), Ottawa, Ontario to G. Murchison, Director of Soldier Settlement, Ottawa, Ontario, 31 October 1939.

¹⁰⁴ Canadian Welfare Council Bulletin February/March 1941, (Ottawa: The Canadian Welfare Council, 1941), 13.

¹⁰⁵ The standard rates set by Jack Pembroke, the Assistant Deputy Minister of National Defence, increased from \$1 to \$2.50 to \$3.50 per inquiry throughout the war. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations - General, "Comments on the Findings of the Canadian Welfare Council's Survey Regarding Investigations," Memorandum by Harvey. Not dated.

¹⁰⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations - General, Charles H. Young, Executive Director, Financial Federation, Montreal, Quebec, to MacNamara, 29 April 1940. This change in attitude was also noted by government officials, see LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations - General, MacNamara to J.W. McKee, Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Pensions and National Health, Ottawa, Ontario, 9 April 1940 and LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations - General, A.H. Brown, DAB Member, Ottawa, Ontario, to MacNamara, 2 May 1940.

family welfare agency for Francophones formed in 1938, had to spend the majority of its limited funds on investigating and administering cases for the Dependents' Allowance Board and the Dependents' Board of Trustees.¹⁰⁷ Some social agencies who had initially been keen to take on the work, eventually decided they wanted to reduce their involvement because dependents' allowances cases had dramatically increased their work load without providing them with enough compensation.¹⁰⁸ A total of 47,462 investigations were made in 1942-1943 and 37,728 in 1943-1944.¹⁰⁹ Figures indicating what percentage of investigations social agencies conducted were not found.

Despite the decision to use Department of Pensions and National Health employees, the importance of using investigators with social work training was a theme that continued to be stressed in the correspondence related to the dependents' allowances. This trend indicates that bureaucrats at the Board did not necessarily endorse the views of some of their colleagues at the Department of Pensions and Health who were skeptical of social workers. Pembroke, the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Department of National Defence, emphasized the "absolute necessity of trained welfare workers,"¹¹⁰ since the

¹⁰⁷ Magda Fahrni, *Household Politics: Montreal Families and Postwar Reconstruction*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 47. The function and purpose of the Dependents' Board of Trustees will be discussed later.

¹⁰⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations - General, Charles H. Young, Executive Director, Financial Federation, Montreal, Quebec, to MacNamara, 29 April 1940. This change in attitude was also noted by government officials, see LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations - General, MacNamara to J.W. McKee, Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Pensions and National Health, Ottawa, Ontario, 9 April 1940 and LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations - General, A.H. Brown, DAB Member, Ottawa, Ontario, to MacNamara, 2 May 1940.

¹⁰⁹ Figures for additional years were not located. LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Chairmen's File Annual Report, Annual Report, 31 March 1944.

¹¹⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 24, File: 1-30, File Title: DAB Staff, J. Pembroke, DBT Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario, to E.C. Phillips, Director of Civil Personnel, Department of National Defence (Army), 7 June 1943.

investigators should be “completely dissociated from any ‘charity’ or ‘relief’ outlook.”¹¹¹

Where representatives from the Department of Pensions and Health had expressed concerns that social workers would be too sympathetic, Pembroke believed that social workers’ reports were “fairly presented” and portrayed their abilities to represent the recipient as well as the taxpayer.¹¹² Just as military officials were convinced by the idea that concerns about soldiers’ families needed to be addressed in order to maintain morale, high ranking bureaucrats within the Department of National Defence were convinced that trained social workers should be a part of the bureaucracy that dealt with soldiers’ families.

The necessity for social work training was also noted by the high ranking bureaucrats within the local social agencies. In commenting about investigators at the Department of Pensions and National Health, K.M. Jackson, the Executive Director of the Edmonton Family Welfare Bureau, wrote to Ruth Harvey, the Social Welfare Adviser to the Dependents’ Allowance Board:

The investigation staff has no professional training and are of the old ‘relief investigator type.’ We have often felt that they took a murky satisfaction in the sexual delinquencies of the soldiers’ wives and that their investigations were based on what they could find out of this type rather than on understanding the client and giving them positive support and acceptance.¹¹³

Jackson thus distinguished social workers who had professional training from “old relief investigators.” Associated with nineteenth century charity programs, the relief investigators Jackson referred to tended to evaluate recipients based on their morality and

¹¹¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 6, File Title: Board Correspondence-Chairman, “Memorandum to Ralston” by Pembroke, 10 October 1942.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File: 4-5, File Title: Volume 4 – General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies, K.M. Jackson, Executive Director, Edmonton Family Welfare Bureau, to Harvey, 16 November 1943. The first name of K.M. Jackson was not provided.

religious beliefs. Jackson was trying to distance himself and the work of his organization from those earlier investigators.

Concerns were also expressed in the correspondence regarding a disparity in the quality of service provided by local agencies. George F. Davidson, the Executive Director of the Canadian Welfare Council from March 1942 to December 1944, commented that investigators from Toronto or Montreal or Vancouver were to be praised for their “highly skilled service,” while investigators from rural areas and in Atlantic Canada were criticized.¹¹⁴ Another unidentified bureaucrat who was assessing the state of social work in Canada commented that Prince Edward Island and Alberta were two provinces where welfare services were “seriously behind the accepted standards of other provinces.”¹¹⁵ There were also criticisms from the Canadian Welfare Council that some of the staff in social agencies in Montreal did not have enough training and were not utilizing vigorous standards in their methods.¹¹⁶ Many local social agencies espoused the importance of social work in family welfare; however, due to lack of resources or limited access to educational facilities with social work courses sometimes they failed to achieve the standards for training outlined by the Canadian Welfare Council.¹¹⁷

The demand for trained social workers increased throughout the war both within government departments and social agencies. To address the issue of limited access to educational facilities offering social work training, the Department of National Defence

¹¹⁴ These types of comments appear throughout the correspondence. For an example, see LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Liaison Committee, George F. Davidson, Executive Director, Canadian Welfare Council, Ottawa, Ontario to Captain F.A. Gilbert, C.O.C. T.C., Barrie Field Camp, Ontario, 3 September 1942. For a biography on George F. Davidson see Richard B. Splane, George Davidson: Social Policy and Public Policy Exemplar, (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 2003), Chapter 7 “Redirecting the Canadian Welfare Council,” 77-92.

¹¹⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File: 4-5, File Title: Conferences and Inspections, “Untitled” (Document on the state of the social work profession in Canada), Author not identified, Not dated. 9.

¹¹⁶ Fahrni, Household Politics, 50.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

requested that bureaucrats at the Department of Labour assist in financing special courses for social welfare aides through the Canadian Vocational Training Program. Officials at the School of Social Work of the University of Manitoba under this scheme organized a twelve week course to train social welfare aides. In order to attend, trainees had to be sponsored by a specific agency doing government work.¹¹⁸ In some other places, there was a mix of training through schools of social work and in-house training.¹¹⁹ For instance, representatives from the School of Social Work at McGill came to Ottawa to give lectures on case work to the Dependents' Allowance Board staff. This training program was indicative of the expansion and development of universities and the civil service occurring during this time period.¹²⁰

As a part of their training, social workers were taught to provide a “scientific diagnosis” to clients’ problems. An important technique to be used was the case work method.¹²¹ This method sought to classify the client’s problems by collecting information about the family’s history, personality, medical and employee records. Social workers were to work with the client to devise solutions.¹²² Ideal social workers were “to be objective and scientific in one’s practice, while also maintaining sympathy with those seeking assistance; and to respect the rules of one’s agency as well as the

¹¹⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 1, File Title: Board Policy and Miscellaneous, Author not identified, University of Manitoba School of Social Work, Winnipeg, Manitoba to Miss J.K. Lind, Secretary of the DBT, Edmonton, Alberta, 13 April 1945.

¹¹⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 24, File: 1-50, File Title: DBT Advisory Committee, London, England, Pembroke to T.M. Logan, Assistance Board, Southport, Lancashire, 24 July 1945.

¹²⁰ For a detailed discussion of the connections and parallel developments occurring among business, universities, and government during this time period see Gale Wills, A Marriage of Convenience: Business and Social Work in Toronto, 1918-1957, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), John R. Graham, “A History of the University of Toronto School of Social Work,” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1996, Doug Owram, The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the state, 1900-1945, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), and Tim Krywulak, “An Archeology of Keynesianism: The Macro-Political Foundations of the Modern Welfare State in Canada, 1895-1948,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Carleton University, 2005.

¹²¹ Krywulak, “An Archeology of Keynesianism,” Chapter 5, 24.

¹²² Ibid., Chapter 5, 23.

rights' of one's clients."¹²³ This approach emphasized dealing with each case on an individual basis rather than in a mass.¹²⁴ For instance, Frank Stapleford, the Executive Secretary of the Neighborhood Workers' Association of Toronto, who participated in the training program put together by the Dependents' Allowance Board, stated that "Modern social workers try to put their work on an individual basis and do not want to treat every individual in the same manner. People have to be treated according to the situation in which they are placed, in relationship to their community background, and having in mind the type of person they are."¹²⁵ Although in some cases a "business like and impersonal approach" was acceptable in the government, social workers employed by the government required "imaginative insight as to how the human mind works."¹²⁶ As readers will recall, officials from the Department of Pensions and National Health criticized social workers' approach for a lack of sufficient disinterest. Conversely, the above comments show how social workers and educators referred to their approach as having an appropriate balance between objectivity and sympathy.

Bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board supported the use of the case work method and techniques, even when they had to rely on employees, who, in some cases, were not professional social workers. As a newly formed organization, they were

¹²³ See T.R. Robinson, "The Professional Ethics of Social Work," *Social Work*, January 1926, 78-77 as quoted in Tim Krywulak, "An Archeology of Keynesianism," Chapter 5, 22. It is important to note that the way in which these principles would be applied in practice was a subject of debate within the social work profession. For further discussion see Ken Moffat, *A Poetics of Social Work: Personal Agency and Social Transformation in Canada, 1920-1939*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), Chapter 1 "The Contested Concepts of Social Service and Social Change," 12-29.

¹²⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 10, File Title: Course of Study for Reviewers, "Case-Work Treatment for Soldiers' Families," Lecture by Reverend Father John A. Macdonald, Executive Director, Catholic Family Service of Ottawa, Ontario, 3 February 1944.

¹²⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 10, File Title: Course of Study for Reviewers, "The Place of Social Agencies in the Community and Their Relationship to the Dependents' Board of Trustees," A Talk by Frank N. Stapleford, Executive Secretary, Neighborhood Workers' Association of the Toronto, Ontario, 4 November 1943.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

more likely to be open to new ideas coming from the emerging profession of social work than an older organization which had well established administrative practices and perhaps more set views. Board members were reported to rely upon “the good judgment, thoroughness and impartiality” of investigators in making their decisions.¹²⁷ R.O.G. Bennett, one of the Chairmen of the Dependents’ Allowance Board, advised investigators to “avoid hearsay,” “use reliable sources” and “verify all information” before reporting the facts in each case.¹²⁸ In providing this advice, Bennett seems to have wanted investigators to avoid relying upon rumors—a source which moral relief investigators were assumed to have relied upon. Despite his advice, rumors and snitching did influence the information some investigators provided, especially in cases of infidelity and “illegitimacy.” The use of such information, however, was generally criticized because officials believed the reliance upon gossip undermined the Board’s credibility in the eyes of the public.¹²⁹

While supporting the use of accurate information, Bennett also emphasized the importance of establishing “a sympathetic atmosphere.”¹³⁰ In order to respect the client, investigators were advised to be discreet and to not reveal any confidential information to others.¹³¹ Investigators’ goals, while completing an investigation, were to “avoid being defensive, do not evade work, co-operate with the client, talk the client’s language, and

¹²⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations - General, “DAB Information and Instructions Re: Investigations and Re-Investigations,” Not dated.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ See correspondence in LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations-General and File: 4-5, File Title: Volume 4-General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies.

¹³⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 10, File Title: Course of Study for Reviewers, “Letter Writing” A Talk by Lawson, 13 January 1944.

¹³¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations - General, “DAB Information and Instructions Re: Investigations and Re-Investigations,” Not dated.

do not humiliate the client.”¹³² Investigators were asked not to make any promise regarding eligibility to the client, as officials believed this type of decision should be made by Board members or Dependents’ Allowance Board reviewers.¹³³ Like Pembroke, Bennett was influenced by social workers’ arguments that it was, in fact, possible to balance the use of scientific method with sympathy.

The insistence by social workers that their professional expertise be used by the Dependents’ Allowance Board and that the case work method be employed were indicative of social workers’ broader attempts to legitimize their authority and knowledge and to seek professional status. Through the establishment of university programs in social work,¹³⁴ professional organizations which held conferences and produced journals,¹³⁵ and through an increasing emphasis on the practices of scientific management, social workers attempted to shift their image from that of volunteer moral reformists to that of skilled experts. Tim Krywulak observes that

as social work practices were gradually adopted within new and existing institutions...the position of the ‘social worker’ emerged as the ‘functional specialist’ charged with implementing these particular practices-much as had been the case with the evolution of analogous positions in business world, such as production engineer, accountant, and personnel manager.¹³⁶

¹³² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 10, File Title: Course of Study for Reviewers, “Letter Writing” A Talk by Lawson, 13 January 1944.

¹³³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File: 4-1, File Title: Investigations – General, “Investigation Reports Provided by the Department of Pensions and National Health,” 14 February 1942.

¹³⁴ Schools of social work were established at the following universities: University of Toronto (1914), McGill University (1919), University of British Columbia (1929), and University of Manitoba (1943). A school in Halifax, The Maritime School of Social Work, was also established. See Krywulak, “An Archeology of Keynesianism,” Chapter 5, 17 and LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File: 4-5, File Title: Conferences and Inspections, Untitled (Document on the state of the social work profession in Canada), Author not identified, Not dated. 14.

¹³⁵ The two most important organizations were the Social Service Council of Canada and Canadian Association of Social Workers. Krywulak, “An Archeology of Keynesianism,” Chapter 5, 12-13.

¹³⁶ Krywulak, “An Archeology of Keynesianism,” Chapter 5, 12-13.

The presence of social workers as advisers and investigators within the Dependents' Allowance Board is significant. Social workers' attitudes and approaches emerged from a different tradition than that of military officials or, as will be seen later in this chapter, that of Indian Agents. On the one hand, military officials tended to focus on soldiers' rights rather than women's rights. As we will see, military officials and some Indian Agents focused on punishment by stopping the allowance or controlling the allowance, especially when wives failed to conform to their notions of "ideal behavior." Two such instances occurred when wives committed infidelity or had "illegitimate" children. In these cases, social workers tended to focus on rehabilitating families through counseling and education.

These distinctions among officers, Agents, and social workers, however, were not black and white and it is interesting to see in what complex ways the different traditions influenced bureaucrats. As we will see in upcoming chapters, in formulating their administration policy, military officials, despite their focus on soldiers' rights, were influenced by the idea that women could be taught to be better money managers as promoted by social workers. In addition, while some Indian Agents advocated for more control over women's cheques, others wanted to keep families together and, like social workers, wanted the Board to have a more flexible policy in cases of "illegitimacy." Social workers claimed to distinguish themselves from relief investigators from the nineteenth century, but they were still using notions of "respectability" when assessing their clients.¹³⁷ Identifying how aspects of these older and newer traditions mixed is

¹³⁷ It must be recognized that in practice, social workers did not achieve their intended goals. They judged their clients based on notions of "respectability," relied on rumors, and, like Indian Agents, could be moralistic and patronizing. Little finds this to be true when she examines social workers' involvement in the implementation of the Mothers' Allowance Program in Ontario. She finds that throughout the

important to understanding how dependents' allowance policies were formed and implemented.

C. QUALIFYING FOR THE ALLOWANCE: THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL SOLDIERS

Now that the bureaucrats have been identified who managed the program, the terms under which the allowance could be received must be studied. Examining the information provided about the allowance, the application process, the procedures, the rules affecting eligibility, and the rates of allowances provided is necessary in order to compare and contrast how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal soldiers and their families were treated. Concerns about these rules and procedures form the very crux of debates that took place among soldiers' relatives, representatives from nongovernmental organizations and bureaucrats about the allowance. Only with some knowledge of these processes will the criticisms posed by soldiers' relatives and representatives from nongovernmental organizations which will be examined in later chapters of this thesis make sense. As suggested in the introduction, such an examination is also essential to understanding how certain assumptions about race and gender were reinforced and perpetuated within bureaucracies.

Potential recruits were informed about the allowance through posters displayed in post offices and recruiting centres across the country.¹³⁸ These posters outlined the financial regulations governing the dependents' allowance. A booklet of the regulations

implementation of the program, social workers, despite their claims to be "sympathetic" and "objective," when investigating their clients continued to judge them based on appearance and notions of "respectable" sexual and social behavior. 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, 1998), 66.

¹³⁸ A copy of this particular poster was not found.

was also printed and distributed.¹³⁹ Through radio broadcasts and posters, potential recruits were advised of the rates provided and what information was needed when applying for the allowance.¹⁴⁰ They were also advised to bring their marriage and birth certificates with them.¹⁴¹

It is unclear what level of access Aboriginal people had to sources of information about the allowance. The isolation of reserves, the high rates of illiteracy, and the lack of radios on reserves may have prevented some people from obtaining the information about the regulations.¹⁴² As a result of these factors, they may have had to rely on the recruiting officer or Agent to provide them with information about the regulations. In the case of the veterans in the post-war situation, the lack of access to information proved to be a disadvantage because they had to rely upon the Indian Agents who did not always provide complete and accurate information about veterans' entitlements.¹⁴³ In the case of the allowance, it is possible that the reliance on the Agent for information led to some

¹³⁹ The specific places the booklets were distributed were not described. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Chairman's File Annual Report, Annual Report, 31 March 1943.

¹⁴⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts, "Army Pay," A Radio Address Given by Helen Marsh over CBC Dominion Network," 11 November 1940.

¹⁴¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts, "Draft Broadcast," Author not identified, Not dated.

¹⁴² These factors were noted to have affected veterans' access to information about benefits. After the war, R. Scott Sheffield notes that the information about veterans' benefits and programs was provided through radios, posters hung in Legion Halls, and newspapers. Some Aboriginal veterans found this information difficult to access because radios on reserves were rare, they were not allowed to go to Legion Halls because they were not allowed to drink due to Indian Act regulations, and there were high rates of illiteracy. It is possible these same factors affected Aboriginal people's access to information about the dependents' allowance regulations. See R. Scott Sheffield, "A Search for Equity: A Study of the Treatment Accorded to First Nations Veterans and Dependents of the Second World War and the Korean Conflict." Prepared for the National Round Table on First Nations Veterans' Issues, April 2001, 33-34. The information in this report was based on archival research and oral interviews.

¹⁴³ According to R. Scott Sheffield, Indian Agents failed to provide correct information because they did not understand the complex rules relating to the Veterans' Charter. There is also some evidence to suggest that Indian Agents provided information to veterans based on their own assessment of the veterans' capabilities. Some veterans were not informed about the education programs for veterans because the Agent assumed they were not intelligent enough. Some veterans were told by Agents they could only use their money on housing when this was not in fact the case. Some Agents told veterans this because building homes was a priority for the Indian Affairs Branch department. See Sheffield, "A Search for Equity," 34, 38, 48.

families not having an accurate understanding of how much they were to receive. Based on the correspondence examined, however, it would appear that many Agents did inform Aboriginal families of the correct amounts. When, as we will see in Chapter 3, reductions were put in place, many Agents protested the reductions, arguing that they had already told the soldiers that their families would receive the full amount of allowance. They also reported that some recipients had written in protesting the reductions, indicating that some Aboriginal families knew the standard rates of dependents' allowances.

In order to receive the allowance, enlisted men had to fill out an application form which they usually did at the time of their enlistment. The dependents' allowance application forms asked enlisted men to provide information about their position in the military, their previous employment,¹⁴⁴ their marital status, and the number of children they had.¹⁴⁵ They were asked if they were "living in a normal domestic relationship" with their wives."¹⁴⁶ Applicants were asked if they were supporting their dependents prior to enlistment and how much money they were providing to family members.¹⁴⁷

All applicants had to show their original marriage and birth certificates to the Paymaster at the recruiting center. In order to receive the allowance, marriages and births had to be registered with Provincial authorities in the Vital Statistics Bureau through the Registrar General of the Province.¹⁴⁸ In cases where the certificates were not brought,

¹⁴⁴ There was particular concern if the enlisted person's salary was from a "public authority." Applicants were also asked if they received disability pensions. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 8, File: 4-10, "Canadian Active Service Force Application for Dependents' Allowance," Not dated.

¹⁴⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 8, File: 4-10, "Canadian Active Service Force Application for Dependents' Allowance," Not dated.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 1, File Title: Creation of Board, "Procedures and Rulings No. 22 Documentation for Dependents' Allowances," 15 June 1943.

Paymasters could check whether marriages or births were registered by contacting the appropriate Registrar General.¹⁴⁹ If the registration could not be confirmed, an investigation was conducted to see if the wives were still eligible to receive the allowance.¹⁵⁰ If the men were previously married, they had to bring proof that their first marriage was legally terminated and that any adoptions were legally completed.¹⁵¹

The requirement for the original marriage and birth certificates caused difficulty for some Aboriginal men because their marriages or children's births were validated according to their First Nations' own cultural practices, not according to the provincial requirements.¹⁵² In order to receive treaty annuity payments, births were recorded by the Indian Agent on the treaty payroll, but this procedure did not require that the birth was formally registered with the province.¹⁵³ In the United States, there were similar demands that in order to receive the allowance all soldiers had to provide "proof" that they were legally married to their wives. This rule led many Native American men who had originally married their wives according the traditions of their community to re-marry their wives in front of clergymen so they could qualify for the allowance.¹⁵⁴ In this way, according to American historian, Alison R. Bernstein, "military life forced Indians to operate within the bureaucratic structures that reinforced socialization to white

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ It is not clear what exact process was used to verify the authenticity of the documents. The primary records examined and Beryl Kalmanasch's Masters thesis did not provide further insights into this process.

¹⁵¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts, "DAB Second Broadcast," Not dated.

¹⁵² According to the regulations only the certificates produced through provincial institutions were considered valid. For a more detailed discussion on the issue of registration of marriages and births see Chapter 5.

¹⁵³ Pierette Galley, Head Genealogical Research Unit, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Personal Communication, 10 January 2006.

¹⁵⁴ Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs*, (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 59.

society.”¹⁵⁵ The dependents’ allowance files for Canadian First Nations did not indicate whether or not soldiers and wives decided to re-marry in a church as a result of the dependents’ allowance regulation that all marriages and births had to be registered. However, the conclusion that participation in the Army forced Aboriginal people to deal with bureaucratic structures that emphasized Euro-Canadian ideals is applicable as the remaining chapters in this thesis will prove.

Works on other social benefits programs have also found that the documentation requirements often favored Euro-Canadian recipients. Margaret Jane Hillyard Little in her book entitled, ‘No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit’: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997, explores the Mother’s Allowance Program. In order to be eligible for the mothers’ allowance only the original marriage, birth or death certificates were acceptable. Bureaucrats had to ensure that these documents met provincial regulations.¹⁵⁶ Little finds that immigrants born outside the country often could not obtain the required birth, marriage, and death certificates needed in order to receive the mother’s allowance.¹⁵⁷ This “bureaucratic mechanism” ensured “the financial support of Anglo-Saxon children while excluding other racial groups.”¹⁵⁸ Little also finds that many Afro-Canadian and Aboriginal mothers lacked the necessary documents and certification required in order to be eligible for the mothers’ allowance.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ The Old Age Pension program had similar documentation requirements. See James Struthers, No fault of their own: Unemployment pension and the Canadian welfare state, 1914-1941, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1983.)

¹⁵⁷ Little, ‘No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit’, 66.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. These strict requirements were made more flexible in 1953.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 66-67. Little notes that the archival record is unclear about why these women could not obtain the proper documents. It was noted by one investigator that the registration of births on some reserves was inconsistently recorded or not recorded at all and that is the reason why the women did not have birth certificates. It is unclear what factors prevented African Canadian women from obtaining the proper documentation. See Little, ‘No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit,’ 67.

Once the dependents' allowance application forms were complete and the appropriate documentation provided, the applications were sent to the District Paymaster for examination and then were passed onto the District Treasury Officer. Finally, they were sent to the Dependents' Allowance Board headquarters in Ottawa. Once applications arrived at the headquarters, they were divided into three main groups. First, there was a distinction based on race. Cases identified as "Status Indian" were separated from the other applications once they arrived at the Dependents' Allowance Board.¹⁶⁰ There was an implication that "Status Indians" as a whole would require different procedures than other applicants. Under the procedures an "Indian" was defined as any person accepted by the Indian Affairs Branch as a "Status Indian" under the terms of the Indian Act.¹⁶¹ Attempts by the federal government to define "Indians" had taken place since the 1850's in order to limit the obligations towards Aboriginal people.¹⁶² These categorizations did not consider how Aboriginal communities defined their own membership which tended to be more inclusive. Indeed, the term "Status Indian" had little meaning for many First Nations because they did not base their membership upon racial categories. As a result, they did not necessarily believe that the government could minimize its obligations by choosing not to include certain individuals. In treaty talks, for instance, many First Nations claimed that their Métis kin should be included, even though the federal government did not define Métis as "Status Indians."¹⁶³ The dependents' allowance policy continued the use of these problematic terms.

¹⁶⁰ It is unclear how these cases were being identified. It is possible applications from reserves were grouped together or the recruiting officer may have identified their status on the application form.

¹⁶¹ J.R. Miller, Lethal Legacy: Current Native Controversies in Canada. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2004), 32.

¹⁶² Ibid., 31-32.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

The dependents' allowance procedures for "Indians" were marked by the distinctive role of the Indian Agents in handling the allowances. As soon as Indian Agents found out a soldier with family members had enlisted, they were supposed to write to the Chairman providing the Aboriginal man's name and the names of his family members. Indian Agents were to inform the Chairman whether the dependents lived on a reserve and what benefits they were entitled to under the Indian Act. The procedures stipulated that the Indian Agents needed to send a report on the family members' behavior. In their reports, Indian Agents were supposed to comment on whether the cheques should be sent directly to the family member or whether they should be sent to the Indian Agents.¹⁶⁴ By asking this question, bureaucrats were implying that there were doubts about whether Aboriginal women could manage their allowances. They were basing their initial assessment of the women's abilities on the Indian Agents' opinions. Aboriginal women who lived off the reserve, like the majority of non-Aboriginal recipients, were not subject to these initial investigations.

Indian Agents were also asked to fill out questionnaires about family members once they started receiving the allowance. Indian Agents were asked if the amount of the allowance exceeded the previous income of the family. They were also asked if the allowance had caused any improvement in living conditions or alternatively, any "adverse effects."¹⁶⁵ Improved food and clothing were common answers.¹⁶⁶ Some

¹⁶⁴ LAC, Records of the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB), RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Procedure and Rulings-No. 30 "Procedure regarding payment of Dependents' Allowance and Assigned Pay when Indians enlist" approved by Bennett, 1 December 1941. Other than the instructions outlined in these procedures regarding what should be in the Indian Agents' reports, there do not seem to have been any more specific questions that Indian Agents were asked to comment on in their reports.

¹⁶⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File: 452-733 Pt. 1, "DAB Questionnaire," Not dated.

¹⁶⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, Files: 452-733 Pt. 1, 452-724, 452-722, "DAB Questionnaire," Not dated.

Indian Agents noted that there was no improvement.¹⁶⁷ Others commented negatively that there was an increase in drinking.¹⁶⁸ Indian Agents had to record the amount of money saved and how much money was put in War Savings Certificates.¹⁶⁹ These types of questions possibly indicate that bureaucrats had certain assumptions about Aboriginal families' economic status and spending habits and that they were seeking answers from the Indian Agents that confirmed these assumptions. The answers on these questionnaires were significant because they influenced future policy decisions. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, some of these answers were used by the Chairman, R.O.G. Bennett, as "proof" that the allowances for Aboriginal families should be reduced.

As will be illustrated in Chapter 6, the different procedures and restrictions for Aboriginal recipients were challenged by soldiers and their families, although in the archival records examined, there were no specific protests by Aboriginal families to the questionnaires used. Generally, during the 1940's and 1950's, the federal government was increasingly criticized for bureaucratic procedures and questionnaires that made distinctions based on race. For instance, in 1942, the African Canadian community protested forms used by the National Selective Service that asked applicants to identify their racial origin. Bureaucrats were assigning black applicants "stereotypical positions as domestic servants and unskilled workers."¹⁷⁰ Protests from African Canadian groups

¹⁶⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File: 452-733 Pt. 1, "DAB Questionnaire," Not dated.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ See James W. St. George Walker, 'Race,' Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies. (Toronto and Waterloo: The Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History and Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), 168.

forced government officials to change the form and “to end any racial distinctions in its own job assignments.”¹⁷¹

Significantly, in the post-war period there continued to be separate procedures for Aboriginal people in the administration of government programs. Benefits for Aboriginal veterans were administered by the Indian Affairs Branch and the procedures that were devised continued to facilitate Indian Agents’ control. Under the special procedures for Aboriginal veterans under the Veterans’ Land Act, Indian Agents were required to write a report on their personal assessment of veterans’ economic prospects. If the report were negative, it could severely impede veterans’ chances to receive land or money grants. In cases where money was received, the procedures also allowed Indian Agents to control how the money was spent by the veteran.¹⁷² These procedures show that despite the protests, some bureaucrats continued to believe that race was an acceptable category in which to distinguish recipients.

At the Dependents’ Allowance Board, after the “Indian” cases were taken out, the remaining applications, mostly from Euro-Canadian applicants, were divided into two groups. Group one applicants included wives and children who were living with the soldier at the time of enlistment. In these cases it was noted “no further initial investigation is required.”¹⁷³ These applications were sent on to the Dependents’ Allowance and Assigned Pay Branch which was a part of the Department of Finance and

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.* It is not clear if African-Canadian recipients dependents’ applications were placed in a separate pile because of their racial origin and if there were special procedures for these cases. In the files examined no special procedures were found.

¹⁷² Sheffield, “A Search for Equity,” 41.

¹⁷³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Procedure and Rulings-No. 30 “Procedure regarding payment of Dependents’ Allowance and Assigned Pay when Indians enlist” approved by Bennett, 1 December 1941.

cheques were issued for the wives.¹⁷⁴ Investigations were only required in these cases if at a future time, it were discovered that the wife was “misusing” her allowance money or was neglecting her children. Significantly, an exception to this rule was made in the case of Aboriginal wives. All Aboriginal wives needed to be investigated prior to receiving the allowance. Racial origin, no matter what the woman’s relation to the soldier, was viewed as an enough of a justification for an investigation.

In addition to Aboriginal wives, investigations were also required for any applicant, no matter what their race, in the Group two category. Group two applications included any situation that included other family members or any situation where the wife and children were not living with the soldier at the time of enlistment. These applications included allowances for parents, sisters, brothers, or grandmothers, allowances for a divorced, or separated wife, and allowances for overage children who were unable to provide for themselves due to mental or physical disability.¹⁷⁵ Mothers were the most common recipients in this category. The staff reviewed the applications in this group and decided whether to decline the application or gather more information. Investigations were usually requested.¹⁷⁶ It was at this stage in the case of non-Aboriginal families or for Aboriginal families not living on a reserve that social workers from local social agencies were asked to collect information about families’ financial situations. For Aboriginal families on reserves, the Indian Agents did the investigations.

¹⁷⁴ This branch also dealt with all matters relating to cheque adjustments, overpayments, change of address, provisional allowances granted in certain cases, and all assigned pay. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents’ Allowance Board, 32. If there were any notices about changes in regulations that affected dependents, the notices were sent from bureaucrats at the Board to the bureaucrats at the Dependents’ Allowance and Assigned Pay Branch. These notices were then put in the envelopes with the cheques and sent to relatives. For pamphlet and forms see LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-22, File Title: Notices to Dependents.

¹⁷⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents’ Allowance Board, 61.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

Additional investigations were sometimes necessary if there were concerns that the family members were “misspending” the allowance.

In order for bureaucrats to consider applications for other family members’ eligibility, proof of pre-enlistment support and financial dependency had to be provided.¹⁷⁷ In proving pre-enlistment financial support, specific money amounts were required. This stipulation emphasized the contribution of a man’s wages. None of the unpaid work men may have done for their family members, especially extended family members, was included. In the Dependents’ Allowance Program, the waged economy generally received greater recognition rather than the non-waged economy. This bias disadvantaged many lower income Euro-Canadian families and some Aboriginal families who relied more heavily on the unpaid contributions of family members. For both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women, the contributions made by them through their unpaid domestic work were not considered as having a monetary value. As will be revealed throughout the chapters of this thesis, this feature of the program becomes particularly important when studying bureaucrats’ assumptions about Aboriginal families’ lower living costs on reserves or the allowances mothers received. Because the value of non paid labour was not considered, families’ expenses were unfairly evaluated and discriminatory policies were justified.

Despite its failure to accurately represent the reality that many families faced, the model of the nuclear family relying upon a sole male breadwinner became part of the

¹⁷⁷ ibid.

institutional structure of the welfare state.¹⁷⁸ This is true in the case of the Dependents' Allowance Program where the eligibility requirements favored nuclear families rather than extended families. Under the rules, it was much harder for other relatives to receive the allowance than wives or children. At the outset of the program in 1939, the amounts of money wives and children received were set at standard rates.¹⁷⁹ In the case of other relatives, the amounts they received varied based on the circumstances of the family. An analysis of decisions made by Board members in individual cases involving other relatives shows that the following were applied in determining eligibility: ability to work, health, age, and other sources of income. If a man were in the household, the Board rarely decided in favour of an allowance because it assumed that he could work and provide for the family.¹⁸⁰ This rule was most commonly used in the case of fathers whom Board members referred to as the "logical" breadwinners in families.¹⁸¹ In some cases, however, exceptions were made if the father were too ill to work. To prove such "incapacitation," the soldier had to provide a medical certificate proving the father was unable to work.¹⁸²

In the case of parents applying for the allowance, the amount of the son's income and the type of job prior to enlistment were assessed. Interestingly, if the son had an exceptionally good job prior to enlistment, it was more likely that the family would

¹⁷⁸ Dominique Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State: Quebec Families, Compulsory Education and Family Allowances. Translated by Nicola Danby. (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2005), Introduction, 3.

¹⁷⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-31, File Title: Letters of Appreciation, Brown to Rogers, 10 June 1940. It is unclear how these rates were initially determined.

¹⁸⁰ As readers will see in Chapter 6, there were some examples of Aboriginal families in this situation where the father tried to claim allowance from his son. In these cases, the Board usually rejected the father's claim.

¹⁸¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 1, File Title: Record of Cases Submitted to Treasury Board, "Record of 119 Cases Rejected by the Treasury Board from the Months of October, November, December 1944 and January, February, March, April, May, June, 1945."

¹⁸² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume I, File Title: Record of Cases Submitted to Treasury Board, "Record of 119 Cases Rejected by the Treasury Board from the Month of August 1945," Not dated.

receive a higher amount of allowance.¹⁸³ The logic was that families used to a higher standard of living prior to their son's enlistment should not have to suffer because their son was now in the Army. Under the allowance policy, wealthier families had a greater chance of getting more allowance than poorer families.

In assessing the eligibility of relatives, the contributions of other family members such as other sons or daughters were considered, as well as savings or other sources of income.¹⁸⁴ These rules particularly affected mothers who were the largest group applying for the allowance other than wives. These rules did not affect wives' eligibility because their allowances were set at a standard rate. Pembroke justified the consideration of other sons and daughters' paid contributions to the mother on the basis that "there is neither rhyme nor reason in the taxpayers relieving these members of the family unit of their responsibility."¹⁸⁵ Pembroke did not consider that the amounts being provided by other family members were insufficient for many mothers to live on and the previous contribution of the soldier, however small, was essential. He did not view the allowance as a right that mothers should receive no matter what their personal financial situation. Mothers were also limited in how much income they could earn through paid work. Initially, if they earned above twenty dollars a month, they became ineligible to receive the allowance. In January 1943, due to mothers' protests, this rule was changed and mothers were allowed to earn forty dollars a month before they became ineligible to

¹⁸³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-31, File Title: Letters of Appreciation, Author not identified to Rogers, 8 June 1940.

¹⁸⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 1, File Title: Record of Cases Submitted to Treasury Board, "Record of 119 Cases Rejected by the Treasury Board for the Month of January 1946," Not dated.

¹⁸⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 6, File Title: Board Correspondence-Chairman, "Memorandum to Ralston" by Pembroke, 10 October 1942.

receive the allowance.¹⁸⁶ These rules were not imposed on wives who could earn as much as they wanted and still remained eligible to receive the allowances.

As readers will see in Chapter 6 when the recipients' responses are analyzed, both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal parents protested against these eligibility rules. Mothers, in particular, argued that they were equally entitled to receive the same amount of allowance as wives. They stated that they had previously supported their sons and now it was their sons' responsibility to provide for them. A sense of reciprocity made them feel that they had a legitimate claim to the allowance. In many mothers' minds, the contributions of other family members did not relieve the son in the Army of his financial obligations. Bureaucrats and parents clearly had different conceptions of the allowance and of soldier sons' ongoing duties to their parents. Mothers also argued that they should be able to work and receive the allowance. They believed that their earnings should not be limited. Others argued that their unpaid domestic work should be considered and should entitle them to the full allowance.

It is also revealing to consider who was excluded altogether from receiving the allowance. Mothers-in-law or step families generally did not receive the allowance.¹⁸⁷ Soldiers' financial obligations to their blood relatives were emphasized over obligations to family members through marriage.¹⁸⁸ It is assumed this distinction was made because Board members were most concerned about supporting soldiers' relatives where the soldier had previously lived in the home. Board members, as a general rule, may have

¹⁸⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-5, File Title: Cost of Living Bonus, "Press Release for Afternoon Papers," 16 December 1942.

¹⁸⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 1, File Title: Record of Cases Submitted to Treasury Board, "Record of 119 Cases Rejected by the Treasury Board for the Months of April, May and June 1946."

¹⁸⁸ In the records examined, there was no explanation as to why this distinction was made.

believed that soldiers did not live in the homes of their mothers-in-law or step-mothers.¹⁸⁹

Board members also expected that these women's own children would be responsible for supporting them.¹⁹⁰

Finally, servicewomen were initially barred from receiving an allowance for their relatives.¹⁹¹ In July 1943, in order to encourage enlistment of women, this rule was changed and servicewomen were allowed to assign the allowance to parents or siblings.¹⁹² They could not, however, assign the allowance to their husbands or children. According to Jeffrey A. Keshen, "to name them [husbands or children] as beneficiaries would suggest that the woman had abandoned family life."¹⁹³ Moreover, such a rule shows that women were never perceived as potential breadwinners for their families. Servicewomen married to enlisted men also became eligible to receive the allowance if "their combined annual income did not exceed \$2,100."¹⁹⁴ As the above eligibility requirements show, officials at the Board had definite ideas about who was and who was not entitled to the allowance based on certain assumptions about family economies and gender roles which touched families of all racial groups.

D. RATES OF ALLOWANCES

For those who provided the appropriate documentation and met the eligibility requirements, the rates of allowance provided varied according to an individual's rank in the military. This system of payment based on rank had been established during World

¹⁸⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-31, File Title: Letters of Appreciation, Brown to Rogers, 10 June 1940.

¹⁹⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 1, File Title: Record of Cases Submitted to Treasury Board, "Record of 119 Cases Rejected by the Treasury Board for the Months of April, May and June 1946."

¹⁹¹ Jeffrey A. Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 177.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 186.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

War I. From 1914 to 1917, twenty dollars was paid in allowance to enlisted men.¹⁹⁵ In 1918, the amount was raised to twenty-five dollars¹⁹⁶ and then to thirty dollars.¹⁹⁷ For officers, the amount went up to a maximum of sixty dollars per month.¹⁹⁸ There had been no assigned pay for relatives until April 1, 1915, when families started to receive fifteen dollars per month in assigned pay from the soldier.¹⁹⁹ Soldiers' allowances were largely inadequate and were not increased to match inflation. Many soldiers' families were made poor by the low pay and allowances provided.²⁰⁰

During World War II, the majority of enlisted men's wives, no matter what their racial origin, received thirty-five dollars per month.²⁰¹ An exception to this was January to April 1942 when the allowances for Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean recipients were reduced.²⁰² For most of the war, however, the full amount of allowance was received. The intention behind these rates was to provide "current maintenance" to the family while the soldier was overseas. The intention was not to replace "the whole income or contributions" of enlisted men, but to maintain "a good standard of living."²⁰³ The government considered the rates of dependents' allowances for wives not only to be "reasonable," but they boasted the "world's highest scale of dependents' allowances."²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-D, File Title: Speeches, "Canadian National Telegraphs Ottawa" McNamara to MacKenzie, 8 February 1940 .

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 11.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁰⁰ Desmond Morton and Glenn Wright, *Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civil life 1915-1930*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 223, 63-64.

²⁰¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 58.

²⁰² For an examination of the debate that occurred around the reductions in allowances see Chapter 3.

²⁰³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-D, File Title: Speeches, "Dependents' Allowance Board," B. W. Mendelssohn, Not dated.

²⁰⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-5, File Title: Cost of Living Bonus, "Press Release for Afternoon Papers," 16 December 1942.

Relatives who were not wives received less. Initially mothers, who were the most common recipients in this category, received a maximum of up to twenty dollars. Fathers, siblings and grandmothers were also eligible to receive money, but rarely received the full twenty dollars.

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal enlisted men had to assign a portion of their own pay to their dependents, in order to receive the allowance. Officers, on the other hand, were only “encouraged” to assign their pay. This distinction between enlisted men and officers was made because enlisted men received lower amounts of allowances than those provided to officers’ wives.²⁰⁵ For the majority of soldiers’ families, twenty dollars in assigned pay was provided. If the soldier had both a wife and mother to whom he wanted to assign allowances, he then had to assign twenty dollars to his wife and six dollars and fifty cents to his mother. If his mother was his only dependent, he then assigned twenty dollars to her.²⁰⁶

Historians have assessed the adequacy of the allowances. Historian Jody Perrun has found that the amount of allowance was “substantially less than the average wage for unskilled labour.”²⁰⁷ In Canada, it was common for municipal, provincial and federal governments to provide assistance below the wages received by an unskilled labourer based on the principle of “less eligibility.” Influenced by the poor law tradition in Britain, this principle stipulated that the amount of assistance provided should always be lower than an unskilled labourer’s wages in order to make work more desirable than

²⁰⁵ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 122.

²⁰⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-D, File Title: Speeches, “Speech for Rotary Club,” 16 September 1940.

²⁰⁷ Jody Perrun, “The Struggle at Home: Canadian Families and the Second World War,” http://www.orchistcanada.ca/files/conference_papers/2002/2c-Perrun-Mar03, consulted on August 22, 2005, 8.

relief and discourage families' from becoming dependent on government support.²⁰⁸

Initially, the amount of allowance for a year with the assigned pay for a woman without children totaled \$660. Perrun points out that workers in Winnipeg in 1937 "at the low end of the pay scale" had earned \$730 and by 1943 these workers were earning \$1,000 to \$1,500.²⁰⁹ Based on the Labour Gazette published by the Department of Labour which listed the costs of food, fuel, and rent, an average yearly budget for a family was \$1,100. Perrun points out that a mother with three children, however, at the start of the war only received \$1,060 in assigned pay and allowances.²¹⁰ As living costs increased, the allowances became even further insufficient.

Despite the fact that the amounts of soldiers' dependents' allowances were lower than what an unskilled labourer received, they were higher than what most recipients had received under previous government programs. Under the Mothers' Allowances Programs established in many provinces across the country, families of a mother and one child had received varied monthly amounts such as thirty-five dollars in Ontario, forty-two dollars and fifty cents in British Columbia and forty-seven dollars and fifty cents in Alberta.²¹¹ These rates were below the amount required in many provinces to raise families' standard of living above the poverty level.²¹² In comparison, under the Dependents' Allowance Program, a mother and child received a total of sixty-seven dollars in allowances and assigned pay.²¹³

²⁰⁸ Dennis Guest, The Emergence of Social Security in Canada, Second Edition, (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia, 1985), 36. This concept will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 on the reductions in allowances debate.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 9.

²¹¹ Ibid., 61

²¹² Ibid., 60.

²¹³ Ibid.

There were public protests, some of which we will be studying later in this thesis, regarding the amount of the dependents' allowances paid. Recipients, mainly wives and mothers, demanded more money because they argued that the allowances did not cover their most basic costs. The notion, that a "social minimum" be established in terms of housing, food, and clothing, and that families, no matter what the lowest wages were, should live at a certain set standard, was becoming a more dominant part of public discussions about government assistance than it had in the past.²¹⁴ In response to these protests by recipients, federal officials implemented a cost of living bonus in January 1943. The debates that took place prior to implementing this bonus will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Also in January 1943, the maximum amount of allowance for other relatives was raised from twenty dollars to twenty-five dollars.²¹⁵ The amount of assigned pay was also increased to twenty-five dollars for wives. The amount of assigned pay was increased to twenty-three dollars for other relatives.²¹⁶ For a wife with three children, these new increases provided a total of \$1,060 to \$1,140. The increases made it more likely that families could meet their basic needs with the amounts provided.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 110-115.

²¹⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 59.

²¹⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-5, File Title: Cost of Living Bonus, "Press Release for Afternoon Papers," 16 December 1942.

²¹⁷ Perrun, "The Struggle at Home," 10.

TABLE 1.C: Rates of Allowances for Adult Dependents According to Military Rank,
1939-1945

Rank in Military	Monthly Rate of Allowance for Main Adult Dependents (\$) 1939-1945	Monthly Rate of Allowance for Adult Dependents in the "Other" Category (\$) as of 1943
Above the Rank of Major	60	30
Major	55	25
Captain	50	25
Lieutenant and 2 nd Lieutenant	45	25
Warrant Officer, Class I	40	25
All other ranks	35	25

Source: LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 8, File: 4-10, J. Stanley Cook, (Position and Location Not Identified), to the Members, The Montreal Board of Trade, Montreal, Quebec, 2 October 1939 and LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Chairman's File Annual Report, "Annual Report," 31 March 1943.

The rates provided to children deserve special consideration because they were a source of debate among officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board. In World War I, allowances had not been provided for children.²¹⁸ Except when the allowances were reduced, Aboriginal and West Indian families received the same amounts as other families did for their children but, unlike other families, the receipt of the money was delayed. These delays occurred because the parentage of the children had to be investigated. Suspicions about Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean women's alleged promiscuous sexual behavior led Board officials to create a rule stipulating that the parentage of their children had to be verified.²¹⁹

For all families, money was initially only received for the first two children. The amount received was twelve dollars for each child. Rates varied based on the birth order

²¹⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-D, File Title: Speeches, "Memorandum of Suggestions for the Honourable Mr. Ralston's Speech to Convention, Summerside, P.E. I. Dependents' Allowance," 16 February 1940.

²¹⁹ This issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

of the children. This changed when in November 1941, Finance Minister James Lorimer (J.L) Ilsley²²⁰ announced that nine dollars for the third child and six dollars for a fourth child would be provided.²²¹ In justifying why these additional allowances were offered, R.O.G. Bennett remarked that the Board “were deluged with letters from soldiers’ wives who had more than two children explaining the financial difficulties they were encountering in keeping up the home on the present funds available, due to the increased living costs since 1939.”²²² Bennett’s statement indicates that soldiers’ wives made demands upon the Board when they believed that the allowances were inadequate and these protests influenced the Board’s policy. These increases did not apply to Officers and Warrant Officers in Class I who only received allowances for two children.²²³ The reason for this exclusion was not stated, but officials probably assumed that the officers’ higher salaries would provide for additional children.

The rates for children were increased in 1942. In December 1942, the Minister of National Defence, J.L. Ralston announced that effective January 1, 1943 the third child would receive ten dollars instead of nine dollars. The fourth child would receive eight dollars instead of six dollars. Eight dollars would also be provided for the fifth, and sixth children.²²⁴ Bennett accounted for these increases by stating generally that the need for more soldiers required that more men with larger families enlist. Previously,

²²⁰ Ilsley was a Barrister who represented various ridings in Nova Scotia. He was a member of the Liberal Caucus from 1926 to 1948. He served in the various Ministerial positions: Minister of National Revenue from 1935 to 1940, Postmaster General (Acting) in 1940, Minister of Finance and Receiver General from 1940 to 1946, and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada from 1946 to 1948. See Library of Parliament, “Senators and Members Historical Information,”

http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/SenatorsMembers_house consulted on July 18, 2005.

²²¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Minister of Finance, Bennett to Military Secretary to the Minister of National Defence (Army), Ottawa, Ontario, 17 August 1943.

²²² *Ibid.* To examine women’s letters of complaint see LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 29, File: DAB 5-6, File Title: Complaints.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

single men had been preferred and men with large families had been discouraged from enlisting.²²⁵ He noted that “representations” were made to the Board to increase the allowances, but he did not state specifically what organizations protested.²²⁶

Prior to the increases made effective in January 1943, the allowances provided for additional children in other countries were higher than in Canada and did not vary based on birth order. In addition, families with children received benefits in other countries that they did not receive in Canada. For instance, soldiers’ families in the United States received free maternity and infant care through the Children’s Bureau of the Department of Labour.²²⁷ In Britain, allowances for children were allowed three months prior to the birth of the child. Canadian regulations did not make such a provision.²²⁸ Other than noting the differences, the bureaucrats in Canada did not attempt to justify why they chose not to provide free maternity care or allowances prior to the birth of a child.²²⁹ They did not discuss if there were any public pressure for them to do so. Perhaps, bureaucrats believed that the allowances provided to wives, which were higher than those paid in other countries, would cover the maternity costs. In Canada, if mothers did have confinement expenses that they could not pay for, they could apply for an “emergency grant” from the Dependents’ Board of Trustees, which will be discussed later in this chapter. In order to receive such a grant, mothers had to be investigated by social workers and had to prove financial need. In the United States and Britain, there appears

²²⁵ Morton makes this comment about recruiting in World War II in his conclusion see Morton, *Fight or Pay*, 241. See also LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-5, File Title: Cost of Living Bonus, “Press Release for Afternoon Papers,” 16 December 1942.

²²⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Minister of Finance, Bennett to Military Secretary to the Minister of National Defence (Army), Ottawa, Ontario, 17 August 1943.

²²⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 6, File Title: DBT United States Regulations-Correspondence, Guy V. Gurney Lt.Col. Military Attache, Washington, D.C. to Pembroke, 26 January 1944.

²²⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 24, File: 1-50, File Title: DBT Advisory Committee London, England, Memorandum by Pembroke, 30 May 1944.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

to have been an assumption that the majority of expectant mothers would have increased costs prior to the birth of their children and that the government had a responsibility to assist with these costs. The Canadian system assumed that few mothers would need additional help and those who did should have to prove their need for the money by applying for a grant.

Some representatives from nongovernmental organizations used these differences among the countries to pressure the Dependents' Allowance Board to make increases in Canada. In advocating for increases in allowances for children, a delegation from the Legion, when presenting their concerns to the Prime Minister, argued that the United States provided more for children than in Canada.²³⁰ Based on the Legion's claim, Bennett investigated the rates provided in the United States and did confirm the rates provided for children were higher. Prior to the Legion's resolution, the government was considering increasing the rates for children and the information about the higher rates received may have helped convince the government that the rates should be increased.²³¹

Although in this case the Legion prompted Bennett to investigate the rates, it is interesting to note that bureaucrats often sought out these comparisons with other countries themselves by asking government representatives in the United States, Britain, and Australia to send information about the eligibility requirements, rates of allowances and other benefits provided. This indicates the degree to which Canada, in its quest to define itself as an independent nation, was concerned about its international standing and

²³⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-31, File Title: U.S.A. Dependents' Allowance, "Canadian Legion Resolution in relation to Dependents' Allowances for Members of the Forces now Serving," Not dated.

²³¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-31, File Title: USA Dependents' Allowance, Bennett to Private Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 3 December 1943.

reputation.²³² Whether a criticism, such as the one from the Legion, forced bureaucrats to compare the rates among countries or if bureaucrats themselves sought out the information, international comparisons ensured that the Canadian program remained competitive and forced bureaucrats to justify the differences that existed.

²³² For an overview of Canada's position internationally during World War II and the state of foreign affairs see Empire to Umpire Canada and the World to the 1990's, Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein, eds. (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman Ltd., 1994)

TABLE 1.D: The Amount of Allowance Paid to Soldiers' Wives and Children in Various Countries, 1943

Country	Assigned Pay (Amounts based on the pay for Privates) (\$)	Rates for Wife (\$)	First Child (\$)	Second Child (\$)	Third Child (\$)	Fourth Child (\$)	Subsequent Children (\$)	TOTAL for a family of five unless otherwise stated (\$)
Canada <i>(to December 1942)</i>	20	35	12	12	9	6	0	95 (Four or more children)
Canada <i>(from January 1943)</i>	25	35	12	12	10	8	8	102 (Four children) 110 (Five children) 118 (Six children)
United States (\$US)	22	28	12	10	10	10	10	102
Australia (\$A)	18.72	24.06	16.02	10.68	8.04	8.04	8.04	93.6
United Kingdom (£)	3.55	20.73	9.16	8.04	6.92	6.92	6.92	62.24

Source: LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File: Cost of Living, International Rates of Allowance, 1943

1.3 THE DEPENDENTS' BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A. IN CASE OF "EMERGENCIES": THE PURPOSE OF THE DEPENDENTS' BOARD OF TRUSTEES

In addition to the Dependents' Allowance Board, the Dependents' Board of Trustees was created to provide additional grants to soldiers' families who received the allowance.²³³ The head offices for the Dependents' Board of Trustees were located at the Record Building at the Experimental Farm in Ottawa. Although the focus of this thesis is on the Dependents' Allowance Board, it is important to have some knowledge of the Dependents' Board of Trustees in order to put bureaucrats' demands that Aboriginal women save a portion of their allowance into context.²³⁴ Created two years after the Dependents' Allowance Board by an Order in Council on January 2, 1942,²³⁵ the Board administered grants for emergencies or special circumstances, not to supplement "normal living costs."²³⁶ It was in response to assertions by the Legion President, military wives organizations, municipal councils, and provincial social agencies, that the amounts of the allowances were insufficient, that the government created this Board.²³⁷ Initially conceived as a less expensive alternative to increasing dependents' allowance rates for all recipients, the creation of the Board does not seem to have satisfied the public's demands since the allowances were increased in January 1943.

²³³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 6, File Title: Addresses on work of DBT, "The Dependents' Board of Trustees Citizen Participation in World War II," Author not identified, Not dated.

²³⁴ For more on the savings program for Aboriginal dependents see Chapter 4.

²³⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 1, File Title: DAB Set Up, Order in Council, 18 January 1942.

²³⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series, 18, Volume 6, File Title: Board Correspondence-Chairman, "Re: Changes in Dependents' Allowances," Pembroke to G.S. Currie, Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 6 October 1942.

²³⁷ The letters from these various organizations arguing that the allowances are insufficient are in the following file LAC, Records of the Department Finance, RG 19, Finance, Volume 516, File: 124-50-0-1, File: Dependents' Allowance.

B. THE USE OF CIVIL SERVANTS AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE OPERATION OF THE DEPENDENTS' BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Dependents' Board of Trustees was separate from the Dependents' Allowance Board and had its own bureaucratic structure and set of staff members. The highest level positions at the Board were generally held by men while women tended to work in the lower level positions. The Board consisted of a Chairman and nine members. George Moir Weir, who was the first Chairman, was the former British Columbia Minister of Health and Education and was loaned from the Department of Pensions and Health to act as the Chairman.²³⁸ Jack Pembroke, whom we have already encountered as the Assistant Deputy Minister for the Department of National Defence, took over as Chairman on May 27, 1942 and was the Chairman until the Board was dissolved in 1950.²³⁹ Jack Pembroke was formerly the President of the Council of Social Agencies and Assistant Manager of the Royal Trust Company in Montreal indicating that his knowledge of the work of social agencies combined with his knowledge of economics and his experiences in business were perceived as valuable qualities for the leader of the Board. There was also an Executive Secretary, a Chief Reviewer and Senior Reviewers. The Chief Reviewer and Senior Reviewers were all social workers.²⁴⁰ Elsie Lawson was the Chief Reviewer for the Board who had been loaned to the federal government from the Manitoba government where she had worked as the Assistant Director of Child

²³⁸ Canadian Welfare Council Bulletin, February/March 1942, (Ottawa: The Canadian Welfare Council, 1942), 4.

²³⁹ LAC, RG 36 Series 18, Volume 1, File Title: DAB Set Up, Order in Council, 4526, 29 May 1942.

²⁴⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 52, File: 3-1-7, File Title: Policy File, M. Nixon, Senior Reviewer, DBT, Ottawa, Ontario, to Dorothy Aronoff, Montreal School of Social Work, Montreal, Quebec, 8 April 1944. The Montreal School of Social Work was affiliated with the McGill School of Social Work. Many Francophone women were trained there. Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 50.

Welfare.²⁴¹ In addition, there was also a set of junior reviewers who had backgrounds in teaching or nursing, but generally were not social workers.²⁴² These reviewers examined the cases once they arrived at headquarters.²⁴³ The cases were then brought to a Senior Reviewer for final approval or, in complex cases, to the Board for final approval.²⁴⁴

In each province across Canada, twenty-one²⁴⁵ local committees called Dependents Advisory Committees were established.²⁴⁶ These committees filtered all applications first, and then social workers from local social agencies were asked to investigate the families and write a report. Based on the social workers' reports, the local committee made recommendations which were then sent to Ottawa and analyzed by a set of reviewers.²⁴⁷

Members of the regional committee were not paid salaries. Their voluntary work was considered a part of their contribution to the war effort²⁴⁸ and "citizen participation" was portrayed as a positive feature of the program by bureaucrats at the Dependents' Board of Trustees indicating that volunteer participation had not been totally rejected by the federal government, even though they disapproved of volunteers doing the

²⁴¹ Canadian Welfare Council Bulletin, February/March 1942, (Ottawa: The Canadian Welfare Council, 1942), 5.

²⁴² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 52, File: 3-1-7, File Title: Policy File, M. Nixon, Senior Reviewer, DBT, Ottawa, Ontario, to Dorothy Aronoff, Montreal School of Social Work, Montreal, Quebec, 8 April 1944.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 6, File Title: Addresses on work of D.B.T. "The Dependents' Board of Trustees Citizen Participation in World War II," Author not identified, Not dated.

²⁴⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 21.

²⁴⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 6, File Title: Addresses on work of D.B.T., Untitled by Louise Gordon, (Gordon's position and location were not identified, presumably she was a DBT staff member), 4 May 1951.

²⁴⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 11, File Title: Organization, Membership, and Correspondence, G.W. Dunn, Executive Secretary, DBT, Ottawa, Ontario, to Mr. Clifford Disturnal, DAC, Edmonton, Alberta, 22 September 1944. Also see LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 24, File: 1-42, Ralston to Rupert C. Reece, Chairman of DAC for the Province of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 12 October 1943, and LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 21.

investigations.²⁴⁹ During World War II, federal officials had generally supported the use of “citizen committees” to act in various capacities, as long as the work of those committees was organized by the federal government. To organize volunteers nationwide, by mid-1940, officials at the Department of National War Services had set up local databases where volunteers were supposed to register. These databases provided federal officials with a list of volunteers whose work could be “steered toward campaigns” that often served federal priorities. The local volunteer committees of the Dependents’ Board of Trustees, who operated under the supervision of bureaucrats in Ottawa, can therefore be seen as a part of this broader effort on the part of the federal government to “encourage” and “direct” citizens’ volunteerism.²⁵⁰

Bureaucrats noted that the model of the local board reporting to a national organization in Ottawa was similar to the Canadian Patriotic Fund in World War I. As a part of the Fund’s set up, local committees made up of volunteers had assessed soldiers’ financial situations and personal circumstances based on investigators’ reports and made recommendations about what amount they believed the families should receive.²⁵¹ There had also been a national organization to co-ordinate and standardize the work of each local organization such as setting maximum rates for the amount of relief that could be given.²⁵² The difference was that the Dependents’ Board of Trustees in Ottawa consisted

²⁴⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 6, File Title: Addresses on work of D.B.T. “The Dependents’ Board of Trustees Citizen Participation in World War II,” Author not identified, Not dated.

²⁵⁰ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 27.

²⁵¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents’ Allowance Board, 15.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

of paid civil servants whereas the individuals who ran the national office of the Canadian Patriotic Fund were mostly volunteers with only some paid staff.²⁵³

The majority of members of the Dependents' Advisory local committees were businessmen, lawyers, bank managers, former military men, and presidents and other high ranking officials from social work agencies.²⁵⁴ While the majority of committee members were men, women, who worked for or volunteered for social agencies, were also included, but these women were always a minority.²⁵⁵ Significantly, in most of the appointments, people from the middle or upper class were assessing the applications of people who were lower middle class or working class. This pattern was similar to the Canadian Patriotic Fund in World War I and the Mothers' Allowances Programs established in the provinces from 1916 to 1920.²⁵⁶ When the local committees were being set up, George Moir and then Jack Pembroke, the Chairmen of the Board, were instrumental in setting up and deciding upon who would be on these committees.

Pembroke traveled to the Western provinces and approved of the members of each

²⁵³ The Canadian Patriotic Fund had a national executive that was made up of prominent individuals who were unpaid, but there was also a paid staff in Ottawa who organized the files that were kept on soldiers' relatives and co-coordinated the information provided by the local committees. See Morton, *Fight or Pay*, 62.

²⁵⁴ This observation is based upon an examination of the lists of members in the Minutes of the Executive Committee. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 4, File Title: Minutes of the Executive Committee.

²⁵⁵ Lynne Marks notes a similar trend in the membership of local charitable boards in Ontario. She finds that one's status as middle class and one's "respectability" were important characteristics in determining who sat on particular committees. Gender also affected one's position and authority on local boards and committees. Marks finds that although in Protestant church organizations women often made up most of the volunteers, a man usually headed the committee and women often had to ask permission from the male board members if they wanted to start a project. See Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late Nineteenth Century Small Town Ontario*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 64-68.

²⁵⁶ The people who served on the local committees for the Canadian Patriotic Fund were usually prominent community members including businessmen, merchants, bank managers, and representatives from women's organizations such as the Local Council of Women. Local committees appeared to nominate their own members, although the architect and president of the Fund, Herbert Ames, seems to have appointed some individuals to certain tasks. He, for instance, appointed wealthier members of the Montreal executive to work on the finance committee. See Morton, *Fight or Pay*, 55-57, 113-114. The set up was also similar to the local boards established as a part of the Mothers' Allowance Program. See Strong-Boag, "Wages for Housework," 28.

committee indicating that federal officials, as previously mentioned, did want to direct and supervise volunteer efforts by deciding who was to be on these volunteer committees.²⁵⁷ In order to obtain an initial list of potential candidates, Pembroke possibly used the previously mentioned local databases that had been set up by the Department of National War Services.²⁵⁸ It would appear that, in assessing potential candidates for the regional committees for the Dependents' Board of Trustees, people who were perceived as fitting Euro-Canadian definitions of "respectability," either through their class status, their education, in their position as leaders in their communities or in their position as "family men," were desirable. It was also important that the individuals were perceived as not too benevolent. The Chairman of the Dependents' Advisory Committee for Edmonton who made recommendations to the Chairman about potential candidates noted in his description of Captain Hewett that he was "...sympathetic but not soft."²⁵⁹ One candidate from Saskatchewan was described as "a civic Labour man, but very fine."²⁶⁰ Just as there was an assumption that social workers would be too compassionate towards families, there was a fear that certain candidates would be too sympathetic towards working class applicants.

C. NOT ENOUGH: CRITICISM OF THE DEPENDENTS' BOARD OF TRUSTEES RULES OF ELIGIBILITY

The rules regarding eligibility for grants reflect the conservative financial policies of the Board members. Dependents' Board of Trustees regulations indicated that women

²⁵⁷ For Pembroke's correspondence and notes on his trip to the West to set up these committees see LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 3, File Title: Chairmen-Western Canada.

²⁵⁸ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 27.

²⁵⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18 Volume 11, File Title: Organization, Membership, and Correspondence, Name not identified, Chairman Edmonton DAC, Edmonton, Alberta, to Bennett, 29 September 1942.

²⁶⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 3, File Title: Chairmen-Western Canada, Untitled, (The reference to Garnet Menzie is found among materials on Regina, Saskatchewan.) Not dated.

could only apply for grants if they had an emergency or if there were special circumstances. The expenses which justified applying for a grant included illness, a large family, funeral expenses, educational costs, and loss due to calamity such as fire. Under illness, the following items were included: hospital bills, doctor and dentist bills, X-rays and surgical appliances.²⁶¹

Organizations that had advocated for increased allowances for all allowance recipients criticized these eligibility requirements. Dorothy Sachse, the Secretary of the Welfare Committee of the Women's Auxiliary to the Canadian Army, argued that dependents stated they needed money for daily living expenses, not just "emergencies."²⁶² Sachse referred to the Dependents' Board of Trustees as the Supplementary Allowance Board. She noted, "...the paying of a grocery bill or the purchase of children's shoes, laying in winter coal (as we are urged to do) can hardly be classed as emergencies. Therefore, the Supplementary Allowance Board is of no service whatever to the majority of Dependents."²⁶³ Sachse's comments had been a part of a larger public protest that the amounts of the allowance provided were insufficient to

²⁶¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 6, File Title: Addresses on work of D.B.T. "The Dependents' Board of Trustees Citizen Participation in World War II," Author not identified, Not dated.

²⁶² Women's auxiliaries were volunteer organizations where women "lent each other moral support" by visiting families whose relatives had died and giving out food hampers to needy families. They also attempted to "make a material contribution to the welfare of soldiers, sailors, and airmen" by distributing information about soldiers' benefits and protesting government policies. See Perrun, "The Struggle at Home," 15.

²⁶³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18 Volume 6, File Title: Board Correspondence-Chairman, Dorothy Sachse, Secretary, Welfare Committee, Women's Auxiliary to Canadian Army (A) on behalf of the Women's Auxiliary to Edmonton Fusiliers 9th Army Troop 29th Armoured Tank Regiment SAR 92nd Battery 61st Battery 4th, Casualty Clearing C.C. of Signallers C., Forestry Corps PPCL11st, Army Tank Brigade Company, the Edmonton Navy Mothers Club and the Air Force Wives Auxiliary, to A. Walker, Dominion President, Canadian Legion, BESL, Calgary, Alberta, 21 August 1942. It would be interesting to know if any Aboriginal women participated in these organizations. Such questions could be more easily answered by examining the history of a particular First Nation and its relation to the local community or the history of one particular organization. Mary-Jane McCallum has examined the participation of Aboriginal women in the Girl Guide Association whose leadership was dominated by Euro-Canadian women. See Mary-Jane McCallum, "Making Good Citizens: The Girl Guides and Residential Schools," Masters Thesis, Trent University, August 2000.

maintain a family, especially a family that lived in a large town or city. The creation of the Board did not allay their concerns. Interestingly, despite Sachse's criticisms of the inadequacy of the allowance, when the Dependents' Allowance Board Chairman suggested that Aboriginal women's allowances be reduced, there was no evidence that Sachse's organization or any other organization protested, even though the reductions affected soldiers' wives. In general, the committees do not have appeared to comment on issues pertaining specifically to Aboriginal women.

In contrast to Sachse's statements, Mr. Stapleford, a member of the Dependents' Board of Trustees Committee, noted, that in Toronto, "where agitation in connection with Dependents' Allowance rates had been most acute," the operation of the Dependents' Board of Trustees had minimized the criticism.²⁶⁴ He believed the existence of the Dependents' Board of Trustees had provided dependents with a "sense of security," even though many dependents had not actually applied to the Dependents' Board of Trustees for a grant.²⁶⁵

D. APPLYING FOR GRANTS

The amount of money in the grants given to the dependents varied according to the family's circumstances, need, and the geographic location. For each local committee, standard budgets were decided upon and the costs of living in particular areas were taken into account. Local Dependents' Advisory Committees could give up to seventy-five dollars on their own, but any grant above that amount had to receive approval from the

²⁶⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, File Title: Minutes of Executive Committee, "Minutes of the Second General meeting of The Dependents' Board of Trustees, Department of National Defence," 27 May 1942, 18.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

Board in Ottawa.²⁶⁶ Hospitalization grants were to be given “at public ward rates applying in a particular area.”²⁶⁷ In areas where rates were not set it was stated that “the practices and rates of the Workmen’s Compensation Board should constitute a reasonable guide”²⁶⁸ Here the practices of an older provincial institution were being used as a basis for determining the rates. Local committees found that most grants were given out to pay hospital expenses.²⁶⁹

Allowance recipients learned about Dependents' Board of Trustees through a notice in their dependents' allowance cheque envelopes which briefly explained the procedures for applying for a grant. In August 1942, 400,000 pamphlets detailing the functions and regulations of the Board were sent to dependents.²⁷⁰ It is assumed that these pamphlets were sent to Aboriginal recipients as well. After the pamphlets were mailed out, there was a large influx of applications.²⁷¹ If women were eligible for grants they had to fill out an application and send it to the local committee. Along with an application they had to submit, “a careful estimate of monthly income and expenditure.”²⁷² This information was compared to the standard budget for a particular area which was approved by the local Dependents' Advisory Committee to meet certain “health and decency standards.”²⁷³

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.* See also LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 24.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ In an assessment of the Board's work, a bureaucrat estimated that \$11,038,000 out of the \$12,200,000 given out in grants was for medical and hospital expenses. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 6, File Title: Addresses on work of D.B.T. “The Dependents' Board of Trustees Citizen Participation in World War II,” Author not identified, Not dated.

²⁷⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 4: Minutes of the Executive Committee, “Report of Executive Secretary,” Author not identified, Not dated, 3.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁷² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 4, File Title: Minutes of Executive Committee, “Minutes of the Executive Committee, DBT, Technical Sub-Committee Report,” 26 January 1942, 13.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

E. “A CHARITABLE SET-UP”: PROTESTS AGAINST THE INVESTIGATIONS OF FAMILIES APPLYING FOR GRANTS

As a part of the Dependents’ Board of Trustees procedures, an investigator visited the families’ home. Such investigations were criticized by organizations representing military wives and soldiers. Sachse, the Secretary of the Welfare Committee for the Women’s Auxiliary to the Canadian Army, who had argued that the eligibility requirements were restrictive, expressed additional concerns about the fact that dependents had to be investigated: “...it has all the earmarks of a charitable set-up and, for that reason, a great number of Dependents would make no appeal to it under any circumstances.”²⁷⁴ She questioned, “Why is it necessary for us to be investigated in just the same way as Relief is handled and by the same Agencies?”²⁷⁵ Sachse estimated that “About 5% of Dependents are indiscreet, wasteful and unscrupulous, and have been in the habit of demanding charity and getting it.”²⁷⁶ According to Sachse, the rest of the women did not deserve to be investigated. It is unclear if Sachse ever applied this argument to Aboriginal women and protested the procedures stipulating that all Aboriginal recipients were to be investigated prior to receiving the allowance, not just in cases where they were applying for supplementary funds.

Alex Walker, who was the President of the Canadian Legion, expressed similar concerns as Sachse. He noted that the set up was problematic because families in need of assistance would not apply to the Board owing to their hesitancy about being investigated

²⁷⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18 Volume 6, File Board Correspondence-Chairman, Sachse to Walker, 21 August 1942.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.* It is not clear how Sachse came up with this figure of five percent and whether or not it was based on a survey that her organization had completed.

by a representative from a local social agency.²⁷⁷ Walker also observed, “From our experience with this problem we can assert that a large number of women will under no circumstances ask for charity or assistance.”²⁷⁸ In protesting the investigations that applicants were going to be subjected to, Walker did not question why Aboriginal wives were being investigated before they even received the allowance. In debates among the Dependents’ Allowance Board, the Canadian Welfare Council, and the Department of Pensions and Health, readers have seen that social workers had portrayed themselves as being able to fairly assess the needs of families and assist them with their problems. They had attempted to distinguish themselves from relief investigators of the nineteenth century, who were seen as moralistic and judgmental. Walker and Sachse were not necessarily convinced by social workers’ claims that they would be sympathetic to soldiers’ families and still believed that potential investigations would make dependents reluctant to apply for grants. Despite these protests by Sachse and Walker, the system continued to function as it was originally set up.

F. “THE SAME CONSIDERATION”: DISCUSSIONS REGARDING ABORIGINAL SOLDIERS’ FAMILIES’ ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANTS

Some Aboriginal women applied to the Dependents’ Board of Trustees for emergency grants. In August 1944 it was reported by E.J. Lawson, Chief Reviewer for the Dependents’ Board of Trustees, that an “increasing number of applications” from Aboriginal families were received.²⁷⁹ Some of these applications for assistance with medical care costs were complicated by the applicants’ status as “Treaty Indians.”

²⁷⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 6, File Board Correspondence-Chairman, Walker to W.L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, 3 September 1942.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 52, File 3-1-7, File Title: Policy File, Lawson to Dunn, 9 August 1944.

Lawson noted that “If assistance is given directly to these Indians, a precedent in service will be established and might possibly make for complications if all the other Indians who are wards of the Dominion Government ask for similar services.”²⁸⁰ Despite this concern, she assured the Board that, “...this Board has made no discrimination in regard to Race, but have made grants according to need, and there is no thought of discriminating against the Indian.”²⁸¹ Lawson appeared concerned that the Board was not perceived as treating Aboriginal people differently because of their race, but at the same time highlighted how all “Treaty Indians” were different from other recipients. Lawson also wondered if Indian Agents or social workers would conduct the investigations. As already noted in dependents’ allowance cases, it was a part of routine procedures that Indian Agents would perform the initial investigations of Aboriginal women prior to receiving the allowance.

In order to discuss the respective obligations of the Indian Affairs Branch and the Dependents’ Allowance Board that Lawson outlined, G.W. Dunn, the Executive Secretary of the Dependents’ Board of Trustees, met with the Indian Affairs Branch Director, H.W. McGill.²⁸² Based on the information McGill provided, Dunn noted that the “aid” given to Treaty or non-Treaty Aboriginal people, “was not obligatory except in the event of pestilence or plague, etc.”²⁸³ Since the assistance was not obligatory, not all medical expenses were covered by the Indian Affairs Branch. For instance, dentist bills and items such as dentures were not necessarily covered. McGill’s narrow interpretation

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Dunn to H.W. McGill, IAB Director, Ottawa, Ontario, 12 August 1944. McGill’s background and leadership style will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

²⁸³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, McGill to Dunn, 14 October 1944.

of the extent of the federal government's treaty obligations resulted from a desire to keep expenditures to a minimum. Such a stance was typical in the federal government's attitudes toward the fulfillment of its treaty obligations. The obligations relating to the provision for schooling in some treaties were also narrowly interpreted by the government. This limited view of the treaty obligations had further been enforced by court decisions which, in many cases, had failed to acknowledge the validity of treaties in favour of provincial rights.²⁸⁴ Such court decisions had lessened the pressure on the federal government to expand how it defined its obligations.²⁸⁵ Many First Nations had advanced a different interpretation of the treaty obligations, but officials had generally refused to acknowledge their claims. In her study of Indian Affairs Branch policy in the 1920's and 1930's, Brownlie finds that instead officials "considered that the DIA (Department of Indian Affairs) was the sole arbiter of its own duties and responsibilities."²⁸⁶

Based on his conversation with McGill, Dunn recognized that the assumption held by officials at Dependents' Board of Trustees that the treaties covered the majority of medical expenses was not true. He believed that Aboriginal families should be able to apply for grants. It is unclear if prior to this meeting, officials at the Dependents' Board of Trustees had in fact been rejecting Aboriginal people's applications for assistance with medical expenses based on their understanding that all these expenses were covered.

²⁸⁴ Robin Jarvis Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye: Indian Agents, Government Power, and Aboriginal Resistance in Ontario, 1918-1939*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003), 84. In legal battles between the Ontario government and the federal government in the early twentieth century the courts tended to favour provincial rights over First Nations treaty rights. The Ontario government in the 1920's tended to deny the existence of treaty rights altogether.

²⁸⁵ This situation changed in the 1970's when treaty rights were more consistently recognized by the courts. The federal government began to negotiate with First Nations regarding the extent of its treaty obligations. See Miller, *Lethal Legacy*, 152.

²⁸⁶ Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, 82. Indian Affairs Branch policy and administration will be discussed in more detail in section 1.4 The Indian Affairs Branch.

After his meeting with McGill, Dunn noted that “dependents of Indians serving in the Canadian Armed Forces should receive the same consideration as other members of the Armed Forces in order to obliterate the possibility of discrimination in terms of consideration of applications for financial assistance.”²⁸⁷ Dunn indicated that he was going to advise the Dependents’ Advisory Committees of the proper procedures in Aboriginal cases, “to assure the dependents of Indians serving in the Canadian Armed Forces uniform consideration of their applications for financial assistance.”²⁸⁸ Regarding investigations, McGill and Dunn agreed that investigations should be conducted by Indian Agents if the recipients lived on the reserve as was done in dependents’ allowances cases. If the women lived off reserve, the investigations were to be conducted by an investigator from a social agency and the Indian Agent was not to be involved. Dependents’ allowance cases for women who lived off the reserve were handled in the same manner.

McGill and Dunn’s exchange reveals how the practices, which in the past had been left to the Indian Affairs Branch to decide, were now being examined by another set of officials. Aboriginal soldiers’ families’ ability to apply for grants gave these families another organization to which they could attempt to get assistance. This was significant given how narrowly the Indian Affairs Branch defined the extent of its obligations to First Nations people.

²⁸⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Dunn to McGill, 11 October 1944.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

1.4 THE INDIAN AFFAIRS BRANCH

A. “PROTECTIVE” PATERNALISM: THE PURPOSE OF THE INDIAN AFFAIRS BRANCH

The Dependents' Allowance Board issued the allowances to Aboriginal soldiers' families and the Dependents' Board of Trustees potentially provided grants to them, but, as the above discussion indicates, bureaucrats from both these Boards consulted with the Indian Affairs Branch and used the Indian Agents employed by the Branch to distribute the allowance and investigate Aboriginal applicants on reserves. An examination of the purpose and major functions of the Indian Affairs Branch is crucial in understanding how the allowance program was implemented in the case of Aboriginal families and why there were tensions between the departments regarding dependents' allowance policies.

The purpose of the Indian Affairs Branch was to administer matters relating to Aboriginal people. Unlike the Dependents' Allowance Board and the Dependents' Board of Trustees, which were created in specific response to the conditions of war time during the 1940's, the Department of Indian Affairs was officially created in 1880 as its own branch, but was eventually transferred to the Department of Mines and Resources in 1936.²⁸⁹ The main piece of legislation that outlined the main functions of the Branch was

²⁸⁹ Additional departments that were transferred to Mines and Resources in 1936 included Immigration and Colonization and Interior. In 1949, the IAB was transferred to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. In 1966, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development was created. See Statistics Canada. “Historical Statistics of Canada” <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/11-516-XIE/sectiony/sectiony.htm>. consulted on July 6, 2005.

the Indian Act of 1876.²⁹⁰ Aboriginal people defined as “Status Indians” under the Indian Act were considered wards of the state and legal minors.²⁹¹

By the mid-twentieth century, the controls outlined in the Indian Act during the nineteenth century were still considered necessary by Euro-Canadian bureaucrats who commonly perceived Aboriginal people as “lazy,” “shiftless,” “irresponsible,” “primitive,” “child-like,” “morally weak,” “delinquent,” and “stubborn.”²⁹² In his study of Aboriginal soldiers during World War II, historian R. Scott Sheffield concludes that “Uniformly negative and derogatory, the corporate language of the IAB reflected an antagonistic relationship with its charges.”²⁹³

The perception of Aboriginal people as unable to manage their own affairs combined with the extensive control bureaucrats received under the Indian Act, led to an intense scrutiny of Aboriginal communities’ finances, cultural traditions, and relationships.²⁹⁴ As historian Robin Jarvis Brownlie comments in her study of two Indian Agents in Northern Ontario from 1919 to 1939, “In its multiple roles, the department was an omnipresent factor in people’s lives...”²⁹⁵ She shows that the administrative practices of the department often went unchecked because it was isolated from other departments and there was little public interest in Aboriginal affairs.²⁹⁶ This pattern seems to have continued during World War II when one looks at the number of employees working for the Department of Mines and Resources. The dramatic increases in the number of

²⁹⁰ For a copy of the Indian Act and the amendments that were made from 1876 to 1951 see Sharon Venne, Indian Acts and Amendments, 1875-1975: An Indexed Collection, (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Native Law Centre, 1981).

²⁹¹ R. Scott Sheffield, The Red Man’s On The Warpath: The Image of the ‘Indian’ and the Second World War, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 51.

²⁹² Ibid., 16-24.

²⁹³ Ibid., 39.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye, 155.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

employees that were shown for the Department of National Defence and for the Canadian Federal Government overall did not take place in the Department of Mines and Resources. From 1939 to 1945, the number of employees working for the Department of Mines and Resources increased from 3,147 to 3,694, an increase of only 547 employees.²⁹⁷ While other departments were expanding rapidly, these figures indicate that this department was considered a low priority for the government and not perceived as an area of growth.

²⁹⁷ Separate figures for the total number of employees in the Indian Affairs Branch were not found for the war years because the numbers were included in the totals for the Department of Mines and Resources.

TABLE 1.E: Total Number of Employees working for the Department of Mines and Resources and the Canadian Federal Government, 1939-1947

Years	Total Number of Employees working for the Mines and Resources (Including the Indian Affairs Branch)	Total Number of Employees working for the Canadian Federal Government
1939	3,147	46,106
1940	3,177	49,656
1941	3,278	66,937
1942	3,307	83,781
1943	3,517	104,055
1944	3,601	112,658
1945	3,694	115,908
1946	4,361	120,557
1947	3,842	125,337

Source: F.H. Leacy, ed. Historical Statistics of Canada, Second Edition, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1983)

Note: Readers should note that in 1949 the Indian Affairs Branch transferred from the Department of Mines and Resources to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. When this transferred occurred, 3,526 employees were moved, reducing the total number of employees at the Department of Mines and Resources from 5,187 to 1,661. This decline suggests that the Indian Affairs Branch made up the highest number of employees at the Department of Mines and Resources. See Statistics Canada. "Historical Statistics of Canada" <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/11-516-XIE/sectiony/sectiony.htm>. consulted on July 6, 2005.

The ultimate goal of the Branch's policies was to assimilate Aboriginal people and to encourage them to adopt Euro-Canadian working class occupations and middle class values. As Brownlie explains,

...the intent of Indian policy was to integrate Aboriginal people into working-class status and occupations. At the same time, they were supposed to adopt values associated with the middle class, such as an endorsement of work for its own sake (not as an instrumental means of making a living), conformity to social and sexual respectability, and above all, a liberal individualism that rejected Aboriginal forms of collective property ownership, economic co-operation, and community reciprocity.²⁹⁸

B. "THE OLD GUARD": THE BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURE AND DUTIES OF STAFF MEMBERS AT THE INDIAN AFFAIRS BRANCH

The bureaucratic structure and duties of staff members of the Indian Affairs Branch were well established, and many of the officials working for the Branch had held their positions for years. In contrast to the Dependents' Allowance Board, the staff at the Branch were not as influenced by ideas from emerging professions such as social work. At the top of the bureaucratic structure at the Department of Mines and Resources was the Minister, Thomas Alexander (T.A.) Crerar.²⁹⁹ He held this position from 1936 to 1945.³⁰⁰ Crerar was considered one of the weaker members of King's cabinet.

According to the Prime Minister, he "seemed lacking in concern for and understanding of

²⁹⁸ Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, xxii.

²⁹⁹ Crerar was a farmer and a teacher who represented various ridings in Manitoba. He was also a Senator from 1945 to 1966. See Library of Parliament, "Senators and Members-Historical Information," http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/SenatorsMembers_house consulted on July 18, 2005.

³⁰⁰ From 1935 to 1936, Crerar served as the Minister of Immigration and Colonization, Minister of Mines, Minister of Interior, Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs. In 1935, he was also the Minister of Agriculture. See Library of Parliament, "Senators and Members-Historical Information," http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/SenatorsMembers_house consulted on July 18, 2005. In 1936 the offices of the Minister of Immigration and Colonization, Minister of the Interior, Minister of Mines and Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs were abolished and the office of Minister of Mines and Resources was created by Statute 1 Edw. VIII, c. 33, assented to on 23 June 1936 and proclaimed in force on 1 Dec. 1936. See Canada. Privy Council Office, "Guide to Canadian Ministries Since Confederation, Sixteenth Ministry." www.pco.-bp.gc.ca/default.asp?Page=Publications&Language=E&doc=min/min_e.htm, consulted on July 6, 2005.

the needs and aspirations of the ordinary people of Canada.”³⁰¹ In terms of Aboriginal affairs specifically, Crerar’s attitudes have been characterized by historian R. Scott Sheffield as “indifferent,” “autocratic,” and “aloof.”³⁰² J. Allison Glen, who took over as Minister in 1945, confirmed this view by informing Indian Agents that “in future the direction from Ottawa would be better and more understanding of conditions on reserves.”³⁰³

During the war years, Charles Camsell was the Deputy Minister for Mines and Resources. Camsell had previously worked as a geologist and had been in charge of the British Columbia and Yukon Branch of the Geological Survey in 1918, where he had mapped some of the larger rivers in northwestern Canada and produced many papers on the geology and geography of British Columbia and Northern Canada. In 1920, he was appointed the Deputy Minister of Mines and, in 1936, was appointed the Deputy Minister of the Department of Mines and Resources, a position he held until 1947.³⁰⁴

At the top of the bureaucratic structure of the Indian Affairs Branch were the positions of the Director and the Secretary. The Director of the Indian Affairs Branch was Harold McGill, whose meeting with Dunn was discussed in the previous section. McGill had taken over from D.C. Scott as Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in 1932.³⁰⁵ McGill was a general, a doctor, and a former member of the Alberta

³⁰¹ Mackenzie King Diary, 22 May 1940, as quoted in J.L. Granatstein, Canada’s War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975), 107.

³⁰² Sheffield, The Red Man’s On The Warpath, 12, 112.

³⁰³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6811, File: 470-2-8 Pt. 1, Circular letter by J. Allison Glenn, 7 January 1946 as quoted in Sheffield, The Red Man’s On the Warpath, 111.

³⁰⁴ See Major A.L. Normandin, ed. Canadian Parliamentary Guide (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1940), 663. In 1947, this position became vacant due to the department’s re-organization.

³⁰⁵ Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye, 41. In 1945, R.A. Hoey was appointed director of the IAB, see Hugh Shewell, ‘Enough to Keep Them Alive’: Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 180. In 1948, Major D.M. MacKay was appointed the director of the IAB, see Shewell, Enough to Keep Them Alive, 181.

Legislature.³⁰⁶ When McGill retired in 1945, his poor leadership had left the Indian Affairs Branch with a “demoralized corporate structure,”³⁰⁷ and many Indian Agents had feelings of “intense alienation.”³⁰⁸

The Secretary during the war was T.R.L. MacInnes, who by this time, had been with the Indian Affairs Branch for over thirty two years.³⁰⁹ MacInnes has been described by historian Hugh Shewell as a part “of the old guard, a man who required complete control of every situation.”³¹⁰ His position was particularly important because it included the handling of all the correspondence with the Indian Agents. In considering the Secretary’s duties, Brownlie has argued that the fact “that such a high-ranking official was involved in minor daily decisions and routine correspondence is indicative of the small size and scope of the department, and also of its micromanagement of the agents in the field.”³¹¹

Below the Director and the Secretary were upper level bureaucrats in charge of the three divisions: the Medical Welfare and Training Service, Reserves and Trust Service, and Trusts and Annuities. The first dealt with schools, employment and agricultural projects.³¹² The second was responsible for land matters and timber disposal. The third and most important division for the administration of the dependents’ allowances was the Trusts and Annuities Division which managed the dependents’

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 157.

³⁰⁷ Sheffield, *The Red Man’s On The Warpath*, 109.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 111.

³⁰⁹ Shewell, ‘*Enough to Keep Them Alive*,’ 147.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 150-151.

³¹¹ Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, 31.

³¹² In 1947 this division split and a separate Welfare division would be created. This division was responsible for family allowances, Veterans’ Land Act, administration, and handicrafts. An Education division was also established. See Shewell, *Enough to Keep Them Alive*, 233.

allowance savings accounts. The bureaucrats in this section were to approve all expenditures when money was requested from these accounts.

Scholars have described the upper level bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch as being isolated from other departments and failing to adapt their policies to changing conditions. More specifically, as Brownlie observes,

The internal DIA [Department of Indian Affairs] officials were a small, insular, inward-looking group, and their plans for the future were more or less those developed in the nineteenth century. This essentially meant continuing to administer First Nations people's money and band affairs until they became enough like Euro-Canadians to be enfranchised.³¹³

Brownlie also refers to the "strict hierarchical nature of administration, which reserved planning and policy-making for the upper echelons of the department."³¹⁴ In some ways, the Dependents' Allowance Program forced these high ranking officials to adjust. This group of officials, who had formerly been isolated from other departments, now had to interact with officials from another department who were influenced by different traditions and ideas. The emphasis on considering the soldiers' point of view challenged the paternalistic traditions of the Indian Affairs Branch that treated Aboriginal people as incapable of making their own decisions. The policies, which in the past had been determined by this group of officials, now had to be negotiated with other bureaucrats. The administrative practices of these officials were also exposed and subject to greater scrutiny. Although these officials still attempted to influence allowance policies, in the end, their suggestions rarely remained unchanged. The need for recipients' consent emphasized by bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board thwarted the attempts of Indian Affairs officials to completely control the allowances.

³¹³ Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, 31-32.

³¹⁴ *Ibid*, 151.

As a part of the bureaucratic structure of the Indian Affairs Branch, there was also a Field Administration division which included the middle level and lower level bureaucrats. The middle level bureaucrats were Inspectors or Superintendents, who traveled to the various Indian Agencies and reported on the work of the Indian Agents to Ottawa.³¹⁵ The lowest level officials in the Indian Affairs Branch hierarchy were the Indian Agents themselves who were the government officials whom dependents' allowance recipients on reserves had to deal with most often.³¹⁶ As we have seen in Table A in the Introduction, during the war years there were approximately 114 Indian Agents throughout the country who were in charge of various agencies. An agency could consist of a single large reserve or several smaller reserves.³¹⁷

Up until the 1950's, Indian Agents were usually appointed through patronage as a result of affiliation with a particular political party.³¹⁸ Job openings for Indian Agents were rarely publicly advertised and Agents were usually appointed from within the Branch or from another government department.³¹⁹ Although there were some instances when Indian Agents disagreed with officials in Ottawa, these cases were rare.³²⁰

³¹⁵ *Ibid.* 31.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ Sheffield, *The Red Man's On The Warpath*, 17.

³¹⁸ Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, 32. Brownlie notes in the early 1930's some of the records refer to 'competitions' for appointments, but she has found that it is unclear what was involved. After the war, procedures were put in place for all civil servants to prevent patronage appointments and standardize hiring processes. The Indian Affairs Branch practices were therefore forced to conform to the government-wide requirements. See Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, 177. For a general overview of the shift from patronage to the merit principle in the personnel hiring practices for bureaucrats in the Civil Service Commission see J.E. Hodgetts, ed., *The Biography of an Institution: the Civil Service Commission of Canada, 1908-1967*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972)

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

³²⁰ Brownlie observes on issues such as resource use sometimes Indian Agents disagreed with or took a different position from upper level officials. For instance, Indian Agent Lewis from the Manitowaning Agency on Manitoulin Island questioned the need for Aboriginal people to obtain fishing licenses. Indian Agent Daly from the Parry Sound Agency argued that, based on the length of time they had occupied the land and their poor economic situation, the hunting season should be extended for Aboriginal people and that Aboriginal guides should not have to pay for licenses. Upper level IAB bureaucrats, on the other hand,

Generally, Indian Agents held their positions for a long time.³²¹ According to Brownlie, Aboriginal people had little influence on upper level bureaucrats when they complained about Indian Agents.³²² In some cases, upper level bureaucrats may have asked Indian Agents to explain particular actions, but they rarely took further action.³²³ The main duties associated with the position were to enforce the Indian Act, inform Ottawa of the conditions on reserves, manage political and economic matters on reserves and provide social services such as relief.³²⁴ The requirements for being an Indian Agent were as minimal as being “familiar with the office procedures and filing system of the Indian Affairs Branch.”³²⁵ A “knowledge of the local area and technical knowledge of road-and-bridge-building” was also perceived as desirable.³²⁶ Nothing was mentioned regarding the knowledge of Aboriginal languages.³²⁷ This lack of training was further reflected in the case of the Dependents’ Allowance Program. Despite the desire among officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board that trained social workers deal with soldiers’ families, there is no evidence to indicate that Indian Agents, once they received the responsibility

did little to protest the restrictions put on Aboriginal hunting and fishing. See Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye, 92, 95.

³²¹ Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye, 48 and xvii. Sheffield makes a similar observation. See Sheffield, The Red Man’s On The Warpath, 110.

³²² Ibid., xvii.

³²³ Ibid., xvii.

³²⁴ Ibid., 32.

³²⁵ Ibid., 34.

³²⁶ Ibid. These comments are based on information provided by a regional supervisor of the Indian Affairs Branch to anthropologist R.W. Dunning, who in the 1950’s, had been making inquiries about field officials’ qualifications. For Dunning’s own research see R.W. Dunning, “Some Aspects of Governmental Indian Policy and Administration,” Anthropologica 4 (1962): 209-29 as referred to in Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye, 33-34, 177.

³²⁷ Ibid., 33. This was a shift from the early nineteenth century when Indian Agents were military men or missionaries who usually spoke an Aboriginal language. In some cases the agents had been married to Aboriginal women and most of them had had pre-existing relationships within the Aboriginal communities. This pattern started to change in 1830 when First Nations’ importance as military allies started to decline and control over Indian Affairs shifted from military to civil authorities. After 1830, the men hired as Agents were government officials who were “political appointees.” These individuals often did not know Aboriginal languages and did not have relatives in Aboriginal communities. See Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye, 33.

to investigate soldiers' families on reserves, received any training in the principles of social work or in the case work method.

The legislation that was passed further reinforced the authority of Indian Affairs Branch officials. According to the Indian Act, any Chief could be deposed as directed by the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Brownlie finds that although males over twenty-one voted for band councilors and those councilors selected a Chief, Indian Affairs Branch officials assumed that the majority of band councilors and Chiefs would "serve the federal agenda."³²⁸ Chiefs or councilors could be deposed by the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs if they were accused of "dishonesty, intemperance, immorality or incompetency."³²⁹ The band councilors and Chiefs handled minor matters and their decisions on major issues such as band expenditure, could be overridden by Indian Agents or upper level Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats who under the Indian Act had veto power.³³⁰ Chiefs often requested to meet directly with officials in Ottawa as opposed to dealing with Indian Agents.³³¹ It was difficult for Chiefs or band members to challenge the decisions made by the Indian Agent because the Indian Affairs Branch Director, H.W. McGill, tended to support Agents' decisions and "actively discouraged" Aboriginal people from bringing their grievances directly to officials in Ottawa.³³²

³²⁸ Ibid., 58.

³²⁹ Such a clause remained in the Indian Act from 1876 to 1927. See Indian Act 1876, Chapter 18, Section 62, as quoted in Venne, Indian Acts and Amendments, 1875-1975, 41 and Indian Act 1927 Chapter 98, Section 99 as quoted in Venne, Indian Acts and Amendments, 1875-1975, 280. In 1951 the conditions under which a Chief could be removed became more specific. The Chief had to have committed an offence, been absent from a band council meeting three consecutive times, or been guilty of receiving a bribe. See Indian Act 1951 Chapter 29 Section 77 as quoted in Venne, Indian Acts and Amendments, 1875-1975, 339.

³³⁰ Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye, 58.

³³¹ Ibid., 73.

³³² Indian Affairs Branch Director, H.W. McGill, sent circulars to Indian Agents informing them that they should deal with problems locally. He believed trips to Ottawa by First Nations leaders were a waste of time and money. For a more detailed examination of attempts to restrict First Nations political

Despite what Indian Agents and the higher ranks of the Indian Affairs Branch perceived the role of the Chiefs to be, many Aboriginal leaders had their own understanding of what their position entailed. Brownlie provides an example of a Chief who questioned what the Indian Agent was doing and “expected a certain level of reciprocity in his interactions with the agent, and also the maintenance of regular contact with Ottawa.”³³³ Brownlie concludes that “These expectations were not met by the Indian agent system.”³³⁴

Overall, Brownlie places Indian Agents at the centre of a system of racist domination:

DIA records strongly support the argument that Indian Agents in the twentieth century were a primary source of oppression for Aboriginal people. These officials acted in ways that reinforced the subordination, marginalization, and disempowerment of First Nations people. This outcome was a direct result of the paternalistic Indian Affairs system, which relegated all meaningful authority over local Aboriginal affairs to the Indian agent. Agents justified their actions, and indeed their jobs, on the grounds that they provided necessary services that First Nation communities could not provide for themselves. This belief underscores the racist assumptions on which the system was based and the inability of the officials responsible for it to envision Aboriginal self-determination. The agent was one of the primary means by which federal officials secured and maintained government domination over First Nations people.³³⁵

Indian Agents’ reactions to the dependents’ allowance policies generally conform to this characterization. They sought increased control over the allowances and undermined Aboriginal women’s right to manage their allowances by claiming that they were “wasteful,” “naive,” and “incompetent,” the very words highlighted in Sheffield’s

organization and protest by officials at the Indian Affairs Branch see Hugh Shewell, “Jules Sioui and Indian Political Radicalism in Canada, 1943-1944,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 34, 3, (1999): 211-242.

³³³ Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, 73.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, xii.

research findings. Paternalistic assumptions influenced the claim that they should determine how much money women received. Whereas inquiries for Euro-Canadian families were conducted by social workers who utilized the case work method, for Aboriginal families the Indian Agents wrote informal letters where they discussed several cases at once. Such correspondence allowed Indian Agents to express their personal judgments and opinions, something social workers were supposed to avoid providing. Whereas social workers' claim to "objectivity" was based on the scientific method, Indian Agents claim to "objectivity" relied on their assumption of superiority over the Aboriginal people they were evaluating. As we have seen, social workers strove for a balance of "science and sympathy" in dealing with clients, a balance which the highest officials of the Dependents' Allowance Board and the Dependents' Board of Trustees both endorsed. In contrast, Indian Agents' tended to be moralistic and patronizing, the very investigational style from which social workers were trying to distance themselves.³³⁶ Overall, the different style and approach of social workers and Indian Agents did affect the way Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal women were treated.

Since the bureaucrats involved in implementing the dependents' allowance policy had different influences, tensions did arise. The bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board did not accept Indian Agents' suggestions uncritically. At a basic level, the dependents' allowance policy challenged the authority of the Agent over the local situation because bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board demanded that

³³⁶ Other scholars working with Indian Agents' reports have made similar comments about their style and have noted the patronizing tone Indian Agents commonly used. See Robin Jarvis Brownlie, "Work Hard and Be Grateful: Native Soldier Settlers in Ontario after the First World War," in *On the Case: Explorations in Social History*, Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 181-203.

the Agents follow more standardized procedures, especially in how the money was handled.

Through their enlistment in the Army, soldiers were also provided with other avenues in which to challenge the Indian Agents' decisions. Soldiers could report problems to their officers who, in turn, would write to the Dependents' Allowance Board or to the Indian Affairs Branch. Indian Agents were forced to explain their decisions to the military officials and bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board giving Agents less discretionary control about the decisions they made. Allowance policies emphasized the importance of the soldiers' opinion and consent. As a result, some men were able to challenge the Indian Agents' decisions by stating their disapproval or refusing to provide consent. This is not to say that the Indian Agents still did not have a great deal of control over Aboriginal soldiers' financial affairs. As the examination of the individual recipients' cases in Chapter 6 will illustrate, many Indian Agents were still able to control and interfere in how Aboriginal families managed their money. Being in the Army, however, did provide some soldiers with additional ways in which they could try to get their claims addressed.

Women were also able to expose Indian Agents' actions, by writing to local Members of Parliament and lawyers. Although Aboriginal families had utilized such figures in the past, their status as soldiers' wives, which they evoked explicitly, could give their claims greater credibility in the eyes of politicians and lawyers. In turn, these men, who were respected authority figures within the Euro-Canadian political system, could force Agents to justify their actions. The entry of another department and the leverage men and women gained from their status as soldiers or soldiers' wives made

more public the practices and actions, that in the past may have been contained within the Indian Affairs Branch.

1.5 THE INDIAN AFFAIRS BRANCH AND ABORIGINAL SOLDIERS IN WORLD WAR II

A. LIMITED SERVICE: A COMPARISON OF THE ENLISTMENT REGULATIONS IN CANADA, THE UNITED STATES, AND AUSTRALIA

So far we have examined the program set up to assist soldiers and their families and various bureaucrats in the Dependents' Allowance Board and Indian Affairs Branch who administered the program, but we have not considered the number of Aboriginal soldiers' families actually involved in the program. How many soldiers enlisted and how many families had access to the allowance? Since the Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats were central in administering the allowance program for Aboriginal soldiers and their families, it is also important to consider what they thought about Aboriginal soldiers and, in turn, how their families should be treated. Did their attitudes towards Aboriginal soldiers differ from bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board who appeared to have a high respect for soldiers? The different understandings about military enlistment and of the rights and treatment of soldiers and their families would affect, in many ways, the debates over dependents' entitlements, which will be examined in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

During World War II, nearly 1.1 million Canadian men and women participated in the forces from an estimated population of 11.5 million.³³⁷ Right from the beginning of the war, Aboriginal enlistees were allowed to enroll in the Canadian Army. As had

³³⁷ *History of the Canadian Peoples: 1867 to the Present*, Volume 11, Third Edition, Alvin Finkel and Margaret Conrad, eds. (Toronto: Addison Wesley Longman, 2002,) 293.

occurred in World War I, Aboriginal recruits were not segregated into their own units, but were scattered among the various units in the Army. These soldiers did fight on the battlefields of Europe. Out of a total population of 189,723 “Status Indians,” 3,018 men and seventy-two women enlisted.³³⁸ (See Table I.F.) Some First Nations dispute these numbers because they do not include individuals such as “Non-Status Indians,” the Métis, and the Inuit.³³⁹ The Indian Affairs Branch excluded these individuals when calculating their numbers. Certain First Nations estimate that 6,000 is a more accurate figure for the number of enlistees.³⁴⁰

African Canadians were initially rejected as they had been at the start of World War I. This rejection was allowed in the Army under the rule that individual commanding officers had the choice about who they could accept or reject. When African Canadians wanted to know why they were being rejected, a survey of unit commanders in Nova Scotia was done and the reason given was that overall recruitment would be hurt because whites would not want to enlist with blacks. Officials in Ottawa rejected the idea that an all black battalion be established. However, by 1941, an increasing need for recruits and persistent demands by Africans Canadians led to the

³³⁸ Comparatively, in World War I out of a total population of 100,000, 3,500 “Status Indians” had enlisted. Seventy two women was the number used in Janice Summerby, *Native Soldiers, Foreign Battlefields*, (Ottawa: Department of Veterans Affairs, 1993), 20. The total population figure was provided for 1941 and included “Status Indians” only. This figure excluded Inuit and Métis. See F.H. Leacy, ed. *Historical Statistics of Canada*, Second Edition, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1983)

³³⁹ It is not possible to provide a number of “Non-Status Indians” because such a figure would be different for each First Nation depending on how they chose to define their membership.

³⁴⁰ Davison points out that based on their own records the Six Nations and Oneida First Nations believe the number of their enlistments is higher. The Indian Affairs Branch did not include “Non-Status Indians” as defined by their requirements. They also excluded Métis or Inuit people. Some First Nations may include members that are not defined as “Status Indians” according to the federal government. In the case of the Six Nations and the Oneida First Nations, the IAB figures do not match the First Nations’ own figures. The IAB recorded 140 enlistments from the Six Nations First Nation whereas the Six Nations First Nation’s figure was 327 enlistments. The Oneida First Nation claims 91 enlistments whereas the IAB recorded 53 enlistments. See Janet Frances Davison, “We Shall Remember: Canadian Indians and World War II,” Masters Thesis, Trent University, 1993, 22.

enlistment of African Canadian soldiers in the Army.³⁴¹ By the end of war, it has been estimated that “several thousand” African Canadian men were serving in the Army.³⁴² Unlike World War I, where African Canadians were segregated into their own units, African Canadians in the World War II were integrated into military units.³⁴³ Despite being integrated into the military, in some instances distinctions based on race were still made within the Legion organization. In the case of African Canadians, they had separate branches in Montreal and Halifax and had their own Chaplain.³⁴⁴

Most Aboriginal and African Canadian enlistees were in the Army because the Air Force and Navy had regulations stipulating that they did not want recruits who were not of “pure European descent” or who did not belong to the “white race.”³⁴⁵ These restrictions also affected potential African Canadian recruits. The Navy rejected non-European applicants because there was a belief that people from different races should not live together in the close quarters that existed on ships and in submarines.³⁴⁶ Military officials believed, as they had in World War I, that white men would not want to enlist if they had to eat and sleep with men from different races.³⁴⁷ These anxieties about racial intermixing in the military were reflective of commonly held beliefs during this time period. Euro-Canadians had long held the view that the racialized groups had

³⁴¹ See Walker, *‘Race,’ Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada*, 30, 169.

³⁴² Calvin Ruck, *The Black Battalion: Canada’s Best Kept Military Secret, 1916 to 1920*, (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1987), 6. An exact number of enlistees was not provided.

³⁴³ The reasoning behind integrating the units was not provided. It is not clear if there were any protests by white soldiers, as commanding officers predicted there would be. See Ruck, *The Black Battalion*, 6.

³⁴⁴ Winks does not discuss the reasons why this occurred, if the Legion imposed the separation, or if there were any protests. See Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1971), 421.

³⁴⁵ See the King’s Regulations and Orders for the Royal Canadian Air Force, 1924, Paragraph 275, the King’s Regulations for the Royal Canadian Air Force, 1943, Article 171, Regulations and Instructions for the Royal Canadian Navy, 1942, Chapter 7, Article 144 (2), amended by PC 4950, 30 June 1944 as quoted in Walker, *‘Race,’ Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada*, 168-169.

³⁴⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume, 6765, File: 452-6, “Report on Kwawkwalth Agency,” M.S. Todd, Indian Agent, Kwawkwalth Agency, March 1944.

³⁴⁷ Walker, *‘Race,’ Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada*, 133-134, 169.

“propensities” due to their race to be “oversexed,” “criminal,” and “filthy.” The “purity of the white race” would be “sullied” if Euro-Canadians were forced to associate with other racial groups.³⁴⁸ These beliefs had led politicians, bureaucrats, policemen, lawyers and judges to create, uphold, and enforce the segregation of the races in the law.³⁴⁹ These restrictions were removed for the Air Force in 1943 and the Navy in 1944.³⁵⁰ However, not many Aboriginal or African Canadian men enlisted in the Air Force or the Navy because the strict education and medical requirements prevented many from qualifying.³⁵¹

Japanese Canadian men did not have the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty as they had had in 1914 because they were not permitted to enlist until 1945. Although some Japanese Canadians had expressed an interest in enlisting, members of the Federal Cabinet, pressured mainly by British Columbian politicians, did not allow enlistment.³⁵² The politicians claimed that Japanese Canadians were more likely to be susceptible to sabotage because Japan was an enemy.³⁵³ By joining the Army, some men from racial minorities were perceived as loyal and therefore deserving of equal pay in the Army to that of Euro-Canadian soldiers. Japanese Canadian citizens who were not allowed to

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 12-16.

³⁴⁹ For examples of how these segregation laws were justified and enforced for Chinese and African Canadians see the Quong Wing case and the Fred Christie case in Walker, *‘Race,’ Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada*. Also see the Viola Desmond and Yee Clun case in Constance Backhouse, *Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

³⁵⁰ Walker, *‘Race,’ Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada*. It is not clear why the regulations were changed at this time. It is possible that racial groups pressured officials in the Air Force and Navy to change these regulations, but the nature of these protests have not been studied in the books and archival documents examined for this thesis.

³⁵¹ Sheffield, *The Red Man’s On The Warpath*, 45 and Ruck, *The Black Battalion*, 6.

³⁵² Ken Adachi, *The Enemy that Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1991) 172, 189, 193, 212, 286 and Ann Gomer Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism: the Uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War*, (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1981), 31, 116.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

enlist could not benefit from the logic of arguments that insisted that all soldiers, no matter what their racial background, should be treated equally.

During World War II, in the United States, Native Americans and African Americans were allowed to enlist in the Army, Navy and Air Force. Similar to Canadian First Nations, many Native Americans had a long tradition of military service dating back in some cases to the American Revolution.³⁵⁴ African Americans also had a long history of service having participated in the War of 1812 and the Civil War.³⁵⁵

For comparative purposes, by the end of the war, almost twelve million Americans had enlisted in World War II.³⁵⁶ Out of this total, Indian Affairs Bureau officials stated that 24,521 Native Americans on reservations enlisted in the Army and the Navy. It was estimated that a further 20,000 enlisted who lived off the reservation.³⁵⁷ In total, 44,500 were said to have enlisted; this number was more than ten percent of the total Native American population at the time.³⁵⁸ Approximately, one million African Americans enlisted. The greatest number, 700,000, served in the Army and 167,000 served in the Navy.³⁵⁹ A limited number enlisted in the Air Force as well.

Despite the fact that both groups were allowed to enlist, there was a greater effort to integrate Native Americans into the military than African Americans who were strictly

³⁵⁴ Jere' Bishop Franco, "Bringing Them in Alive: Selective Service and Native Americans," The Journal of Ethnic Studies, 18, 3, (1990): 15.

³⁵⁵ Gary A. Donaldson, The History of African-Americans in the Military, (Malabar: Krieger Publishing Company, 1991), v.

³⁵⁶ David R. Segal, Recruiting for Uncle Sam: Citizenship and Military Manpower Policy, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 4.

³⁵⁷ Franco, "Bringing Them in Alive," 18, 3, 17.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Martin Binkin and Mark J. Eitelberg with Alivn J. Schexnider and Marvin M. Smith, Blacks and the Military, (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1982), 24.

segregated.³⁶⁰ The American military did not officially desegregate until 1948.³⁶¹ Native Americans did see action on the battlefield while very few African Americans did. African American leaders wanted more African Americans to have the opportunity to fight and they placed pressure on the government.³⁶² The chance to fight like other soldiers was considered an opportunity for African Americans to challenge stereotypes about their inferiority and to use their service as leverage in their claims for greater rights.³⁶³ Military officials, however, perceived African-Americans as being incompetent soldiers. As a result of this assumption, most African Americans were assigned to menial labour duties rather than combat.³⁶⁴ In June 1945, African Americans made up less than three percent of all black males assigned to combat duty.³⁶⁵ Despite officials' assumptions, when given the opportunity, African American soldiers performed well considering these soldiers did not have access to the same level of training, facilities or competent leadership that many white soldiers had.³⁶⁶

Both Native and African Americans were discriminated against in terms of promotions. Few men rose in the ranks or were given leadership positions in the military. No restrictions on enlistment clearly did not mean that certain racial groups did not continue to face discrimination while in the military.

³⁶⁰ Lauren Rebecca Sklaroff, "Constructing G.I. Joe Louis," Journal of American History, 89, 3, (2002): 961-962.

³⁶¹ Binkin, et. al., Blacks and the Military, 26-28.

³⁶² Donaldson, The History of African-Americans in the Military, 118.

³⁶³ Binkin, et. al., Blacks and the Military, 26.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 116.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 24.

³⁶⁶ Donaldson, The History of African-Americans in the Military, 115-116, 122.

In Australia, out of a population of approximately 80,000 Aborigines and 5,000 Torres Strait Islanders, 3,000 served in the military during World War II.³⁶⁷ At the beginning of the war, some Aborigine soldiers were allowed to voluntarily enlist because there was some confusion about the military's official policy. In 1940, however, military officials formally decided that "the enlistment of persons of non-European descent was 'neither necessary nor desirable.'"³⁶⁸ This policy decision was made despite the successful achievements by many Aborigine soldiers during the First World War.³⁶⁹ Although some individual exceptions were made as the need for men increased, in general, the policy was that Aborigines were not permitted to enlist.

For those Aborigines that were in the military, most of them served in integrated military units while the enlistees from the Torres Strait Islands served in segregated units.³⁷⁰ The men who served in the segregated units were discriminated against in terms of the amount of pay they received.³⁷¹ Initially, they were paid "one third the pay of white Australian soldiers."³⁷² Historian Robert A. Hall has argued that the purpose of this lower payment was "to preserve the Islanders as a pool of cheap labour for the post-war pearling industry and it reduced the cost of garrisoning the Strait."³⁷³ The low pay was inadequate for many soldiers' families to live on, especially with inflation. The men protested, eventually leading the military to increase their pay to "two thirds the pay of

³⁶⁷ Robert A. Hall, "Black Australians in the Second World War," Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire, 72, (1990): 146, 165. The specific breakdown of how many served in the Army, Navy, and Air Force was not given.

³⁶⁸ Hall, "Black Australians in the Second World War," 151.

³⁶⁹ David Huggonson, "The dark diggers of the AIF," The Australian Quarterly, 61, 3, (Spring 1989): 352

³⁷⁰ Hall, "Black Australians in the Second World War," 153. See also Kay Saunders, "Inequalities of Sacrifice: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Labour in Northern Australia during the Second World War," Labour History Australia, 69, (1995): 131-148.

³⁷¹ It is assumed that Aborigines in the integrated military units received the same amount of pay as white soldiers.

³⁷² Ibid., 156.

³⁷³ Ibid.

white Australian soldiers.”³⁷⁴ Officials felt justified in not increasing the amount of pay to the full amount because they claimed that Torres Strait Islanders served under a “special wartime policy” rather than being officially in the Army. In 1983, Australian government officials decided that there had, in fact, been a legal obligation to pay the full amount and veterans received financial compensation.³⁷⁵

B. SIGNING UP: RECRUITING ABORIGINAL MEN

For Aboriginal men in Canada who wished to enlist, they had to travel to a recruiting station or meet with a recruiting team on a reserve. Most recruiting stations were set up in towns or cities. Consequently, many Aboriginal men who wanted to enlist had to go to towns or cities and had to pay their own travel expenses. Indian Agents inquired if such costs could be covered by the Branch as they claimed that many men wanted to enlist, but were unemployed or on relief and, as a result, did not have the necessary resources to pay for their travel expenses. In response to these inquiries, the Director of the Indian Affairs Branch asked the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources if Indian Agents could approve of these transportation expenses, and he suggested that they could charge them to the Medical and Welfare Appropriation.³⁷⁶ The Chief Treasury Officer, L.W. Mutcheon, who was unsure if such an expenditure could be charged under Medical and Welfare Appropriation, asked the Comptroller of the Treasury for a ruling on the matter.³⁷⁷ He also wrote to McGill advising him that travel expenses could not be covered.³⁷⁸ The Minister of Mines and Resources subsequently

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 157.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-17, McGill to Charles Camsell, Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources, Ottawa, Ontario, 10 May 1940.

³⁷⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-17, L.W. McCutcheon, Chief Treasury Officer, Ottawa, Ontario, to Comptroller of the Treasury, Ottawa, Ontario, 11 May 1940.

³⁷⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-17, MacCutcheon to McGill, 17 May 1940.

wrote to the Treasury Board on the issue,³⁷⁹ but the request was denied.³⁸⁰ There is no further correspondence to indicate whether the Indian Affairs Branch made any further attempts to get the travel expenses covered. Men presumably had to find alternative ways to cover these expenses if they wanted to enlist.

In some cases, recruiters contacted the Provincial Superintendents and asked if they could go to reserves. Mindy Christianson, the General Superintendent of Indian Agencies in Saskatchewan, wrote that recruiting teams consisting of an officer, a doctor and two or three assistants traveled throughout Saskatchewan. In early 1942, Christianson informed Indian Agents to gather all the interested men who wanted to enlist so when the team went onto the reserve they could be examined by the doctor. Christianson also reported that some of the men had already gone to the recruiting centre in Regina to enlist. Prior to doing so, the men had received information from the Indian Agents about the amount of pay and allowances they would receive.³⁸¹

³⁷⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-17, T.A.Crerar, Minister of Mines and Resources, Ottawa, Ontario, to The Administrator in Council, Treasury Board, Ottawa, Ontario, 23 May 1940.

³⁸⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-17, W. Ronson, Secretary, Treasury Board of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, to Camsell, 15 July 1940.

³⁸¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Mindy Christianson, General Superintendent, Regina, Saskatchewan to Bennett, 21 February 1942.

TABLE 1.F: Enlistment of Aboriginal Soldiers, 1939-1946

Years	1939 to 1942 (A breakdown was not provided prior to 1942)	1943	1944	1945	Enlistments unaccounted for in previous Annual Reports	1946 Revised Enlistment Figures
Total Number of New Enlistments Per Year	1,448	353	582	220	487	NA
Total Number Enlisted Cumulative	1,448	1,801	2,383	2,603	NA	3,090

Source: Canada. Department of Mines and Resources, "Annual Report of the Indian Affairs Branch," Ottawa, Ontario, <http://www.collectionscanda.ca/indianaffairs/>. consulted on May 16, 2003.

TABLE 1.G: Canadian Aboriginal Soldiers receiving the Dependents' Allowance, Cases Divided by Recipient, Savings, and Administration, 1943 and 1945

Year (Figures could only be found for 1943 and 1945)	Total Number of Aboriginal recipients receiving the allowance	Married women receiving the dependents' allowance	Others receiving the dependents' allowance (including parents, siblings, caregivers)	Total number of recipients saving through War Savings Certificates (Wives only)	Total number of recipients saving through the Indian Trust Fund (Wives only)	Total number of recipients having their allowances administered (Wives only)
1943	1,600	588	1,012	NA	NA	52
1945	2,400	754	1,646	220	48	96

Sources: LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, R.O.G. Bennett, Chairman, Dependents' Allowance Board, Ottawa, Ontario, to T.R.L. MacInnes, Secretary, Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa, Ontario, 22 February 1943, LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Bennett to MacInnes, 24 March 1943, and LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Bennett to MacInnes, 31 January 1945.

C. A SIGN OF CONTINUED LOYALTY: PERCEPTIONS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WAR EFFORT BY THE EURO-CANADIAN COMMUNITY

How enlistment was perceived by Euro-Canadian members of the public and officials provides invaluable insights into how soldiers were perceived in Euro-Canadian society. These perceptions will provide context to bureaucrats' debates about the meaning of soldiers' rights discussed in the following chapters. Chapter 6 will examine Aboriginal soldiers' own motivations for participating in the war effort.

The wider Canadian public had a more positive view of Aboriginal enlistment than some Indian Agents because they perceived it as an endorsement of Euro-Canadian values and society.³⁸² Similar assumptions had been made in World War I. In fact, in the inter-war period, many Euro-Canadians had come to believe that Aboriginal people should be granted the right to vote because of the very loyalty and patriotism they had demonstrated through their military service and war contributions. The federal government considered granting the franchise to Aboriginal people, but only if they agreed to give up their special status. Since Aboriginal people were not willing to give up their status, they were not granted the right to vote at this time.³⁸³ The public shared this inability to understand the importance of collective rights to Aboriginal people, a belief that persisted after World War II, as we will see later.

Sheffield finds that newspaper articles during World War II emphasized Aboriginal people's loyalty to Britain. One article referred to Aboriginal soldiers

³⁸² The newspaper articles from departmental files used here as examples are representative of the patterns found by R. Scott Sheffield's systematic study of newspapers in English Canada from the 1930's to the 1940's. See Sheffield, *The Red Man's On The Warpath*.

³⁸³ L. James Dempsey, *Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I*, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina, 1999), 73.

protecting the “land of the Great White King.” Articles emphasized that despite past conflicts, Euro-Canadians and Aboriginal people were united against a common enemy. As conditions in Europe worsened and Euro-Canadians became increasingly anxious about the outcome of the war, the number of stories about Aboriginal people supporting the war effort increased.³⁸⁴ Even though these articles often failed to acknowledge the complex reasons why Aboriginal people enlisted and they rarely used Aboriginal people’s own words, the more positive portrayals of Aboriginal people did lead to a re-examination of many of the negative images of them.³⁸⁵ Aboriginal people had usually been portrayed as passive, but during the war, there were more images of Aboriginal people being active, especially in organizing events to earn money for the Red Cross. The tone used to describe Aboriginal cultural activities was more respectful than it had been in the 1930’s.³⁸⁶ The positive images of the “Indian-at-war” legitimized Aboriginal protests.³⁸⁷ When Aboriginal leaders gathered in October 1943 to discuss their grievances regarding compulsory military registration and taxation, their concerns were not attacked as undermining the war effort, but were portrayed as reasonable.³⁸⁸ Sheffield finds there was “an increasing willingness among Canadians to construct First Nations people inclusively as human beings, rather than solely as an external and alien other.”³⁸⁹ This re-examination eventually led to debates about Aboriginal people’s status in Canadian society and the failures of the Indian Affairs Branch administration.³⁹⁰ The

³⁸⁴ Sheffield, *The Red Man’s On The Warpath*, 81.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 69, 75.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 91.

results of such debates and the role of the Dependents' Allowance Program in fostering them will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 and 6 of this thesis.

Such positive images are important to keep in mind when analyzing the Dependents' Allowance Program because they may have influenced some politicians, lawyers, and military officials' attitudes towards soldiers and their families. They may help to explain their willingness to write letters protesting against the actions of Indian Agents on behalf of dependents' allowance recipients. These officials provided another avenue in which soldiers and their families could pursue their grievances and expose the actions of the Indian Affairs Branch.

In the American case, Aboriginal people's participation in the war was also understood as a desire to assimilate, not because Native Americans were themselves saying this, but because assimilation fit into politicians' own agenda. At the time, American government policy towards Native Americans was shifting away from New Deal reforms promoted by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, John Collier. These reforms had emphasized the preservation of Native culture, had taken away powers from Bureau Agents, had granted more power to local communities, and had allowed communities to make more of their own decisions about how to spend their money.³⁹¹ By World War II, the conditions of wartime led politicians to reprioritize government spending and redirect Indian Affairs policy. Politicians and officials decided that the Bureau of Indian Affairs was an "non-essential" government agency during wartime and most of the programs set up to implement the changes brought in with the New Deal were

³⁹¹ Clayton R. Koppes, "From New Deal to Termination: Liberalism and Indian Policy, 1933-1953," *Pacific Historical Review*, 46, 4, (1977): 552-553. Koppes emphasizes the role of Collier in implementing the reforms. It is unclear what role Aboriginal communities played in pressuring for these reforms or if they thought they were desirable.

“emasculated or dropped altogether.”³⁹² The most talented young employees were moved to jobs in the military and Collier, who had been the greatest proponent of the New Deal reforms, left the Bureau. There was also less money to spend on these programs; “deep budget cuts curtailed vital services” and politicians believed that they needed to “reduce federal obligations” towards Natives.³⁹³ Politicians argued that the community approach to land ownership that was essential to the New Deal reforms should be replaced with an emphasis on individual property ownership and assimilation. These notions had been central to the Indian Affairs policy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and politicians argued that there should be a return to these ideas.

There was a belief that Native Americans should be treated like other Americans and should not be given special treatment and “any legal distinctions between Indians and other citizens abolished.”³⁹⁴ Such proposals undermined Native Americans’ claims to collective rights which many Native Americans continued to insist should be recognized.³⁹⁵ Although many Native Americans did believe it was their patriotic duty to fight the war, they did not believe that they should be denied their tribal sovereignty and other collective rights as a result. To assert their tribal sovereignty, Six Nations, Oklahoma Osage, the South Dakota Sioux and the Oklahoma Ponca all made their own declaration of war upon Germany.³⁹⁶ Despite these attempts to declare their independence, after the war, the emphasis on integration became even more central to Indian Affairs policy. Under the Truman administration, officials decided any services

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 555.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 556.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 559.

³⁹⁵ Franco, “Bringing Them in Alive,” 6-7.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

provided by Bureau of Indian Affairs were to be transferred to agencies at the federal state, or local level which provided the programs for the non-Aboriginal population.³⁹⁷

Given politicians' attitudes during World War II, what role, if any, the Bureau of Indian Affairs played in implementing the dependents' allowances and how it compared to the Canadian situation is not known.³⁹⁸ When Native Americans entered the Army, unlike African Americans who were strictly segregated, Aboriginal people were integrated. Due to the emphasis on integration and not distinguishing Native Americans from other groups, it is possible, that in the program set up to deal with soldiers' allowances, that Native American soldiers and their families were grouped together with Euro-Americans and were not treated separately. It is not clear if local Bureau Indian Affairs officials, as the existing bureaucracy, played any role in administering the allowance program on reserves or if soldiers' families managed their own cheques without officials' interference.

D. MIXED VIEWS: PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENLISTMENT OF ABORIGINAL MEN BY OFFICIALS AT THE INDIAN AFFAIRS BRANCH

Officials had differing perceptions of Aboriginal men's enlistment. Enlistment was perceived by some officials at the Indian Affairs Branch as a sign of Aboriginal people's "continued loyalty" to the British Empire. The Indian Affairs Branch Annual reports, in particular, emphasized Aboriginal people's participation in the war effort

³⁹⁷ Koppes, "From New Deal to Termination," 559.

³⁹⁸ In a survey of three monographs on Native American soldiers and World War II, based on the examination conducted, there were no references found to the dependents' allowances in two of the books. See Bernstein, American Indians and World War II, and Jere' Bishop Franco, Crossing the Pond: The Native American Effort in World War II, (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1999). The one book that did mention the allowances noted that the increased income benefited the families during the war, but the role of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in administering the allowances was not mentioned. See Kenneth William Townsend, World War II and the American Indian, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 217.

because, in the minds of some government officials, it was evidence that Aboriginal people were adopting the values of Euro-Canadian culture such as “patriotism.” The Indian Affairs Branch officials commented in the 1940 annual report:

The outbreak of war could not fail to affect in some measure the Indians of Canada. Always loyal, they were not slow to come forward with offers of assistance in both men and money. About one hundred Indians had enlisted by the end of the fiscal year and the contribution of the Indians to the Red Cross and other funds amounted to over \$1,300.³⁹⁹

The 1942 annual report confirmed this trend: “in every part of the country they have shown a patriotic spirit and in some provinces enlistment of a high percentage of the adult male population has been recorded.”⁴⁰⁰ Aboriginal soldiers’ loyalty, volunteerism, and sacrifice were always emphasized:

Throughout the war effort the Indians have behaved as all other loyal Canadians. They have voluntarily enlisted in the Armed Forces in numbers that compare favorably with any other cross section of Canadian citizens. Within their means they have contributed financially which in terms of sacrifice equals if not exceeds that of any other section of our communities. They are represented in the Armed Forces in every rank ranging from Private to Brigadier.⁴⁰¹

Annual reports also publicized the military awards: by 1944 Aboriginal soldiers had earned 17 decorations for “bravery in action”⁴⁰² and “for excellent leadership, [and] loyalty to the British Crown...”⁴⁰³ Such comments in the Annual Reports suggest that officials were eager to present “proof” to other government officials and the Euro-Canadian public that Aboriginal people had embraced Euro-Canadian values and that the

³⁹⁹ Canada. Department of Mines and Resources, “Annual Report of the Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa, Ontario, 31 March 1940,” 183. <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/indianaffairs/>. consulted on May 16, 2003.

⁴⁰⁰ “Annual Report of the Indian Affairs Branch,” 31 March 1942, 164.

⁴⁰¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6764, File: 452-6X Pt 2, “War Services,” Author not identified, Not dated.

⁴⁰² Summerby, *Native Soldiers, Foreign Battlefields*, 31.

⁴⁰³ “Annual Report of the Indian Affairs Branch,” 31 March 1944, 153 and “Annual Report of the Indian Affairs Branch,” 31 March 1946, 196.

Indian Affairs Branch had, in some regard, been “successful” in achieving its assimilationist policy goals.

In his report on the Kwawkewlth Agency in British Columbia, Indian Agent M.S. Todd described how men and women in the agency purchased victory bonds, gave to the Red Cross and joined the Pacific Coast Rangers for home defence. In reference to these people he concluded that “They have become a national asset and I feel deserve credit and consideration for their efforts.”⁴⁰⁴

Despite the positive assessments by some officials, Sheffield’s study of Aboriginal soldiers and Indian Affairs Branch policy during the war years concludes that most Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats had a pragmatic rather than idealistic view of Aboriginal men’s enlistment.⁴⁰⁵ Indian Affairs Branch officials, according to Sheffield, were not as willing to change their attitudes as the wider Euro-Canadian society. The isolation of the Branch from other departments, the geographic isolation of the Indian Agents, and the long standing administrative practices of paternalistic control possibly account for the endurance of these officials’ attitudes.⁴⁰⁶

Some Indian Agents only encouraged enlistment because they wanted to reduce the number of families on relief. For instance, J.P.B. Ostrander from Battleford in Saskatchewan stated that “I have been advising the Indians to enlist, where possible, as a means of providing a living for their families for the coming winter...”⁴⁰⁷ But some Indian Agents were against enlistment for this very reason: they argued that the allowance would prevent Aboriginal people from becoming “self-supporting.” As

⁴⁰⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume, 6765, File: 452-6, “Report on Kwawkewlth Agency,” Todd, March 1944.

⁴⁰⁵ Sheffield, *The Red Man’s On The Warpath*, 47.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 177-179.

⁴⁰⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6764, File: 452-6 Pt. 2, J.P.B. Ostrander, Indian Agent, Battleford, Saskatchewan, to IAB Secretary, Ottawa, Ontario, 11 September 1941.

Harper Reed from Telegraph Creek in British Columbia, commented, “were enlistment for even home service mentioned to our Indians here, nearly all would venture an enlistment. The idea would be to get away from keeping themselves, whilst their large families would be the care of the Government.”⁴⁰⁸ American historians have noted that many Native Americans enlisted because of the military pay and allowances that their families would receive. During the Great Depression, Native Americans were especially hard hit by the poor economic conditions, making the military allowances particularly desirable.⁴⁰⁹

Moreover, many bureaucrats doubted Aboriginal people could benefit the national war effort, because of their poor health.⁴¹⁰ Indeed, Reed concluded that, “the health conditions of our nomads, at the present time, are not such that enlistment would be beneficial to the Canadian government.”⁴¹¹ Sheffield’s research confirms Reed’s assumption, as he finds that many Aboriginal people could not pass the medical examination due to poor health.⁴¹² Many Native Americans, were also rejected because they did not meet the military requirements due to poor health.⁴¹³

Some Canadian officials also argued that Aboriginal people would not adapt to the life in the Army. This generalization was based on the assumption that Aboriginal

⁴⁰⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6764, File: 452-6X Pt.1, Harper Reed, Indian Agent, Telegraph Creek, British Columbia, to IAB Secretary, 26 July 1941. In the records examined similar comments were not found about poor or working class Euro-Canadian men. A further search of Department of National Defence files specifically on enlistment would be needed to discuss this issue comparatively. See LAC, RG 24, Series C-2, Volume 12547, File: 8/ENLIST/1 Policy Regarding Enlistment, 1939-1943, LAC, RG 24, Series C-2, Volume 12548, File: 8/ENLIST/3, Applications for Enlistment, 1939-1945, LAC, RG 24, Series C-2, Volume 12551, File: 8/ENLIST/12, Rejected Applications for Enlistment, 1938-1940.

⁴⁰⁹ Franco, “Bringing Them in Alive,” 17.

⁴¹⁰ Sheffield, *The Red Man’s On The Warpath*, 47

⁴¹¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-135, “Agent’s Report on Ft. Simpson Agency,” W.M. Truesdell, Indian Agent, Ft. Simpson, October 1939.

⁴¹² Davison makes a similar observation in her Masters thesis. She attributes Aboriginal people’s poor health due to Indian Affairs Branch’s failure to provide adequate funding and services. See Davison, “We Shall Remember,” 22.

⁴¹³ Franco, “Bringing Them in Alive,” 12.

people had “inherent” racial traits that made them prefer the “nomadic” lifestyle. As a result, it was assumed that Aboriginal men were unable to adapt to the regimented nature of the military. Indian Agent Devlin from Parry Sound stated that, “A very good percentage of our Indian men are in the armed services, but not all of them take kindly to army discipline, and they go AWL (Absent Without Leave) whenever the opportunity offers.”⁴¹⁴ Aboriginal men’s ability to adjust to the military in World War I was not considered in the Indian Agent’s assessment.⁴¹⁵

1.6 CONCLUSION

The Dependents’ Allowance Program was motivated by a desire to financially support all Canadian soldiers’ families and increase soldiers’ morale. Rather than relying upon the charity of others, as many soldiers’ families were forced to do during World War I, during World War II soldiers’ families were to receive standard amounts under a program that was to be administered by the federal government. The goal of supporting soldiers’ families was complicated by notions of gender and race. The involvement of multiple departments with different structures and goals, separate staffs with varied duties and backgrounds, and each influenced by diverse sets of traditions led to distinctions in the ways that soldiers’ families were treated.

In implementing a national program for all soldiers’ families, bureaucrats created regulations and procedures that necessitated that families conform to certain definitions and requirements in order to be eligible to receive the allowance. For all women, their

⁴¹⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6X Pt. 3, “Agent’s Report on the Parry Sound Agency for the Month of February 1944,” Samuel Devlin, Indian Agent, Parry Sound, Ontario, February 1944. The Indian Agent was not specific about whether the men were going AWL in Europe or while in training. Desertion figures for Aboriginal soldiers have not been located. Based upon a search at the archives there does not appear to be a specific file on Aboriginal soldier desertion, although material on them could be included in general files. See LAC, RG 24, Series C-27, File 55-L-500, Desertion, Fraudulent Enlistment, and LAC, RG 24, Series C-27, File 55-L-493, AWL Losing by neglect fraudulent enlistment.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

receipt of the allowance was contingent on their husbands' continued military service, not because the women were recognized as having economic rights. Instead, they were seen as "dependents." Many of the officials running the Dependents' Allowance Board had backgrounds in the military and tended to be more sympathetic towards soldiers than to soldiers' female relatives. Soldiers assigned the allowance to whomever they wished and had the option to withdraw it. Women were expected to conform to certain standards of "respectable" behavior if they wished to continue to receive the allowance. Those who committed infidelity, for instance, lost their allowances because their actions were considered to be disloyal to the soldiers.

Particular notions of family also influenced women's eligibility. Within this program, the concept of the nuclear family provided the model. They failed to recognize the importance of extended family members' contributions to the family income and the value of non-paid labour. Women were not seen as contributors to the family income. In particular, mothers were seen as not having seen as having as equal a claim to the allowance as wives. Unlike wives, the amounts they received were not set at standard rates, but they received varied amounts based on investigators' reports on their financial circumstances. In contrast, wives generally received thirty-five dollars a month and their receipt of this money did not require an investigation into their financial situation.

Notions of race also affected dependents' allowance policies. Before Aboriginal families even received the allowance, doubts were raised about their ability to handle the money. In applying for the allowance, Aboriginal families were disadvantaged because they had to conform to certain documentation requirements. These requirements only recognized marriages that took place according to Euro-Canadian laws and customs. All

Aboriginal wives had to be investigated before they received the allowance, when Euro-Canadian wives did not. Their applications were also subject to a different set of procedures that encouraged the involvement of Indian Agents forcing Aboriginal families to deal with a second bureaucracy, the Indian Affairs Branch. The Indian Affairs Branch had a longer history and more established departmental practices; these practices were steeped in paternalistic assumptions that Aboriginal people, as wards of the government, were incapable of taking care of their own affairs.

While enforcing racial distinctions and forcing recipients to deal with officials at the Indian Affairs Branch, it must be recognized that the Dependents' Allowance Program did provide opportunities for Aboriginal families to communicate with other officials and gain access to additional funds. Soldiers could express their concerns to military officials and family members could make inquiries at the Dependents' Allowance Board. Having this other set of officials to contact was important given that officials at the Indian Affairs Branch often dismissed their concerns. The insular nature of the bureaucrats working within the Indian Affairs Branch in the past had allowed some of their practices to go unquestioned by other bureaucrats. Requests for more information required that officials at the Indian Affairs Branch explain their actions, exposing in some cases the arbitrary control that some Indian Agents exercised when dealing with Aboriginal families. The Dependents' Allowance Program also provided access to a steady monthly cheque and eligibility for grants at the Dependents' Board of Trustees. These developments were important given how narrowly the Indian Affairs Branch defined its obligations and the meager amounts of money the officials at the Branch had given out in the programs they had previously administered.

A theme that emerges when discussing the backgrounds of the departments and the bureaucrats who worked in them is how they were influenced by different traditions. The Dependents' Allowance Board was invigorated by new ideas from the emerging social work profession. There was a desire to move away from the moralistic and patronizing investigators associated with the nineteenth century. Instead, investigators were to balance "scientific" case work methods with sympathetic attitudes towards the clients. Social workers portrayed themselves as being particularly adept at having these skills and abilities. High ranking officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board and Department of Defence were convinced that some social work training was a desirable skill for investigators. Indian Agents who worked for the Indian Affairs Branch, on the other hand, were often appointed due to patronage and had little training. In doing investigations, they tended to act more like the nineteenth century investigators from whom officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board were trying to distance themselves.

Officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board also tended to respect soldiers and many had a military background which may have influenced their attitudes towards the treatment of Aboriginal soldiers and their families. They wanted the soldiers' viewpoint to be considered. These attitudes challenged the paternalistic administrative practices of the Indian Affairs Branch that were based on the belief that Aboriginal people did not have the capacity to make decisions about money. The Indian Act had provided bureaucrats at Indian Affairs Branch, both in Ottawa and locally, with a great deal of authority over Aboriginal people's affairs. The degree of control exercised by bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch was questioned by officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board. The diverse traditions that influenced these officials' different

attitudes towards soldiers' families fueled the debates that will be examined in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2 “WASTEFUL” WOMEN REQUIRE “SPECIAL SUPERVISION”: DEBATES OVER THE ADMINISTRATION OF ALLOWANCES

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Access to dependents' allowance money for most Canadian women related to a soldier was a simple process of receiving a cheque in the mail. Almost as soon as the program began, Aboriginal women, however, were forced to contend with assumptions about their inabilities to manage money. This chapter will examine what assumptions were made about Aboriginal women's abilities to manage money and the ways in which these assumptions affected their access to the allowance. The following questions have shaped this analysis: What assumptions were made about Aboriginal women's abilities to handle money? Was the amount of the allowance deemed adequate by officials and recipients? In what ways, if any, were past administrative practices of the Indian Affairs Branch undermined by the procedures proposed by the bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board? How did the officials at the Indian Affairs Branch react to women receiving their cheques directly? Did they believe their authority was being questioned? What measures, if any, were put in place to control women's access to their cheques? How were the women treated who were considered incapable of handling their allowances? Did the principles of social work influence dependents' allowance bureaucrats' approaches in these cases? In what ways did these principles undermine or reinforce the paternalistic traditions of the Indian Affairs Branch?

Questions regarding how the dependents' allowance challenged previous practices of the Indian Affairs Branch are worth exploring because the dependents' allowance is an example of a program where Indian Affairs Branch officials did not have complete

control over how the policy was formed or implemented. Under the Dependents' Allowance Program, Aboriginal women, like non-Aboriginal women, were eligible to receive the allowance because their family members had enrolled in the Canadian services. Indian Agents had to adhere to dependents' allowance regulations. Any change that occurred had to be justified to the officials of the Dependents' Allowance Board at the Department of National Defence. As a part of this examination, it is essential to examine one of the main debates that took place among bureaucrats about women's access to their dependents' allowance cheques and to measure the respective leverage of both administrations. These procedures indicate that, unlike in previous programs, Indian Affairs Branch officials did not have as much control over how the cheques were distributed. Beliefs that recipients had a right to access the allowance conflicted with the view of many officials at the Indian Affairs Branch that Aboriginal people were incapable of managing their own affairs. These conflicts affected Indian Agents' attitudes towards the procedures.

Assumptions about Aboriginal women's abilities to handle money and the adequacy of the allowances are worth investigating because they influenced the main concerns of bureaucrats of both institutions and they reveal how racial and gender stereotypes affected the policy and procedural decisions made by the Dependents' Allowance Board and the Indian Affairs Branch. The problematic nature of these assumptions is further highlighted by examining public debates about the inadequacy of the allowance in light of rising living costs.

Comparing how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cases were administered reveals how the principles of social work and paternalistic traditions of control mixed within

dependents' allowance policies. Administration meant that the allowance money was managed by a third party, not the recipient herself. Although notions of Euro-Canadian "respectability" affected how both groups of women were evaluated by local officials, there were differences between the officials of each department. In non-Aboriginal cases, if administration were required, it was viewed as a short term solution until women were "taught" how to budget. Conversely, administration was viewed by some Indian Agents as a long term solution because they perceived Aboriginal women as less willing to change. By analyzing assumptions about Aboriginal women's financial abilities, the cheque distribution procedures, and the attitudes and approaches of local officials in administration cases, this chapter will illustrate how dependents' allowance policies both legitimized and undermined assumptions about race and gender.

2.2 HISTORIOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

To provide essential context to the findings in this chapter, studies were consulted that dealt respectively with the restrictive Indian Affairs Branch policies in the administration of relief, the discretionary role Indian Agents played in issuing relief, emerging definitions of citizens' economic rights within the welfare state, and assessments of Aboriginal women by Euro-Canadians, based on particular standards of "respectability." These scholars' conclusions, when compared with how the allowance program operated, allows us to highlight the ways in which the program not only questioned, but also reinforced certain practices of Indian Affairs Branch officials.

Scholarly studies of Indian Affairs Branch relief policies have found that upper level civil servants issued strict instructions to Indian Agents to limit the amount of relief provided. In his overview of Indian Affairs Branch welfare policy from 1873 to 1965,

Hugh Shewell finds that the justification for the low relief rates and strict rules regarding the receipt of relief were put in place so that families would “learn” to become “self-supporting.”¹ Similar to relief programs for Euro-Canadians at the time, only the sick, the aged, and the blind were to receive relief.² During the Great Depression these attitudes towards relief did not change. Despite widespread unemployment and poor economic conditions, those who required economic assistance were treated with suspicion by government officials. During the early 1930’s relief recipients, whether Aboriginal or Euro-Canadian, were not considered “trustworthy” enough to handle money so they could only receive relief in the form of food, clothing or fuel. Only in the late 1930’s did direct cash payments begin to be used.³

Although the negative attitudes towards the unemployed receiving relief were applied both to Aboriginal people and Euro-Canadians, Shewell finds that Aboriginal relief recipients were treated even more badly than Euro-Canadians. During the 1930’s, when relief rates were increasing in the rest of the country, they were declining in the Indian Affairs Branch. This desire to minimize relief fit into a pattern that had existed since the late nineteenth century of officials at the Indian Affairs Branch trying to reduce costs. Repeatedly officials in Ottawa during the 1930’s instructed Indian Agents to minimize the amount of relief provided.⁴ Standard relief rates were set by officials at levels substantially lower than what Euro-Canadians received.⁵ In 1936, for instance, the approximate per capita relief expenditure for Canadians in general was \$61.69; whereas

¹ As noted in Chapter 1, an Indian Agent used similar reasoning when arguing against Aboriginal enlistment. He believed that receiving the dependents’ allowance would thwart attempts to teach Aboriginal families to be “self-supporting.”

² Hugh Shewell, *‘Enough to Keep Them Alive’: Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 104.

³ *Ibid.*, 113-116.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 111, 118.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 123.

for the Indian Affairs Branch, the per capita expenditure was \$20.57.⁶ The central administration had to be consulted if relief were to be given for an extended period or if the amount provided were above the standard rate.⁷ Federal officials justified providing Aboriginal people with less relief because they argued that Aboriginal people could survive on less than Euro-Canadians.⁸ Indian Agents were asked to make sure that local merchants provided Aboriginal people only the “actual necessities” to live. These necessities were usually limited to flour, pork or lard. Clothing was only to be issued by Agents twice per year.⁹

For Aboriginal families who needed relief money in the 1950's, concerns continued to be raised about these families' abilities to manage their money. By this time, many poor Euro-Canadian families who qualified for assistance received cheques rather than goods. Anxieties were still expressed by some officials that poor white people could not manage money and they would misuse it; however, the majority believed that poor families should receive direct cheques. Aboriginal families who needed help were treated differently from Euro-Canadian families in this regard. In terms of relief payments, as late as 1957, bureaucrats, at the Indian Affairs Branch, debated whether Aboriginal families should receive cheques for their relief money.¹⁰ Many families still received relief in the form of goods rather than money. There were still doubts that either sex could manage cash without supervision by Euro-Canadians. Some

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 101, 104.

¹⁰ For a discussion of these debates see Shewell, *Enough to Keep Them Alive*, 247-251.

officials still assumed that both Aboriginal men and women needed “safeguards” to ensure they were spending the money “properly.”¹¹

Robin Jarvis Brownlie’s work on Ontario from 1919 to 1939 supports Shewell’s conclusions. In her case studies of two Indian Agents, John Daly of the Parry Sound Agency and Robert Lewis of the Manitowaning Agency on Manitoulin Island,¹² she emphasizes how Agents acted arbitrarily when issuing relief.¹³ When some First Nations communities tried to suggest changes to standardize the administration of the relief system, both Daly and Lewis rejected these suggestions. They claimed that Aboriginal people’s poor economic circumstances were brought on by their own “misbehavior” and their refusal to “lead a clean Christian life.”¹⁴ The Agents claimed that they should remain responsible for issuing relief and refused to consider plans that would undermine their authority.¹⁵ Daly and Lewis used their ability to withdraw relief as a way to threaten people who were perceived as questioning the Agents’ authority or who were behaving in ways in which the Agents did not approve.¹⁶ As a result of this ability to withdraw relief, the power of Agents had risen during the Great Depression, when economic circumstances on reserves had been particularly desperate.¹⁷ If men refused roadwork jobs due to illness, Agent Daly refused aid.¹⁸ Women who received relief

¹¹ Shewell, Enough to Keep Them Alive, 250.

¹² Robin Jarvis Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye: Indian Agents, Government Power, and Aboriginal Resistance in Ontario, 1918-1939 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹³ Ibid., 107.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 110 and 117.

¹⁷ Ibid., 117.

¹⁸ Ibid., 119.

usually only received it in the winter because they were expected to support themselves through the sale of berries or handicrafts in the summer.¹⁹

Brownlie also notes, as Shewell did, that the amount of money Aboriginal families received was significantly lower than what Euro-Canadian families received. In 1934, Aboriginal people received the following amounts in relief per month: six dollars for a family with two or three persons, seven dollars for four to six persons, nine dollars for seven to eight persons and ten for nine to ten persons. In comparison, in 1936 the city of North Bay provided \$21.66 for a family of five.²⁰

In addition, Brownlie argues that there was resistance on the part of the Agents to providing relief because they believed that it could interfere with Aboriginal people's adoption of the values of "hard work" and "thriftiness." As she comments, "Any assistance was potentially harmful to the recipient, but none more than 'gratuitous aid,' which would only encourage the idleness and improvidence believed to be inherent in 'the Indian character.'"²¹ Thus, Indian Agents tended to blame Aboriginal people for their own poverty rather than trying to address the structural economic causes such as insufficient resources, lack of training, and isolation that prevented some Aboriginal people from obtaining work.²² She shows that "Choices about policy implementation were informed by a set of stereotypes about Aboriginal character and the 'Indian mode of life' that assumed that most First Nations people would live at the level of mere

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 106.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 115.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 104.

²² *Ibid.*, 109.

subsistence.”²³ These stereotypes were central to bureaucrats’ justifications that Aboriginal families should receive a lower amount of allowance.

Indian Agents controlled not only relief money, but also the majority of other monies spent on reserves through the Indian Act. Brownlie finds, for example, that Indian Agents controlled the money collected from the sale or lease of land or other resources.²⁴ Access to these funds by band councils was limited by the Indian Agents’ power to veto any resolutions passed by the band councils if they did not approve of the way the funds were going to be spent.²⁵ Brownlie notes that Aboriginal people’s access to bank loans was also restricted:

Status Indians were protected from seizure of their property for debt, a feature based on their presumed incompetence to manage their affairs. While this provision sometimes saved them from personal losses, it also had the effect of blocking Aboriginal people from practically any access to bank loans because their property could not be used for collateral. The only remaining sources of loans were band funds or the DIA itself.²⁶

Brownlie notes that Indian Agents often perceived Aboriginal people as “...childlike, dependent individuals who were incompetent to manage their own affairs...”²⁷ She characterizes Indian Agents as wanting to control as much as possible Aboriginal people’s affairs. Initially, she writes, this control was justified in the name of the assimilation of Aboriginal people, but eventually control itself became the goal because “...it both justified and facilitated the agents’ own work.”²⁸

²³ Ibid., 151.

²⁴ Ibid., 35.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 42.

²⁸ Ibid., xv.

The findings of these scholars would suggest that the Dependents' Allowance Program challenged past administrative practices at the Indian Affairs Branch. With the receipt of the dependents' allowances, Aboriginal women started to receive regular monthly cheques from the federal government, addressed to them as individuals. They were eligible to receive the allowance not because of their status as Aboriginal people, but because of their husband's or son's enlistment. This policy undermined the system of allowing Indian Agents discretionary powers over how social programs were implemented.

The notion that families should be scrutinized before they received money from the government was not limited to the Indian Affairs Branch. Many bureaucrats believed that poor families' spending habits should also be carefully monitored suggesting a link between the assumptions that were made about race and class. In her study of the implementation of the Family Allowance Program of 1945, Dominique Marshall argues that bureaucrats believed that poor parents needed to be supervised to ensure that their children were attending school and that the money was being spent on the children.²⁹ Parents who were not abiding by these rules could have their allowances suspended.³⁰ Similar to the Indian Agents, family allowance investigators questioned parents' morality. Marshall concludes that the role of "The family allowance investigators were vested with discretionary powers, which they often used to the detriment of poor families. Social workers connected with the Quebec Regional Family Allowances Bureau were

²⁹ Dominique Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State: Quebec Families, Compulsory Education and Family Allowances. Translated by Nicola Danby. (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2005), Chapter 3, 20.

³⁰ Ibid., Chapter 3, 21.

thus able to arbitrarily scrutinize the spending habits of families.”³¹ In the case of middle class or elite families, it was argued that as taxpayers they should not be subject to such scrutiny.³² Marshall observes that Mackenzie King “recognized richer parents’ ‘right’ to protect their private lives, a right to which poorer families hadn’t access.”³³ Assumptions that people’s racial origin and class status made them incapable of handling money affected local officials’ attitudes when implementing social benefits programs.

A consideration of what other scholars have found when examining debates about cheque distribution procedures in other programs is useful for comparative purposes. Marshall finds that in implementing the Family Allowance Program there was a controversy between the federal and Quebec government regarding who the cheques would be addressed to. The Quebec Premier, Maurice Duplessis, wanted the cheques addressed to the father.³⁴ In opposition to Duplessis’ stance, reformists, nationalists and feminists started a campaign to have the cheques sent to the mothers.³⁵ Some of these activists wanted women to have more control over the family finances so they would be less susceptible to the whims of their husbands,³⁶ whereas social conservatives saw cheques to mothers as a way to avoid sending the allowance to poor men who, they

³¹ *Ibid.*, Chapter 3, 21-22.

³² Aboriginal people could not use this argument because they generally did not pay taxes due to their treaty agreements with the federal government. The issue of taxation as it relates to Aboriginal people is more complex than can be described here. See Richard H. Bartlett, *Indians and Taxation in Canada*, (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Native Law Centre, 1992). For the arguments that Aboriginal families did make in protest to Indian Agents’ intrusion into their lives see Chapter 6.

³³ Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State*, Chapter 3, 27.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Chapter 4, 24.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Chapter 4, 25.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Chapter 5, 34.

assumed, would spend the money on alcohol.³⁷ The campaign of these different groups succeeded and the cheques were sent to the mothers.³⁸

Despite the success of the campaign, Marshall finds that the diverse nature of the groups arguing for the cheques to be sent directly to the mothers reveals “the fragility of the progress achieved in the civic recognition of women.”³⁹ However, she suggests that receipt of these cheques did have a long term impact that was more favourable to recognizing women’s economic rights as citizens:

It is even possible that by recognizing domestic work and by conferring upon mothers an extra degree of public existence, an economic basis upon which they could support their citizenship, the program of family allowances had laid the groundwork for the demands from ‘second wave’ of feminism in the 1960’s.⁴⁰

Shewell also observes that women rather than men tended to be the preferred recipients of direct cheques on reservations. Despite the continuing debates in the 1950’s about whether relief cheques should be sent directly to Aboriginal families, significantly, in cases where the family had “proven” they were capable of managing their finances, H.M. Jones, the Indian Affairs Branch Director in the 1950’s, argued that the cheques should be issued to the mothers rather than the fathers so ““the capable Indian housekeeper [could] secure the best...value for her relief dollar”” and the cheques could be ““used to the best advantage.””⁴¹ The evidence in this chapter illustrates that such images of the “thrifty Indian housekeeper” and consumer were rarely present in Indian Affairs Branch officials’ statements about Aboriginal dependents’ allowance

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Chapter 5, 33.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Chapter 4, 26.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Chapter 5, 33.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Chapter 6, 49.

⁴¹ Library Archives Canada (LAC), Records of the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB), RG 10, CR Series, Volume 7094, File: 1/10-3-0, 25 April 1957, “Relief Assistance by Agency Cheque,” H.M. Jones, IAB Director, Policy document sent to the field, as quoted in Shewell, *Enough to Keep Them Alive*, 248.

recipients. By the 1950's, however, there appears to have been a shift in some officials' attitudes. Some women at least were seen as more prudent shoppers than their husbands.⁴²

The Dependents' Allowance Program of the 1940's is significant because it is an example of a program where a large number of women received a monthly cheque directly. Other than the separation allowance cheques received in World War I, the majority of women had not received money directly from the government. Some women had received cheques under the pension program and mothers' allowances, but eligibility for these programs was limited and the receipt of money was often not continuous if one's status or income changed. For Aboriginal women involved in the Dependents' Allowance Program, the fact that the cheques were addressed to them is important because it is one of the first times that these women received cash directly from the government. For some, their receipt of a cheque established a precedent for their direct receipt of cheques offered through other social programs such as the Family Allowances Program.⁴³

This chapter also considers some Euro-Canadian women's demands for higher rates due to inadequate allowances and increased costs of living. Here a consideration of

⁴² More research needs to be done to explore if the images of Aboriginal women changed as their role as consumers was acknowledged. If the images did change, it would be interesting to know if the newer images led Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal women to participate in joint protests for greater economic rights. It is possible that Aboriginal women saw organizations dominated by Euro-Canadian women as unable to address their unique concerns and therefore rejected participating in them.

⁴³ It is important to note that this precedent did not apply to all Aboriginal women. Under the Family Allowances Program, Hugh Shewell has noted that many First Nations women received their cheques directly. However, some northern First Nations and Innu women did not receive cheques because officials argued they were too inexperienced with money and were not familiar enough with consumer products. Although the experience of the Dependents' Allowance Program had convinced some federal officials that certain First Nations women were capable of receiving cheques directly, they were not convinced of this in all cases. The assumption that racial origin was linked to an inability to handle money continued to affect how cheques were distributed in the post-war period. See Shewell, *Enough to Keep Them Alive*, 247. Also see Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State*, Chapter 3, 7.

the links some scholars have made between economics and citizenship are helpful. In her article on debates about citizenship and gender in 1940's Montreal, Magda Fahrni finds that the rights of economic citizenship were increasingly defined as entitlement "to participate in a capitalist economy on reasonable terms, and further that the state had a role to play in facilitating this participation."⁴⁴ In discussing the experiences of English and French women in Canada, Fahrni notes that, "In cities across the country, women used their intimate knowledge of their household finances to demand better social welfare measures and a reasonable cost of living in the context of the Second World War and postwar reconstruction."⁴⁵ In constructing their arguments for fair prices, women often provided detailed budgets itemizing the amount spent. They emphasized their own thriftiness.⁴⁶ Concepts such as "personal liberty," "individual autonomy," and "free choice" were evoked when women claimed rights to access certain consumer goods.⁴⁷ In this way, purchasing power was linked to notions of citizenship. In the post-war period, when the government failed to control prices or to provide access to certain goods, women organized protests and refused to buy certain items until the prices came down.⁴⁸ Fahrni argues that these women's arguments and protests were significant because, through these public debates, the family and its concerns were not limited to the private sphere. She states that, "Their efforts made the family visible in public; indeed, these women used the claims of family as a key basis for citizenship."⁴⁹ Fahrni concludes that

⁴⁴ Magda Fahrni, "Counting the Costs of Living: Gender, Citizenship, and a Politics of Prices in 1940s Montreal," *The Canadian Historical Review*, 83, 4, (December 2002): 483-504.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 483.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 490.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 499.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 495-497.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 484.

women during this time period had a “growing sense that an expanding state was accessible to them and that they were entitled to make certain demands upon it.”⁵⁰

The example of the Dependents’ Allowances Program supports Farhni’s conclusions. Women as individuals and as a part of formal organizations protested when they believed their allowances to be inadequate. In making their arguments, they referred to their daily living costs and how these could not be met by the allowances provided. Based upon their husbands’ or sons’ military service, these women believed that they were entitled to the allowances as a right. Due to their belief that they had a right to the allowance, they resented, as we have seen in Chapter 1, the Dependents’ Board of Trustees Program because grants were only issued to certain families who subjected themselves to investigations by representatives from social agencies. Rather than providing all soldiers’ families with increased rates, this program, soldiers’ wives argued, resembled relief. Eventually, due to the pressure they put on the federal government, increases to all allowances were made in 1943. These protests reveal that soldiers’ wives and mothers believed, as Fahrni argues, that they had a right to make demands upon the state.

Indian Agents defended their increased control over the allowances by arguing that Aboriginal women did not conform to certain idealized notions of sexual “purity” and “respectability.” These claims reflect patterns found by other researchers exploring the regulation of Aboriginal women and their families. Joan Sangster, in her book entitled, Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960, finds that social workers, policy and law makers sought to make working class and racial groups conform to idealized notions of middle class Euro-Canadian values. These

⁵⁰ Ibid., 486.

values included “monogamous marriages, patriarchal and nuclear families, female purity, and domesticity.”⁵¹ These goals and ideals were unattainable or undesirable for many working class or Aboriginal families due to economic circumstances or cultural beliefs. Despite many families’ alternate views, Sangster finds that “Creating and sustaining ‘ideal’ families through law and bureaucratic policy had long been an enduring ingredient of the state’s nation-building project.”⁵² Women were seen as being particularly important to this project because they raised the children and were responsible for the family’s domestic life.

The desire to impose certain middle class ideals on working class and Aboriginal women were generally similar; however, when discussing the regulation of women’s sexuality, Sangster argues that Aboriginal women’s experiences differed. Most significantly, the powers Indian Agents had through the Indian Act to punish women subjected them to harsher treatment.⁵³ To be sure, Sangster finds that both working class and Aboriginal women were convicted for such offenses as promiscuity and illegitimacy under the Ontario Female Refuges Act.⁵⁴ However, when sentencing “the courts were influenced by racial stereotypes of Aboriginal women as weaker in moral outlook and more sexually promiscuous. Once incarcerated, they were often perceived to be less

⁵¹ Joan Sangster, Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ This Act was first enacted in 1897 to regulate women between the ages of 16 and 35 in Industrial Houses of Refuge who had been or were liable to be sentenced by local magistrates or under the Criminal Code. In 1919 the Act was amended giving magistrates and judges more powers to incarcerate women who were considered to be leading a life of vice. Women were usually sentenced to serve one to two years in a reformatory institute as punishment. Most of the incarcerations dealt with promiscuity, illegitimate pregnancies and venereal disease. The majority of women who were sentenced under the Act were working class or poor. See Sangster, Regulating Girls and Women, 116.

likely candidates for rehabilitation.”⁵⁵ Racial assumptions about Aboriginal women’s perceived lack of morality and lack of sexual propriety, which had been articulated by colonial officials since the nineteenth century, made officials attentive to Aboriginal women’s sexual practices, even more so than in the case of working class or poor women.⁵⁶

While the overall numbers of women arrested under the Act decreased in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s, the number of Aboriginal women being incarcerated increased.⁵⁷ Sangster states that this movement was representative of an overall pattern of Aboriginal women’s increased incarceration during this time period.⁵⁸ For Euro-Canadian working class and poor women, who were typically charged under the Act, concerns about sexual behavior had been related to fears that it would lead to prostitution. By the 1950’s, prostitution came to be seen as only one of many other social problems. The public’s interest in social problems other than prostitution led to fewer arrests and the closing of reformatory institutes. In contrast, Indian Agents’ continued willingness to enforce their authority to punish Aboriginal women’s perceived sexual promiscuity played a part in ensuring the number of Aboriginal women sentenced remained high.⁵⁹

In her history of families in Canada, Cynthia Comacchio discusses additional stereotypes that affected bureaucrats’ perceptions of Aboriginal men and women. She argues that federal government officials⁶⁰ believed that Aboriginal men were incapable of being “proper” breadwinners because they were unable to pursue their traditional

⁵⁵ Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women*, 186.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 87, 122.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 122.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Comacchio is not more specific as to what specific federal officials held these beliefs. See Cynthia R. Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 45-46.

occupations of being hunters, warriors and nomads.⁶¹ Aboriginal women were perceived as “incompetent” mothers. They were portrayed by officials as “dissolute, immoral, and somehow responsible for the deplorable housing on reserves, the high mortality rate, the neglected and ‘rebellious’ children, and the general poverty.”⁶² Indian Agents’ statements studied in this chapter support these views. Comacchio concludes, however, that the perceived “problems” on reserves had more to do with the inadequate resources provided rather than with “racial origin.”⁶³

Notions of “respectability” were central to how Aboriginal women were perceived, especially by Indian Agents. It is worthwhile, therefore, to explore how other historians have defined “respectability” and how they have assessed its impact. According to recent literature in women’s history, “respectability” was defined as dressing well, being chaste, and not drinking. For instance, as Kate Boyer finds in her examination of female clerks in Montreal in the early twentieth century, “Appearance, dress, and conforming in outward behaviour to certain social codes has always been a standard feature in definitions of respectability.”⁶⁴ Sobriety and sexual propriety were two other characteristics essential to how “respectability” was defined. These standards of “respectability” allowed employers to protect their corporate image while hiring female labour at a lower price than what they would have had to pay male employees.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 46.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Kate Boyer, “Re-Working Respectability: The Feminization of Clerical Work and the Politics of Public Virtue in Early Twentieth-Century Montreal,” in Power, Place and Identity: Historical Studies of Social and Legal Regulation in Quebec, Occasional Papers of the Montreal History Group Number 3, Tamara Myers, Kate Boyer, Mary Anne Poutanen, and Steven Watt, eds., 1998/2002, 159.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 168. For other works addressing constructions of “respectability” and female employees see Carolyn Strange, Toronto’s Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), Joan Sangster, Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), Sangster, Regulating Girls

These definitions of “respectability” are important to keep in mind because they influenced how Indian Agents evaluated the women. The failure to be “respectable” was the basis upon which Indian Agents justified administration. Most Indian Agents in the dependents’ allowance case files portrayed Aboriginal women as thwarting them in achieving assimilation by failing to become “good mothers” who rejected their own cultural traditions. The adversarial relationship some Indian Agents described with Aboriginal women suggests that these women did not necessarily agree with officials’ views about their role. In fact, many oral histories recorded by Aboriginal women indicate that they acted in the exact opposite way officials intended them to by continuing to practice and teach their particular First Nations’ cultural traditions to their children.⁶⁶

2.3 THE BARE NECESSITIES: OFFICIALS ASSESS ABORIGINAL FAMILIES’ NEEDS AND ABORIGINAL WOMEN’S SPENDING

One of the major assumptions that influenced officials’ decisions about allowance policies was the notion that Aboriginal women were “wasteful” and incapable of managing money. This assumption was based on pre-conceived ideas about Aboriginal women’s racial characteristics rather than upon any systematic collection of evidence that Aboriginal women were “misspending” their allowance. Only four months after the policy was implemented, Charles Camsell, the Deputy Minister of the Department of

and Women, and Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

⁶⁶ See Sarah Carter, “First Nations Women of Prairie Canada in the Early Reserve Years, the 1870s to the 1920s: A Preliminary Inquiry,” in *Women of the First Nations: Power, Wisdom and Strength*, Christine Miller and Patricia Chuchryk, eds. (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 58-61. In noting this pattern one must be careful not to see Aboriginal women as historical figures frozen in time that kept pre-contact traditions and did not adapt to changing historical circumstances. This issue is further complicated by some First Nations’ women’s claims in current political debates that they are the “keepers of the tradition.” Some scholars have suggested that these claims disregard the complexity of the role Aboriginal women played throughout history. See Jo-Anne Fiske, “Political Status of Native Indian Women: Contradictory Implications of Canadian State Policy,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 19, 2, (1995): 1-30 and Julia V. Emberley, “The Power in Written Bodies: Gender, Decolonization, and the Archive,” *Genders*, 23, (1996): 184-211.

Mines and Resources, expressed his concerns about the amount of allowance Aboriginal dependents received:

This is a great deal more money than these women have been accustomed to, and is more than they require for their immediate needs. It has been our experience that this condition may result in demoralization of the individual or family concerned, as well as create jealousy and unrest among the Band in general.⁶⁷

Camsell made assumptions about Aboriginal people's class status and living costs by pointing out that the amount of the allowance would be higher than women's pre-enlistment income. It is unclear what costs and what levels of living conditions were considered as being included in the term "immediate needs." Instead of improving families' economic situation, the Deputy Minister concluded that the additional money would lead to "demoralization."⁶⁸ He added that other community members would get jealous of the women because of their allowance. In the case of non-Aboriginal recipients, such concerns about how women's neighbours would react do not seem to have been used as a reason to justify why their access to the allowance money should be limited based on the archival documents examined. The "unrest" Camsell refers to could have been perceived differently by the Aboriginal recipients. Based on their beliefs that they were entitled to the allowance, some women may have begun to challenge Indian Agents' attempts to control the money. What the women would have seen as legitimate protest may have been perceived by Indian Agents and upper level bureaucrats as "unrest." Such words did not seem to appear in comments about Euro-Canadians' protests.

⁶⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Charles Camsell, Deputy Minister, Department of Mines and Resources, Ottawa, Ontario, to Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 1 November 1939.

⁶⁸ This term was repeated by the Dependents' Allowance Chairman when trying to justify the Board's policy decisions. Presumably he used it because Camsell used it.

The Deputy Minister's statements were supported by comments made by Indian Agents. Their assumptions about Aboriginal women's financial abilities are important to understanding why they wanted more control over the allowances. In the correspondence related to the dependents' allowances, they generally believed that Aboriginal people did not know how to manage their finances. Indian Agent McDougall from Summerside in Prince Edward Island, wrote that "The Dept quite well understands that no Indian is capable of handling money properly."⁶⁹ Agent Irwin from Kootenay Agency in Cranbrook, British Columbia, concluded that "In my opinion no Indian woman in this agency who is the wife of an enlisted man now serving or likely to serve overseas, should receive an allowance of more than \$40 a month. They are a wasteful people and cannot be persuaded to open a savings account in our local banks."⁷⁰ One Indian Agent compared Aboriginal people to children: "Knowing these Indians as I do, a cheque for \$100 or even \$200 would be gone in less than a week. They have no idea of the value of money, and the majority of them have to be treated like children."⁷¹ Through phrases such as "In my opinion" and "Knowing these Indians as I do," the Indian Agents emphasized their ability to speak authoritatively about how Aboriginal people spent their money. In non-Aboriginal cases, bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board and social workers expressed concerns that some women could not manage the household finances because their husbands had previously done this job prior to going overseas. They recognized that only a minority of women would require assistance and did not appear to refer to one particular class of white women as all needing assistance. In the

⁶⁹ LAC, Records of the Dependents' Allowance Board, (DAB), RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, "Remarks of Indian Agents Extracted from Files," Author not identified, Not dated.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

case of Aboriginal women, the concerns were more complicated than an anxiety that women would not be able to take over from their husbands. The above Indian Agents' concerns had to do with assumptions about "Indians" general "wastefulness," and these concerns related more to their racial origin than to their gender. Rather than attempting to qualify their statements, the majority of Agents appeared to believe it was justifiable to characterize Aboriginal women as being the same.

There were only a few Agents who attempted to challenge the image of "wastefulness" and incompetence presented by the majority of Indian Agents. E.P. Randle, the Indian Superintendent of the Six Nations at Brantford, Ontario wrote to the Dependents' Allowance Board that "most Indians are sensible and thrifty with what little money they earn or receive."⁷² C.R. Johnston from Manitowaning, Ontario, also wrote to the Board stating that he believed most soldiers' dependents were capable of handling their own allowance money.⁷³ Officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board appeared to accept that the majority of Aboriginal recipients were "misusing" their allowances and the few comments suggesting otherwise do not appear to have significantly altered their thinking on this issue.

Whereas some Indian Agents stated that the allowance was being used to purchase more food and clothing, others claimed that the money was not being used to improve living conditions. Agent Irwin wrote the following answer to questions about the impact of the allowance on family finances which the Dependents' Allowance Board

⁷² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 49, File Number: 30, File Title: D.A. & A.P. re: Enlisted North American Indians and list of agencies, E.P. Randle, Indian Superintendent, Brantford, Ontario to R.O.G. Bennett, DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario, 22 January 1942.

⁷³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 49, File Number 30, File Title: D.A. & A.P. re: Enlisted North American Indians and list of agencies, C.R. Johnston, Indian Agent, Manitowaning, Ontario to DAB, Ottawa, Ontario, 13 March 1942.

asked Agents to report on:⁷⁴ “Has the sudden increase in income caused any adverse effects? ‘Perhaps not; but certainly has not bettered conditions. No savings in 16 months.’”⁷⁵ He implied that savings were the only “proof” that conditions were better; it seems that other factors, such as improvements in the quantity and quality of groceries, clothing, or household items would not qualify as “bettered conditions.” As will be illustrated later in this chapter, the claims by many representatives from nongovernmental organizations that the allowances were inadequate undermined the notion that recipients should have been able to save their allowances.

Other Agents commented that the allowance money was being spent on transportation, alcohol, and other items that they perceived as “unnecessary.” As one of them stated, “All money received in the past with two exceptions has just been wasted and no improvements are noticeable in their home conditions. Money is just squandered in the hire of cars, [and] liquor...”⁷⁶ In commenting on the types of purchases Aboriginal recipients were making with their allowance, Indian Agent Hudson from New Brunswick East Agency, Richibucto, remarked, “Indians are much inclined to spend their money on things that are unnecessary, such as musical instruments, radios, and sometimes on second-hand cars.”⁷⁷ Interestingly, Indian Agent Hudson did not refer to specific cases. Instead he stated that “Indians are much inclined” as if it was an “inherent” part of an Aboriginal person’s nature to buy things that are “unnecessary.” Such generalizations

⁷⁴ It would appear based on the archival documents examined that only Indian Agents were asked to answer these questions. Officials dealing with non-Aboriginal recipients do not appear to have been asked to fill out such questionnaires.

⁷⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, “Extracts from Letters from Indian Agents,” Author not identified, Not dated. A written note at the top of the document indicated, “Mr. Bennett: You may find this useful.”

⁷⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, “Remarks of Indian Agents Extracted from Files,” Author not identified, Not dated.

⁷⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, “Extracts from Letters from Indian Agents,” Author not identified, Not dated.

were commonly made by officials and are related to the larger concern that “Indians” by nature were “improvident” and unable to plan for the future.⁷⁸ Spending money on “unnecessary” things could have been seen by the Indian Agent as further “evidence” that the Aboriginal allowance recipients were making impulse purchases based on what they wanted in the present rather than budgeting for the money to last the month.

From the 1920’s onward, cars, telephones, and radios were becoming increasingly common in Euro-Canadian households.⁷⁹ Hudson was setting the standard of living at a lower level for Aboriginal families in comparison to Euro-Canadian families. Items that were commonly found in Euro-Canadian households were “luxuries” or “unnecessary” for Aboriginal families.

It is difficult to ascertain what level of experience Aboriginal women had with the consumer market. Their experience presumably would have varied depending on whether or not they or their husbands made the majority of the purchases, how isolated their reserve was from a town and if they were engaged in paid employment. The documents found did not provide any insights into the nature of the relationships between merchants and these women. Consequently, it is not possible to comment further on what strategies women used when dealing with merchants, how frequently they purchased items, what items they purchased, and what they paid for the items.

Research in United States suggests that the steady and higher income received through military pay and allowances did allow more Aboriginal people to participate in the economy as consumers. Many people bought items they had previously been unable

⁷⁸ See Sarah Carter, Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 17.

⁷⁹ Comacchio, The Infinite Bonds of Family, 83.

to afford such as radios, heaters, phonograph record players, and refrigerators.⁸⁰ In the Canadian case, as we have seen, some Indian Agents criticized women for buying radios because they considered them “unnecessary.” American politicians in the 1940’s appeared to encourage both Native American and Euro-American to purchase consumer goods as a way to stimulate the economy. They believed that Native Americans should assimilate and give up “communalism for consumerism.”⁸¹

Indian Agents also remarked that they disapproved when women lent money to other community members. One Indian Agent noted that the allowance was wasted through “the chiseling by others.”⁸² Indian Agent Hudson remarked that “There are also Indians, and sometimes others, that will borrow from these women when they know they have money, and of course they very seldom if ever repay these loans, and the result is that the money is wasted as it is very seldom borrowed for any useful purpose.”⁸³ Indian Agent J.P.B. Ostrander from Battleford, Saskatchewan, also perceived the sharing of the allowance negatively. He stated that dependents’ allowance recipients “are also preyed upon, by other Indians, who find their homes good places to get free meals.”⁸⁴ As we will see in Chapter 3, there was one Agent who had a less critical view of the sharing of the allowance because he argued it helped community members who would in turn help

⁸⁰ Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward A New Era in Indian Affairs*, (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 59.

⁸¹ Clayton R. Koppes, “From New Deal to Termination: Liberalism and Indian Policy, 1933-1953,” *Pacific Historical Review*, 46, 4, (1977): 553.

⁸² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, “Extracts from Letters from Indian Agents,” Author not identified, Not dated.

⁸³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, “Remarks of Indian Agents Extracted from Files,” Author not identified, Not dated.

⁸⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, J.P. B. Ostrander, Indian Agent, Battleford, Saskatchewan, to Mindy Christianson, General Superintendent of Indian Agencies for Saskatchewan, Regina, Saskatchewan 25 March 1942

out the women.⁸⁵ The implication that community members would take advantage of women with money tended, however, to be the more commonly held view. Such assumptions stemmed, in part, from many Agents' beliefs that Aboriginal men in particular lacked work ethic and would do anything to avoid working.⁸⁶ So pervasive was this belief that some Agents made Aboriginal men work when they were ill because they viewed these men's inability to work for health reasons as being "suspicious" and just an excuse to get out of doing strenuous road work.⁸⁷ Research on Aboriginal workers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has suggested that the assumptions that Aboriginal people were "immoral or lazy, unwilling or unable to adapt to the work ethic of modern industrial capitalism," were largely myths.⁸⁸ The work that Aboriginal men and women did was often varied and included some wage earning through factory work, but also included seasonal work which required traveling, the sale of goods such as fruit and crafts and participation in barter exchanges based on goods rather than money. Their participation in these different systems required much work and effort. However, since they did not conform to the "ideal worker of modern capitalism" who worked in permanent steady employment, was settled in one place, and spent one's wages on

⁸⁵ The Agent made this argument in reaction to the decision of the DAB to reduce the allowance. His comments will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, J.W. Waddy, Indian Agent, Punnichy, Saskatchewan to DAB, Ottawa, Ontario, 16 February 1942.

⁸⁶ Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, 44-45.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁸⁸ See Carol Williams, "Between Doorstep Barter Economy and Industrial Wages: Mobility and Adaptability of Coast Salish Female Laborers in Coastal British Columbia, 1858-1890," *Native Being—Being Native Identity and Difference Proceedings of the Fifth Native American Symposium*, Mark B. Spencer and Lucretia Scoufos, eds. (Southeastern Oklahoma State University, 2005), 25.

building a single family dwelling, their work was often dismissed and devalued by Euro-Canadian officials.⁸⁹

The “loans” and the sharing of food may have been perceived differently in First Nations’ communities. In many Aboriginal cultural traditions, the nuclear family was a part of “a larger system of kin and marital alliances.”⁹⁰ These kinship networks

organized rights and obligations in all aspects of life: naming a child at birth, residence, labour, trade, gender relations, political and cultural leadership, diplomacy and war, marriage and divorce, death and inheritance. The network was extended as widely as possible, through rituals of kinship reciprocity and ceremonial friendships, games and hospitality.⁹¹

For some Aboriginal women, participating in a communal system of exchange could have been a prudent and useful economic strategy. For the women who received the dependents’ allowance, the files examined did not provide insights into how such communal exchanges worked in each of the different First Nation communities and in what ways women utilized such networks. Some soldiers’ wives may have provided part of their allowance money or food to male community members in exchange for assistance with jobs that their husbands would have previously done such as cutting wood. In some cases access to a steady income through the receipt of the allowance may have improved some women’s ability to contribute money consistently to such economic exchanges possibly improving their bargaining position. It is possible that the allowance money that was received by women as an individual benefit from the federal government

⁸⁹ Paige Raibmon, “Theatres of Contact: The Kwakwaka’wakw Meet Colonialism in British Columbia and at the Chicago’s World’s Fair,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 81, 2, (June 2000): 158-160, 170. For a further discussion of officials’ desire to have Aboriginal people spend their allowance on building single family dwellings see Chapter 4.

⁹⁰ Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family*, 16.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

could have been used to, in fact, strengthen the tradition of communalism which for years Indian Affairs Branch officials had been trying to abolish.⁹²

There also may have been societal obligations that would have required that the women share their allowance. In some First Nations' cultures people with resources were obliged to share with people in need. In the Iroquois culture, one's status and authority was proven through how much one gave to others, not through the personal accumulation of goods. The individuals with the highest status in the society such as the Chiefs often had the least amount of goods because they were distributed among the population.⁹³

Among Northwest Coast cultures, what families were able to give away at a potlatch ceremony was seen as a reflection of the respect they believed their name should be

⁹² More research on First Nations' communities' economic systems during the 1940's would have to be done in order to more fully validate this conclusion. Such possible uses for the allowance are interesting to think about in light of the research scholars have done on Aboriginal peoples' economies in the nineteenth century. These scholars have found that rather than encouraging assimilation, Aboriginal people's participation in the waged economy allowed them, in some cases, to strengthen their own cultural traditions. In the nineteenth century, many Aboriginal men and women in Canada received wages through seasonal work such as hop picking, employment in the canneries, and through the sale of crafts. Some used the money they earned to practice some aspects of own cultural traditions—albeit in a modified form from the pre-contact era. Tina Loo has found that wages allowed people to buy more goods to bring to the potlatch and allowed the Kwakiutl First Nation to expand their potlatches. This expansion of the potlatch was a result, in part, of Aboriginal people's ability to successfully adapt to a waged capitalist economy. See Tina Loo, "Dan Cramner's Potlatch: Law as Coercion, Symbol, and Rhetoric in British Columbia, 1884-1951," *Canadian Historical Review*, 2 (1992): 138-139, 144. Paige Raibmon finds that the Kwakwak'wakw First Nation also used the wages they earned through seasonal work and by performing at the Chicago Fair on potlatches. As Raibmon's concludes, "instead of supplanting the potlatch economy, the wage economy encouraged it to flourish in new ways, even as the potlatch encouraged increasing Aboriginal involvement in 'modern' wage labour." See Paige Raibmon, "Theatres of Contact: The Kwakwaka'wakw Meet Colonialism in British Columbia and at the Chicago's World's Fair," *Canadian Historical Review*, 81, 2, (June 2000): 170. Carol Williams has found that the tradition of basket weaving was revived, in part, because Aboriginal women wanted a craft that could be sold to Euro-American consumers. Williams concludes that "women's entrepreneurialism of the contemporary era had unexpected positive effects in reviving and sustaining traditional women's skills and knowledge." See Carol Williams, "Between Doorstep Barter Economy and Industrial Wages: Mobility and Adaptability of Coast Salish Female Laborers in Coastal British Columbia, 1858-1890," *Native Being--Being Native: Identity and Difference Proceedings of the Fifth Native American Symposium*, Mark B. Spencer and Lucretia Scoufos, eds. (Southeastern Oklahoma State University, 2005), 17, 24-26. It is possible that monies received through state benefits were used to revive certain traditions or reinforce traditions such as communal sharing, although more research would have to be done to support this conclusion.

⁹³ Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization*. (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 22.

given.⁹⁴ What was seen as “waste” by some of the Indian Agents may have been, for certain women, a fulfillment of their responsibilities in accordance with the values and codes of conduct within their own First Nation.

Many Euro-Canadians found such type of social organization “uncivilized.” They preferred a system of “property and inheritance rights to separate families in separate households...”⁹⁵ Historian Paige Raibmon argues that the potlatch, in particular, was seen by many Euro-Canadian government officials as “wasteful” and “excessive” and “fundamentally opposed to the accumulation of wealth and the workings of capitalist markets.”⁹⁶ Brownlie notes for Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats, who wanted Aboriginal people to assimilate “...it was important that the people abandon their kinship and community oriented ethic of sharing resources, conforming instead to the heavily individualistic emphasis of Euro-Canadian society.”⁹⁷ Brownlie concludes, “Only by denying aid to their kin and friends, and by accumulating privately owned property whose use was confined to the nuclear family, could First Nations people become fully worthy of membership in Canadian society.”⁹⁸ The Indian Agents discussed above appear to reflect these larger concerns of trying to ensure Aboriginal communities abandoned the practice of communal sharing.

In addition to questioning the practice of communal sharing, Indian Agents emphasized that Aboriginal women were naive. Accordingly, they believed it was their paternalistic duty to prevent these women from being cheated. As Indian Agent

⁹⁴ Ruth Kirk, Wisdom of the Elders: Native Traditions on the Northwest Coast. (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1986), 60.

⁹⁵ Raibmon, “Theatres of Contact,” 166.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye, 127.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 127-128.

Ostrander from Battleford, Saskatchewan stated, “the women have not been in the habit of having rather large sums of money to handle and they use poor judgment in spending and are the prey of all kinds of crooks, and dead-beats, when they are known to have money.”⁹⁹ Ostrander emphasized his own authority by implying he could identify the people who were the “crooks and dead-beats.” In comparison, he perceived the women as having “poor judgment.” Indian Agent R. Lee MacCutcheon from Fredericton, New Brunswick, made a similar observation to Ostrander:

Unfortunately, we have car dealers, who endeavor to put some old useless car off on these women and then scare them into paying twice the value for the car. In several instances, I have warned dealers to stay away from the reserves and to make no sale without first consulting my office.¹⁰⁰

In his statement, Indian Agent MacCutcheon emphasized his role as a protector by noting that he informed the car dealers to stay away from the reserve. Women were perceived as being gullible. According to MacCutcheon, his approval was needed if the value of the purchase was to be “properly” assessed. He stated that he would confer with the car dealers. Both Indian Agents emphasized that they should be in charge of making the financial arrangements with the merchants or salesmen. It is unclear if the men referred to by the Indian Agents were Euro-Canadian or Aboriginal or both. Other scholars have found that Indian Agents and missionaries in the nineteenth century expressed concerns about certain Euro-Canadians who would try to sell alcohol to Aboriginal people on reserves. They expressed anxieties that “bad white men” who were “intemperate and

⁹⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Ostrander to Christianson, 25 March 1942.

¹⁰⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File 452-6-56, R. Lee MacCutcheon, Indian Agent, Fredericton, New Brunswick to IAB Secretary, Ottawa, Ontario, May 10, 1940.

immoral” would negatively affect Aboriginal people’s behavior.¹⁰¹ Aboriginal people were assumed to be more easily susceptible to negative influences and many missionaries and local officials considered it their duty to “protect” them.¹⁰²

Indian Agents also sought to isolate Aboriginal women from directly dealing with other Euro-Canadians in order to preserve their ability to bargain with merchants or salesmen. It is unclear whether Indian Agents’ anxieties about soldiers’ wives being vulnerable to unscrupulous salesmen were justified.¹⁰³ In some cases where the soldiers had previously handled the family finances, it is possible that the women, who were taking over these responsibilities for the first time, were made more vulnerable by the soldiers’ departure. The Indian Agents, however, emphasized their own need for control as a way to solve this problem. They generally did not see their control as a short term measure until the women gained more experience with budgeting. They did not consider the possibility that the women may have been assisted by male or female relatives who had experience in dealing with these matters.¹⁰⁴

Indian Agents consistently stated that Aboriginal women could live on a lower amount of money. One Indian Agent remarked in the case of the family of Ernest Howe, “The dependent of the above mentioned Indian soldier is in receipt of an allowance of approximately \$120.00 per month. As this seems a bit more than she should require to

¹⁰¹ J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 189. The class background of these men was not stated.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ The soldiers who wrote in to the Dependents’ Allowance Board or the Indian Affairs Branch did not express worries that their wives were being taken advantage of by salesmen or merchants. The members of the community did not write in complaining of these problems based on the files examined.

¹⁰⁴ For Euro-Canadian recipients, social workers did not express concerns to the Dependents’ Allowance Board about unscrupulous merchants. A more systematic review of the social workers’ reports on Euro-Canadian dependents’ could possibly reveal such concerns. Although social workers had to send their reports to the Dependents’ Allowance Board for review, there were only a few social workers’ reports in the Dependents’ Allowance Board records. It is possible that these reports were destroyed. An examination of provincial or municipal records could reveal that the files are located there, but such research is beyond the scope of this work.

maintain an adequate standard of living for her and her children I suggested to her the possibility of saving a portion of it monthly preparing for any future emergency.”¹⁰⁵ Indian Agent Kerley¹⁰⁶ remarked that “In most cases I believe that the amount of the allowance is greater than is necessary for their immediate needs. In my opinion \$40 per month for those living on the reserve would be sufficient.”¹⁰⁷ At least seven other Indian Agents made similar comments.¹⁰⁸ Once again terms like “adequate standard” and “immediate needs” are not defined so it is difficult to ascertain what type of conditions were perceived by the Indian Agents as “sufficient.” As we have seen, Brownlie finds, in her examination of bureaucrats’ attitudes towards relief in the 1930’s, that it was assumed most Aboriginal people would live at a subsistence level.¹⁰⁹ In implementing relief, bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch stated that Aboriginal people should receive “only the actual necessities of life.”¹¹⁰ In these assessments of living costs, it is unclear how Indian Agents were calculating the economic contribution of the soldier who may have previously done unpaid as well as paid work. It is not evident either that

¹⁰⁵ LAC RG 10, Volume 6799, File 452-749 Pt. 1, Illegible signature, Indian Agent J.S. Robb, Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, to IAB, Ottawa, Ontario, 9 June 1943.

¹⁰⁶ Indian Agent’s Kerley’s geographic location was not identified.

¹⁰⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, “Remarks of Indian Agents Extracted from Files,” Author not identified, Not dated.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* See the additional comments by Indian Agents: Indian Agent Robertson remarked, “...\$20 is sufficient for wife’s needs.” Indian Agent McCracken wrote, “\$94 seems excessive. This family should be able to live nicely on \$75 monthly.” Indian Agent Pugh remarked, “Out of a \$79 cheque, the agent sends the wife only \$30 per month for living expenses.” Indian Agent Spence commented, “Present amount ‘not desirable or necessary.’” Indian Agent Clarke noted, “The total of \$45 per month as outlined in your letter should be sufficient for this woman’s needs.” Indian Agent Davis wrote, “I quite agree with you that \$94 is far in excess of the amount necessary for this family to maintain a comfortable living standard, and much more than they have been used to.” Indian Agent Davis also wrote, “I consider the amount stated in your letter is quite sufficient to maintain a family properly...if Mrs. Smith only receives the \$34 as stated in your letter, it will be quite alright to send it to her, as her husband is now in eastern Canada and can not come home to drink it.” Indian Agent Lewis stated, “I consider that \$54 per month would be ample for the needs of the family.”

¹⁰⁹ Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, 151.

¹¹⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 10615 File name not identified, Robert Lewis, Indian Agent, Manitowaning Agency, Manitoulin Island, to IAB, Ottawa, Ontario, 19 January 1933, as quoted in Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, 113.

unpaid contributions to the family income were being calculated in the Indian Agents' estimates as additional costs the woman would now have to pay for. The women themselves do not appear to have been consulted about their budgets and expenses when these estimates were devised. Here we can see the influence of the "less eligibility" principle which had long shaped officials' thinking on social security issues.¹¹¹ This principle had originally come from the English poor laws in Britain which had required that any amount given to the poor had to be less than the average wages of an unskilled labourer. The low amounts would make relief unappealing and would force the poor to maintain a good work ethic and be thrifty—characteristics the poor were considered not to have. In arguing that Aboriginal recipients should receive only enough for their "immediate needs," Indian Agents were trying to ensure that government support did not appear too appealing.

2.4 A SOCIAL MINIMUM? PUBLIC DEBATES ABOUT THE ADEQUACY OF THE ALLOWANCE

Some Indian Agents' belief that the bare minimum be provided to recipients contrasted with the nature of the general debates about the allowance that took place among federal officials, social workers, municipal officials, Legion representatives, women's organizations and recipients. These debates need to be examined, even though they do not specifically discuss Aboriginal recipients, because they show how attitudes towards assistance and the poor were starting to change and the degree to which Indian Agents' expectations and attitudes towards Aboriginal recipients differed from general

¹¹¹ Dennis Guest, *The Emergence of Social Security in Canada*, Second Edition, (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia, 1985), 36, 112.

debates involving the majority of Euro-Canadian recipients.¹¹² Among these groups, there were discussions about the adequacy of the allowance and the necessity of establishing a “social minimum” which would set basic living standards.¹¹³ Such views contrasted the older notion that those receiving government assistance should only be given money at rates below what an unskilled labourer received. There was a greater recognition than before that economic factors beyond the control of the individual contributed to poor living conditions. These views undermined Indian Agents’ assumptions that the allowance was “excessive.”

In discussing the adequacy of the allowance, the notion that a basic standard should be devised and maintained was present. In a report on the Eighth Canadian Conference on Social Work, one social worker observed, “Running all through the sessions was a quiet insistence for a minimum standard of living, involving adequate housing and nutrition.”¹¹⁴ The Homemakers’ Association was quoted as saying that the allowance rates were below those of the “the absolute minimum” necessary for a family

¹¹² Madga Fahrni also mentions these debates in her book, but does not go into the detail provided here. She puts such claims in the larger context of post-war reconstruction in Montreal. See Madga Fahrni, *Household Politics: Montreal Families and Postwar Reconstruction*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), Chapter 3 Sustaining Soldiers, Veterans, and Their Families.

¹¹³ These debates were not limited to Canada. In Britain, there were also debates about establishing a social minimum. In the British system of military allowances, officials defined a standard level of maintenance regarded as acceptable for soldiers’ families. If the family’s income fell short of this standard the amount needed to meet the standard was provided through a war service grant. Families whose standard of living was above the set amount could also apply for grants if the amount being received through allowances was below the pre-enlistment income. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 24, File: 1-50, File Title: DBT Advisory Committee, London, England, Memorandum by J. Pembroke, DBT Chairman and Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 30 May 1944 and LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 24, File: 1-50, File Title: DBT Advisory Committee, London, England, Vincent Massey, Office of the High Commissioner for Canada, Canada House, London, England, to Not identified, 22 November 1941.

¹¹⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 4, File Title: Minutes of Executive Committee, “The Dependents’ Board of Trustees Appendix ‘A’ to the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting: Report of Miss Lawson, DAB Chief Reviewer, on ‘The Eighth Canadian Conference on Social Work Montreal,’” 11 May 1942. The language regarding children’s rights to a minimum standard of living became more explicit in the implementation of the Family Allowances Program in 1944. Prime Minister Mackenzie King stated that one of the justifications for the program was to ensure that every child would have the right to a minimum standard of living. See Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State*, 1.

to exist.¹¹⁵ In particular, concerns were raised that large families could not survive on the amount they were being provided.¹¹⁶ As readers will recall from Chapter 1, initially allowances were only provided for three children. From January 1943 onwards, allowances were provided for the fourth, fifth and sixth children, but not for any additional children.

Dorothy Sachse, the Secretary of the Welfare Committee for the Women's Auxiliary to the Canadian Army, who earlier had argued against the investigations required by the Dependents' Board of Trustees, also expressed concerns about the inadequacy of the allowance. She argued that the allowance was not covering soldiers' families' basic needs:

Rents are high and have to be paid regularly, as also have heat light and water. Food is becoming a more serious problem daily...Clothing except for the barest essentials, like children's shoes, is getting beyond us altogether. Those who can do it have wisely joined hospitalization groups, but a great number have not even the small necessary margin of income which that requires.¹¹⁷

Sachse believed that dependents deserved the same wages munitions workers or men working in industry received. She wrote, "The dependents of men who have offered themselves to do the grim and dangerous business of actual fighting should surely be on

¹¹⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts, "Soldiers' Dependents Get Less Than Those on Relief City Investigator Reports," Toronto Telegram, Toronto, Ontario, 11 December 1942.

¹¹⁶ For recipients' letters protesting the inadequacy of the allowances when raising a large family see LAC, Records of the Department of Finance, RG 19, Finance, Volume 516, File 124-50-0-1, File Title: Dependents' Allowances. Economic pressures on large families continued to be a concern after the war. A large family was one of the main reasons a child was taken out of school to work. See Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 5, 12

¹¹⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18 Volume 6, File Title: Board Correspondence-Chairman, Dorothy Sachse, Secretary, Welfare Committee, Women's Auxiliary to Canadian Army (A) on behalf of the Women's Auxiliary to Edmonton Fusiliers 9th Army Troop 29th Armored Tank Regiment SAR92nd Battery 61st Battery 4th ,Casualty Clearing C.C. of Signalers C., Forestry Corps PPCL11st, Army Tank Brigade Company, the Edmonton Navy Mothers Club and the Air Force Wives Auxiliary, to Alex Walker, Dominion President, Canadian Legion, BESL, Calgary, Alberta, 21 August 1942.

at least a par with the dependents of those who do the comparatively safe job of making the weapons with which the fighting is done.”¹¹⁸

Many individual women agreed with these arguments and wrote their own letters to the Dependents' Allowance Board. A woman from Montreal North wrote that an increase for soldiers' wives was only fair considering

the factory workers have all had their pay increased to keep up with the rise in the cost of living, also all Civil Servants are getting a bonus to help them out, But we Soldiers wives are still having to carry on the best we can with the same pay as we got when the war started, and that is no easy job now that the cost of living has doubled, we are not complaining all we want is a square deal and a chance to live properly.¹¹⁹

Similar to Sachse, the woman directly compared the pay of soldiers to that of factory workers. She also noted that government officials themselves had even been provided with a cost of living bonus. Furthermore, there was the difficulty of living on soldiers' allowances since the cost of living had increased, a point also made by Sachse.

Alex Walker, the President of the Canadian Legion, in a letter to Prime Minister King wrote, “A member of the Forces is entitled to adequate pay and allowances to take care of his dependents in accordance with a reasonable standard of living.”¹²⁰ Walker believed that many dependents will “be condemned to a marginal existence” if increases were not made. Like Sachse, Walker thought it was unfair that on the whole, family members of workers in industry could count on more money than soldiers' families. Walker concluded, “We are convinced that so far as the allowances to dependents are

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 29, File: DAB 5-6, File Title: Complaints, Mrs. E. Wiltshire, Montreal Quebec, to DAB, Ottawa, Ontario, 5 September 1941. Also quoted in Magda Fahrni, *Household Politics: Montreal Families and Postwar Reconstruction*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 76.

¹²⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 6, File: Board Correspondence-Chairman, Walker to W.L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, 3 September 1942

concerned, some slight evening up of the sacrifice can be made by paying more adequate allowances as a matter of right to all dependents, rather than treating large numbers as if they were on relief.”¹²¹ In particular, Walker contested the fact that dependents, other than wives, received discretionary amounts based on investigators’ evaluations of the families’ financial circumstances. Such protests were linked to larger debates that soldiers’ overall wages should be increased to be comparable to other wage earners.

For the representatives of the women’s auxiliary and the Legion, the problem of what they believed to be inadequate allowances was exacerbated by rising living costs due to inflation. The impact of rising living costs was noted by social welfare organizations as well. G.F. Strong, the Chairman of the Vancouver Welfare Federation, noted in 1941 that a rapid increase in living costs affected most severely the “‘marginal income’ family, the family whose earnings are scarcely sufficient to meet the essentials of food and shelter, and will not sustain any emergency. Higher living costs raise the level of what must be considered ‘marginal income’ and throw new families into the ranks of those who need help in the event of illness or other misfortunes.”¹²² Strong reported that “...services to families of enlisted men constitute the greatest of these special wartime responsibilities which accounted for approximately \$40,000 of our total budgets in 1941.”¹²³ He advocated price ceilings as a way to solve the problem.¹²⁴

Politicians also expressed worries about inflation and its impact on soldiers’ families. In the House of Commons debates there were concerns that there were rising prices due to price manipulation and hoarding. In particular, Howard Charles Green, a

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 3, File: Chairman-Western Canada, “Annual Report of the Board of Directors,” Vancouver Welfare Federation, Vancouver, British Columbia, 8.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Conservative Party Member of Parliament for Vancouver South, British Columbia, noted that dependents receiving the allowance would be particularly affected if the prices were not controlled.¹²⁵ He claimed that he was speaking on behalf of J. Lyle Telford, the Mayor of Vancouver, who had written a letter to him stating that increased prices due to price manipulation and hoarding would create “justifiable resentment and unrest.”¹²⁶ Telford had also argued that “consumers’ rights” needed to be protected. Green agreed with Telford noting specifically that price increases would severely impact those on relief or on the verge of relief, veteran pensioners from World War I, old age pensioners, and mothers’ allowance recipients. Green, who was a veteran from World War I, added, “I ask the committee to note this, the dependents of these young men who are now enlisting, the dependents of our new soldiers. For all of these the raising of prices means semi-starvation.”¹²⁷ He asked for the sake of public morale that the government investigate price increases and punish the people trying to profiteer.¹²⁸

Alex Walker, President of the Legion, believed that the scale of the allowance should be linked to a cost of living index.¹²⁹ He reported that “The index published in the Labour Gazette for June 1942, shows an overall increase of 15.8% since the outbreak of war, while the cost of food has risen 26.2% and clothing 19.9%.”¹³⁰ Walker noted that a cost of living bonus had been provided to workers whose earnings did not exceed \$2,100,

¹²⁵ Green was a Barrister. He was a Member of Parliament from 1935 to 1965. He was a member of the Conservative Caucus from 1936 to 1963. From 1957 to 1962, he served in various Ministerial positions including: the Minister of Defence Production (Acting), the Minister of Public Works, the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Minister of Public Works (Acting). From 1957 to 1959 he was also the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and the House Leader. See Library of Parliament, “Senators and Members- Historical Information,” http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/SenatorsMembers_house consulted on July 6, 2005.

¹²⁶ Canada. Parliament, House of Commons Debates, Volume I, 11 September 1939, 101-102.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 6, File Board Correspondence-Chairman, Walker, to King, 3 September 1942

but not to soldiers' whose earnings in many cases were less than this amount.¹³¹ In contrast to Walker, Indian Agents assumed Aboriginal women's living costs rather than trying to mathematically calculate the costs using an index.

Despite Indian Agents' assumptions that the amount of allowance was "excessive," it is improbable that economic circumstances on some reserves were not affected by rising prices undermining, in part, Agents' claims that Aboriginal women needed less money than Euro-Canadian women. One must consider that some reserves were located near towns or cities where Aboriginal women would have made purchases from local merchants. If the rising prices affected the cost of goods in the local shops, Aboriginal women would have had to pay higher prices. Interestingly, employees working for the Public Service, including Indian Agents who lived in the same geographic areas as Aboriginal women, were provided with a wartime cost of living bonus to deal with rising living costs. This bonus was evaluated based on the Cost of Living Index prepared by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and was provided at a flat rate.¹³²

So far the two concerns discussed have been inadequate allowances and rising living costs due to inflation. These concerns were seen as affecting the majority of soldiers' families. A third issue brought up pertained to families in cities, mainly Toronto, who were particularly hard hit because it cost more to live in the city than it did to live in a small town. For families in Toronto, accusations were made that the "existing standard of dependents' allowances was not high enough for proper food

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Canada. Department of Mines and Resources. "Order in Council, 6702," 26 August 1941. Indian Affairs and Northern Development Library consulted on May 16, 2003.

requirements.”¹³³ Jack Pembroke, the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Department of National Defence and the Chairman of the Dependents’ Board of Trustees, noted that “a scientifically constructed budget” based on “accepted nutritional standards” indicated that the rates of allowance were insufficient for families living in cities.¹³⁴ One member of the City of Toronto Board of Control stated, “The families of soldiers are not treated alike across the dominion when the regional differences in living costs are not recognized.”¹³⁵

In order to deal with rising living costs, the idea that a cost of living bonus for all dependents’ allowance recipients should be implemented was publicly discussed. The public appeared to support the idea, as eighty-four percent of Canadians polled by the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion agreed with a cost of living bonus to dependents of men serving in the armed forces; ten percent said no and six percent were undecided.¹³⁶ The support for the bonus was lowest in the East (sixty-eight percent) and highest in British Columbia (ninety-six percent) but, in each province, the majority of the voting population wanted the increase.¹³⁷ In a press release, the Finance Minister claimed that the allowances were deliberately made high at the beginning of the war to account for the projected increase in the cost of living and that he was reluctant to provide further increases.¹³⁸

In addition to the general public, local politicians also supported the cost of living bonus. A conference of Ontario mayors adopted a motion supporting cost of living

¹³³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 4: “Minutes of Executive Committee,” 29 April 1942, 169.

¹³⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series, 18, Volume 6, File Title: Board Correspondence-Chairman, “Re: Changes in Dependents’ Allowances,” Pembroke to G.S. Currie, Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 6 October 1942.

¹³⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts, “City to Urge Government to Give Dependents’ Bonus,” *Toronto Star*, Toronto, Ontario, 15 October 1942.

¹³⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Cost of Living, “News Service Release from the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion,” Gallup Poll of Canada, 25 November 1942.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

bonuses for soldiers' dependents.¹³⁹ Officials from the City of Toronto were particularly interested in the bonus as they argued they were paying out large amounts of relief to soldiers' families.¹⁴⁰

In their internal discussions about the adequacy of the allowance and the possibility of providing a bonus for soldiers' dependents, government officials debated how such a measure could be implemented and speculated on how to deal with the problem of variations in living costs based on geographical location. Pembroke noted that "There are formidable objections (both public reaction and mechanical) to any attempt to vary allowances by zones established as high, normal, or low-cost areas."¹⁴¹ Local officials and recipients in various cities, towns, and rural areas may have been sensitive to any such differentiations the federal government tried to make based on their experiences in previous provincial programs. Under the Mother's Allowances Program in Ontario officials had provided varied rates based on geographic location. Women in cities generally received thirty-five dollars, town residents received thirty dollars and those in rural areas received twenty-five dollars.¹⁴² These differences had caused a great deal of tension among municipal politicians in urban and rural areas with local country councils arguing that the amounts provided unfairly discriminated against women living in rural areas and in Northern Ontario.¹⁴³ An awareness of these previous debates

¹³⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts, "Mayors Ask For Increase in Mothers' Allowances," Toronto Star, Toronto, Ontario, 8 October 1942.

¹⁴⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts, "Bonus for Soldiers' Kin Aim of Mass Meeting," Toronto Star, Toronto, Ontario, 11 November 1942.

¹⁴¹ LAC, RG 36, Series, 18, Volume 6, File: Board Correspondence-Chairman, "Re: Changes in Dependents' Allowances," Pembroke to Currie, 6 October 1942. The cost of living bonuses provided to civil servants did not serve as a model for varying the allowances based on geographic area because these bonuses were provided at a flat rate. See "Order in Council, 6702," 26 August 1941.

¹⁴² 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, 1998), 94.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 87.

possibly influenced Pembroke's opinion that there would be "formidable objections" to any variations. Despite Pembroke's observation that there would be objections to varying the allowances, bureaucrats, as Chapter 3 will illustrate, did attempt to vary the allowance paid to Aboriginal women on the basis of geographic location. They claimed that reserves as a whole were "low cost" areas. Overall, Pembroke argued that it might not be useful to increase the allowances for certain groups and not for others because it would have a negative impact on morale.¹⁴⁴ When bureaucrats reduced Aboriginal women's allowances for four months in 1942, the potential impact on their morale was not discussed by officials.

A.H. Brown, a member of the Dependents' Allowance Board, also commented on potential increases in allowances and the idea of a cost of living bonus. He noted that an increase in the allowances to meet rising living costs was looked upon "as a matter of right."¹⁴⁵ He believed that among the members of the Armed Forces there was a belief in the theory of "equal work-equal pay."¹⁴⁶ He also feared that if higher allowances were only given to families living in cities, people might move to urban areas. There was the additional problem of "arriving at, and defending, clear cut and well founded variations in allowances based on differential regional living costs."¹⁴⁷ Brown pointed out the problems with trying to vary the rates based on living costs in different regions. Significantly, however, in the case of reserves, bureaucrats attempted to defend different treatment for Aboriginal families based on their assumptions about lower costs of living

¹⁴⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series, 18, Volume 6, File Title: Board Correspondence-Chairman, "Re: Changes in Dependents' Allowances," Pembroke to Currie, 6 October 1942.

¹⁴⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Cost of Living, Memorandum by A.H. Brown, 22 September, 1942.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

on reserves. Brown concluded that although increasing the allowances to city dwellers would be the most cost effective for the government, there would be great protest. Consequently, he suggested that an increase in the general scale of dependents' allowances to meet living costs be considered.

The demands for increases by the Legion, the women's military auxiliary and other women's and social welfare organizations combined with concerns about morale, appeared to have convinced politicians that a cost of living bonus be put in place. The cost of living bonus eventually provided was put in place effective January 1, 1943. J.L. Ralston, the Minister of National Defence, noted, "The bonus will be based upon the increase in the cost of living index since October 1941, and revised quarterly, in the same way as the bonus to labour."¹⁴⁸ The Order in Council authorizing the bonus stipulated that for a wife without a child "such percentage of \$58 as is equal to the percentage declared by the National War Labour Board to be payable to female workers employed at less than \$25 per week."¹⁴⁹ For women with children, the amount was paid based on "an amount equal to four and one-third times the weekly amount payable to adult male employees as declared by the National War Labour Board."¹⁵⁰ Based on these calculations, the bonus ended up being \$1.40 per month for wives without children and

¹⁴⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-5, File Title: Cost of Living Bonus, "Press Release for Afternoon Papers," 16 December 1942. First sentence reads, "Ottawa, DEC. – Higher rates of pay for the Canadian soldier, a full-scale cost of living bonus for families of all Canadian servicemen, and the world's highest scale of dependents' allowances, were announced today by the Dept. of National Defence." Jeffrey Keshen notes that this claim that the allowances were the highest in the world was in fact true. See Jeffrey A. Keshen, Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 157.

¹⁴⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-5, File Title: Cost of Living Bonus, "Order in Council, 11690," 29 December 1942.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

\$2.60 per month for wives with children.¹⁵¹ Ralston believed that “This new bonus will ensure that the wives and children of service men will enjoy the same protection as labour against any rise in the cost of living following the establishment of the price and wage ceiling policy.”¹⁵² In addition to the cost of living bonus, the amount of pay to be assigned to wives increased from twenty dollars to twenty-three dollars. As well, the amount of allowance mothers were eligible to receive was increased from twenty to twenty-five dollars. Although they received an increase in the amount of assigned pay they received and the bonus, the amount of allowances for wives remained thirty-five dollars per month.¹⁵³ The fact that this cost of living bonus and other increases were provided brings into question Indian Agents’ assessments that the amount Aboriginal women received was “excessive” and that they could be reasonably be expected to save a portion of their allowances.

The different amounts received by married women with children and married women without children are interesting. Although the purpose of the allowance was to replace the income of the male breadwinner, women without children were given less money because it was argued that they could work.¹⁵⁴ The argument that these women could work undermined the notion that married women should be dependent on the income of a sole male breadwinner, which had justified the need for the allowance in the first place.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-5, File Title: Cost of Living Bonus, “Press Release for Afternoon Papers,” 16 December 1942.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Pierson makes a similar observation. See Ruth Roach Pierson, “Gender and the Unemployment Insurance Debates in Canada, 1934-1940,” *Labour / Le Travail*, 25, (Spring 1990): 77-103.

The implementation of a cost of living bonus is also indicative of the shift in federal officials' thinking regarding the role of the federal government in the fixation of wages. In the philanthropic tradition of the nineteenth century, federal officials blamed poverty on poor or working class families' lack of morality rather than acknowledging the limits of the economy. Once the men who were workers became soldiers and the federal government was responsible for paying their wages, it became more difficult for officials to blame the men themselves for their poor financial circumstances. Soldiers were considered to be patriotic, self sacrificing and courageous. As Marshall finds these "most legitimate and irreproachable motives of all, contributed to the push for recognition of poverty's structural dimension at the heart of the elite."¹⁵⁶ By the 1940's, due in part to the pressure of labour organizations, Marshall argues that the federal officials had come "to a partial acceptance of the idea that the economic conditions were responsible for poverty, underlining the impossibility of raising children on wartime wages, where the levels were established by the State."¹⁵⁷ Marshall concludes that "The idea of collective responsibility for the economic conditions of some adults was making some headway, and with it, the proposition that the State should systematically guarantee more equal opportunity."¹⁵⁸ The notion that the poor should be blamed for their own poverty was increasingly at odds with federal officials' thinking on these issues.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State*, Chapter 3, 5.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Chapter 3, 6.

¹⁵⁹ Although the federal government increasingly sought to distance itself from older philanthropic traditions, Marshall does note that aspects of older traditions such as the monitoring of poor families did remain in the post-war period, but they came to be identified differently than they had in the past. Rather than a lack of morality, officials in the Family Allowances Program claimed instead that some poor parents were ignorant or ill-informed and needed to be educated about the importance of their children's consistent attendance at school. See Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State*, Chapter 3, 16, 20-22.

2.5 SUPERVISING EXPENDITURES: CHEQUE DISTRIBUTION

PROCEDURES IN THE CASE OF ABORIGINAL RECIPIENTS

Despite the fact that many federal officials were starting to think differently about poverty than they had in the past, their changing ideas were applied more often to poor whites than to poor people of other racial groups. Bureaucrats who worked at the Indian Affairs Branch were still able to convince officials at the Department of National Defence that Euro-Canadians should supervise the allowances given to Aboriginal women who, they feared, would “waste” the money. Officials agreed that special cheque distribution procedures needed to be put in place. Bureaucrats at the Department of National Defence were swayed by the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources’ and the Indian Agents’ concerns that the allowance was in “excess” of what Aboriginal women needed. The Deputy Ministers of the Department of Mines and Resources and the Department of National Defence met to discuss the issue and agreed at their meeting that the allowance cheques should be sent through the Indian Agents’ offices instead of being sent to the women’s mail boxes at their local post office addresses.¹⁶⁰ This rule only applied to women who lived on the reserve. Aboriginal women who lived away from the reserve received their cheques directly.¹⁶¹ The fact that the Deputy Ministers were involved in making the decisions about the handling of the cheques would indicate that the issue had some importance.

The anxiety about “misuse” seems to have been particularly targeted at women in this case. There was no equivalent discussion in the correspondence consulted about

¹⁶⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Camsell to Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 1 November 1939 and LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, H. DesRosiers, Acting Deputy Minister (Militia), Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, to Camsell, 20 November 1939.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

Aboriginal soldiers' propensity to "waste" the pay they received.¹⁶² The pay was considered to be a part of soldiers' "earnings" whereas the allowance was perceived as an "award" which was "given" to dependents. Officials appear to have believed they were justified in controlling how the allowance cheques were distributed, but seem not to have dictated to Aboriginal soldiers how they should receive or spend their pay cheques after they assigned the required twenty dollars to their families in order to receive the allowance. As readers will recall, assigning this money was a requirement for all soldiers, no matter what their racial origin. Assumptions that men were generally more prudent financial managers and had a "right" to spend their earnings whereas women were commonly perceived as imprudent and as "dependents" who did not necessarily have rights possibly influenced the language that was used to distinguish the money soldiers and recipients received and their subsequent access to this money.

Based on the agreement between the Deputy Ministers, Arthur MacNamara, the Dependents' Allowance Board Chairman at the time, asked R.A. Hoey, the Superintendent of Welfare and Training, who typically dealt with matters relating to health and education at the Indian Affairs Branch, that a letter be sent out to all Indian Agents. They were to be informed that the cheques would be sent to them. MacNamara believed the procedure would allow for Indian Agents to consult with the women when they came to pick up their cheques about what "appropriate" purchases to make. The Agents were also supposed to "encourage" the women to save for future emergencies

¹⁶² This comment is based on correspondence examined in the DAB records and the IAB records dealing with the allowance and World War II. Such debates may have taken place among military officials and bureaucrats at the Department of National Defence as well, but these records were not examined.

such as hospital and dentist bills and education costs.¹⁶³ Hoey suggested an alternative that the money for all the dependents be assigned to the Indian Affairs Branch.

MacNamara informed Hoey that the Board could not follow his suggestion: “We have no authority to actually pay the money to a dependent other than the soldier. Consequently, our procedure is that we will request the Treasury Officer to send the cheque payable to the dependent in care of the Indian Agent...”¹⁶⁴ This legal requirement was significant because the cheque had to be assigned to the individual. As a result of this rule, Hoey’s suggestion that the money be given to the Indian Affairs Branch to be handled in a more discretionary manner could not be considered. This example illustrates how dealing with the legal requirements of another department prevented bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch from continuing with internal procedures.

Yet, the Indian Affairs Branch still tried to exert some discretionary control over the allowance money. H.W. McGill, the Indian Affairs Branch Director, suggested that when the women came to the office to get their cheques, the Indian Agent, could advise them of “...wise expenditure or, where possible, of inducing them to leave part of the money with him so that he may parcel it out for them weekly or fortnightly, or allow him to make necessary purchases for them himself in order that they might receive better values.”¹⁶⁵ If women left part of their money with the Indian Agent, it would be “out of their own volition,” not because the money was being administered. There were specific procedures for administration cases which will be discussed later in this chapter. It was assumed that Indian Agents could get better values because they understood what items

¹⁶³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6764, File 452-6 Pt. 2, To Hoey from A. MacNamara, DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario, 14 September 1940.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Memorandum by McGill to Camsell, 30 April 1942.

were worth and could negotiate for the fair price. Some Indian Agents had recently reinforced this image by stating that women were being taken advantage of by unscrupulous individuals trying to sell them faulty products.

In cases where women refused to allow the Indian Agent to handle the allowance money and where there was no officially sanctioned justification for the administration of the dependents' allowance, the Indian Agent had to provide the woman with the cheque when she came to his office. No further control could be exercised as it would infringe on soldiers' rights. McGill explained his position:

Where the dependent refuses to leave any control to the Agent he has no alternative but to hand over the cheque, and further control action can only be taken if evidence can be furnished to warrant the Board in making a special administration order...Here it may be pertinent to remark that the Indian soldier considers himself on an equality of any other soldier and holds that his dependent should have as much right to spend assigned pay and allowance as the dependent of any other soldier. Against that argument an Indian Agent cannot act arbitrarily, especially as an Indian soldier receives allowances for his dependent in his capacity as a member of the Armed Forces and not as an Indian under the Indian Act.¹⁶⁶

This quotation reveals how the contradictions brought up by the treatment of Aboriginal soldiers undermined the authority of the Indian Affairs Branch and the validity of race as a category. The individual's racial origin did not change, but his treatment changed based on the department with which he dealt. The different treatment was based on different legislation. If the supposedly "inherent" traits that were associated with Aboriginal people were in fact "true," one would think that the issue of the department being involved would not matter. Furthermore, the notion that Indian Agents could not take arbitrary actions in the cases of Aboriginal soldiers was, in part, eroding the idea that their control over other Aboriginal people was justified.

¹⁶⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Memorandum by McGill to Camsell, 30 April 1942.

Although upper level bureaucrats discussed the justifications for the policy in general terms, the technical procedures need to be examined in order to define the specific ways in which the money was to be controlled. The printed procedures at least give some indication of the bureaucrats' expectations of Indian Agents, even though local practices could have deviated from the procedures. The procedures for "Indian" cases were printed in December 1941. By this time, R.O.G. Bennett had taken over from MacNamara as Chairman of the Dependents' Allowance Board. MacNamara believed that special procedures were necessary for Aboriginal dependents, but had not worked out the specific details of how the cheques would be issued. When Bennett took over he attempted to work out these details. Bennett argued that the special procedures were necessary because if Aboriginal people received more money than for their "immediate needs" it was a "disadvantage."¹⁶⁷ As already illustrated, this logic was used by the Deputy Minister of Mines Resources and Indian Agents to justify increased control over women's allowances. The procedures indicated that any cheques for women on reserves would generally be sent to the Indian Agent, unless the Agent suggested otherwise:

If the wife or principal dependent resides on a reserve or special reserve, or is receiving benefits and welfare through an Indian Agent, the general practice will be that any cheques payable will be addressed to the dependent in care of the Agent, but if the Agent requests or so recommends such cheques may be sent direct to the dependent at her usual postal address.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Procedure and Rulings-No. 30 "Procedure regarding payment of Dependents' Allowance and Assigned Pay when Indians enlist" approved by R.O.G. Bennett, DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario, 1 December 1941. This procedure was revised September 27, 1943. The procedure of December 31, 1941 was cancelled. The Chairman of the DAB noted that much of the original procedure was there, but changes, such as depositing savings in the Indian Trust Account, were included in the new procedure. Copies were sent to the Indian Agents. See LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, T.R.L. MacInnes, IAB Secretary, Ottawa, Ontario, to Bennett, 28 September 1943.

¹⁶⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Procedure and Rulings-No. 30 "Procedure regarding payment of Dependents' Allowance and Assigned Pay when Indians enlist," approved by Bennett, 1 December 1941.

In all cases the Indian Agents had to submit reports on the wives recommending whether or not they should receive their cheques. If reports were not received prior to the first cheques being issued, these cheques were sent to the women directly, to provide for “immediate necessities.”¹⁶⁹ Depending on the Agents’ subsequent recommendations, women either continued to receive their cheques directly or the cheques were sent to the Agents’ offices.

In cases where the distance was too far to travel to the Indian Agents’ offices each month, it was agreed by Bennett and MacInnes at a meeting that arrangements could be made to have the women sign an order. This order would allow the Indian Agents to handle the money, but the money would not be formally administered. Each month the Indian Agents could forward a cheque to the women for the amount the Agents considered necessary.¹⁷⁰ The woman had to consent to signing this order. When MacInnes informed the Indian Agents of this arrangement he noted that “This procedure should be treated as confidential and passed on to a successor should there be any change in the personnel of your Agency.”¹⁷¹

As noted earlier, MacNamara was not willing to consider Hoey’s suggestion that the Indian Affairs Branch handle the money because the legal requirements stipulated that the cheque only be addressed to the individual. However, Bennett’s comments do indicate that in some cases bureaucrats at the Dependents’ Allowance Board did make exceptions to the standardized procedure, although they did want such changes kept a secret.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, MacInnes to Bennett, 14 November 1941.

¹⁷¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, MacInnes to all Indian Agents, 13 December 1941.

In implementing these procedures, the middle level bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch encountered difficulties. Women protested against traveling to the Indian Agents' offices to pick up their cheques. They argued their cheques should be sent to their mail boxes. Mindy Christianson,¹⁷² the Superintendent for Saskatchewan, noted that he had received five such complaints, from Aboriginal dependents who did not want to travel to the Indian Agents' offices to get their money.¹⁷³ Christianson stated: "Naturally they are objecting to this and want the money sent directly to them without delay."¹⁷⁴ This statement indicates that the women appeared to believe that as individual recipients they had a right to receive the allowances directly. Christianson, on the other hand, agreed with the procedure of sending the cheques to the Indian Agents' offices. However, he also believed that "...no extra expense or inconvenience from long distance travel or delay should be placed on the Dependent. Avoiding this I think that 99% of the complaints could be satisfied."¹⁷⁵

To ensure the dependents received their cheques as quickly as possible, Christianson suggested ways to make the cheque distribution procedures more efficient. In making his suggestions he did not seem aware of Bennett's previous letter stating that

¹⁷² Mindy Christianson was an immigrant from Iceland, but came to Canada when he was young. He was educated in Winnipeg and engaged in business in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. He began working with the Indian Affairs Branch in 1914 when he was approximately thirty years old. (His exact birth date is unknown). First, he was a farm instructor and clerk at the Pelly Agency in Saskatchewan. He became an Indian Agent in 1915. He then moved to the Qu'Appelle reserve also in Saskatchewan and was an Agent there until he moved to Regina to become the Indian Inspector for the Prairie provinces in 1919. He became the Department of Indian Affairs General Superintendent for Saskatchewan in 1936 when he was in his mid-fifties. Similar to other high ranking officials in the Indian Affairs Branch, such as the Director and Secretary, Christianson had been with the department for a long time. By World War II, he already been with the department twenty-five years. For Christianson's biography see Archives Canadian Archival Information Network, "Mindy Christianson," <http://www.archivescanada.ca/english/search>, consulted on December 9, 2005.

¹⁷³ These letters of complaint Christianson refers to were not found in archival records examined.

¹⁷⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Christianson to all Agents (presumably Christianson was referring to Indian Agents in Saskatchewan, but the document does not specifically state this), 13 January 1942.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

recipients could sign an order authorizing the Indian Agent to handle the money. Perhaps, he made these suggestions in cases where women did not sign an order. His suggestions indicate how Indian Agents were supposed to handle the cheques once they received them at their offices. He stated that, as soon as the cheques arrived at the offices, Indian Agents were to enter them into the cash book and ledger. The recipient (or payee, as referred to by Christianson) then had to endorse the cheque. Christianson noted that in cases where there was a farming instructor the cheque could be forwarded to him to be endorsed by the dependent and then returned to the Indian Agents' offices. Farming instructors were employees of the Indian Affairs Branch who were hired to "teach" Aboriginal people how to farm.¹⁷⁶ In certain cases they were asked to assist Indian Agents in the handling of the dependents' allowance cheques. Christianson also suggested that "It might be that you make a practice of visiting the Reserves at the same time you receive these cheques and if so you can get the Payee's endorsement on the cheque and it back to the Agency, thus avoiding unnecessary delay."¹⁷⁷ Indian Agents should, according to Christianson, consult with the recipient about what amount would be required each month. This is one of the few examples in the Indian Affairs correspondence examined where a recommendation was made that Indian Agents consult with the women about their budgets. Indian Agents were expected to uphold the agreements they had made with the women about when the cheques were to be received. Christianson emphasized, "Dependents should know exactly when the cheques can be

¹⁷⁶ This position had existed since the nineteenth century. As a part of its assimilation policies, the Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats believed that Aboriginal people should become farmers. Farming instructors were hired to "train" Aboriginal people to be farmers. For a discussion of Indian Affairs Branch agricultural policy see Sarah Carter, Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 68.

¹⁷⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Christianson to all Agents, 13 January 1942.

expected and that should be carried out to the letter.”¹⁷⁸ If savings had accumulated and there was some delay in endorsing the cheque, money from the savings account could be sent to the family “as to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or inconvenience.”¹⁷⁹ The recipients’ cheques could then be endorsed at a later date. Christianson did not dismiss the women’s complaints, but asked Indian Agents to inform him of the arrangements made “as I am anxious that this be carried out to the satisfaction of all.”¹⁸⁰ Christianson concluded, “...I might say that I feel confident that you will handle this in the best manner satisfactory to all and avoid complaints as much as possible, particularly such that seem to be quite legitimate which we receive here from time to time.”¹⁸¹ Significantly, it was not only the Dependents’ Allowance Board Chairmen who were concerned that Indian Agents followed certain procedures. Within the Indian Affairs Branch organization, middle level bureaucrats sometimes critiqued certain Indian Agents’ practices. Rather than resenting Christianson’s comments, some Indian Agents may have welcomed his specific directions about the procedures to be followed. No specific responses from Indian Agents were found to Christianson’s suggestions so it is not possible to comment on their reaction to his suggestions.

Christianson emphasized that women receive their cheques in a timely manner and referred to dependents as “payees.” This term was exceptional as most officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board referred to allowance recipients as “dependents,” not “payees.” Even in discussions by nongovernmental organizations such as the Legion and the military wives’ organization, the women were referred to as “dependents.” The

¹⁷⁸ ibid.

¹⁷⁹ ibid.

¹⁸⁰ ibid.

¹⁸¹ ibid.

debate was framed in terms of soldiers' rights and women's financial reliance on men, not women's economic rights. The use of the word "payee" is significant because it implied that women were recipients of a financial benefit that was paid to them as individuals. It has been noted earlier in reference to soldiers the fact that they received "pay" instead of "award" seemed to make officials less likely to limit access to this money. Similarly, Christianson's use of the word "payees," could possibly suggest a more progressive understanding of women as individual recipients than the word "dependents." On the other hand, his belief that Indian Agents should supervise how the money was spent reinforces paternalistic assumptions.

Based on the records examined, Christianson's response is exceptional because he saw the legitimacy of the women's concerns and attempted to suggest a solution to the problem. Two other Indian Agents mentioned women's concerns about the delays in receiving their cheques, but one official simply noted the problem and the other attempted to dismiss it.¹⁸² Christianson's comments take on an added importance when one considers his position as Provincial Superintendent. In the light of scholars' studies of Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats, the uniqueness of Christianson's concerns appears. For instance, Brownlie argued that middle or upper level bureaucrats largely ignored or

¹⁸² Two Indian Agents, Indian Agent J.P.B. Ostrander from Battleford, Saskatchewan and Indian Agent Irwin from Cranbrook, British Columbia, noted that Aboriginal women made similar complaints. Ostrander dismissed these complaints while Irwin merely acknowledged that they existed. See LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452, Ostrander to DAB, Ottawa, Ontario, 3 March 1942, and LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: BC Military Service Enlistments 1941-45, Indian Agent Irwin, Cranbrook, British Columbia, to D.M. MacKay, Indian Commissioner for B.C., Vancouver, British Columbia, 8 April 1942. One letter written by an Aboriginal woman was found which criticized this practice. See LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File 452-737 Pt 1., Mrs. Lilly Wilson, Bothwell, Ontario, to Mr. MacNicol, Member of Parliament, Thamesville, Ontario, 4 January 1943. For a discussion of these letters see Chapter 6.

dismissed Aboriginal people's concerns.¹⁸³ Christianson may have been more attentive to these women's complaints because he believed their status as soldiers' wives made them more deserving of better treatment. Alternatively, if one considers Stoler and Cooper's arguments, perhaps scholars have assumed too much unity in bureaucrats' views when in practice there was room for "competing strategies for maintaining control."¹⁸⁴ If some officials dismissed Aboriginal people's protests, others did try to address them.

At a lower level, some local Indian Agents identified problems with the cheque distribution procedures. They anticipated that when the women came to get their cheques, they would not be willing to listen to their advice. Indian Agent H.E. Taylor of Williams Lake, British Columbia, for instance, believed that the procedures did not allow for the exercise of strict enough controls. He noted that, according to his understanding of the procedures, no matter what his advice was, if the full amount of the allowance was requested, it would have to be passed onto the recipients. His assumption was correct. According to the rules, women could not be forced to let Indian Agents handle a portion of their money. Taylor remarked, "without any authority to withhold a portion of the allowance to dependents, I foresee considerable difficulty and unpleasantness in handling these funds."¹⁸⁵ Taylor identified potential tensions between himself and the recipients suggesting that the recipients did not necessarily recognize the Indian Agent's authority. It could also suggest that some women believed that receiving the allowance meant that

¹⁸³ The exception to this general pattern, according to Brownlie, was when the band was united on a particular issue. Officials rarely went against the united will of the band. Achieving such unity among band members, however, was often difficult. See Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, 61.

¹⁸⁴ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 21.

¹⁸⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, H.E. Taylor, Indian Agent, Williams Lake, British Columbia to IAB Secretary, 26 June 1941.

they should get the cheque directly. Taylor believed increased control would be the only way to deal with the difficulties.

As an alternative to receiving the cheques at their offices, Indian Agents suggested that they should have increased control over the allowances. As a part of the financial structure of the Indian Affairs Branch, an Agency Trust Account was already set up in each agency and was controlled by the Indian Agent. Indian Agent Swartman of the Sioux Lookout Agency in Ontario advised that the money should be put in an Agency Trust Account:

...the most practical solution would be to have assigned pay and allowance forwarded to Agency Trust Account. We would then arrange for a monthly credit from a merchant in the vicinity of the Reserve, otherwise there will be a feast for a few days following receipt of cheque and famine for remainder of month.¹⁸⁶

Setting up the monthly credit with the local merchant would undermine Aboriginal women's ability to make their own arrangements with local merchants. The local merchants' involvement in dictating the terms of such accounts is not evident in the archival records examined. It would be interesting to find out more about how the credit system operated. Dependents' allowance recipients may have been perceived as desirable customers because they had a steady income as a result of their monthly cheque. The level of competition among merchants or, alternatively, the degree to which they held monopolies in certain areas is unclear making it difficult to speculate about the cost of goods and the choices offered to customers. In cases where there were multiple merchants, if the Indian Agents made the arrangements, as Swartman suggested, presumably the women had less choice about what stores they went to and what purchases they made.

¹⁸⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6797, File 452-706, "DAB Questionnaire," Author not identified, Not dated.

Swartman's reference to the "feast then famine" refers to a nineteenth century stereotype of First Nation hunting societies which deserves to be explained. According to observers in the nineteenth century who did not understand how First Nation hunting societies operated, hunters would gorge themselves on buffalo until there was nothing left and then starve. Consequently, "Indians" were commonly perceived to be in state of "feast or famine" because they were unable to plan for the future.¹⁸⁷ This stereotype did not allow for First Nations' societies to change and assumed that First Nations' people's habits remained static. Swartman's use of this phrase reveals how he was still relying upon these stereotypes.

Despite Indian Agents' suggestions that the allowance money be handled through the Agency Trust Fund and that even stricter controls should be exercised, R.O.G. Bennett, the Dependents' Allowance Board Chairman, did not agree with these suggestions. In fact, in August 1942, he even decided to modify the procedures in the opposite way, so that the Indian Agents would have less control over the cheques. Bennett informed MacInnes that unless the account was under formal administration, the cheques received at the Indian Agents' offices should be given directly to the recipient. This decision was still contested by some recipients, as we will see in Chapter 6, who argued that they should be able to receive their cheques in their local mail boxes and should not have to go to the Indian Agents' offices at all.

Why did Bennett change his mind about the procedure? He may have deduced from his correspondence with the Indian Agents that the practice of Indian Agents' handling the money without the account being formally administered was being

¹⁸⁷ Carter, *Lost Harvests*, 17.

commonly used as opposed to being used only in exceptional cases.¹⁸⁸ He also may have received letters from recipients claiming that the Indian Agents were withholding their allowances without their permission.¹⁸⁹ There appears to have been a disparity between the instructions Indian Agents received and how some of the Indian Agents interpreted those instructions. Regarding the practice of withholding a portion of the money, Bennett stated that the discretion of the Agent was no longer sufficient: “While we realize this is generally for the Dependent’s benefit, still we are of the opinion such cases should be put on a proper administration which can be arranged if the case is properly presented to this Board by the agent giving reasons and if the applicant is willing.”¹⁹⁰ He reminded Agents that administration should only be required in extreme cases and generally that the Board preferred not to administer recipients’ accounts.

Bennett expressed concerns about the nature of the Agency Trust accounts where some Indian Agents were putting the recipients’ money. He asked MacInnes if the monies that had been put in Agency Trust accounts were subject to government audit. MacInnes confirmed that the accounts being used were intended “for the transaction of public business but they are also used to provide banking facilities under supervision for individual Indians.”¹⁹¹ MacInnes noted that “All funds passed through the Indian Agency Accounts for whatever purpose are subject to government audit.”¹⁹² Bennett’s concerns about the Agency accounts lead one to wonder if any accusations had been made that Indian Agents were fraudulently taking the money from recipients. Although

¹⁸⁸ The orders the dependents had to sign were not found in the archival files examined so it is not possible to count how many existed.

¹⁸⁹ Some Aboriginal families did indeed criticize Indian Agents for withholding their cheques or for interfering in their management of the allowance. For a further discussion see Chapter 6.

¹⁹⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Bennett to MacInnes, 10 August 1942.

¹⁹¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, MacInnes to Bennett, 17 August 1942.

¹⁹² Ibid.

no such accusations were found, subsequent accusations have been made by First Nations to that effect.¹⁹³ Bennett's concerns may have also resulted from his belief in the transparency of administration, especially in a program set up to assist individual recipients. Perhaps he thought this transparency was necessary because the Dependents' Allowance Program was subject to greater scrutiny by politicians, the press, and the public than Indian Affairs Branch programs. As readers will recall from Chapter 1, the Indian Affairs Branch tended to be isolated from other government departments and the Canadian public largely ignored its operations.¹⁹⁴ Rather than relying upon the Indian Agents' judgment to spend the money from the general Agency account, Bennett wanted to ensure the money could be accounted for. The Indian Affairs Branch administrative practices that relied upon the integrity of the Indian Agent were being challenged by Bennett's demand for public accountability. Bennett was not content to leave the control of the program in the hands of the Indian Affairs Branch.

A circular that MacInness sent to all Indian Agents reiterated that in cases where the cheque was addressed to the recipient, but was mailed to the office of the Indian Agent, the cheque "should be handed over to the dependent except where in the opinion of the Agent it would be unwise for the dependent to receive the full amount, in which

¹⁹³ R. Scott Sheffield, "A Search for Equity: A Study of the Treatment Accorded to First Nations Veterans and Dependents of the Second World War and the Korean Conflict," Prepared for the National Round Table on First Nations Veterans' Issues, April 2001.

¹⁹⁴ Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye, 155 and Sheffield, The Red Man's On the Warpath, 12. Sheffield notes this pattern changed in the post-war period with the establishment of the Special Joint Commission which was formed in response to the demands of Aboriginal political organizations, the public, nongovernmental organizations, and politicians. Aboriginal people's participation in the war effort, emerging human rights movements, and a desire to create a "better" Canada led many Euro-Canadian politicians and nongovernmental organizations such as church organizations and unions to pressure the federal government to establish the Commission. People were particularly concerned about the low standard of living on many reserves and the degree to which the Indian Affairs controlled Aboriginal people's affairs. As a result of this Commission, the practices of the Indian Affairs Branch came under greater public scrutiny. The importance of this Commission will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. See Sheffield, The Red Man's On the Warpath, Chapter 7, "Whither the 'Indian'? The Special Joint Senate and House of Commons Committee to Reconsider the Indian Act, 1946-48," 148-175.

case the facts and circumstances should be reported fully to the Board.”¹⁹⁵ Within the procedures, the possibility that the women could sign an order and allow the Indian Agent to handle the money without the knowledge of the Board no longer existed. The requirements of the dependents’ allowance policies now gave Indian Agents less discretionary power over the allowances.

After women picked up their cheques at the Indian Agents’ offices, it is unclear if they opened up individual accounts at banks in the nearby town or if they cashed their cheques and kept the money at their houses. For some women cashing these cheques may have been a difficult process since getting to a bank in a remote area might have been awkward. Although no provisions were found in the Indian Act explicitly stating that individuals could not open bank accounts, the Act severely restricted Aboriginal people’s access and control over their money. All money earned from the sale of land or resources was put in an account controlled by the Indian Affairs Branch and officials determined the amount paid out. Such restrictions would have limited people’s interactions with financial institutions.¹⁹⁶ Some families’ experiences with financial institutions may have also been limited by the fact that they relied upon the exchange of goods or unpaid labour rather than wages for their economic survival. For those families who earned wages, it is not known whether they did open bank accounts or just kept their cash. Their experiences with the Indian Affairs Branch may have made them skeptical of Euro-Canadian financial institutions.

¹⁹⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, “Circular to all Indian Agents and to Inspectors and Indian Commissioners” by MacInnes, 17 August 1942.

¹⁹⁶ See sections 70, 71, “An Act respecting Indians,” R.S.C. 1886, c. 43, Statue of Canada in Sharon Venne, Indian Acts and Amendments, 1868-1975: An Indexed Collection, (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Native Law Center, 1981), 138-139. These rules were still in force in the 1927 Act. See sections 90-93 in “An Act respecting Indians,” R.S.C. 1927, c. 98, Statue of Canada in Venne, Indian Acts and Amendments, 275-276. Although some of the statutes were partially revised, the 1927 Act was the one in force in the 1940’s. The Indian Act underwent a major revision in 1951.

2.6 A HELPING HAND? ATTITUDES AND APPROACHES TOWARDS THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ALLOWANCE

From the beginning of the war, procedures had been created to deal with cases where the allowance would have to be administered. Administration meant that the allowance was managed on behalf of the recipient by a representative from the Department of Pensions and Health or a representative from a social agency or, in the case of Aboriginal recipients, the Indian Agents. Once again, for comparative purposes, it is necessary to examine the general discussions that took place about administration as it related to the majority of Euro-Canadian recipients in order to see the ways in which Aboriginal recipients were treated differently. Based on Bennett's 1942 modifications to the procedures, the only way Indian Agents could control the allowance money was if the allowance were formally administered. Such administration was justified only in "extreme cases" where "the dependent was quite unfit to manage the funds."¹⁹⁷ Only the following reasons justified administration in dependents' allowance cases: proof the wife was "mentally retarded or incompetent to handle money,"¹⁹⁸ the neglect of children due to the wife's behavior, or the death of the wife.¹⁹⁹ Soldiers could request administration especially in cases where their wives had committed adultery. A wife could request administration if "she finds herself involved in money matters which her husband has

¹⁹⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, IAB Director, to the Deputy Minister, Department of Mines and Resources, 15 April 1942.

¹⁹⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 52, File Title: War Service Gratuities, Bennett to the Chairman, Canadian Pension Commission, Ottawa, Ontario, 27 November 1945.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.* In cases where the wife died, the soldier could assign someone to receive the allowance on behalf of the children, or alternatively the Board could appoint someone or pay the money to a child caring agency.

always shouldered in the past and which now overwhelm her.”²⁰⁰ In considering whether a case should be administered, bureaucrats from the Dependents’ Allowance Board stated: “Allowances are not placed under administration as a punishment for the wife or because of misbehaviour only. In applying Article 111, it is the aim of the Board: 1. So that Dependents may be helped to develop their capacities. 2. To preserve a home for the Serviceman.”²⁰¹ There was an assumption that bureaucrats at the Dependents’ Allowance Board had a responsibility to help dependents in order to protect soldiers’ interests. At times this meant controlling the money and investigating the wives’ behavior. As noted in Chapter 1, there was a greater emphasis on soldiers’ rights than on the rights of soldiers’ relatives to receive economic benefits without interference from bureaucrats or social workers.

The Director of the Indian Affairs Branch, H.W. McGill, emphasized that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cases were administered for similar reasons:

Direct administration is ordered by the Dependents’ Allowance Board only for special and individual cause. Indian cases are treated in this respect in the same manner as others, and the allowances of the dependent of an Indian soldier is only ordered to be administered for reasons which would lead to similar action in the case of the dependent of any other soldier.²⁰²

Possibly the Director felt pressured by bureaucrats at the Board to make such a statement. Alternatively, perhaps he believed such a statement was necessary to quell criticism from Aboriginal soldiers or the Legion.²⁰³ If anxieties about race were truly not an issue for

²⁰⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts, “Dependents’ Allowance Board,” First sentence begins, “The Dependents’ Allowance Board consists of seven members....,” Author not identified, Not dated, 3.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, IAB Director to the Deputy Minister, Department of Mines and Resources, 30 April 1942.

²⁰³ No specific criticisms from the Legion were found in the archival records examined, but it is possible that they were made.

the Board and the Branch, such statements would not have been necessary because they would not have categorized dependents using racial categories in the first place. In a sense by bringing attention to the fact that all soldiers were being treated equally, they perpetuated the notion that race was in fact a “legitimate” category.

Generally, bureaucrats at the Dependents’ Allowance Board considered administration to be an exceptional course of action. A draft procedure for the administration of allowances confirmed this view:

Don’t deprive a wife of the right to administer her own and her children’s allowances unless you are satisfied that she is incapable of handling the monies or is conducting herself in public so as to create a public scandal or is neglecting her children to an extent making outside supervision and administration of allowances necessary in the children’s interest. As long as the woman is keeping a good home for her children, and appears capable of handling her allowances, don’t deprive her of this right merely because her past record of conduct does not meet with your approval.²⁰⁴

As discussed in Chapter 1, social workers attempted to distinguish themselves from relief investigators by emphasizing their professional training, their “scientific” case work method and their “objectivity.” The above quotation suggests that women’s “respectability” was still considered important as indicated in the references to not creating a public scandal and keeping a “good” home. However, it was acknowledged that women had the right to manage their own allowances. This was an acknowledgment that relief investigators would have been unlikely to make. There was a certain flexibility in the portrayal of women in the quotation because women’s past conduct did not necessarily prevent them being able to manage their allowances in the present. Recipients were given the chance to change. In the case of Aboriginal women, Indian

²⁰⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 54, File Title: Administration of Allowances, “Draft Procedure,” Not dated.

Agents did not acknowledge such a right to manage one's own allowance. Personal judgments remained an integral part of Indian Agents' assessments. Aboriginal women do not seem to appear to be portrayed by Indian Agents as having the chance to change. Such limited views possibly resulted from assumptions that were made about these women's racial origin. The above quotation suggests that Indian Agents' behaviour did not correspond with Dependents' Allowance Board bureaucrats' expectations about how investigators should act.

The need for consent was emphasized in administration cases. Indian Agents were advised by T.R.L. MacInnes, the Secretary of the Indian Affairs Branch, that "You will appreciate that the administration of these funds is a somewhat delicate task and that the consent of the recipient will be required if they are to be administered to the best possible advantage."²⁰⁵ It is unclear what MacInnes meant by "delicate task." Perhaps he feared if he did not emphasize the need for consent, bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch might be criticized by their colleagues at the Dependents' Allowance Board of arbitrarily withholding the allowance from soldiers' wives. Cases where the soldier or recipient did not provide their consent were reviewed further to "...determine whether evidence of misconduct or gross mismanagement justifies compulsory assignment, in which case the file will be brought to the Full Board through a Member for the necessary action."²⁰⁶ This meant in some cases the Board could impose administration without the couple's consent.

²⁰⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, MacInnes to Indian Agents and Inspectors of Indian, 30 September 1940

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

Overall, the number of administration cases remained low. In 1941 to 1942, 982 out of 319,053 dependents' allowances cases were administered.²⁰⁷ Although the total number of cases was not provided, the number of administered cases increased to 1,370 in 1942 to 1943.²⁰⁸ In 1943 to 1944 we know the number of cases administered was 1,700.²⁰⁹ For Aboriginal cases specifically, numbers were only found for 1943 to 1944 and 1945. In 1943 to 1944, 52 out of 1,600 Aboriginal cases were being administered or 3.3 percent of the total.²¹⁰ In 1945, 96 out of 2,400 cases were being administered or 4 percent of cases.²¹¹ The Board's reluctance to bring cases under formal administration is perhaps reflected in these low figures.

The general procedures in administration cases for the Dependents' Allowance Program required the administrators to provide a detailed budget of the women's expenses and to account for how the money was spent. In Aboriginal administration cases, the cheques were "made payable to the Indian Agent in trust for the dependent."²¹² Once the cheque was received at the Indian Agents' offices, it was to be deposited in an Indian Agency Trust Account.²¹³ In non-Aboriginal cases the cheque was issued to the Department of Pensions and Health local office or the local social agency administering the money. In all administration cases, a detailed account of the expenditures was required including the amounts spent on: rent, light, water, fuel, insurance, food,

²⁰⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Chairmen's File Annual Report, Annual Report, The Dependents' Allowance Board, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 31 March 1942.

²⁰⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Chairmen's File Annual Report, Annual Report, 31 March 1943.

²⁰⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 2, File Title: Chairmen's File Annual Report, Annual Report, 31 March 1944.

²¹⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Bennett to MacInnes, 24 March 1943 and LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Bennett to MacInnes, 22 February 1943.

²¹¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Bennett to MacInnes, 31 January 1945.

²¹² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, "Procedure and Rulings-No. 30 Procedure regarding payment of Dependents' Allowance and Assigned Pay when Indians enlist," approved by Bennett, 1 December 1941

²¹³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, MacInnes to all Indian Agents and to Inspectors and Indian Commissioners, 17 August 1942.

clothing, education, medical and dental care, household equipment and War Savings Certificates.²¹⁴ The forms administrators had to fill in were the same making the process more uniform, at least on paper. Individual administrators' dealings with the women could have varied based on their personality and their training.

A breakdown of the amount given to the women was also required. This included the amounts spent on car fare, Church contributions, and recreation.²¹⁵ Recipients having their allowances administered only received a minimal amount of money. Even though the administration system was justified on the basis that women would learn to handle money, the little amount of money they had access to undermined women's ability to learn these skills. Out of this small amount it was expected that women would spend part of it on "Church contributions." There was an assumption that women went to Church and contributions were a "legitimate" expenditure. The definition of what were "appropriate" recreation activities was not stipulated on the form.

Other income was also to be recorded as well as the amount of cash "on hand" or in the bank. Administrators were informed the amount of allowance was "to be used exclusively for the benefit of this dependent(s)."²¹⁶ Administrators were required to submit semi-annual reports outlining how the money was being managed and "the conditions in the home and the progress being made."²¹⁷ The administrators were presumed to be qualified to assess these conditions and determine if there was any

²¹⁴ See LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-770 Pt. 1. "Statement to be completed by administrator or guardian on behalf of soldiers' dependents--Financial Statement showing receipts, expenditures, and funds and securities on hand in respect to dependents.," Not dated.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ For Indian Agents, financial reports were to be forwarded to the DAB in administration cases every six months. The rule was changed and financial reports were required only once a year at the time of the annual audit. See LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Bennett to Not identified, (presumably to Indian Agents,) Not dated.

improvement. The question asked focused on the home conditions in general. If the issue was solely on learning how to handle money, presumably the questions would have asked more specifically about what the woman was learning about planning a budget, bargaining with merchants and the operation of bank accounts. The questions on the form indicate that administration was linked to broader concerns about the women's abilities to be "good" mothers and housekeepers according to idealized middle class Euro-Canadian notions of "respectability."

This link between "respectability" and administration is further reinforced when one examines the reasons Indian Agents used to justify administration. Below is an example of how one case came to be administered. In the case of the wife of Sylvester Armstrong, Indian Agent Whalen from Fredericton, New Brunswick, commented that the wife's cheque should be sent to the Acting Indian Agent, Fred Hudson in Richibucto, New Brunswick.²¹⁸

The camp they occupy is not fit for habitation as it is only tar paper and without a floor, also much too small. The children are ragged and dirty and I think not too well fed... I would strongly recommend that her cheque be made payable to Mr. Fred Hudson, Acting Indian Agent at Richibucto, N.B., as he is Indian Agent for Big Cove Reserve, where he can administer same for that family, as I am satisfied that Mrs. Armstrong is totally unfit to handle the money.²¹⁹

Whalen informed Hudson: "I have written to the Dependents' Allowance Board and asked them to make her cheque payable to you in order that the children might get what they need to eat and wear. This will also keep Mrs. Armstrong home as she will not go

²¹⁸ It is unclear why Whalen was commenting about the family if they lived in the area where the Acting Indian Agent was in charge. Perhaps the family was in Fredericton and then moved to Richibucto.

²¹⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File 452-770 Pt 1, Whalen to DAB, 16 October 1943.

away from the money.”²²⁰ Based on the Indian Agent’s request, Armstrong’s allowances were administered.²²¹

Responsibility for poor housing was seen as evidence of the mother’s incompetence.²²² Scholars, such as Cynthia Commachio, have noted that the poor housing on reserves often consisted of one room huts with “poor ventilation, dirt floors, and walls of mud and hay.”²²³ Such homes were too small and hard to keep clean. Rather than the neglect of Aboriginal mothers in the care of their homes, Comacchio argues that inadequate federal government funding for housing was the main cause of the poor housing conditions.²²⁴

Whalen’s assessment of the children’s clothes can be compared to the way many Euro-Canadian missionaries and Indian Agents evaluated children at residential schools, where they expected children to dress in military uniforms, dresses, and suits similar, officials assumed, to those worn by middle class Euro-Canadian children who lived in urban areas.²²⁵ Missionaries and Indian Agents put a lot of importance on these external signs as indicative of whether or not a person was assimilating. They negatively evaluated people who did not conform to these standards, but rarely acknowledged the impossibility of their demands due to lack of income or the desire of First Nations to

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-770 Pt 1, Ian A. Sutherland on behalf of Bennett to IAB Secretary, 26 November 1943.

²²² Indian Agent Ostrander was the only Agent, based on the correspondence examined, who noted that women did not have money to buy household items that Euro-Canadian women considered necessary. He linked their inability to buy these items to lack of money, not to ill will. This example will be discussed in Chapter 3 as it relates to the reductions in allowances debate. See LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Ostrander to Christianson, 25 March 1942.

²²³ Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family*, 46. For a more in-depth look at housing policies in Canada in general see John Bacher, *Keeping to the Marketplace: the Evolution of Canadian housing policy*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993) and John Miron, *Housing in Postwar Canada: Demographic change, Household formation and Housing demand*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988)

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*, 195.

retain their own style of dress.²²⁶ Whalen's statements about the Armstrong children's clothing reflect these same types of assumptions. He does not appear to consider either the family's economic circumstances or their customs.

Drinking and sexually promiscuous behaviour were often linked as reasons why Indian Agents believed the allowances should be administered. If women were having relationships with men other than their husbands, this was seen as "proof" that they were not capable of handling their allowances. Indian Agent Whalen reported in the case of Cathy Scott that she "is absolutely unfit to handle Dependents' Allowance and Assigned Pay, which she is receiving for herself and two children... Mrs. Scott has caused a lot of trouble on the reserve on account of drinking and she is also a great friend of the soldiers."²²⁷ "The soldiers" Whalen refers to could have been on leave or in a training camp located near the reserve. In a later letter he added: "I think it would be a grand idea if this woman's money was handled by this office..."²²⁸ In this case the Indian Agent associated drunkenness and promiscuity with the inability to manage money.

In the case of Mrs. Lewis T. Mooney from Maria, Quebec, Edgar Arsenault, who was the farming instructor for the reserve, believed the woman was having an affair with her former partner: "The man, with whom she lived 13 years in the past, was back from overseas, lately, and she received him day and night during 14 days in her house."²²⁹

Arsenault concluded:

On my opinion, that wife should not administrate herself her allocation, because she spends all the monney (sic) for nothing, and till now she has never forwarded any parcel to her husband (the

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File 452-6-56, Whalen to Bennett, 5 June 1942.

²²⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File 452-6-56, Whalen to Bennett, 30 June 1942.

²²⁹ LAC RG 10, Volume 6765, File 452-6-17, Edgar Arsenault, Farming Instructor, Maria, Quebec to Not identified, (Presumably IAB), 15 November 1943.

husband's declaration by letter), moreover she has a very bad conduct and she is a bad example for the rest of the people on the Maria Reserve.²³⁰

Based on this hearsay evidence the observer felt it was best, "In the interest of the family and the husband, that wife should receive only what she needs monthly, the rest being kept for the future."²³¹ In Arsenault's estimation, since the woman did not spend her money wisely and did not send her husband any parcels, she did not "deserve" to receive her allowance. Significantly, Arsenault supports his claim by implying that the husband is also displeased by his wife's behavior. Indian Agents also claimed to take action on behalf of the soldiers. However, as Chapter 6 will illustrate, this assumption was problematic because soldiers did not necessarily agree with the actions taken by Indian Agents. Arsenault believed that a woman's control over the allowance was not a right, but a privilege that had to be earned by conforming to certain expectations. The justification for administering the allowance was that the woman was not perceived to be taking "proper" care of her family. Her behaviour also was noted as providing a "bad example" to other community members. Arsenault possibly believed that soldiers' wives should provide an example to other community members as the soldiers did by enlisting in the Army. As already noted in Chapter 1, some Indian Affairs Branch officials viewed enlistment as an endorsement of Euro-Canadian values.

For comparative purposes, it is useful to consider how Indian Agents' statements compare to investigators who handled non-Aboriginal cases. How did their attitudes towards administration compare to Indian Agents? What justifications for administration did they use? In non-Aboriginal cases, some of the investigators who administered the

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

allowance on behalf of the Dependents' Allowance Board commented similarly to the Indian Agents that dependents were using their allowance money to purchase high priced or non-essential items.²³² In these cases it was assumed that the husbands had been the financial managers of the household and that an administrator was needed to replace them. Administrators planned out a budget and advised women to purchase such foods as vegetables, fruit and milk, and to avoid purchasing cigarettes and candy.²³³ This list indicates what bureaucrats believed were the intended "appropriate" and "inappropriate" purchases that were to be made with the allowance. In some cases, women were given control over a certain amount of the money to make the purchases outlined in the budget.²³⁴ In other cases, arrangements were made with merchants so women were only allowed to run up a credit to a certain amount.²³⁵ Assistance with budgeting was believed to have positive benefits because the woman was involved. According to representatives from social agencies, this help had a positive impact because the woman had "more incentive to keep her home looking attractive, the family's diet has improved and the children look better."²³⁶ The point is, at least in theory, that when compared to Indian Agents' statements representatives from social agencies placed a greater emphasis on education. In addition, the representative also saw his or her role as short term.

²³² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 10, File Title: Course of Study for Reviewers, "Case-Work Treatment for Soldiers' Families," A talk by Rev. Father John A. Macdonald, Executive Director, Catholic Family Service of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, 3 February 1944.

²³³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts, "Dependents' Allowance Board," First sentence begins "The Dependents' Allowance Board consists of seven members..." Author not identified, Not dated, 4.

²³⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 10, File: Course of Study for Reviewers, "A Children's Aid Society and its Work," A talk by Jean Henshaw, Executive Secretary, Children's Aid Society of Ottawa and Carleton County, Ottawa, Ontario, 2 December 1943.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File 2-30, File Title: DAB Press Notices and Clippings, "Soldiers' Kin Given Help," by Helen Bannerman, Name of newspaper not provided, (date illegible), 1944

In providing advice about how to handle administration cases, the Dependents' Allowance Board was influenced by the ideas and goals of the social work profession. In training courses, staff at the Dependents' Allowance Board were taught the importance of establishing a "good working relationship" with the family.²³⁷ It was noted that in some cases the problems did not relate only to budgeting difficulties, but other more complex issues which had to be carefully assessed. Jean Henshaw, the Executive Secretary of the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa and Carleton County, made her position clear:

The degree of success of Administration is dependent upon the attitudes of the Dependent and the soldier, and the skill and time of the Agency. A good working relationship must be established if the administration is to be of value. The work of administration is a painstaking job requiring skill, patience, tact, flexibility, imagination and resourcefulness on the part of the Administrator. The Agencies find that in undertaking administration, it is rarely that they are required to deal with money matters only, and that there is a straight budgeting problem. Therefore, it is most imperative that the best possible service be obtained for the Dependents, when the Board decides upon administration of Dependents' Allowance.²³⁸

Indian Agents' attitude and approach to Aboriginal families was more punitive. Administrators who were social workers received training on how to use the above mentioned skills in dealing with cases. There is no evidence to indicate that Indian Agents received similar training. It is unclear if they were ever provided with this type of advice regarding how they should approach working with Aboriginal families. Henshaw's and Indian Agents' own statements illustrate contradictory logics at play. Language used in emerging welfare state programs referred to recipients as "clients" who deserved "respect." Indian Agents' attitudes were influenced by an older paternalistic tradition where Aboriginal people were seen as "wards" that required the "guidance" of

²³⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 10, File Title: Course of Study for Reviewers, "A Children's Aid Society and its Work," talk by Henshaw, 2 December 1943.

²³⁸ Ibid.

Euro-Canadians. Whereas Henshaw emphasized social workers' skills and abilities to work with the dependent in order to change the women's behavior, Indian Agents argued that they could only change the women's behavior if they controlled the money. The language used by Indian Agents was derogatory and punitive. They often stated that the women were "difficult" and "unco-operative." Some Indian Agents stated they had a hostile relationship with the women. The one noted exception to this was Christianson, the Superintendent of Indian Agents in Saskatchewan, who referred to Aboriginal dependents' allowance recipients as "payees" and argued that the women should receive their allowances in a timely manner.

Moreover, in non-Aboriginal cases, administration was mostly viewed as a short term solution. Henshaw argued that administration should be seen as a chance to educate rather than punish the women:

The C.A.S. workers try to educate the mother in home management so that she can assume independence as soon as possible. There is nothing quite so devastating to the morale of a woman as to take her allowance away from her and have someone else manage it. The C.A.S. tries to move from the most stringent treatment to the most lenient method of dealing with the problem.²³⁹

Thus, social workers would use their time to teach women the necessary skills to ensure they spent the money "appropriately." In Aboriginal cases, administration often was viewed as a long term, if not permanent, device to control Aboriginal women's allowances. Teaching women how to budget or considering Aboriginal women's morale were issues Agents rarely valued. In this way, Aboriginal women seem to have been considered to have certain "innate" characteristics due to their racial origin that made it more difficult for them to change.

²³⁹ Ibid.

The stated intentions and purposes behind administration were generally framed positively by bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board and some representatives from social agencies. However, it is important to note that there was by no means unanimous agreement that administration was a "positive" measure. Other members of social agencies, municipal officials and the press did question the intrusive nature of administration. To some social workers, administration was being unfairly imposed. For instance, Stewart Sutton, the Superintendent of the Children's Aid Society in Kingston, expressed concerns to Ruth Harvey who was a Social Adviser to the Dependents' Allowance Board. He believed that even though the allowances were "derived from public funds, still, they are well earned by the men and were not just a gift from the Government."²⁴⁰ He concluded "that a soldier's wife should be as free to spend the money as she thinks best, as she would be, if her husband were employed in industry."²⁴¹ Harvey believed Sutton's suggestions were "sensible."²⁴² Interestingly, although Harvey did agree with Sutton, prior to writing his letter to her, he obviously had the impression that at least some bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board were not recognizing the rights of allowance recipients. Concerns were also expressed by Sutton that neighbors and family members were spreading "gossip" about soldiers' wives and this false information was being unfairly used to justify investigations. Sutton rejected the reliance on "gossip" associated with the former moralistic tradition of relief investigators. According to his own observations, however, "gossip" was still prompting some wives to be investigated. This example reveals once again that there was not necessarily a clean

²⁴⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File: 4-5, File Title: Conferences and Inspections, Ruth Harvey, DAB Social Advisor, DAB Welfare Division, Ottawa, Ontario, to Bennett, 16 December 1941.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

break between former methods of investigation and the newer claims of social workers for “objectivity” and a “scientific approach.” Although he does not refer to specific investigators, perhaps Sutton was criticizing the Department of Pensions and Health investigators who were used by the Board.

Significantly, Sutton’s comments also suggest an alternative understanding of citizens’ rights. As noted in Chapter 1, the Department of Pensions and Health investigators claimed to represent the interests of taxpayers who were entitled to know how government monies were being spent. In contrast, Sutton suggested that citizens who receive government money “earn” that money and as a result, have a right to spend the funds autonomously. He questioned the notion that the allowance could only be spent on pre-approved items. His view of the allowance differed from that of many Indian Agents and bureaucrats working at the Board who believed that it was their responsibility to advise the women to make “appropriate” purchases. Notions of citizens’ rights within the emerging welfare state had multiple meanings depending on one’s perspective.

Other local city officials questioned the idea that women were not competent household managers. The logic being criticized was used by Indian Agents when they made broad generalizations about Aboriginal women. As E. E. Jones who worked for the City of Toronto argued: “There has always been the criticism that these women are not good managers. One lone soul has been seen to go into a beverage room and the whole group is condemned. We found from our survey that not more than five per cent could be

classified as poor managers.”²⁴³ The survey Jones based his conclusions on was not found. Such surveys of dependents’ allowance spending were important in subsequent debates about the need for family allowances because they illustrated that women were in fact spending their money to help their families by purchasing better quality food and clothes.²⁴⁴ These results helped convince officials and politicians who were skeptical about family allowances that the money was needed and would be spent by the mothers on their children.²⁴⁵ In the Family Allowances Program the use of these social science techniques was a popular method used by sociologists and social workers to collect information about families. Officials from the Department of National Health and Welfare frequently used the information from the surveys as evidence of the necessity and success of the program.²⁴⁶

Some journalists were critical of the administration of allowances because it resembled relief. A journalist in the Toronto newspaper Hush²⁴⁷ accused local social agencies of accumulating women’s allowances and only providing the women with small sums of the money forcing the recipient “to plead and travel for the dole like a beggar” or to be “prosecuted like criminals.”²⁴⁸ He implied that representatives from social agencies were unfairly investigating women so they could access the allowance money.²⁴⁹ In response, Bennett wrote to the newspaper’s editor that the agencies were asked to provide

²⁴³ The actual survey itself was not located in the records examined. See reference to survey in LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts, “Tells Wife Sorry, Vacate Husband Lost at Dieppe,” The Evening Telegram, Toronto, Ontario, 8 September 1942.

²⁴⁴ See Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 2, 34-35.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., Chapter 3, 6.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., Chapter 2, 35.

²⁴⁷ Hush was a Toronto publication in circulation from 1927 to 1973. See LAC, AMICUS No. 7754516.

²⁴⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-30, File Title: DAB Press Notices and Clippings, “Controlled by Social Snoopers Dependents’ Allowance Bd. Under Fire,” Hush, Toronto, Ontario, 19 August 1944.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

a full account of how the money was spent.²⁵⁰ Again the above criticisms of administration reveal how various groups were struggling to define the nature of government benefits and the role of bureaucrats in implementing these programs.

These criticisms of the investigators are reflective of a shift in the public's attitude towards the role of the investigator and the terms in which social benefits were received. The notion that an investigator should decide an individual's eligibility was being rejected by many recipients in favor of rights. In 1948, George Davidson, who by this time was the Minister of the Department of National Health and Welfare, would reflect upon this change:

We soon found an increasing resistance on the part of the public to the idea that any person, social worker or not, should presume to decide who is a deserving case and who isn't a deserving case. We got to the stage where people began to demand that legislation be written down in specific terms to provide as a matter of right certain benefits to people under clearly defined conditions that were prescribed in the law rather than left to the judgment of some individual.²⁵¹

In addition to the above officials and journalists who questioned the role of the investigator, as we will see in Chapter 6, individual Aboriginal soldiers and their families questioned the need for investigations by Indian Agents. The degree to which the Indian Agents could intrude and interfere with families' financial affairs was in some cases even more intense than social workers, giving Aboriginal families even more cause for complaint. Aboriginal families were not convinced by the Board's claim that administration was intended to assist wives with their financial management skills. They

²⁵⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-30, File Title: DAB Press Notices and Clippings, Bennett to G.S. Shear, Managing Editor, Dominion News Distributors Limited, Toronto, Ontario, 2 November 1944.

²⁵¹ LAC, Records of National Health and Welfare, RG 29, Volume: 1934, R233/100-6/25, "Maintenance as an Eligibility Factor. Dr. Davidson's Remarks at Supervisors' Conference with Introductory Discussion," George Davison, Minister of the Department of National Health and Welfare, Ottawa, Ontario, March 1948, as quoted in Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State*, Chapter 3, 5.

identified administration as a way Indian Agents further controlled the money and sought out alternatives to avoid administration by the Indian Agent. There are also examples of families directly challenging the Indian Agents' decisions by writing letters to military officials, lawyers, local Members of Parliament and officials within the Dependents' Allowance Board. In this way, the frustrations of the individual Aboriginal families with the intrusion of Indian Agents are similar to the public's general frustrations with investigations by social workers. Both were demanding that families had a right to privacy and were rejecting the older philanthropic traditions of the nineteenth century where volunteers or government investigators evaluated recipients' eligibility based on an assessment of their "moral worthiness."

2.7 CONCLUSION

The debate over the management of Aboriginal women's allowance cheques reveals some of the central issues that bureaucrats from the Dependents' Allowance Board and Indian Affairs Branch faced. One of the main themes in this chapter was the portrayals and assumptions made about Aboriginal women and how these perceptions affected policy and procedures. Several of the images of Aboriginal women mentioned will be explored again when discussing other policy issues. Many of these images were based on long held assumptions about Aboriginal people. One of the most prevalent was that Aboriginal people were "wasteful." The inability to handle money was often portrayed as being "innate" to the "Indian" character. The belief that Aboriginal women would "misuse" their allowance by buying "unnecessary" items was based upon the assumption that Aboriginal people only thought about what they wanted in the present moment and were unable to plan for the future. Women were also perceived by Indian

Agents as “wasting” their allowances because they shared their allowances with other community members. Indian Agents were generally against such exchanges because they wanted Aboriginal people to abandon communal sharing in favour of individual property ownership.

Indian Agents’ suspicions about Aboriginal women’s inability to handle money were linked to their poor economic status as well as their race. There was a commonly held belief that poor people could not handle money and needed to be forced to maintain their “work ethic.” As a result of these beliefs, officials argued that the poor should only receive the least amount of money possible. Indian Agents agreed with these views that had long influenced officials and politicians’ attitudes towards relief. They consistently stated that women could live on a lower amount of allowance. Previous poor economic status was perceived as a legitimate enough reason to maintain this standard rather than using the allowance to improve it. Indian Agents emphasized their own authority in being able to judge how much money the women should receive. In these ways, many Indian Agents continued to be influenced by notions that stemmed from older traditions associated with English poor laws. Such views and methods were increasingly coming to be seen as out of touch with the demands that basic living standards be established.

As we have seen in the general debates about the cost of living bonus, representatives from the military wives’ organization and the Legion argued that the allowances were insufficient to sustain a minimum standard of living. They based their claims on comparisons to cost of living indexes employed for industrial workers; at least there was an attempt at objectivity. While Indian Agents used personal assessment to evaluate the amount Aboriginal women needed, in contrast, nongovernmental

representatives utilized the cost of living indexes in an attempt to calculate more precisely a basis for establishing a minimum standard of living for soldiers' families. The ambiguous and vague assessments of Indian Agents regarding what defined a minimum standard of living were not characteristic of the ways such issues were being discussed in wider public debates.

The cost of living debate also reveals that representatives from the military wives' organizations and the Legion linked inadequate housing, food, and clothing to lack of income. They argued that since soldiers were sacrificing themselves for their country, they should be paid on an equal basis to what workers were paid. In these arguments poverty was not the result of immorality, but of the inadequacy of the government's allowance program when compared to what industrial employers were paying. Alternatively, Indian Agents were more likely to blame such inadequacies on Aboriginal people themselves who, they believed, lacked morality due to their "race." As we have seen, Agents saw poor housing and clothing as being connected to women's sexual promiscuity and drinking rather than economic conditions on reserves or the failure of Indian Affairs Branch policies. As opposed to arguing the government allowance program was insufficient, some Agents argued that the allowances were "excessive" and a potential cause for further immorality. They did not connect more money to improved conditions like the representatives from nongovernmental organizations did.

The study of the administration of the allowances by Indian Agents and social workers further revealed some key similarities and differences between their approaches. Both groups of dependents were supposed to adhere to standards of "respectability" in terms of their appearance, habits, housekeeping and mothering skills. Bureaucrats

attached to the allowance money certain culturally specific standards and goals.

Idealized notions of women's roles as wives and mothers were imposed upon all women.

However, despite these similarities there were also key differences. Whereas social workers, influenced by their training and profession, emphasized educating the dependent and working with the dependent, Indian Agents advocated increased control over the allowances.

The conclusions in this chapter support Stoler and Cooper's suggestions that there was by no means "an omniscient colonial apparatus." Several factors affected bureaucrats' reactions: the department's administrative practices, the position of the bureaucrats and whether they believed the policies or procedures threatened their authority. While Bennett accepted some Indian Affairs Branch officials' statements, he was not afraid to also question some of their practices. When it came to assumptions about Aboriginal women's financial abilities, Bennett accepted Indian Agents' comments. From the archival evidence examined, he did not do additional research to confirm their assumptions. In doing so, he shared his colleagues' idea that race was a legitimate category with which to distinguish certain dependents from one another. If he believed that "special" procedures were necessary in these cases, he nevertheless did question the past administrative practices of Indian Agents regarding the procedures for the handling of the cheques. He believed that the Indian Agents could not withhold a portion of the dependents' allowance in an Agency Trust account. In cases of administration, consent was required by the dependent or the soldier. In asking for Aboriginal women's approval, Bennett recognized that these women and soldiers had a right to consent or refuse administration. Thus, he acknowledged that Aboriginal people

were capable of making decisions about their financial situations. This recognition undermined the notion still prevalent in the Branch that Aboriginal people were “child like” and incapable of managing their own affairs. In insisting that Indian Agents adhere to dependents’ allowance policies, the Chairman recognized the rights of individual soldiers and their dependents and undermined assumptions about Aboriginal people’s incompetence.

CHAPTER 3 “THE ODIUM OF DISCRIMINATION”: DEBATES ON REDUCTIONS IN ALLOWANCES FOR ABORIGINAL AND AFRO- CARIBBEAN SOLDIERS’ FAMILIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

“No Race discrimination is made in the payment of dependents allowances,” stated the Dependents’ Allowance Board Chairman, R.O.G. Bennett.¹ Not everyone agreed with his assessment. In response to the Board members’ decision in January 1942 to reduce the allowances for Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean² dependents, the Secretary of the Canadian-West Indian League,³ H.C. Collier, wrote to Bennett that “we fail to see how the action taken...can escape the odium of discrimination.”⁴ These contrasting quotations encourage researchers to ask questions about how the decision to reduce the allowances in the case of Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean recipients was influenced by notions of race. What arguments did officials make in favour or against reductions in allowances? What were the responses of other Euro-Canadians and representatives from nongovernmental and private organizations? Were there any similarities in the arguments made? By examining the arguments for and against the reductions in

¹ Library Archives Canada (LAC), Records of the Dependents’ Allowance Board (DAB), RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File 5-30 File title: British West Indian Dependents, R.O.G. Bennett, DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario, to C.R. Stollmeyer, Trade Commissioner for the British West Indies, Montreal, Quebec, 21 March 1942.

² For the purposes of this project, this term refers to families from countries that were a part of the British West Indies. They are also referred to as West Indian families.

³ The Canadian-West Indian League was an organization based in Canada that had promoted trade and travel between Canada and the West Indies since the 1860’s. See Robin Winks, Canadian-West Indian Union: A Forty-Year Minuet, (London: University of London, 1968), 21.

⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30 File title: British West Indian Dependents, H.C. Collier, Secretary Canadian-West Indian League, Montreal, Quebec to Bennett, 28 March 1942.

allowances in the case of Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean dependents, some potential answers to these questions will be explored.⁵

Interdepartmental tensions appear between officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board and the Indian Affairs Branch. On the one hand, the Chairman of the Board believed the reductions were justified because the cost of living was lower on reserves than in towns and cities, Aboriginal people already received "benefits" from the government, and the amount of the allowance was higher than their pre-enlistment income. He used some of the same arguments in the case of Afro-Caribbean dependents. On the other hand, while Indian Affairs Branch officials agreed that Aboriginal women's living expenses were lower than Euro-Canadian women's, these officials wanted the allowance administered, not reduced. The Indian Agents' arguments stemmed, in part, from the fact that they were implementing the policies. They expressed concerns that they would be perceived as responsible for the reductions and would have to deal with a number of complaints from Aboriginal people. The Indian Affairs Branch Director also argued that reductions would be "unfair" in light of Aboriginal people's contributions to the war effort. This bureaucrat's arguments were made in specific reference to justice for Aboriginal soldiers. On the whole, he was not fundamentally challenging the validity of policies based on notions of race. Indeed, on issues such as treaty obligations or Aboriginal people's collective rights, his Branch officials rarely invoked such notions of

⁵ This debate is also summarized in Davison's thesis. See Janet Frances Davison, "We Shall Remember: Canadian Indians and World War II," Masters Thesis, Trent University, 1993. The focus of Davison's thesis was to discuss Aboriginal soldiers' experiences in the Army and Aboriginal veterans' benefits. As a result of her focus, Davison does not discuss the debate around the reductions in depth and mainly summarizes DAB officials' and Indian Affairs Branch (IAB) officials' different points of view. Furthermore, she does not attempt to compare the debates about the reductions in the case of Aboriginal dependents to Afro-Caribbean dependents.

justice; they did not question the continued need for paternalistic control over Aboriginal people's affairs.

Bennett's arguments also faced criticism from private business organizations and journalists, providing readers with examples of how organizations outside the government interacted with and put pressure on the Dependents' Allowance Board. Businessmen associated with the Canadian West Indian League feared trade relations might be affected by the Board's action because families in the Caribbean, as a form of protest, would no longer purchase Canadian goods. In response to Bennett's claims that the cost of living in the Caribbean was significantly lower than in Canada and the allowances, even at reduced rates, were higher than the pre or post enlistment incomes of many Afro-Caribbean soldiers, journalists argued that the allowance should be legally defined as a right. They pointed out that Euro-Canadians whose pre and post enlistment incomes were lower than the allowance were not having their allowances similarly reduced. In contrast to the officials at the Indian Affairs Branch, organizations such as the Canadian West Indian League presented a different understanding of justice that more fundamentally challenged racial discrimination. Studying these various arguments for and against the reductions by these various stakeholders will show how racial groups were specifically targeted due to their race, despite Bennett's claim that there was no such discrimination.

3.2 HISTORIOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Research studying how assumptions about race affected public policy and law together with the complex reaction of Euro-Canadians to notions of "racial difference" helps us to understand the debate about reductions in allowances. In her book entitled,

Colour-coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950, Constance Backhouse argues that, although the concept of race itself is not universal or unchanging, it remains a valid category to use when analyzing the past.⁶ Backhouse argues that the construction of race, as a category, has economic, social and political implications which are used to “create, explain, and perpetuate inequalities.”⁷ These inequalities, she argues, are especially worthy of examination in the Canadian context because of the myth that Canada is a “raceless” nation.⁸ Despite evidence of the racist attitudes of some judges and lawyers and legislation that used race as a category of distinction to limit people’s rights, Backhouse explains how the notion of “racelessness” had been perpetuated in the Canadian legal system.⁹ In the court cases she examines from 1900 to 1950, race does not appear as a “recognizable legal category of classification.”¹⁰ One could argue that Chairman Bennett was perpetuating the myth of “racelessness” in a similar fashion in his insistence that racial discrimination did not affect the implementation of the dependents’ allowance policy.

When examining how inequalities based on race were created and explained, historians studying race relations in Canada too often, according to Backhouse, have assumed that Euro-Canadians accepted racism uncritically.¹¹ From her own examination of court cases involving different racial groups, Backhouse concludes that “Some whites, including some lawyers and judges, also dissented from racist ideas and practices. The suggestion that racism was like the air one breathed, that there was no space for

⁶ Constance Backhouse, Colour-coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 7.

⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁸ Ibid., 13.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 10.

countervailing perspectives, is simply not credible.”¹² Although it could be claimed that the lawyers only argued against the discriminatory practices because they were hired to do so by their clients, Backhouse is convinced that some were sincere in their beliefs that the laws were unjust. She concludes that “...racism did not entirely envelop white Canadian society in an unrelieved manner throughout this period. There were white individuals who took explicitly anti-racist positions at specific moments in time.”¹³ The conclusions in this chapter support Backhouse’s observations. The President of the Legion, the Secretary of the Canadian-West Indian League, and journalists all argued against the reductions of dependents’ allowances because they believed the reductions were racially discriminatory and unjust. The response of these groups seems to belong to a larger shift taking place during this period relating to changing perceptions of the concept of race. Backhouse describes the shift that took place in the 1930’s and 1940’s:

Scientists began to deconstruct racial definitions and categories. Legislators began to enact statutes to prohibit racial and religious discrimination in the insurance industry, in social welfare programs, in the labour movement, in land transactions. The publication and display of racial and religious libel came under legislative attack. The first comprehensive human rights statute was enacted in Saskatchewan in 1947. Public analysis of racial discrimination took on new focus.¹⁴

The dependents’ allowance policy represents one such case where the validity of racial distinctions was being questioned.

In his book entitled, ‘Race,’ Rights, and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies, James St. George Walker examines four legal cases dealing with

¹² Ibid., 11.

¹³ Ibid., 277. Backhouse’s argument for a recognition of multiple perspectives is similar to Stoler and Cooper. See Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony,” in Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World, Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 19.

¹⁴ Ibid., 281.

racial discrimination. He situates each case in its political, social, and economic context to find that attitudes towards race were not static, but were influenced by changing circumstances, shifting definitions of individual and group rights, and different moral outlooks.¹⁵ Race was not a fixed category biologically defined, but a socially constructed concept.

Like Backhouse, Walker notes that during the time period that he examines, the “acceptance of the meaning of ‘race’ was recognizable, as was a readiness to use the machinery of the state to regulate relations between ‘races.’”¹⁶ He finds that some of the judges’ decisions, and much of the public policy, were based on assumptions that racial groups should be treated differently. These assumptions were a part of the “common sense” of the time period. Such beliefs did not need to be justified or proven because the fact that differences existed was “self evident.”¹⁷ By creating or reinforcing laws using this approach, judges legitimized certain common attitudes that were based upon perceptions rather than evidence.¹⁸ For instance in the Quong Wing case, the decision to support the Province of Saskatchewan’s right not to allow Chinese men to hire Euro-Canadian women was based on a general perception that Chinese men were a threat to Euro-Canadian women. Rather than being based upon actual recorded cases of Chinese men attacking Euro-Canadian women, this perception was based on assumptions about Chinese men’s sexual aggressiveness and Euro-Canadian women’s vulnerability.¹⁹ Walker states that the Supreme Court gave “public effect to private beliefs and fears

¹⁵ James W. St. George Walker, ‘Race,’ Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies. (Toronto and Waterloo: The Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History and Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), 6.

¹⁶ Ibid., 302.

¹⁷ Ibid., 28.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 118.

about ‘race.’”²⁰ In doing so it “was a significant participant, legitimating racial categories and maintaining barriers among them.”²¹ He remarks, “As a result of the law, ‘race’ became an officially meaningful category in Canada...”²²

Despite the judges’ similar beliefs that race was a “legitimate” category in the law, Walker finds that judges’ decisions cannot be characterized as monolithic. The judges that did agree provided their own set of reasons for arriving at the same decisions. Some judges provided dissenting opinions indicating that there was flexibility within the law. Judges’ decisions were not simply a “rigid or “mechanistic” application of procedures, but rather were influenced by their own interpretations and their own moral outlook.²³ As Walker states, “in each instance more than one plausible meaning was available.”²⁴ The outcomes were not “inevitable” or “pre-determined,” but the result of particular circumstances.²⁵ Walker emphasizes that the law was not “objective,” but “indeterminate,” “ambiguous,” and at times “contradictory.”²⁶

By insisting their cases be pursued through the court system, Walker argues that racial minorities never accepted the majority’s view that racial discrimination was justified. From their own experience they understood, that despite claims by government officials and the wider Canadian public that policies were not racially discriminatory, their access to employment, housing, education, and voting was hindered by their racial background.²⁷ The belief of many of these minority groups was that racial

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 305.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 302.

²² *Ibid.*, 305.

²³ *Ibid.*, 310.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 310

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 26

discrimination should not be permitted in a democratic society.²⁸ African Canadians claimed that their status as “British subjects” entitled them to better treatment. In the early 1940’s when Fred Christie was denied service in a tavern due to his race, the African Canadian community provided money so he could take his case to the Supreme Court. A journalist in the Free Lance, an African Canadian community newspaper in Montreal, had previously argued that the Supreme Court ““will not uphold this malicious principle of racial discrimination, which is certainly contrary to British principles and traditions.””²⁹ By making these arguments, some African Canadians believed notions of “British justice” and “equality” could be re-defined to be more inclusive.³⁰ Similar to Backhouse’s conclusions, Walker finds that some Euro-Canadians also attempted to work within the political and legal system to present these arguments against racial discrimination.³¹

R. Scott Sheffield’s book entitled, The Red Man’s On the Warpath: The Image of the ‘Indian’ and the Second World War, is also useful for the specific discussion of Aboriginal people’s status and its relation to broader debates about the meaning of democracy and equality, during the post-war period. The arguments used to challenge the reductions in allowances found in this research foreshadowed the debates that took place in the post- war period during the Special Joint Commission on Indian Affairs studied by Sheffield. In existence from 1946 to 1948, the purpose of the Commission was to make recommendations regarding how Indian Affairs Branch policy should be modified and what changes should be made to the Indian Act. The twenty-two Members

²⁸ Ibid., 144.

²⁹ Free Lance, Montreal, Quebec, 9 July 1938 as quoted in Walker, ‘Race, Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada’, 158.

³⁰ Walker, ‘Race, Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada’, 309-310.

³¹ Ibid., 7.

of Parliament and twelve senators of the Commission invited statements by Indian Affairs Branch officials, nongovernmental organizations,³² and First Nations themselves. In all, 122 witnesses were heard and 411 written briefs submitted.³³ The Commission presented First Nations with a chance to present their views to politicians; an opportunity rarely provided to them in the past.³⁴ One of the main dilemmas faced by the committee was how could Canadians tolerate racial discrimination in a society which claimed to value “democracy,” “equality,” and “freedom.”³⁵ In the international context, the adoption of the Atlantic Charter in 1942 and the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 further defined human rights in legal terms.³⁶ The definitions of human rights used were shaped by Western ideologies that emphasized the universal rights of the individual to the exclusion of collective rights and communal responsibilities.³⁷ In light of these international agreements, church groups, unions, and municipal councils argued that Canada should also ensure its First Nations people had

³² R. Scott Sheffield, The Red Man’s On The Warpath: The Image of the ‘Indian’ and the Second World War, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 131-132, 148. Organizations who wrote to the commission were: religious groups, municipal councils, unions, veterans’ organizations, professional societies, youth groups, and social clubs. Sheffield suggests that, “The sheer diversity of agencies demonstrated that the plight of the ‘Indian’ resonated with a multiplicity of Canadians.” See Sheffield, The Red Man’s On The Warpath, 131.

³³ Ibid., 150.

³⁴ Ibid., 129.

³⁵ Ibid., 135.

³⁶ Ibid., 146.

³⁷ Charles Taylor, “Conditions of an Unforced Consensus on Human Rights,” in The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights, Joanne R. Bauer and Daniel A. Bell, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 126-128. Scholars considering more current dilemmas with these definitions of human rights have argued that we should not look upon Western individualist views versus more collectivist ideas as either or propositions. They have argued that there are alternative ways that notions of human rights can be approached to consider aspects of various religious and cultural beliefs by not assuming there can be one universal standard and by not imposing Western moral standards onto other cultures. For a consideration of this in relation to Western and Confucian and Buddhist beliefs see Taylor, “Conditions of an Unforced Consensus on Human Rights,” 124-143. These ideas are explored in reference to Qur’anic punishments in Muslim societies in Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im, “Towards a Cross-Cultural Approach to Defining International Standards of Human Rights. The Meaning of Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading treatment or Punishment,” in Human Rights in Cross-cultural Perspectives. A Quest for Consensus, Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im, ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 19-44.

equal status to other citizens.³⁸ Many Euro-Canadians assumed that First Nation peoples would accept their definitions of citizenship which emphasized individual rights.

First Nations groups also participated in the Commission. While many Aboriginal leaders argued that Aboriginal people could have individual rights, they maintained that they should keep their cultural identity and treaty rights.³⁹ Sheffield finds that, “Terms like democracy, freedom, progress, citizenship, and equality were broad enough to accommodate a multiplicity of meanings, and indigenous leaders and spokespersons used such language almost as liberally as their Canadian counterparts.”⁴⁰

Ultimately, during a time when universality was paramount, committee members could not reconcile the notion that Aboriginal people wanted the rights of citizenship, but also wanted to maintain their special status. Sheffield concludes, “In such a cultural environment, the idea of differentiated citizenship was not a concept likely to be greeted with widespread acceptance.”⁴¹ Committee members, for instance, refused to acknowledge that the treaties represented an ongoing set of obligations.⁴² Although members of the committee highlighted Euro-Canadians’ mistreatment of Aboriginal people and the poor living standards on many reserves, the committee members failed to address First Nations’ organizations’ demands for self government and greater autonomy. Instead, their recommendations reinforced the notion that Euro-Canadian definitions of citizenship were superior. Assimilation through integration was still perceived as the most effective way to “solve” the “Indian problem.”⁴³ Sheffield argues that through the

³⁸ Sheffield, The Red Man’s on the Warpath, 131.

³⁹ Ibid., 141.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 131.

⁴¹ Ibid., 137.

⁴² Ibid., 170.

⁴³ Ibid., 178.

recommendations of the Special Joint Commission, “Assimilation although still founded on a conviction of racial superiority, was legitimized and renewed through liberal-democratic principles.”⁴⁴ For many Euro-Canadians and many Aboriginal people, however, definitions of citizenship continued to have multiple and complex meanings.⁴⁵ These different understandings of citizenship are important to keep in mind when analyzing the arguments against the reductions. Many of the individuals making these arguments were advocating for the individual rights of soldiers who were from racial minorities to be recognized. They were not necessarily acknowledging First Nations’ collective rights or arguing that definitions of citizenship should be more inclusive of different types of rights.

3.3 THE GREAT DEBATE: ALLOWANCE REDUCTIONS FOR ABORIGINAL RECIPIENTS

As we have previously seen, from the beginning officials at the Dependent’s Allowance Board and Indian Affairs Branch expressed anxieties that the amount of the allowance was too high for Aboriginal dependents. In order to “solve” this “problem,” in 1940, potential reductions in allowances for Aboriginal recipients were suggested by Chairman Arthur MacNamara, but these deductions were rejected.⁴⁶ MacNamara did not state why Board members decided against the reductions at this time. A year and a half later, however, in January 1942, Dependents’ Allowance Board members changed their minds and decided to reduce the amount of allowances for Aboriginal recipients.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ There is a further discussion of these types of issues in Chapter 6.

⁴⁶ LAC, Records of the Indian Affairs Branch, (IAB), RG 10, Volume 6764, File: 452-6 Pt. 2, Arthur MacNamara, DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario to R.A. Hoey, Superintendent Welfare and Training, IAB, Ottawa Ontario, 7 September 1940.

⁴⁷ Although no specific reason for this decision was found, some potential reasons are discussed later in this chapter.

Wives' allowances were reduced from thirty-five dollars to twenty-five dollars,⁴⁸ and the amounts for children from twelve dollars to nine dollars for the first two children, and from nine dollars to six dollars for the third child. Board members took advantage of the fact that there was no legal obligation to provide the maximum amount of allowance. As Bennett stated to the Director of Public Relations for the Department of National Defence, "Allowances may not be claimed as a right but are gratuitous payments made by the Canadian government for the purpose of alleviating the anxiety of the Members of the Forces for the financial welfare of their Dependents. The amounts quoted in the Regulations are maximum amounts...."⁴⁹ If women found the reduced amount insufficient, they were supposed to give a list of their expenditures to the Indian Agent and Board members would reconsider each individual case.⁵⁰ It is unclear from the archival material how many women requested that their cases be re-examined by Board members. In the cases located where the allowances were being administered by Indian Agents, we know that no reductions were made.⁵¹ Afro-Caribbean soldiers' families, who will be discussed later in this chapter, and Aboriginal soldiers' families appear to be the only racial groups who had their allowances reduced.⁵²

Initially, the decision to reduce the allowances caused inter-departmental tension because no Dependents' Allowance Board members or staff members had informed

⁴⁸ There were also a few instances in which the allowances were reduced for Euro-Canadians. These instances included: guardian cases when trust funds were accumulating, cases where disability pension was received and cases where wives were employed in the Public Service. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts, "Soldiers' Wives Forced to Accept Public Charity when Allowances Cut," Unnamed Newspaper, Not dated.

⁴⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to J.W.G. Clarke, Director of Public Relations, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 6 April 1942.

⁵⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, Bennett to T.R.L. MacInnes, IAB Secretary, Ottawa, Ontario, 26 March 1942.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² The archival records examined do not indicate what happened in the case of African Canadian soldiers' families or in the cases of other racial groups living in Canada.

Indian Affairs Branch officials that the allowances were going to be reduced. Instead, letters were sent out directly by the Dependents' Allowance Board Chairman to women who were going to get their allowances reduced. Many women then contacted Indian Agents, who in turn, reported to T.R.L. MacInnes, the Indian Affairs Branch Secretary in Ottawa. Once H.W. McGill, the Director of the Indian Affairs Branch found out, he wrote to his colleague at the Dependents' Allowance Board: "It is perhaps unfortunate that the Board proceeded to make these reductions without first consulting this Branch."⁵³ It is unclear why Dependents' Allowance Board members and staff did not consult with Indian Affairs Branch officials prior to making the reductions.

Considering the fact that Indian Affairs Branch officials were not pressuring Board members to make reductions, it becomes harder to understand why in 1942 Board members decided to implement the reductions when they had previously rejected the idea. Perhaps, concerns about finances made them decide to reduce the allowances as a cost cutting measure. As no letters written by politicians were found requesting reductions in allowances, it would appear that the decision was not an answer to political pressures. In the evidence examined, no concerns were expressed by Dependents' Allowance Board staff members that the allowances should be reduced. One possible reason for the timing of the reductions could be the change of the Dependents' Allowance Board Chairman. In 1941, Bennett took over as Chairman and he was the one to write most of the correspondence in favour of the reductions.

Bennett, indeed, expressed his views about the reductions clearly: since Aboriginal women already received "benefits" from the government, they should not

⁵³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, H.W. McGill, IAB Director, Ottawa, Ontario to the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources, Department of Mines and Resources, Ottawa, Ontario, 30 April 1942.

receive as much allowance as Euro-Canadian women. In addition, Bennett pointed out that it was not as expensive to live on a reserve as it was to live in a city, a belief harbored by many Indian Agents. He summarized his views in a letter to the General Superintendent of Indian Affairs:

We realize that as you point out it will be difficult in some cases to make it clear to the Indians that they are not being discriminated against but this is decidedly not the case. They are receiving free rent, taxes, medical, hospital and other services on the Reserves which are not provided for people living in cities. As the Government does not pay twice, it is necessary to deduct the approximate cost of these services when providing Dependents' Allowance.⁵⁴

Similar arguments surfaced in World War I, when officials tried to refuse Aboriginal families money from the Canadian Patriotic Fund. This volunteer organization, as we have seen, had raised, collected, and distributed money to soldiers' families during World War I. In March 1917, a local Canadian Patriotic Fund Committee informed Indian Agent W.J. Dilworth of the Blood Agency in Alberta that Aboriginal families were going to be excluded from consideration because they did not pay rent and they already received assistance from the government.⁵⁵ These reasons were the same as those used by Bennett in the above quotation to justify the reductions. When Duncan Campbell Scott, who was the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, was informed of this local committee's stance, he spoke to Philip Morris, the Assistant Secretary of the Canadian Patriotic Fund. At a subsequent meeting of the Canadian Patriotic Fund in

⁵⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, Bennett to E.P. Randle, General Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Brantford, Ontario, 28 March 1942.

⁵⁵ It is not clear if the local committee came up with these reasons on its own and what, if any, advice headquarters had provided to the local committee on this issue. This exclusion would appear to be unfair considering that some First Nations had contributed money to the fund. See Glenbow Archives, Blood Agency Papers, M1788, Box 16, File 122, letter, W.J. Dilworth to J.D. McLean, 20 February 1917 as quoted in L. James Dempsey, *Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I*, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1999), 76.

Ottawa, it was decided that Aboriginal families should be eligible to receive money from the Fund.⁵⁶

Ironically, despite Scott's desire that Aboriginal families be considered eligible for the Canadian Patriotic Fund during World War I, he used the argument that Aboriginal people did not pay taxes and did receive medical care and education in the 1930's, to argue that Aboriginal families were less affected by the economic depression than Euro-Canadian families.⁵⁷ The only expenses he claimed Aboriginal people had were food and clothing.⁵⁸ According to some treaties, the Indian Affairs Branch was supposed to provide basic medical care and schooling as a part of its treaty obligations. By using the language of "benefits," neither Bennett nor Scott conceived medical care or tax exemptions as treaty obligations owed to Aboriginal people from the government.

In making his arguments, Bennett underestimated the living costs of Aboriginal families who lived on reserves. According to Brownlie, what medical expenditures were covered varied.⁵⁹ In one case an Indian Agent made Aboriginal people pay for their own medical bills out of their interest money because he wanted to "teach" them to pay their own debts.⁶⁰ Indian Agents' own perceptions of the individual's health problems and their attitude toward the individual significantly affected what medical services Indian

⁵⁶ The reasons why the decision was reversed were not provided in Dempsey's book. It is therefore difficult to assess Scott's influence. See Glenbow Archives, Blood Agency Papers, M1788, Box 16, File 122, letter, D.C. Scott to W.J. Dilworth, April 18, 1917 as quoted in Dempsey, *Warriors of the King*, 77. Morton's book on the Canadian Patriotic Fund does not appear to discuss this debate in more detail. See Desmond Morton, *Fight or Pay: Soldiers' Families in the Great War*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).

⁵⁷ Canada. Department of Mines and Resources. "Annual Report of the Indian Affairs Branch," 31 March 1931, 7. See "Report of the Deputy Superintendent General," <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/indianaffairs/> consulted on May 16, 2003.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Robin Jarvis Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye: Indian Agents, Government Power, and Aboriginal Resistance in Ontario, 1918-1939*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003), 120

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

Affairs Branch would cover.⁶¹ Moreover, the source of the payment would vary: in some cases, expenses were paid out of band funds or by the Indian Affairs Branch and in other cases they were not. The system of payment was highly subjective.⁶² In light of these observations, the assumption that women beneficiaries of the dependents' allowance did not have to pay for medical expenses is problematic. Readers should also keep in mind that although women may have not owed any rent, they had to pay for the materials to build or repair their homes and for furniture. Similarly, if the families had farms, they had to pay for equipment, hay, and other related expenses. Women who did not have male relatives to replace the unpaid labour of their husbands/sons, may have had to pay for this work while their husbands/sons were overseas.

In addition, Aboriginal people who lived in isolated areas did not have access to the same number of jobs that people who lived in cities. In later debates about the Family Allowance Program of 1945, officials would make such a differentiation: they would conceive of the allowance as an equalizer between Euro-Canadian people living in the country and the city because people in the country had lower incomes and did not have the same level of services as people in cities.⁶³ But, if living standards on most reserves were much lower for Aboriginal people than for the majority of Euro-Canadians, no official conceived of the dependents' allowance as a compensation of this kind. On the contrary, the allowances of Aboriginal families were reduced, thus creating an exception to the notion that all soldiers should receive the same amount of allowance.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Dominique Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State: Quebec Families, Compulsory Education and Family Allowances. Translated by Nicola Danby. (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2005), Chapter 4, 14-16. In the case of the family allowance it was assumed the payment would improve the standard of living for farming, fishing, and lumberjacking families. See Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 4, 14-16.

In order to further his argument that the government did not need to provide additional monies to Aboriginal dependents through the allowance, Bennett compared the money provided to Aboriginal dependents to the salaries of women in government jobs and the military:

It is a well established rule that the Government does not pay twice. For instance, one cannot receive Dependents Allowances on account of more than one soldier or airman, nor any women in receipt of salaries as Civil Servants (except Stenographers and Typists) receive Dependents Allowance.⁶⁴ If the wife of a soldier receives pay as a Member of the C.W.A.C. or the R.C.A.F. (W.D.) she forfeits her Dependents Allowance.⁶⁵

Bennett did not point out that many Aboriginal women did not receive steady incomes like civil servants or female soldiers or that treaty money did not function according to the same logic as the labour market.

Indian Agents had a mixed reaction to Bennett's arguments supporting the reductions. They had made assumptions regarding Aboriginal families' pre-enlistment income, their class status, their economic "benefits" and their living costs that fit Bennett's argument that the allowances were "excessive." However, they believed that the reductions policy would be difficult to implement.

Indian Agents pointed out that the amount of the allowance was higher than the previous income of many Aboriginal families. For instance, Agent Frank Booth from Muscow, Saskatchewan, stated about one soldier's wife that, "At the present time she has only herself and a son about eight years of age to support, and I consider \$35.00 a month

⁶⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-32, File Title: Press Releases and Radio Broadcasts, "Soldiers' Wives Forced Accept Public Charity when Allowances Cut," Unnamed Newspaper, Not dated. It was reported in the newspaper that the regulations were amended so soldiers' wives could earn up to \$3,000 a year in a government job without losing their allowance. This reference indicates that the regulations were eventually amended.

⁶⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, "This letter may be copied if required for the information of the Indian Chiefs and Headmen," Bennett to S.H. Simpson, Indian Agent, Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, Not dated.

should be ample for this, and far more than she has ever been used to before her husband enlisted.”⁶⁶ S.H. Simpson from Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, held a similar point of view:

In all cases the assigned pay and allowance received by these people is very much larger than the amount their husbands have earned at any time during the past six years. Despite this, the dependents are not only spending every cent of their monthly allowance but are creating debts with the local merchants...their intelligence is much lower than the average white person and they are not capable of successfully handling their own affairs.⁶⁷

Instead of identifying the complicating factors that accounted for Aboriginal families' lower incomes before the payment of the dependents' allowance, Agent Simpson attributed the cause of the problem to the recipients' "racial" origin. Aboriginal people were assumed to be less intelligent than Euro-Canadians.

Some Indian Agents expressed concerns that after the war there would be a strain on marriages because men would not be able to provide the same amount of money as provided through the allowance. J.P.B. Ostrander of Battleford, Saskatchewan, wrote such a warning:

I regard this as a serious situation for the future, when the wife has developed extravagant habits and the husband suddenly finds himself without a job, at the end of the war. The result will be that the wife will be dissatisfied with the living her husband is able to provide and she will make unreasonable demands upon him, which, by his being unable to comply, will result in many quarrels and separations.⁶⁸

Ostrander assumed that men's wages after the war would be less than the allowance.

Women were portrayed as "unreasonable" and unable to adjust if the family's economic

⁶⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File 452-729 Pt. 1, Frank Booth, Indian Agent, Muscow, Saskatchewan to MacInnes, 8 September 1941.

⁶⁷ As quoted in LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, "Remarks of Indian Agents Extracted from Files," Author not identified, Not dated. The original letter from the Indian Agent was not found.

⁶⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, J.P.B. Ostrander, Indian Agent, Battleford, Saskatchewan, to IAB, 8 January 1942.

circumstances changed. Ostrander also assumed that women were dependent on the male income.

The references to low pre-enlistment incomes deserve further exploration. There were many complex reasons why Aboriginal families had limited incomes prior to the war which often were related to the federal officials' failure to properly protect Aboriginal people's access to resources on their reserves.⁶⁹ Many Aboriginal people were considered to be a part of the "traditional poor" "whose economic marginality was already established before the 1930's."⁷⁰ The Great Depression had worsened these families' circumstances. A survey of Indian Affairs Branch Annual Reports in the 1930's indicated that Aboriginal men and women were mainly employed as labourers. The main jobs mentioned were logging, fishing, and farming. Hunting and trapping were also listed, but hunting had become more difficult in the 1930's as Euro-Canadian men encroached on Aboriginal hunting areas and the prices for fur were low. The sale of crafts such as moccasins was also listed; the market for these items had declined in the 1930's and, as a result, many Aboriginal people who made these crafts had had to go on relief. Women were reported to work at craft making and berry picking.⁷¹ They also worked as domestics. These types of jobs tended to be low paying and seasonal. On the whole, during the 1930's, the earnings of Aboriginal people had declined.⁷² They were often forced to survive on low amounts of relief which only allowed for the bare necessities.⁷³ For Aboriginal families on reserves, "persistent high infant mortality,

⁶⁹ Joan Sangster, Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), 186.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 123.

⁷¹ See "Annual Report of the Indian Affairs Branch," 31 March 1930 48, 68 and "Annual Report of the Indian Affairs Branch," 31 March 1931, 8,23.

⁷² Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye, 111.

⁷³ Ibid., 114.

general ill health, and lowered life expectancy testified to the continued poverty and scarcity of medical care.”⁷⁴

In the 1940's, the pattern of low paying and seasonal employment continued although more people did get jobs in war industries. British Columbian men, for instance, crossed the border to be fruit pickers in Washington at a rate of eighty-five cents per hour; hop picking became available at a rate of five cents per pound. Women, the elderly, and older children worked in canneries and worked as agricultural labourers in berry and hop-fields. Fruit picking jobs were available in Nova Scotia as well.⁷⁵ For Aboriginal families, as for whites, this type of seasonal employment made families' income unstable.⁷⁶ Unforeseen emergencies or illness could add to this instability.

Although Indian Agents recognized that Aboriginal men had low paying jobs prior to the war, they identified race rather than low wages and seasonal employment as creating these conditions. As already noted in Chapter 2, Aboriginal men were considered by some Agents to be inherently “lazy” and poor conditions were generally related more to Aboriginal mothers' ill will than to economics.⁷⁷ These types of assumptions were also applied to other racial groups. As Walker found in his study of Supreme Court cases involving various racial groups, “Acceptance of a lower standard of living was attributed, by common sense at least, to genetic factors such as a lack of ambition or even lower physical requirements.”⁷⁸ Given these beliefs and assumptions,

⁷⁴ Cynthia R. Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1999), 121.

⁷⁵ “Annual Report of Indian Affairs Branch,” 31 March 1946, 202 and “Annual Report of Indian Affairs Branch,” 31 March 1942, 144.

⁷⁶ Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State*, Chapter 5, 13.

⁷⁷ Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, 45.

⁷⁸ Walker, *‘Race,’ Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada*, 306.

Agents did not believe that Aboriginal families, even for a short time period, should receive an amount of money that they considered to be “excessive.”

Some Indian Agents argued that costs of living on reserves were significantly lower for Aboriginal women than for Euro-Canadian women. Indian Agent Simpson from Duck Lake, Saskatchewan remarked, “These dependents have no rent to pay and their fuel costs little or nothing. Medical and hospital services are free, also the education of their children and they have no taxes to pay...”⁷⁹ Just as Superintendent Scott had done earlier, Simpson perceived services such as medical care and education as “benefits” rather than treaty obligations. Indian Agent Ostrander believed, like Bennett, that Aboriginal women on reserves had fewer living expenses than non-Aboriginal women who lived in towns and cities. As a result of these lower living expenses, Ostrander believed that women should save a portion of their allowance. He wrote, “I feel that Indian women should be made to save a certain amount each month, as they have no such expenses as rent, fuel, water and other incidental expenses which women have who reside in Towns or Cities.”⁸⁰ Indian Agent Robertson from the Saugeen Agency near Chippewa Hill, Ontario, agreed with Ostrander, “In my opinion the allowance referred to in your letter (\$69) would be sufficient to ensure a comfortable standard of living for this family, as they reside on the reserve where the cost is not so great as if they lived in a town or city.”⁸¹

The principle of “less eligibility” appears to have been at play in these arguments. This notion, influenced by poor laws in Britain, was based on the idea that the amount of

⁷⁹ As quoted in LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, “Remarks of Indian Agents Extracted from Files,” Author not identified, Not dated.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

any relief provided to the poor must be set at a rate lower than the amount earned by the lowest paid labourer.⁸² Many government officials in the Canada believed during the nineteenth and early twentieth century that the cause of poverty was individual incompetence and laziness rather than economic conditions. As a result of these commonly held beliefs, they argued that low rates would make relief unappealing and would “encourage” the poor to work instead of accepting relief and would force the poor to be “thrifty” with their money.⁸³ Indian Agents appear to have been influenced by this line of thinking. Aboriginal people who were already receiving “benefits” must not receive high rates of allowance because it might make government support too appealing and facilitate dependence. The assumption that Aboriginal people were “naturally lazy” may have led some officials to believe that a “predisposition” towards dependence on the government already existed. According to these officials’ views, the government support Aboriginal people received must only be the bare minimum so that the low standard of living provided would act as an incentive to work.

A similar logic had also been applied to the unemployed during the Great Depression. Charlotte Whitton, who was the Director of the Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare during the 1930’s, was asked to investigate the federal government’s relief policy. In her report to the government, she argued that recipients on relief, the majority of whom were Euro-Canadian, should not be provided with amounts that exceeded what they previously earned or would earn in the future because they would become used to a scale of living that they themselves could not afford, and as a result,

⁸² Dennis Guest, The Emergence of Social Security in Canada, Second Edition, (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia, 1985), 36. For a closer comparison of Indian Affairs Branch relief policies and English poor laws see Andrew Webster, “The Political Economy of Indian Relief in the Territorial North, 1927-1973,” *Masters of Social Work*, Carleton University, 1994.

⁸³ Ibid., 37.

these recipients would be “permanently dependent.” She argued that the amount of relief provided should be less than the earnings of an unskilled labourer. In this way, Whitton argued “work ethic” would be maintained because it would always be more worthwhile to earn wages than to receive relief if the amounts of relief provided were always kept to an absolute minimum.⁸⁴

By the 1940’s, the ideas that Whitton professed were being questioned to a greater degree. As readers will recall from Chapter 1, the amounts of allowance were provided at rates below what an unskilled labourer received suggesting that officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board wanted to keep rates of allowances in line with the principle of “less eligibility.” However, federal officials were also being forced to reckon with demands that rates should provide a “social minimum” for all soldiers’ relatives. The notion of a “social minimum” was based on the idea that there should be a set of standards for housing, food, and health and that families, no matter what the lowest wages were, should not live below these standards. There was an increasing recognition that poverty had many complex economic causes and was not merely the fault of the individual. In providing the lowest possible rates of relief under the “less eligibility” principle, people were being provided with subsistence level support that was substandard and a threat to people’s health.⁸⁵ Debates about the amount of allowances provided which were discussed in Chapter 2 revealed how federal officials, individual recipients, nongovernmental organizations, and community groups were struggling with these different notions. The claims of recipients that they could not pay their basic

⁸⁴ James Struthers, “A Profession in Crisis: Charlotte Whitton and Canadian Social Work in the 1930s,” in *The ‘Benevolent’ State: The Growth of Welfare in Canada*, Allan Moscovitch and Jim Albert, eds. (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1987), 116, 121.

⁸⁵ Guest, *The Emergence of Social Security in Canada*, 36.

living costs and the arguments by nongovernmental organizations that decent housing and nutritious food could not be maintained were factors that contributed to federal officials' decision to implement a cost of living bonus and to provide an increase in assigned pay to wives and an increase in allowances to mothers in January 1943. In their discussions about the adequacy of the allowance and the necessity of a cost of living bonus, federal officials did not suggest that poor Euro-Canadians, whose previous or future earnings would exceed the allowance, should have their allowances reduced. Widespread public support for soldiers and their families would have made such arguments politically unpopular, especially when soldiers' relatives were already arguing publicly that they could barely survive on the amount of allowances that were being provided. Although arguments associated with the logics of the England poor law tradition were becoming increasingly unpopular in relation to poor Euro-Canadians, when discussing Aboriginal or Afro-Caribbean recipients bureaucrats still considered it reasonable to use such arguments. The notion that a "social minimum" in terms of housing, food, and clothing be established for these families was less of a consideration than it was for poor Euro-Canadian families.

Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean recipients were placed in the same category because, in both cases, as we will learn later, officials believed they had lower costs of living. However, there were distinctions made in the justifications that were required. In the case of Afro-Caribbean families, the Trade Commissioners, who were asked by Bennett to outline these families' living costs, created charts providing the specific amounts paid for rent, fuel, food and clothes for families living in different geographical

areas and from different economic backgrounds.⁸⁶ As readers will recall from Chapter 2, in debates about whether to increase the allowances, there was an attempt to relate the cost of living to a calculated index. In the case of Aboriginal people, it seems that such documentation was not needed: there were no such charts comparing the expenses for women living on reserves versus women living in towns and cities. The differences in the cost of living were assumed rather than investigated. Walker found a similar lack of evidence in the Quong Wing case. The belief that Chinese men were a threat to white women was so pervasive that the judges enforced the Province of Saskatchewan's right to enact a law stipulating that Chinese men could not hire white women to work in their stores or restaurants.⁸⁷ They did not question the logic of this argument, even though there were a small number of recorded incidents of Chinese men attacking white women and the waitresses working in Wing's restaurant stated in court that Wing was a good employer.⁸⁸ According to Walker, the judges ignored this evidence because the "common sense" of the time period supported the assumption that white women needed to be protected.⁸⁹ Similarly, among Indian Affairs Branch officials, the assumption that "Indians" were "wasteful" may have been so pervasive that Dependents' Allowance Board officials just took Indian Affairs Branch officials' statements about economic conditions at face value. The officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board perhaps knew less about the Caribbean and wanted to collect more precise information.

One might assume from the Indian Agents' statements that their views towards the reductions would be the same as Bennett's views. Such an assumption is problematic

⁸⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, F.W. Fraser, Canadian Government Trade Commissioner Kingston, Jamaica, to Bennett, 20 April 1942.

⁸⁷ Walker, 'Race,' Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada, 101.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 83.

in light of some of the letters protesting the reductions. Exploring Indian Agents and other Indian Affairs Branch officials' arguments against the reductions reveals the complexity of their attitudes towards Aboriginal women and dependents' allowance policies. Officials' geographical location, their position in the bureaucratic hierarchy and their desire to enhance their own authority are just some of the factors that must be taken into account when assessing their attitudes.

The Indian Affairs Branch Secretary and Indian Agents anticipated that Aboriginal allowance recipients would protest the reductions. Officials were concerned about the potential for complaints, as their abilities to implement policies were contingent on how they negotiated their relationships within Aboriginal communities and how they were perceived by community members. Regarding the reductions, the Indian Affairs Branch Secretary, T.R.L. MacInnes, wrote, "...I feel that if any discrimination was shown in the amount of allowances they [Aboriginal soldiers] were to receive as compared to white men, it possibly might create considerable difficulty for the Indian Agent and also affect Indian enlistment."⁹⁰ MacInnes informed Bennett: "You will no doubt recall that it has always been our contention that no discrimination should be shown in the amount of allowances being paid to Indian and white women. We are very much concerned in this matter, as the action of your Board is placing the Agent in a most difficult position..."⁹¹

Indian Agents expressed similar concerns. Alfred H. Barber from Okanagan Indian Agency, Vernon, British Columbia wrote a letter to Major D.M. MacKay, the Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, stating that the reductions were "most

⁹⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, MacInnes, to DAB, Ottawa, Ontario, 14 November 1941.

⁹¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, MacInnes to Bennett, 21 March 1942,

unfair.”⁹² He noted that the decision to reduce the allowances “places the Indian Agent in a difficult position and would create a very bad feeling among the Indians.”⁹³ The example indicates that the potential for a negative reaction from the Aboriginal community prompted some Indian Agents to write to their superiors.

In order to avoid being blamed for the reductions, some Indian Agents tried to emphasize that it was the Dependents’ Allowance Board members who had made the decision to reduce the allowances. Simpson, for instance, requested that Bennett write directly to the Chiefs of the Duck Lake reserve. Following through on Simpson’s request, Bennett informed the Chiefs, “We can also advise for the information of any who may enquire that no reductions in Dependents Allowances have been made as a result of recommendations by Indian Agents or by the Indian Affairs Branch.”⁹⁴ When there was the potential for an Aboriginal community to react negatively to a policy, Indian Agents could try to direct the responsibility for the policy to upper level bureaucrats in Ottawa and to another department altogether.

Like his colleague Simpson, Indian Agent J.W. Waddy from Punnichy, Saskatchewan, wanted to make sure that he was not held responsible for the reductions. To this effect, he suggested that any reduction should take place at headquarters in Ottawa, not at the local office:

I do not like to recommend that wives of Indian soldiers have their allowances reduced. I fully appreciate your difficulties, you wish to save certain funds for the government at this time, you also wish to save funds for use of the family when the soldiers gets discharge

⁹² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 11288, File: 139-10 File Title: ICBC War Enlistments-Okanagan, Alfred H. Barber, Okanagan Indian Agency, Vernon, British Columbia, to Major D.M. MacKay, Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, 29 April 1942.

⁹³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, Barber to MacKay, 6 May 1942.

⁹⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, “This letter may be copied if required for the information of the Indian Chiefs and Headmen,” Bennett to Simpson, Not dated.

etc., and no doubt you are being instructed by those higher up to get action in these cases, you have heavy responsibilities. However, I do not feel that I should be the person to start cutting down on allowances of wives of Indian soldiers, if it is to be done come out at headquarters and cut the whole lot, it is going to make a lot of stink and I am not in position to take the blame, I actually live with these people and they would give me the blame... Besides this, here is another side of the question. No Indian Agent in his right mind ever tried to stop money coming onto a reserve, as all that comes here is used to keep relatives of every sort, and those being helped now by soldiers wives who are their relatives will at some other time help out the woman who gets the cheque now. She also pays for her firewood, hay for her horses and cattle and this money stays on the reserve to help others, we have our side to look after it is not all a dollar question.⁹⁵

According to Waddy's perception, the allowances were being reduced because high ranking department officials wanted to save money. He did not agree with this policy created by upper level bureaucrats. To justify his position, he painted a picture of soldiers' wives economic situation which differed considerably from Bennett and other Indian Agents. Indeed, he pointed out that part of the allowance money was often given to relatives who would do favors for the family. Unlike Hudson and Ostrander, who criticized the sharing of the allowance by some recipients because it did not conform to the Indian Affairs policy of individual property ownership, Waddy recognized that there existed a system of economic exchanges among extended family members and community members on the reserve.

Middle level bureaucrats were concerned that their credibility would be undermined because they had already informed recruits that their families would receive the standard rates. Mindy Christianson, the General Superintendent of Saskatchewan Agencies, was mentioned earlier in Chapter 2 when he made suggestions to Indian

⁹⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, J.W. Waddy, Indian Agent, Punnichy, Saskatchewan to DAB, 16 February 1942.

Agents to ensure recipients received their cheques in a timely manner. He also participated in the debate on the reductions in allowances. He commented that he made arrangements with recruiting officers so they could go onto the reserves to speak to the men who wanted to enlist. He wrote that “The Indians in every case, I know, were given all the information required, such as the amount of the soldier’s pay, the amount that would have to be assigned to their dependents, and the allowance that each child would receive...”⁹⁶ As we have seen in Chapter 1, some men prior to going to the recruiting station in Regina, had gone to the Indian Agents and were informed of the standard rates of pay and allowances. In regard to these cases Christianson remarked, “I can conscientiously say that in every case they were fully aware of just exactly what they were going to receive and their families whom they are leaving behind.”⁹⁷ Christianson reported that Indian Agent Booth of the Qu’Appelle Agency near Muscow, Saskatchewan, had shown him four letters written by Aboriginal women regarding the reductions.⁹⁸ In reference to Booth, Christianson wrote, “Naturally he is very worried over the thought that the promises to the soldiers and their dependents in his agency are being broken.”⁹⁹ He wrote further about his concerns:

Our Staff in the field co-operated in every way with the Recruiting Officers on instructions from this office which were verified from our Minister’s Office in Ottawa to give every possible aid in order to recruit more men. Are these promises that were made by the government representatives now going to be repudiated-surely not.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Mindy Christianson, General Superintendent of Indian Agencies, Regina, Saskatchewan to Bennett, 21 February 1942.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ These letters were not located in the archival records.

⁹⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Christianson to Bennett, 21 February 1942.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

There was, as we have mentioned already, a concern that Agents' authority would be undermined by the change in the policy. More deeply, concerns about breaking promises to soldiers seem to have been linked to perceptions of soldiers as "worthy" men who were patriotic and loyal and deserving of individual rights. In contrast, on issues such as treaties, government officials tended not to fulfill obligations that Aboriginal people perceived as promises partly because these obligations emphasized Aboriginal people's collective rights. According to government officials, only certain types of rights that conformed to Euro-Canadian sensibilities should be defended. Sheffield makes a similar conclusion when assessing what politicians serving on the Special Commission identified as priorities. They tended to emphasize issues that appealed to their liberal democratic principles such as an individual's right to vote rather than addressing First Nations' claims to collective rights.¹⁰¹

Indian Agents were also concerned that government officials would be perceived as misinforming soldiers. Ostrander stated his position clearly:

It should be remembered that, when the Indians enlisted, they were told that their wives would be paid \$35.00 a month, plus \$12.00 a month for each of two children, then later they were told that further payments of \$9.00 for the third child and \$6.00 for the fourth child, would be paid. They were not told that, because they were Indians, their wives would get only \$25.00. I have taken an active part in recruiting Indians for Active Service and am still doing it, but I do not know, at the present time, what I should tell them in this regard. I hope I never have to quote the figure of \$25.00 to them, unless the allowances of the wives of half breeds and white men, who enlist, are reduced to the same amounts.¹⁰²

Ostrander understood his ability to recruit men was contingent on the type of information he provided and how accurate the information was. Ostrander also implied in his

¹⁰¹ Sheffield, *The Red Man's On The Warpath*, 131.

¹⁰² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File 452-42, Ostrander to Christianson, 25 March 1942.

statement that once a right was given, it could not be withdrawn. As officials who had assisted in recruiting men, Christianson and Ostrander, had used the allowance as an incentive to enlist and had clearly informed men of the amounts of pay and allowance they would receive. More so than the officials in Ottawa, they had to face the contradictions in the government policy because they had to explain directly to the soldier or his family members why the amount provided was less than originally promised. Both officials did not want to appear as if they lied to potential recruits. In their own minds, their authority was linked to their ability to provide accurate information about government regulations.

The Indian Affairs Branch Director, the General Superintendent for Indian Agencies in Saskatchewan and one Indian Agent argued that the reductions were discriminatory. Again, they believed that the reductions were problematic because they challenged individual soldiers' rights, not because they acknowledged Aboriginal people's demands for collective rights. H.W. McGill, the Director, wrote in response to the reductions:

...in no case should the amount allowed to an Indian dependent be actually less than would be allowed to the dependent of a non-Indian soldier, as any discrimination against the Indians as a class would be unjust, would create lasting grievances and would act as a deterrent to Indian enlistment and support of the war effort generally. It might be pointed out here that discrimination against Indians in regard to allowances would not look very well in the light of the generous contributions which Indians have made to various war funds...¹⁰³

The Director's arguments that the reductions were "unjust" were linked to Aboriginal men's enlistment and to Aboriginal communities' participation in the war effort.

Although Aboriginal people had many complex reasons for wanting to enlist and

¹⁰³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, McGill to the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources, 15 April 1942.

contribute to the war effort, many officials believed that it was a sign that Aboriginal people were assimilating.¹⁰⁴ This assumption may have influenced the Director's attitudes towards the reductions. In earlier cases, such as relief provisions during the 1930's, the Director had informed Indian Agents to keep relief rates to a minimum and he had not expressed concerns that the rates provided to Aboriginal families were drastically lower than those provided to Euro-Canadian families.¹⁰⁵ The importance assigned to soldiering in Euro-Canadian society and the view that soldiers were patriotic may have influenced the shift in officials' attitudes making them less tolerant of differences in the amounts Aboriginal families were paid in comparison to Euro-Canadian families.

More specifically, Mindy Christianson, the General Superintendent for Saskatchewan, linked his arguments against the reductions to soldiers' experiences. Christianson remarked, "After all, the Indians, when they get into the conflict will probably put up just as good a fight as anybody else and they will certainly go through the same anxiety, suffering, and hell as the others will."¹⁰⁶ The soldiers' "sacrifice" was the reason why they deserved to be treated equally. He did not emphasize that it was unfair to treat any Aboriginal person differently based on his/her race. Christianson also quoted a letter from Indian Agent Davis working in Carleton Agency near Leask, Saskatchewan, who argued the soldiers' patriotism entitled their families to better treatment. As Davis had written to Christianson about the reductions, "This would be a

¹⁰⁴ Sheffield, *The Red Man's On The Warpath*, 84.

¹⁰⁵ Hugh Shewell, *'Enough to Keep Them Alive': Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 123.

¹⁰⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Christianson to Bennett, 21 February 1942.

most unfair practice, as these men are fighting for our country, their wives should be treated the same as white women.”¹⁰⁷

Some officials questioned Bennett’s argument that the reductions were justified based on the lower cost of living on reserves. Christianson argued, “In my opinion the standard of living does not enter into the question at all because I can find thousands of non-Indian elements that are probably living under a lower standard than our Indians are. Therefore why discriminate against the Indians?”¹⁰⁸ Christianson identified that, amongst the poor, only Aboriginal people were being targeted. In doing so, he undermined Bennett’s claim that race was not a factor in the policy decision.

Indian Agent Ostrander from Battleford, Saskatchewan also reflected on the extent and meaning of the poor living conditions of many Aboriginal women on reserves:

It would also appear that, in making the ruling that Indian women do not deserve the same amount in dependents’ allowance, as white women and half breed women, the Board has overlooked one very important feature of the whole matter. I refer to the living conditions of these women, who have been in poverty for years, and have very little in their homes, in the way of clothing, furniture, bedding, dishes and all other things which white women consider necessary.¹⁰⁹

Ostrander had previously argued that the living costs on reserves were lower than the living costs in towns or cities, but he did not believe, as Bennett did, that this justified the reductions. He suggested that a portion of the allowance should be given to the woman “to be spent upon what she would like to buy to suit her own taste,” and that the remaining part be given to him to be spent on “real needs.”¹¹⁰ The Indian Agent

¹⁰⁷ As quoted in LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Christianson to Bennett, 11 March 1942. The original letter by Indian Agent Davis was not located.

¹⁰⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Christianson to Bennett, 21 February 1942.

¹⁰⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Ostrander to Christianson, 25 March 1942.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

recognized that there was a difference between the standards of living for Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian families. When he pointed out that many Aboriginal women did not have the items considered common in Euro-Canadian women's homes, it was not to blame them, but to suggest that the allowance be used to purchase these items. Unlike some Indian Agents mentioned in Chapter 2, who argued that Aboriginal women should use the allowance to provide for their "immediate" needs only, Ostrander argued that the allowance could be used to improve women's homes. Similar to the other Indian Agents, he emphasized that he should control the money. He believed that he was more qualified to assess the "real needs" of the household than the women themselves. He implied that with the money provided to them the women who followed their "taste" might buy frivolous things.

Although he approved of women buying consumer goods for their homes, readers will also recall from Chapter 2, that Ostrander criticized the practice of women sharing their allowances with other community members. Ostrander possibly believed that buying goods for the improvement of one's home enforced the notion of an independent household while sharing the allowance reinforced communal practices. Even though he recognized the poor conditions women lived in, he only endorsed solutions that he believed would facilitate assimilation.

In addition Ostrander argued that the reductions were wrong because it went against the universal principles that soldiers were fighting to defend. Ostrander remarked, "...to say that, because their living conditions have not been equal to those of white women, they should not be given the same rates of dependents' allowances on behalf of their husbands in the Active Service Forces, seems to me to be contrary to the

principles for which this war is being fought.”¹¹¹ Many Euro-Canadians believed World War II was fought for principles such as equality, democracy, and freedom. Providing soldiers with less money due to their living conditions, in Ostrander’s assessment, was contrary to these principles. Ostrander concluded that “...the Board has decided now...the wives of Indians are not worthy of equal consideration by the Government, as that given to the wives of white men and half breeds who enlist. If my activities bring only this result, then I am certainly ashamed of myself.”¹¹² The above quotations illustrate the contradictory nature of some Indian Agents’ attitudes. On the one hand, Ostrander made paternalistic assumptions that Aboriginal women could not manage money. On the other hand, he identified that it was discriminatory to provide Aboriginal women with less money than their Euro-Canadian counterparts. Ironically, Ostrander may have helped the case for reductions because extracts from the previous letters he wrote about the lower cost of living on reserves were used by Bennett as “proof” that the reductions in the allowances were justified. These statements indicate that the extracts taken from the Indian Agents’ letters that were used by Bennett may have been taken out of context.

As readers will recall from Chapter 2, as an alternative to the reductions, some bureaucrats suggested that the Indian Agents should be given the control over the cheques. In support of this suggestion, Christianson wrote, “If this is done the Agent will be in a position to see that the money is judiciously spent.”¹¹³ He concluded, “The matter of reducing the allowances by so much money from the Dependent is absolutely wrong and only creates a very bad impression.”¹¹⁴ Interestingly, even though he argued

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Christianson to MacInnes, 30 March 1942.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

that soldiers should all receive the same amount of allowance, Christianson did not perceive Indian Agents' management of the cheques as infringing upon individuals' rights to manage their own money.¹¹⁵ In this way, as we have indicated earlier, some Indian Affairs Branch officials were more willing to recognize soldiers' rights than the rights of women to manage their allowances. Christianson argued it was the responsibility of the Indian Affairs Branch, not of the Dependents' Allowance Board, to deal with the handling of the Aboriginal women's allowances. He argued that the "whole trouble is being created by the Dependents' Allowance Board," not by Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats.¹¹⁶ Christianson concluded, "I have written two letters to Mr. Bennett and received replies but I know we will never get any place by everybody writing letters. It has got to be settled by our Branch as to how this should be handled in the future."¹¹⁷ Christianson suggested that the Indian Agents stop communicating with Dependents' Allowance Board members until the matter was resolved.¹¹⁸ T.R.L. MacInnes, the Indian Affairs Branch Secretary, wrote back stating the Indian Agents should continue their correspondence with the Dependents' Allowance Board.¹¹⁹ This example reveals Christianson's frustration with the relationship between Indian Affairs Branch officials and the Dependents' Allowance Board. Provincial Superintendents, like himself, and Indian Agents were asked to assist the Board to implement the allowance policy locally. Sometimes, as in the reductions policy, the Board's policy decisions caused difficulties for local officials who had to explain the changes to soldiers and their families.

¹¹⁵ Some Aboriginal families believed that the Indian Agents' management of the cheques did infringe upon their rights. For a further discussion of their statements see Chapter 6.

¹¹⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Christianson to MacInnes, 30 March 1942.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Christianson to MacInnes, 31 March 1942.

¹¹⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Christianson to MacInnes, 10 April 1942.

However, instead of the Board trying to address these concerns, Christianson believed that he was being ignored. In Christianson's perception of the situation, the Board wanted to use the Agents for its own convenience, but at the same time dismissed their concerns. He perhaps resented having to wait upon the Dependents' Allowance Board's advice when in the past the Indian Affairs Branch had largely been in charge of determining its own policies.

Some politicians also protested the reductions imposed upon Aboriginal families. Conservative Member of Parliament, John Diefenbaker, brought up the issue in the House of Commons. He noted, as the Director of the Indian Affairs Branch did, that the reductions were unfair in light of the high percentage of Aboriginal men who had enlisted. As he stated, "In western Canada the reserves have been depleted of almost all the physically fit men. The Indians in service ask, 'Why are we discriminated against?'"¹²⁰ He concluded, "I ask the minister to give consideration to these natives of our country who today are shouldering their responsibility in the armed forces as are those of no other race. They ask that the same consideration be given to their loved ones as is being given to the loved ones and dependents of the soldiers of other races."¹²¹ From Diefenbaker's comments it appears as if soldiers had contacted him regarding the reductions.¹²² No letters from these soldiers, however, were found in the archival files examined. By the time Diefenbaker made this statement in the House of Commons in April 1942, the government had already decided to stop the reductions. In responding to

¹²⁰ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates, Volume II, 28 April 1942, 1960.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Diefenbaker did not identify the names of the organization or of the individual soldiers who contacted him with their concerns.

Diefenbaker, Ralston, the Minister of National Defence at the time, informed him in the House that no further reductions would be made.¹²³

The representations made by officials at the Indian Affairs Branch, in part, seem to have convinced the Dependents' Allowance Board Chairman to change his mind. The tensions over the reductions led eventually to a meeting among the Ministers of the Department of National Defence and of the Department of Mines and Resources in the spring of 1942.¹²⁴ Following the meeting, Bennett sent a letter to Indian Agents to inform them that the allowances for Aboriginal dependents would no longer be reduced.¹²⁵ In a report to his superior, the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources, the Indian Affairs Branch Director confirmed that the reductions in allowances for Aboriginal dependents would be stopped. As Director McGill wrote, "The cuts now have been discontinued and we are assured that no further cuts will be made in the allowances of Indians as such."¹²⁶ Instead, Aboriginal women would be "encouraged" to save a portion of their allowance money through the purchase of War Savings Certificates. Bennett hoped that through the purchase of these certificates families would be able to save money for emergencies.¹²⁷

3.4 REDUCTIONS IN THE CASE OF AFRO-CARIBBEAN RECIPIENTS

Examining the debate regarding reductions for Afro-Caribbean recipients reveals how anxieties about race affected other racial groups. This is an approach used by Backhouse and Walker, but in their cases they have drawn their own comparisons between the different groups. The debate about the reductions is interesting because

¹²³ House of Commons Debate. Volume II, 28 April 1942, 1967.

¹²⁴ The minutes from this meeting were not found. From the correspondence available, it appears that it was decided not to reduce the allowances.

¹²⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Bennett to Indian Agents, 15 April 1942.

¹²⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, McGill to Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources, 30 April 1942.

¹²⁷ For a detailed discussion of the savings program see Chapter 4.

officials at the time drew the connections between two different racial groups. In the records examined, the issue of Afro-Caribbean recipients was the only other instance where race was explicitly mentioned.¹²⁸ The Afro-Caribbean recipients being dealt with here were from the area known as the British West Indies. This area included the following countries: Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana, Barbados, Bahamas, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent.¹²⁹ The majority of the people in these countries were of African descent.

During World War II, the British government asked the Canadian government to take over its military duties in the Caribbean as the British troops located there were needed in Europe and it wanted to protect its interests in the region. In response to the British request, the Canadian government sent troops to Jamaica, Bermuda, the Bahamas and British Guiana.¹³⁰ In addition to sending Euro-Canadian troops to the area, the Canadian government was also responsible for men who enlisted from the British colonies in the Caribbean. This was a change from World War I where men from the Caribbean enlisted in the British Army.¹³¹ In order to enlist in the Canadian Army during World War II, each person had to come to Canada and pay his own passage at a cost of

¹²⁸ African Canadian or Chinese soldiers' dependents were not mentioned in the files examined.

¹²⁹ Stephen J. Randall and Graeme S. Mount, The Caribbean Basin: An International History. (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 9.

¹³⁰ Randall, The Caribbean Basin, 81 and Colonel C.P. Stacey, Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific. (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer of Canada, 1966), 181-182.

¹³¹ It is assumed that Euro-Caribbean men could also enlist in the Canadian Army. However, throughout this chapter Afro-Caribbean families are the families referred to because it is unclear if Euro-Caribbean soldiers' families had their allowances reduced. In the correspondence examined, white Caribbean soldiers' families do not appear to have been discussed. In World War I when Euro-Caribbean soldiers were in the British Army, they were not discriminated against in terms of the pay and allowances they received and were allowed to fight on the battlefield. In contrast their Afro-Caribbean counterparts did receive lower allowances and were not allowed to fight in battles. See C.L. Joseph, "The British West Indies Regiment, 1914-1918," Journal of Caribbean History, Volume 3, (November 1971): 95.

150 dollars.¹³² Most of the men who expressed an interest in joining were from Jamaica or Trinidad.¹³³ While these men came to Canada to enlist, their families stayed in the Caribbean. Many individuals or private organizations raised funds to help pay for these men's passages because many of them could not afford the travel costs.

One such private organization that helped pay for men's passage was the Canadian West Indian League. This organization is important in the debates being analyzed here because the members of this organization argued strongly against the reductions. Formed by Euro-Canadian businessmen involved in banks, insurance, and the railway, this League was established in Montreal in the spring of 1911 and existed until 1950.¹³⁴ Almost all the Canadian businesses involved with trade in the Caribbean were members. Concerned about labour shortages, they had wanted to facilitate relations between Canada and the Caribbean in order to protect trade relations and benefit from lower labour costs. Two founders of the Canadian West Indian League were T.B. Macaulay, future President of the Sun Life Insurance Company of Canada,¹³⁵ and Thomas G. Shaughnessy, the first President of the Canadian Pacific Railway.¹³⁶

¹³² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, "Soldiers' Allowances and Government Responsibility," A. Clifford Archer, The Standard, Montreal, Quebec, 25 April 1942.

¹³³ This observation is based on a cursory look at the file on Caribbean enlistment at Library Archives Canada. See LAC, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, Series G-2, Volume 2917, File: 2580-A-40A, File Title: Enlistment from the British West Indies.

¹³⁴ Robin Winks, Canadian-West Indian Union: A Forty-Year Minuet, (London: University of London, 1968), 30.

¹³⁵ The Sun Life Insurance Company first established a branch in Barbados in 1879. Banks such as the Royal Bank of Canada and the Bank of Nova Scotia also established branches in the West Indies in the 1880's and the 1890's. See Winks, Canadian West Indian Union, 14-16. The Canadian West Indian League remained associated with the Sun Life Insurance Company in Montreal. The insurance company continued to have an interest in the Caribbean and by 1939, the Company had a main office in Jamaica and fifteen additional branches scattered throughout the region. Most of the correspondence from the Canadian West Indian League to the DAB has the Sun Life logo on it. Winks, Canadian-West Indian Union, 30.

¹³⁶ Macaulay, who was of Scottish origin, was described as a "distinguished actuary" who was "energetic" and "pervasive" when attempting to convince Canadian politicians in the nineteenth century to consider a union with the West Indies. He continued to promote the idea of political union until 1919 because he felt a union would lessen the immigration difficulties that prevented the members of his organization from

Throughout the war, members of the Canadian West Indian League made repeated inquiries to officials at the Department of Defence regarding men in the Caribbean who were eager to enlist. As a part of their contribution to the war effort, they informed officials that they would be willing to pay the 150 dollars for the men's passage to Canada if the government was willing to accept them. Officials responded that they did not want people of African descent in the Canadian Army.¹³⁷ The official policy of the Canadian government was that if the men met the literacy and medical requirements, they were allowed to enlist. However, in practice, the Canadian government tried to discourage such enlistment. The reason given was that "blacks" from the Caribbean were "unsuitable" because they could not fight in cold climates.¹³⁸ This reason had also been used in World War I by the British Army when officials tried to justify why British West Indian men could not fight in Europe.¹³⁹ After initially refusing to accept Afro-Caribbean men in 1914, some of whom had traveled all the way to England to enlist at their own expense, British officials eventually allowed them to enlist, as part of a West Indian contingent, but they were not allowed to fight in Europe. Instead the troops were sent to Egypt because "blacks," it was argued, could adapt better in hot regions.¹⁴⁰ The real

accessing cheap labourers. He remained in charge of the Canadian West Indian League until 1934. He died in 1942. See Winks, Canadian West Indian Union, 24. Macaulay's name does not appear in the correspondence on the reductions in allowances debate. The majority of the correspondence is signed by H.C. Collier.

¹³⁷ For a look at the detailed correspondence that took place between officials at the Department of National Defence and the Canadian West Indian League over the war years see LAC, RG 25, Series G-2, Volume 2917, File: 2580-A-40A, File Title: Enlistment from the British West Indies.

¹³⁸ For Department of National Defence officials' statements to this effect see correspondence in LAC, RG 25, Series G-2, Volume 2917, File: 2580-A-40A, File Title: Enlistment from the British West Indies.

¹³⁹ For more on the experiences of Caribbean soldiers in World War I who enlisted in the British Army see Joseph, "The British West Indies Regiment," 95. Also see Glenford Howe, Race, War and Nationalism: A Social History of the West Indians in the First World War, (London: Ian Randle, 2002) and Richard Smith, Jamaican Volunteers in the First World War: Race, Masculinity and the Development of National Consciousness, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004.)

¹⁴⁰ Joseph, "The British West Indies Regiment," 97.

reason behind this argument was that British officials did not want Europeans and people of African descent fighting one another on the battleground.¹⁴¹

In World War II, the underlying anxiety that made Canadian officials reluctant about accepting Afro-Caribbean men into the Army was that they were concerned about the potential immigration of these men to Canada. Privately, officials in Canada expressed concerns that once the Afro-Caribbean men arrived in Canada, they would try to immigrate and would not want to go back to the Caribbean after the war. Officials believed Afro-Caribbean immigrants were “undesirable” and they wanted to keep the black population in Canada small.¹⁴² Exact figures indicating the number of men who chose to enlist were not found, but it would appear that the numbers remained small due to the Canadian government officials’ reluctance to accept these troops. We do know that approximately seventy-eight families were affected by the reductions.¹⁴³

Readers will recall from Chapter 1 that African Canadians were also targeted as not being desirable candidates for the Army. Although Aboriginal and Chinese men were accepted from the beginning of the war, African Canadian men were not accepted until 1941. As noted above, the official policy of the Canadian Army was that any man was allowed to enlist who met the requirements. However, African Canadian men were not accepted because individual commanding officers had the option to reject candidates.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁴² See correspondence in LAC, RG 25, Series G-2, Volume 2917, File: 2580-A-40A, File Title: Enlistment from the British West Indies. For further insights on the conditions and circumstances of Afro-Caribbeans’ enlistment see LAC, National Defence Records, RG 24, Series D-1-A, Volume 5620, File: 30-2-12, File Title: War Services Mobilization Enlistment of Coloured Troops from West Indies and employment for civilian purposes of West Indian labourers. For a file on the enlistment of women from the British West Indies in Canada see LAC, RG 25, Series G-2, Volume 2917, File: 2580-A-40, File Title: Enlistment in Canada of women from British West Indies. No histories of these soldiers’ experiences while in the Canadian Army were found. It is unclear what duties they were assigned or where they served.

¹⁴³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indies Dependents, Bennett to J.L. Ralston, Minister of the Department of National Defence, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 22 April 1942.

Different reasoning for the rejection had to be provided because African Canadians living in Canada had already proven that they could survive and adapt to the cold climate. Instead, military officials had claimed that white soldiers would not want to enlist with “black” troops.¹⁴⁴ Whatever the reasoning, people of African descent, no matter how longed they had lived in Canada, were restricted from entrance into the military in ways that other racial groups were not. Eventually, as readers will remember, continued protests by African Canadian community organizations combined with a need for more soldiers, led military officials to accept more African Canadian troops.¹⁴⁵

Once men enlisted, whether they were of African descent or from another racial group, the pay scales were equivalent to what white soldiers received who were of similar rank. In World War I, Afro-Caribbean men had received pay at standard British rates, but their families received less allowances.¹⁴⁶ Paying lower allowances was permitted because these men enlisted as a part of their own West Indian contingent, not officially in the British Army. Military officials were keen to make this distinction because if the men were enrolled in the British Army, they “would be entitled to all the emoluments of a British soldier” and officials did not want these men to have these rights.¹⁴⁷ During 1918, the British Army did try to deny Afro-Caribbean men equal pay to other soldiers. They ordered that the pay for all soldiers would be increased, including the men who had enlisted from the Caribbean who were white. Afro-Caribbean men, however, were

¹⁴⁴ Walker, ‘Race,’ *Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada*, 133-134, 169.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 169. As pointed out in Chapter 1, the exception to this rule was the Navy. Men from various racial groups were not allowed to enlist in the Navy until 1943. See Sheffield, *The Red Man’s On The Warpath*, 45. In terms of African Canadian families, based on the files examined, it is unclear if they were discriminated against in terms of the allowances they received. The files looked at do not mention them.

¹⁴⁶ Afro-Caribbean sergeants received 2s 3d per day and other ranks received 1s 1d per day. The British amounts of allowance were not provided, but they were apparently higher than these rates. See Joseph, “The British West Indies Regiment, 1914-1918,” 101.

¹⁴⁷ Joseph, “The British West Indies Regiment, 1914-1918,” 100-101.

excluded from these pay increases. This decision was reversed due to protests by the West Indian contingent. Eventually, all men from the Caribbean, white or black, received the pay increase.¹⁴⁸

Although all soldiers received the same amount of pay in the Canadian Army during World War II, these soldiers were still discriminated against in terms of the amount of allowance their families received. In January 1942, the allowances of Afro-Caribbean families were reduced. Approximately, seventy-eight families were affected.¹⁴⁹ It is not stated explicitly in the records whether these reductions applied to all families from the Caribbean or just to Afro-Caribbean families, but the correspondence refers mostly to Afro-Caribbean families. In January 1942, the allowances were reduced from thirty-five dollars to twenty dollars.¹⁵⁰ Soldiers' wives from the Caribbean received five fewer dollars than Aboriginal wives, whose allowances were reduced to twenty-five dollars. The allowance for the first child decreased from twelve to six dollars,¹⁵¹ whereas in Aboriginal cases, the new amount was nine dollars. Similar to Aboriginal wives, if wives in the Caribbean found that the amount of the allowance was not enough, they were to submit a statement of their expenditures and the members of the Board would reconsider their cases.¹⁵² They had to submit their expenses to the

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 101. Joseph does not describe the specific reasons that were used at the time to justify not paying Afro-Caribbean soldiers equally. He also does not state what arguments were made to oppose the decision.

¹⁴⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indies Dependents, Bennett to Ralston, 22 April 1942.

¹⁵⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to Stollmeyer, 21 March 1942.

¹⁵¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to Ralston, 2 May 1942. It is unclear if money was received for additional children and how much was received.

¹⁵² Some women from the Caribbean did go to the Trade Commissioners with a list of their expenses and requested that their allowances be increased. For examples see LAC, Industry, Trade and Commerce, RG 20, Volume 33, File: 17017, File Title: Investigation by Trade Commissioners on behalf of Dependents' Allowance Board of the Department of National Defence, 1940-1944.

Canadian Trade Commissioners who worked on behalf of the Canadian Federal Government in various countries in the Caribbean.¹⁵³

As in the case of the Aboriginal recipients, Dependents' Allowance Board members relied on the assessments of "qualified" Euro-Canadian male bureaucrats regarding the financial needs of the families of Afro-Caribbean soldiers. As in the case of Indian Agents who dealt with Aboriginal dependents' allowances cases, officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board relied upon the existing bureaucracy to assist them in handling dependents' allowance cases involving Caribbean families. Board members based their decision to reduce the allowances on evidence about the cost of living collected from Canadian Trade Commissioners in the Caribbean. For instance, Bennett asked F.W. Fraser, who was based in Kingston, Jamaica, for figures "covering conditions which would be applicable to white and coloured races."¹⁵⁴ In asking this question, Bennett assumed that white and blacks would have different living conditions and made Fraser present his information using race as a category of investigation. Fraser reported that in Jamaica living costs were less for working men than in Canada because the overall standard of living was lower and the warmer climate required less expenditure

¹⁵³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to Clarke, 6 April 1942. Trade Commissioners were set up in the Caribbean because trade with the West Indies had been vitally important to the Canadian economy for years. The demand for the sugar grown in the West Indies and the opportunity to export cod to satisfy West Indian demand for this staple motivated trade. Trade was also facilitated in the late nineteenth century by the British free trade laws that applied among Commonwealth countries. Since 1890's many Canadian financial institutions had set up branches in the West Indies and more and more Canadian companies had started to become involved in trade in the area. In 1892, in order to aid further economic development, the Department of Trade and Commerce had begun to send representatives to the West Indies and, in the same year, a full Trade Commissioner was appointed to work in Trinidad. See Winks, Canadian-West Indian Union, 20- 21. For more archival files on the role of the Trade Commissioners in the Caribbean see LAC, RG 25, Series G-2, Volume 3322, File: 10824-A-40, File Title: The West Indies -Canada Relations, LAC, RG 25, Series G-2, Volume 6246, File: 9323-AG-6-40, File Title: Canadian Trade Commissioner at Kingston, and LAC, RG 25, Series A-3-b, Volume 4571, File: 50042-AU-40, File Title: Kingston-Canadian Trade Commissioner-Instructions re emergency evacuation arrangements.

¹⁵⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to Fraser, 6 April 1942.

on clothing and shelter. Fraser estimated that fifty-three percent of a working man's money was spent on food, eighteen and a half percent on rent, ten percent on clothing, eight percent on fuel and cleaning, and ten and a half percent on all other articles.¹⁵⁵ He provided a complete breakdown of the costs for various items, unlike Indian Agents who just generally commented that there were differences in costs of living. It was Fraser who seems to have originally suggested that the maximum allowance should be twenty dollars for wives and mothers and six dollars for children.¹⁵⁶

The types of questions Bennett asked of the Trade Commissioners were similar to types of questions about racial origin, climate, jobs, salaries, cost of living that were asked on immigration forms by bureaucrats at the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.¹⁵⁷ Local Members of Parliament in the 1950's in Canada would argue that questions about racial origin and salaries were meant to deliberately exclude Afro-Caribbean immigrants from entry into Canada.¹⁵⁸

In addition to their general comments about the cost of living in the Caribbean, Bennett asked the Trade Commissioners for comments based on their "personal observations." When necessary, Trade Commissioners would provide reports on Caribbean families to the Dependents' Allowance Board. Readers will recall from Chapter 1 that high ranking officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board preferred

¹⁵⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Fraser to Bennett, 20 April 1942.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Walker, 'Race, Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada, 276.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. 276. There were demands that racial origin should not have to be identified. Although bureaucrats removed the question, they did not change the intent behind the questionnaire. The question about racial origin was replaced by a question about "last permanent residence." By asking about the country the person was from, individuals could still potentially be identified as being from a particular racial group. As Walker argues, "The revision was cosmetic, to disguise Canadian policies in a Commonwealth and a world increasingly hostile to overt racism." See Walker, 'Race, Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada, 284, 296.

bureaucrats with training in social work to investigate recipients. For purposes of practicality in the case of families in the Caribbean, officials had to rely on the reports of Trade Commissioners who, similar to the Indian Agents, did not necessarily have training in social work principles or the case work method.¹⁵⁹

Bennett asked Garneau, who was the Trade Commissioner for Trinidad, to get in touch with Fraser who was the Trade Commissioner for Jamaica and investigate the families receiving the dependents' allowance to determine their "standard of living and particularly their possible earnings previous to enlistment."¹⁶⁰ Finally, the racial origin of the families was to be noted. Bennett valued these observations over the comments made by the Canadian West Indian League. Based on his own investigations of soldiers' families which will be discussed later in this chapter, the Canadian West Indian League Secretary, H.C. Collier, disputed the costs of living estimates of the Board. In reference to the Secretary's own estimates, Bennett wrote that "...we are not prepared to accept their statements and would prefer to have somebody on the premises give us a fair observation of the circumstances of these natives who have enlisted."¹⁶¹ Like Indian Agents, the Trade Commissioners were perceived as "objective" and as having more authority than private organizations to provide a "fair" observation. No concerns were

¹⁵⁹ It should be noted that a cursory examination would suggest that there are some important differences between the Indian Agents' and Trade Commissioners' reports, despite the fact that either group may not have had social work training. Based on the Trade Commissioners' reports found in the archival files, they would appear to be written in a more formal tone than those written by the Indian Agents. This could be the result of the different educational backgrounds of the civil servants. When compared to the Indian Agents' reports, they also tend not to make general statements about race and focus more on the individual cases. They do, however, like the Indian Agents, emphasize the importance of the individual's "respectability" by mentioning the recipients' family background, social behavior and appearance. For Trade Commissioners' reports from the Caribbean see LAC, RG 20, Volume 33, File: 17017, File Title: Investigation by Trade Commissioners on behalf of Dependents' Allowance Board of the Department of National Defence, 1940-1944. It would be interesting to study more thoroughly the differences and similarities between Indian Agents and Trade Commissioners.

¹⁶⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: DAB 5-30 British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to Lt.-Colonel Garneau, Kingston, Jamaica, 7 April 1942.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

expressed that these Trade Commissioners lacked the kind of social work training that was preferred for case workers dealing with Euro-Canadian recipients.

Despite asking specific questions about the different living conditions of blacks and whites, Bennett answered the protests of the Canadian West Indian League by arguing that racial discrimination was not a factor in the decisions of the Dependents' Allowance Board, as he had done in the case of Aboriginal families: "It is not the intention that reductions in allowances should refer to Dependents of coloured men only....No Race discrimination is made in the payment of Dependents Allowances but as already pointed out allowances may not be claimed as a right and the amounts in the Regulations are maximum amounts only."¹⁶² The reductions were only based on cost of living: "no discrimination is intended because of the colour of the Dependents concerned but it is primarily the question of the cost of living."¹⁶³ He outlined his reasons for the reductions:

In the course of investigations the Dependents' Allowance Board found that the general cost of living to the natives of the West Indies was less than one-half of the cost of living in Canada..... if a person lived for \$10 a month under the pre-war cost of living in the West Indies, they would presumably be able to live for \$14 a month under the increased cost of living, but this same sum would not be sufficient in Canada....As a matter of fact, reductions made in Dependents Allowances were considerably less than the difference in the cost of living and in advising Dependents of the reductions the Board has in each case requested prompt advice if the allowances were not sufficient for maintaining the standard of living to which the Dependent had been accustomed....The Board would like to emphasize that there is no thought or intention of racial

¹⁶² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to Stollmeyer, 21 March 1942.

¹⁶³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to H.C. Collier, the Secretary of the Canadian West Indian League, Montreal, Quebec, 21 March 1942.

discrimination and that the matter is entirely a question of the cost of living in the different communities.¹⁶⁴

Bennett further noted that “Cases investigated through our Trade Commissioner in the West Indies all show improvement in families finances since enlistment.”¹⁶⁵ He emphasized that “Dependents’ Allowances are intended to provide for comfortable maintenance,”¹⁶⁶ to maintain the families’ standard of living rather than being used to improve it. He was concerned that families accustomed to a higher standard of living, such as middle class families, be able to maintain themselves on the allowances provided. If the families’ living standards were below what they were “accustomed to,” they should write to the Board. The poor or working class families, on the other hand, had no cause for complaint, according to Bennett, because the amount of the allowance exceeded what they had previously earned.

Such denial of racial discrimination was not unique to the Dependents’ Allowance Board. Contemporary politicians and bureaucrats tried to claim that Canada’s immigration policies did not discriminate against certain racial groups, even when they did, according to Walker’s study.¹⁶⁷ Walker suggests a possible reason why officials believed they were justified in making such claims. As Walker remarks, “Under the British rhetoric of maternalistic trusteeship that formed so prominent a part of Canadian discourse until well after World War II, distinctions were justified as long as they were intended for the benefit of the less fortunate and did not differentiate among persons

¹⁶⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to Clarke, 6 April 1942.

¹⁶⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 23 April 1942.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Walker, ‘Race,’ Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada, 296

‘similarly situated.’”¹⁶⁸ Walker goes on to argue that, “To receive condemnation from contemporaries, a particular act had to violate prevailing standards of equality. This helps to explain why what was then defined as ‘racial discrimination’ was regarded as pathology, practised by aberrant individuals, while the majority reconciled their racial practices with a commitment to British justice and fair play.”¹⁶⁹ In this way, Bennett may have believed the policy was not discriminatory because he understood Aboriginal and West Indian families to be “similarly situated” and his belief that by not allowing the families to “waste” the money, he would be “helping” them in the long term. Such assumptions were indeed compatible with the tenets of “maternalistic trusteeship.” However, as we will see, this definition of “equality” and the meaning of race attached to it were beginning to fracture under the scrutiny of representatives from private organizations and journalists who protested the reductions.

To more specifically justify the decision to implement the reductions, Bennett drew comparisons between the economic situation of West Indians and Aboriginal people. He argued pre-enlistment support was significantly less than the allowance:

The average pre-enlistment earnings of enlisted men were found to have varied from Five to Twenty Dollars a month in most cases, much less than a third of the relative earnings of people in the same class of employment in Canada. In practically every case the present income, even at the reduced rates, is more than pre-enlistment support.¹⁷⁰

Bennett was correct in his assumption that the pay and allowances were lower than the pre-enlistment income. In 1942, in Jamaica, for example, fifty-two percent of those

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 308.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to Assistant General Secretary, the Canadian Legion of the B.E.S.L., Dominion Command, Ottawa, Ontario, 14 April 1942.

employed made less than two dollars a week.¹⁷¹ Half of the women who were employed earned less than \$1.20 per week. In 1944, it was estimated that sugar workers made \$2.80 per week, but the work was irregular.¹⁷² In the 1943 Jamaican census, it was recorded that thirty-one percent of the workers were unemployed.¹⁷³ The principle of “less eligibility” which suggested that the amount of assistance should be kept lower than the lowest wages to ensure a strong work ethic, was being applied here as it was in the case of Aboriginal people. This logic does not appear to have been applied to poor Euro-Canadians whose pre-enlistment wages were lower than the allowance.

Poor or working class families from the Caribbean who attempted to improve their standard of living by enlisting in the Army caused officials anxieties whereas attempts to earn a higher income were often praised as economic strategies among the rich. Colonel Raymond, who was a member of the Dependents' Allowance Board, speculated that the high amount of the allowance was one of the reasons that Afro-Caribbean men enlisted. As Raymond remarked, “A great many natives from Jamaica have enlisted with the Canadian Army, very likely because of the high pay they can get.”¹⁷⁴ Raymond did not praise these Jamaicans for trying to improve their economic situation. His statements about the men's motivations undermined arguments that these soldiers, due to their patriotism, deserved the same amount of allowances as Euro-Canadian soldiers. Indeed, when arguments were made against the reductions in the

¹⁷¹ Paul Blanshard, *Democracy and Empire in the Caribbean*. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1947), 29.

¹⁷² *Ibid.* 42.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* 91.

¹⁷⁴ LAC, RG 36 Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Colonel Raymond, DAB Member, Ottawa, Ontario, to Garneau, 7 April 1942.

allowances by the Secretary of the Canadian West Indian League, he often emphasized soldiers' patriotism as the reason for enlistment.

Another variation of this line of thought was that the allowances should not be raised too high because when the men returned from the war they would not be able to maintain the same standard of living. As Raymond informed the Deputy Minister of the Department of National Defence, "The standard of living of these families has already been raised and if too large allowances are paid, difficulty will be experienced by the heads of families now enlisted in keeping up this standard after the War when they will have to revert to pre-enlistment earnings which were much lower."¹⁷⁵ There was an assumption men would return to jobs that would pay less money than the allowance. The logic used was that lower income soldiers' families should not benefit from additional money as it might create expectations by family members.

3.5 ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REDUCTIONS

In the debates surrounding the reductions in allowances, the secretaries of the Legion and of the Canadian-West Indian League, together with journalists, insisted that it was misleading to inform the soldiers of one amount at the time of enlistment and then change the amount after enlistment. They also questioned the validity of Bennett's argument that the differences in the cost of living justified the reductions. In their eyes, the reductions were discriminatory. For the most part, they made their arguments in specific reference to West Indian soldiers.

Overall, there appears to have been more public awareness and more organized protests in response to the reductions in the West Indian cases than in the Aboriginal

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

ones.¹⁷⁶ In the case of West Indian soldiers' families, Euro-Canadian businessmen were interested in protecting their trade relations with the Caribbean and feared that reductions might affect these relations, as we will see later. Canadian businessmen would have been more likely to see the Caribbean as a potential consumer market for their goods because there was a larger concentrated population in the Caribbean. In comparison, the Aboriginal population was lower and reserves were scattered across Canada. The transportation of goods by ship to the Caribbean may have been more efficient than trying to access many of the reserves that were geographically isolated. In light of these factors, Canadian businessmen were perhaps less concerned about ensuring that Aboriginal families' allowances were not reduced. The businessmen, as already noted, also had a formal organization called the Canadian-West Indian League. This organization and the status of the men associated with it, may have legitimized these men's protests in the eyes of government officials. The businessmen associated with the League would have been more likely to publicize their protests than officials at the Indian Affairs Branch. Interestingly, the journalists who wrote articles on the reductions were from Montreal where the Canadian-West Indian League was based.

Rather than potentially create a public controversy which would embarrass the government, the bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch, who did not agree with the reductions, were more likely to try and deal with the issue internally. As a result, the public may have been less aware that Aboriginal families were also having their allowances reduced. Perhaps journalists believed that exposing the discriminatory

¹⁷⁶ This observation was based upon the records examined. A systematic review of newspapers during the time period could reveal that more articles were written on the reductions as they affected Aboriginal families. Sheffield did review newspapers during this time period for articles about Aboriginal soldiers, but in his book he does not mention any articles that talked about the reductions. See Sheffield, The Redman's On the Warpath.

treatment of soldiers from another country would pressure politicians to react because Canada's international reputation would be at stake. Since Aboriginal soldiers were from Canada, such pressures were possibly less intense.

When comparing the arguments of the bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch to the arguments of the members of the Canadian West Indian League, there was a further important difference between these groups. When Indian Affairs Branch officials argued that reductions were "unjust" and "unfair," they also advocated for Indian Agents to have more control over the allowances. As we have seen, ultimately, they were trying to undermine soldiers' rights by not allowing recipients to manage their own money. They believed that Aboriginal people's affairs needed to be "supervised" by Euro-Canadians. By contrast, some of the representatives from the Canadian West Indian League and the journalists who wrote about the reductions seemed to have been trying to question more fundamentally the validity of race as a "natural" biologically determined category. Their stance belonged to another, newer tradition, by which some groups of Euro-Canadians argued that in a democracy, policies that were racially discriminatory were no longer acceptable.

In reaction to the decision to reduce the allowances, the Secretary for the Canadian-West Indian League, H.C. Collier, wrote a series of letters to the Dependents' Allowance protesting the reductions. The letters contained some arguments similar to the ones made by officials at the Indian Affairs Branch. First, there was a concern about misleading soldiers. At the time of enlistment, soldiers had been informed that their families would receive the maximum rate and most soldiers believed that the allowance was a legal obligation on the part of the government. As a result of soldiers' common

understandings of their rights, Collier argued, it would be “immoral” to reduce the allowances after the soldiers had enlisted:¹⁷⁷

My Council feels that unless a soldier has been clearly informed at the time of his enlistment that the dependents’ allowances are only gratuitous and are subject to change and withdrawal at the will of the Government, there rests upon the Government a moral responsibility at least, to pay the allowances in effect at the time of his enlistment. So far, of those we have interviewed, we have not found one of the West Indians who was so advised. Furthermore, it would seem that many Canadian-born soldiers, from the ranks to high commands, labour under the erroneous impression that the allowances are provided and protected by legal enactment.¹⁷⁸

It is unclear under what circumstances Collier conducted the interviews that supported his claim, if he sought them out or if West Indian soldiers came to him. He believed that the Dependents’ Allowance Board had not been clear enough initially in communicating the fact that the allowances were not provided as a right through a legal enactment, but as a “gratuitous award.” Canadian-born soldiers, also confused about the rule, commonly perceived that the allowances were a right.

A newspaper article in the Montreal Standard confirmed Collier’s claim: one argued that it was unfair to alter the amount of the allowance when the soldiers at the time of recruitment had not been clearly informed the allowances were subject to change.¹⁷⁹ Another one informed readers that maximum rates had been advertised to soldiers at recruiting meetings where it was implied that the pay and allowances were “linked together as incentives for joining up. The wife’s monthly allowance of \$35.00,

¹⁷⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Collier to Bennett, 18 March 1942. Winks noted that Collier had held the position of Secretary for many years, but did not go into further detail about his career. See Winks, Canadian-West Indian Union, 30.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, “Soldiers’ Allowances and Government Responsibility”, A. Clifford Archer, The Standard, Montreal, Quebec, 25 April 1942. The article referred to British West Indies soldiers only. Aboriginal soldiers were not mentioned.

with \$12.00 for each of two children, was cited in terms that implied a legal right.”¹⁸⁰

The discrepancy between Bennett’s definition of the allowance as a “gratuitous award” and Collier and the journalists’ understanding that the allowance was a right was also observed amongst the Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian recipients.¹⁸¹

A representative from the Legion and some journalists proposed further that the allowances should be a part of soldiers’ wages. As J.C.G. Herwig, the Assistant General Secretary of the Legion, stated, “In any event, the Legion has already expressed the view that Dependents’ Allowances should be regarded as part of the soldier’s wage or earnings and should not be subject to variations any more than are the wages of a munitions worker because of his geographical location.”¹⁸² Herwig was referring to both Aboriginal and West Indian soldiers’ wages. He argued that the allowance should be considered a part of the soldiers’ salary. According to his logic, a salary that is part of a worker’s wage cannot be subject to the same kind of fluctuations as an award. Herwig was arguing against the disassociation of the allowances from pay and wages. In the post-war period, when the family allowances were enacted, unions would similarly argue against the separation of wages and benefits. They would argue that family allowances were an attempt to undermine their demands for higher wages from workers’ employers by supplementing families’ incomes. Indeed, Dominique Marshall finds officials used

¹⁸⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, “Allowances to Soldiers From West Indies Are Cut,” I.C. McCaw, The Standard, Montreal, Quebec, 4 April 1942.

¹⁸¹ It is unclear if Collier used “Canadian born” to refer to Euro-Canadians only or to any soldier born in Canada. Many families also saw the allowance as a right. For a more detailed exploration of families’ perceptions of the allowance see Chapter 6.

¹⁸² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, J.C.G. Herwig, Assistant General Secretary, The Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League Dominion Command, Ottawa, Ontario, to Ralston, 28 March 1942.

the allowance “to deflect attention away from disadvantaged workers’ groups to ‘parents’” not belonging to any particular socio-economic class.¹⁸³

Archer, a journalist writing for a Montreal newspaper called The Standard, agreed with Herwig, arguing further, that the allowance should be defined legally as a right. As readers will recall from Chapter 1, there was no legal obligation to provide the allowance. Archer disagreed with this policy:

The allowance also should be guaranteed by Act of Parliament or by the un-democratic but politically popular mode of today, order in council. The soldier risking his life and his whole future for his country should be assured of the best protection his country can give his dependent loved ones. It should not be left to the fickle devices of changeable policy and Governmental whim. Our fighting men are deserving of the best we can do for them. Our whole fate lies in their hands. Their dependent loved ones are joined with them in a sacrifice for the protection of all who remain behind the firing line. They, too, are a moral responsibility of Government and people. Let us play fair with them.¹⁸⁴

In this statement, Archer sees the universal economic support of soldiers’ families as a moral obligation. Although Bennett would have agreed that the moral obligation to provide some form of economic support to soldiers’ families existed, he believed that distinctions could be made based on such factors as cost of living and geographical location. Archer believed that soldiers’ families should receive the allowance as a right. In Archer’s argument, the image of the patriotic soldiers’ family is evoked as being essential to the war effort. This image contrasted with earlier officials’ comments that claimed that Jamaicans only enlisted for the high pay and not for patriotic reasons. For Archer, soldiers’ sacrifices were not only linked to the soldiers as individuals, but also to their relatives. A similar link between soldiers and their families had been made in

¹⁸³ Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 3, 14.

¹⁸⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, “Soldiers’ Allowances and Government Responsibility,” Archer, The Standard, Montreal, Quebec, 25 April 1942.

World War I by politicians who granted the right to vote to soldiers' female relatives in 1917 as a result of their husbands and sons' military service.¹⁸⁵ In this way, demands that soldiers' rights be recognized indirectly contributed to a greater acknowledgement by the federal government that women and children had rights as citizens too.

There were also concerns that the policy was discriminatory and unjust. As Herwig, the Assistant Secretary of the Legion, stated in a letter to Ralston, who was the Minister of National Defence, "The Canadian Legion feels very strongly that such discrimination in pay and allowances as between different individuals serving in the Canadian Forces is wrong in principle and will lead to a great deal of trouble as time goes on."¹⁸⁶ Herwig's stance most likely stemmed from his belief that all soldiers were risking their lives and consequently they all deserved the same pay.¹⁸⁷ It is not known if Legion Secretaries in other countries argued that all soldiers, no matter what their racial

¹⁸⁵ See J.L. Granatstein and J.M. Hitsman, Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977). It is not clear if Aboriginal women who were related to soldiers received the vote in 1917. Finding out such information would be interesting because it would suggest the degree to which such arguments linking military service with more rights for soldiers' families were able to challenge the prevailing assumptions about race. Some government officials at the Indian Affairs Branch believed that Aboriginal people were children and were not sophisticated enough to vote. If Aboriginal soldiers' wives and mothers received the right to vote in 1917, it would be interesting to see if such voting changed officials' thinking in certain cases, how it affected their attitudes towards enfranchisement, and if it affected Aboriginal women's understanding of their own rights. These issues does not seem to have been discussed in Joseph Wearing, The Ballot and its Message: Voting in Canada, (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1991)

¹⁸⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Herwig to Ralston, 28 March 1942.

¹⁸⁷ Although Herwig argued against racial discrimination in this instance, the Legion was actually perpetuating racist sentiments against the Japanese. In British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario, local Legion chapters organized anti-Japanese demonstrations, supported the dismissal of Japanese teachers and protested the hiring of Japanese in local factories. The Legion in British Columbia argued that Japanese Canadians should be deported. Only a minority of soldiers argued against the Legion's stance stating that Japanese Canadians were loyal and deportation was against the democratic principles they had fought for. See Ken Adachi, The Enemy that Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1991) 172, 189, 193, 212, 286 and Ann Gomer Sunahara, The Politics of Racism: the Uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War, (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1981), 31, 116.

origin, should receive the same amount of pay, especially in countries where there were differences in pay.¹⁸⁸

Herwig's argument for equal pay for all soldiers is particularly interesting when put into context with Afro-Caribbean labourers' demands for higher wages during the interwar period. It would appear that the wage increases that workers demanded between the wars were provided through the pay and allowances they received as soldiers.

According to Stephen J. Randall and Graeme S. Mount's historical overview of the Caribbean, Afro-Caribbean labourers had long agitated for higher wages particularly after the drastic increases in the cost of living which began during World War I and continued into the 1920's. For instance, from 1914 to 1920, the cost of basic necessities had risen in British Guiana by 118 percent and by 145 percent in Trinidad.¹⁸⁹ The failure of wages to address these increases had contributed to labour unrest. Throughout the 1920's and 1930's, there had been strikes in Trinidad, Jamaica, St. Lucia, the Bahamas, Jamaica, and in British Honduras and membership in formal labour organizations had grown.¹⁹⁰

Veterans of World War I, angered by the menial jobs they were assigned to in the military and the low pay that they received, had organized some of these strikes and joined labour organizations. But, restrictive laws against strikes and against the formation of trade unions, combined with the failure of the British government and foreign companies (who were the main employers) to recognize the legitimacy of trade unions, had thwarted labourers' efforts. The British government had eventually

¹⁸⁸ It is not clear, for instance, how the Legion organization reacted in Australia where certain Torres Strait Islander soldiers were not paid equally to white soldiers. It is known that the soldiers themselves protested. See Robert A. Hall, "Black Australians in the Second World War," *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire*, 72, (1990): 146-166.

¹⁸⁹ Randall does not indicate upon what basis these figures were calculated. See Randall, *The Caribbean Basin*, 65.

¹⁹⁰ Randall, *The Caribbean Basin*, 65.

investigated the inadequate wages, working conditions, and social welfare through three Royal Commissions, but it is unclear how the actual situation of workers had improved.¹⁹¹ At the same time labourers and political activists were making demands for political reforms. By the 1930's Afro-Jamaican political activists were demanding that political reform include expanded franchise and lower qualifications to be a member in the legislature.¹⁹²

Whereas achieving legitimacy in the eyes of the government and foreign companies in the name of workers and citizens had been difficult, doing so in the name of soldiers appeared to be somewhat easier. The view that all soldiers were patriotic and heroic, benefited soldiers' families because it was harder to deny them equal pay. Men's status as soldiers and the perceived link between military service and rights may have given them some political leverage in their demands for the vote.¹⁹³ In November 1944, Jamaicans won universal adult suffrage.¹⁹⁴

H.C. Collier, the Secretary of the Canadian West Indian League, agreed with Herwig that the reductions were "unjust." He stated that the reductions were "...an unfair

¹⁹¹ Randall, *The Caribbean Basin*, 69.

¹⁹² Demands for political reform accompanied labourers' demands for higher wages. The majority of working class men in Jamaica, for instance, did not have the right to vote during the 1930's. Although some blacks had been able to vote in the nineteenth century, these rights had been taken away by successive colonial governments. During the mid-1830's after the emancipation of slaves, the Jamaica Assembly passed various franchise acts that allowed Afro-Jamaicans to vote if they met the qualifications which including either owning property, paying rent, or paying taxes. The main group who qualified to vote under these rules were black small freeholders. The rebellion at Morant Bay in 1865 was an uprising among African and Creole workers, settlers and peasants. The major grievances that had led to the rebellion were higher wages, better working conditions, lower taxes and more land. Colonial officials used the threat of further violence to enact major changes to the constitution which included demands for high property qualifications for both members of the assembly and voters. Through these changes the majority of Afro-Jamaicans were denied the right to vote and consequently, their ability to act as a major political force was severely impaired. Subsequent amendments made little substantial change. See Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labour, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832 to 1938*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 216, 299-300, 303, 337, 340, 395, 399.

¹⁹³ The perceived link between military service and rights will be discussed more in Chapter 6.

¹⁹⁴ Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 399.

and dangerous discrimination against loyal coloured subjects of the British Empire.”¹⁹⁵

Collier also predicted that the reductions would create resentment. The consequences, he added, reached far beyond Canada’s internal affairs as racial discrimination would threaten unity among the Commonwealth nations:

First of all, we submit the most objectionable feature of this action is its discrimination against coloured subjects of His Majesty. Indeed, on this score alone, if pursued, such action when it becomes generally known as inevitably it must, will create bitter resentment and, we, firmly believe will undermine the loyalty of these subjects to all future war effort... Furthermore, this policy, although not intended as such but which nevertheless bears the imprint of racial discrimination, is contrary to Imperial policy and the fundamental principles of democracy for which we are fighting. To permit any suggestion to gain ground that colour or race prejudice exists in our united war effort is to make travesty of that unity with resultant injury to the loyalty of millions of His Majesty’s coloured subjects.¹⁹⁶

Collier perceived British West Indians as loyal members of the “British Empire,” who for the sake of unity within the “Empire,” should not be treated differently. The importance of the loyalty of the British colonies in the Caribbean to the Empire had been recognized by British military officials in World War I as well. As mentioned earlier, British military officials did not want people of African descent in the Army; however, eventually they did allow them to enlist, in part, because officials recognized it would be more “harmful to the Empire if the susceptibilities of the black population were offended.”¹⁹⁷ The loyalty of the Afro-Caribbean population was seen as important in order to maintain British political and economic interests in the region.¹⁹⁸ Collier, though, is different from these officials or the Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats

¹⁹⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Collier to Bennett, 18 March 1942.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Joseph, “The British West Indies Regiment, 1914-1918,” 96.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

mentioned earlier because he is challenging the validity of race in a more fundamental way. Race distinctions were not valid in a “democracy” according to Collier. As we have seen, while the bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch argued that all soldiers should be treated equally, they still held the paternalistic belief that they should control how Aboriginal families’ money was spent. For them race as a category of distinction still had validity. In the context of soldiers’ rights, Collier’s definition of equality was more expansive.¹⁹⁹

Notions of “Empire” had been used to link the Caribbean and Canada since the nineteenth century. Canadian businessmen commonly employed such arguments when trying to foster trade relations with the Caribbean in order to ensure the migration of Afro-Caribbean labourers to Canada, who were particularly desirable because they were willing to work for low wages. In her study of African Canadian and Afro-Caribbean sleeping car porters, Sarah-Jane Mathieu finds that, “Canadian corporations encouraged American and West Indian emigration by reinforcing their interests in the Caribbean, appealing to the notion of Empire, and downplaying Canada’s hostility towards black migrants. As North American members of the British Empire, West Indians and Canadians supposedly shared a common bond.”²⁰⁰ Mathieu goes on to state that, “Canadian corporations capitalized on these constructed connections, hoping to solve their economic, military, and labour needs. They curried favor with West Indian

¹⁹⁹ Collier’s views would have to be studied in a wider context to fully assess if Collier’s notions of equality were specific to soldiers’ rights. In other contexts he may have believed that making distinctions based on notions of race were valid.

²⁰⁰ See Sarah-Jane (Saje) Mathieu, “North of the Colour Line: Sleeping Car Porters and the Battle Against Jim Crow on Canadian Rails, 1880-1920,” *Labour/Le Travail*, 47, (Spring 2001): 15.

governments by promoting profitable trade relations and establishing banks, insurance companies, railroads, boards of trade, steamship lines, and import-export ventures.”²⁰¹

Collier’s reference to the bonds of “Empire” also included consideration for close trading ties among the countries. He stated the “coloured dependents” of the British West Indies²⁰²

...are an extremely loyal people yet at the same time keenly sensitive to any real or imaginary slight to their race, and they represent a considerable proportion of the consumer market for Canadian goods. My Council fears that if the action of the Board in reducing the allowances is interpreted by these people as either or both a breach of faith and/or racial discrimination, it will create widespread disaffection toward the Dominion thereby impairing Canadian trade with these colonies and will create also a sense of injury which will affect loyalty and interest toward the Empire war effort.²⁰³

The Canadian West Indian League was trying to “see that no injustice is done to a very loyal section of His Majesty’s subjects which would impair the friendly and beneficial relations which Canada shares with the British Caribbean colonies.”²⁰⁴ The Canadian West Indian League had business interests in the Caribbean and there was a belief that these ties with the Caribbean would be threatened if significant reductions were made in the allowances to Afro-Caribbean soldiers. Perhaps, Collier thought his argument would hold more weight with government officials if he emphasized the potential threat to

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Collier to Bennett, 18 March 1942.

²⁰³ *Ibid.* Similar arguments had been made by the League Secretary in the early 1900s in reference to Canada’s exclusionary immigration policy which urged steamship agents not to sell tickets to Afro-Caribbean people desiring to come to Canada, unless they had a special permit from the Canadian government. The League Secretary believed that immigration officials’ negative attitude toward Afro-Caribbean immigrants and their attempts to exclude their entrance into Canada would harm trade relations with the Caribbean. See Agnes Calliste, “Race, Gender and Canadian Immigration Policy: Blacks from the Caribbean, 1900-1932,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 28, 4, (1993-1994): 137.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

economic relations after the war.²⁰⁵ This long tradition of economic ties, and the importance of trade relations were arguments that could not be used in the case of Aboriginal families as a potential political bargaining tool.

Whereas Collier could portray Afro-Caribbean soldiers and their families as consumers who needed the allowance as a steady income to ensure their purchasing power, few attempts were made to portray Aboriginal soldiers and their families as potential consumers. On the contrary, as we have seen, rather than encouraging women to use their allowance to purchase consumer goods, many Indian Agents considered it their paternalistic duty to restrict Aboriginal women's access to the allowance to prevent "wastefulness." This would change somewhat in the 1950's when officials began to see Aboriginal women as potential consumers of certain kinds of Euro-Canadian products. As a part of the Family Allowances Program, for instance, Aboriginal women were encouraged to use their family allowances to buy baby cereal and powdered milk.²⁰⁶ Interestingly, research on Native Americans would suggest that politicians and officials in the United States during the war and post-war period were in fact encouraging consumerism among Native Americans because they believed it would facilitate

²⁰⁵ It would be interesting to know what other businessmen who were not based in Canada thought of the reductions. Some of the businessmen working in the sugar and oil industries may have supported the reductions because they wanted to keep the wages low and did not want the soldiers, when they returned home, to have higher expectations regarding their wages. They may have been less concerned about maintaining the West Indies as a potential consumer market because they were supplying consumer markets in other countries.

²⁰⁶ Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 3, 7 and Shewell, 'Enough to Keep Them Alive', 248. It is important to keep in mind that government officials' views are being discussed here. Some local merchants may have seen Aboriginal peoples as consumers prior to this time. Some merchants valued the business provided by their Aboriginal customers, especially when they purchased goods such as blankets and pots and pans for their potlatches. See Tina Loo, "Dan Cramner's Potlatch: Law as Coercion, Symbol and Rhetoric in British Columbia, 1884-1951," Canadian Historical Review, 73, 2 (1992): 125-165.

assimilation through individual consumption and push Native Americans to give up communalism.²⁰⁷

Bennett's argument that the differences in the cost of living justified the reductions for Afro-Caribbean families was also questioned by Collier and journalists. Collier argued that not all "coloured" soldiers came from similar backgrounds. He reported a case of a "coloured" man who was a teacher, had servants and lived "...on a standard equal to that of many white Civil Servants..."²⁰⁸ "His circumstances," Collier noted, "indeed would provide a more cultural mode of life and of a higher standard than that of a very large percentage of Canadian soldiers."²⁰⁹ The Secretary concluded that "...it is obviously unfair and contrary to Imperial policy to class him with the coloured labouring class simply because he has been born black instead of white....Indeed, there are many coloured people in the West Indies who enjoy a higher standard of living and education than many of the poorer classes in urban and rural areas in the Dominion."²¹⁰ Collier argued, "Unless, however, similar action has been taken with respect to the white dependents of Canadian soldiers who reside in communities other than the West Indies, we fail to see how the action taken in the case of West Indian dependents can escape the odium of discrimination..."²¹¹

It is interesting to compare Collier's point of view to earlier statements made by officials at the Indian Affairs Branch. Similar to Collier, Christianson and Ostrander, as we have previously discussed, were arguing that Euro-Canadian families of similar

²⁰⁷ Clayton R. Koppes, "From New Deal to Termination: Liberalism and Indian Policy, 1933-1953," *Pacific Historical Review*, 46, 4 (1977): 552-553.

²⁰⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Collier to Bennett, 18 March 1942.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30 British West Indies Dependents, Collier to Bennett, 28 March 1942.

“class” status as Aboriginal families were not having their allowances cut. However, unlike Collier, they did not point out that some Aboriginal families may have been living at a higher standard than what the allowances provided for at the reduced rates. By pointing out that Afro-Caribbean men from middle class backgrounds were having their allowances reduced as well as poor men, Collier further undermined Bennett’s argument that the reductions were justified based on cost of living. Based on the notion of “maternalistic trusteeship” which was referred to earlier, treating people differently was justified if they were “similarly situated.” Even if this logic was used, the reductions were problematic because they were applied to families from different classes who were not “similarly situated.” Collier exposed the contradictions in Bennett’s logic and showed that the reductions were discriminatory.

In assessing cost of living, Archer, who was one of the journalists, noted that West Indian families did have expenses that Canadian families did not have. For instance, West Indian families had to pay more for food and clothes because they had to be imported. “War risk and transportation charges” increased the cost of commodities. Archer noted, “This has hit the wage earning and poorer classes twice as hard as it has in Canada and remember, there are no opportunities to make big money in government and munitions jobs!”²¹² The fact that transporting goods to certain reservations that were geographically isolated, would have raised the prices Aboriginal families had to pay, does

²¹² Archer does not state upon what evidence he made his assumption. Archer’s statement is not necessarily true. On St. Thomas, people were able to get munitions jobs through the United States defence projects in that area. For many of these people, who had previously worked as farmers, it was the first time they had done waged work in a cash economy. See Bill Maurer, Recharting the Caribbean: Land, Law, and Citizenship in the British West Virgin Islands, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 36, 40.

not appear to have been a point that Indian Agents made when arguing against the reductions.

Archer had the following response to the argument that the reductions were justified on the basis that the previous economic contributions of men in the Caribbean were already low:

Well, what of it? The reduction in relief rolls in Canada suggests that many Canadian unemployed are now serving their country in the armed forces. Are their dependents to be cut off without allowance because of their unhappy pre-war position? This writer knows of at least two officers now holding lucrative positions of high rank in the Army who, prior, to the war, were scarcely able to provide for their families from their earnings. Are their dependents to be placed on reduced allowances in the development of this argument to a logical conclusion?²¹³

Archer challenged the notion that families' previous economic status should prevent their current ability to earn money and improve their families' living conditions. Bennett, as previously noted, had argued that families should maintain their previous status. Archer pointed out that such an assumption was problematic because prior to the war, men of all classes, had struggled to provide for their families due to the Great Depression. Despite this, men's previous economic status was being held against West Indians, not Euro-Canadian men who had been able to get higher positions in the Army.

As a result of all these protests, the reductions for West Indian soldiers' families were in place for four months from January to April 1942 before the maximum rates were reinstated. A memorandum to the Chairman summarized the dilemma the Dependents' Allowance Board faced: the allowance was not a right, but the maximum rates were outlined in documentation provided to soldiers that was produced by the Department of

²¹³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30 British West Indies Dependents, "Soldiers' Allowances and Government Responsibility," Archer, The Standard, Montreal, Quebec, 25 April 1942.

National Defence. As a result, the author of a memorandum on this issue, C.B. O'Brien, an employee of the Dependents' Allowance Board, stated, "...unless we admit to discrimination against the coloured population there is no justification sufficiently plausible to account for our reductions in awards..."²¹⁴ She concluded, "...at the risk of appearing an alarmist I would respectfully suggest that we bow to the approaching inevitable and reinstate West Indian dependents on the scale in effect for dependents in all other quarters of the globe..."²¹⁵ O'Brien was concerned that Canada was an exception in the fact that it was giving reduced amounts to Afro-Caribbean soldiers' families and argued that the rates of allowances should be comparable to those paid in other countries.²¹⁶ In this case it would appear that the international situation acted as a pressure for the government to change its policies.²¹⁷

In a letter to the Minister of National Defence, Bennett noted that seventy-eight families from the Caribbean had their allowances reduced. The total amount of allowances paid at the reduced rate was \$1,131. If the maximum were paid, the amount would have been \$2,177. The difference between the two amounts was \$1,046 per month. Bennett conceded and suggested that the reductions be stopped:

In view of the small amount involved, it is thought the simplest manner of dealing with this question would be to increase the allowances to the maximum (after possibly recommending the purchase of War Savings Certificates) and to look into the matter of

²¹⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30 File Title: British West Indian Dependents, C.B. O'Brien, Ottawa, Ontario to Bennett, 25 August 1942. O'Brien's exact position was not identified. She appears to have been an employee of the DAB.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ The fact that Torres Strait Islander soldiers were being paid less in Australia was not raised. Perhaps Canadian officials did not know about this situation because the Australian government was careful not to publicize it. See Hall, "Black Australians in the Second World War," 146-166.

²¹⁷ To put officials' concerns at the Department of National Defence about Canada's international reputation in wider context see Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein, Empire to Umpire: Canada and the World to the 1990's, (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman Ltd., 1994), Chapter 5 "If Britain and France Go Down, 1939-1945," 153-180.

the desirability of encouraging further recruits from the British West Indies who are apparently attracted to the Canadian Army by the comparatively large amount of remuneration they receive.²¹⁸

In April, 1942, Ralston declared his stance to the House of Commons:

My position...is that notwithstanding the fact that the terms of the dependents' allowance regulation provide that the amount to be paid to a wife is such amount as the board may allow, not exceeding \$35, at the same time in practice my feeling is that that amount should remain stationary, regardless of the cost of living of a particular individual who happens to be receiving the allowance.²¹⁹

Although it is unclear if Ralston's statement was a reaction to political pressure, it is worth noting that in his role as the Minister of National Defence, he would have been especially concerned about maintaining morale and avoiding disunity and conflict among soldiers. Ralston's comments are interesting considering Bennett's previous justifications for reductions that stated cost of living should be linked to the amount of the allowance. Allowances for the families of Afro-Caribbean and Aboriginal soldiers were reinstated to thirty-five dollars per month effective May 1, 1942.²²⁰

This reversal in the Dependents' Allowance Board's position reveals how the pressures of wartime forced politicians and officials to address allegations of class and racial discrimination that in the past had been more easily dismissed. Once a man's primary role shifted from wage earner to soldier or, from "Indian" or "Black" to soldier, he was less easily defined by his class status or racial background. It was harder for politicians and officials to discriminate when faced with arguments that all soldiers, no matter what their class position or racial origin, deserved to be treated and paid equally.

²¹⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indies Dependents, Bennett to Ralston, 22 April 1942.

²¹⁹ House of Commons Debates, Volume II, 29 April 1942, 1967.

²²⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File: 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to Stollmeyer, 6 May 1942.

The experience of being in the Army and receiving equal pay strengthened Afro-Caribbean and Aboriginal soldiers' sense of their entitlements when they became workers again after the war.²²¹

More specifically, for Aboriginal men, their participation in the Army, where they were completing similar tasks to Euro-Canadian men, may have changed the public's common misperception that they were "lazy" and "unwilling to work."²²² For those Aboriginal men, who had worked in the non-waged economy doing unpaid labour, their work in the Army marked their entry into the paid labour force. The receipt of a wage may have further legitimized their work in the eyes of some federal officials who may have dismissed non-paid labour. The work of Aboriginal men as soldiers in combination with the continuing political agitation of Aboriginal leaders and Aboriginal political organizations²²³ forced the public to at least partially recognize that the poverty

²²¹ Robin W. Winks finds that for African Canadians World War II led to increasing militancy in organized African Canadian labour unions in the post-war period. Membership in the Sleeping Car Porters Union, for instance, grew rapidly during and after the war. This increased militancy continued a trend that first began after World War I. See Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1971), 423-427. We also know that Aboriginal soldiers did organize politically when they returned from the war. See Sheffield, *The Redman's On The Warpath*, 139.

²²² It is important to emphasize that this was largely the public's perception and that Aboriginal men and women did varied forms of work. See Carol Williams, "Between Doorstep Barter Economy and Industrial Wages: Mobility and Adaptability of Coast Salish Female Laborers in Coastal British Columbia, 1858-1890," *Native Being—Being Native Identity and Difference Proceedings of the Fifth Native American Symposium*, Mark B. Spencer and Lucretia Scoufos, eds. (Southeastern Oklahoma State University, 2005), 25.

²²³ Aboriginal leaders in organizations such as the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia had been active during the war years which led to the public becoming more aware of their demands. They protested, for instance, the compulsory military registration program. See Michael D. Stevenson, "The Mobilization of Native Canadians during the Second World War," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 7, (1996): 205-26. There were also a number of Aboriginal political organizations that were established during the war years such as the North American Indian Brotherhood which was formed in 1943. These newer organizations helped support other organization's demands for change. See Sheffield, *The Redman's On The Warpath*, 139. Aboriginal causes were also brought to the attention of the public through one publicized incident in 1943 when some Aboriginal leaders went to Ottawa to demand that the Prime Minister meet with them to discuss changes to Indian Affairs Branch policy. See Hugh Shewell, "Jules Sioui and Indian Political Radicalism in Canada, 1943-44," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 34, 3, (Fall 1999): 211-41. For more on individual families protests that occurred see Chapter 6. This agitation did not just emerge in World War II. Similar agitation had also occurred during and after World War I. This earlier movement laid the foundation for the protest that occurred during World War II. See Stan Cuthand,

that many First Nations families faced was not the result of laziness as was commonly believed in the past, but was an outcome of low wages, a lack of economic opportunities, and insufficient government assistance. To a greater extent than they had before, politicians and the public became more aware of the poor living conditions on the reservations. In the post-war period, some of these politicians and some members of the public sought to scrutinize the inadequacies of the government's policies in regard to Aboriginal people more carefully.²²⁴ The protest of Aboriginal organizations combined with the public pressure did force the federal government to make a greater effort to address the issues of employment on reserves in the post-war period through training and work relocation programs. Even though assumptions about race continued to plague Aboriginal workers in the post-war period, and even if government programs often failed to meet communities' demands, federal officials, especially those in Ottawa, could no longer ignore the complexity of the issues involving economic conditions on reserves as they had often done before.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The debate about the reductions in allowances is different from the other debates examined in this thesis because it is the most open and public. The pressures placed on Dependents' Allowance Board by various groups were successful in that the reductions in the amount of money Aboriginal and West Indian families received were removed. The

"The Native Peoples of the Prairie Provinces in the 1920s and 1930s," in Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada, J.R. Miller, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 381-392 and Harold Cardinal, "Hat in the Hand: The Long Fight to Organize," in Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada, J.R. Miller, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 393-404.
²²⁴ According to Sheffield, the public became more aware and concerned about conditions on reserves due to more stories about Aboriginal people in the newspapers and Aboriginal people's own agitation for change. For a more detailed discussion of the public's contribution to the post-war debates about Aboriginal people's living conditions and their criticism of Indian Affairs Branch policy see Sheffield, The Redman's On The Warpath, Chapter 7 "Whither the "Indian"? The Social Joint Senate and the House of Commons Committee to Reconsider the Indian Act, 1946-48," 148-175.

analysis of this debate supports Stoler and Cooper's conclusion that there was not an "omniscient colonial apparatus." There were a multiplicity of views present across a number of different groups. For instance, look at the response of bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch. Even though many Indian Affairs Branch officials provided Bennett assessments of the lower cost of living on reserves, they did not agree with his decision to reduce the allowances. They had a series of reasons for arguing against the reductions. They believed that there would be much protest to the reductions by Aboriginal people and they did not want to be perceived as responsible for the reductions. In addition to these difficulties in implementing the policy, Indian Affairs Branch officials argued that the reductions were "unfair." Their definition of "unfair" was not based on emerging traditions of human rights or a recognition of minorities' rights like that of private organizations who protested the reductions in the case of West Indian dependents. Instead, Indian Affairs Branch officials' arguments against discrimination were specifically linked to the treatment of soldiers. Some Indian Agents were concerned that they had already informed the soldiers that their families would receive the standard rates and they believed it was a part of their paternalistic duty to provide soldiers with accurate information. True, by questioning the reductions in this fashion these officials did not question the legitimacy of Euro-Canadian supervision and control over Aboriginal people's affairs, but it did reveal the meaning of the "soldier" was a powerful notion.

In the case of Afro-Caribbean soldiers' families, some representatives from private organizations and journalists were trying to challenge the legitimacy of race as a category to justify economic inequalities. As a part of this process, they were trying to

redefine notions of “Empire” and “citizenship.” Instead of the “British Empire” symbolizing colonization and the suppression of different racial groups as inferior, some Euro-Canadians, through the Canadian-West Indian League, were insisting that different racial groups should be included as “citizens.” Their definitions of equality were based on more inclusive forms of democracy and human rights that did not stem from a paternalistic tradition. In the context of the debate about the reductions in allowances, the Canadian-West Indian League presented its arguments in relation to West Indian families, not Aboriginal ones. However, later in Chapter 6, readers will learn that soldiers’ commanding officers and local Members of Parliament did attempt to question the extent of Indian Agents’ control over Aboriginal families’ affairs. In making their arguments, these Euro-Canadians were influenced by changing notions of democracy and equality that challenged aspects of the paternalistic tradition.

Although policies in the post-war period still made distinctions based on race, some members of the public and an increasing number of bureaucrats did become sensitive to issues of racial discrimination. The assumptions about race used to make policy were beginning to unravel. If one acknowledges that all soldiers are equal and should receive the same allowances, how far removed is it to apply a similar logic to railway porters, students, and parents? Such logic fueled post-war debates against racial discrimination.

CHAPTER 4: THE SAVINGS PROGRAM AND ABORIGINAL FAMILIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As the preceding chapters have shown, civil servants from the Dependents' Allowance Board and Indian Affairs Branch agreed that Aboriginal cases needed "special" policies and procedures to prevent "wastefulness." The bureaucrats from the Board and the Branch generally disagreed, however, about the ways the allowance should be restricted or controlled. Chapter 2 showed that some Indian Agents supported the idea that the allowance cheques should be addressed to them and administered in trust. The Dependents' Allowance Chairmen, however, were against such administration, except in extreme cases of mismanagement. Chapter 3 revealed that the Indian Affairs Branch Director and Indian Agents were against the reductions in allowances for Aboriginal families promoted by the Chairman of the Dependents' Allowance Board. In the end, both policies of addressing all the allowance cheques to the Indian Agents and reducing the allowances, were dropped. As an alternative, in May, 1942 after the reductions were stopped, the Chairman of the Dependents' Allowance Board and Indian Affairs Branch Director agreed that Aboriginal wives should save a portion of their allowance money. Savings were requested only in the cases which involved wives presumably because the amount of their monthly allowance of thirty-five dollars was the highest.¹

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the intended goals attached to the encouragement of savings and the debates that took place regarding the implementation

¹ Library Archives Canada, (LAC), Records of the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB), RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, H.W. McGill, IAB Director, Ottawa, Ontario to the Deputy Minister, Department of Mines and Resources, Ottawa, Ontario, 24 March 1943. As we have seen, other dependents such as mothers initially received twenty and then, with the increases of January 1943, twenty-five dollars maximum depending on their financial situation. Bureaucrats perhaps had fewer anxieties about "waste" in these cases because less money was provided.

of the savings program. More specifically, the following questions have informed this analysis: What were the intended uses for the savings? Were non-Aboriginal dependents expected to save their allowances for these purposes? Did bureaucrats agree regarding the form savings should take? Were there any difficulties in implementing the savings program? If so, what measures were suggested to deal with these difficulties? Were there differences of opinion among upper level and lower level officials from the Dependents' Allowance Board and the Indian Affairs Branch regarding savings?

Examining the discussions surrounding the savings program highlights many of the themes already explored in the other policy debates. Indeed, the desire to assimilate Aboriginal people to be more "respectable" according to Euro-Canadian standards formed a part of the debates about the savings program. Indian Agents' desire for more control over the allowance and the concerns of high ranking officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board about obtaining consent from soldiers' relatives were also major elements in policy discussions. These debates show how notions of racial difference were being enforced in ways that contradicted the initial purpose of the Dependents' Allowance Program. As already mentioned, the allowance was supposed to provide for "current maintenance" while soldiers were overseas. Discussions about the savings policies reveal there were certain allowable exceptions to general policy directives if they were justified on the basis that they were going to mould the "Indian" character. Once again, the debates indicate how race was further legitimized as a category, despite claims that dependents' allowance policies were not discriminatory.

The main motivation for saving the allowance money was to pay for future emergencies, a home, or for the soldiers' return. Bureaucrats believed that saving a

portion of the allowance would teach Aboriginal people what were perceived as “unique” middle class Euro-Canadian values such as “thrift” and “planning for the future.”

Building or improving a house was also linked to notions of “respectability:”

“Respectable” people had clean homes with “modern conveniences” such as electricity.

Such houses were supposed to be owned by individual families. Saving the money for

the soldiers’ return also reinforced the notion of the male “breadwinner” who was more

capable of handling the family finances than his wife. The intended uses for Aboriginal

women’s savings sought to undermine various Aboriginal cultural practices, communal

ownership, and collective rights. Through savings, Indian Agents sought to fulfill the

Indian Affairs Branch goals through the money provided by the Department of National

Defence. In the past, the Indian Affairs Branch had been chronically under funded.

Perhaps, anticipating that this under funding would continue in the post-war period,

officials, by encouraging Aboriginal women to save the money they received from the

Department of National Defence, sought to relieve their own future financial obligations.

Despite agreeing about the need to save a portion of the allowance, upper, middle, and lower level Indian Affairs Branch employees disagreed, amongst themselves and with their colleagues at the Dependents’ Allowance Board, about the form the savings should take. The Chairman of the Dependents’ Allowance Board suggested that women should use their “excess” money to purchase War Savings Certificates. These certificates could be bought at post offices, trust companies, and banks from May, 1940, onwards. The certificates paid back to the purchaser five dollars for every four invested and they matured after seven years. The maximum amount held in these certificates was

\$600.² At the Indian Affairs Branch it was suggested that the money should be put in the Indian Trust Fund, a fund which was made up of individual bank accounts and group accounts. This fund was subject to more control by the Department of Indian Affairs than War Savings Certificates. Although agreeing that some women could use the Indian Trust Fund, Dependents' Allowance Board bureaucrats preferred the War Savings Certificates option instead.

In assessing the role Indian Agents should have in encouraging savings among soldiers' families, officials at the Indian Affairs Branch and Dependents' Allowance Board headquarters in Ottawa had conflicting expectations. Upper level Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats believed that Indian Agents should approve of the amount deducted for savings and should supervise any expenditures. However, they also had to emphasize the need for women to consent to the amount being deducted, in order to allay concerns from the Dependents' Allowance Board bureaucrats that it not appear as if the Aboriginal soldiers' families were targets of discrimination. Despite the emphasis on consent and the limits on Indian Agents' control over Aboriginal women's savings, Indian Agents were criticized by the Minister of National Defence³ for not doing enough to promote savings among Aboriginal dependents.

Indian Agents, similar to what they had done in the case of the management of the cheques, advocated for more control. Some of them argued that they were having difficulties convincing the women to consent to save their money. As a result, some Indian Agents argued that the money should be withheld without the women's knowledge

² Jeffrey Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 31.

³ Readers will recall from Chapter 1, that the Dependents' Allowance Board (DAB) was under the Department of National Defence making the Minister of National Defence the highest ranking official within this department.

in the Indian Trust Fund. This latter suggestion was not implemented because the Board required that women consent to the amount being deducted.

Women themselves had other priorities for the money, which did not necessarily conform to the goals of the Indian Affairs Branch. Because women had to consent to savings, most spent the allowance on their families' daily needs. If they did choose to save, when given the choice between the Indian Trust Fund and War Savings Certificates which were not under Indian Affairs Branch control, they chose the latter.

In the following examination of the intentions behind the savings policy and the debates over how the policy should be implemented, readers can see how, even with the removal of the reductions, Aboriginal soldiers' families were still discriminated against and treated differently based on assumptions about race. At the same time, with the option to withhold consent, the arbitrary authority of the Indian Agents to impose policies onto recipients was undermined. The ability of the Indian Affairs Branch to implement paternalistic policies was being challenged, in part, by the demands for consent as required by officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board.

4.2 HISTORIOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

A brief overview of some of the patterns that scholars have noted about politicians, businessmen, and bureaucrats' attitudes towards saving will provide a basis for comparing how assumptions about race and class overlapped, but also how distinctions were made between the categories. The notion that families should save their money for future emergencies was by no means a new idea. Some businessmen and bureaucrats had suggested, in various debates about how to deal with poverty during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, that poor and working class families could

improve their standard of living by saving a portion of their earnings. Alvin Finkel, in his book studying the relationship between the business community and the federal government during the 1930's, finds that many businessmen and politicians expected workers to save their wages and criticized them when they did not. For instance, in debating the validity of unemployment insurance schemes, one writer in a conservative journal claimed that such schemes were necessary because "workers, unlike corporations, did not have the good sense to build reserves" to protect them in times of unemployment.⁴ The assumption was that even when workers were unemployed, the income provided through the insurance would ensure they could still purchase the necessities. Businessmen indicated in the Canadian Machinery and Manufacturing News that they preferred unemployment insurance as opposed to relief because they admired the values and principles such a program would encourage among workers; they noted that "Relief penalizes the conscientious workers who save their money in good times and favors the spendthrift element. Unemployment insurance does the opposite, benefits being based on the savings of the worker, enforced though it may be, and not simply on need."⁵ The Retail Merchants Association supported the plan because it would increase the purchasing power of consumers.⁶ The above views on unemployment insurance reveal well how the principles and values associated with saving were being encouraged while the importance of sustained consumer purchasing power was also a concern.

With the implementation of more government funded social programs, businessmen and bureaucrats continued to debate whether families should be encouraged

⁴ Alvin Finkel, Business and Social Reform in the Thirties, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1979), 84-85.

⁵ Canadian Machinery and Manufacturing News, April 1934, 8 as quoted in Finkel, Business and Social Reform in the Thirties, 88.

⁶ Ibid. 96.

to save or spend. Dominique Marshall's study of the Family Allowances Program in Quebec in the 1940's to 1960's discusses the different attitudes officials had towards saving. Guides for families suggested that if poor families sacrificed by eating less meat and more baked beans, they could save a portion of their money and eventually improve their standard of living. Some parents agreed with this goal and, when they answered surveys studying parents' intentions regarding the allowance money, many of them hoped to save a portion of their allowances for their children.⁷ The Quebec Regional Family Allowances Board created tables for parents indicating how much per month they should save for the higher education of their children after they paid for their living expenses. By using such tables, the Board suggested that the allowance would provide all children, no matter what their class status, with equal opportunities in education. Marshall finds that despite parents' hopes to save, many of them simply had to spend all their family allowances on essential goods and did not have additional money to put aside.⁸

Despite the above examples, for the most part, however, there was an emphasis on spending rather than saving in the Family Allowances Program. In brochures on the family allowance, federal officials suggested that poor families would spend the monthly amount on immediate necessities such as food, clothing, medical and dentist appointments. Middle class families, on the other hand, were encouraged to spend their allowances on activities that would "enrich" their children's lives such as "piano lessons, bicycles, sporting equipment and summer camp."⁹ The emphasis was on the consumption of goods rather than saving the allowance for the future. Such advice to

⁷ Dominique Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State: Quebec Families, Compulsory Education and Family Allowances. Translated by Nicola Danby. (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2005), Chapter 5, 2.

⁸ Ibid., Chapter 5, 2.

⁹ Ibid., Chapter 3, 19.

parents reflects the importance federal officials placed on parents as consumers and the influence of Keynesian principles in officials' thinking. When it came to social benefits sent to individual recipients, more businessmen and bureaucrats came to believe that families should not save their social benefits, but should use this money to purchase consumer goods. The demand for such goods would subsequently sustain the economy whereas saving money would lower the demand for consumer products, which would have a negative impact on the overall economy. The Deputy Minister of the Department of National Health and Welfare stated that investments or insurance would ““have the effect of diverting the Family Allowances moneys into unwise spending, or even into unwise savings and hoarding, during the deflationary period of the postwar years when the interest of the country may call for a policy of encouraging spending rather than encouraging to saving.””¹⁰ Later though, when the need to increase consumer demand had declined, the practice of parents saving the family allowances became more acceptable to government officials.¹¹

Despite the emphasis on spending, it is important to keep in mind that, even for Euro-Canadians, the principles associated with saving were still encouraged. Even spending the family allowance, as Marshall finds in brochures included in the family allowance cheque envelopes, parents were invited to teach their children “moderation” by encouraging “habits of planned consumption.”¹² Through such lessons children would learn the importance of careful family budgeting for the future.¹³ Parents' abilities to

¹⁰ LAC, Records of National Health and Welfare, RG 29, acc. 82-83/152, 260-8-1, 1945, Deputy Minister of the Department of National Health and Welfare to the Montreal Board of Trade, Montreal, Quebec and the Trust Companies Association of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, as quoted in Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 5, 6.

¹¹ Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 5, 6.

¹² Ibid., Chapter 3, 17.

¹³ Ibid., Chapter 3, 18.

teach their children these skills were considered to be very important by the federal government.¹⁴

4.3 PINCHING PENNIES: JUSTIFICATIONS FOR THE SAVINGS PROGRAM

The Chairman of the Dependents' Allowance Board believed that women should save a portion of their allowance. The dependents' allowance procedures agreed upon by Bennett and Board members, which we have referred to before in other debates, stated the reasons Aboriginal women should save their allowances:

Generally speaking, Dependents on Reservations pay no rental, taxes, receive free hospitalization and medical treatment and their water and fuel cost little or nothing. It has been pointed out that in some cases receipt by these Dependents of allowances at the standard rate, without deductions for savings in some form, results in Dependents having a greater income than they are accustomed to or than they require for their immediate needs. This sometimes leads to the squandering of allowances on unnecessary expenditures and non-payment of store bills, etc., and the allowances prove more of a hindrance than a benefit. The Board therefore endeavours to encourage saving by these Dependents by every means possible, to prevent them from spending foolishly and to provide for future emergencies and improved living conditions.¹⁵

Concerns about lower living costs that included paying no rent or taxes and “free” medical treatment led Bennett to conclude that Aboriginal women should save a portion of their allowance.¹⁶ Every one of Bennett's justifications had already been brought up by the Indian Agents, and the problems with these assumptions have already been

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11154, File Title: Shannon CR 35 Pt. B. “DAB Procedure No. 30 Procedure regarding payment of Dependents' Allowance and Assigned Pay when Indians enlist,” approved by R.O.G. Bennett, DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario, 27 September 1943. This procedure superseded the 1 December 1941 procedure.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Indian Agents also made similar comments regarding costs of living. See Indian Agent Ostrander and Indian Agent A.G. Smith's comments as quoted in LAC, Records of the Dependent's Allowance Board (DAB), RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, “Remarks of Indian Agents Extracted from Files,” Author not identified, Not dated, and LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File 452-6-106, A.G. Smith, Indian Agent, Birtle Agency, Birtle, Manitoba to T.R.L. MacInnes, IAB Secretary, Ottawa, Ontario, 9 March 1942.

discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. The fact that many families needed the allowance to improve their current conditions was not considered because there was an assumption that Aboriginal families could survive at a subsistence level. According to these officials, improving living conditions belonged to the future.

The savings of Aboriginal women were also supposed to be used for “future emergencies.” Such an expectation was not placed on non-Aboriginal women who could apply to the Dependents’ Board of Trustees if they had an unforeseen emergency. As noted in Chapter 1, this organization had been established to provide grants to dependents to pay for costs associated with a large family, hospital bills, dental bills and calamities.

Bennett also justified savings, in the case of Aboriginal dependents, by the fact that they would, “provide a backlog of savings...but at the same time help the War Effort by eliminating unnecessary spending and conserving spending power for the time when it will be most needed.”¹⁷ Bennett applied different principles to the spending of non-Aboriginal dependents, who were informed that they could only save up to \$100 for emergencies from the allowance because the allowance was for “current maintenance.”¹⁸ Why was the Keynesian principle of spending to encourage economic growth applied to the spending of non-Aboriginal women, but not to the spending of Aboriginal women?

¹⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Bennett to Not Identified (Form letter sent to Aboriginal recipients), Not dated.

¹⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File: 4-5, File Title: Volume 4-General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies, Bennett to Not Identified, 6 November 1942. Bennett’s comments were made in specific reference to the allowance. This rule did not preclude women from saving from other sources if they wanted. For instance, if a woman had a job she could save money from that source. There was a rule that dependents could not save more than \$100 for their children. The limit of \$100 was changed to \$200 in 1944 due to protest by parents who were having their allowances reduced when their savings exceed the \$100 limit. Parents argued that they were not being allowed to provide for their children’s welfare if the father died or for their children’s further education. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-30, File Title: Press Notices and Clippings, “Children Don’t Count,” The Canadian Statesman Bowmanville, Bowmanville, Ontario, 20 April 1944.

Like the Chairman of the Dependents' Allowance Board, bureaucrats from all levels at the Indian Affairs Branch promoted the idea that Aboriginal women should save a portion of their allowances. As we have seen, the allowance was used as a tool to try to make Aboriginal people adopt what were perceived as middle class Euro-Canadian values. It was commonly believed that it was part of the "Indian" character not to think about the future. As stated in the 1942 Indian Affairs Branch Annual Report:

The failure of the Indian population, when work is plentiful and wages high, to provide for their future needs or to spend their earnings on worthwhile projects, such as the repair and furnishing of their dwellings, is one of the most perplexing features of the welfare program, although in many cases they are showing improvement in this respect.¹⁹

The Annual Report indicated that spending money on repairing or furnishing dwellings was considered an appropriate use of one's wages. This quotation reveals the common belief that the former nomadic lifestyle of many of Aboriginal people's ancestors, which had focused on day to day survival, had not encouraged planning for the future.²⁰

Researchers have shown that, for many First Nations' people, such characterizations were inaccurate because preserving and storing food for the winter was an important task for many women in the pre-contact era.²¹ Despite the inaccuracy of the assumption, officials believed an essential part of the Indian Affairs Branch's responsibility was to teach Aboriginal people how to plan for the future. Such policies emphasized that the individual needed to save only for his or her family. The idea that individuals would keep their own resources to themselves when others were in need went against the belief

¹⁹ Canada. Department of Mines and Resources. "Annual Report of the Indian Affairs Branch," 31 March 1942, 137 <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/indianaffairs/> consulted on May 16, 2003.

²⁰ See Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 144.

²¹ Judith Brown, "Economic Organization and the Position of Women among the Iroquois," *Ethnohistory*, 17, 3-4, (1970): 154 and Karen Anderson, *Chain Her By One Foot: The Subjugation of Women in Seventeenth Century New France*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 159.

system in many First Nations' cultures, as we have seen earlier in Chapter 2, where it was expected that people would share their resources.

Promoting savings would teach Aboriginal people "thriftiness," as T. Crerar, the Minister of Mines and Resources, commented in regard to the promotion of saving a portion of their allowance: "This policy appears to be a good one, having regard [to the] the inculcation of habits of thrift among the Indians. Funds saved by them, moreover, should serve as a protective "backlog" for their future needs."²² In a 1943 circular letter to all Indian Agents and Inspectors, H.W. McGill, the Indian Affairs Branch Director, noted that members of the Dependents' Allowance Board appreciated the efforts of the Indian Agents and Inspectors "...in their endeavor to safeguard the interests of the Indians and to encourage thrift and savings and improve the living conditions among the Indian Dependents."²³ He shared the idea that Indian Agents and Inspectors had a paternalistic duty. Aboriginal people were portrayed by the Director as incapable of handling their own finances or improving their living conditions on their own.

Not only would certain values be adopted through savings, but the money could be used for "legitimate" purposes. Chapter 2 already revealed that Indian Agents expressed anxieties about the allowance being spent on liquor, "luxury" items, and used cars. The Agents also worried that the money was being lent to other community members. These were considered "inappropriate" uses of the allowance and reinforced in many Indian Agents' minds that Aboriginal people's "innate" characteristics such as inability to plan for the future and their system of communal exchange had not changed.

²² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, T.A. Crerar, Minister of Mines and Resources, Department of Mines and Resources, Ottawa, Ontario to J.L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 23 July 1942.

²³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, McGill to all Indian Agents, Inspectors of Indian Agents, and the Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, 2 October 1943.

As an alternative, some Agents argued that in addition to spending their money on food and clothing, Aboriginal people should spend their allowance money on building or improving houses. For the bureaucrats of the Indian Affairs Branch, individual homes were an especially worthy rubric of spending because this meant people were no longer living in communal houses,²⁴ which was a traditional way of living in some Aboriginal communities. In the nineteenth century, as Jean Barman notes, the Agents had made a connection between the building of Euro-Canadian style homes and the adoption of Euro-Canadian values. Communal housing was associated with promiscuity and the spread of diseases. Individual dwellings indicated, in the Indian Agents' minds, that the women were in monogamous relationships. They were also believed to be cleaner than communal homes.²⁵ Frequently, the Indian Affairs Branch Annual Reports made comments about the quality of the Aboriginal people's homes that reflected the view that individual dwellings were superior to communal homes. One bureaucrat from the Indian Affairs Branch, presumably an Indian Agent, wrote on the condition of homes on Vancouver Island in such terms:²⁶

The Indians of the west coast of Vancouver Island also have roomy, well-ventilated and well-kept houses. The high standard of comfort and decoration exhibited is quite remarkable, kitchens and bathrooms being equipped with most modern conveniences. In years past it was customary to build community houses in which as many as ten families lived. Now the young people are building their own homes and separating from the older people. A number of coast Indian villages are equipped with electric light and sidewalks whereas their adjoining white neighbours have neither of these services.²⁷

²⁴ Jean Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power, and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900," *BC Studies*, 115-116, (1997-98): 258-259.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ The Annual Reports for the Indian Affairs Branch do not indicate who made particular comments. The regional reports were, however, usually sent in by the Indian Agents or Inspectors.

²⁷ "Annual Report of the Indian Affairs Branch." 31 March 1940. See section on British Columbia, 199.

It was stated in the 1942 Indian Affairs Branch Annual Report, “All new houses are built upon modern lines of the small compact type used by white labouring classes, and greater interest is paid to ventilation, heating, and sanitation than formerly.”²⁸ These comments implied that in the past Aboriginal homes had not been well built and were dirty, poorly ventilated and unsanitary. Officials did not appear to consider that some First Nations people may have preferred their communal way of living and may have felt officials’ assumptions were unjustified. The reference to “white labouring classes” reflects the desire of officials at the Indian Affairs Branch that Aboriginal people should live like working class Euro-Canadians, a goal which Brownlie also noted in her study of Indian Affairs Branch policies.²⁹

During this time period, working class Euro-Canadians were also being encouraged by government officials and housing reformers to purchase homes with modern conveniences such as “electricity, modern bathrooms, kitchen sinks, basement laundries, bedroom closets and water heaters.”³⁰ Many housing reformers believed the purchase of such homes would relieve the problems of urban decay because trying to escape crowded dirty homes in industrial cities was seen as a reason that working class people engaged in activities that were “disreputable” such as drinking in taverns.³¹ Single family dwellings which were less crowded and located out of the city centre would rectify this situation because families would want to stay at home. To facilitate these goals the federal government, through the Dominion Housing Act of 1935 and later the

²⁸“Annual Report of the Indian Affairs Branch,” 31 March 1942. See section on British Columbia, 148.

²⁹ Robin Jarvis Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye: Indian Agents, Government Power, and Aboriginal Resistance in Ontario, 1918-1939, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003), 42.

³⁰ Cynthia R. Comacchio, The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 107.

³¹ Ibid., 106-107.

National Housing Act of 1938, attempted to set up a system where families could be provided with loans in order to build a home.³² Such loans required steady employment and usually helped middle class families.³³ For many working class and poor families, the purchase of a new house remained out of reach because of the low wages received and the stipulations in the government's loan policies.³⁴ The demand by officials at the Indian Affairs Branch that Aboriginal families should live in individual homes, like Euro-Canadian working class labourers, was problematic considering that the goal was not achievable for many of the families Aboriginal people were supposed to emulate. Despite the economic realities that prevented many families, both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal, from purchasing homes, many officials continued to blame "class status" or "racial origin" as the cause for poor housing conditions.

Although officials wanted both working class and Aboriginal families to live in individual homes, the main difference between the respective policies concerning these families was that non-Aboriginal families, no matter what their class background, were not supposed to use their dependents' allowances to improve or build homes. Officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board expected that Euro-Canadian families would spend their allowances on food and clothing. In the Family Allowances Program, parents, as we have already seen, were supposed to spend their allowances on food, clothes, school supplies, and vaccinations for their children and were, in fact, discouraged by officials to spend money on their homes and rent because they believed it would not help the post-war economic recovery.³⁵

³² Finkel, Business and Social Reform in the Thirties, 103-104, 107.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Commachio, The Infinite Bonds of Family, 79.

³⁵ Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 3, 19.

Conversely, officials at the Indian Affairs Branch stated that one of the main purposes of saving the allowance money was to encourage Aboriginal people to build or improve their homes. H.W. McGill, the Director, noted in a letter to Inspectors that “Our records would indicate that in many cases the desired result is being achieved with the dependents’ allowance (surplus to actual living requirements) being utilised for home improvements or for the erection of new homes...”³⁶ He wrote that “extra” monies would be “set aside for special purchases and expenditures for their benefit, such as clothing, winter’s fuel supply and other items as required, also housing repairs and improvements.”³⁷ Superintendent Mindy Christianson from Saskatchewan also argued that the allowance money that was saved would be used “to better their home conditions.”³⁸

Some Indian Agents supported the idea of their superiors that the allowance money should be used to build or improve houses. For instance, Agent Ostrander from Battleford, Saskatchewan tried to justify his wish to monitor savings by arguing that a soldier had told Ostrander he wanted his wife to save the allowance for a home. He recounted what the soldier supposedly told him:

I should insist that she save enough, from her allowances as his wife, that he would be able to build a house and furnish it when he returns from the war....Now that the Dependents’ Allowance Board, in spite of every effort by me to prevent, has decided to send her money direct to Mrs. Blatch, there will certainly be nothing saved to build the house, or do anything else.³⁹

³⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Circular letter, McGill to Major MacKay, Messrs. Coleman, Christianson, Schmidt, Hamilton, Arneil, Thibault, and Inspectors of Agencies, 22 February 1943.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Mindy Christianson, General Superintendent of Indian Agencies, Regina, Saskatchewan, to MacInnes, 18 December 1941.

³⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, J.P.B. Ostrander, Indian Agent, Battleford Agency, Battleford, Saskatchewan to Christianson, 25 March 1942.

He disagreed with the decision made by the Dependents' Allowance Board to send the cheque directly to the woman. Not only did he try to justify his control over the cheque by referring to the soldiers' desire about how the money should be used, but he reinforced the position of the soldier, not the wife, as the person who should dictate how the money should be spent. There is no correspondence written from the soldier to collaborate Ostrander's statements so it is unclear if the soldier did want to build a house or if the Indian Agent was imposing his own desires onto the soldier about how the allowance money should be used. It is clear, however, that Indian Agent Ostrander supported the idea that a portion of the allowance money should be saved to build a house.

Indian Agents were eager to inform their superiors when homes were built or improved and they approved of expenditures for this purpose. Chapter 2 revealed the expenditures some Indian Agents did not approve of such as purchasing radios or musical instruments. Now we can see the types of expenditures that Indian Agents supported. Indian Agent Clarke from Hodgson, Manitoba stated, "Ingrid wishes to draw on her Saving Acct for the purpose of purchasing a better dwelling, which is also larger. The present house is small, and in poor condition. We would heartily recommend this withdrawal for the above purpose."⁴⁰ Indian Agent W. Young from Griswold, Manitoba noted a woman had used her savings to buy a house that was insulated. The house cost \$350.⁴¹ In his June report, Indian Agent Young informed Director McGill that the house was finished. The Indian Agent concluded, "This house is quite an asset to this Reserve,

⁴⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File 452-709, F.J. Clarke, Indian Agent, Fisher River Agency, Hodgson, Manitoba, To IAB, 7 August 1944.

⁴¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File 452-6-133, "Report on Griswold Indian Agency," W. Young, Indian Agent, Griswold Indian Agency, Griswold, Manitoba, May 1944.

and I hope that some more of the soldiers' wives will follow this example."⁴² By building the house, the woman had fulfilled the Indian Agent's expectations of how the allowance should be used. As a result, he viewed the woman positively and believed she was a good example to the other soldiers' wives on the reserve.

Here a comparison can be drawn between the Indian Agents and their eagerness to spend the allowance money on housing and the truant officers' desire for poor parents to send their children to school. Marshall found in her study of the Family Allowances Program in Quebec that although truant officers had long advocated children's attendance at school, it was not possible for many of them to enforce the law. Once attendance at school was necessary in order to receive the family allowance, truant officers had money incentives to enforce the law. They could threaten the parents with allowance suspension if they did not comply.⁴³ Similarly, Agents since the nineteenth century, had believed that Aboriginal people should live in individual homes, but little or no funds were provided to build such homes on reserves.⁴⁴ With the dependents' allowance, the Agents believed that the money should be used to fulfill the goals that they had little success in achieving before. Their position was slightly different from the truant officers because they had less legal authority in this case.⁴⁵ As will be discussed in more detail later, the

⁴² *Ibid.*, "Report on Griswold Indian Agency," June 1944.

⁴³ Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State*, Chapter 2, 40-42.

⁴⁴ Indian Agents' inability to fulfill certain goals as outlined by the Indian Affairs Branch was not just limited to housing. Agents had often expressed frustration that even though in principle they agreed with a particular rule or law outlined by officials in Ottawa, they did not have the financial resources to implement the rules. This happened in the case of the potlatch law see Tina Loo, "Dan Cramner's Potlatch: Law as Coercion, Symbol, and Rhetoric in British Columbia, 1884-1951," *Canadian Historical Review*, 2, (1992): 125-165. In addition to the potlatch laws, similar frustrations were also expressed by Agents in regards to the laws against Aboriginal people holding dances see J.R. Miller, "Owen Glendower, Hotspur, and Canadian Indian Policy," in *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada*, J.R. Miller, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 323-352.

⁴⁵ It should be noted that Indian Agents had less authority in this case because they had to follow the requirements of the DAB. Under the *Indian Act* which was the major piece of legislation governing the IAB, Indian Agents, in fact, had a great deal of legal authority. As will be noted in Chapter 5, Joan

Dependents' Allowance Board required the recipients' consent to save a portion of the allowance. Agents could not withhold the money if the wives chose not to save for a home. In the case of the truant officers, the Family Allowances Act stipulated that school attendance was mandatory in order to receive the allowance.⁴⁶

After the war, Indian Agents continued to think building a house should be a priority for veterans and their families. In fact, historian R. Scott Sheffield has found that officials at the Indian Affairs Branch viewed the Veterans Land Act grants provided to veterans "essentially as a means of providing veterans with housing, rather than as an agricultural measure" which was the original intention of the policy.⁴⁷ Although veterans had a variety of options as a part of the federal benefits program, Indian Agents continued to insist that veterans take the Veterans Land Act grants so they could build homes. Some Agents considered building a house more important than encouraging veterans to take advantage of alternate benefits that would have helped them start businesses or improve their long term employment prospects.⁴⁸ Sheffield argues officials did this because it fit their own department's goals and priorities. As Sheffield states, "...Agents and their superiors in Ottawa were more concerned with using VLA [Veterans Land Act] money to provide houses and thereby augmenting their admittedly stretched Welfare

Sangster has observed that in comparison to social workers, Indian Agents had more power due to the Indian Act to punish Aboriginal women living with men who were not their husbands. In some cases it was possible under the Indian Act to bring charges against individuals for "immorality" and jail time could be served. The Act enabled Indian Agents to act as justices of the peace or magistrates giving them the ability to prosecute, try and convict Aboriginal people on reserves. Due to this Act, Indian Agents were given more arbitrary power to enforce punishments than social welfare agencies. See Joan Sangster, Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), 176-180.

⁴⁶ Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 1, 1.

⁴⁷ R. Scott Sheffield, "A Search for Equity: A Study of the Treatment Accorded to First Nations Veterans and Dependents of the Second World War and the Korean Conflict," prepared for the National Round Table on First Nations Veterans' Issues," April 2001, 48.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

budget for reserve housing” than “on the re-establishment of the veteran to his or her best advantage.”⁴⁹

According to some bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch, savings would also be beneficial because the soldier and the family could use the funds when the soldier returned home, even though dependents’ allowance policy stipulated that the allowance was to be spent on “current maintenance.” The Director of the Indian Affairs Branch, H.W. McGill, encouraged Indian Agents to consult with the soldier about his family’s financial situation prior to the soldier’s departure. In some cases, Indian Agents were informed that they should write the soldier if they believed the wife could be saving more. McGill instructed Indian Agents:

In a number of Agencies beneficial results have been obtained by co-operation and particularly so when the Agent has had an opportunity to discuss the family’s finances with the soldier prior to enlistment and to explain to him that he will gladly assist his wife to build up a credit for the family on his return. In other cases the desired result has been obtained by the Agent writing to the soldier suggesting that an improvement could be made in his financial position were he to request that the Agent assist his family in spending the allowance cheque to better advantage.⁵⁰

By emphasizing that the Indian Agents should consult with the soldier, the Director undermined women’s role in managing the family finances. A.G. Leslie, for the Chief Clerk of the Trusts and Annuities Division, supported McGill’s statements when he wrote a letter to Acting Indian Agent G.E. Hurl from Christian Island, Ontario. Leslie stated, “At any rate you may be assured of our support in attempting to see to it that proper use

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Circular letter, McGill to Major MacKay, Messrs. Coleman, Christianson, Schmidt, Hamilton, Arneil, Thibault, and Inspectors of Agencies, 22 February 1943.

of these funds which should be devoted to those purposes which the soldier had in mind before leaving.”⁵¹

The purpose of accumulating savings for the soldiers' return was justified, according to upper level Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats, because economic conditions would possibly be uncertain when soldiers returned from the war.⁵² McGill advised Indian Agents that savings were made “...having regard to the welfare of the Indian families concerned, in the difficult period which may follow the war.”⁵³ After McGill retired in 1945, R.A. Hoey, the Acting Indian Affairs Branch Director who took over, also advised Indian Agents regarding the necessity for savings, “Such investment, I may add, is more than ever important now, as the post-war period approaches, bringing with it the need for saving for individual rehabilitation and planning for the future.”⁵⁴ It was considered the duty of bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch to make “an appeal...to the Indian people to conserve, in a time of relative prosperity, their unearned income against the days of greater need which may follow the discontinuance of war industries and a possible diminution in the demand for what they have to sell.”⁵⁵ There was an assumption that, unless Euro-Canadian bureaucrats advised Aboriginal people to save, they would not do so on their own. Aboriginal people were expected by Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats to save for potentially hard economic times after the war. There does

⁵¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File 452-721, A.G. Leslie for Chief Clerk, Trusts and Annuities Division, IAB, Ottawa, Ontario, to G.E. Hurl, Acting Indian Agent, Christian Island Agency, Christian Island, Ontario, 27 June 1945.

⁵² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Circular letter, McGill to Major MacKay, Messrs. Coleman, Christianson, Schmidt, Hamilton, Arneil, Thibault, and Inspectors of Agencies, 22 February 1943.

⁵³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, McGill, Circular letter to all Indian Agents and for the information of Inspectors of Indian Agencies and the Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, 11 March 1943.

⁵⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, R.A. Hoey, Acting IAB Director, Ottawa, Ontario, Circular to all Indian Agents, Inspectors and the Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, 3 February 1945.

⁵⁵ “Annual Report of the Indian Affairs Branch,” 31 March 1944, 162.

not appear to have been an acknowledgement that if hard times were faced by Aboriginal veterans and their families after the war that the federal government would be obliged to help re-establish these men. Instead, the onus was placed on the individual families to save. From the archival evidence examined, this expectation was not imposed upon non-Aboriginal families.

Middle level bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch also agreed that the money should be saved so it could be used by the soldiers after the war. C. Pant Schmidt, the Inspector of Indian Agencies for the Alberta Inspectorate, noted that Aboriginal women who received the allowance were becoming “spendthrifts.”⁵⁶ With a portion of the allowance money he believed the women should “set aside a certain amount of this money for a rainy day, or for the use of the bread-winner when he returns home.”⁵⁷

Superintendent Christianson agreed with Schmidt:

As you are aware, you as Agents, have requested time and again that the beneficiaries receiving cheques be asked to set aside some of this money for the future because if left to themselves they will not make any attempt in that direction. In many instances Indians discharged and upon returning found that their dependents such as their wives, had not saved anything for them out of their allowance with which to make a new start.⁵⁸

Christianson emphasized the role of the Indian Agent in assessing the financial situation and making recommendations about what should be done. In assessing non-Aboriginal women’s use of the allowance, it was considered reasonable for them not to save.

However, Christianson criticized Aboriginal recipients for not making an attempt to save.

Christianson implied that soldiers expected their wives to save money for their return.

⁵⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, “Alberta Inspectorate Report,” C. Pant Schmidt, Inspector of Indian Agencies Alberta, location not identified, 31 March 1945.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Christianson to All Agents, 13 January 1942.

Christianson's assumptions about soldiers' expectations were at odds with the very purpose of the Dependents' Allowance Program. The purpose of the program, as indicated in Chapter 1, was to alleviate soldiers' financial concerns about their families while they were overseas, not when they came home.

Some soldiers, based on what they were told or read about the purpose of program and on their own assessments of their families' needs, may have believed, contrary to Christianson, that their wives would spend the money on immediate needs. Chapter 6 will reveal that these assumptions that the allowance should be saved for the soldiers' return did not always conform to what soldiers themselves believed. Some soldiers defended their wives' decisions about how to spend the allowance money and they did not necessarily believe the money should be saved for the post-war period. Perhaps, they believed that they would have full access to veterans' programs that would assist them in re-establishing themselves after the war. The wives who wrote in to the Dependents' Allowance Board or Indian Affairs Branch often noted that they needed the allowance money for their current expenses which was the intended purpose for the allowance.

When the soldiers eventually did return home, some of the Aboriginal men, who may have expected to have full access to veterans' benefits, did not have their expectations met. Euro-Canadian veterans' families were assisted to a greater extent than Aboriginal veterans' families because they were given more access to education programs, job training, or land. As mentioned earlier, Indian Agents, with their own departmental goals and priorities, often did not provide men with accurate information about the veterans' programs available and tried to direct and control their applications

for assistance. As a result, some men did not always get to benefit fully from the programs that may have helped them re-establish themselves and improve their economic opportunities.⁵⁹ By interfering to the extent that they did with veterans' access to these programs, Indian Agents, in a sense, helped contribute to the difficult post-war times they had predicted.

4.4 WAR SAVINGS CERTIFICATES VERSUS THE INDIAN TRUST FUND: A DEBATE OVER THE PREFERRED METHOD

Although there was little disagreement among bureaucrats about the need for savings, there was disagreement about the preferred form of savings. The Chairman of the Dependents' Allowance Board, R.O.G. Bennett, favoured the purchase of War Savings Certificates. In April, 1942, after deciding that no reductions would be made in the amount of allowances issued to recipients, a letter was sent to Indian Agents by Bennett stating that the "excess" money not needed to cover basic living costs should be used to purchase War Savings Certificates.⁶⁰ Bennett suggested the amounts that Aboriginal women should be deducting for War Savings Certificates per month be based on the number of children. A woman without children was to save eight dollars. A woman with one child was to save twelve dollars. A woman with two or three children was to save sixteen dollars. A woman with four children was to save twenty dollars.⁶¹ According to Bennett, Aboriginal women with the most children were supposed to save the highest amount of money. Although these women received a higher amount of

⁵⁹ For an examination of the post-war situation when veterans did return home see Sheffield, "A Search for Equity," 48.

⁶⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Bennett to Indian Agents, 15 April 1942.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* As readers will recall from Chapter 1, no allowance money was received for more than four children until December 1942 when it was announced that allowances for up to six children would be received. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-5, File Title: Cost of Living Bonus, "Press Release for Afternoon Papers," 16 December 1942.

money compared to women with fewer children, they also had more food and clothing expenses. Mothers may have been surprised to learn that, according to Bennett's logic, raising more children would lead to higher savings. Bennett appeared to have little understanding of the financial strains of raising children on a reserve in Canada. Mothers would have been responsible for taking care of the immediate needs of their children and perhaps had obligations to other relatives that would have taken precedence over savings. Even though the rates suggested were impractical, the failure to conform to Bennett's plan for savings would have confirmed officials' beliefs that Aboriginal mothers were incompetent household managers.

A form letter signed by Bennett was sent to each Aboriginal recipient regarding the necessity of savings. Dependents were informed that their living expenses were lower than women who lived in towns and cities and they did not pay for taxes or medical care. Bennett concluded, "As the purpose of Dependents' Allowance is primarily for current maintenance, it is felt that the present amount you are receiving should [provide] comfortable maintenance and allow some savings for future emergencies."⁶² It was implied that Aboriginal women should be able to save money because they were used to a lower standard of living. Non-Aboriginal women from towns or cities could not necessarily save because they had a higher standard of living. Bennett also noted that purchasing the certificates would assist the government with the war effort. This last argument was also used more generally by federal officials to encourage Euro-Canadian families to put their savings in War Savings Certificates, but it

⁶² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Bennett to Not Identified (Form letter sent to Aboriginal recipients), Not dated.

was not necessarily directed in the same way at Euro-Canadian dependents' allowance recipients as it was in the case of Aboriginal recipients.⁶³

Once War Savings Certificates were purchased, there were special procedures in place for Aboriginal recipients. Usually War Savings Certificates were only issued in the name of the person purchasing the certificate. It was deemed however "not practicable to register War Savings Certificates in the names of Indians."⁶⁴ The certificates were to be "issued by, held by, and administered by the Superintendent on behalf of Indian individuals who purchased such certificates."⁶⁵ This measure fits into previous patterns of administering Aboriginal people's money savings or saving bonds.⁶⁶ In 1942, the Director requested that the certificates be written out in his name "for the benefit of the dependents."⁶⁷ He remarked that if the War Savings Certificates were addressed to anyone else, difficulties in administration under the Indian Act would arise in distributing the assets of the estates of the dependents if they died. This example indicates that the legislative structure of the Indian Act was set up to facilitate bureaucrats' control over Aboriginal people's financial affairs.

Despite the fact that some War Savings Certificates were issued and administered by the Indian Affairs Branch Superintendent or Director, some certificates were purchased through the Dependents' Allowance Board in women's names and mailed by the Board to the women. This was possible because when the letters were sent by

⁶³ Keshen, Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers, 31.

⁶⁴ Canada. Department of Mines and Resources, "Order in Council, 4573," 25 June 1941. Indian Affairs and Northern Development Library consulted on May 16, 2003.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Individuals' deposits of money for savings had been previously handled by the IAB and put in a Consolidated Revenue Fund. Securities such as bonds were held for "safe keeping" by the IAB and the accumulated interest was credited to the account of the individual. See Canada. Department of Mines and Resources, "Order in Council, 1744," 8 July 1939. Indian Affairs and Northern Development Library consulted on May 16, 2003.

⁶⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, McGill to Camsell, 15 April 1942.

Bennett to Aboriginal recipients advising them to save, the forms for purchasing the War Savings Certificates were included with the letters.⁶⁸ In these cases, Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats expressed concerns that the certificates would get lost, an assumption that implied again that Aboriginal people were careless and could not keep track of their key financial documents. The Director encouraged Indian Agents to advise these women to give their certificates to the Indian Agents for “safe-keeping.”⁶⁹

Concerns were also expressed that Aboriginal people could access their savings more easily through War Savings Certificates than in a departmental account. As a result, some upper level bureaucrats preferred the Indian Trust Fund because they believed bureaucrats would have more control over the savings. To give readers an idea of how many accounts were managed under the Indian Trust Fund in 1944, the Trust Fund had over 450 individual band accounts and 2,000 individual accounts. Approximately, forty-eight of these individual accounts represented dependents’ allowance cases.⁷⁰ As of February 1944, the Fund contained \$15,692,988.06.⁷¹ The department had more control over the money because it was held in the Indian Affairs Branch accounts in Ottawa. Indian Agents also had more control over how the money was spent. If the wives subsequently wanted to make a request for their savings from an Indian Trust Fund account, Indian Agents had the authority to supervise any

⁶⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Bennett to Not Identified (Form letter sent to Aboriginal recipients), Not dated.

⁶⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, McGill to Camsell, 30 April 1942.

⁷⁰ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates, Volume II, 23 March 1944, 1743. It is not clear why Mr. MacInnis was motivated to ask about the Indian Trust Fund in the House of Commons. It is possible he was asked by Aboriginal people to inquire about the fund or perhaps there was a particular incident that sparked his interest. The Minister of Mines and Resources, T.A. Crerar, answered his questions.

⁷¹ Ibid.

expenditures.⁷² The role of the Indian Agent in advising the recipient against a withdrawal from the savings account, if he believed it “unwise,” emphasized the paternalistic role of the Indian Agent. Indian Agents did not control how the money was spent in the case of War Savings Certificates. The Fund had a higher rate of interest in comparison to War Savings Certificates. As a result of these reasons, the Indian Affairs Branch Director, H.W. McGill, believed that this Fund was preferable to other forms of saving.⁷³ In a 1945 circular letter to all Indian Agents and Inspectors, the Acting Director of the Indian Affairs Branch, R.A. Hoey, noted that Aboriginal women were purchasing more War Savings Certificates than they were putting money in the Indian Trust Fund. Despite the lower number of dependents using the fund, he referred to the Indian Trust Fund as the “preferred plan, both from the view point of stability and the amount of interest earned.”⁷⁴

Middle level bureaucrats agreed with the Director and Acting Director. Major D.M. MacKay feared Aboriginal people would cash out their War Savings Certificates after six months. However, with a departmental savings account he believed that “they would hesitate to apply for funds from their savings account with the Department unless the need for such withdrawal was quite urgent.”⁷⁵ MacKay acknowledged that the degree of control by the Department would be a deterrent so that women would be reluctant to apply for their own money. According to him, this hesitancy was positive, undermining the right of the individual to access her money. As MacKay predicted,

⁷² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, W.J.F. Pratt, Private Secretary to the Minister of Mines and Resources, Department of Mines and Resources, Ottawa, Ontario, to O.J. Waters, Private Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 10 August 1942.

⁷³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, McGill to all Indian Agents, 11 March 1943.

⁷⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Hoey to all Indian Agents, 3 February 1945.

⁷⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, MacKay to MacInnes, 12 May 1942.

Indian Agent Edward Whalen of Fredericton, New Brunswick, claimed that women were cashing their War Savings Certificates after six months. He stated, “Although it is beyond my authority to question these women in regard to their War Savings Certificates, I am certain that the most of them are spending all the money they receive.”⁷⁶ In making this statement, Whalen was acknowledging the Board’s demand that the women’s consent was required and Agents could not act arbitrarily. However, he also implied that his inability to control the money was, in his opinion, leading to waste. Interestingly, the officials from the Indian Affairs Branch did not point out that War Savings Certificates were patriotic and contributing to the war effort, an argument which had been brought up by Bennett in his letter encouraging recipients to save their money.

How did officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board react to these arguments in favour of the Indian Trust Fund? Although officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board did eventually agree to allow recipients to put their money in an Indian Trust Fund, they initially were somewhat skeptical of this Fund, especially when Indian Affairs Branch officials suggested all Aboriginal women should put their savings in this Fund. McGill noted in April, 1942 that Board members were “dubious” about replacing War Savings Certificates with the Indian Trust Fund in all Aboriginal cases because “it would not be in accordance with their established practice and would place the Indian allowances on a special footing which might be open to criticism, and create a precedent which the Board might find embarrassing.”⁷⁷

⁷⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Edward Whalen, Indian Agent, Fredericton, New Brunswick, to Bennett, 30 December 1942.

⁷⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, McGill to the Deputy Minister, Department of Mines and Resources, 15 April 1942.

In May, 1942, MacInnes, the Indian Affairs Branch Secretary, suggested to Bennett that recipients be given the choice to put their money in the Fund “in cases where they prefer to do so.”⁷⁸ Bennett wrote to MacInnes stating that putting the money in an Indian Trust Fund “appears to have considerable merit as the money would be more easily controlled...and would bear a higher rate of interest.”⁷⁹ He advised that the Minister of Mines and Resources should discuss the matter with the Minister of National Defence “in order that the Government policy may be defined with regard to the deposit of a portion of allowances in a Trust Account by Indians who are wards of the Government.”⁸⁰ Although in April, 1942 Board members had rejected the suggestion of using the Indian Trust Fund in all cases, Bennett appeared to be convinced that the Indian Trust Fund was an acceptable alternative in cases where the recipient chose to use it. The fact that the Indian Trust Fund bore a higher rate of interest than War Savings Certificates appears to have influenced his decision to accept the use of this Fund. His concerns about the “misuse” of the allowance may have led him to conclude that the Fund was beneficial because officials had more control over how the funds were spent.

In discussing the proposed Indian Trust Fund option, the Minister of Mines and Resources, Thomas Crerar, did not suggest that the Fund should be used in every case, but only where the recipient requested it. In a letter to J.L. Ralston, the Minister of National Defence, he stated his views:

It is not proposed that the Indian dependents in general should forego investment in War Savings Certificates in favor of investment in the Indian Trust Fund. It would be appreciated, however, if this

⁷⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, MacInnes to Bennett, 22 May 1942.

⁷⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: “Indians,” Bennett to MacInnes, 26 May 1942.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

alternative could be followed, with the approval of the Board, in particular cases where desired by Indian dependents.⁸¹

MacInnes reiterated the Minister's statements in a memo to Indian Agents. MacInnes remarked that the Indian Trust Fund was to "enable the dependents to create a secure reserve for emergencies and other special needs. It is not desirable, however, that it should act in such a way as to bring about the cancellation of War Savings Certificate pledges."⁸² Crerar and MacInnes may have been trying to allay officials' concerns at the Department of National Defence about the cancellation of these certificates. These officials were perhaps concerned about losing access to this money because savings in the Indian Trust Fund were not used to assist the war effort in the same way monies from War Savings Certificates were.

In response to Crerar's letter, Ralston asked for some clarifications about the operation of Indian Trust Fund. Ralston emphasized that the amount be deducted for "only a reasonable proportion of the allowance payable."⁸³ He also noted that "funds could be withdrawn by the depositor to meet emergencies which might arise."⁸⁴ He inquired if there were "any restrictions on the repayment to the depositors of the balance at their credit in the Indian Trust Account."⁸⁵ W.J.F. Pratt, the Private Secretary for the Minister of Mines and Resources, wrote to O.J. Waters, the Private Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, regarding Ralston's questions. In reference to deductions Pratt stated, "It is understood that the deductions would only be for such proportion of the allowances payable as desired by the dependents and agreed to by the Indian Agents, and

⁸¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Crerar to Ralston, 23 July 1942.

⁸² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, "Draft Circular," MacInnes to all Indian Agents, Inspectors of Indian Agencies and the Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, 19 September 1942.

⁸³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Ralston to Crerar, 1 August 1942.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

that funds could be withdrawn by the depositors to meet emergencies that might arise.”⁸⁶ He noted there were no regulations or restrictions regarding repayment.⁸⁷ This example reveals that the handling of savings was perceived as being important enough to be discussed between the Ministers of both departments. The issue was not relegated to middle or lower level bureaucrats. It is revealing that the Minister of National Defence wanted to ensure that the Indian Trust Fund was subject to government audit and that individuals could easily access the money in their accounts. These concerns indicate how the administrative practices of the Indian Affairs Branch were being brought into question by officials at the Department of National Defence.

In addition to Ralston’s letter to the Minister of Mine of Resources, Bennett also wrote a letter to MacInnes, the Secretary of the Indian Affairs Branch, seeking clarification regarding how the Trust Fund functioned. He confirmed that there was a difference between the Indian Agency Trust Accounts which were controlled by Indian Agents and the Indian Trust Fund which was controlled by officials at the Indian Affairs Branch in Ottawa. As readers will recall from Chapter 2, Bennett had expressed concerns that some Indian Agents were exercising too much discretionary control over the allowance money and consequently ended up changing the policy of allowing Indian Agents to withhold a portion of the cheque without the account being brought under formal administration. In light of this experience, Bennett may have been less inclined to have the Indian Agents handle the savings. MacInnes assured Bennett that the Indian Agency Account and the Indian Trust Fund were separate accounts and that all savings

⁸⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Pratt to Waters, 10 August 1942.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

monies were transferred to Ottawa.⁸⁸ Bennett was willing to allow the officials at the Indian Affairs Branch to handle these accounts. Bennett and the Board members subsequently approved of the plan and recipients were given the option of purchasing War Savings Certificates or putting their money in an Indian Trust Fund.

Overall, more money was used to purchase War Savings Certificates than invested in the Indian Trust Fund. In 1945, out of the 2,400 Aboriginal dependents' allowance cases, 754 of the recipients were wives.⁸⁹ Out of these cases, 220 wives were making deductions for War Savings Certificates and forty-eight were making deductions for the Indian Trust Fund.⁹⁰ In total, 268 wives out of 754, approximately 35.5%, were saving a portion of their allowance. The figures suggest that despite the desires of bureaucrats, over half of the Aboriginal wives chose not to save their money through either method. Women either devised other ways to save their money or were using all their money on their day to day living costs. Chapter 6 reveals that some soldiers' relatives clearly believed they were entitled to the allowance based upon their definitions of the meaning of military service. As a result, they had certain expectations that they would make their own decisions about how to spend their money.

Wives might have preferred War Savings Certificates for the very reason that some officials at the Indian Affairs Branch were against this form of saving. Officials could exert less control over the money. It could also reflect the desire of these women to directly aid the war effort. During the First World War, First Nations had contributed \$44,545.46 to various war funds including the Canadian Patriotic War Fund and the Red

⁸⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, MacInnes to Bennett, 10 September 1942.

⁸⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Bennett to MacInnes, 31 January 1945.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Cross.⁹¹ Band members had stated that a desire to aid the King and to assist the war effort were the main reasons for these donations. Some band members said that they saw these financial contributions as an alternative to enlistment. The Blackfoot, for instance, were reluctant to have their young men enlist because they felt they had already lost too many of their young people to disease and did not want to lose anymore.⁹² They did, however, make financial contributions to the war effort. The Indian Affairs Branch Annual reports from the World War II period, some of which were quoted in Chapter 1, indicate that First Nations' communities continued to make donations to war funds and the Red Cross. For many women the desire to assist the war effort and the tradition of First Nations contributing to these funds could have made the War Savings Certificates more appealing than the Indian Trust Fund, where the money was held by the government, but was less likely to be used for the war effort.⁹³

4.5 SAVING FOR A RAINY DAY: INDIAN AGENTS' ATTEMPTS TO "ENCOURAGE" SAVING AMONG ABORIGINAL DEPENDENTS' ALLOWANCE RECIPIENTS

The problems with implementing the savings program traced in the archives revolved around the issues of convincing the women to consent to making voluntary deductions for savings and what role Indian Agents should play in this process. At various points, upper level bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch and Dependents' Allowance Board believed it was necessary to remind Indian Agents of the necessity of

⁹¹ L. James Dempsey, *Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I*. (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1999), 33.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 35.

⁹³ The records examined did not indicate what the money was used for which was held in the Indian Trust Fund. It was presumably used by the Indian Affairs Branch. There was no record of it being transferred to the Department of National Defence to support the war effort.

promoting savings among recipients. They lamented that the number of wives investing in War Savings Certificates or the Indian Trust Fund was not as high as they believed it should be. In 1943, the Indian Affairs Branch Director believed there was a need "...for a far greater effort being made by our staff and particularly our Indian Agents at this time to ensure that those families receiving dependents' allowance cheques use them to advantage and build up a savings account for leaner days."⁹⁴ The Director informed the Inspectors to bring up the issue of savings with the Indian Agents. As he instructed Inspectors, "To those Agents who may be somewhat negligent about the matter, a demand should be made that they give it the attention it warrants and to those others who are trying to control the family expenditure, with only indifferent success, encouragement should be given to their efforts."⁹⁵

Charles Camsell, the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources, shared similar concerns on behalf of the Minister that Indian Agents should make more of an effort to encourage savings. Camsell wrote to the Indian Affairs Branch Director:

A few days ago the Minister inquired again as to what further action was being taken by the Branch to do everything possible to ensure that the Indian recipients of Dependents' Allowances were not wasting the money that was being paid to them. He again expressed the view that all the Agents should do whatever they could to persuade the wives or other dependents to save as much of their allowance as possible.⁹⁶

In reply to the Deputy Minister, the Director stated that Indian Agents were reminded to interview new dependents allowance recipients to encourage savings. When the previously mentioned form letter signed by Bennett was sent to Aboriginal soldiers'

⁹⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Circular letter, McGill to Major MacKay, Messrs. Coleman, Christianson, Schmidt, Hamilton, Arneil, Thibault, and Inspectors of Agencies, 22 February 1943.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Camsell to McGill, 10 March 1943.

wives advising them that they should save a portion of their allowance, a copy was also sent to Indian Agents.⁹⁷ Indian Agents were also advised to visit the recipient personally “as a follow-up to the letter from the Board, with a view to endeavoring to arrange for a voluntary and regular monthly deduction from the allowance cheque for investment...”⁹⁸ If any women were not having deductions made, “but who...could afford to do so,” the Indian Agents were to meet with the women to try and convince them of the benefits of monthly deductions.⁹⁹ Such interviews were a part of procedure that, according to the Director, the “majority of agents” were already following. He insisted two weeks later that an additional request, “may stimulate them [the Agents] to even greater effort.”¹⁰⁰ Even with these efforts he concluded, “It is, of course, impossible, either in the case of Indian or other dependents, to prevent waste of money altogether.”¹⁰¹

Consent from the recipient was needed if War Savings Certificates were to be purchased or if money was to be put in an Indian Trust Fund. Readers will recall from Chapter 2 that soldiers or the soldiers’ relatives also had to consent to the formal administration of the allowance money by the Indian Agent. This consent was necessary because, according to the legal requirements of the Dependents’ Allowance Board, the Board did not have the authority to pay the money to anyone other than the relative of the soldier. Once again the procedures or rules checked the control of the Indian Affairs Branch, at least on paper. In a memo dated September 19, 1942, T.R.L. MacInnes, the Indian Affairs Branch Secretary, informed Indian Agents that recipients who wanted to put their money in a savings account had to fill out an Indian Trust Account Savings

⁹⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, McGill to all Indian Agents, 11 March 1943.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, McGill to Camsell, 24 March 1942.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Order indicating the amount they wanted taken off their cheque.¹⁰² The form had to be signed by the dependent, recommended by the Indian Agent and approved by the Dependents' Allowance Board.¹⁰³ MacInnes emphasized, "It is to be understood that such deductions are only to be made where desired by the dependent concerned and that they may be withdrawn on demand of the dependent, provided that the application for withdrawal is forwarded through the Indian Agent."¹⁰⁴ George Patrick, the Chief of the Trusts and Annuities Division, reiterated MacInnes' statements about the need for consent:

The Department has no power to retain any portion of these allowances except with the consent of the beneficiary...it is not intended that pressure shall be exerted to force these people to save their monies but merely to provide machinery to arrange for administration of funds left with the Department by any of those who care to do so.¹⁰⁵

McCrimmon of the Trusts and Annuities Division wrote that "opening of a savings account is a voluntary matter and is in no way compulsory."¹⁰⁶ Here the Indian Affairs Branch was made to conform to the rules of the Dependents' Allowance Board that stipulated that the recipients had to consent to saving the money. The need for consent emphasized that soldiers and their families should make the decision about saving the money and undermined the Indian Affairs Branch policy of Indian Agents exerting discretionary control over Aboriginal people's money. Once again the past

¹⁰² See a sample form, LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File 452-725, "Indian Trust Account Savings Order." These forms were common in the IAB files for individual dependents' allowance recipients. The most common amounts deducted were \$10 or \$15.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Draft Circular, MacInnes to all Indian Agents, Inspectors of Indian Agencies and the Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, 19 September 1942.

¹⁰⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File 452-6-56, George Patrick, Chief Trusts and Annuities Division, IAB, Ottawa, Ontario, to R. Lee MacCutcheon, Indian Agent, Fredericton, New Brunswick, 22 December 1939.

¹⁰⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, M. McCrimmon, for Chief, Trust and Annuities Division, IAB, Ottawa, Ontario to Whalen, 7 January 1943.

administrative practices of the Indian Affairs Branch were being challenged by the demands of the Dependents' Allowance Board. The need for consent and the ability to choose may have given some wives a greater sense of power in their relations with Indian Agents.

To the Director of the Indian Affairs Branch, obtaining consent was a "problem." Concerning why more dependents were not saving, McGill wrote in a draft letter¹⁰⁷ to Inspectors stating that "The problem would appear to be mainly one endeavoring to secure the recipient's co-operation to purchase War Savings Certificates or to start a departmental savings account at Ottawa."¹⁰⁸ McGill concluded that in cases where the Indian Agents appealed to the wives to save and they refused "reasonably strict or forceful methods might be used."¹⁰⁹ This statement reflects what the Director may have suggested if the Indian Affairs Branch alone had been in charge of setting the policy. Upon reviewing his statements in his draft letter, McGill clarified his comments and reiterated other upper level bureaucrats' emphasis on consent:

In reading the draft letter my attention was arrested by the statement that 'in many cases where an appeal is not responded to reasonably strict or forceful methods might be used.' This I believe might be interpreted, and acted upon, by some of our agents in such a way as to cause criticism of the department and the Board. The deductions for investment are to be entirely voluntary and any suggestion of coercion should be avoided sedulously. This, of course, does not mean that all reasonable influence and persuasion should not be used by the Indian Agents to bring about the wished for result, but even with this in mind such terms as 'strict or forceful' give an undesirable impression.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Based on the correspondence examined, it is unclear why the Director sent this draft letter and simply did not revise it prior to sending it to all the Indian Agents.

¹⁰⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Circular letter, McGill to Major MacKay, Messrs. Coleman, Christianson, Schmidt, Hamilton, Arneil, Thibault, and Inspectors of Agencies, 22 February 1943.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, McGill to R.A. Hoey, the Superintendent of Welfare and Training and the Superintendent of Reserves and Trusts, IAB, Ottawa, Ontario, 1 March 1943. R.A. Hoey would later become the Acting IAB Director.

One wonders why McGill altered his statements and what previous incidents made him think that Indian Agents might misinterpret his comments. Perhaps, he changed his comments because he thought that the bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board might disapprove.

Middle level bureaucrats also provided Indian Agents with advice about their role in "encouraging" recipients to save a portion of the allowance. Some of these bureaucrats cautioned the Indian Agents that the women should have enough to live on and savings should only be made with the "excess" money that would be potentially spent "wastefully." Christianson, the Superintendent of Saskatchewan Agencies, was one bureaucrat who held these views:

It is not my wish nor the wish of our Department that the Dependents should be penalized as a result of asking them to set aside some of their allowances for a rainy day. They should have sufficient to live on and only be asked to set aside such surplus that they would spend foolishly and without any benefit to all concerned.¹¹¹

He clarified that women were not expected to invest all their money, "but a substantial portion of it."¹¹² Ralston made a similar statement when discussing with Crerar the procedures regarding the Indian Trust Fund. The problem with these recommendations was that they were vague. It is unclear how basic living costs were being defined and if, in practice, Indian Agents were assuming that Aboriginal families would live at a subsistence level. Since no specific figures were provided, Indian Agents could be subjective about how much they calculated women could live on and the amounts they

¹¹¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Christianson to All Agents (Presumably in Saskatchewan, but this is not specifically stated,) 13 January 1942.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

advised women to deduct. As the Director did, Christianson concluded that Indian Agents should use their “influence” to encourage savings.¹¹³

When discussing the issue with officials in Ottawa, other middle level bureaucrats suggested that Indian Agents should be given more control over women’s savings. They believed that, based on what Indian Agents reported to them, savings should not be contingent on the women’s approval and the cheques should be addressed to the Indian Agents. In a Memorandum to the Director, P.E. Moore, the Acting Superintendent of Medical Services, reported, “There is still apparently some confusion over the handling of dependents’ allowances. Some of the Agents state that the cheques should be made payable to the Agents if they are to save any money for the Indians.”¹¹⁴ Moore noted that there was confusion over the allowance indicating that policies were not always clearly laid out from Ottawa to local officials. This example also reveals that there was by no means a consensus among bureaucrats about policies and procedures either in Ottawa or in the local areas. By reporting their desire to have the cheques made payable to them, Indian Agents were trying to use Moore to report their concerns to the upper level bureaucrats. Perhaps they believed Moore’s higher position as an Acting Superintendent would give his observations more weight with officials in Ottawa. According to Moore, Indian Agents did not believe that consulting with the women about the need for savings was convincing them to save their allowances. Indian Agents’ suggestions that the cheques be made payable to them would appear to indicate that they had not been convinced by the notion that Aboriginal recipients had the right to receive their cheques directly.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, P.E. Moore M.D. Acting Superintendent of Medical Services, Department of Pensions and Health, Ottawa, Ontario, to McGill, 24 March 1942.

Similarly, C. Pant Schmidt, the Inspector of Indian Agencies for the Alberta Inspectorate, argued that a portion from the cheques should be taken off. He disagreed with the notion that Aboriginal women's consent be required:

It is certainly regrettable, that part of the allowance paid to these dependents cannot be saved for them without having to beg them to set aside a certain amount of this money for a rainy day, or for the use of the bread-winner when he returns home. In the case of Treaty Indians, who in many other ways are treated as minors, is it not possible to have part of these dependents' allowances or assigned pay invested in War Savings Certificates?¹¹⁵

Schmidt believed, due to the women's status as "minors" or "wards," that bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch could dictate that the money be invested in War Savings Certificates. In his opinion, officials should not have to "beg" Aboriginal people to consent to save their money. This is an example of how the past administrative practices of the Indian Affairs Branch, the legal authority of this branch, and Aboriginal people's ambiguous citizenship status, affected officials' attitudes towards the way they believed the allowances should be handled.

Some Indian Agents remarked that they did not have any problems in convincing the women to put aside a portion of their money. In what would have been defined as an "ideal" case by Indian Affairs Branch standards, an Indian Agent from Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, remarked about the case of the family of Ernie Howard:

The dependent of the above mentioned Indian soldier is in receipt of an allowance of approximately \$120.00 per month. As this seems a bit more than she should require to maintain an adequate standard of living for her and her children I suggested to her the possibility of saving a portion of it monthly preparing for any future emergency. This was two months ago and as she was improving her house at the time the matter was left in abeyance. Having an opportunity to talk the matter over recently she is quite willing to open a trust fund (Indian) with the Indian Affairs Branch. She would start it with a

¹¹⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, "Alberta Inspectorate Report," Schmidt, 31 March 1945.

deduction of fifteen dollars per month beginning with June's cheque and continuing until further advised.¹¹⁶

Other Agents reported that they were having difficulties convincing the women to save their allowance money. They disagreed with the need for consent arguing that it was not possible, in their opinion, to convince women to save a portion of their allowance voluntarily. This argument is similar to their complaints that women were not listening to their advice when they came to pick up their cheques at their offices. Rather than pointing out that the savings policy was impractical in light of the harsh economic conditions on reserves, Indian Agents blamed Aboriginal women's "stubbornness" as the reason why women were not putting money in savings.¹¹⁷ Agent Frank Booth from Muscow, Saskatchewan, for example, noted of one wife that "I have tried to persuade her to put at least \$20.00 a month by but so far she has refused to do so."¹¹⁸ Agent MacCutcheon from Fredericton, New Brunswick claimed that it was not possible to persuade the women to make deductions unless:

...the Indian Agent is prepared to take all the abuse in the world and be regarded as a "Scrooge"...I presume you realize the tremendous task of trying to persuade an Indian woman to pass over to me a portion of the money which really belongs to her, so that I might make her future secure. As I said before, this can be done, but not by persuasion.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ LAC, RG 10 Volume 6799 File: 452-749 Pt. 1, Signature illegible, (J.S. Robb was the Indian Agent for that agency) Indian Agent, Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, to IAB, 9 June 1943.

¹¹⁷ Indian Agents' tendency to blame First Nations "inherent" characteristics for the lack of economic prosperity on reserves is a pattern that has been observed by other historians. Some Indian Agents and officials at the Indian Affairs Branch blamed the failure of agriculture on some reserves to be the fault of the "lazy Indians" rather than the lack of arable land or the insufficient machinery provided. See Carter, *Lost Harvests*, 144. In her study of the 1930's, Robin Jarvis Brownlie notes that despite the economic depression being experienced by the whole country and the presence of widespread unemployment, Indian Agents stated that Aboriginal men were "lazy." They argued that relief should be restricted because it would "encourage laziness," instead of teaching Aboriginal men the values of "hard work." See Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye*, 104.

¹¹⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File: 452-729 Pt. 1, Frank Booth, Indian Agent, Muscow, Saskatchewan, to MacInnes, 8 September 1941.

¹¹⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-56, MacCutcheon to MacInnes, 16 December 1939.

Interestingly, whereas some Indian Agents believed that the money belonged to the soldiers, MacCutcheon referred to the money as belonging to the women. Despite this recognition, he appeared to suggest that persuasion was not effective, and more forceful tactics might be necessary:

The task of administering allowances for Indians, to say the least, is delicate, and in almost every case it just a waste of words to talk and plead with the Indians, especially the women, to set apart a portion of their allowance for emergencies. I have saved considerable money for Mrs. Scott of the Oromocto Reserve but in so doing, I make all her purchases for her and insist that she save approximately 20 dollars a month.¹²⁰

MacCutcheon failed to acknowledge that the women might have logical reasons for not wanting to save their allowances based upon an assessment of the needs of their household.

As some of their superiors had argued, certain Indian Agents did not believe that obtaining the women's consent should be necessary. In the case of Connie Allan, Indian Agent A.G. Smith from Birtle, Manitoba noted, "I think that this allowance should be made payable to me and that a certain amount should be saved for the time when this soldier returns to Civilian life whether she approves or not."¹²¹

4.6 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to analyze bureaucrats' justifications for encouraging Aboriginal soldiers' wives to save a portion of their allowances and to explore the debates regarding the implementation of the Dependents' Allowance Board savings program. Assumptions about race led officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board to make an exception to the general policy that the allowances provide for the

¹²⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-56, MacCutcheon, to MacInnes, 17 October 1940.

¹²¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-106, Smith to MacInnes, 9 March 1942.

“current maintenance” of the recipients while the soldiers were overseas. The notion that recipients should use the money for daily living expenses to alleviate soldiers’ anxieties about their families’ financial situation had been the main the purpose for the allowance program. There was also the idea that the spending of the allowance money would stimulate the economy and sustain the demand for consumer goods. These logics appeared to have been applied to the spending of the majority of Euro-Canadian recipients who received the dependents’ allowance.

Alternatively, in the case of Aboriginal women, officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board and Indian Affairs Branch believed that Aboriginal women should be able to save a portion of their allowance. This idea was based on the understanding, present in the previous debates, that Aboriginal women should only have access to enough money to live at a subsistence level. Any additional monies would lead to “waste” because officials believed that Aboriginal women were more “innately” “extravagant,” “irresponsible,” and unable to plan for the future. By “encouraging” women to save their money rather than spend it, women would learn “thriftiness” and how to save for future emergencies. These “values” were perceived as being uniquely middle class and Euro-Canadian.

Officials at the Indian Affairs Branch further saw savings from the allowance as a tool to promote assimilation. Officials hoped that using the money to build houses for nuclear families would possibly encourage Aboriginal people to reject communal ways of living. Indian Agents were keen to have individuals save their money, presumably to discourage communal sharing of the allowance. Some bureaucrats suggested that savings could be used by the soldiers when they returned from the war. This suggestion

reinforced certain gender roles. The wife was supposed to save money for the husband's return because it was assumed the husband could better assess the family's needs. Long held Indian Affairs Branch objectives such as individual property ownership, the building of Euro-Canadian style homes on reserves, and the promotion of the nuclear family on reserves had been difficult to achieve due to chronic under funding and the desire among many First Nations to keep their own traditions. Some Agents saw the saving of the allowance money as an opportunity to fulfill the department's own goals and objectives.

Exploring the debates about the implementation of the savings program has provided additional insights into the complex inter-relationships among bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board and Indian Affairs Branch. The examination of these debates has further revealed how these groups negotiated policy decisions based on competing assumptions about race and soldiers' rights. Officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board and Department of Defence did put pressure on Aboriginal women to save. They wrote to the women stipulating specific amounts that should be saved. They also wrote to Indian Affairs Branch officials urging them to promote savings among recipients. However, these officials did partially undermine the control that had characterized the policies of the Indian Affairs Branch. High ranking officials at the Department of National Defence, for instance, were concerned about the administration of the Indian Trust Fund and wanted to ensure that the accounts were subject to government audit and that, upon request, individuals could easily access the money in their accounts. They insisted that women give consent to save the money. These upper level officials also believed that women should be given a choice about whether they wanted to purchase War Savings Certificates or whether they wanted to put their money

in the Indian Trust Fund. Although savings were “encouraged” among these officials, there was a belief that Aboriginal soldiers’ families should still have a say in deciding how to manage their allowances as other non-Aboriginal soldiers’ families did.

The fact that Aboriginal women were given options in the savings program was important. Because they were given the choice, some women could make the decision not to save which many of them did. They also could choose to put their money into War Savings Certificates. For some women purchasing these certificates may have been a preferable option because the funds aided the war effort and there was a tradition of First Nations communities providing this type of financial support. In addition, in comparison to the Indian Trust Fund, the money in War Savings Certificates could be more easily accessed and Indian Agents had less control over the expenditure of the money. In the past, when they had dealt with the Indian Affairs Branch Aboriginal women may not have been given the opportunity to make these types of choices.

In discussing the implementation of the savings program, officials at the Indian Affairs Branch tried to convince upper level officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board and the Department of National Defence that stricter controls over Aboriginal women’s decisions about saving should be enforced. Although in the past bureaucrats of the Indian Affairs Branch had decided the way Aboriginal people’s money from the federal government would be handled, they now had to justify why the Indian Trust Fund was a better plan to another set officials. Officials at the Indian Affairs Branch preferred the Indian Trust Fund because Agents could exert more control over this money. In order to access their savings, the women had to make requests through the Agents allowing them to potentially scrutinize the intended purchases and uses for the money. The notion,

brought up by officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board and Department of National Defence, that the Agents had to obtain the recipients' consent challenged the idea that Aboriginal women were incompetent and depended on the Agents' guidance. Although the savings programs was seen by some officials as a way to further control Aboriginal women's money and encourage assimilation, the program did challenge the arbitrary control Agents often exerted over Aboriginal families' financial affairs.

CHAPTER 5 QUESTIONED LEGITIMACIES: DEBATES REGARDING THE LEGALITY OF MARRIAGES BY “INDIAN CUSTOM” AND THE REPORTING OF “ILLEGITIMATE” BIRTHS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Debates about implementing the dependents' allowance policies intensified when the issues of marital practices and “illegitimacy” became a preoccupation of bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board. By exploring these debates, this chapter will provide further insights into the complex inter-relationships among bureaucrats and their attitudes towards Aboriginal families. Although officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board and the lawyers at the Department of Justice tried to apply standardized rules to all dependents' allowance cases, the local implementation of policies and regulations was by no means uniform. These debates also revealed how various bureaucrats defined familial relationships, what First Nations cultural practices they encountered, and how they reacted to them.

Notions of “racial” difference were enforced by suggestions that Aboriginal women who married according to the customs of their own First Nation could not receive the allowance on the same terms as married Euro-Canadian women did. The authorities at the Dependents' Allowance Board decided that the marriages had to be registered according to the rules and regulations set out by the Registrar General in the Province and the Provincial Marriage Acts. The general policy was that if the marriages did not conform to the rules for eligibility, they were to be equated with common-law unions. Under Article 117 of the dependents' allowance regulations, women in common-law unions were eligible to receive the allowance if they had cohabited with their partner for

two years prior to enlistment. However, the amount they received was discretionary and it depended on the number of children and the women's ability to work. In order to ensure eligibility, benefits programs, like the dependents' allowance, demanded homogenous bureaucratic procedures based on specific documentation requirements. Although the notion that all soldiers' dependents deserved the same amount of allowance benefited Aboriginal women in terms of the amount they received, the same uniformity when applied to the regulations and rules of eligibility could undermine community practices.

In some cases lawyers from the Department of Justice were asked for their opinion. Board members with legal experience also provided advice. Some accepted certain "tribal" marriages as legal unions. Others rejected these unions as invalid. These evaluations often depended on whether the ceremony performed was similar to a Christian ceremony. Most of the correspondence referred to in the previous chapters was written by the Chairman. Now, the opinions of other members of the Board become evident.

Examining the correspondence between upper level bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board and the administrators on reserves including clergymen, and Indian Agents reveals how the viewpoints of these two groups sometimes conflicted. These religious officials became involved in dependents' allowances cases because in some cases they were asked to produce marriage certificates or confirm that certain marriages had been properly registered. As it does with the upper level bureaucrats, this debate allows us to learn about the views of another set of officials on the local reserves other than the Indian Agents. There is an emphasis on local Indian Affairs Branch

officials because in the correspondence examined on this issue, letters written by upper level bureaucrats from the Branch were rarely found. These high ranking officials at the Indian Affairs Branch appear to have deferred to the Dependents' Allowance Board on this matter. Local officials who wrote letters claimed an expertise based on their knowledge of past administrative practices. In contrast with the legal opinions of some lawyers from the Department of Justice on the invalidity of "tribal marriages," these local officials conveyed the importance of historic precedents within the Indian Affairs Branch to accept the unions as legal. One official also emphasized soldiers' volunteerism and sacrifice, when he argued that it was insulting to soldiers who were fighting for their country to have their marriages equated with common-law unions. In some individual cases, they may have convinced lawyers to acknowledge the legality of certain unions, but on the whole, they could not persuade their superiors that a legal exception should be made to the policy.

Dependents' allowance regulations also defined "illegitimate" and "legitimate" children in particular ways. If a wife had an "illegitimate" child while receiving the allowance, the woman's allowance of thirty-five dollars per month was stopped. Exceptions were made in regard to the legality of certain marriages in some individual cases, but Board members were not convinced that the rules regarding "illegitimacy" should be changed.

Conversely, local Indian Affairs Branch officials' did not apply the rules uniformly in cases of "illegitimacy." Based on their assessments of the "respectability" of a woman's family, her attitude and her subsequent behaviour, they reported certain cases of "illegitimate" children and did not report others. Indian Agents' perceptions of

whether or not the women were assimilating was also a factor. In cases where women were perceived as adopting Euro-Canadian ideals such as building a home, the Indian Agents either did not report these cases or recommended to their superiors that these women's allowances should not be suspended. As Chapter 2 revealed, Indian Agents determined whether cases needed to be administered or not, based on their own observations. Similarly, in cases of "illegitimacy," these Agents valued their personal judgments.

In cases of "illegitimacy" local officials' responses in Aboriginal cases can be compared to those of representatives from local agencies such as the Children's Aid Society who worked with Euro-Canadian families. As noted in Chapter 1 and 2, social workers were sometimes responsible for investigating and administering allowances in cases involving non-Aboriginal dependents. They, too, were against the uniform application of the rules and wanted each case assessed on its merits. If the women were repentant and were "good" mothers, they emphasized the importance of the allowance in keeping families together. The reactions of both groups of local officials reveal that attitudes towards "illegitimacy" were not as straightforward as suggested by the procedures. As in most social benefits programs, there were complex relationships between the individuals devising the policies and the individuals implementing them. Rather than emphasizing technical regulations as many policy makers did, some Indian Agents viewed personal observation and community practice as legitimate forms of knowledge. Even social workers whose aim was to record an "objective" account of the "facts" through the case-work method, believed their personal assessments of their clients were important. Among Indian Agents and social workers alike, these observations

allowed them to claim an area of expertise that upper level bureaucrats did not have. At the same time, Euro-Canadian notions of “respectability” influenced assessments at all levels of the state hierarchy.

In trying to define and shape family relationships, officials often failed to take into account First Nations’ own cultural beliefs and practices. Aboriginal families’ participation in the Dependents’ Allowance Program did attempt to make Aboriginal people conform to Euro-Canadian standards and values by linking money incentives to certain legal requirements and behavior. In this way, the Dependents’ Allowance Program can be seen as part of a broader attempt to assimilate Aboriginal peoples.

5.2 HISTORIOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

In thinking about issues relating to marriage and “illegitimacy,” readers should consider the work that has been done on Europeans’ views of Aboriginal marriages in earlier time periods. The research completed on the regulation of Aboriginal families under other laws and the findings of historians studying policy makers and administrators’ views of families under the Mothers’ Allowances and Family Allowances Programs, should also be examined. Part of this overview will consider some of the literature written on marriages between European fur traders and Aboriginal women, colonial authorities’ reaction to these marriages and missionaries’ attempts to change First Nations marital practices in the nineteenth century. Although the economic, political, and cultural circumstances of the colonial periods are clearly different from the 1940’s, recognizing the longstanding nature of these debates provides an essential context. These studies also provide insights into understanding the complex nature of Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal cultural exchanges.

Debates about the legality of “tribal marriages” or marriages by “Indian custom” had taken place in the nineteenth century when the courts decided whether the unions between Aboriginal women and fur traders were legal. Studying the history of these unions and the debates about their legality provides context to the debates that took place in the 1940’s. Initially, fur traders in the Northwest adapted First Nations’ marital customs rather than condemned them. Fur traders were more inclined to accept Aboriginal customs because they needed Aboriginal women’s skills as interpreters and mediators to facilitate trade.¹ Their marriages with Aboriginal women solidified important trading alliances which were key to ensuring that traders received a steady supply of furs from First Nations.² They also needed women to help survive the harsh conditions by making clothing, repairing materials and cooking.³ These marriages had some advantages for Aboriginal women as well who, according to Van Kirk, had greater access to material goods, were freed from restrictive customs and taboos typical in some Native societies and were allowed to increase their influence by being in monogamous rather than polygamous relationships.⁴

¹ Sylvia Van Kirk, ‘Many Tender Ties’: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670-1870, (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyers, Publishing Ltd., 1980), 65-66. See also Jennifer S.H. Brown, Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country, (Vancouver and London: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), 65.

² Van Kirk, ‘Many Tender Ties,’ 4 and Brown, Strangers in Blood, 126-127.

³ Van Kirk, ‘Many Tender Ties,’ 53-63.

⁴ Ibid. 80-84. Some historians have debated this conclusion arguing that many women in pre-contact egalitarian societies already had a significant degree of influence in their own societies and as a result, were not as interested in pursuing relationships with fur traders as Van Kirk suggests. See criticism Robin Fisher, review of “Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870,” Canadian Historical Review, 64, (June 1983): 238, Lorraine Littlefield, “Women Traders in the Maritime Fur Trade,” in Canadian Women: A Reader, Wendy Mitchinson, Naomi Black, Beth Light, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Paula Bourne, Alison Prentice, eds. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1996), 17, Carol Devens, Countering Colonization: Native American Women and the Great Lake Missions, 1630-1900, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) and Karen Anderson, Chain Her By One Foot: The Subjugation of Women in Seventeenth Century New France, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991)

According to Van Kirk, Aboriginal women's status began to decline when more European settlers arrived in the West and Aboriginal women became more vulnerable to the consequences of European men's patriarchal views and, with the arrival of European women, more susceptible to the racist views of Victorian society.⁵ Métis or European women who could help traders enhance their social mobility through their family relations and their knowledge of European customs were viewed as more desirable.⁶ Van Kirk finds as Red River society became more settled, the skills that Aboriginal women had contributed to fur traders' survival were not needed as much and many trader husbands abandoned their Aboriginal wives.

The abandonment of these wives and children first raised the question of the legality of unions by "Indian custom." Judges and lawyers debated whether the abandoned wives and children had any legal right to support from their trader husbands. Although there were exceptions, such as the judge's ruling in the Connolly vs. Woolwich case which will be examined later in this chapter, other rulings denied financial support or children's inheritance rights on the basis that their marriages were not considered "legal."⁷

In her examination of British Columbia settler society in the mid-nineteenth century, Adele Perry, finds that using the law to define what were "appropriate" unions was essential for colonial authorities trying to limit mixed race relationships. These

⁵ Van Kirk, 'Many Tender Ties,' 200 and Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 151-152.

⁶ Van Kirk, 'Many Tender Ties,' 189.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 241.

relationships were perceived as “a special threat to the colonial project”⁸ because they were “indicative of the failure of respectable gender and racial organization.”⁹

Perry finds that in order to clear up the “problem” of non-legalized unions, officials at the British Colonial Office persistently requested that a registration system for marriages and births be developed in British Columbia to make marriages conform to certain requirements.¹⁰ For many government officials, agreeing upon “a uniform system of legitimating, registering, and conducting marriage” proved difficult.¹¹ Geographic isolation for one would prevent many couples from registering their marriages.¹² There were also the additional debates about who was qualified to perform marriage ceremonies and whether or not marriages had to be held in an actual church.¹³ In reference to registering children’s births, Governor Frederick Seymour doubted that white men would bother traveling from the interior of the Province to register their “half-breed” children.¹⁴ He assumed these men would not value these children as much because they were not white. Officials also had a difficult time attempting to define and classify all the various different racial and ethnic groups.¹⁵ Due to these problems, Perry concludes that a registration law “was never successfully developed” in British Columbia during the colonial period.¹⁶ Similar tensions marred the Dependents’ Allowance Program. The desire to make “tribal” marriages conform to certain requirements was still present. However, the complexity of the local situation often thwarted officials’ goals.

⁸ Adele Perry, On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 99.

⁹ Ibid., 97.

¹⁰ Ibid., 100.

¹¹ Ibid., 98.

¹² Ibid., 100.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Tensions over marital practices also emerged among missionaries and First Nations. Susan Neylan's article on Protestant missionaries and the Tsimshian in the North Coast region of British Columbia from 1857 to 1896 is particularly useful because she provides an example of how Stoler and Cooper's ideas can be applied to a historical analysis.¹⁷ Neylan suggests that historians must strive to see more than "a top-down model of social control" where Euro-Canadian views and cultural beliefs were imposed upon Aboriginal peoples.¹⁸ She emphasizes the importance of examining the dynamics among officials and First Nations as well as looking at the interplay among each group. Her own research supports Stoler and Cooper's idea that colonial forces, and responses to them, were "heterogeneous" and that "colonial successes were never total or uncontested."¹⁹

Neylan explores how missionaries attempted to change Tsimshian marriage practices into "monogamous," "patrilineal," "lifelong unions," "between a non-related, adult couple, formally sanctioned through a church ceremony."²⁰ In doing so, missionaries "appear to have promoted the idea that Christian marriages were a more valid and appropriate ceremony for all Native Christians to go through."²¹ The Tsimshian had different marriage practices that included "cross-cousin marriages" agreed upon between house and lineage groups.²² Before a man and a woman could marry, the parents and extended family members had to agree and property had to be exchanged. A "rule of clan exogamy" governed marriage practices. Couples were to be "relatively

¹⁷ Susan Neylan, "Contested Family: Navigating Kin and Culture in Protestant Missions to the Tsimshian, 1857-1896," in *Households of Faith: Family, Gender, and Community in Canada, 1760-1969*, Nancy Christie, ed. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 2002), 196.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 183-184.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 188.

²² *Ibid.*, 184.

equal in class, status, and wealth, but they were not to have the same clan/crest (ptex) affiliation. Strict exogamy customs determined potential partners from outside one's own clan for marriage and also governed inheritance rights (to names, property, titles, etc.).²³

Neylan argues that although missionaries believed Christian marriages were "superior" to the Tsimshian marriages, they soon understood that their influence over Tsimshian marriage practices would be limited. As a result, they had to modify their expectations. For instance, one missionary married two people who had the same clan/crest affiliation. He also married a man and woman even though the woman's family had already exchanged property with another man and his family. Both these marriages went against the standard practices in the Tsimshian community.²⁴ In both cases, the missionary who performed the ceremonies was confronted by members of the community and in future "was obliged to take greater care before consenting to perform marriage ceremonies."²⁵ Some missionaries tolerated Tsimshian customs because they found not interfering with "existing social groupings and practices could help maintain a peaceful and cooperative community."²⁶ Neylan's findings indicate that even though missionaries wanted the Tsimshian to adopt Christian marital practices, there were limits to how much they could change existing practices.

In exploring the dependents' allowance policy regarding marriages, the theoretical approach that Stoler, Cooper and Neylan advocate is useful. High ranking officials in the federal government did not merely impose rules regarding the registration of and legality of marriages and births, but were forced to consider and discuss potential exceptions

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 185.

²⁵ Ibid., 186.

²⁶ Ibid.

based on the persistence of local practices that did not conform to the rules. Like the missionaries Neylan discusses, some of the Indian Agents and clergymen on reserves tolerated First Nations marital practices and understood that there were limits to their influence in changing these practices. Consequently, some officials registered marriages as legal in accordance with local practice rather than according to the stipulations in the Provincial Marriage Acts. Stoler and Cooper's suggestions in favour of seeing the complex interplay among the groups allows us to see that federal and local officials did not act as an unified group of government officials and they did not simply impose their regulations onto First Nation populations.

In her book entitled Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960, Joan Sangster also discusses how policy and law makers attempted to regulate the marriage customs of Aboriginal families in the mid-twentieth century. Indian Agents were mandated under the Indian Act to record marriages and births which were considered "legitimate" and to "supervise" family relationships on reserves to ensure they conformed to the Euro-Canadian middle class ideals. Indian Agents' "supervision" was intended to limit adulterous relationships, control sexual immorality, and prevent marital separation and "illegitimate" births. In the view of Indian Affairs Branch officials, "...monogamous, lifelong unions were seen as signs of sexual order/civilization, while deviations from this model were a sign that Native peoples remained attached to sexual disorder/primitive endurance."²⁷ Sangster argues that

27 Joan Sangster, Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), 176.

“The regulation of marriage was the first line of defence for the Federal Department of Indian Affairs in its quest for sexual order.”²⁸

In practice, however, Indian Agents did not necessarily apply these policies uniformly.²⁹ Some viewed marriages that were not legal according to the Euro-Canadian tradition “suspiciously, as less genuine in commitment than Christian marriage.”³⁰ One Indian Agent even claimed that marriages by “Indian custom” were not spiritual unions.³¹ In some cases, it was possible under the Indian Act to bring charges against individuals for “immorality” and jail time could be served.³² Even though similar anxieties were expressed by social workers in cases where Euro-Canadians were living in common-law relationships, Sangster notes that the Indian Act gave Agents more arbitrary power than it allowed to social welfare agencies to enforce punishments.³³ As Sangster states, “Indian Agents could act as justices of the peace or magistrates, prosecuting, trying, and convicting reserve inhabitants for infractions of the Act and the Criminal Code, a concentration of power quite unparalleled in Canadian law.”³⁴

Other Indian Agents, like some of the ones discussed in this chapter, defended marriages by “Indian custom.” However, as Sangster notes, they only did so in cases

²⁸ Ibid. Regulation of marriage was seen to be first line of defence because in the eyes of officials it would establish “proper” unions. Any subsequent children produced from these relationships would therefore be “legitimate” according to Euro-Canadian definitions. The building of individual homes, the continued promotion of Christianity, and training Aboriginal women in housekeeping and mothering skills that conformed to Euro-Canadian standards were also other ways in which officials believed they could make Aboriginal families more like Euro-Canadian ones. Such influences, they believed, would discourage what they believed to be the promiscuous sexual behavior of Aboriginal women. For an examination of some of officials’ attempts in an earlier period to impose their vision of family on Aboriginal women see Pamela Margaret White, “Reconstructing the Domestic Sphere – Prairie Indian Women on Reserves: Image, Ideology and State Policy, 1880-1930,” PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 1987.

²⁹ Ibid., 179.

³⁰ Ibid., 177.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 178.

³³ Ibid., 180.

³⁴ Ibid., 176.

where the union was “lifelong.”³⁵ Some Agents recognized the logistical difficulties involved in legalizing unions. One Agent whom Sangster examines argued that it was “both financially and logistically impossible for Natives to go into urban centres, wait the three days for the licenses, or find ministers to marry them.”³⁶

Even though Sangster notes that some Aboriginal families did not accept the views of Indian Agents and legal authorities, some people’s views on sexuality and marital practices were influenced by Christian ideology. On the issue of marriage, Sangster finds, that many Aboriginal people, “especially in more remote areas, continued to practice and defend customary marriages, defining them, as the courts originally did,³⁷ as lifelong exclusive unions.”³⁸ However, Sangster does not believe that Aboriginal people’s rejection of Euro-Canadian law and practices should necessarily be equated with “their embrace of Native custom.”³⁹ She argues that over time some Aboriginal people adopted the Christian ideals of “lifelong unions” and “premarital chastity” which were not previously a part of their traditional practices. Even though some Aboriginal people recognized the “negative impact” of Christian morals, they were, according to Sangster, still influenced by them.⁴⁰ Similar to Neylan, Sangster finds that the regulation of marriage practices was a complex process:

Regulation was never uncontested, complete, or uncomplicated. Clerics might oppose the policies of Indian agents on marriage; agents’ own efforts to police morality varied widely; and Native communities and cultures responded with degrees of acceptance, negotiation, or resistance to these efforts. The latter is a critical

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 179.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ The courts originally ruled that these marriages were legal in the 1876 *Connolly vs. Woolich* case which will be discussed later in this chapter.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 180.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

point: the new legalities articulated by the state always overlapped with some lingering practices of non-observance or 'illegality.'⁴¹

Sangster, however, cautions that "Within First Nations cultures, domination and resistance both existed, but not on equal terms. In colonial contexts, premised upon unequal social power and an ideology of racism, indigenous values were often more fragile, while the hegemony of those controlling legal knowledge was more authoritative."⁴² Although the evidence examined in this chapter does not highlight the tensions between the Indian Agents and clerics, it does attempt to show that the implementation of the dependents' allowance regulations was complicated by various officials and community members' points of view.

Scholars' work on social benefits programs is helpful in identifying patterns present in the Dependents' Allowance Program. This research has revealed a disjuncture between the requirements of federal policies and the implementation of those policies by local officials. In her examination of the Family Allowances Program, Dominique Marshall finds that local officials did not necessarily accept new bureaucratic procedures or, in some cases, could not put them into effect, as they did not have the resources to collect the necessary information. For example, the implementation of the compulsory education law of 1943 in Quebec required a school census on attendance. In each of the school boards, the ability to conduct the census was affected by the budgets and staff.⁴³ Moreover, the quality of the reports on the number of absences were affected by how conscientious inspectors were about monitoring individual students, the number of other

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 192.

⁴³ Dominique Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State: Quebec Families, Compulsory Education and Family Allowances. Translated by Nicola Danby. (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2005), Chapter 2, 20. In Montreal, for instance, the enormity of the figures to be collected and the cost of the project caused delays and the reports were not sent in by the deadline.

duties they had, and how much money they were paid. One regional inspector feared that the whole policy of compulsory attendance was undermined through the “error” and “negligence” of some local officers.⁴⁴ Although upper level bureaucrats working for the Province or the federal government made demands for “accurate” statistics, depending on the local circumstances the information received did not necessarily meet these demands. Marshall indicates the full impact of a policy can only be examined if the local circumstances are investigated.

The history of the Dependents’ Allowance Program supports this conclusion. Local officials questioned the procedures for registration and verification, especially for the documentation requirements. They also acknowledged that they were not reporting all cases of “illegitimate” children to the Dependents’ Allowance Board as requested.

In her history of the Ontario Mothers’ Allowances (OMA) program, Margaret Little finds that local officials’ assessments of recipients’ “respectability” and moral values often affected how they used their discretionary powers. Little notes that recipients’ finances, sexuality, attitudes and character were subjected to scrutiny by investigators.⁴⁵ While it is true that the mothers’ allowance represented a fixed sum of money distributed on a regular basis and that it differed from the inconsistent amounts often given by charities, the characteristics of private welfare still affected the implementation of this program.⁴⁶ Little describes the complex nature of the program:

The OMA case files reveal both traditional and ‘new’ scientific notions of welfare. The policy did routinize some aspects of nineteenth-century welfare for the poor with standardized application forms and regular reports and updates, but, as the case files reveal,

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Chapter 2, 22-23.

⁴⁵ 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, 1998), 51.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 74-75.

the investigation of OMA applicants and recipients was far from 'objective.' The policy permitted much discretionary decision-making in the determination of who was or was not worthy, and this worthiness depended not simply on financial need but on a number of expansive moral criteria.⁴⁷

Little's observations highlight the danger of viewing emerging welfare state programs as suddenly breaking away from previous traditions. As she notes, "The values of one type of welfare did not fade with the emergence of another. Rather, both private and public welfare activities and values persisted alongside one another..."⁴⁸

5.3 THE PAPER CHASE: THE REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGES AND BIRTHS

The inaccurate registration of marriages and births, the failure to report them, the lack of appropriate documentation, and the verification of children's parentage were all sources of concern for dependents' allowance officials.⁴⁹ The proper procedure was that the original birth or marriage certificates be provided and verified to ensure eligibility for the allowance.⁵⁰ In the case of marriages, the officials conducting the ceremonies were required to report the marriage to provincial officials so they could register the marriage

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴⁹ See requests concerning such worries in Library Archives Canada (LAC), Records of the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB), RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, R.O.G. Bennett, DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario To T.R.L. MacInnes, IAB Secretary, Ottawa, Ontario, 21 October 1941; LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Bennett to MacInnes, 20 December 1941; LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, A.S. Stewart, (Position not identified,) to IAB, Ottawa, Ontario, 26 April 1941; LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, A.H. Brown, Acting DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario to MacInnes, 8 September 1941, and LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File Title: BC Military Service Enlistments 1941-45, Bennett to MacInnes, 18 December 1941.

⁵⁰ LAC, Records of the Dependents' Allowance Board, (DAB), RG 36, Series 18, Volume 1, File Title: Creation of Board, "Procedures and Rulings No. 22 Documentation for Dependents' Allowances," 21 May 1940. These procedures were later replaced on 15 June 1943 where the same stipulation remained. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 1, File Title: Creation of Board, "Procedures and Rulings No. 22 Documentation for Dependents' Allowances," 15 June 1943.

with the Vital Statistics Bureau. The Registrar General of the Province provided the certificates in most cases.⁵¹

In some cases alternate documents could be submitted. For instance, in Quebec certificates of baptism were satisfactory. The acceptable documents were outlined in separate procedures for each province. These procedures indicate that bureaucrats did make exceptions to accommodate local practices when the local practices did not threaten accepted Anglo Protestant or French Catholic norms. In her overview of the history of the family in Canada, Cynthia R. Comacchio argues that Anglo Protestantism and French Catholicism were perceived as the “acceptable” religious and family models in nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth century in Canada:

Despite the obvious religious and cultural differences, there are many similarities between these two models. They both support masculine authority, feminine submission, and the reproduction of certain socially defined qualities. They are also clearly hierarchical, and they define those who, because of race, religion, or ‘deviance,’ do not fit the approved model.⁵²

Because of these similarities, it was possible for bureaucrats to make accommodations for Quebec. Due to their race, Aboriginal families were perceived as not fitting either model. As a result, bureaucrats were less willing to make exceptions in these cases.

When dealing with the marriage registration and documentation requirements in Aboriginal cases, officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board asked Indian Agents to be more careful when registering marriages to ensure they met the proper provincial requirements. L.Carey, who worked as an adviser to the Dependents’ Allowance

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Cynthia R. Comacchio, The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 9.

Board,⁵³ informed K.M. Macdonald, the Dependents' Allowance Board Secretary, that Indian Agents on reserves were being too lax in their definitions of a "legal" marriage. Some Agents listed "Longhouse marriages" like other legal marriages in the Divisional Registrar which, according to Carey, "would be readily accepted by the Registrar General."⁵⁴ However, Carey stated, "I fail to find any provision in the various Vital Statistics Acts providing for the registration of Longhouse Marriages and doubt the possibility of securing a Registrar General's Certificate for such a ceremony."⁵⁵

In addition to requesting Indian Agents be more attentive when registering marriages, upper level Dependents' Allowance Board bureaucrats were often not satisfied with the documentation provided by Aboriginal soldiers' families and asked Indian Agents to clarify or find information.⁵⁶ In one letter, R.R. Hawton, a Board member, asked T.R.L. MacInnes, Indian Affairs Branch Secretary, if the Indian Agents could go to the provincial authorities to ensure the marriages and births were properly registered and to ensure any mistakes were corrected.⁵⁷ This request undermined the abilities of Aboriginal families to take care of their own personal affairs. Indeed, the Indian Agents were asked to do this because, according to Hawton, "by corresponding directly with the soldier or dependent, the Board finds it difficult to obtain satisfactory results, and it is felt

⁵³ L. J. Carey later became the DAB Chairman in 1947.

⁵⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, L.J. Carey, DAB Member, to K.M. Macdonald, DAB Secretary, Ottawa, Ontario, 27 July 1942.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ See such requests in LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Bennett to MacInnes, 21 October 1941; LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Bennett to MacInnes, 20 December 1941; LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Stewart to IAB, 26 April 1941; LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Brown to MacInnes, 8 September 1941, and LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File Title: BC Military Service Enlistments 1941-45, Bennett to MacInnes, 18 December 1941.

⁵⁷ Clarifying the statistics with provincial authorities could sometimes be complicated by federal/provincial relations. Marshall finds that, in Quebec, regional officials working for the federal government sometimes had difficulties obtaining access to the Provincial Statistic Bureau files. Bureaucrats needed these files in order to verify children's date of birth. The Premier at the time, Maurice Duplessis prevented access to these statistics. He claimed he did not want the federal government intruding in matters under provincial control. See Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 2, 37.

that some other practice should be devised.”⁵⁸ MacInnes responded that Hawton could ask Indian Agents to clarify registrations.⁵⁹

Perhaps Aboriginal families did not believe it was necessary to respond to these requests because the marriages, births, and deaths were properly recorded according to their own customs.⁶⁰ Ceremonies, such as the potlatch, validated marriages and births and acknowledged the dead.⁶¹ A potlatch rather than a registration document served as the “public record” of these changes.⁶² Despite the federal government bans on potlatching, the belief persisted among the First Nations who held potlatch ceremonies that the potlatch was “the right way to mark birth or death, puberty or marriage....”⁶³

In contrast, officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board only believed that registrations which adhered to the rules stipulated by provincial authorities were valid. Uniformity was important to these bureaucrats, in part, because it enforced their own authority to regulate and it also undermined the authority of local officials to determine how marriages would be defined and what practices would be tolerated. In addition, the continuance of First Nations’ marital practices symbolized the failure of the federal government to assimilate Aboriginal peoples. By insisting all marriages conform to a

⁵⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, R.R. Hawton, DAB Member, Ottawa, Ontario to MacInnes, 15 September 1941.

⁵⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, MacInnes to Bennett, 9 October 1941.

⁶⁰ The non-compliance with the government’s attempts to categorize Aboriginal people was by no means new. In his study of the census in the nineteenth century, Bruce Curtis finds that officials at the Bureau of Registration and Statistics wanted local enumerators to record the Aboriginal population because the British government wanted to know the extent of its treaty obligations. Collecting information about the number of furs and venison sold by Aboriginal people would also illustrate the colony’s “natural wealth” and could be used to attract settlers. However, some local enumerators found when they asked questions of some Aboriginal people they refused to answer making it difficult for the enumerators to collect information about them. See Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840-1875*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2001), 28, 109, 127, 192.

⁶¹ Ruth Kirk, *Wisdom of the Elders: Native Traditions on the Northwest Coast*, (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1986), 30.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 30-31.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 69.

certain set of rules and regulations, it is possible these upper level bureaucrats were attempting to reinforce the authority of the federal government to impose its vision of family life onto First Nations' cultures.

Ensuring that children's births were properly registered was important to officials because they wanted to ensure they were only providing allowances for soldiers' children. In Aboriginal cases, children's parentage was usually verified by bureaucrats which caused delays in the receipt of children's allowances for Aboriginal families. The reason for this exception was that "many of these children are not registered and this matter requires to be attended to before Dependents' Allowance can be paid."⁶⁴ In the majority of cases, once a questionnaire was filled out by the Indian Agent and the marriages and births were confirmed, the allowance for the children was paid "at the usual rates."⁶⁵

If verifying the children's parentage was more complicated and took a more in-depth investigation, the children were paid at lower rates until the parentage was verified. R.O.G. Bennett, the Chairman of the Dependents' Allowance Board, did not want to provide the higher rate while waiting for verification and then lower it if the children were "illegitimate" because trying to recover overpayments caused hardship for some families when they had already spent the money.⁶⁶ Under this policy, even potentially "legitimate" children were suspect because of the racial origin of their parents. Children who attended residential schools were an exception. Dependents' allowance regulations

⁶⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, "Procedure regarding payment of Dependents' Allowance and Assigned Pay when Indians Enlist, Dependents' Allowance Board Procedure No. 30," 27 September 1943. The procedure of December 31, 1941 was cancelled. The Secretary was asked to send copies to the Indian Agents. See LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, and File: 452-42, Bennett to MacInnes, 28 September 1943.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to J.L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 2 May 1942.

stated that children in residential schools did not receive the allowance. Bennett justified this decision by arguing that since the federal government was already paying for their upkeep in school, there was no obligation to pay an additional allowance for these children.⁶⁷

The stipulation in the dependents' allowance regulations that all Aboriginal children's parentage had to be verified before these children received the allowance, implied that Aboriginal women had numerous sexual partners. The belief was that promiscuity was an "innate" racial characteristic, even though there was no systematic evidence to suggest this was in fact true.

First, the above assumption was problematic because it characterized the sexual practices of all First Nations as the same and did not recognize the diversity of traditions and beliefs. Anthropologists and historians have found many differences in First Nations' attitudes towards sex. Those studying egalitarian societies have found that some First Nations in the pre-contact era had less rigid attitudes towards sex. Among the Huron, for instance, husbands did not control women's sexuality and individuals made their own decisions about sexual activity.⁶⁸ Some women and men engaged in pre-marital sex and had more than one sexual partner.

⁶⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, Bennett to Ralston, 2 May 1942. Interestingly, in the post-war period such logics were not applied to Euro-Canadian children in orphanages. Under the Family Allowances Program, they received their allowances provided by the federal government while being maintained in a state institution. See Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 6, 33.

⁶⁸ Anderson, Chain Her By One Foot, 116. Research in the United States shows a similar pattern. See Katherine M.B. Osburn, "'To Build Up the Morals of the Tribe': Southern Ute Women's Sexual Behavior and the Office of Indian Affairs, 1895-1932," Journal of Women's History, 9, 3, (Fall 1997): 12.

Not all First Nations societies had the same attitudes towards sex as the Huron people. Ojibwa men believed that women had “dangerous and polluting sexual power.”⁶⁹ In order to control women’s sexuality, men physically punished women who had sex with partners of whom they did not approve. Some men performed ritual cures when they had what was considered “improper” contact with women.⁷⁰

Other Aboriginal peoples did not necessarily believe women had dangerous sexual power, but did have more reserved attitudes towards sex. As J.R. Miller finds, “modesty and reticence about sexual activities were common in Aboriginal communities.”⁷¹ Among the Sioux, sexual activity was only condoned in specific instances. Certain unmarried women of high status could have sex with several male partners if they were chosen by the tribe.⁷² Generally, however, couples were not to engage in pre-marital sex. Once married, the couple could only have sex after they had slept apart for four nights.⁷³ Some European missionaries failed to see the nuances among various First Nations’ attitudes towards sexual practices. Instead, missionaries generally “were inclined to suspect Native peoples of fewer inhibitions on promiscuous sexual activity.”⁷⁴

Second, the assumption that Aboriginal women were promiscuous was problematic because it did not consider the impact that missionaries had had on First Nations’ belief systems, thus minimizing the impact of colonialism. Among the Huron, for example, the influence of Jesuit teachings had led more men to try and control their

⁶⁹ Laura Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780-1870*, (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1994), 84.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 235.

⁷² James H. Howard, *The Canadian Sioux*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 13.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

⁷⁴ Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*, 235.

wives' sexual freedom.⁷⁵ In the case of the Ojibwa, some men's negative attitudes toward women were further enforced through missionary teachings.⁷⁶

Considering the long term influence of missionaries and the fact that many First Nations' own belief systems did not condone pre-marital sex, it is unlikely that by the 1940's the majority of Aboriginal women had numerous sexual partners. Still the assumption that all Aboriginal women were promiscuous was perpetuated by the dependents' allowance regulation that children's parentage be verified.⁷⁷ Although individual cases of "illegitimacy" were singled out, it was never suggested that formal regulations be put in place requiring the parentage of all Euro-Canadian children be verified. This is another example of how the dependents' allowance regulations set Aboriginal women apart from other recipients.

The subsequent labeling of children as "illegitimate" or "legitimate" through the verification process also failed to recognize notions of community membership present in some First Nations' societies. Practices varied based on region, beliefs, and community organization, but generally, children belonged to the whole community.⁷⁸ According to some First Nations' beliefs, the specific parentage of the children mattered less than it did in Euro-Canadian society. Rather than being raised by individual parents, children could be raised by extended family members.⁷⁹ When some First Nations did make

⁷⁵ Anderson, *Chain Her By One Foot*, 116.

⁷⁶ Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780-1870*, 84.

⁷⁷ This is not to say that Europeans or Euro-Canadians' ideas about sexuality remained static, but this assumption about Aboriginal women did persist and affected how government policies were formed. For more on how the image of Aboriginal women as promiscuous was perpetuated in government policy see Jean Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power, and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900," *BC Studies*, 115-116, (1997-98): 237-266, Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997) and Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women*.

⁷⁸ Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family*, 24.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

distinctions between children born to married parents and children born out of wedlock, the children born out of wedlock were, in some cases, not stigmatized to the same degree as they would have been in Euro-Canadian society. Joan Sangster finds that over time, however, the influence of religious authorities who claimed children born out of wedlock were “shameful” did have an impact on some First Nations’ attitudes. In the period from the 1920’s to the 1950’s, Sangster finds that changing attitudes and limited economic resources on reserves made certain First Nation communities less accepting of “illegitimate” children in their bands than they had in the past. Some individual families, though, continued to believe these children should not be treated differently.⁸⁰

The parentage in Afro-Caribbean cases also had to be verified indicating that assumptions about promiscuity were not just made in Aboriginal cases.⁸¹ In the case of Afro-Caribbean children, Bennett estimated, without any specific evidence, that sixty percent of these children were “illegitimate.”⁸² The perception of the racial group’s cultural practices was enough “proof” to justify the different policy.

Such statistics were supported by academic and government studies. Philip Blanshard in his 1947 study of Caribbean countries would later claim that sixty to ninety percent of the children in the British colonies in the Caribbean were born out of wedlock.⁸³ Blanshard accounted for these high rates of “illegitimacy” by arguing that it was an outcome of slavery. He argued that Afro-Caribbean men and women were not allowed to marry in the time of slavery and consequently, sexual relations never had to be

⁸⁰ Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women*, 183-184.

⁸¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 32, File 5-30, File Title: British West Indian Dependents, “Minute Number 3” passed at a meeting of the Dependents’ Allowance Board, 31 August 1942.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Paul Blanshard, *Democracy and Empire in the Caribbean*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1947), 60.

legitimized through a legal marital union. This practice was seen as leading to widespread promiscuity. By the time slavery ended, according to Blanshard, marriage among Afro-Caribbean men and women was seen as “a white’s man luxury” rather than “a social necessity.”⁸⁴ Subsequently, societal attitudes did not condemn “illegitimacy.”

To prove the “negative” effects of “illegitimacy” on family life, Blanshard referred to the government report entitled, the “Government Committee on Concubinage and Illegitimacy of Jamaica” which in 1941 concluded that the high rates of “illegitimacy” led to “the absence of the sense of responsibility toward the children, the value of home life and the sacredness of the marriage state, and the increase in tendency to look to the state to accept the responsibility for the maintenance of their children.”⁸⁵ According to this government report, parents were portrayed as wanting to avoid their responsibilities towards their children by offloading them onto the state. A lack of morality, not poverty, was seen as the root cause for families seeking assistance from the state. This report did not acknowledge that some of the parents, in demanding social benefits for the children, may have been trying to assert their rights as citizens.

Scholars studying slave families have found the types of arguments made by Blanshard to be untrue. Many men and women who were slaves were in committed life long monogamous unions and developed a sense of marital and family obligations and kin networks that fostered the development of a strong sense of family and community. When given the opportunity, they wished to have these marriages legalized and formally registered and did not believe that legal marriages were only for the white upper classes. The assumption that sexual relations were casual and loose and that women and men had

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

numerous sexual partners is not supported by this research. Communities did have standards about appropriate sexual behavior. Although pre-marital sex did occur, once a couple had committed to each other, infidelity was looked down upon among slaves and it was the exception rather than the norm. Most children grew up in two parent families with the same biological parents. Parents believed that they had a life long responsibility, both emotional and financial, to their children.⁸⁶ Despite the evidence to the contrary, the assumption that families with “illegitimate” children were negligent, irresponsible, and willingly dependent on the state, may have influenced members of the Dependents’ Allowance Board when they created the rule that the parentage needed to be verified.

The importance placed on proper registrations and the receipt of the original documents reveals that officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board linked the recording of accurate “data” and the verifying of documents as necessary to define the eligibility of applicants. Individuals had to conform to the definitions and requirements or risk having their allowance suspended or reduced. The attitudes of these officials fit into a pattern of bureaucrats and other professionals who believed the implementation of social benefits relied on the accurate collection of statistics and the use of provincial institutions to legitimize legal unions and births.⁸⁷ This process sought to centralize the collection of information and standardize the practices of local officials.

⁸⁶ For an examination of the impact of slavery on Afro-Caribbean families see Jennifer L. Morgan, Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). Similar conclusions have also been made in the case of African-American slave families by Herbert George Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), Chapter 1 “Send me some of the Children’s Hair,” 3-37 and Chapter 2, “Because She was my Cousin,” 45-100.

⁸⁷ For a discussion of the rise of statistics and the welfare state see Tim Krywulak, “An Archeology of Keynesianism: The Macro-Political Foundations of the Modern Welfare State in Canada, 1895-1948,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Carleton University, 2005, Chapter 5, 39. The rise in statistics was by no means related only to the emergence of the welfare state. As Bruce Curtis finds in his study of census takers in the nineteenth century, the centralization of knowledge in the form of “official statistics” was an important

Not all government officials agreed with dependents' allowance regulations regarding documentation requirements, registration, and the verification of parentage. Some local officials at the Indian Affairs Branch were frustrated with the requirements and defended the variations in the registration of marriages and births on reserves. Major E.P. Randle, for instance, the Indian Superintendent for the Six Nations at Brantford, Ontario, noted, as Carey predicted, that the Divisional Registrar included "Longhouse marriages" on the monthly marriage returns to the Registrar-General and he wrote that "they have been accepted without comment."⁸⁸ The Registrar-General's acceptance of the marriage was proof, according to Randle, that the marriage was properly registered.

Local religious authorities also believed that they had the authority to "legitimize" marriages. They resented Dependents' Allowance Board officials who questioned the marriage certificates they provided. Joseph Barker, the parish priest for the West Bay Indian Reserve near Excelsior, Ontario, wrote to Bennett expressing such exasperation:

I would like to ask you if you think I have nothing else to do but write out marriage certificates from the Church records here, which you have no intention of accepting. In one letter you ask if I will kindly favour the Board with the information about such and such a marriage from the Parish Records and put the stamp of the Church upon it. I do so and then you want something else. Do you think the Parish Records are a pack of lies or that the Parish Priest who goes to

aspect of state formation because it produced "social intelligence." Such information provided a basis upon which the state could claim authority over the people and social relations. Attempts to categorize the population through a census tended to discriminate against Aboriginal populations. Curtis specifically looks at the time period from 1840 to 1875. The census methods such as the notion of "fixed districts" that enumerators used could not be applied to many Aboriginal groups who had a nomadic way of living. Enumerators wondered if those who were put in the race category were a part of the Canadian population and if they should be asked the same questions that white residents were asked. The assumption that Aboriginal people would assimilate or die out made some local enumerators wonder if they should even bother to count the Aboriginal population. Such biases indicate how the census, as it was conducted from 1840 to 1875, was used as an instrument for shaping a vision of the Canadian population that did not include Aboriginal people as equal and important citizens. Further research dealing with later time periods may reveal similar biases in the methods and approaches to the census. See Curtis, The Politics of Population, 28, 36, 193, 194.

⁸⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, E.P. Randle, Indian Superintendent, Brantford, Ontario to Bennett, 8 July 1942.

the trouble of copying these marriages from the Parish Register without any remuneration whatever is a confirmed liar? It is not my fault if the priest who performed the marriage did not register it in Toronto. All I know is that the marriage took place on such and such a day of such and such a year as the priest who performed the marriage truthfully testifies in the Parish Register before my eyes. If you think for one minute that I'm going to pay anywhere from \$1.00 to \$3.00 out of my own pocket to have a lawyer make me a certified copy of what I have already truthfully given you from a truthful church Register, you are very badly mistaken. I've copied marriage and birth certificates from my Parish Registers here two and three times for one particular case until I'm sick and tired of it and if you people expect co-operation to the full on our part, it might be well if you practiced a little of what you preach yourselves.⁸⁹

In this example, Barker resented that the authorities at the Dependents' Allowance Board questioned the accuracy and authenticity of the documents he provided. He emphasized the legitimacy of his own position when he stated that he would not pay a lawyer to certify documents which he already believed were "truthful." This example reveals that local officials could sometimes become frustrated with regulations and requirements if they thought their authority was being undermined or they believed they were being forced to do unnecessary and time consuming work. It is unclear who informed the priest that he needed a lawyer's signature to approve the documents because this stipulation did not appear in the procedures. Perhaps a lawyer's signature was required because there was some doubt about the legitimacy of the certificate.

Barker also complained about the need for the verification of the parentage of children. In one case while awaiting the verification of parentage, a woman received twenty dollars in assigned pay and thirty-five dollars in monthly allowance. Nothing was received for the children. There was a bureaucratic mistake in this case as well because, according to dependents' allowance regulations, the woman should have received money

⁸⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Joseph Barker S.J. Church of the Holy Name of Mary, Excelsior, Ontario, to DAB, 4 September 1942.

for her children at reduced rates while the parentage was verified. Barker asked “What reasons have you for depriving her of her legitimate allowance for the 3 children?”⁹⁰ The delay in the receipt of the money for the children was the reason that the soldier went absent without leave. Barker stated the soldier, “...stayed home to work and support his wife and children who found it too difficult to live on the \$55 allowance when they had every right to be getting \$79.00 a month as all other soldiers’ wives are getting who have 3 dependent children...”⁹¹ The main purpose of the Dependents’ Allowance Program was to alleviate soldiers’ worries about their families. However, in this case the soldier felt forced to go absent without leave in order to provide for his family. This scenario is exactly what military officials had wanted to avoid. Barker’s comments also revealed that he viewed the children’s allowance as a right and something to which the woman had a “legitimate” claim. He did not question her children’s eligibility because of their race. However, as we have seen in Chapter 1, Bennett viewed the allowance as a benefit, not as a right and therefore eligibility could be subjected to bureaucrats’ scrutiny. In the above examples, there is a conflict between the demands of upper level bureaucrats for a more precise registration system and local officials’ frustration with the bureaucratic procedures and with the disregard of their local knowledge.

The interaction of local officials and upper level bureaucrats regarding registration is similar to the interactions between the Quebec teachers and provincial bureaucrats regarding the enforcement of the Compulsory School Attendance Law of 1943. Despite being underpaid and overworked, teachers were asked to keep new attendance records which required the filling out of additional forms. Marshall finds that

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

although most teachers fulfilled the requirements, some did not respond well to the “avalanche of new forms” and “saw only bureaucratic chaos.”⁹² Barker would probably have shared these latter sentiments. These teachers did not understand why new forms were required and believed this secretarial work interfered with their work as educators.⁹³ One wonders if Barker believed that the demands of the Dependents’ Allowance Board officials were interfering with his ministry. In the same way that some of the teachers did not want to pay the postage to send their reports to the Provincial authorities, Barker resented being asked to pay additional money to have a lawyer certify the documents.⁹⁴ Similar to officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board, middle or upper level bureaucrats working for the Quebec government were not always sympathetic to the concerns of teachers and criticized them for not being diligent enough.⁹⁵ There is a limit to the analogy, however, because Barker had the additional problem of not being believed by the bureaucrats who scrutinized the documents. Teachers generally did not have this problem.

5.4 THE LEGALITY OF “TRIBAL” MARRIAGES: THE ONGOING BATTLE

The technical debates regarding the non-registration or inaccurate registration of marriages and births were tied to larger questions relating to the legality of “tribal marriages” such as “Longhouse marriages.” Dependents’ Allowance Board members and advisers and lawyers at the Department of Justice were largely against viewing these unions as legal.⁹⁶ To support their arguments they relied upon the ambiguity of the

⁹² Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State*, Chapter 2, 14.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Chapter 2, 16.

⁹⁶ Varcoe was appointed Deputy Minister of Justice on October 1, 1941. See Pierre Normandin, ed. *Canadian Parliamentary Guide 1947*, (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1947), 719-720.

Indian Affairs Branch's position, interpretations of case law, and provincial regulations. Almost all high ranking bureaucrats relied upon legal and legislative knowledge, not community tradition. They believed this form of knowledge was more definitive and authoritative than other forms.

Since the nineteenth century, legal authorities had debated the legality of "tribal marriages." One of the first such cases was *Connolly vs. Woolrich* case. One of the sons of Chief Factor William Connolly, who had been married according to the "Indian custom" to a Cree woman named Suzanne Pas-de-Nom, sued for a portion of his father's estate. He argued that the marriage between Connolly and Pas-de-Nom had been legal. Chief Justice Coram Monk, who was the judge ruling on the case, agreed with the son. He found that marriages by "Indian custom" were legal due to the nature of the ceremony performed.⁹⁷ Judge Monk made the following comment about the ceremonies:

It exacts the solemn consent of parents, and that of the parties who choose each other, for good or for evil, as husband and wife, it recognizes the tie, and some of the sacred obligations of married life, and it would be mere cant and hypocrisy, it would be sheer legal pedantry and pretension, for any man, or for any tribunal to disregard this Indian custom of marriage inspired and taught, as it must have been, by the law and the religion of nature among barbarians, who, in this essential element of a moral life, approach so near to the holy inculcations of Christianity.⁹⁸

In assessing this very case, Joan Sangster points out that the judge had accepted the unions not "out of respect for Native practice." Instead, "exclusive sexual coupling, monogamy, and a lifelong union had led to court approval."⁹⁹ This type of assessment ensured, according to Sangster, that "Euro-Canadian values remained dominant, setting

⁹⁷ Van Kirk, 'Many Tender Ties,' 240-241.

⁹⁸ Bureaucrats at the DAB did their own search for the historical precedents. Copies of the documents they located were found in the following file LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages.

⁹⁹ Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women*, 176.

out the boundaries of which sexual relations were ‘normal’ and ‘legal.’”¹⁰⁰ The judge’s excerpt is a good example of how Euro-Canadian colonial authorities, when faced with different cultural practices, attempted to define what marriage meant within their own culture.¹⁰¹ Studying how these authorities attempted to distinguish cultural practices shows how norms were defined within the dominant society.¹⁰²

In addition to the Connolly vs. Woolwich case, a legal opinion written in November 1887 by a lawyer under the direction of the Minister of Justice to the Indian Affairs Branch had confirmed that the marriages were legal.¹⁰³ In December 1888, another lawyer made a similar conclusion.¹⁰⁴ In 1914, Duncan Campbell Scott, the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, sent a circular to all the Indian Agents regarding the issue of marriages. Scott stated there was a historic precedent to accept that “tribal marriages” were legal.¹⁰⁵

In contrast to these statements confirming the legality of “tribal marriages,” there were other legal cases rejecting this conclusion. In the 1886, in the Jones v. Fraser case, Chief Justice Ramsay ruled that “tribal marriages” were not legal. In Ramsay’s

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Scholars have made a similar argument concerning the larger colonial world. See Frederick Cooper, Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) and Frederick Cooper, From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labour and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890-1925, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

¹⁰² Comacchio, The Infinite Bonds of Family, 9.

¹⁰³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Legal Opinion by A. Power, Acting Deputy Minister of Justice, Department of Justice, Ottawa, Ontario, 7 November 1887.

¹⁰⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Legal Opinion by Geo. B. Fraser, Acting Deputy Minister of Justice, Ottawa, Ontario, 14 December 1888.

¹⁰⁵ See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, Ontario, Circular to Indian Agents, 2 January 1914.

assessment, the length of the union, even if it were long term, did not imply that the couple had consented to be legally married.¹⁰⁶

In formulating their argument against the legality of “tribal marriages,” the staff and members of the Dependents’ Allowance Board emphasized Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats’ ambiguity on this issue. References were made to a 1935 letter addressed to E.V. Wilson, the Departmental Solicitor for the Canadian Pension Commission, by A.F. MacKenzie, the Indian Affairs Branch Secretary. MacKenzie stated, “...I may say that the department is not prepared to give an opinion as to the actual status of Indian tribal marriages. For administrative purposes, however, the department recognizes such marriages.”¹⁰⁷ Although there was a 1914 Indian Affairs Branch circular and other legal opinions dating back to the late nineteenth century that defined “tribal marriages” as legal unions, Carey believed the 1935 letter trumped the circular and other opinions.¹⁰⁸ An unidentified writer from the staff at the Dependents’ Allowance Board, in a memorandum, noted that statements which referred to the marriages as legal did “not have the support of a decision of any competent Court in Canada.”¹⁰⁹ The writer noted further, “On the contrary the Department of Indian Affairs has never received advice to the effect that a marriage according to the Indian Customs, irrespective of the tribe, has the status of a marriage within Canada.”¹¹⁰ This statement was not necessarily supported

¹⁰⁶ Van Kirk, *‘Many Tender Ties,’* 241. Van Kirk does not further describe Ramsay’s reasoning for this decision.

¹⁰⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, A.F. MacKenzie, IAB Secretary, Ottawa, Ontario to E.V. Wilson, Departmental Solicitor, the Canadian Pension Commission, Ottawa, Ontario, 1 May 1935.

¹⁰⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Carey to Macdonald, 27 July 1942.

¹⁰⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, “Memorandum Re: Bumberry, Leaman,” (Author not identified), 3 June 1944.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

by local Indian Affairs Branch officials who believed there was a historic precedent to support the marriages as legal.

“Tribal marriages” were also illegal, according to some bureaucrats at the Dependents’ Allowance Board, because they did not adhere to provincial laws. The Dependents’ Allowance Board Secretary, K.M. Macdonald, pointed out that under the British North America Act, the legalization of marriage had become a provincial responsibility. Each province had a Marriage Act which outlined who was qualified to perform marriages and the requirements for a legal marriage. He noted that, “The Marriage Act for the Province of Ontario does not contain any provision by which marriages of Indians in accordance with the tribal custom can be recognized as legal marriages, and therefore I am unable to conclude that such marriages can be recognized by this Board as legal marriages.”¹¹¹ Carey, who was the legal advisor to the Dependents’ Allowance Board, agreed.¹¹²

F.P. Varcoe, the Deputy Minister of Justice, had a slightly different interpretation of the provincial Marriage Acts. Varcoe noted that under some of the Marriage Acts there were “provisions declaring valid certain marriages not performed according to prescribed ceremonies or by authorized persons.”¹¹³ In Ontario, for example, “certain marriages performed in intended compliance with the provisions of the statute” were valid.¹¹⁴ Similar provisions were made in other provinces.¹¹⁵ The one exception Varcoe

¹¹¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, MacDonald to Bennett, 29 July 1942.

¹¹² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Carey to Macdonald, 27 July 1942.

¹¹³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriage, F.P. Varcoe, Deputy Minister of Justice, Department of Justice, Ottawa, Ontario, to Brig. R.J. Orde, Judge Advocate-General, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 2 December 1943.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

noted was the Marriage Act in Prince Edward Island. In that province, “no marriage is valid unless solemnized by an authorized person.”¹¹⁶ According to Varcoe’s interpretation, the provincial regulations, except in Prince Edward Island, stipulated that marriages by “Indian Tribal customs” would be valid as long as the marriage adhered to “our understanding of the term.”¹¹⁷ Varcoe defined marriage as “a voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.”¹¹⁸ Similar to Judge Monk in 1867, Varcoe still argued that the marriage had to fit the Euro-Canadian definition of the term and the validity of Aboriginal practices were not acknowledged on their own terms. Varcoe concluded, “...it must not be overlooked that there is a strong presumption in favour of the validity of a marriage where the parties have lived together as husband and wife over a period of time.”¹¹⁹

H.E. Whiffin also argued that the marriages should be considered legal when it could be proven that the nature of the ceremony performed was similar to a Christian ceremony. In commenting on the validity of one case, Whiffin¹²⁰ emphasized the importance of the nature of the ceremony and the intentions of the couple. If the couple voluntarily intended to marry, were not married to other people, and a ceremony was performed “by a proper and authorized person,” Whiffin stated, “the law will intend that

¹¹⁵ Ibid. Varcoe refers to the following provincial Marriage Acts: Ontario Marriage Act, Section 33, Chapter 207, R.S.O. 1927, British Columbia Marriage Act, R.S.B.C. 1936, Chapter 166; the Alberta Solemnization of Marriage Act, R.S.A. 1942, Chapter 303, Section 26; the Saskatchewan Marriage Act, R.S.S. 1940, Chapter 231, sections 50 and 62; the Marriage Act of Manitoba, R.S.M. 1940, Chapter 126, section 30; the Nova Scotia Marriage Act, R.S.N.S. 1923, Chapter 134, section 34; the New Brunswick Marriage Act, R.S.N.B. 1927, Chapter 77, sections 15 and 19.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. For cases where previous cohabitation affected the determination regarding the marriage see LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Thomas Moss, Lt. Colonel for Brig. Orde, to Bennett, 22 March 1944, and LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Moss to Bennett, 3 July 1944.

¹²⁰ H.E. Whiffin’s position is unclear.

everything was done in proper manner, and this legal presumption requires very strong evidence to displace it.”¹²¹ It is unclear how Whiffin was defining who was authorized and if he would have included a First Nations Chief in his definition. Varcoe’s and Whiffin’s comments, which did not agree with other upper level bureaucrats, prove that there was room for disagreement and different interpretations among these officials.

In addition to Varcoe and Whiffin, there was also an unidentified writer from the Dependents’ Allowance Board who suggested the possibility that “Longhouse marriages” could be considered legal if there were provisions in the treaty signed by the Six Nations. If the treaty recognized these marriages, Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats could consult with the Province of Ontario and make an addition to the Marriage Act which would recognize “Longhouse marriages.” The treaty was acknowledged as a valid basis upon which to discuss making an addition to the Marriage Act with the Ontario government.

Regarding the Six Nation claims, the writer made the following conclusion:

It is a matter of public knowledge that the Six Nations Indians have, on several occasions, since 1867, asserted their rights and it would, therefore, appear that this might be an appropriate time for the Indians to once more put forward their petitions in respect to their marriage customs. Upon a decision being made the Board would have something authentic upon which to give consideration to such marriages. As the matter presently stands, the attitude to the Board is correct in every respect, and it has no occasion to deviate from the present attitude.¹²²

Bennett noted the writer’s conclusions in a letter to MacInnes.¹²³ There was no further evidence in the correspondence indicating whether or not this issue was pursued. Were

¹²¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, “Precis re: Pte. Bernard, Peter” signed by Whiffin, 19 May 1942.

¹²² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Author not identified to Macdonald, 30 March 1943.

¹²³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Bennett to MacInnes, 10 April 1943.

Ontario government officials asked to respond? Did Six Nations at this time end up putting forward another petition regarding their marriage customs?

Although there could be individual exceptions if certain requirements were met, in general, the policy was based on the interpretation that the unions were not legal. As readers will recall, this interpretation had been put forward by Macdonald, who was the Dependents' Allowance Board Secretary, and Carey, who was a legal adviser to the Board. As a result of this interpretation, Aboriginal women who were married by "tribal marriage" or "Longhouse marriage" received the allowance under the same terms as common-law wives did.¹²⁴ As mentioned earlier, under Article 117 of the dependents' allowance financial regulations, regarding all beneficiaries, allowances could be made to the dependents in common-law relationships if assigned pay was provided by the soldier. In order to be eligible to receive the allowance under Article 117, the couple needed to have lived together for two years. The woman had to be "regularly supported on a bona fide domestic basis during the period by the officer or man."¹²⁵ The woman also could not be "commonly regarded as a loose character."¹²⁶ Eligibility was linked to a woman's sexual behaviour.

The length of the relationship was crucial. If the couple had lived together for two or more years and had children, thirty-five dollars was usually granted. In common-law cases when the relationship had existed for fewer than two years, no allowance was granted, but a soldier's child, living with a woman in this situation, could receive the

¹²⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Carey to Macdonald, 27 July 1942. K.M. Macdonald agreed with Carey's conclusion, see LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Macdonald to Bennett, 29 July 1942.

¹²⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 19, File Title: Toronto Rehabilitation Committee, "Meeting of County and Electoral District Citizens' Committees in Military District No. 2," Minutes compiled by C.R. Hill, 13 January 1941. See comments by Captain Nurse about DAB regulations.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

allowance.¹²⁷ There was a belief that soldiers, no matter what the state of their domestic relationships, had an obligation to support their children.¹²⁸ In the cases of married women, eligibility was not affected by the length of the marriage.

The potential to work also affected how much a woman in a common-law union received. When the woman had no children or could work or had other income such as boarders, an allowance of twenty dollars or twenty-five dollars was granted.¹²⁹ This distinguished them from married women, for whom the amount of allowance was not contingent on whether or not they could work. As readers will recall from Chapter 1, extended family members' eligibility for the allowance was also contingent on their ability to work. They also received less than the full thirty-five dollars that wives received. Not giving the full amount of allowance to women if they could work appeared to contradict the principle that women were dependent on a sole male breadwinner, which had been the basis for the Dependents' Allowance Program in the first place.

In addition, women in common-law relationships became eligible to receive the allowance later than married women. Bennett noted, "that if no valid marriage is established, the woman concerned is eligible for Dependents' Allowance only from the effective date of the assignment of pay in her favour" whereas married women were eligible to receive the allowance from the date of the enlistment of the soldier.¹³⁰

A further delay occurred because in any identified common-law unions, an investigation was necessary. This rule meant that common-law wives not only became

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 11

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* 82.

¹²⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 12.

¹³⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Bennett to Randle, 16 July 1942 and LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 19, File Title: Toronto Rehabilitation Committee, "Meeting of County and Electoral District Citizens' Committees in Military District No. 2," Minutes compiled by C.R. Hill, 13 January 1941. See comments by Captain Nurse about DAB regulations.

eligible later, but started receiving their allowance later than married women. As readers learned in Chapter 1, the majority of married women were not investigated, except for Aboriginal married women, all of whom were investigated.¹³¹ During the time of the investigation, no allowance was paid, but assigned pay was issued. When bureaucrats discovered that a union was of the common-law type, after the recipient had started receiving the allowance, they suspended the thirty-five dollars to the recipient until the case was investigated. For Aboriginal women, these additional investigations were yet another way by which the dependents' allowance procedures encouraged the involvement of the Indian Agent and the scrutiny of Aboriginal families' relationships.

Most common-law cases among non-Aboriginal people resulted from a separation from the first partner without a formal divorce.¹³² During the investigation, if it was discovered there was no reason why the marriage could not take place, the Commanding Officer was asked to inquire why the union was not legalized. Sometimes bureaucrats sent a form letter suggesting that a common-law union be made legal.¹³³ In contrast, most common-law Aboriginal cases were defined as common-law not because of legal barriers or separation from a partner, but because the couple preferred marriage within their own cultural tradition.

As we have seen, a number of different officials in Ottawa commented on the issue of what defined a legal marriage. The refusal to recognize "tribal" marriages and the rules and procedures applied to common-law unions were yet more ways in which Aboriginal women were denied full access to the allowance.

¹³¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance, 13.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 73.

¹³³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 1, File Title: Creation of Board, "Procedure and Rulings No. 22, Documentation for Dependents' Allowances," 15 June 1943.

5.5 THE TENSION ESCALATES: LOCAL OFFICIALS' RESPOND TO THE DEPENDENTS' ALLOWANCE BOARD

The decision of Board members not to accept some "tribal marriages" as legal and to equate them instead to common-law unions was questioned by local Indian Affairs Branch officials. In formulating their counter arguments, local officials referred to historic and legal precedents within the Indian Affairs Branch, their interpretation of community cultural practices and the patriotism and volunteerism of soldiers.

In reference to "Longhouse marriages," Major E.P. Randle, the Indian Superintendent on the Six Nations reserve, pointed out that a legal precedent existed within the Indian Affairs Branch to accept the marriages.¹³⁴ In trying to prove his argument, Randle specifically referred to the previously mentioned circular that Scott had sent to all Indian Agents in 1914.¹³⁵

Bennett countered Randle's reference to the circular by referring to the 1935 letter that stated that the Indian Affairs Branch was not willing to give an opinion on the subject of tribal marriages. Randle was more willing to look at the historic practice within the department, whereas Bennett only considered the most recent correspondence on the issue. Perhaps Bennett did not put as much importance on previous administrative practices as Randle did because he did not have to directly explain the change to community members. Or perhaps he used the 1935 letter to justify a discriminatory policy in order to save money.

¹³⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Randle to IAB, 31 January 1946.

¹³⁵ See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Scott, Circular to Indian Agents, 2 January 1914.

In furthering his argument, Randle also noted that women who were married by the “Longhouse tradition” already received war pensions and mothers’ allowances and the validity of their marriages were not questioned. Randle knew about these programs because they were administered by local officials on reserves. In responding to this argument, Bennett noted that, according to his understanding, the eligibility requirements for war pensions and mothers’ allowances did not require that the marriage was legal so questions about the legality of “Longhouse marriages” would have not arisen.¹³⁶ This assumption appears to be correct in terms of war pensions. Women who were not legally married could receive war pensions if their soldier partners had died.¹³⁷ In making this decision, it is not clear whether “tribal marriages” were in fact discussed and whether women in such unions were perceived as being married or unmarried by officials administering the pension program. In the case of mothers’ allowances, Bennett would appear to be incorrect in his statement that recipients of mothers’ allowances did not have to prove they had been legally married. Applicants had to provide marriage certificates along with birth certificates for their children and if they were widows, a death certificate to prove that their husband had died.¹³⁸ As already noted, Little found in Ontario that the demand that a marriage certificate be provided excluded many Aboriginal women from gaining access to the mothers’ allowance because they could not provide this necessary

¹³⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Randle to Bennett, 16 July 1942.

¹³⁷ Morton states that unmarried women could receive war pensions if they had been “publicly represented as a wife” prior to enlistment and at the time of enlistment. The amount married or unmarried women were provided with would appear to have been the same. This was different under the Dependents’ Allowance Program where the amount women received differed if they were married or unmarried. Morton does not discuss whether Aboriginal women’s marital status, in particular, was discussed by officials in World War I. See Desmond Morton, *Fight or Pay: Soldiers’ Families in the Great War*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 230. The issue of Aboriginal women’s marital status does not appear to have been brought up in Morton’s other book on veterans’ benefits after World War I. See Desmond Morton and Glenn Wright, *Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915-1930*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987)

¹³⁸ Little, ‘No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit,’ 66.

piece of documentation.¹³⁹ This would suggest that proof that the potential applicant had been in a legal marriage was required. How “Longhouse marriages” were categorized by provincial authorities administering the Mothers’ Allowances Program and whether they debated the legality of these marriages, is not evident.¹⁴⁰ If Randle was correct that no debates about the legality of “tribal marriages” had taken place, it raises interesting questions about why authorities had been more accepting of these marriages in the past and what changed during World War II to make officials start to question their legality when there was already a precedent in other programs to accept these marriages.¹⁴¹

Randle also argued that the ceremony as performed in the Six Nations community had all the elements required to make it a legal union. According to Randle, Longhouse ceremonies occurred among the Onondaga, Seneca and Cayuga Tribes. Randle noted there were four Longhouses on the Six Nations Reserve.¹⁴² He noted that these marriages were “a voluntary union for life of an unmarried man and an unmarried woman, to the exclusion of all others.”¹⁴³ Varcoe had noted this was an important factor in determining the validity of a union.¹⁴⁴ In comparison to other First Nations’ marital practices based on pre-contact traditions, Longhouse marriages had more elements that

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Little does not go into further detail about whether or not there was a subsequent discussion among officials about the legality of the marriages where there was no certificate. In Shewell’s discussion of the Mothers’ Allowances Program on reserves, the issue of the legality of “tribal” marriages was not discussed. See Hugh Shewell, *‘Enough to Keep Them Alive’: Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 141-145.

¹⁴¹ To find potential answers to this question a more thorough study of archival records dealing with the administration of war pensions and mothers’ allowances on reserves would have to be undertaken. See LAC, RG 10, Red Series, Volume 3224, File 549, 421-1, File Title: Correspondence Regarding the Mothers’ Allowance Commission as it Applies to Indian Women in Ontario and LAC, RG 10, Volume 3226, File 549, 421-1D, File Title: Reports of the Department of Indian Affairs to Mothers’ Allowance Commission, Toronto, Ontario.

¹⁴² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Randle to H.W. McGill, IAB Director, Ottawa, Ontario, 1 August 1944.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

were similar to European ceremonies because the Longhouse tradition was a religious practice based on a combination of ancient Iroquois and Christian ideas that developed following the American Revolution.¹⁴⁵

Randle went on to describe the nature of the Longhouse marriage ceremony.¹⁴⁶ He wrote that “The Longhouse, of course, is the Indian equivalent to the Church of the Christian people.”¹⁴⁷ Regarding the ceremonies, he stated that, “In general, these ceremonies are carried out with great reverence, dignity, and are most impressive.”¹⁴⁸ The person who performed the ceremony gave the couple a certificate which was signed by the individual who performed the ceremony, the bride, groom and two witnesses.¹⁴⁹ He noted the certificate was registered at the Superintendent’s office and an entry was made in the census books and on the membership lists.¹⁵⁰ The children who were born to parents who were married in the “Longhouse tradition” had full legal rights in relation to the inheritance of property.¹⁵¹ Although Bennett had previously tried to counter many of Randle’s points, the information about the ceremony convinced Board members, in at least one case, that a marriage by “Longhouse custom” was legal.¹⁵²

Some Indian Agents noted that it was difficult to collect information about marriage ceremonies. Factors such as the dynamics between the Indian Agents and the

¹⁴⁵ The Longhouse religion and religious practice was first developed by a man named Handsome Lake following the American Revolution. Not all Iroquoian people adopted this practice. Some Iroquoian peoples rejected the Longhouse tradition because they believed its practices were too much of a concession to Christianity. For a more detailed examination of Lake’s teachings and the emergence of the Longhouse tradition see Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Death and rebirth of the Seneca*, (New York: Knopf, 1969).

¹⁴⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Randle to IAB, 31 January 1946.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Randle to Bennett, 8 July 1942.

¹⁵² See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages.

communities, the communities' desire to protect their traditions, and the geographic isolation of the reserves could have all affected Indian Agents' access to this information. In the case of Private Frank Thompson¹⁵³ from Whitefish Bay reserve near Kenora, Ontario, Thompson had enlisted and claimed allowance for his wife. Bureaucrats had raised questions about the legality of his marriage and asked Indian Agent Norman Paterson to collect information on the nature of the marriage ceremony performed between Thompson and his wife. Paterson went to the Whitefish Bay Reserve and interviewed the Chief, band councilors and other members of the band. This First Nation was Ojibwa. Regarding the collection of information about the ceremony, Paterson made the following statement:

Naturally the ones concerned are very reticent in discussing the Indian custom of marriage. They consider it an imposition for anyone to ask vital questions concerning their initial marital affairs and of course, you understand too that this is a delicate subject to deal with and the methods of procuring the required information cannot be ascertained by direct questioning.¹⁵⁴

Even though he still persisted in trying to collect information, Paterson recognized community members were reluctant to provide the answers. By informing upper level bureaucrats of the difficulties in collecting the information, Paterson emphasized his ability to assess the attitudes of community members. In his perception of the situation at least, he believed his "expertise" lay in trying to devise alternate ways to get the information. There is no correspondence from the members of the community on this issue. The intrusive nature of Paterson's questions may have been insulting to

¹⁵³ The correspondence did not indicate Private Thompson's duties or locations where he served.

¹⁵⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Norman Paterson, Indian Agent, Kenora, Ontario, to IAB, 17 June 1944.

community members who felt the legitimacy of their rituals were being evaluated and compared to Euro-Canadian standards.

Paterson later reported that although the community defined the “marriage as a voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others,” there were “no ceremonial rites or contract” and the couple had not lived together for two years prior to Thompson’s enlistment.¹⁵⁵ According to Paterson, the man asked the woman’s parents’ permission to marry and then the couple started living together. The lack of ceremony and the short time of co-habitation made the Thompson marriage invalid according to officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board, even though the marriage was valid according to Ojibwa tradition. In the Ojibwa tradition, the background of the person and their status was more important than the ceremony. Historically, a person’s membership in a particular totem category and their status as a cross cousin¹⁵⁶ were factors which determined a marriage partner’s desirability. There was such an emphasis on the individual’s connections because the choosing of partners was seen as a way to maintain alliances and reinforce social and kinship ties.¹⁵⁷ Although, over time, children were given more choice regarding who they could marry, parental approval remained important. Once two partners were matched, the couple then started living together.¹⁵⁸ Unlike other First Nations, no feast, potlatch or other ceremony was necessary to finally validate the marriage. The fact that Thompson and his wife received parental approval, but did not have a formal marriage ceremony before they started living together appears

¹⁵⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Paterson to IAB, 15 September 1944.

¹⁵⁶ Cross cousins were the offspring of father’s sisters and mother’s brothers. See Charles A. Bishop, The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade: An Historical and Ecological Study, (Toronto and Montreal: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1974), 49-50.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 51.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

to have corresponded with their community's cultural practices. Because the marriage did not have a ceremony, according to officials, and the time of co-habitation pre-enlistment did not meet the two year requirement, the Thompson marriage was not considered legal.

In cases, like Thompson's, where it was decided the marriage was not legal, officials tried to pressure some couples to legalize their unions. In discussing the Thompson case with Bennett, the Indian Affairs Branch Secretary, T.R.L. MacInnes, wrote that he was going to inform the Indian Agent "to advise the Indians that in their own interest and for the protection of their personal legal rights, they should place their domestic relationship on a more secure basis."¹⁵⁹ MacInnes emphasized the notion of individual legal rights over the collective rights of First Nations people to protect their culture. He also emphasized the authority of Euro-Canadian law, not the authority necessarily recognized in First Nations' communities. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Moss proposed that Thompson's Commanding Officer should also convince him to marry his wife in accordance with provincial laws. Moss was a lawyer who worked for the Department of National Defence. He provided his opinion as to the legality of the marriages and in some cases recommended whether or not the case should be passed on to the Department of Justice for further review. In the Thompson case, Moss suggested, "Perhaps this Indian soldier could be made to see the difficulty that is created when his tribal customs have to be reconciled with the provisions of the regulations governing Dependents' Allowance."¹⁶⁰ Moss expected the couple to forego their cultural tradition

¹⁵⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, MacInnes to Bennett, Not dated.

¹⁶⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Moss to Bennett, 30 June 1944.

to marry according to the Euro-Canadian law because it would be more convenient for the bureaucratic process. Moss did not suggest the dependents' allowance requirements should be made more flexible.¹⁶¹ Ensuring potential recipients' eligibility for the allowance was used as the reason for the change in status. Officials may have believed that the application of the rule would help further their goal of assimilating Aboriginal people by making their marriages conform to Euro-Canadian standards.

In addition to providing descriptions of ceremonies that may or may not have convinced upper level officials that the marriages were legal, some local officials wrote to upper level officials with their impressions of community members' reactions. Some local officials used this as further evidence that the dependents' allowance regulations regarding marriage should be more flexible. Randle noted that equating "Longhouse marriages" with common-law unions would insult and cause resentment among some Aboriginal people:

This office must once again point out how offensive it is to the proud Indians of the Iroquois Nation, to have any doubt thrown on the lawfulness of their marriages made by Indian custom. The attitude taken by your Board virtually throws marriages of this type into the same category as those known as "common-law", and though it may not be meant, this is insulting to the Indian.¹⁶²

Randle noted that soldiers came to his office questioning the designation. One of them, Sergeant Geoffrey Bronson,¹⁶³ came to Randle's office and showed him a letter Bronson had received from the Paymaster at the D&H Rifles Sussex Camp in Sussex, New Brunswick that stated the Board would not recognize Longhouse marriages. Randle

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Randle to Bennett, 9 January 1943.

¹⁶³ Presumably Bronson was on leave when he went to Randle's office. It was not stated in the correspondence if Bronson had served overseas.

noted that Bronson, “took stronge (sic) exception to the fact that your Board would not recognize for Dependents’ Allowance purposes, his marriage to his present wife, which was carried out according to the ancient custom of the Indians of the Iroquois Confederacy.”¹⁶⁴ It could be argued that this comment was only made by Randle to reinforce his own viewpoint. However, it is interesting that he believed mentioning the soldier would help support his argument. His reference to Bronson possibly indicates that soldiers’ views were given a certain degree of credibility that other community members’ views were not. In her examination of this case, Sangster has suggested that Bronson’s negative reaction to the common-law designation indicates that there was an “internalization of the view that such common-law unions were immoral.”¹⁶⁵ Another possibility is that Bronson recognized the Euro-Canadian negative reaction to common-law marriages and knew he had to object to such a designation if he wanted to achieve results within the bureaucratic system.

Interestingly, Randle did not highlight the financial disadvantages of the common-law designation, but instead argued that the term was disrespectful to the “Iroquois Nation.” Randle believed that the feelings of disrespect were not only felt by the soldier as an insult to his identity, but were an affront to the First Nation as a whole. An individual’s personal expression of identity was linked to the broader expression of the political identity of the Iroquois as its own nation.

The notion that a certain policy was “shameful” or “dishonoring” a particular person or community was a reason used by other racial groups to argue against discriminatory policies. Historian James St. George Walker finds that such arguments

¹⁶⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Randle to Bennett, 9 January 1943.

¹⁶⁵ Sangster, Regulating Girls and Women, 181.

were used by the African Canadian community in the 1940's in the Fred Christie court case. This case was based on an incident in a tavern in Montreal when a waiter refused to serve Christie a drink because he was African Canadian. In arguing the case before the Supreme Court, the lawyer included the fact that Christie was "insulted" and "humiliated" by the incident as a part of his arguments.¹⁶⁶ Many people in the African Canadian community in Montreal believed the waiter's actions were an insult to the whole community. The community raised money to help fund Christie's court case. As in the Bronson case, the feelings experienced by the one individual became linked to the community's attempts to express themselves politically.¹⁶⁷

As a result of his impression that the term "common-law" was not acceptable to the Six Nations community, Randle asked Bennett not to refer to the marriages as common-law in the correspondence.¹⁶⁸ Bennett wrote back saying that the phrase "common-law wife" would be replaced by the phrase "woman represented as wife."¹⁶⁹ Bennett, although acknowledging that "common-law wife" was an inaccurate term, did not refer to the women as married. No additional letters were found by Randle indicating whether or not he responded to Bennett's new phrase. Based on Randle's previous statements, he may have still found Bennett's designation was insulting to the Six Nations.

Norman Paterson, the Indian Agent from Kenora, Ontario, also made observations about community members' attitudes when he was investigating the previously

¹⁶⁶ James W. St. G. Walker, "Race, Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies," (Waterloo and Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press and the Osgoode Society, 1997), 152.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Randle to Bennett, 8 July 1942.

¹⁶⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Bennett to Randle, 16 July 1942.

mentioned Thompson case. After discussing the situation with Thompson's wife and the councilors of the couple's band, Paterson noted that the "marriage is considered a proper marriage from the Indians point of view."¹⁷⁰ Paterson remarked, "The majority of Indians balk at legal marriages and appear to prefer their own custom."¹⁷¹ The importance of the traditions to the community were rarely acknowledged by upper level officials who were more concerned that the marriages conform to the provincial regulations.

Some Indian Agents also may not have recognized the importance of such traditions. Instead, they may have seen the rule as incentive to "encourage" those Aboriginal couples who preferred their own cultural tradition to marry according to Euro-Canadian standards. As readers will remember from Chapter 4, some Agents believed that savings from the allowance could be used to construct houses which would conform to their definition of single family permanent housing. Agents generally disapproved of the communal and mobile housing that had been a part of many First Nations' traditions. The allowance provided Agents with the means to enforce a policy that had been a goal of the Indian Affairs Branch for years, but which they did not have the funds to implement. Similarly, for those couples who refused to marry in a church, Agents may have seen the potential loss of the full allowance as an incentive for some families to consider marrying in this way. Research in the United States has suggested that this was true for some Native American soldiers who had married according to their own cultural tradition, but who, during the war, also married in the church to avoid losing their

¹⁷⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Paterson to IAB, 17 June 1944.

¹⁷¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Paterson to IAB, 10 April 1944.

allowances.¹⁷² Whereas Randle and Paterson saw the Dependents' Allowance Board rules regarding marriages as difficult and problematic, others may have welcomed the rules and agreed with upper level officials that they should be reinforced.

Soldiers' loyalty and patriotism were mentioned as additional reasons to support the recognition of "tribal marriages." Similar to the case of the Afro-Caribbean soldiers' families whose loyalty was used as a reason why their allowances should not be reduced, Randle referred to the patriotism of the soldiers and their loyalty to the Empire as a reason why their marriages deserved to be acknowledged:

There are nearly 6000 Indians in this Superintendency and well over 100 are now serving in His Majesty's Forces, which is a goodly proportion of the male population in the military age category. Most of them, as in earlier wars, joined out of a sense of loyalty to the Crown and Empire, and it is rather a bitter blow to their pride and dignity to find their marriages according to 'ancient custom' are not treated with respect and honoured equally with those of a christian nature.¹⁷³

Randle made these comments in a letter dealing with the Geoffrey Bronson case. He implied that Bronson's anger that his marriage was not recognized was reflective of the whole community's point of view. Randle argued in another letter:

...in fairness, to Indian feelings the matter should be cleared so there is no stigma attached to their Tribal marriages. It is insulting to a man who was married some fifteen or twenty years ago by a "Longhouse ceremony", to the woman of his choice, and with whom he has lived since and by whom he has several children, to find on offering his services and his life to the Country and the Empire, that this relationship to his family is verily (sic) that of the common-law type.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Alison R. Bernstein, American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs, (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 59.

¹⁷³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Randle to Bennett, 9 January 1943.

¹⁷⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 34, File: 6-5, File Title: Indian Marriages, Randle to IAB, 22 February 1943.

The acknowledgement by Randle that certain government policies were insensitive to various First Nations' cultural traditions was not limited to the issue of the legality of "tribal marriages." Some Agents did recognize that, in general, the insensitivity to First Nations' culture caused tensions between First Nations and government officials. In his book about Aboriginal soldiers during World War II, R. Scott Sheffield also includes an examination of post-war Indian Affairs Branch policy. As a part of his research, Sheffield studies Indian Agents' responses to a request made in 1946 by the newly appointed Minister of Mines and Resources, J. Allison Glenn, for input on why First Nations mistrusted government officials. When writing back to the Minister, some Indian Agents stated that there was a "lack of consideration for the viewpoints and culture of First Nations people."¹⁷⁵ The issue of broken treaty promises, the lack of understanding about First Nations culture, and the refusal to accept Aboriginal traditions, were also brought up as reasons why First Nations did not trust the Indian Affairs Branch administration.¹⁷⁶ In comparison to the official images of Aboriginal people presented in the Great Depression of Native people as being "lazy," "incompetent," and "child-like," in Indian Agents' responses to Glenn's questions there would appear to be a shift in how Aboriginal people are discussed. As Sheffield concludes, "In recognizing that IAB policies and administration were demeaning and made ill use of the very people they were designed to help, these field personnel accepted First Nations people at a more

¹⁷⁵ R. Scott Sheffield, *The Red Man's On the Warpath: The Image of the 'Indian' and the Second World War*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 116.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 115.

human level than had previously been voiced in the official image.”¹⁷⁷ Randle’s comments fit this pattern Sheffield observes.

While Randle wanted the overall policy to change, the Dependents’ Allowance Board bureaucrats were content with dealing with Aboriginal cases individually. They did not state why they preferred this policy. Perhaps officials did not want to set a precedent that would have financial or policy implications for other programs. The amount given to common-law wives was also subject to more discretionary control than the allowances provided to married women. As we have seen, while married women received a standard thirty-five dollars per month, common-law wives could receive amounts ranging from twenty to thirty-five dollars, depending on whether they had children or had a job. Although protests from Indian Affairs Branch officials had prevented upper level bureaucrats from instituting reductions for Aboriginal dependents, not recognizing “tribal marriages” as legal gave bureaucrats the flexibility of providing those Aboriginal women who did not meet the requirements with less money. Accepting the marriages as legal would have undermined the authority of the provincial and federal governments to define what constituted a marriage. From a political perspective, these bureaucrats may have been worried that if First Nations won recognition for their marital traditions, they would use such recognition as leverage in making other demands.

When bureaucrats at the Dependents’ Allowance Board devised regulations that denied the collective identity by refusing to acknowledge communities’ marriage customs, they tried to separate individual couples from the community. Bureaucrats

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.* It is important to keep in mind that Sheffield is talking about the official image. In the past there had been individual Agents who had accepted Aboriginal people at a more human level, but these views often did not have much of an impact on the overall official image as portrayed by the majority of officials working for the Indian Affairs Branch.

attempted to define recipients' relationship with the federal government on an individual basis rather than seeing First Nations as collective political entities.

5.6 DEFINING CHILDREN'S LEGITIMACY: THE DEBATE BETWEEN BOARD MEMBERS AND LOCAL OFFICIALS

The different approaches to "illegitimate" children reveal further tensions among officials in Ottawa and those working in local communities. In cases of "illegitimacy,"¹⁷⁸ it was the position of upper level bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board that the allowance was a grant "given under certain definite conditions" and "it had to be withheld if the wife disqualified herself" through an act such as infidelity.¹⁷⁹ This rule applied to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal dependents' allowance recipients. According to Bennett, based on other policies such as the mother's allowance, it was "a general practice in welfare legislation to demand fidelity on the part of the wife in receipt of public funds."¹⁸⁰ Magda Fahrni has concluded that, "in the minds of the public, like that of the DAB [Dependents' Allowance Board], the criterion for receiving military allowances was clearly loyalty: men's loyalty to their country, and women's loyalty to the men who were loyal to their country."¹⁸¹ Women who had "illegitimate" children

¹⁷⁸ It is difficult to determine the actual number of cases of "illegitimacy." No numbers were found in the documents. Fahrni concludes that there was probably more anxiety about infidelity than actual cases of adultery. In the cases that did appear, typically there were usually problems with the relationship between the wife and husband prior to enlistment. See Magda Fahrni, "The Romance of Reunion: Montreal War Veterans Return to Family Life, 1944-1949," Conference paper, Canadian Historical Association, Annual General Meeting, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, June 1998, 5.

¹⁷⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-7, File Title: Montreal Welfare Department, "Meeting to discuss services provided by certain Montreal Social Agencies to Dependents' Allowance Board" Minutes recorded by G. Howell, 10 October, No year listed.

¹⁸⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 50, File 43, File Title: Suspension of Allowances for Wife on Ground of Improper Conduct, Bennett to Mr. Charles H. Young, Montreal Council of Social Agencies, Montreal, Quebec, 27 October 1942. For a similar argument by officials in the mothers' allowance program see Little, 'No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit,' 62-63.

¹⁸¹ Fahrni, "The Romance of Reunion," 7.

were not perceived as loyal and therefore Bennett believed suspending their allowances was justified.

According to the dependents' allowance regulations which were applied to all recipients, in cases of "illegitimacy" where the child belonged to the female parent, the child was not eligible to receive the allowance unless accepted by the husband and formerly adopted. In cases where the husband would not accept the child, the only way to get support for the child was to go after the biological father through an affiliation order or agreement.¹⁸² For infidelity, the woman could also lose her thirty-five dollar monthly allowance. In these cases, assigned pay and dependents' allowance money was still received monthly for the children belonging to the soldier. The attitude of Board members in these cases was to "carry through the wishes of the soldier as far as it is possible to do this without sacrificing the interest of the children."¹⁸³ If soldiers were displeased with the decision, the file could be reviewed.¹⁸⁴ In cases where the woman was not in general a "loose" woman and she was taking care of the household and children, the wife's allowance could be reinstated upon the soldier's request.¹⁸⁵ In the

¹⁸² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-5, File Title: Volume 4,-General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies, Bennett to Claude A. Winters, Superintendent, Children's Aid Society, Brockville, Ontario, 30 December 1943. Other programs also were concerned with tracking fathers and assumed fathers would be financially responsible for their children. During the Great Depression many families could not qualify for the mothers' allowance because even though the father had left the family, his whereabouts were known to officials. Officials assumed that the family did have a male breadwinner to support them and they did not need the mothers' allowance. In many cases, however, the family was receiving no financial support from the father. See Little, 'No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit,' 100-101. If the father was not to be found, officials in the Mothers' Allowance Program were eager to have the widowed or single mothers remarry as quickly as possible. The focus was on having a new male breadwinner rather than providing women with adequate paying jobs so that they could support their own families. See Little, 'No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit,' 100.

¹⁸³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File 4-1, File Title: Investigations-General, A. H. Brown, Acting DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario to Lieutenant C.C. Kernahan, R.C.E. Training Centre, Petawawa Military Camp, Ontario, 8 January 1941.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 52, File Title: Policy File, Bennett to R.J. Rogers, Liaison Officer and Supervisor of Regional Committees, Dependents' Board of Trustees (DBT), Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 21 July 1942.

cases of children born to a couple in a common-law union, in order to be considered eligible for the allowance, it had to be proven that the soldier was the child's parent and that the child was dependent on the soldier's income.¹⁸⁶

Although local officials were largely concerned with "illegitimate children" where the woman was the parent, dependents' allowance regulations also took into account cases where the soldier was one of the parents. In these cases, the child was still eligible for the allowance.¹⁸⁷ In the case where the soldier was a parent of the child, but he had not established a home for the woman or the child and the woman was unmarried, proof of parentage and liability for support had to be established. Assignment of pay on the part of the enlisted man and admission that he was the parent was regarded as prima facie evidence.¹⁸⁸ In cases where the soldier refused to assign pay to support children who were proven to be his, Board members could order compulsory assignment of pay.¹⁸⁹ The policy was more concerned with providing for the soldiers' children, legitimate or not, than their wives who may not have conformed to the Board members' notion of loyalty.

Local officials differed from upper level bureaucrats in their attitudes regarding "illegitimate" cases. As already noted in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, Indian Agents did the investigations on reserves and social workers from provincial, municipal or private social agencies investigated and administered allowances in non-Aboriginal cases on behalf of the Dependents' Allowance Board. Local officials, whether working on reserves or for social agencies, wanted to take into account their personal observations of the family and

¹⁸⁶ LAC, RG 10 Volume 6772 File: 452-42, Brown to MacInnes, 28 April 1941.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 82.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

wanted to be flexible in how the “illegitimate” cases were dealt with by the Board. If the family were perceived by the Indian Agent or social worker as “respectable” and the wife said she was sorry for what she had done, these officials believed these factors should be taken into consideration prior to the suspension of the allowance. According to Magda Fahrni in her study of post-war social policies in Montreal, there are a number of reasons why the social agencies and Board members conflicted regarding “illegitimate” cases. Fahrni’s observations about the attitudes of the members of social agencies are similar to the attitudes of some Agents. As already noted, since many of the Board members of the Dependents’ Allowance Board were veterans from World War I, they were more concerned with the effects on the soldiers than on other family members. The purpose of the Dependents’ Allowance Board was to administer the allowances during the war whereas social agencies would continue to work in the communities after the war.¹⁹⁰ Board members, as a result, were narrower in their focus while social agencies tended to have broader perspective. Indian Agents also considered the impact the Board’s decisions would have on the unity of the family in the post-war period. Social workers and Indian Agents in many cases were dealing directly with soldiers and their families. For instance, despite Board members’ desire to protect and defend the soldiers’ interests, some soldiers had mixed views towards wives who committed adultery. Some soldiers wanted to deny their wives the allowances while others were willing to forgive them and did not want their families to suffer financially. These sentiments were more likely to be heard by the social worker and the Indian Agents than by Board members who, in most cases, did not have direct contact with the soldiers.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Fahrni, “The Romance of Reunion,” 9.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

Although the dependents' allowance regulations were clear in cases of "illegitimacy," Indian Agents, and, as we will see later social workers, did not always implement these regulations uniformly. In the case of Indian Agent Whalen from Fredericton, New Brunswick when two women had "illegitimate" children, he felt "obliged to notify the Dependents' Allowance Board when this offense took place" because he was already administering their cheques.¹⁹² Indian Agent Whalen did not know whether he still had to report the "illegitimate" babies to the Dependents' Allowance Board if the women's cheques were not already being administered.¹⁹³ Whalen wrote to an upper level Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrat for advice on the interpretation of the regulations rather than consulting with the staff at the Dependents' Allowance Board directly. D.J. Allan, the Superintendent of Reserves and Trusts, responded to Indian Agent Whalen's letter.¹⁹⁴

It was no doubt your duty to take the action you did with reference to those women whose dependent's allowance you were administering. However, such is not the case for the other two; rather your duty with regard to them is that of Indian Agent. To prove illegitimacy in cases such as you mention is extremely difficult and action in these cases must be very well considered.¹⁹⁵

Despite the dependents' allowance regulations, Allan's attitude was practical by pointing out the cases were hard to prove. He also distinguished between the role of a dependents' allowance administrator and Indian Agent. Allan believed if the allowance were being

¹⁹² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File 452-6-56, Edward J. Whalen, Indian Agent, Fredericton, New Brunswick to IAB, 12 April 1943.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ D.J. Allan had been recommended by Arthur MacNamara, one of the DAB Chairmen, to be a Board member, but was not assigned to this position. He noted that Allan prior to coming to Ottawa was the Assistant Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources in Manitoba. Prior to obtaining this position he was a lawyer and a Reeve. Allan had also worked as a member of a committee dealing with single men relief. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 24, File 1-30, File Title: DAB Staff, Arthur MacNamara, DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario, to Ralston, 18 November 1940.

¹⁹⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File 452-6-56, D.J. Allan, Superintendent Reserves and Trusts, IAB, Ottawa, Ontario, to Whalen, 4 May 1943.

administered, the Indian Agent was obliged to follow the dependents' allowance regulations. However, if the allowance were not being administered, the role of the Indian Agent, according to Allan, was to protect the women's financial interests by not reporting them to the Board. Allan emphasized the paternalistic role of the Indian Agent. Perhaps he was also concerned that if the allowance were stopped these women would have to be supported through Indian Affairs Branch relief funds. Allan was looking out for the financial interests of his own department. Board members would not have necessarily agreed with Allan's assessment.

Family respectability played a role in the Indian Agents' assessments of the women's characters prior to and after their allowances were suspended. In studies of clerical workers, it has also been found that evaluating a woman's character based on her family's perceived "respectability" was also used by employers trying to assess female applicants.¹⁹⁶ In reference to the two women who were already having their cheques administered, Indian Agent Whalen referred to a family history of intoxication and "illegitimacy." In the case of Angela Scott, the Indian Agent remarked that she had a history of heavy drinking and was an "illegitimate" child herself.¹⁹⁷ Regarding Cathy Smith, Indian Agent Whalen noted "This girl's mother is dead and the father, who had left the family years ago, is somewhere in the United States. Both mother and father

¹⁹⁶ Kate Boyer "Re-Working Respectability: The Feminization of Clerical Work and the Politics of Public Virtue in Early Twentieth-Century Montreal," Power, Place and Identity: Historical Studies of Social and Legal Regulation in Quebec. Proceedings of a Montreal History Conference Group, Occasional Papers of the Montreal History Group Number 3, Tamara Myers, Kate Boyer, Mary Anne Poutanen, and Steven Watt, eds., 1998/2002, 166.

¹⁹⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File 452-6-56, Whalen to IAB, 25 May 1943. Whalen refers to numerous cases in one letter.

were heavy drinkers.”¹⁹⁸ The Indian Agent reported both these women to the Board and the thirty-five dollars in allowance for the wives was suspended.

In the cases where women were perceived as coming from a “nice” family, the Indian Agent was less likely to see the “illegitimate” child as a reason to have the allowance removed if the family and the woman appeared to be repentant. Indian Agent Whalen noted of Ester Pollack that, “This young woman seemed a very respectable Indian and came from a nice family. She and her family were very much ashamed of this disgraceful action. Since that time Mrs. Pollack appears to have carried herself straight and is looking after her children in a very creditable manner.”¹⁹⁹ The Indian Agent also reported that Pollack built herself a “nice respectable house”²⁰⁰ and that she always “appeared very neat and clean.”²⁰¹ In the case of Martha Astor, Indian Agent Whalen observed that, “She is from a good family and those who know her were rather surprised that she became pregnant while her husband was away.”²⁰² The Indian Agent also reported that she had built a house and was saving money.²⁰³ Factors, such as the woman’s character and her home management skills, were considered important when assessing whether her “illegitimate” child should be reported to the Board.

The emphasis on repentance and reform fits into a pattern which has been observed in Little’s examination of the Mothers’ Allowances Program. If a mother had an “illegitimate” child or had done something else “wrong” in the eyes of the officials, she could sometimes get her allowance reinstated if she promised the investigator to go to

¹⁹⁸ ibid.

¹⁹⁹ ibid.

²⁰⁰ ibid.

²⁰¹ ibid.

²⁰² ibid.

²⁰³ ibid.

church or to stop associating with “questionable” people.²⁰⁴ Little concludes, “The importance of a grateful, humble attitude is in keeping with traditional philanthropic notions of the deserving poor. At the turn of the century, it was essential for the impoverished to prove their gratitude, humility, and desire to reform in order to receive the discretionary local charity.”²⁰⁵ Little’s conclusion that aspects of nineteenth century philanthropy still affected social policies is applicable when examining this aspect of the Dependents’ Allowance Program.

In cases where the allowance was suspended due to infidelity, local officials sometimes commented positively on the women’s character and home management skills. These arguments were made either to convince Board members not to suspend the allowances permanently or to convince Dependents’ Allowance Board officials that the children should not be removed from the home. In the case of Mrs. Harry Rutherford, the Acting Indian Agent Anthony McMillan from Cardston, Alberta did not think Rutherford’s allowance should be permanently stopped even though he had reported she had had an “illegitimate” baby girl. He observed, “The woman concerned...is not neglecting her home or family in any way, she is also building a house and getting a nice home together against the time of her husband’s return.”²⁰⁶ As mentioned in Chapter 4 on savings, building a home was perceived by Indian Agents as a sign that Aboriginal people were assimilating. This perception explains why McMillan would have included this piece of information as a part of his positive portrayal of Mrs. Rutherford. He

²⁰⁴ Little, ‘No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit,’ 64-65.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 65.

²⁰⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File 452-774 Pt. 1, Anthony McMillan, Acting Indian Agent, Blood Indian Agency, Cardston, Alberta, to Bennett, 26 January 1942.

pointed out that, “This lady has by no means been promiscuous and has hitherto borne an exemplary character.”²⁰⁷

In one case where a woman had had an “illegitimate” child, the Indian Agent argued that the children should not be removed from the home. Indian Agent Fralick from Scugog, Ontario, noted “She has always taken the very best care in every way & keeps them clean & well fed & clothed.”²⁰⁸ Indian Agent Fralick also remarked that “She is doing all that is possible to care for her family. One is going to the school near this reserve. They do not talk the Indian language nor does the mother. There is no other place better to raise these children.”²⁰⁹ Fralick’s description of the children as clean, well fed and clothed indicates how he was using Euro-Canadian definitions of “respectability” to positively assess the woman’s character. As readers will recall in Chapter 2, the failure of some women to meet these standards of “respectability” resulted in the Indian Agents having a negative attitude towards them. The attendance of children at school and the suppression of Aboriginal language were considered important aspects of the governments’ assimilation policies.²¹⁰ Although missionaries in the nineteenth century had been encouraged to learn First Nations languages in order to better communicate with Aboriginal people, demands were increasingly made in the twentieth century by bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch that Aboriginal language not be used in residential schools.²¹¹ Upper level officials would have been inclined to view the mother

²⁰⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File 452-774 Pt. 1, McMillan to MacInnes, 30 December 1941.

²⁰⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File 452-769 Pt. 1, Clarence Fralick, Indian Agent, Scugog, Ontario, to IAB, 20 January 1944.

²⁰⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File 452-769 Pt. 1, Fralick to McGill, 24 August 1944.

²¹⁰ Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*, 200.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 203-204. Interestingly, despite demands by bureaucrats at the IAB that Aboriginal languages not be used at school, J.R. Miller in his study of the residential school system has found that missionaries tolerated the use of Aboriginal languages by the students because they did not believe in the policy or they did not have enough staff to enforce it. The policy still had a devastating impact on students because they

positively in light of Fralick's description because he portrayed her as conforming to the Branch's goals.

In trying to get suspensions reversed, some Indian Agents wrote that the soldiers knew about the wife's infidelity and did not want the allowance to be cancelled. Indian Agent McMillan wrote to the Chairman of the Dependents' Allowance Board in the case of Harry Rutherford that "I understand that word has been received from the husband that he is fully aware of what has transpired and that he wishes no action to be taken which would be detrimental to his wife and family's welfare."²¹² Despite the rule that in some cases soldiers could get their wives' allowances reinstated after a suspension, the woman still lost her allowance.²¹³ She continued to receive the assigned pay which the soldier agreed to have administered by the Indian Agent.²¹⁴

Similarly, Indian Agent Fralick stated that he felt that soldier, Adam Granger, did not want the allowance taken away because his wife, Denise Granger, was taking care of his children. The soldier was portrayed by the Indian Agent as having divided feelings:

He joined the Canadian Forces to get away from her, yet was anxious to support the children who are very dear to him. He assigned so much of his pay to his wife and children although knowing the circumstances surrounding his home and existing at the present time. He would not stop that portion of support because he wanted the two children and the expectant baby to be looked after.²¹⁵

Despite his negative attitude towards his wife and her actions, the soldier wanted to make to make sure his family had money. This example shows how sometimes soldiers'

were still told that their Aboriginal language was inferior to English and they consequently felt alienated from their culture. It is, however, another example of local officials adapting the rules to the local situation.

²¹² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File 452-774 Pt. 1, McMillan to Bennett, 26 January 1942.

²¹³ It is unclear in this case if the soldier made a formal request to have the allowance reinstated or why the Board seemed against following through on his wishes.

²¹⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File 452-774 Pt. 1, Bennett to McMillan, 19 April 1944.

²¹⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File 452-769 Pt. 1, Fralick to IAB, 20 May 1943.

attitudes were not as dichotomous as Board members assumed. As Chapter 2 revealed, Indian Agents criticized the women's behaviour severely when justifying why they should administer their allowances. However, in cases when the allowance was going to be reduced or suspended, Indian Agents' argued in favor of the continuance of Aboriginal women's allowances. In making their decisions, some Indian Agents considered factors such as family respectability, home management, mothering skills, and the attitudes of the soldier. The Indian Agents' flexibility, however, was closely linked to their definitions of Euro-Canadian middle class "respectability." Women who did not conform to these notions of "respectability" were less likely to be helped. Other scholars have noted that upper level Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats put pressure on Indian Agents to keep relief costs to a minimum.²¹⁶ Indian Agents in the cases of the debates about the reductions in allowances and "illegitimate" cases were perhaps motivated to try to maintain the women's allowances so they would be supported by another department and would not become the total financial responsibility of the Indian Affairs Branch.

Social workers, like Indian Agents, who were asked to investigate soldiers' families on behalf of the Dependents' Allowance Board were unsure whether to report cases of "illegitimate" children.²¹⁷ These social workers made their comments in reference to the Euro-Canadian soldiers' families. Their concerns indicated that discussions about "legitimacy" were a part of larger debates that affected both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal soldiers' families. Olive M. Snyder of the Children's Aid Society for the Country of Waterloo was unclear if cases of infidelity should be reported to the

²¹⁶ See Shewell, 'Enough to Keep Them Alive', Chapter 4 "Relief Policy and the Consolidation of Subjugation, 1913-1944," 93-133.

²¹⁷ Debates about the necessity of social workers conducting these investigations, the advice given to investigators by the DAB and investigators' role in administration cases has already been discussed in Chapter 1 and 2.

Board. Snyder suggested that the matter should be kept quiet in order to preserve the family.²¹⁸

Other social workers had anxieties about reporting these cases as it deviated from their usual practice. After attending a social work conference, Ruth Harvey, Social Welfare Advisor to the Dependents' Allowance Board, reported to Bennett:

The Children's Aid Society said that in cases where they were administering allowances, they were reporting such births to the Board, as they felt they were acting as an agent for the Board, and the Board's policy was to inform the soldier. However, under ordinary circumstances, they would not feel it was their responsibility to see that the husband, if he were a civilian, is informed.²¹⁹

Allan used similar logic when he advised the Indian Agent only to report cases where the allowances were already being administered.

Some representatives believed that the suspension of allowances due to "illegitimate" births was causing extreme hardship for the families affected.²²⁰ In some cases wives were not receiving proper medical care because they were trying to hide the fact they were pregnant so they would not lose their allowance. Some representatives from Children's Aid Societies expressed concerns that some wives who had "illegitimate" children might neglect these children sometimes leading to sickness or

²¹⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-5, File Title: Volume 4-General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies, Olive M. Snyder, Children's Aid Society of the County of Waterloo and the Cities of Kitchener and Galt, Kitchener, Ontario, to Bennett, 3 May 1943.

²¹⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-5, File Title: Conferences and Inspections, Ruth Harvey, DAB Social Advisor, Ottawa, Ontario to Bennett, 1 December 1941.

²²⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File 4-1, File Title: Investigations-General, "Summary of Replies to Letter of September 22, 1942" sent by Canadian Welfare Council to Social Agencies across Canada, 26 November 1942. Magda Fahrni makes similar observations about social agencies' concerns over the DAB policy on infidelity in her paper, "The Romance of Reunion," 3-12.

death.²²¹ Fahrni's comments summarize well the motivations and attitudes of social workers dealing with soldiers' families:

A concern for the morale of soldiers overseas, and a desire to preserve family units for the postwar period, meant that certain social agencies were willing to turn a blind eye, or at least a forgiving one, to sexual indiscretions. Some family agencies tried to prevent official reports from going to husbands overseas, particularly when the wives appeared repentant.²²²

Once again the notion of repentance was important suggesting aspects of the older moral reformist tradition remained.

Despite the persistence of aspects of these older traditions, social workers continually emphasized how they were different from previous volunteer or relief investigators. Elizabeth Wallace, the Executive Secretary of the Canadian Association of Social Workers, agreed with Indian Agent Whalen that the women's ability to take care of the children and the home should be considered before suspending the allowance. She stated, "Our Association believes that misbehaviour, (such as illegitimacy, drunkenness, etc.) should not be considered a reason for discontinuance of an allowance because of 'moral unworthiness' until the circumstances related to such an incident and to the care of the other children in the home are known and weighed."²²³ Wallace differed from Indian Agent Whalen in the fact that she did not believe "drunkenness" should be a reason for automatically discontinuing the allowance. Whalen used "drunkenness" as a reason to justify why two of the women should be reported to the Dependents' Allowance Board. In evaluating the families, the social worker appears to be more flexible than the Indian

²²¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-5, File Title: Conferences and Inspections, Harvey to Bennett, 1 December 1941.

²²² Fahrni, "The Romance of Reunion," 8.

²²³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-5, File Title: Volume 4-General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies, Elizabeth Wallace, Executive Secretary, Canadian Association of Social Workers, Toronto, Ontario, to Bennett, 6 January 1944.

Agent possibly reflecting their different training and outlooks. Although both social workers and Indian Agents emphasized repentance when dealing with cases of “illegitimacy,” the emerging social work profession was more inclined to be sympathetic to the families than Indian Agents whose departmental culture and lack of training encouraged them to judge the families as nineteenth century relief investigators had done.

Representatives from Children Aid Societies claimed that Board members criticized the societies if the children were not removed from the home if a wife were involved with another man.²²⁴ However, the societies’ position was to try to keep the children in the home as long as it was in the children’s best interests to do so.²²⁵ In some cases, it was more injurious for the child to be removed. The representatives from social agencies argued that under the Child Protection Act “moral neglect” required the act to have been committed in the home while the children were present.²²⁶ If the act was not committed in the home, the children could stay there. This stance would appear to differ from the position at the Indian Affairs Branch that Aboriginal children should be removed from their homes to go to residential school.²²⁷ Interestingly, in this example

²²⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-5, File Title: Conferences and Inspections, Memorandum by Harvey, 8 December 1941. This is similar to what Marshall has found in her study of family allowance cases. See Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 6.

²²⁵ Ibid. The emphasis on keeping the family together represents a shift from the past practice in the nineteenth century where volunteer moral reformists had argued that the best thing for children was to separate them from their families and put them in orphanages, refuges and industrial schools. Social workers had increasingly come to believe that children should stay with their families because removing children from their parents was harmful. Children were only to be taken from the home if absolutely necessary. The ways this shift in thinking came about are discussed in more detail in Patricia T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell, Disregarding the Asylum: from Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English Canada, 1800-1950, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), Chapter 9 From Sentiment to Science: Professionalizing Child Rescue, 337-387.

²²⁶ Harvey noted these comments by social agencies in her Memorandum to Bennett. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-5, File Title: Conferences and Inspections, Harvey to Bennett, 1 December 1941.

²²⁷ It is not clear from the investigation done for this thesis whether social agencies criticized the Indian Affairs Branch policy of removing children from their homes because it differed from their own policy of trying to keep children in the home. It would appear that social workers did protest this policy in the 1950’s and 1960’s. Children were not always removed from communities. See John Milloy’s forthcoming

the representatives refer to a piece of legislation to support their argument. Perhaps, the representatives believed this reference would have more weight with upper level bureaucrats because it referred to the law. Ruth Harvey, the Social Welfare Advisor to the Board, recommended that the societies' judgment in these cases be trusted.²²⁸ Harvey was a university trained social worker and her sense of professional identity and ethics in this case appeared to prevail over the stipulations of the officials at the Dependents' Allowances for whom she worked.

In cases where the children were removed from the home, it was the position of some social workers that the children could be returned to their home if the soldier could prove he could support the children. In making these decisions including the soldier was important so as to obtain "his sympathy and support so that while he is away he will feel as a part of the plan and when he comes home he will have a definite responsibility."²²⁹ However, if the soldier refused to take responsibility or re-establish the home, then the children would have to become permanent wards.²³⁰ The role of the man as the head of the family and the main financial breadwinner are reinforced through these comments. The representatives, by wanting the man's support, did not want to undermine or exclude the man from the decisions made about his children. Unless there were dire circumstances, they wanted to emphasize that it was the man's responsibility to take care of his family, not the government's responsibility.

research on social workers and the Indian Affairs Branch. The title of the upcoming article/book is not yet named.

²²⁸ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-5, File Title: Conferences and Inspections, Memorandum by Harvey, 8 December 1941.

²²⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-5, File Title: Volume 4-General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies, F.R. MacKinnon, Assistant Director of Child Welfare, Department of Public Welfare, Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Bennett, 13 July 1944.

²³⁰ Ibid.

Bennett expressed frustration with representatives from agencies who were not reporting “illegitimate” cases to the Board: “We have occasion to feel that certain agencies are not co-operating with the Board when they withhold information which has come to their knowledge and which may affect the allowance in pay.”²³¹ Bennett acknowledged that social agencies wanted to “protect confidential information regarding their clients”²³² and did not want the children to suffer due to the wife’s action.²³³ However, he reminded representatives from the agencies that “the Board has regulations which cannot be stretched to meet all situations.”²³⁴ In fairness to the husband, the allowances for these women had to be suspended until the soldier was informed of the situation.²³⁵ Once again in Board members’ minds, soldiers’ rights took precedence over the families’ financial security. This attitude assumed that soldiers would want their wives’ allowances stopped until they had an opportunity to assess the situation. But some soldiers did not agree that their wives should lose their allowances for any length of time. Although Board members claimed to represent soldiers’ interests by emphasizing the need for wives to be punished, in reality soldiers’ attitudes towards infidelity were more complex than Board members assumed.²³⁶ The soldiers’ attitudes were motivated by family and financial concerns.

²³¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-7, File Title: Montreal Welfare Department, Bennett to Young, Not dated.

²³² The local social agencies expressed a desire to want to keep the information confidential, but it is unclear if the information was in fact legally confidential. It is presumed Bennett would be aware of any legal restrictions.

²³³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 52, File Title: Policy File, Bennett to Rogers, 21 July 1942.

²³⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-7, File Title: Montreal Welfare Department, Bennett to Young, Not dated.

²³⁵ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-5, File Title: Volume 4-General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies, Bennett to Wallace, 25 January 1944.

²³⁶ The complexity of soldiers’ attitudes will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Based on a request by the Ontario Children Aid Societies, George F. Davidson, the Executive Director of the Canadian Welfare Council from March 1942 to December 1944, wrote to Bennett suggesting an alternative. The Canadian Welfare Council was the national body representing the interests of local social agencies. The local societies were concerned about the Board's stance in "illegitimate" cases and had decided at a national conference to present an alternative to the Board. Davidson relayed the local societies' suggestions to Bennett. He appeared to make his suggestions in relation to Euro-Canadian soldiers and families. He does not mention specifically what should be done in the cases of Aboriginal families.²³⁷ The main suggestion was that social workers should be given the chance to rehabilitate the families prior to the soldier finding out about the infidelity or "illegitimate" child.²³⁸ As Executive Director of the Canadian Welfare Council, Davidson was trying to present an alternative solution in dealing with these cases that would speak to concerns of the social workers who were a part of his organization. Perhaps his scope and position as Executive Director imbued his statements with more authority than the individuals who wrote in from the local social agencies. Davidson argued that the delay in notifying the soldier would give social workers the opportunity to discuss the situation with the wife and clarify the accuracy of the original information. The soldier was more likely to forgive the wife if she were able to explain the situation rather than receiving a letter about it from the Dependents'

²³⁷ For a book the Canadian Welfare Council and Aboriginal children see Canadian Welfare Council, Indian Residential Schools and the Canadian Welfare Council, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1967)

²³⁸ Davidson's statements are based on correspondence found in the DAB files. A closer examination of the Canadian Welfare Council files may provide more insights into Davidson's views. See LAC, Non-Profit Organization Papers, R4210-17-2-E, Volume 36-44, Canadian Welfare Council / Canadian Council on Social Development, 1935-1987, and LAC, Records of National Health and Welfare, RG 29, Volume 97, File 156-2-2, Canadian Welfare Council 1921-1949. For a biography on George Davidson see Richard B. Splane, George Davidson: Social policy and Public Policy Exemplar, (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 2003), Chapter 7 "Redirecting the Canadian Welfare Council," 77-92.

Allowance Board. Davidson believed that keeping families together was important in the post-war period:

If what we are striving for in the future life of Canada is normal homes in which children may grow up with their own two parents, it would seem that we are well advised to do everything possible now to maintain, restore and rebuild the homes we already have so that our Service men, upon discharge, may have some stable family life to which to return rather than face a post-war world without the home, wife or children whom they left on enlistment.²³⁹

Interestingly, Davidson identified the presence of two parents as being necessary to build a “normal” home and a “stable family life.” The nuclear family was the model upon which “the future life of Canada” would be based. He implied that other types of family situations were “abnormal.” He emphasized the importance of servicemen returning to the social stability of their homes, their wives, and their children. Keeping families together was a way fears about social instability after the war could be placated, possibly giving Davidson’s claims leverage in the eyes of certain officials. The role of social workers was to facilitate this process. Davidson wanted the Board to delay suspending the allowances in cases of infidelity or “illegitimacy.” Here the continuation of the allowances was seen as a potential incentive that could possibly help families stay together. Davidson argued that once the allowance was cancelled and the financial position of the family worsened, reconciliation between the wife and husband became difficult. As mentioned earlier, it is not evident what action Davidson believed was necessary in the case of Aboriginal families. Indian Agents do not appear to have had training in social work and as a result, do not emphasize their skills in being able to

²³⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-5, File Title: Volume 4-General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies, George F. Davidson, Executive Director, The Canadian Welfare Council, Ottawa, Ontario to Bennett, 28 June 1944. For an exploration of officials’ fears about post-war instability see Greg Donaghy, ed. *Uncertain Horizons: Canadians and Their World in 1945*, (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1996)

rehabilitate families. Some Indian Agents' comments do indicate though that they did want to keep the families together and did emphasize forgiveness among family members.

Colonel S.H. Hill, the former Chairman of the Board, corresponded with Davidson on behalf of Bennett.²⁴⁰ Hill rejected the idea that social agencies be given a chance to work on rehabilitating the family before the allowance was suspended. Hill argued that in many isolated rural areas and in provinces where social agencies were less organized, the close and continuous supervision required for the rehabilitation process could not occur. He also argued that sometimes the social agencies failed to contact the Dependents' Allowance Board with updates and this threatened the confidence of the soldiers in the Dependents' Allowance Board staff.²⁴¹ In responding to Hill's letter, Davidson argued that although the quality of service in some areas was lacking, in the areas where service was available, the agencies should be given the chance to rehabilitate families.²⁴²

Board members seemed more willing to adopt Davidson's suggestions when the war was drawing to a close. There was a shift, according to Fahrni, from "the punishment of wives to the preservation of households."²⁴³ At the end of the war, there was a greater emphasis by Board members on "forgiveness and reconciliation" among family members because they wanted to preserve as many families as possible.²⁴⁴ This

²⁴⁰ It is unclear why Hill handled this correspondence.

²⁴¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-5, File Title: Volume 4-General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies, Colonel S.H. Hill on behalf of Bennett, to Davidson, 18 July 1944.

²⁴² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 28, File 4-5, File Title: Volume 4-General Correspondence with Welfare Agencies, Davidson to Colonel Hill, 21 July 1944.

²⁴³ Fahrni, "The Romance of Reunion," 10.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

change was linked to the idea that unified families were an essential foundation for post-war Canada.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The debates regarding the legality of “tribal marriages” and cases of “illegitimacy” are worth examining for a number of reasons. They highlight the ways upper level bureaucrats at the Dependents’ Allowance Board and local officials used various types of evidence to construct their arguments. Although groups at various levels within the bureaucratic hierarchy were not monolithic, there were differences in the way officials responded based on their position and geographic location.

In the debates regarding the legality of “tribal” marriages and “illegitimacy,” Dependents’ Allowance Board members tended to be inflexible. Because of their geographic position in Ottawa, they made decisions that were based not on local experiences, but on the legal opinions, legislation, and dependents’ allowance regulations. Even though there were different legal interpretations of an issue, the law was still the basis for the argument. Although pressured by local officials to make exceptions in some cases when the regulations were too rigid, overall, these federal officials emphasized the authority of the law to determine policy.

In the case of local officials, their position as lower level bureaucrats made them sensitive to criticism by upper level bureaucrats, especially when they believed their authority was being undermined or the accuracy of their work was being questioned. Local officials had to contend with the marriage and birth registration and documentation and verification requirements. Federal officials in Ottawa were keen to enforce the

authority of the provinces in determining legal marriages and births. The demand for standardization by some upper level officials caused tension with local officials.

Since they did not have an “expertise” in the law, both Indian Agents and social workers defined their authority by their ability to work with the individuals involved to gather the necessary information. They often perceived themselves as trying to defend the interests of the families involved, although some families may have disagreed with this perspective. Local officials claimed that their personal observations, their ability to judge a woman’s character, and their interpretations of community members’ attitudes should affect the outcome of certain cases. They believed their own interpretations of the regulations were valid even when they recognized that high ranking officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board might disagree with their perspective. Because local officials were often dealing with individual cases, not broad policy measures, they were often more willing to make exceptions and were less concerned than high level officials about uniformly adhering to the regulations.

If local officials were not convinced of the legitimacy of the bureaucratic procedures and regulations, they could interfere with how the policy was implemented. For example, Indian Agents were reluctant to report cases of “illegitimate” children to the Board. Indian Agents were more likely either not to report an “illegitimate” case or to argue against a suspension if they believed the woman was “respectable.” They assessed “respectability” by the woman’s appearance, her home management skills and how she was taking care of her children. The subjective moral evaluations of the nineteenth century philanthropic tradition were not fully erased in the implementation of the

Dependents' Allowance Program. In some cases, local officials were able to mold the policy to suit their notions of "moral worthiness."

This chapter has also revealed that Dependents' Allowance Board officials had patriarchal biases and favored the Euro-Canadian nuclear family model. The dependents' allowance regulations created by upper level bureaucrats enforced the notion that the soldier was the head of the family and should be the decision maker. In cases of infidelity, soldiers could decide, for instance, if their wives could continue to receive their allowance or if it should be cut off. This decision could drastically affect the family income. Suspending a wife's allowance due to sexual infidelity placed the responsibility on her, not her husband. Soldiers' sexual behavior was not scrutinized as a part of the dependents' allowance regulations. Subjecting "tribal marriages" and common-law unions to more restrictive regulations reinforced the notion that a provincially registered Christian marriage was the "normal" state of the family and any other family situations were problematic. According to Board members, different treatments in these latter situations were justified. There was a belief that couples should be made to conform to middle class Euro-Canadian values and standards. Board members appeared to be reluctant to acknowledge customs that challenged their ideals and that recognized First Nations' cultural autonomy.

The Dependents' Allowance Program, as previous chapters have shown, did challenge the arbitrary control exercised by some Indian Agents over the money of Aboriginal soldiers' families' and thereby undermined the paternalistic policies of the Indian Affairs Branch. At the same time officials did try to pressure Aboriginal families, who were recipients of dependents' allowances, to conform to Euro-Canadian definitions

of marriage and family and again reinforce the idea that Aboriginal people should ultimately assimilate.

CHAPTER 6 CONFLICTING INTERPRETATIONS: SOLDIERS, THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS, AND BUREAUCRATS' DEBATES REGARDING DEPENDENTS' ALLOWANCE POLICIES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

So far the voices of Aboriginal soldiers and their families have not been placed at the centre of the analysis. Now is the time to examine more closely Aboriginal soldiers' families' reaction to the Dependents' Allowance Program.¹ What were families' beliefs and expectations regarding the allowance? Did they view the allowance as an entitlement? If so, on what basis did they claim their entitlement? How did this claim relate to wider political debates about the meaning of military service and definitions of citizenship? How did families react to Indian Agents' involvement in the handling of the money? What strategies did they use to get their concerns addressed? Does examining the dependents' allowance reveal anything about how family members defined their roles and responsibilities?

Soldiers' and their families' reactions to the dependents' allowance cannot be examined without looking at the meaning of military service. To separate these issues would fail to recognize the complexity of Aboriginal people's political position. In general, there were some fundamental differences in the way Euro-Canadians and Aboriginal people understood the meaning of military service. The major claim for more equal treatment for racial groups used by Euro-Canadians was that loyalty to Britain through military service entitled individual soldiers to certain benefits. In many Aboriginal people's minds, military service not only ensured greater rights for the

¹ All Aboriginal dependents' allowance recipients' names have been changed to protect the families' confidentiality.

individual, but it was also linked to claims for collective rights. Aboriginal people argued that treaty agreements should be recognized because of their military service. Their arguments regarding the meaning of military service are worth exploring because they challenge the idea of military service as being linked exclusively to individual rights and provide alternate definitions of citizenship which complicate our understanding of political debates during this period.

Within the context of wider political debates regarding the meaning of military service, Aboriginal wives made claims to the allowance as an entitlement which they received as a result of their husbands' military service. Their beliefs regarding the nature of their entitlements often conflicted with the dependents' allowance regulations. Time and again, as we have seen, the Dependents' Allowance Board Chairman emphasized that the allowance was a "gratuitous award" by which officials themselves could determine recipients' eligibility. The Chairman claimed that the allowance was to be received if the soldier were to assign the allowance to his wife and if she were sexually faithful to her husband. In contrast, some wives argued it was the duty of their husbands to provide for them financially and they did not agree with the rule that soldiers could assign the allowance to whomever they wished.

Parents, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, also believed they were entitled to the allowance and disagreed with the Board's regulations regarding their eligibility. In these debates, the public protests made by mothers are particularly useful to examine when thinking about definitions of family responsibility and women's work. As noted in Chapter 1, parents typically only received the allowance if they could prove financial need. They received lower rates of allowance than wives and could have their

allowances cancelled if they were to receive assistance from other children or if their income from their work were to exceed a certain level. Many parents questioned the legitimacy of these regulations based on their previous maintenance of their sons through their waged employment and unpaid domestic work. They argued that their sons had an ongoing financial responsibility towards them. Their own definitions of family obligations did not necessarily correspond with officials' attempts to limit parents' eligibility for their sons' allowances. They believed that entitlements were guaranteed and should not be subject to what they perceived as arbitrary rules.

Aboriginal soldiers' families who had to deal with Indian Agents protested further when Indian Agents interfered in the handling of their cheques. Aboriginal soldiers' wives, for instance, did not want to go to Indian Agents' offices to pick up their cheques. Soldiers and their wives also argued against the administration of the allowance by Indian Agents. Families wanted to make their own decisions about the amount of money they saved and how they wanted to spend their savings. Although many Indian Agents believed that it was their duty to interfere, many families believed they were entitled to greater autonomy in the handling of their affairs. Concerns about Indian Agents' handling of the allowance were often linked to broader criticisms of Indian Agents' interference in personal family relationships.

In analyzing family members' protests to Indian Agents' interference, much can be learned about the dynamics of family relationships and how these relationships were influenced by assumptions about gender roles.² In most cases, soldiers believed their

² In these relationships there is potentially also a multi-generational dynamic among parents, children and Indian Agents. In the case files examined most of the files dealt with tensions among husbands, wives and Indian Agents, not parents. The nature of the relationships between older and younger people and Indian Agents is also evident when enlistment is examined. Young soldiers were influenced to enlist or not

wives would spend the money judiciously. However, some husbands tried to stop their wives' allowances in cases of infidelity. Wives did not necessarily accept the decisions of their husbands, especially when their husbands tried to stop their allowances. Some wives believed the allowance money belonged to them to spend as they wished.

In response to the interference of Indian Agents or in cases where Indian Agents ignored families' claims, some Aboriginal people used lawyers and local Members of Parliament³ in an attempt to get their concerns addressed. Most of these intermediaries were middle class Euro-Canadians. There was a 1927 amendment to the Indian Act that stated Aboriginal people could not hire lawyers.⁴ This provision in the Indian Act remained until 1951, but enforcement was inconsistent. The rule appears to have been imposed mostly upon bands. Individuals, it seems, could still hire lawyers to make claims. Local Members of Parliament were contacted, even though the majority of

to enlist based on opinions of older community members. The Indian Agents noted that some men were not enlisting because of the advice they received from older members in the community. See Library and Archives of Canada (LAC,) Records of the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB), RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service 1939-44, Indian Agent J. Gillett, Prince Rupert, British Columbia to Major D.M. MacKay, Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, 29 April 1941, and LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service 1939-44, Indian Agent Wm. Christie, Bella Coola, British Columbia to T.R.L. MacInnes, IAB Secretary, Ottawa, Ontario, 11 October 1941.

³ This strategy was also used by other disadvantaged groups. African Canadians contacted their local members of Parliament with their concerns that black immigrants were being excluded from entrance into Canada. These local politicians brought up these concerns in the House of Commons. See James W. St. G. Walker, 'Race,' Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies, (Toronto and Waterloo: The Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History and Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), 127. In trying to advocate for the vote, women, who during the nineteenth century were denied the franchise, utilized politicians to put forward their claims. See Mary Ryan, Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990).

⁴ The provision in the Indian Act read "Every person who, without the consent of the Superintendent General...receives, obtains, solicits or requests from any Indian any payment or contribution...for the prosecution of any claim which the tribe or band of Indians to which such Indian belongs...has or is represented to have for the recovery of any claim or money for the benefit of the said tribe or band, shall be guilty of an offence." See Section 141, The Indian Act, R.S.C. 1927, c. 98, Statute of Canada, in Sharon Venne, Indian Acts and Amendments 1868-1975: An Indexed Collection, (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Native Law Centre, 1981), 301.

Aboriginal people did not receive the right to vote in federal elections until 1960.⁵ Some recipients may have believed that within the patriarchal and paternalistic system, the authority of certain individuals was respected by bureaucrats. Although many recipients recognized the legitimacy of their own demands without the approval of Euro-Canadians, they, perhaps, realized that having Euro-Canadian lawyers and politicians confirm their own statements would pressure government officials to investigate their cases more expeditiously. By identifying the people who held power within the system and the methods of protest that elicited responses, some recipients tried to use the political and bureaucratic system, which usually exploited them, to their own advantage.

The comments by politicians and lawyers indicate that some Euro-Canadians believed in a system of universal and uniform entitlements as opposed to a system where Indian Agents used their discretionary powers to give out allowances. Their comments indicate that the administrative practices of the Indian Affairs Branch were coming under greater scrutiny during the 1940's. The status of Aboriginal men as soldiers was influential in determining some lawyers and politicians' attitudes. Some of these officials were generally more willing to recognize the rights of soldiers than the rights of First Nations people. Aboriginal people's demands for cultural autonomy and self government were not typically evoked in lawyers and politicians' comments. For some acknowledging soldiers' rights was not threatening to their liberal democratic principles, but considering First Nations' collective rights was perceived as more of a threat. For

⁵ Alison Prentice, Paula Bourne, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Beth Light, Wendy Mitchinson and Naomi Black, eds., *Canadian Women: A History*. Second Edition. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Canada, 1996), 235. Although the majority of Aboriginal peoples did not receive the right to vote until 1960, some Aboriginal soldiers had previously received the right to vote during World War I. See L. James Dempsey, *Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I*, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1999), vii.

some politicians a sense of paternalistic duty may have made them feel obliged to provide assistance because they had to “look after” Aboriginal people’s interests due to their legal status as “wards” of the federal government. It is also possible that in other cases emerging human rights movements may have made them want to challenge racial discrimination.

Exploring the dynamics among Aboriginal families, government officials, and intermediaries in the Dependents’ Allowance Program indicates the complex nature of these relationships. Many recipients were determined to let their views be known to the Board when they disagreed with a policy. Bureaucrats were forced to react to these criticisms, even if they did not meet recipients’ exact demands. Perspectives and attitudes stemming from colonial traditions of paternalism, collective or national traditions of military service, and democratic traditions of citizenship, all entered the debate about dependents’ allowance policies.

6.2 HISTORIOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

The evidence presented in this chapter fits patterns that other scholars have observed about the attitudes of Aboriginal people towards military service and the response of families of all backgrounds to welfare state programs. Debates among bureaucrats and Aboriginal people on the issues of enlistment and conscription in World War I and World War II have been examined in more detail by other historians.⁶ The purpose of mentioning these issues here is not to challenge previous interpretations or to

⁶ For an overview of the compulsory enlistment issue see Michael D. Stevenson, Canada’s Greatest Wartime Muddle: National Selective Service and the Mobilization of Human Resources During World War II, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill Queen’s University Press, 2001). For a general examination of the conscription issue in Canada see J.L. Granatstein and J.M. Hitsman, Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977) and J.L. Granatstein, Conscription in the Second World War, 1939-1945: A Study in Political Management, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1969).

shift the focus away from the dependents' allowance. The intention is to provide context to families' beliefs and expectations regarding the allowance by discussing the perceived link between military service and rights. An overview of the main works that refer to the World War I period illustrates that links between military service and rights were not entirely new developments in World War II, but a continuation and expansion of trends present in the First War.

James W. St. G. Walker in an article entitled, "Race and Recruitment in World War I: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force," explores the government's recruiting policies regarding the Chinese, African Canadians, and Aboriginal people during the First World War. At first, he argues, the Canadian Federal Government refused to allow these groups to enlist. Walker shows how these groups lobbied the federal government and how this pressure, together with the government's need for more men, led to a reversal of the policy. By November 1915, Aboriginal men as well as African Canadians and Chinese were being recruited.⁷ Through enlistment, Walker argues, Aboriginal people and other minorities wanted to "be accorded equal responsibilities as well as equal opportunities."⁸ Minorities' desire to serve suggests that "'visible' Canadians had not been defeated by the racism of white society, had not accepted its rationalizations, and were not prepared to quietly accept inferior status."⁹ Walker also argues that many minority groups believed that through protest within the Canadian justice system, they could achieve change and given the government's need for soldiers, the question of enlistment represented an important opportunity for them to

⁷ James W. St. G. Walker, "Race and Recruitment in World War I: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force," *Canadian Historical Review*, 70, 1 (1989): 8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

assert their claims.¹⁰

Despite some Aboriginal people's desire to enlist voluntarily in World War I, Walker finds, many Aboriginal groups were against compulsory enlistment through conscription. They argued that they should not be forced to enlist because they did not have the same rights as other citizens. Walker's findings are relevant to discussions about the connection between military service and rights. In their arguments against conscription, Aboriginal representatives stated, "We are not citizens and have no votes, as free men."¹¹ An Ontario Aboriginal group declared that "We cannot say that we are fighting for our liberty, freedom and other privileges dear to all nations, for we have none."¹² British Columbia Aboriginal groups articulated their position: "the government attitude towards us in respect to our land troubles and in refusing to extend to us the position of citizens of Canada are unreasonable, and until we receive just treatment...we should not be subject to conscription."¹³ One of the many petitions written to the Canadian government and the Prime Minister stated that "if they were not to have the rights of citizens, they must not be forced to perform a citizen's duty."¹⁴ On January 17, 1918, an Order in Council was passed exempting Aboriginal men and Japanese from conscription on the grounds of their limited citizenship rights. In March, the regulations were amended so that any British subject disqualified from voting at a federal election

¹⁰ This pattern has also been noted in the United States. From World War I onward, military enlistment was seen as a way that minorities could achieve political legitimacy and rights. See David R. Segal, Recruiting for Uncle Sam: Citizenship and Military Manpower Policy, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 10.

¹¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6768, File 452-20, Garden River Reserve to the Governor General of Canada, 4 December 1917, as quoted in Walker, "Race and Recruitment in World War I," 26.

¹² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6768, File: 452-20, Mississauga of the New Credit to D.C. Scott, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 22 October 1917, as quoted in Walker, "Race and Recruitment in World War I," 26.

¹³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6768, File 452-20, Nishga to the Prime Minister, November 1917, as quoted in Walker, "Race and Recruitment in World War I," 18.

¹⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6768, File: 452-20, Committee of Allied Tribes to the Prime Minister, 17 November 1917, as quoted in Walker, "Race and Recruitment in World War I," 18.

was exempted from conscription.¹⁵

Aboriginal soldiers' status and rights were a source of debate in the post World War I period. L. James Dempsey, in his book entitled, Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I explores the experiences of 400 Western Aboriginal men who enlisted.¹⁶ He finds that soldiers did receive the right to vote in federal elections through the passing of the Military Voters Bill which was introduced in 1917. For those Aboriginal soldiers who voted in the 1917 election, they did not lose their treaty status.¹⁷ Usually, people had to give up their treaty status before they received the right to vote, but an exception to this general pattern was made for soldiers and veterans.¹⁸ After the war, through an amendment made to the 1924 Dominion Elections Act, First World War veterans living on reserves received the right to vote.¹⁹

Suggestions were made in the post World War I period that all Aboriginal people become enfranchised. Enfranchisement meant that the individuals legally became citizens. They would have the right to vote, but they would lose their status as "Indians" and would no longer have treaty rights. Once enfranchised, bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch believed they no longer had any financial responsibility towards these

¹⁵ Ibid., 19.

¹⁶ L. James Dempsey, Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1999), vii.

¹⁷ Ibid., 73.

¹⁸ Men who were "Status Indians" had had the right to vote in 1885, but the vote was repealed in 1898. The reason for the repeal was justified by officials who argued as "wards of the state" these men could "not act independently and freely." The majority of "Status Indians" did not receive the vote until 1960, unless they became enfranchised or were soldiers or veterans. Whether or not Aboriginal female relatives of soldiers received the right to vote during 1917 as white female soldiers' relatives did is not clear. More research on this issue could possibly indicate in what ways notions of soldiers' rights may have affected the rights that some Aboriginal families received. See David Bedford, "Aboriginal Voter Participation in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick," Electoral Insight, November 2003, <http://www.elections.ca/>, consulted on January 31, 2006.

¹⁹ It is not clear why this amendment was made at this time. More research could provide insights into what role, if any, Aboriginal veterans' organizations played in pressuring the government to make this amendment. See Canada. Museum of Civilization, "A History of the Vote in Canada: Chronicle A Spotlight on 1920-1997," <http://www.civilization.ca/hist/elections>, consulted on January 31, 2006.

individuals. Duncan Campbell Scott, the Superintendent of the Indian Affairs Branch at the time, was particularly keen on enfranchisement: going so far to suggest that enfranchisement in some cases should be mandatory and the individual's consent should not have to be obtained.²⁰ Although some Aboriginal soldiers were enfranchised, others protested against enfranchisement because they did not want to give up their special status and treaty rights.²¹ Officials at the Indian Affairs Branch presented the question of legal status in such a narrow rigid way that, after the war, people did not have the chance to choose an option that would allow them to vote, but would also allow them to keep their treaty rights.

Scholars studying the World War II period have observed similar patterns regarding Aboriginal people's attitudes towards enlistment and conscription. Michael D. Stevenson points out in his article, "The Mobilisation of Native Canadians during the Second World War," that some men "felt that their voluntary participation in the war effort would enhance their claims toward full citizenship and legal equality in Canada come peacetime."²² When the issue of conscription arose in 1942, however, Stevenson finds, many Aboriginal men questioned their requirement to serve. As Walker found when studying the Great War, Stevenson suggests that a lack of political rights, ambiguous citizenship status, and limited recognition of First Nations' collective rights were reasons used by Aboriginal men against conscription.²³ The point here is that, once again, military service was being linked to rights. The evidence found in the dependents' allowance files supports this conclusion. Similar to Walker and Stevenson, two main

²⁰ Dempsey, *Warriors of the King*, 74.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 73, 80.

²² Michael D. Stevenson, "The Mobilisation of Native Canadians During the Second World War," *Journal of Canadian Historical Association New Series*, Volume 7, (1996): 214.

²³ *Ibid.*, 215.

stances were evident. Some men enlisted based on the understanding that they would obtain more rights based on their service. Others refused to serve because they did not have certain rights.

After World War II, there was an attempt, as in World War I, to re-assess Aboriginal people's citizenship status and address the fact that many Aboriginal lacked certain political rights. R. Scott Sheffield, whose work was discussed in previous chapters, ends his book on Aboriginal soldiers and World War II by discussing the Special Joint Commission on Aboriginal Affairs of 1946 which was already discussed in Chapter 3. The Commission was set up in reaction to Aboriginal people's, the public's and politicians' protests that the conditions in which Aboriginal people lived on reserves, together with their lack of rights and status in comparison to other Canadian citizens, were unacceptable.²⁴ In the past, the public had generally not paid much attention to First Nations' issues. According to Sheffield, the public became more sensitive to these issues due to factors such as Aboriginal people's participation in the war effort, a desire to improve the standard of living in the country, and the influence of emerging human rights movements.²⁵

Once again, as in World War I, the issues around Aboriginal people's status remained unresolved, due to the differences of opinion among the Euro-Canadian politicians and Aboriginal groups. The Members of Parliament and Senators selected to be on the Special Joint Commission committee received input from Indian Affairs Branch officials and Aboriginal organizations. Aboriginal organizations across Canada wrote

²⁴ R. Scott Sheffield, The Red Man's On The Warpath: The Image of the 'Indian' and the Second World War, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004),130-131.

²⁵ Ibid.

over 150 submissions that were read by the Commission members.²⁶ At first, many committee members believed they could recognize Aboriginal people's contributions to the war effort by giving them the right to vote; these members underestimated how much First Nations wanted their collective rights recognized. Aboriginal people's submissions, however, convinced committee members that Aboriginal people did not want the vote if their status and rights as Aboriginal people would be taken away.²⁷ As Sheffield comments, committee members, "finally accepted that for First Nations people the franchise was a nebulous and finite reward compared to the loss of identity, kinship ties, and the security of Indian status."²⁸ Characterizing the 150 submissions, Sheffield concludes, "Though they had different and conflicting ideas on many issues, their desire to maintain their distinctive cultures cut through all else. It most certainly went against the grain of the assimilation doctrine that formed the public and official common sense in the country."²⁹ Based on many First Nations' interpretations of the historic relationship between themselves and the federal government, it was not possible for many Aboriginal people to embrace the concepts of individuality, universality and egalitarianism which were essential to Euro-Canadian notions of citizens' rights during and after World War II.³⁰ As a result of these different conceptualizations of citizenship, Aboriginal people's status remained ambiguous in the immediate post-war period.³¹ It was not until 1960 that "Status Indians" in Canada received the right to vote without having to give up their

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 139.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 158.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 159.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 147.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

treaty rights.³²

Scholars' findings about the impact of military service on Aboriginal men's attitudes are relevant to this chapter, especially when soldiers' reactions to the dependents' allowance are studied. Men used military service as a basis for arguing for the recognition of their cultural traditions. Men's status as soldiers also created certain expectations about the way that they should be treated by government officials. Dempsey finds that when soldiers returned from the First World War, they argued for greater rights based upon their military service. One soldier, for instance, claimed that his community should be able to openly hold sun dances. As he explained to W.M. Graham, the Indian Commissioner at Regina, "I went to the war. I offered my life to protect this country. I have come back. I fought for you and I fought for all those who sat in this office during the war. I have a right to ask you to give us back our Sun Dance."³³ As well, soldiers argued that they should be able to manage their own affairs; not only because of their loyalty, but also because of the experience they had gained during the war. One soldier stated his opinion:

In the Army, oftimes, I was entrusted with very responsible work. In the struggle for liberty I tried to do my little bit, and because of having learnt its meaning, I beg of you, to grant me my request and right, by letting [me] be my own master. I may say I held the rank of Corporal and have been awarded the Military Medal.³⁴

Similarly, Robin Jarvis Brownlie finds that many Aboriginal veterans of World War I were less likely to accept the dictates of Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats after their war experiences. As she notes, "The returned soldiers were often less inclined to

³² See Bedford, "Aboriginal Voter Participation in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick."

³³ See Abel Watetch, *Payepot and His People* (Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1959), 46 as quoted in Dempsey, *Warriors of the King*, 78.

³⁴ See LAC, RG 10 Volume 7524 file 25,111-2 Pt 1 Alexander Brass to IAB, Not dated, as quoted in Dempsey, *Warriors of the King*, 78.

tolerate the department's control and the condescension of its employees."³⁵ Moreover, the experience of leaving the reserve provided men, who had lived on isolated reserves, to observe the difference in standards of living between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.³⁶ It also allowed them to meet Euro-Canadian citizens on an equal footing. Indeed, after the war, many Aboriginal veterans were able to ask their Euro-Canadian comrades in positions of authority to intervene on their behalf in disputes with Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats. In addition, veterans went to the Legion and to local politicians seeking assistance with their concerns about veterans' benefits programs.³⁷ The employment of lawyers increased after the war as well. Although Aboriginal people had always protested government policies, because of the war, veterans identified additional "levers of power within the system as a means of resistance against federal control."³⁸

The use of intermediaries was often necessary because the initial reaction of Indian Affairs Branch officials to Aboriginal people's letters and protests was usually negative. Before World War II, according to Brownlie's study of Indian Agents' administration of the Soldier Settlement Program, she finds Agents consistently sought to undermine the legitimacy of Aboriginal people's criticisms. Agents would point out that the individuals protesting were "improvident" or "irresponsible" in an attempt to discredit their claims.³⁹ Individuals who tried to bring up treaty grievances or make allegations

³⁵ Robin Jarvis Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye: Indian Agents, Government Power, and Aboriginal Resistance in Ontario, 1918-1939*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003), 131.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 131. See also Robin Jarvis Brownlie, "Work Hard and Be Grateful: Native Soldiers Settlers in Ontario after the First World War," in *On the Case: Explorations in Social History*, Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 193-194.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 140.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 62.

were considered to be “troublemakers” by the Indian Agents.⁴⁰ When officials in Ottawa received letters, their response was similar to that of the Agents.⁴¹ Brownlie concludes that “the department very rarely took Aboriginal views into account.”⁴²

For the 1930’s and 1940’s, Sheffield makes similar observations regarding officials’ attitudes towards Aboriginal people when they expressed concerns. Indian Affairs Branch officials believed that Aboriginal people who protested were “stubborn” and “easily misled.”⁴³ Sheffield argues that officials portrayed, “Native resistance as the product of ignorance, unintelligence, obstinacy, and the work of agitators and subversives.”⁴⁴ By belittling the people who complained, Indian Affairs Branch officials could, in their own minds, dismiss the legitimacy of Aboriginal people’s objections.⁴⁵ The consistency in the way that protestors were depicted over time indicates how views of Aboriginal people within the Indian Affairs Branch tended not to change.⁴⁶

As we will see, in the case of the dependents’ allowance, most of the Indian Agents’ comments sought to disregard Aboriginal people’s criticisms. Indian Agents wanted to ensure that they maintained control over the family finances and they felt threatened when soldiers and their family members tried to question their authority. Despite the fact that Indian Agents consistently undermined families’ financial decisions, Aboriginal families continued to present their own point of view. Because some of Aboriginal men who complained were described by their military officers as “good” soldiers, it became more difficult for Indian Agents to dismiss the people who

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 81.

⁴³ Sheffield, *The Red Man’s On The Warpath*, 57.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

complained as being merely “unintelligent” or “troublemakers.” The status of these men and their families as “soldiers’ families” may have helped some of them when trying to get their claims addressed.

In considering Aboriginal soldiers’ families’ responses, it is also important to keep in mind scholars’ suggestions that historians must seek to understand the complexities of these relationships. Susan Neylan, whose theoretical perspective was influenced in part by Stoler and Cooper, states that “Just as colonial forces were heterogeneous,” terms such as “resistance” or “colonized” do not accurately address “the myriad of responses” Aboriginal people had to these forces.⁴⁷ While not always being “mutually beneficial,” she argues that “The resulting forged relationship between the colonizer and colonized was dialogic...”⁴⁸ By examining individual dependents’ allowance cases, the negotiations that went on between families and government officials can be studied. In analyzing these interactions, there has been an attempt to see how these families tried to influence policy and political debates.

Research on the nature of family responses to welfare state policies is relevant when exploring the interactions among families, local officers and upper level bureaucrats regarding the dependents’ allowance. When Dominique Marshall investigated the reactions of poor and working class parents to the Family Allowance Program, she found that officials and parents sometimes had very different views. Officials, especially local truant officers, had expectations that, according to the law, children under the age of sixteen would attend school. If children were not attending, the

⁴⁷ Susan Neylan, “Contested Family: Navigating Kin and Culture in Protestant Missions to the Tsimshian, 1857-1896” in *Households of Faith: Family, Gender, and Community in Canada, 1760-1969*, Nancy Christie, ed. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), 183-184.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

allowance would be suspended. Some bureaucrats blamed lack of attendance on “ignorant parents” and supported a campaign to convince parents, especially those from lower incomes, that education was essential.⁴⁹ Marshall finds, however, that these officials’ concerns were misplaced. Parents from working class and poor families often realized the importance of their children receiving an education, but their economic situation required that the children stay at home or work. They consistently wrote to officers trying to explain their position. They argued that it was not possible for them to follow the law when in order to send their children to school, they had to pay for school supplies and other costs.⁵⁰ Marshall finds that many parents also questioned “the logic of politicians’ macro-management of their lives” when economic conditions demanded that their children work.⁵¹ In order not to lose access to the allowance, some parents became adept at using the reasoning and language necessary to convince bureaucrats that their children should be allowed to miss a certain amount of school to work.⁵² In the case of the compulsory education law, Marshall finds that truancy officers sometimes increased the number of permits for absences so children from certain families could miss school and still receive the allowance.⁵³ Marshall summarizes their position: “Many truancy officers believed in fact that, unable to offer an alternative solution to destitute families, they had no choice but to accommodate their demands. Incomes were not sufficient to hire a salaried employee, and the labour pool to replace the children was

⁴⁹ Dominique Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State: Quebec Families, Compulsory Education and Family Allowances. Translated by Nicola Danby. (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2005), Chapter 6, 26.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., Chapter 6, 5.

⁵³ Ibid., Chapter 5, 26.

limited, a limitation which was accentuated during the war.”⁵⁴ Marshall argues that in consistently trying to present their viewpoints to officials, families did more than simply resist the State, but influenced policy. As Neylan suggests in relation to Aboriginal families, Marshall argues that this view is more flexible than simply seeing the State as imposing its laws onto families and families having little say in how policies affecting them were implemented.⁵⁵

The pattern, that Marshall observes, of poor and working class families’ both questioning the macro-management of their lives and working within the system to achieve results seems to be applicable to the case of Aboriginal families and the dependents’ allowance. As we will see, Aboriginal families questioned the rigidity of the dependents’ allowance regulations and Indian Agents’ interference in their financial affairs. However, at the same time Aboriginal soldiers and their families appealed to various levels of officials in the bureaucratic hierarchy in order to get their concerns addressed. When receiving women’s requests for additional information about their savings accounts, upper level bureaucrats in some cases were required to provide a more detailed statement of how monies were distributed. In responding to families’ complaints, Indian Agents had to explain their actions to their superiors. Bureaucrats, no matter what their goals, regulations or procedures were, had to consider families’ responses when implementing policies. Families’ protests made bureaucrats realize there were limits to how restrictive policies could be. In these ways, families influenced dependents’ allowance policies.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Introduction, 10.

6.3 WHY FIGHT? ABORIGINAL PEOPLE'S ARGUMENTS REGARDING ENLISTMENT, POLITICAL ENTITLEMENTS AND FIRST NATIONS' COLLECTIVE RIGHTS

In previous debates about the allowance, loyalty to Britain and to the Empire were reasons used by certain Euro-Canadians to justify why Aboriginal soldiers deserved better treatment. As already discussed in Chapter 1, for some, loyalty was viewed as a sign of assimilation and the adoption of Euro-Canadian values. The arguments presented by Aboriginal men⁵⁶ indicate that some of them interpreted the meaning of loyalty differently. By being loyal to Britain in military conflicts, they protected their treaty agreements with Britain. They did not necessarily see loyalty as endorsement of Euro-Canadian values, but a means by which to protect their collective rights. Although the men discussed here did not use the term “collective rights” in their letters, scholars such as Hugh Shewell and R. Scott Sheffield have used the term to refer to the claims by First Nations to protect their treaty rights, cultural rights, and land claims. These scholars distinguish between these rights and the “individual rights” emphasized in Euro-Canadian society which included the right to vote.⁵⁷ These individual rights emphasized universality and equal treatment for all citizens. Recognition of Aboriginal people's special status was not considered a part of these individual rights. Aboriginal men's basis for claiming rights was more complicated than a belief that patriotism entitled them to these rights. Their understanding of treaty obligations and their status as the first peoples of Canada made them believe their demands had a historic precedent. These claims must be examined if one wants to put Aboriginal people's attitudes towards the dependents'

⁵⁶ No letters by Aboriginal women on this issue were located in the archival files examined.

⁵⁷ Sheffield, *The Red Man's On the Warpath*, 159 and Hugh Shewell, 'Enough to Keep Them Alive,': *Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2001), 236.

allowance policy in a wider political context.

As discussed in Chapter 1, when Euro-Canadian journalists or bureaucrats wrote about historic alliances, they did not see continued military service as a guarantee of collective rights, but as an endorsement of Aboriginal people's loyalty to Britain. Alternatively, in some Aboriginal men's view, military service stemmed from a tradition of historic alliances between Britain and First Nations. Elijah Palmer, a Sioux man from Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, wrote a letter to Harry Leader who was a former veteran and a Liberal Member of Parliament for Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.⁵⁸ Palmer argued that because of Sioux men's military service, they should be recognized as Canadians, not Americans. The status of the Sioux peoples in Canada was a contentious issue. Although the Sioux originally lived in the Minnesota area, expanding agricultural settlements by white settlers in the late 1850's forced them out of their traditional lands and led to an uprising in 1862 which was crushed by the American military. Seeking refuge from the American Army, over a thousand Sioux peoples migrated to the Red River settlement in Manitoba.⁵⁹ In claiming their right to live in Canada, historian Peter Douglas Elias, recounts the Sioux understanding that King George III had made an oath to them. As part of this oath, in exchange for their loyalty during the War of 1812, the King had promised that "their culture and freedom would always be respected and honoured wherever British rule prevailed."⁶⁰ Officials in Ottawa did not agree and

⁵⁸ Leader was an exporter, a farmer and a rancher. He served as a Member of Parliament for Portage la Prairie, Manitoba from 1921 to 1925 and from 1935 to 1945. He was a member of the Progressive Caucus from 1922 to 1925. He was a member of the Liberal Caucus from 1936 to 1946. See Library of Parliament, "Senators and Members-Historical Information," http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/SenatorsMembers_house consulted on July 18, 2005.

⁵⁹ For a more detailed description of the events surrounding the migration of the Sioux from the United States to the Red River settlement see Peter Douglas Elias, The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest: Lessons for Survival, (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1998), 17-19.

⁶⁰Elias, The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest, 19.

claimed that these Sioux were “alien Indians.” At the time, however, the government did not have the necessary military force in the West to force them to leave, and decided, instead, to “tolerate” their presence.⁶¹ Some of the Sioux families who migrated settled in the Portage La Prairie area where Palmer resided.⁶² Due to the disagreement about their status, the Sioux were not included in the treaty making process and were provided with little aid or land from the government. Despite this lack of assistance, the Sioux continued to fight for the British in subsequent military conflicts. Palmer referred to this continuing military participation as a reason why the Sioux should be included in a treaty:

They claim this is the fifth war they have taken part in, fighting under British Falag (sic), but still we are looked upon as or taken as American Sioux even yet after the last war. These are the wars they claim they took part in –first war, 1812-1816; second, 1885; third, 1901; fourth, 1914-18; fifth, the present war of today....After fighting in the five wars alongside the British and Canadian soldiers...when this war is over are we going back to the American blood? If not the good Government should treat us a little better-bring us under the Treaty Act... The next meeting will be held about the 10th of April. The Members of the present meetings want to know if you could have some good worthy news to hear by then. Right now it is hard to say what is what, but what they want to know for sure is –‘are we going to be called Americans or Canadians’ after this war. They want it settled.⁶³

Palmer believed that the Sioux should be included in the treaty, despite the federal government’s long standing reluctance to recognize the Sioux as Canadians. By writing his letter to a politician, perhaps, Palmer hoped that Leader, in his position as a local Member of Parliament, would pressure bureaucrats to recognize the validity of the Sioux’s claims. It is clear from the above quotation that military service was directly linked in Palmer’s mind to the recognition of treaty rights.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 187.

⁶³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Elijah Palmer, Portage la Prairie, Manitoba to Harry Leader, M.P. for Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, 17 March 1942.

Palmer was not alone in placing such importance on treaty rights. This stance was a view shared by other First Nations. Significantly, when presenting evidence to the Special Joint Commission in 1946, the main evidence First Nations people referred to in order to support their claims were the treaties. Initially, committee members downplayed the importance of treaties. The consistent statements made by First Nations about the significance of the treaties convinced some committee members, however, that the treaties were of greater importance than the Indian Affairs Branch officials acknowledged.⁶⁴ Even though they were a dominant force, bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch did not solely set the agenda when it came to defining the government's relationship with Aboriginal people. If they had, the treaties would have been forgotten.

Some Aboriginal people, such as Palmer, believed that military service did not only confirm Aboriginal people's collective rights, but was a basis for arguing for political rights within the Euro-Canadian community. Some argued for the franchise, believing that this would give them more political clout. They wanted to use their right to vote as individuals as leverage in their fight for collective rights. After mentioning the long standing military alliances between the Sioux and the British, Elijah Palmer argued that the Sioux should have the right to vote:

If we could only have the right to vote for this manpower for Overseas Service. We will be very glad to vote for it because that's the only way we can win the war. We think the Indians all over Canada should have a say too, because we are all in the war, but they listen to the French Canadians of Quebec. Who are the natives of this Country, Indians or French Canadians?⁶⁵

Palmer referred to the fact that, if the Sioux were to have the right to vote, they would

⁶⁴ See Sheffield, *The Red Man's On The Warpath*, 142 and 157.

⁶⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Palmer to Leader, 17 March 1942.

vote for conscription.⁶⁶ When Palmer was writing his letter in March 1942, Canadians were about to be asked, through a national plebiscite, whether or not the federal government could be released from its promise that there would be no overseas conscription. A large majority of French Canadians were against releasing the government from its promise because they were staunchly opposed to conscription while most English Canadians supported conscription.⁶⁷ Possibly Palmer was trying to appeal to politicians' anxieties over the outcome of the vote as a way of supporting his argument. He questioned the degree to which French Canadians influenced politicians and argued that Aboriginal people also had legitimate claims in political debates because of their status as the first peoples of Canada.⁶⁸ Palmer's arguments reflect a trend observed by historians studying World War I. As Dempsey noted in the historiographic section of this paper, soldiers and veterans demanded the right to vote and greater recognition of Aboriginal issues based upon their military service.

Other racial groups made similar links during World War II. Some of the Chinese men, who enlisted, claimed that they did so in order to gain more status and rights for their ethnic group⁶⁹ and Japanese Canadians believed military enlistment would entitle them to the right to vote. Some men argued this was their reason for wanting to enlist. White politicians believed these potential demands for more rights were reasons to exclude certain ethnic groups from enlisting. In formulating their arguments against the

⁶⁶ Not all First Nations' people would have supported Palmer's argument because many were against conscription. See Stevenson, "The Mobilisation of Native Canadians During the Second World War," 214.

⁶⁷ See J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975) and C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945*, (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer of Canada, 1970).

⁶⁸ It is not clear if Palmer was reacting to statements by a specific individual or if he made his comments based on his general perception.

⁶⁹ See Robert Rutherford, "Masculine Identities in the 1950's," Conference Paper, Canadian Historical Association, Annual General Meeting, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, June 2003, 1-25.

enlistment of the Japanese Canadians, politicians in British Columbia anticipated that Japanese Canadian soldiers would demand the right to vote and public opinion was against granting them this right. The issue of extending the franchise was one of the factors that eventually led the Federal Liberal Cabinet to decide to forbid Japanese Canadians to enlist.⁷⁰

Not all Aboriginal people used military service as a basis for advocating for more political rights. Arguments against compulsory service must be considered if the complexity of Aboriginal people's viewpoints is to be addressed. Stevenson found in his research on the compulsory enlistment program that some Aboriginal people argued that a lack of political rights ensured that they should not be subject to compulsory military registration for home defence.⁷¹ Compulsory service for home defence began in June 1940. As a part of this registration process, single Aboriginal men from the age of 19 to 45 were supposed to go to Indian Agents to register and get medical examinations.⁷² Many Aboriginal people protested having to register for compulsory service. As Bob Crawford from the Nishka reserve in British Columbia commented:

I promise that unless my people, I mean the Nishka band are free and that the white will treat them like they treat the Japs and Chinese... I don't care if I go to prison if I don't go. I won't go unless we get what we want... We are going on this Monday's boat, Isaac Angus and I to the training centre at Vernon. But the Councilors told us not to until the meeting is passed.⁷³

⁷⁰Ken Adachi, The Enemy that Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1991), 193, 293. In 1945, 150 men were accepted into the Canadian Intelligence Corps because officials believed their language skills would help fight the war with Japan. However, the soldiers received little publicity or recognition for their efforts. Japanese Canadians received the right to vote in 1948, but it is unclear what role, if any, the military service of the men played in receiving this right. See Adachi, The Enemy that Never Was, 293-295, 345.

⁷¹For an overview of the debate surrounding military registration see Sheffield, The Red Man's On The Warpath, 51-61 and Stevenson, "The Mobilisation of Native Canadians During the Second World War," 214-215.

⁷²Fred Gaffen, Forgotten Soldiers, (Penticton: Theytus Books, Ltd., 1985), 67.

⁷³LAC, RG 10, Volume 11154, File: CR 35 PTC 1939-42, Bob Crawford, Kincolith, British Columbia to

Crawford wanted Euro-Canadians to treat the Nishka band like they treat the “Japs and Chinese.” It is unclear what he meant because the Japanese during this time period lost their rights as citizens, their property, and were moved to internment camps.⁷⁴ Perhaps, Crawford meant that he wanted greater freedom for the Nishka so they would not be treated like the Japanese. Like Palmer, Crawford compared the position of his First Nation to other ethnic and racial minorities. In Palmer’s case, he believed the government’s treatment of French Canadians was better than what First Nations received. In Crawford’s case, he seemed to suggest that he wanted his people to receive better treatment than other ethnic minorities. These comments imply that ethnic and racial minorities compared their status to one another and used the status of another group as a basis for arguing for political and civic rights. At times, the restrictions placed on an ethnic or racial group could be supported by other groups if it benefited them economically. In British Columbia, the Native Brotherhood supported the restrictions placed upon Japanese fishermen and farmers during World War II because it meant less competition and greater economic prosperity for First Nations people engaged in these industries.⁷⁵

Crawford’s decision not to enlist because of what the leaders in his community

Nellie (not further identified,) 26 October 1941. This letter was intercepted at the Residential School and sent to the Indian Agent.

⁷⁴ For an examination of how the Japanese were treated during World War II see Adachi, *The Enemy that Never Was*, Patricia Roy, J.L. Granastein, Masako Iino, Hiroko Takamura, *Mutual Hostages: Canadians and the Japanese during the Second World War*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) and Ann Gomer Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism: the Uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War*, (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1981). Except for the reference Adachi makes to the Native Brotherhood supporting the segregation of Japanese fishermen and farmers, the opinions and reactions of First Nations to the internment of the Japanese were not discussed in these books so further context to Crawford’s comment cannot be provided at this time. For the Native Brotherhood reference see Adachi, *The Enemy that Never Was*, 299.

⁷⁵ Adachi notes the stance of this organization, but does not go into detail regarding why the organization held this opinion or if it changed over time. See Adachi, *The Enemy that Never Was*, 299.

advised him was not an isolated incident. Crawford referred to the “Councilors” who told him not to go to the training centre, until after the meeting. Other young men and Indian Agents made similar comments that suggest that the older community members influenced these men’s decisions not to register. In such a case, Harold Mackinnon from Prince Rupert, British Columbia claimed that he did not report for military training because his grandfather told him not to and he wanted to obey his grandfather. In reference to McKinnon’s grandparents, Indian Agent J. Gillett from the Skeena Agency near Prince Rupert stated, “John MacKinnon and his wife are Indians of the old type and it is useless to try and reason with them...”⁷⁶ In general, Indian Agent William Christie of Bella Coola commented, “older people” were “very antagonistic” to compulsory military training.⁷⁷ These comments are reflective of some Indian Agents’ attitudes that some older Aboriginal people had an “innate” set of characteristics that were never going to be changed.⁷⁸ Young people were perceived as more adaptable. When older people brought up treaty grievances or continued to maintain First Nations’ cultural traditions, Indian Agents often used the people’s old age as a reason why their views were irrelevant by suggesting that their age made them “backward” or “senile.”⁷⁹ These views contradicted the beliefs in many First Nations communities where older people were perceived as having the most knowledge and as a result of this wisdom, played an important role in

⁷⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service 1939-44, Gillett to MacKay, 29 April 1941.

⁷⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service 1939-44, Christie to MacInnes, 11 October 1941.

⁷⁸ Sarah Carter makes a similar observation in her study on agricultural policy in the nineteenth century in the West. Government officials claimed that the “Indians of the old type” were unwilling to adapt to farming and brought up the government’s failure to adhere to treaty promises. See Sarah Carter, Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 257. The notion that younger people could be more easily taught Euro-Canadian ways was central to the residential school policy. See J.R. Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 35.

⁷⁹ Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye, 70.

educating young people.⁸⁰ Older people's opinions were to be respected and honoured, not discounted.⁸¹ Crawford and Mackinnon's desire to follow the advice of the older people in their community may have corresponded with these beliefs.

Not all older people were against enlistment. Some older male relatives in First Nations communities endorsed enlistment if certain demands were met. Steven G. Gamester from New Hazelton, British Columbia, uncle of Jake Mitchell, wrote to Inspector J. Coleman concerning his reservations about his nephew going for military training. He asked Coleman to forward the letter to the Indian Commissioner for British Columbia. He wanted to express his concerns to one of the higher level officials within the bureaucratic hierarchy:

As this Boy called for service of Reserve without full privilege to the country...we not only holding this Boy just because we dont like to have our Indian Boys to the serve for the country. we like very much to do so. but we have to have written agreement from Gov.t. granted us the full privilege to the country. this will protection us at home an the boys in the Army. now I am having my boy examine By doctor Austen but I'll have to have the answer before I'll let him go. because we (word illegible) Indian an with out support from this country an dont even get enough schooling an (word illegible)⁸²

Gamester insisted that he receive a written agreement from the government to protect "us at home" and the young men in the Army. It is interesting that Gamester wanted a written document. Perhaps, he recognized that within the Euro-Canadian bureaucratic system written documents held more weight than oral agreements. Gamester's reference to "us at home" possibly meant his nephew's family or his First Nations' community. If

⁸⁰ Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 35.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* See also Cynthia R. Commachio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 32.

⁸² LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service 1939-44, Steven G. Gamester, Hagwilget Indian Reserve, New Hazelton, British Columbia to Mr. J. Coleman, Inspector, (Location not identified), 7 June 1941.

Gamester meant the latter, military service was seen as earning entitlements not only for the individual soldier and his immediate family, but the whole community. A similar connection was made in Chapter 5 when the Dependents' Allowance Board's designation of "Longhouse marriage" as common-law, was seen as an affront to the whole Six Nations First Nation. Gamester did not describe what he meant by "full privilege." It is possible that he meant that his people should receive the status and rights of Euro-Canadian citizens in the country or he may have meant that the government should fulfill its treaty obligations to the fullest extent. In previous examples, we have seen how military enlistment was linked to the right to vote. Here, Gamester links military enlistment to other rights such as the right to schooling. He attempted to use his refusal to allow his nephew to enlist as leverage in his argument for more support. He may have believed that it was his responsibility as an older member of his community to insist that the government recognize its treaty obligations.

This example also reveals how older male relatives perceived their role in the family. Gamester believed that he should determine under what conditions his nephew would enlist. According to some First Nations' traditions, extended family members' status is particularly important. In the Wakashan language, spoken by some Northwest Coast First Nations, "aunts" and "uncles" are not distinguished from "parents."⁸³ One's age and generation are more important than specific parentage. In some cases, uncles trained and educated young men rather than fathers.⁸⁴ Gamester's letter, on behalf of his nephew, could be indicative of a tradition in some First Nations where extended family members make claims upon children on behalf of the community.

⁸³ Ruth Kirk, *Wisdom of the Elders: Native Tradition on the Northwest Coast*, (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1986), 37.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Many government officials did not recognize the legitimacy of Aboriginal people's concerns about young men's enlistment. In responding to Gamester, D.M. MacKay, the Indian Commissioner of British Columbia, stated that Gamester's nephew had to go to military training. MacKay stated, "This training is compulsory under the law, and you should encourage your nephew to proceed to the training centre once he is called. Otherwise, he would be subject to the penalties for non-compliance."⁸⁵ MacKay ignored Gamester's demand about receiving a written agreement.

In short, notions of military service for the Aboriginal men discussed here, were intricately linked to rights. They believed men's military service obliged the government to fulfill its treaty obligations. They demanded that the rights of the whole community be recognized in addition to the rights of the individual soldier. Years of military service to Britain and Canada allowed many First Nations to become well practiced in articulating such demands which often, as we have seen by officials' responses above, were dismissed.

6.4 A RIGHT OR "GRATUITOUS AWARD"? PERCEPTIONS OF THE ALLOWANCE BY RECIPIENTS

Previous chapters have shown that in public debates about the allowance, representatives from nongovernmental organizations and journalists believed soldiers' families were entitled to the allowances as a right. How did Aboriginal families respond to debates about the dependents' allowance? Did they see the allowance as a right? Upon what basis did they make their claims?

Both wives and parents' awareness of larger debates about the meaning of

⁸⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service 1939-44, MacKay to Gamester, 14 June 1941.

military service and their knowledge of or experience with previous programs, most likely, influenced how they discussed the dependents' allowance. First Nations had a long history of referring to their military service as a reason for their entitlement to economic benefits.⁸⁶ In addition, public debates about soldiers' rights during both World Wars may have also influenced soldiers' families' attitudes. As already shown in Chapter 3, representatives from the Legion and journalists claimed that the allowances should be included as a part of soldiers' salaries. Allowance and pension programs in World War I and provincial benefits programs such as the mothers' allowance also exposed Aboriginal families to how other social benefits programs operated.⁸⁷ Based on these experiences, many wives and parents asserted their claims to individual economic benefits. In interacting with the State on an individual basis when claiming these rights, they did not necessarily believe their demands for collective rights were undermined. As illustrated above, many saw a link between military service and collective, as well as individual rights.

Most often in the dependents' allowance case files for Aboriginal recipients, wives claimed they were entitled to the allowance because of their status as soldiers' relatives. Some thought that this entitlement existed whether or not their husbands assigned the allowance to them. The examples used here are from Aboriginal families, but it is possible that non-Aboriginal wives held similar views.⁸⁸ As Maureen Peterson⁸⁹

⁸⁶ In his study of the nineteenth century, Anthony P. Michel has also found that Aboriginal families made claims for economic benefits based on their long history of military service. See Anthony P. Michel, "The Nile Voyageurs: 'To Represent the Country in Egypt'" Ph.D. Dissertation, Carleton University, forthcoming 2006.

⁸⁷ Although the focus is on non-Aboriginal women, there are a few references to Aboriginal women's experiences with the Mother's Allowances Program in Margaret Jane Little, 'No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit': The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), 47-48, 66-67, 98, 138.

⁸⁸ Examining more non-Aboriginal wives' letters could possibly reveal that they made similar complaints

commented, “My husband in the army over Canada and over Woodstock they to me to rite to him, but he refuse to leave me the money. I got a letter form him he said he would [n’t] leave me any money. I dont see why he refuse he’s my husband... I think I’m entitle to it I’m his wife.”⁹⁰ Peterson concluded, “he never did help me I guess its time for him to now.”⁹¹ This example reveals how husbands and wives sometimes had differing interpretations of the allowance policy. According to Peterson, the soldier believed that he had the option to assign his wife the allowance. This perception corresponded with dependents’ allowance regulations. Under these regulations, soldiers could assign the allowance to whomever they chose as long as they could prove that they had supported the individual financially prior to enlistment. The maximum number of individuals who could be assigned part of the allowance was three.⁹² In the case of the Peterson family, there is no letter from the soldier to indicate his reasons for not wanting to assign the allowance to his wife. Peterson challenged the notion that soldiers could decide not to support their families. She believed it was the duty of her husband to provide for her financially. As indicated in Chapter 1, the Dependents’ Allowance Board members, on the other hand, were more willing to recognize the rights of the soldiers to make decisions about the allowance than the rights of wives to have consistent financial support.

about the dependents’ allowance regulations. Most of the letters written by non-Aboriginal wives that were found in the archival files examined tended to focus on the inadequacy of the allowance. See LAC, Records of the Department of Finance, RG 19, Volume 516, File 124-50-0-1, File Title: Dependents’ Allowance.

⁸⁹ It is assumed that Peterson was from New Brunswick because the Indian Agent from Fredericton, New Brunswick wrote about her case. She wrote her letters from Houlton, Maine; presumably she was working there.

⁹⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-56, Maureen Peterson, Houlton, Maine, (Originally from New Brunswick) to IAB, 29 May 1940.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² See LAC, Records of the Dependents’ Allowance Board (DAB,) RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents’ Allowance Board, 13.

In another case, a wife believed that she was entitled to receive the allowance over the common-law partner, no matter what the soldier wanted. She contacted James Ewen (J.E.) Matthews, the Liberal Member of Parliament for Brandon, Manitoba, regarding the assignment of the allowance to the soldier's common-law partner instead of to her.⁹³ Matthews appeared to hold the same belief that the wife should receive the allowance over the common-law partner. He questioned the fact that the Indian Agent was giving part of the allowance to the common-law partner. To the Indian Affairs Branch, Matthews wrote, in reference to the Indian Agent, "Should he not be advised from your Department that the \$35.00 per month is in trust for Mrs. Miles and for no one else, and that he has no authority to discriminate?"⁹⁴ In this case, the Indian Agent was following through on the soldier's request because the soldier had wanted to assign his allowance to the common-law partner and not to his wife. As already noted, this was allowed under the dependents' allowance policy because soldiers could assign the allowance to whomever they wished. Once again the emphasis was on the right of the soldier to decide. Eventually, the soldier agreed to split the allowance with his wife and common-law partner so that his wife would have some financial support.⁹⁵

In the case of another soldier, who decided that he did not want to assign the allowance to his wife, we know the reason for the husband's refusal: the woman was

⁹³ J.E. Matthews was an insurance agent, journalist, and teacher. He was first elected in 1938 and represented Brandon, Manitoba until 1949. In 1946, he served on the Special Joint Committee on Aboriginal affairs. He served in the Liberal Caucus from 1938 to 1950. He died in 1950. See Library of Parliament, "Senators and Members - Historical Information," http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/SenatorsMembers_house consulted on July 18, 2005. See also Sheffield, *The Redman's On the Warpath*, 153.

⁹⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-133, J.E. Matthews, Liberal, M.P. Brandon, Manitoba, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario to C.W. Jackson, Secretary and Executive Assistant, Department of Mines and Resources, Ottawa, Ontario, 9 May 1942.

⁹⁵ It is unclear in the file if the soldier was pressured by his Commanding Officer or by officials at the DAB to take such an action.

accused of having affairs with other men. The soldier linked his wife's entitlement to her sexual behavior. As he stated in a letter, "At the time I joined the army I was told that my wife was living or running around with other men. This was common knowledge in the Prince Albert District. In view of her actions I considered that she was not entitled to any money from me and I joined the army and said I was a single man."⁹⁶ According to this soldier's understanding, women's allowances were to be earned through their sexual fidelity. This view corresponded with dependents' allowance regulations. As already illustrated in Chapter 5, the allowance could be suspended if a woman were to have an "illegitimate" child. In contrast, men only lost their pay and allowances if they went absent without leave. Their loyalty to their country was more important than their sexual fidelity to their wives. The above cases show how the dependents' allowance regulations reinforced patriarchal attitudes which allowed men to determine women's access to the money. Even women in legal marriages were not guaranteed the allowance.

In some cases, wives and soldiers shared the same beliefs about their entitlements, but these understandings conflicted with the regulations of the Dependents' Allowance Board. The regulations stipulated that women in hospitals could not receive the allowance. The logic was that people could not benefit twice from government support in a public institution and through the payment of the allowance. A similar logic was applied in the case of the separation allowances provided to soldiers' families during World War I and the Ontario Mother's Allowance Program.⁹⁷ In the case of the separation allowance, no allowances were provided to individuals maintained in a federal

⁹⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6X Pt. 3, Excerpt from report by Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 18 April 1944. The soldier's name was not provided in the document.

⁹⁷ An exception was orphans in government institutions in the Family Allowances Program. They were allowed to be in a government institution and still receive their allowances. See Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 6, 36.

or provincial institution or any other institution that was paid for by either government.⁹⁸

In the case of mothers' allowances, if mothers were receiving the allowance and then they became sick and entered a hospital or other institution, the allowances were stopped.⁹⁹ For soldiers' families during World War I and World War II, the allowances could be reinstated when the individuals were released from the hospital. It is not clear what happened in the case of the mothers' allowances. It is assumed that the mothers had the option to reapply for the allowance once they were released

Some soldiers' families did not agree with these rules. According to Mrs. Aaron Macintosh and her husband, her entitlement to the allowance was not contingent on whether or not she was in the hospital. Macintosh wrote to the Indian Agent from the Touchwood Agency in Saskatchewan, "My husband knows my cheque was stopped. And they made him understand my cheque couldn't be stopped no matter where I was. I was intitled [sic] to it."¹⁰⁰ It is unclear who the "they" are in this statement. Possibly the soldier misunderstood the information provided by the military authorities at the recruiting station. Alternatively, there might have been discrepancies between what soldiers were told by recruiting officers and the regulations. This example reveals the different attitudes of the policy makers and recipients regarding who was eligible to receive the allowance and under what terms. Dependents' Allowance Board members believed that the regulations they created determined recipients' eligibility. Under certain

⁹⁸ A specific reason for this regulation was not stated, although it is assumed that the officials believed that the government should not pay twice for an individual's maintenance. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 13. A search was conducted in Morton's book for a further discussion of the reasoning behind this regulation, but in his section on eligibility, the issue of institutions was not discussed. See Desmond Morton, Fight or Pay: Soldiers' Families in the Great War, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 22-24.

⁹⁹ Little, 'No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit,' 73.

¹⁰⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6797, File: 452-708, Mrs. A. Macintosh, Indian Hospital, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, to R. Davis, Indian Agent, Touchwood Agency, Punnichy, Saskatchewan, 16 February 1943.

circumstances, they felt justified in stopping the allowance. Alternatively, Macintosh and her husband believed that when a recipient was entitled to a benefit, the money should not be stopped. In light of public debates occurring during the time period about soldiers' rights and entitlements, they may have considered the allowance to be part of the husband's wages as a soldier and therefore not subject to the dictates of the Dependents' Allowance Board.

Similar to wives, parents believed they were entitled to their sons' allowances based upon their sons' military service. Comments from both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal parents were found in the files examined. Some letters were personally written to the Board or, in the case of Aboriginal parents, the Indian Affairs Branch. Others were written to newspapers. When officials at Dependents' Allowance Board tried to make distinctions between wives and parents, parents protested claiming they had a right to the allowance. They specifically criticized many of the dependents' allowance eligibility requirements. As indicated in Chapter 1, wives received a standard rate of thirty-five dollars per month whereas parents received varied rates of allowance. At the beginning of the war, parents received amounts ranging from five dollars to a maximum of twenty dollars. The amount of allowance parents obtained was based upon factors such as financial contributions of other children, age, and ability to work. Initially, if parents earned above twenty dollars in wages, they were considered no longer eligible to receive the allowance. Board members believed the allowance for parents was based on need, not entitlement. The following section will explore what arguments parents, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, made to support their arguments.

Parents believed they were entitled to allowances because of their previous

reliance on their sons' income prior to enlistment. As Magda Fahrni has observed in the case of Euro-Canadian families in Montreal, "Parents of soldiers and veterans, used to relying on sons' earnings, had a clear sense of entitlement to state-administered allowances."¹⁰¹ Allowances, in fact, were preferred over other forms of social welfare because "military allowances were a source of pride rather than stigma."¹⁰²

Parents often referred to their sons' income as their only financial support. As Greg James, an Aboriginal man who was from Ahousat, British Columbia, stated, "Our son and sole support is enlisted and is now overseas."¹⁰³ Lydia Jefferson from the Maria Reserve in Quebec wrote to R.A. Hoey, the Superintendent of Health and Welfare for the Indian Affairs Branch, inquiring about why she had not received her allowance from her son. She emphasized that her son was "the only son we have for support."¹⁰⁴ As readers will recall from Chapter 1, Board members did consider pre-enlistment financial support as a necessity in determining eligibility. They believed, however, that parents were only entitled to partial support, not full support.

Although, in most cases, parents emphasized that their sons had supported them prior to enlistment, one mother,¹⁰⁵ in a letter to the Toronto Star, questioned the Board's regulation that her eligibility for the allowance was based on her sons' previous financial contributions. This was unfair, according to the mother, because prior to the war her sons were in school and she was paying for their education. As she stated "they were getting

¹⁰¹ Magda Fahrni, "The Romance of Reunion: Montreal War Veterans Return to Family Life, 1944-1949," Canadian Historical Association, Annual General Meeting, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, June 1998, 18.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139-15, James to MacKay, 19 October 1942.

¹⁰⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6764, File: 452-6 Pt 2, Lydia Jefferson, Maria Reserve, Maria, Quebec to R.A. Hoey, Superintendent of Welfare and Training, IAB, Ottawa, Ontario, 11 September 1941.

¹⁰⁵ The mother did not identify whether she was Aboriginal or not. She did not identify where exactly she was writing from.

their education and I paid for it.”¹⁰⁶ She concluded, “Now it was their turn to pay and look after me-but the government says no.”¹⁰⁷ Whether sons had previously provided for their parents or not, there was a belief that once sons did have an income or access to benefits that they had an obligation to share those earnings with their parents. There was also a belief that the government did not have the right to deny parents’ access to the money.

Other parents contested the dependents’ allowance regulation that the ability to work should affect their entitlement. This requirement made it particularly hard for fathers to receive the allowance because Board members assumed that men who were “able-bodied,” could work and were capable of financially providing for themselves. Conversely, Trey Bendus, an Aboriginal man from Birtle Manitoba, believed he was entitled to his son’s allowance.¹⁰⁸ Indian Agent Smith did not agree. He noted that Bendus was working and was, according to the Agent, a “very healthy and quite a strong man.”¹⁰⁹ The Indian Agent concluded, “I see no reason why he should require any allowance from his son.”¹¹⁰ In this example, there was a discrepancy between the father’s beliefs about his entitlements versus the assumption that extended family members had to prove financial need in order to receive the allowance. The Agent also disregarded the functioning of families’ economies and the importance of children’s role in those economies.¹¹¹ The Agent may have been disinclined to provide the allowance

¹⁰⁶ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-30, File Title: DAB Press Notices and Clippings, “Letter to the Editor,” The Toronto Star, 12 May 1944.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-106, Trey Bendus, Decker, Manitoba to IAB, 29 May 1942.

¹⁰⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-106, A.G. Smith, Indian Agent, Birtle, Manitoba to MacInnes, 10 June 1942.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Scholars in analyzing the family economy have noted the importance of children’s economic contributions. See Marshall, The Social Origins of the Welfare State, Chapter 4, 5, 6.

because of the assumption that Aboriginal men were “naturally” lazy and needed to be “taught” how to work hard.¹¹² These assumptions may have made the Agent view Bendus’ claim for assistance suspiciously.

Under the dependents’ allowance regulations, the mere existence of a father made it difficult for some mothers to receive the allowance from their sons, even when the father was no longer living in the home. The assumption was that fathers were the “natural” breadwinners and they would still financially support the mothers. In the same way that Bendus argued that his ability to work should not affect his entitlement, mothers argued that the presence of their husbands did not preclude them from receiving the allowance from their sons. In the case of the Hopkins family¹¹³ who lived in Saskatoon, the father was still alive, but was no longer supporting the mother financially. Despite this, the mother was not considered eligible for the allowance because the father was alive. The son’s employer, the manager at Sherwin-Williams Company of Canada in Saskatoon, wrote to the Chairman of the Dependents’ Allowance Board regarding the case. He stated that Mrs. Hopkins’s son provided her full support and the father rarely contributed anything. He requested on behalf of the mother that she receive her allowance. Perhaps, Mrs. Hopkins and her son believed that if a business manager supported their case, the family’s claims would be perceived as more “legitimate” in the eyes of the officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board. The manager believed that he could provide the Chairman with a “true picture” of the facts in the case.¹¹⁴ Perhaps, he

¹¹² See Carter, Lost Harvests, 17.

¹¹³ The racial origin of the Hopkins family was not stated, but it is assumed they were non-Aboriginal.

¹¹⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-31, File Title: Letters of Appreciation, J. Bentley, Manager, Sherwin-Williams Company of Canada Ltd., Saskatoon, Saskatchewan to Arthur MacNamara, DAB Chairman, Ottawa, Ontario, 18 April 1940.

was trying to contradict the report provided by the investigator.¹¹⁵ As readers will recall, all cases involving extended family members were investigated by an official from the Department of Pensions and Health or a social worker. Like Mrs. Hopkins, Aboriginal dependents' allowance recipients used local politicians and lawyers in similar ways when trying to get the staff at the Dependents' Allowance Board to address their concerns.

Mothers,¹¹⁶ in particular, argued against the dependents' allowance regulation that stipulated their wages should be considered when assigning the allowance. According to them, earnings should not affect eligibility. Usually the desire to earn more money through waged employment was a characteristic that was praised within the capitalist system. For mothers, however, the desire to earn more wages hindered them from receiving the allowance. Wives, on the other hand, had no restrictions on their earnings during World War II. This situation differed from World War I. At the beginning of World War I, wives were not allowed to be employed in private industry and receive the allowance. These restrictions were seen as contributing to the labour shortage and were eventually removed.¹¹⁷ From the start of World War II, accordingly, wives were allowed to both work for private industry and receive the dependents' allowance. Common-law wives could also work and receive a partial dependents' allowance of twenty-five dollars. In contrast, mothers' earnings were restricted. The regulations initially stipulated that mothers could not earn above twenty dollars before they became ineligible to receive the allowances.¹¹⁸

Many mothers resented these restrictions and wrote to the press and the

¹¹⁵ The original social worker's report in this case could not be found.

¹¹⁶ The racial origin of these mothers was not stated, but it is assumed they were mostly non-Aboriginal.

¹¹⁷ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 7, File Title: Beryl M. Kalmanasch-Thesis on Dependents' Allowance Board, 18.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Dependents' Allowance Board. They believed that it was unfair that wives were making high salaries in munitions factories and still receiving the allowance, while they were forced to choose between the allowance and work. They also argued that they were denied the ability to contribute to the war effort. One mother noted that munitions factories were calling for workers and many mothers of soldiers were willing to work, but the restrictions on earnings prevented women from working because they feared they would lose their allowances. In regard to the regulations, the mother remarked, "It is denying a grand class of women, (the mothers of our fighting boys), the right, the sacred right to work, to back up their boys in the fighting line."¹¹⁹ She stated, "Wives of our fighting men are allowed to work as long, as hard, and as often as they like. Why this discrimination against the mothers?"¹²⁰ Although government officials often perceived the utilization of female labour as something to be avoided because women's "true calling" was to be in the home, this mother argued she had a "sacred right to work" outside the home to earn wages. This woman defined her identity as both a mother and a worker. In contrast, Board members tended to see women as "dependents." A further discussion of the problematic nature of this assumption will occur later in this chapter.

Some mothers wondered why they had restrictions on their earnings while married women and common-law wives were able to work as much as they wanted. Some mothers believed they should have the same, if not more rights, than common-law wives. Mrs. Wilson inquired, "Will you please explain why a common-law wife (who is little better than a prostitute) should receive preference with regard to working full time

¹¹⁹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-30, File Title: DAB Press Notices and Clippings, Author not identified to DAB, 12 June 1944.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

and earning whatever she is able to and also receive the allowance?”¹²¹ She concluded, “If I, as a Dependent mother, do not merit as good treatment as a common-law wife-then I want my son sent back to me!”¹²² This quotation reveals how some women associated a certain level of status with their position as mothers and they believed this status entitled them to better treatment from the State. They believed that common-law wives should not have the same rights as they did because they were not “respectable” women. These protests by mothers did eventually have an impact on the dependents’ allowance policy. Due to their protests, in January 1943 politicians and officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board decided to raise the amount of money mothers could earn before they became ineligible to receive their allowances from twenty dollars to forty dollars.¹²³

While some mothers demanded that they be able to earn more wages, other mothers argued that the unpaid work they did for their sons should be acknowledged. They believed this unpaid work entitled them to the full allowance, not an amount which varied depending on their individual circumstances. One mother wrote to the Dependents’ Allowance Board, “Mothers have worked almost 24 hours in the day-first to earn money to raise her children-then acting as nurse at night-seamstress-baker-shopper-scrubber-both of children and floors-homework assistance to children-mender of her own and children’s clothing, etc., etc., etc., etc.”¹²⁴ The mother went on to state that “Being men, the members of the Dependents’ Board don’t realize what a desperately hard struggle the Widowed Mothers have been through-they can’t possibly visualize it-or they

¹²¹ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-30, File Title: DAB Press Notices and Clippings, Wilson to Bennett, 18 September 1943.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ For the announcement of this decision see LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: Cost of Living Bonus, Press Release, 16 December 1942.

¹²⁴ The mother’s geographical location was not identified. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-30, File Title: DAB Press Notices and Clippings, Author not identified to DAB, 15 May 1944.

simply could not discriminate against Mothers as they do.”¹²⁵ Even with all her work inside and outside the home, the mother could still not make ends meet. The mother was questioning why the value of her domestic work was not being included when Board members decided the amounts that mothers would receive. She believed she was entitled to the full thirty-five dollars wives received. The argument that mothers did not need as much money as wives because their husbands were the “natural breadwinners” was undermined in the case of widows, who, due to their husbands’ deaths, would not have had access to their income.

Board members did not consider that unpaid labour had a monetary value. As readers will recall from Chapter 3 on the reductions in allowances, the value of unpaid labour done by Aboriginal or Afro-Caribbean men or women was also not considered when assessing these families’ livings costs. Similar to Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean families, Board members expected mothers to be satisfied with whatever amount of allowance they received because it was assumed to be higher than the amount that they previously received from their relatives. This assumption was inherently problematic because by not including the value of non paid labour and considering the functioning of these families’ economies, Board members were not accurately evaluating these families’ living costs. The Board did not appear to make an exception for widowed mothers, even though they no longer had access to an income from their husbands. In contrast to Board members, many soldiers’ families believed they had earned and were entitled to the full thirty-five dollars based on their own contributions to the family and the military service of their relatives.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

The limits on mothers' wages and the failure to consider the value of their unpaid work illustrate how dependents' allowance regulations reinforced notions of women's dependency. The notion of women's dependency had influenced the formulation of other social policies prior to the dependents' allowance. The Mothers' Allowance Program established in many provinces in the 1910's and 1920's is a good example. Rather than providing single or widowed mothers with better training so they could earn higher wages or advocating for higher wages for women in general, the focus of many officials involved in the administration of mothers' allowances was on the remarriage of widowed or single mothers. Officials believed these mothers should be financially provided for through a male "breadwinner," not through their own work.¹²⁶

The notion of women's dependency also influenced bureaucrats' thinking on the issue of unemployment insurance. Male workers' unemployment and subsequent need for insurance was considered to be more important because officials perceived that men were "the head of household and therefore deserving of a 'family wage.'"¹²⁷ Many single female workers were excluded from being eligible to apply for unemployment insurance due to the stipulation that only certain occupations were included in the program and the requirement that a certain level of income had to be earned.¹²⁸ Married women were not considered as workers within the policy. As a part of the regulations,

¹²⁶ See Veronica Strong-Boag, "Wages for Housework: Mothers' Allowances and the Beginnings of Social Security in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Volume 14, Number 1, (Spring 1979): 32-33 and Little, 'No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit,' 51.

¹²⁷ Ruth Roach Pierson, "Gender and the Unemployment Insurance Debates in Canada, 1934-1940," *Labour/Le Travail*, 25, (Spring 1990): 82. During World War II, Ruth Roach Pierson also finds that women's employment in the labour force was seen as a short term solution to the labour shortage. Government officials, employers, and religious authorities promoted the idea that after the war women were supposed to return home where they would once again be dependent on a male breadwinner. See Ruth Roach Pierson, *'They're Still Women After all': Canadian Women and the Second World War*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1986).

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

the term “wife” was in fact equated with dependency and it was considered “common sense” at the time, that women once married would resign from their jobs and become economically dependent on their husbands.¹²⁹ So widely held was this belief that officials assumed, “for a married woman to claim unemployment insurance was a contradiction in terms or, what was greatly feared, a way to defraud the system.”¹³⁰ In the Mothers’ Allowance Program and the Unemployment Insurance Program, the precedent had been established not to acknowledge women’s unpaid labour and to see women as “dependents” rather than workers.¹³¹ Mothers were doubly disadvantaged in the Dependents’ Allowance Program because they could not live on the amount of allowance that was provided, yet had restrictions on their earnings that affected their eligibility.

For those parents who did qualify to receive the allowance, the fact that many parents believed that the allowance was an entitlement created certain expectations when they were dealing with the Dependents’ Allowance Board. Greg James, who was an Aboriginal man from Ahousat, British Columbia, believed that his son’s military service entitled him to receive the allowance in a timely manner. As Greg James wrote to D.M. MacKay, the Indian Commissioner of British Columbia, “We feel it an honour to have our boy fighting for King and Country but we feel that the Country should also do its part and at least take some definite action in regard to his application... We feel we are entitled to an allowance but we feel that even more we are entitled to some action in this and not

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹³¹ The categorization of women as “dependents” undermined their claims to economic citizenship on an equal basis to men. This pattern occurred in other countries such as Britain, the United States, and Australia. For an examination of the sexually divided way the welfare state has been constructed and how this has undermined women’s claims to citizenship see Carole Pateman, “The Patriarchal Welfare State,” in *Democracy and Welfare*, Amy Guttmann, ed., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 231-260.

total Government inertia and inaction.”¹³² Like many Aboriginal men quoted so far, James was not necessarily against military service, but he did believe that military service imposed upon the government certain responsibilities. James expressed his frustration with delays within the bureaucratic system.

Officials at the Dependents’ Allowance Board recognized that parents believed they were entitled to the full allowance. An unidentified speaker from the Dependents’ Allowance Board noted that parents conceptualized the allowance as a right, not an award as it was legally defined. As he stated, “Many a bombast has been sent the Board from women, and men too, who accuse us of chiseling them out of their just right when, as a matter of fact, they have no claim for an allowance.”¹³³

In response to the criticisms that parents were entitled to the full allowance, A.H. Brown, a Dependents’ Allowance Board member, pointed out that the amount parents received from their soldier sons was twice what Old Age Pension recipients received.¹³⁴ Once again, the attitude of Board members was that parents, like Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean families, were supposed to be satisfied with what they received because it exceeded what they had received before. Brown also pointed out that parents only required their maintenance needs be met whereas wives needed to provide for more long

¹³² LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139-15, Greg James, Ahousat, British Columbia to MacKay, 19 October 1942.

¹³³ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-D, File Title: Speeches, “Speech for Rotary Club,” 16 September 1940.

¹³⁴ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 26, File: 2-31, File Title: Letters of Appreciation, A.H. Brown, DAB Member, Ottawa, Ontario to Norman Rogers, Minister of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario, 10 June 1940. Brown made this statement in reference to elderly Euro-Canadians who received money under the Old Age Pensions Program. Elderly Aboriginal people received relief through the IAB, but they were not included in the Old Age Pensions Program until 1952. Some First Nations argued that the elderly should be included in this program and believed that the amounts the aged received on reserves as provided by the IAB were insufficient and did not provide for the basic necessities. The respect given to elders in First Nations cultures may have made this poor treatment of the aged on reserves seem particularly wrong. See Shewell, ‘Enough to Keep Them Alive,’ 194-196, 199, 202, 238.

term needs such as life insurance, saving, household equipment, and children's education.¹³⁵ This justification contradicted the claim that allowances were intended for "current maintenance" only. According to Brown, wives needed more money because "the normal requirements of a wife as a younger woman are in excess of those of a mother in respect of clothes, normal entertainment and food."¹³⁶ It is not clear how Brown was defining the term "normal requirements." Brown implied that mothers, because of their age, did not need as many clothes or as many social outings as wives did. Although Brown did concede that older women might have additional expenses due to illness, he did not believe this expense equaled the expenses wives had.¹³⁷ He discriminated against parents, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, based on their age.¹³⁸

Despite Brown's reasoning that parents did not need as much money as wives, parents' protests did lead Board members to adjust the amounts provided. In January 1943 in addition to the previously mentioned increases in the amount of the wages mothers could earn, the maximum amounts in allowance that could be paid out were

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ The distinctions that officials tried to make to separate wives and parents often did not recognize the interrelatedness of family economies and the important role elderly parents played in them. Often elderly parents made a vital contribution to the family economy by doing unpaid work in the home freeing younger members of the family to take on paid work. There were many adult children who continued to rely on their parents for support whether living with them in order to reduce living costs or relying on them for financial support. Support flowed between the generations and it was not just one sided. For many families, work, property, living arrangements and income were thought about in terms of extended family rather than the nuclear family. Despite the diverse contributions the aged made to families, many politicians and social reformers increasingly saw the elderly as a helpless, dependent, monolithic group who were a "societal problem." For a greater discussion of the misconceptions about the elderly, their contribution to family economies, and the interdependence of generations see Edgar-Andre Montigny, Foisted Upon the Government: Family Obligations, Government Responsibilities and the Care of Dependent Aged in Late Nineteenth-Century Ontario, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997) and James Snell, "The Family and the Working-Class Elderly in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," in Family Matters: Papers in Post-Confederation Canadian Family History, Lori Chambers and Edgar-Andre Montigny, eds. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1998), 499-510.

increased from twenty to twenty-five dollars.¹³⁹ Although parents never received the full thirty-five dollars that wives received, bureaucrats did have to consider and respond to parents' protests to a certain extent. Madga Fahrni has argued that mothers were able to achieve these increases, in part, because as soldiers' mothers they "enjoyed widespread public respect and a certain political purchase, enabling their voices, and the voices of their supporters, to be raised and listened to in a variety of public forums."¹⁴⁰ Here we see that some women's status as soldiers' relatives did appear to provide them with political leverage that in some cases they may have not had before.

6.5 WORKING THE SYSTEM: ABORIGINAL FAMILIES' STRATEGIES TO PROTECT THEIR FINANCIAL AND FAMILY AUTONOMY

The belief that the allowance was an entitlement created certain expectations in the minds of Aboriginal soldiers' families regarding how the allowance money would be managed. They thought that they were entitled to a certain level of independence in making decisions about their financial affairs. Based on the archival evidence examined, the main areas of contention for families involved the following: Indian Agent's interference in the receipt of the allowance cheques, administration by the Indian Agent of the allowance, and the management of savings. Most of the archival records on these issues deal with husbands and wives rather than children and parents.¹⁴¹ Indian Agents' reactions to these families' concerns reveal the degree to which some of them interfered

¹³⁹ See the announcement of this decision see LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: Cost of Living Bonus, Press Release, 16 December 1942.

¹⁴⁰ Magda Fahrni, *Household Politics: Montreal Families and Postwar Reconstruction*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 75.

¹⁴¹ It could be that non-Aboriginal husbands and wives made similar complaints against investigators and against dependents' allowance procedures, but the case files for non-Aboriginal families were not examined. Such case files were not found in the fifty-six boxes examined from the Dependents' Allowance Board at Library and Archives Canada. A more thorough search of records from the Department of National Defence or of social agencies' records could possibly reveal the location of these case files.

in family situations.¹⁴²

As Chapter 2 revealed, there was a stipulation in the dependents' allowance procedures that cheques would be sent to the Indian Agents' offices so the Agents could "advise" the Aboriginal women about what purchases to make. Aboriginal women contested this procedure. Indian Agents generally observed that most women wanted to receive their cheques directly. For instance, Indian Agent Irwin from Cranbrook, British Columbia, stated, "Each and every wife of enlisted Indians in this agency, have refused to open a Bank account, and have resented coming to this office for their cheques..."¹⁴³ Perhaps women refused to open bank accounts because they mistrusted financial institutions or they knew that opening such an account at the request of the Indian Agent might give the Agents more control over their allowances.

Some women tried to use the different administrative practices and attitudes of bureaucrats to their advantage by writing directly to the Dependents' Allowance Board Chairman, R.O.G. Bennett. As Indian Agent, J.B.P. Ostrander from Battleford, Saskatchewan, wrote to Bennett, "For sometime certain Indian women have apparently written you asking that their cheques be sent to their local Post Office address instead of Battleford."¹⁴⁴ By contacting the Chairman, the women were making the top level bureaucrat at the Dependents' Allowance Board aware of their desire to receive their cheques directly. Perhaps they believed that contacting the Chairman directly would

¹⁴² Local studies that looked at community histories and explored such themes as economic development, band politics, specific political grievances, and the past relationship with the Agent could put these interactions in a broader context. Biographies on the individual Agents could also possibly provide insights into their opinions and how their actions in dependents' allowance cases were or were not consistent with their positions on other administrative matters.

¹⁴³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File Title: BC Military Service Enlistments 1941-45, Indian Agent Irwin, Cranbrook, British Columbia to MacKay, 8 April 1942.

¹⁴⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Indian Agent J.P.B. Ostrander, Battleford Agency, Saskatchewan to DAB, 3 March 1942.

minimize the Indian Agents' knowledge of their affairs. As the above example suggests, however, Indian Agents became aware of these women's requests.¹⁴⁵

In arguing why they should receive their cheques directly, women emphasized that it was inconvenient to travel to the Indian Agent's office, especially when they had their own mail boxes at the local post office where the cheque could be mailed. As Chapter 2 discussed, under the cheque distribution procedures when the cheque arrived at the Indian Agent's office, women had to go to the office to endorse the cheque. They then had to wait until the Indian Agent went to the bank in town and deposited the cheque.¹⁴⁶ Indian Agents did not always do this right away. After the Indian Agent went to the bank, the woman had to go back to the Indian Agent's office to pick up the cash. To get to the Indian Agent's office, women had to pay for their own transportation. Lilly Wilson from the Moraviantown Reserve near Thamesville, Ontario, summarized the problems with this procedure, "As transportation is a hard thing now days, I have to got to Highgate every time and I aint got no care and I can't walk. And Besides It costs me money to go there too. So I Just Cant stand this no longer please see that my cheque comes to my Box this month."¹⁴⁷ Wilson emphasized the transportation difficulties and her health problems as reasons why she should not have to go to the Indian Agent's office. Although upper level bureaucrats and Indian Agents emphasized that women should not "waste" money, they created procedures that forced Wilson and other recipients to pay twice to go to Indian Agents' offices. Control was more important than

¹⁴⁵ In the Ostrander case, it is not clear how the Indian Agent found out the information. DAB officials may have written to him about it.

¹⁴⁶ Most banks were located in the nearest town. There was no evidence found to indicate that banks were located on reserves.

¹⁴⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File: 452-737 Pt 1, Mrs. Lilly Wilson, Bothwell, Ontario to John R. MacNicol, M.P. (Constituency not stated) House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, 4 January 1943.

practicality.

Some women contacted local politicians to put pressure on bureaucrats to change the procedure. In addition to writing to the Board herself, Lilly Wilson requested that J.R. MacNicol, a Member of Parliament, write to the Indian Affairs Branch Director, H.W. McGill, on her behalf. In his letter to McGill, MacNicol commented, "Mrs. Wilson has been protesting for quite some time against being compelled to go to Highgate for her cheque...Unless there is some valid reason why her cheque wouldn't be mailed direct I...suggest that you see that it is done. Please write to Mrs. Wilson directly what you propose to do."¹⁴⁸ MacNicol expected that the Director would explain the situation to Wilson. Indian Agent, Stuart Spence from Highgate, Ontario, was asked by McGill to comment on the case. According to the dependents' allowance procedures, the Indian Agent always had the option to send the cheque directly to the woman if he believed she were "capable" of handling the money. However, in this case, Spence did not believe Wilson was competent. Spence claimed that Wilson was accused of having an "illegitimate" child.¹⁴⁹ As a result of these accusations, the Indian Agent believed that Wilson should have to go to his office to pick up the cheque. The Director approved of Spence's actions and subsequently informed MacNicol of the Indian Agent's reason for keeping the cheque at his office.¹⁵⁰ In this case, Wilson identified the politician as someone who might be sympathetic to her problem, but who was also a "respected" authority figure in the Euro-Canadian community. By having the politician support her claims, perhaps Wilson believed that this would substantiate her arguments in the minds

¹⁴⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File: 452-737 Pt 1, MacNicol to IAB, 7 January 1944.

¹⁴⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File: 452-737 Pt 1, Stuart Spence, Indian Agent, Highgate, Ontario to IAB, 13 January 1944.

¹⁵⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File: 452-737 Pt 1, MacInnes to MacNicol, 22 January 1944.

of Euro-Canadian bureaucrats and impel them to act. Although Wilson did not get her cheque sent directly to her, the Indian Agent did have to justify his actions in the case to his superiors. Wilson's letters brought the Indian Agent's actions under scrutiny further exposing the controlling nature of the Indian Affairs Branch.

Lawyers also questioned the system of handling cheques. It was argued by Mr. Conroy, a lawyer from Saskatchewan, that the cheques should be sent directly to the women.¹⁵¹ The correspondence examined did not provide any insights into whether or not the women solicited Conroy's advice or if he sought out the women and offered his services. The amount Conroy charged and how much he was paid is also unknown. Although the circumstances around the hiring of lawyers are unclear, this example does indicate that despite the stipulation in the Indian Act that Aboriginal people could not hire lawyers, some people ignored this rule. This example suggests there was a discrepancy between regulations in the Act and the enforcement of the regulations at the local level. In response to Conroy's arguments, Indian Agent J.P.B. Ostrander stated that the women were being unreasonable in complaining that they had to come to his office to endorse their cheques. Delays in the receipt of cheques were not caused by the procedures, but because, according to Ostrander, the soldiers went absent without leave. Ostrander stated, "It would be found, upon thorough investigation, that in almost every instance of dissatisfaction by the dependents in the handling of their allowance monies, the true facts will disclose that the husband has been absent without leave and the pay stopped for a period, as a result."¹⁵² Ostrander tried to undermine the work being done by soldiers by

¹⁵¹ Mr. Conroy's letter was not found in the archival records so it is not possible to go into more detail about his identity or his arguments.

¹⁵² LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, Ostrander to Not Identified, 8 January 1942.

implying that they broke military regulations and abandoned their duties. He attempted to question Conroy's credibility by claiming that he did not properly research the complaints. In the Indian Agent's opinion, he was the one who was able to investigate and find out the "true facts." In reference to Conroy, Ostrander suggested that the bureaucrats at Indian Affairs Branch headquarters "officially advise this man that we can put our time to much better use, than by assisting him to collect legal fees from the Indians for imaginary complaints."¹⁵³ Ostrander suggested that the lawyer was being unscrupulous in trying to represent women's concerns. He further dismissed the notion that the women had legitimate concerns by saying that the complaints were "imaginary." As already noted, this type of dismissive attitude was typical when Indian Agents were responding to the criticisms made by Aboriginal people.

Although many Dependents' Allowance Board members, social workers, and Indian Agents agreed that administration in some cases was necessary in order to help the recipient better manage the funds, some families challenged the need for administration. As discussed in Chapter 2, administration meant that the Indian Agent or, in the case of non-Aboriginal families, a local branch of the Department of Pensions and Health or a local social agency, received the cheque and determined how the money was spent. These officials dictated what portion of the money was provided to the wife. In order for a woman's allowance to be administered, the soldiers' or wives' consent had to be obtained. The Dependents' Allowance Board could make an exception in certain cases and approve of administration if the soldier or the wife refused, but the Board preferred not to take such action.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

Some Aboriginal families protested Indian Agents' administration of the allowances. The Dependents' Allowance Board Chairman, R.O.G. Bennett, noted that "In some cases, the wives have written in expressing their opposition to any form of administration."¹⁵⁴ Wives may have been encouraged to write the Board with their concerns based upon the correspondence they received from Bennett. Readers will recall that Bennett corresponded directly with wives when encouraging them to save their allowances through the purchase of War Savings Certificates. The address for the Dependents' Allowance Board was provided to recipients in the notices that they received in their monthly cheques. After years of dealing almost exclusively with bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch, through the receipt of these addresses, Aboriginal wives were given an alternate set of bureaucrats they could contact. These wives' letters made Bennett, who was the highest level bureaucrat within the Dependents' Allowance Board, aware of their concerns.

Some Indian Agents recognized that the administration of the dependents' allowance was a sensitive issue. Indian Agent A.O'N Daunt of New Westminster, British Columbia, believed that in any decision made about the administration of the allowance, the men's consent should be obtained.¹⁵⁵ Daunt concluded that "intervention in the management of their affairs is a very delicate matter. All these Indians live on small Reserves in the thickly settled Fraser Valley, mix freely with the Whites, and have always been accustomed to run their own private financial affairs."¹⁵⁶ Daunt's reference to the fact that the Aboriginal people in the area interacted with the Euro-Canadians may be

¹⁵⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, Bennett to Ostrander, 4 March 1942.

¹⁵⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service 1939-44, Indian Agent A.O'N Daunt, New Westminster, British Columbia to MacInnes, 23 October 1940.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

significant. In other contexts, some Agents noted that living near Euro-Canadians had a “positive” impact on Aboriginal people because it helped them assimilate.¹⁵⁷ Daunt may have believed that Aboriginal people “learned” to manage their own financial affairs by imitating the Euro-Canadian families with whom they interacted.

Due to the location of the reserve in a settled area, the Aboriginal people near New Westminster may have also been engaged in paid employment. With the receipt of a wage, families would have dealt with the cash economy. Since Indian Agents generally controlled government monies, not private monies, families would have managed their own wages. Daunt may have been referring to the management of such wages when he noted that the families were used to running their “private financial affairs” and therefore his intrusion into these affairs had become “delicate.” As a part of the assimilation process, Aboriginal people were supposed to adopt notions of wage earning and individual property ownership and were supposed to reject notions of collective ownership and communal exchanges based on unpaid labour. As a result of these beliefs, Indian Agents were more likely to view families who had access to paid employment as more capable of managing their own finances than families who relied on communal economic exchanges which were considered by many Agents as “uncivilized.” Unlike some other Agents, Daunt recognized the families’ desire for autonomy and the

¹⁵⁷ The same is true for Indian Agents in the nineteenth century when commenting on the adoption of agriculture. Some claimed that First Nations who lived near Euro-Canadians were more likely to adopt agriculture than those who were isolated. They also commented that towns provided an important market for the sale of produce. For references to Indian Agents who believed that the proximity to white settlement had a “positive” effect on Aboriginal people see Canada. Department of Indian Affairs, (In the nineteenth century Indian Affairs was not yet part of the Department of Mines and Resources which was not created until 1936), “Annual Report 1875,” 31, “Annual Report 1885,” 61, “Annual Report 1895,” 179, “Annual Report 1903,” 180, “Annual Report 1907,” 140, and “Annual Report 1913,” 152. It is important to note that not all Indian Agents held this viewpoint. Some commented that Euro-Canadians had a negative influence on Aboriginal people because they sold liquor to them. See “Annual Report 1887,” 76 and “Annual Report 1907,” 139.

importance of obtaining their consent. Other Agents, as we will see, were less likely to acknowledge this desire and had no qualms about interfering in families' financial and intimate personal affairs.

Some Aboriginal soldiers showed their disapproval of the administration of their wives' allowances by refusing to provide their consent. L.L. Bastin, who originally was from the Kingsclear Reserve in New Brunswick, was serving in Italy and Germany as a Private. Indian Agent Whalen from Fredericton, New Brunswick, wanted Bastin's wife's¹⁵⁸ allowance administered because he claimed she was not "behaving well." He did not point out further specifics, but said she had venereal disease. Bastin disagreed with the need for administration and refused to sign the consent form. Bastin's wife apparently informed Whalen that Bastin had told her "someone was trying to take her money away from her."¹⁵⁹ Here families' and officials' views illustrate the different understandings of administration. Despite statements made by officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board that administration was meant to assist the family, some soldiers' families disagreed. They perceived administration with suspicion. Aboriginal families, in particular, had ample reason to be skeptical based on years of experience with the Indian Affairs Branch's strict controls and ambiguous accounting procedures.

In reference to Bastin's refusal to provide consent, Whalen commented that "It is a pity that, in the case of Indians, the soldier has to be consulted before his money may be changed to someone for administration rather than paid to his wife. In 99% of the cases the soldier does not believe that his wife would spend unwisely and in some cases he

¹⁵⁸ The name of Bastin's wife was not provided in the case file.

¹⁵⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-763 Pt. 1, Edward J. Whalen, Indian Agent, Fredericton, New Brunswick to Bennett, 14 February 1945.

does not quite understand.”¹⁶⁰ He concluded that it was “ridiculous...to ask the soldier about administration of funds.”¹⁶¹ Whalen disagreed with Board members that Aboriginal soldiers should have the right to withhold their consent. He claimed that the majority of soldiers who believed that their wives would manage the money well, simply misunderstood. He did not consider that Aboriginal soldiers were, perhaps, logically assessing their wives’ abilities to handle money accurately. As shown in Chapter 2, Bennett, the Dependents’ Allowance Chairman, emphasized the importance of consent in administration cases, especially from 1941 onwards, at that time Bennett told Indian Agents they could no longer handle the money on a discretionary basis. He requested that Agents justify the need for formal administration by providing a report to the Board. Whalen wrote these comments in 1945 indicating that some Indian Agents remained unconvinced that the need for consent was necessary and continued to argue against it. Despite Bennett’s emphasis on the need for the soldiers’ consent, the allowance in the Bastin case ended up being administered. Whalen wrote that “Mrs. Bastin is real cross at this last action.”¹⁶² The Agent’s report about the wife’s venereal disease may have convinced Dependents’ Allowance Board members that they should override the soldier’s refusal.¹⁶³ As indicated in Chapter 2, the Board could impose administration, even

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-763 Pt.1, Whalen to IAB, 5 June 1945. This letter was written in June 1945. There is no further correspondence to reveal if the soldier and his wife made further protests. The soldier’s letter of protest that will be discussed later in this chapter was written in April 1945 before this action by the DAB was taken.

¹⁶³ During this time, women who had venereal disease were viewed more negatively than men reflecting the double standard regarding men’s and women’s sexuality. This characterization applied to all women, although women from various racial groups were often seen as being more promiscuous than white women. In the military, for instance, men who had the disease were allowed to keep their jobs, while women who had the disease, no matter their racial origin, were discharged. Women, not men, were often portrayed as spreading venereal disease. In the court system, young women were more likely than men to be charged with immorality or sexual misconduct. Even in cases where the woman was a victim of male violence,

though its members were generally against such action and sought to obtain consent from the wife or the soldier first. Aboriginal soldiers' capacities to make decisions about their finances were undermined by Whalen's comments. Whalen dismissed any protest by the soldier and disregarded the importance of consent.

In some cases, where the soldiers did not want the Indian Agents to administer the allowances, they brought their cases to local Members of Parliament. In one case, the Indian Agent apparently told a soldier's wife she had to give her cheque to him. The soldier reported this incident to G.H. Castleden, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation Member of Parliament for Yorkton, Saskatchewan.¹⁶⁴ Castleden's status as a World War I veteran may have made him particularly sensitive to soldiers' demands. He summarized the situation:

I received information from an enlisted Indian today to the effect that the Indian Agent on the Qu'Appelle Agency had requested his wife to turn over the Dependents' Allowance cheque to him, and that she would thus only be allowed about \$12.00 per month. I would like to know whether or not any such instructions were issued from the Department.¹⁶⁵

By contacting the politician, the soldier was bringing the Indian Agent's actions under greater scrutiny and making the politician aware of how his family was being treated. Such information could have influenced politicians' perspectives. In 1945 during a

venereal disease was seen as "proof" of women's delinquency rather than men's criminality. See Christabelle Sethna, "Wait Till Your Father Gets Home: Absent Fathers, Working Mothers and Delinquent Daughters in Ontario during World War II," in Family Matters: Papers in Post-Confederation Canadian Family History, Lori Chambers and Edgar-Andre Montigny, eds., (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, Inc., 1998), 21-22 and Ruth Roach Pierson, 'They're Still Women After All': The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1986), 169-214.

¹⁶⁴ Castleden was a teacher who served as Member of Parliament in Yorkton, Saskatchewan from 1940 to 1949 and 1953 to 1958. He was a member of the caucus from 1940 to 1949 and from 1953 to 1958. See LibraryofParliament, "SenatorsandMembers-HistoricalInformation"

http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/SenatorsMembers_house consulted on July 18, 2005.

¹⁶⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6764, File: 452-6 Pt.2, G.H. Castleden, M.P. for Yorkton, Saskatchewan, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario to H.W. McGill, IAB Director, Ottawa, Ontario, 12 March 1942. See also Sheffield, The Redman's On the Warpath, 150.

debate in the House of Commons, Castleden generally criticized the amount of control Indian Agents had over Aboriginal people. He demanded that an inquiry be held into the extent of Indian Agents' power and stated it was time that Aboriginal people controlled their own affairs:¹⁶⁶

The Indian considers that he is treated too much as a child,¹⁶⁷ and in my view the time has come when we should look upon the Indian population as humans, with rights to citizenship. They need not be treated entirely as wards. The policy under the Indian Act has been to keep them subdued to such an extent that their capacity and ability have been smothered. Surely this is not good.¹⁶⁸

He further recommended that the clause in the Indian Act specifically relating to the powers of Indian Agents in respect to the sale of cattle and control at band council meetings, be amended. He noted that band councils, as represented to him through the North American Indian Brotherhood, in general, felt that "the Indian Agent in this respect has been granted too much power."¹⁶⁹ Castleden posed the question, "Is it not time that the Indian band themselves were permitted to carry on their own business at these band meetings? They could go to the agent for advice instead of being constantly placed under the control of these persons."¹⁷⁰ Although he is arguing for less control, Castleden still sees the Agent as a figure who can provide advice. To a greater degree than before, however, the extent of the Indian Agents' control is being questioned. Acknowledging that Aboriginal people should be treated like human beings undermined the notion of paternalism that had justified so many of the supervisory and controlling policies of the

¹⁶⁶ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. Volume III, 14 December 1945, 3514-3515.

¹⁶⁷ The notion that Aboriginal people were like children was used to justify many of the Indian Affairs Branch's paternalistic policies. See J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 191.

¹⁶⁸ House of Commons Debates. Volume III, 14 December 1945, 3514.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 3515.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 3516.

Indian Affairs Branch. Here we can see how politicians' experiences with individual soldiers' families in combination with the protests by Aboriginal organizations may have encouraged politicians to question the management of Aboriginal people's affairs.

Soldiers also relied upon the military authorities to represent their concerns to bureaucrats regarding the administration of the allowances by Indian Agents. Men's position as soldiers in the Army was significant because it provided them with another official, other than the Indian Agent, to whom they could present their concerns. The officers of the individual units knew the men personally and may have had a different impression of them than that of the Indian Agent. Brownlie noted that sometimes personality conflicts with Indian Agents could prevent men's protests from being addressed because the Agents would not pass along the letters to upper level officials. If they did pass the letters along, when discussing the case with upper level officials, the Agents would often try to discredit or undermine the men's claims.¹⁷¹ As a part of their duties, officers were responsible for maintaining the morale of the men within their units. Consequently, they may have been inclined to present soldiers' claims more sympathetically than Indian Agents did.

Joshua Proctor from the Lennox Island Reserve on Prince Edward Island was one such soldier who asked his Commanding Officer to inquire about the Indian Agent's handling of his wife's allowance. Proctor was concerned that his wife's savings were being administered by the Indian Agent. He was also concerned about his children. Proctor claimed two of his children were being taken care of by a man he did not know.

¹⁷¹ For examples, see the Francis Pegahmagabow case and the John Manitowaba case in Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye, 63-70 and 70-75.

The other child was in residential school.¹⁷² Proctor asked Commanding Officer Peterson to write to upper level bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch on his behalf. Peterson questioned the Indian Agent's actions and asked for a detailed explanation regarding the case. He concluded, "In these busy days when a soldier is called upon to put every ounce of strength he has into his work, it is difficult for a man with Proctor's worries to carry on as he should, and as he is one of my best reliable men I would appreciate the speediest possible attention to the matter."¹⁷³ Peterson believed the soldier's performance would be improved if his concerns about his family were addressed. Similar to many other military officials, Peterson saw a link between a soldier's performance and his level of concern about his family. This perceived link had been one of the major justifications for the allowance program.

Officials at the Indian Affairs Branch responded to Peterson's inquiries. M. McCrimmon from the Trusts and Annuities Division informed Peterson that he did not believe the Indian Agent's administration of the money should be a concern. Prior to the administration of the money by the Agent, McCrimmon claimed that Proctor's wife was apparently not saving money and not paying her bills.¹⁷⁴ Proctor's wife eventually went to Charlottetown to work. It is unclear what role she played in determining who cared for her children. McCrimmon stated about the Indian Agent's actions, "Indeed we may say that it was with a view to forestall worry on the soldier's part that the administration of the savings account and the care of the three children was arranged for...by the Indian

¹⁷² There was no school in Atlantic Canada until 1930 when one was set up in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia. See Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 171.

¹⁷³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-766 Pt 1, S.G. Peterson, Captain, Officer Commanding, "C" Troop, 8 Cdn. HAA Bty., (Location not identified) to IAB, 10 November 1944.

¹⁷⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-766 Pt 1, J.E. Daly, Indian Agent, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island to Hoey, 20 December 1943.

Agent whose duty it is to supervise such cases.”¹⁷⁵ McCrimmon believed the soldier should trust that the Indian Agent would make the best decision for the family. He viewed the soldier and Indian Agent as working together. He did not acknowledge that Proctor and the Indian Agent might have had very different intentions and objectives when making their decisions.

Despite McCrimmon’s statement, Proctor’s concerns regarding the care of his children were not ignored. Indian Agent J.E. Daly stated that Proctor wanted Jack Adams¹⁷⁶ to take care of his children. Although Indian Agent Daly was convinced that children were being well taken care of by the family he put them with and in school, he wrote, “...we shall try to comply with the soldier’s wishes as soon as possible.”¹⁷⁷ Proctor claimed his right as a parent to determine who took care of his children. Proctor’s skepticism about the Indian Agent’s placement of his children is reflective of other Aboriginal parents’ attitudes. In his study of the history of residential schools, J.R. Miller has found that parents asserted their rights to decide when to send their children to school and when to withdraw them. In fact, consistently low attendance at the schools forced Indian Affairs Branch officials to create a provision in the Indian Act making school attendance mandatory.¹⁷⁸ The provision in the Act, however, was inconsistently enforced by Agents and many parents still demanded that they make decisions about their children’s attendance.¹⁷⁹ Like other soldiers who wrote to the Dependents’ Allowance

¹⁷⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-766 Pt 1, M. McCrimmon for Chief Clerk, Trusts and Annuities Division, Ottawa, Ontario to Captain Peterson, 28 November 1944.

¹⁷⁶ It is unclear from the archival records examined who Jack Adams was. Presumably he was a friend or relative of Proctor’s.

¹⁷⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-766 Pt 1, Daly to IAB, 18 January 1945.

¹⁷⁸ Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 169.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 171. This was especially true during the war when, in order to save money, upper level officials at the IAB asked Agents not to use Mounties as truant officers, as they had in the past, because the police charged the Branch for their services. It would appear that, in general assimilation, became less urgent

Board, Proctor was concerned that his family's autonomy was protected from the Indian Agent's interference.

In some cases, where soldiers believed their wives were improperly managing the allowance money, they devised alternate strategies to purposely avoid having the Indian Agent formally administer the money. Some of these strategies involved using other Indian Affairs Branch employees. In one case, a soldier from the Thunderchild Reserve in Saskatchewan, asked the farming instructor, not the Indian Agent, to make some purchases for his family because he believed his wife was not managing the money properly. The only correspondence that was found regarding this incident was written by the farming instructor who was trying to defend his actions to his superiors. No letters were found that were written by the soldier or his wife to collaborate or contradict the instructor's version of what happened. When the soldier made his request, the farming instructor had apparently advised the soldier to have the Indian Agent administer the allowance. The soldier, however, decided to have the instructor handle the money for one month. Perhaps, the soldier believed that if the Indian Agent were to formally administer the money, there would be less of a chance that the wife could gain back control of the allowance at a later time. In doing so, he would have been justified: generally Indian Agents proved reluctant to give up control over the allowance once it was obtained. The soldier might have had a previous disagreement with the Indian Agent and as a result, may have wanted to deal with another official. The farming instructor stated he did everything the soldier asked and provided the soldier with the bills for his purchases. The instructor concluded, "I did not like doing this as I knew that his wife would resent it.

because the war was a more important concern. See Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 171.

They are just like other women they do not always agree as to what their husbands want them to do.”¹⁸⁰ The instructor identified tensions over financial decisions as being common to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal couples. He then reported that the wife had told him that she mailed a letter of complaint because “she was mad at her husband because he would not let her have her own way and that she wanted all her money for herself.”¹⁸¹ The farming instructor concluded, “At the outset I might state that anything that was done was by the expressed wish of her husband and until he asked me to do this, she spent her money as she saw fit.”¹⁸² The farming instructor claimed to adhere to the soldier’s request indicating that he recognized the authority of the husband to make financial decisions. The wife, according to the instructor, believed that she should have control over the money. As indicated in the debate over who was entitled to the allowance, soldiers and wives sometimes disagreed about the authority of the soldier husband to determine whether or not wives received the allowance. While soldiers, as stipulated in the dependents’ allowance regulations, could assign the allowance to whomever they wished, wives believed they were entitled to the allowance no matter what.

Although, in most cases, administration by the Indian Agent was avoided, tensions between husbands and wives sometimes led soldiers to request such administration. In these cases, Indian Agents sometimes became involved in interpersonal disputes between husbands and wives. In one example, Jason Pollack, whose family was in Oromocto, New Brunswick, requested that Indian Agent Whalen

¹⁸⁰ LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 33, File: 6-1, File Title: Indians, Wm. Cockburn, Farming Instructor, Thunderchild Reserve, Saskatchewan to Ostrander, 3 March 1942.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

from Fredericton, New Brunswick, administer the allowance because his wife was not sending him letters, parcels, or cigarettes.¹⁸³ He also asked the Indian Agent to investigate why the woman was not writing to him and “what she’s doing with her money.”¹⁸⁴ Pollack expected his wife to fulfill certain duties and when she did not, he believed this behavior was grounds for having her allowance administered. Pollack’s attitude was similar to the soldier who did not believe his wife should receive the allowance when she was sexually unfaithful. In addition to the soldier’s own letter, the soldier asked Chaplain Giddings from the Carleton York Regiment to write to the Indian Agent. Giddings reported that the soldier believed that his wife was “misbehaving and wasting money.”¹⁸⁵ Perhaps, the soldier believed that the Chaplain’s letter reinforcing his request, would receive greater attention from Whalen.

Indian Agent Whalen did not agree with Pollack’s decision, even though administration meant that he would have more control over the allowance. Whalen justified his decision by stating that Pollack’s wife built “a nice house” on the reserve, saved money monthly, and purchased a \$50.00 Victory Bond.¹⁸⁶ This woman’s spending conformed with many Indian Agents’ “ideal” goals for how the allowance should be used. Whalen also noted that the woman kept “her house neat and clean” and also “busies herself helping the aged and needy on the Reserve.”¹⁸⁷ Whalen further described Pollack’s wife as “quite a good Indian woman” who was clean and had “nice

¹⁸³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-56, Jason Pollack, Carleton York Regiment, C Company 15 Platoon First Canadian Division Canadian Army Overseas to Not identified, 11 July 1942. The letter does not state the location of the soldier.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-56, Chaplain Giddings, Carleton York Regiment, Canadian Army Overseas to (First name not identified) MacAfee, Indian Agent, Oromocto, New Brunswick, 22 July 1942.

¹⁸⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6765, File: 452-6-56, Whalen to Pollack, 16 September 1942. This case was already discussed in Chapter 4.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

clothes.”¹⁸⁸ Whalen evaluated the woman based on her appearance, manners, and her volunteer work. As in cases of “illegitimacy,” some Indian Agents’ decisions were influenced by whether or not they perceived the woman to be “respectable.” Whalen stated that the wife stopped sending letters because the soldier mistakenly sent a letter to his wife that was intended for another woman. Whalen wrote to Pollack, “I realize a soldier away from home is very lonesome, but you should remember that you, as a married man, should not be having sweethearts in England and when you do, you are committing a great wrong to your wife, as well as committing a sin.”¹⁸⁹ This comment indicates how Indian Agents could be moralistic and patronizing. Whalen believed that sexual fidelity was not just one sided and the husband had a responsibility to be faithful to his wife. He was not as tolerant as some officials were of soldiers’ sexual indiscretions. Whalen noted that since Pollack’s wife was sending him parcels again, “it may be your wish that she continue to receive this money, therefore, I will not take any action until I hear from you again.”¹⁹⁰ This example illustrates how Indian Agents undermined soldiers’ decisions when they did not conform to their own views.

Another issue of contention for some families was deductions from allowances for savings. As Chapter 4 on the savings program revealed, Indian Agents were encouraged by the Dependents’ Allowance Board Chairman, R.O.G. Bennett, and the Indian Affairs Branch Director, H.W. McGill, to persuade soldiers and their wives to save a portion of their allowance money. According to dependents’ allowance regulations, all savings were voluntary. If soldiers or their wives wanted to save part of their allowance, they had to sign a permission form stipulating the amount they wanted to

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. The soldier’s response to Whalen’s statements was not included in the case file.

save each month. The importance of consent was emphasized. Although Indian Agents had received instructions from Bennett and McGill to promote savings among Aboriginal recipients, they were also informed by McGill that no pressure or coercion could be used when trying to make these deductions. The way the savings program was implemented in some individual cases, suggests that these instructions from Ottawa were not being followed. Readers will recall that officials at the Indian Affairs Branch preferred the Indian Trust Fund because they had more control. Some of the examples discussed below show, however, even with War Savings Certificates Indian Agents could still interfere in the way these savings were handled.

Conflicts arose between soldiers and Indian Agents over the savings accounts. Some soldiers claimed that Indian Agents were arbitrarily deducting money from the allowance cheques for savings without permission. Timothy Perry from Fort St. James, British Columbia, who was a Private writing from Vernon, British Columbia, went to D.M. MacKay's office to complain about the way Indian Agent Howe from the Stuart Lake Agency was handling his family's saving account. MacKay was the Indian Commissioner for province. According to MacKay, Perry claimed that "an unstated amount is being stopped" by the Indian Agent from the dependents' allowance cheque for the purchase of War Savings Certificates. This transaction was done without the consent of Perry's wife or Perry himself.¹⁹¹ Perry and his wife had decided to stop making deductions for savings. MacKay asked for a report from the Agent on the matter concluding that Perry's statements sounded "improbable" to him "as it is most unlikely

¹⁹¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service 1939-44, MacKay to Indian Agent, Robert Howe, Stuart Lake Agency, Vanderhoof, British Columbia, 11 April 1942.

that you would discriminate against the dependents of Indian servicemen in this way.”¹⁹²

Once again MacKay was another Indian Affairs Branch official who cast doubt on the Aboriginal soldier’s claims.

In responding to Perry’s accusations, Indian Agent Howe claimed that no pressure was put on Perry’s wife to purchase War Savings Certificates. He stated that Perry’s wife signed the permission form “in the presence of Constable Sharpe of her own free will.”¹⁹³ The presence of the police when Perry’s wife was signing the form suggests some sort of intimidation may have been at play. When the woman wanted the amount being deducted reduced, the Indian Agent claimed he complied with the request. However, when the woman wanted to cancel her savings, Howe wrote to Perry. He informed Perry, “Due to subversive influence, no doubt from other Indians who would like to share part of your wife’s allowance, she wrote to me wishing to cancel the purchase of the certificates. However I prevailed upon her to await your advice before taking this action.”¹⁹⁴ These comments undermined the ability of Perry’s wife to make a financial decision. In Howe’s opinion, Perry’s wife only wanted to cancel the certificates because she was naive and was influenced by other community members. As other Indian Agents did, Howe was possibly identifying the practice of communal sharing. He criticized this practice because it undermined notions of individual property ownership which he was trying to promote. He then wanted Perry to clarify and confirm his wife’s decision.¹⁹⁵ He concluded, “If you wish further advice go to your Officer commanding your Unit. I

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service 1939-44, Howe to MacKay, 16 April 1942.

¹⁹⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service 1939-44, Howe to Pte. Timothy Perry, No. 1 cpy. No. 4 Platoon, C.A. (B)T.C. #110, Vernon, British Columbia, 20 February 1942.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

am sure he will give you similar advice.”¹⁹⁶ In this example Perry supported his wife’s decision, not the Indian Agent’s. Despite the fact that Perry confirmed his wife’s decision, Indian Agent Howe continued to argue that the family should not stop saving. He remarked in a letter to MacKay, “I do not feel inclined to recommend cancellation of these certificates until every means have been exerted to induce the Perrys to the contrary.”¹⁹⁷ He reported that most recipients in his Agency were making such reductions for the purchase of War Savings Certificates.¹⁹⁸

MacKay suggested that an official from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police contact Perry and explain the advantages of purchasing War Savings Certificates. It is unclear if the police officer was going to intimidate Perry to keep saving. There are few insights in the files regarding what the relationship was like between the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Indian Agents, and families in relation to the allowances. Although the Indian Affairs Branch Director wrote to Agents saying coercion should not be used, not all officials necessarily followed this advice. MacKay remarked that if Perry or his wife still refused to save their allowance after the meeting with the police officer, “there is nothing we can do about it.”¹⁹⁹ MacKay concluded, “While it is realized that these women are receiving more funds than they have ever handled before, we have to be careful not to do anything that might be interpreted as discriminating against them as compared with other Indians.”²⁰⁰ MacKay’s comments are contradictory. On the one hand, he supports using the police potentially to force the Perrys into saving, but, on the

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service 1939-44, Howe to MacKay, 16 April 1942.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service 1939-44, MacKay to Howe, 8 May 1942.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

other hand, he notes that are limits to how much the Indian Agents could interfere. Interestingly, MacKay does not state that Aboriginal people's treatment should not appear discriminatory when compared to Euro-Canadians. He is more concerned that Aboriginal people are treated the same. Walker, as previously mentioned, has argued that at the time, officials may not have believed their actions were discriminatory because under the rhetoric of "maternal trusteeship," an action was not considered discriminatory unless it treated people differently who were "similarly situated."²⁰¹ According to this logic, if all Aboriginal people were being treated the same, they were not being discriminated against.

MacKay wrote to Perry stating that he could decide with his wife whether he wanted to save some of the allowance money.²⁰² "Whether or not your wife makes any savings from her allowance is a matter that you will have to decide for yourselves, but I cannot impress on you too strongly the great advantage of having a few dollars available for the time when you are discharged from the Army and wish to set up yourself."²⁰³ MacKay advised putting the money in an Indian Trust Fund instead of purchasing War Savings Certificates. Despite Howe's statement that most recipients were purchasing War Savings Certificates in his Agency, the Trust Fund was the favoured option by MacKay because recipients had to make a request through their Indian Agent to access money from the account. Officials at the Indian Affairs Branch could exert more supervisory control over how the money was spent in the Indian Trust Fund than in War

²⁰¹ Walker, 'Race,' *Rights and the Supreme Court*, 308.

²⁰² LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service, 1939-1944, MacKay to Perry, 8 May 1942.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

Bonds or War Savings Certificates which they argued could be more easily cashed out.²⁰⁴

Indian Agent Howe reported that Perry wrote to him demanding that further reductions from the allowance for savings be stopped. Howe reported that he passed along his request to the Dependents' Allowance Board and presumably the reductions for savings were stopped.²⁰⁵ Ironically, it was left up to the family to make their own decision. The right to make this decision is what the family wanted in the first place. The Perry case reveals the degree to which various levels of bureaucracy in the Indian Affairs Branch could create problems for families if they did not agree with their financial decisions. Officials' tactics included trying to create animosity between the husbands and wives, creating bureaucratic delays by writing to upper level officials and even suggesting the use of the police.

In some cases, soldiers interpreted deductions for savings as evidence that Indian Agents were trying to stop their wives' allowances. This is another example where there were discrepancies between the soldier's understanding of the policy and the Indian Agent's perception of his role in managing the allowance. Sometimes soldiers would write directly to either the Dependents' Allowance Board or the Indian Affairs Branch. Alternatively, they would convey their concerns through their Commanding Officer who would write to the Dependents' Allowance Board on behalf of the soldier. Private Bastin, who, as we have already seen, refused to consent to the administration of his wife's allowances, wrote to upper level officials at the Indian Affairs Branch protesting against a portion of his wife's allowance being stopped. He wrote this letter in April 1945, before finding out that the Dependents' Allowance Board had permitted Indian

²⁰⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6772, File: 452-42, MacKay to MacInnes, 12 May 1942.

²⁰⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File: 139, File Title: General ICBC-Military Service, 1939-1944, Howe to MacKay, 13 May 1942.

Agent Whalen to administer his wife's allowance, despite his refusal to consent to such an action. There is no further correspondence in the case file to indicate how he reacted when he found out that Board members had gone against his wishes. In the letter he wrote in April 1945, Bastin was frustrated with Whalen for making deductions from his wife's allowance for savings and for generally interfering in his marriage:²⁰⁶

I might as tell you's people about my troubles. I just don't know how to start. Its about the Indian Agent in Fredericton Branch he is interfering in our business between my wife and i. he is trying to stop the money which my wife is getting from me and i don't think it no business of his to interfere at all as i know the Indian Dep. aint helping her and i dont know why he done this to her. Besides he stopped 15 dollars of her money and i been trying to get it for her for a long time now and she hasn'got it yet.. So i taught i would try you's just to see how much power you's got over thir. I know my wife got into trouble here few months ago but as i know we all bound to get in trouble some time ..And i forgive her for all what she done. If i wanted to stop her money i would stopped it long before this and the Indian Agent of Fredericton dont have to do it for me. I been suffering quite long enough now and i didn't know what to do so i let's you's people know and you want to till im to minds his own business rom now on. and we all get along better if he did....I am very sarrw to write this kind of a letter to you's people but i had to do some thing but i dont think you's dont mind it. Could you please try and give my wife Mrs. LL Bastin her money what the Indian Agent took from her.²⁰⁷

Bastin's wife had presumably written to her husband explaining the Indian Agent's actions.²⁰⁸ Perhaps the couple believed if Bastin, who was the soldier, wrote a letter he

²⁰⁶ Bastin only identified his location as "Somewhere in Germany." He also wrote in the letter that he had been in Italy. See LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-763 Pt.1, Private Bastin, No. 2 Canadian CCS RCAMC, Canadian Army Overseas to IAB, 21 April 1945.

²⁰⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-763 Pt.1, Bastin to IAB, 21 April 1945.

²⁰⁸ Private letters written between husbands and wives were not found in the case files. Most women had their own mail boxes at the local post office. It is assumed that unless Indian Agents intercepted the mail, they only had access to private correspondence if the wives brought it to them. Here a study of one particular reserve or interviews with former recipients could possibly provide more insights into this question. Students who went to residential schools were in a different situation. Their mail was read by the teachers at the school. See Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 139. In the archival research done for this project, there was one example found in the files of a Principal sending a letter from a residential school student to an Indian Agent. This letter dealt with a man who stated he was not going to register in the military under

would further expose the Indian Agent's actions to upper level officials and possibly convince them to reverse the Agent's decision. Bastin referred to the allowance as "her money" indicating he believed that the allowance belonged to his wife. The soldier reinforced his own authority by saying that if he wanted the allowance stopped, he would have done it himself. He emphasized that he could make his own decisions about his domestic affairs.

Similar to Indian Agent Howe, Indian Agent Whalen defended his decision to deduct money for savings from Bastin's allowance, even though the soldier said he wanted these deductions stopped. Whalen pointed out that deductions were approved by Bastin's wife:

Mr. Bastin states in his letter that I have taken \$15.00 from his wife's cheque. The money he refers to has been deducted each month and deposited in the Indian Trust Fund at Ottawa. (Savings No. 56-2). It is true I advised and persuaded Mrs. Bastin to sign this money over as I knew it was the only way she would save any. It is all that she has saved...Pte Bastin is taking the same attitude as a few of the Indians take when one is trying to help them. I am doing what I consider best for their future interests in all cases...Mrs. Bastin has a very bad tongue and I believe she has been writing to him and causing him to get in such a mood as he is not that kind of a man. It is a wonder he did not write to me.²⁰⁹

The Indian Agent made assumptions about gender. He identified the wife as causing the problem because of her "bad tongue." According to Whalen, the wife was not a "trustworthy" source of information. He wondered why the soldier did not write to him, first, implying that the husband should have viewed his wife's comments skeptically. Whalen claimed to know Bastin's interest based on his impressions of what kind of man he was in the past. Whalen assumed that Bastin's behavior would not deviate from his

the compulsory military registration program. The letter did not refer to the allowance. See LAC, RG 10, Volume 11154, File CR 35 PTC 1939-42, Crawford to Nellie, 26 October 1941.

²⁰⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-763 Pt.1, Whalen to IAB, 17 May 1945.

initial impression and consequently Bastin's wife must be the cause for his change in attitude. He failed to acknowledge Bastin's ability to independently decide to critique the Agent's actions. The Acting Director of the Indian Affairs Branch approved of Whalen's report. He told Whalen to write directly to Bastin in order to "endeavor to put his mind at rest concerning his domestic affairs."²¹⁰ The geographic isolation of soldiers who were away from their families, possibly made it easier for some Agents to attempt to divide family members because communication was more difficult and less frequent. Indian Agents continually portrayed themselves as trying to protect soldiers' interests, even though soldiers' own views often conflicted with Indian Agents.

In the Perry and Bastin cases, the interference by the Indian Agent appears to be different than the way the social workers intervened in cases involving wives. In the Perry and Bastin cases, the wife and husband were not fighting. Perry and his wife agreed about their decision to stop their savings. Bastin and his wife had reconciled and he stated in his letter he had forgiven his wife for getting into "trouble." There was no evidence in the correspondence that there was prior abuse in the family either financial or physical. The Indian Agents became involved in these families' affairs without specific incidents being brought to their attention. In both cases, the Indian Agents were persistent in arguing that their financial decisions were superior to the families' own decisions.

Representatives from local social agencies would appear to have acted differently than Agents. Although parents and common-law wives were all investigated by social agencies, in cases involving wives, representatives usually needed either an accusation or

²¹⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-763 Pt. 1, R.A. Hoey, Acting IAB Director, Ottawa, Ontario, (Hoey was the former Superintendent of Welfare and Training who took over as Acting Director when McGill retired) to Whalen, 28 May 1945.

evidence of abuse of funds before they intervened.²¹¹ Moreover, social workers emphasized the importance of reconciling the family; so perhaps, they were less motivated to intervene in cases where the husband and wife were getting along. Social agencies also had a greater number of clients. They did not have contact with every family in a particular area. The position and circumstances of Indian Agents and social agencies were different and as a result may have affected the level of scrutiny Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal families experienced. Aboriginal soldiers' families were more likely to have an Indian Agent interfere in their affairs because of the fewer number of soldiers' families on reserves.

The individual letters of protest from soldiers examined are reflective of broader political concerns among First Nations. Significantly, when presenting their submissions to the Special Joint Commission in 1946, one of the major demands made by several First Nations was that the arbitrary power of Indian Agents be limited.²¹² This demand, according to Sheffield, caught the attention of many committee members, like Castleden who was mentioned earlier, because it "offended their democratic sensibilities."²¹³ Here the significance of studying individual families' experiences is revealed. What occurred with these individual families at the local level can, in part, provide insights into what influenced the demands that became a part of the wider political post-war movement.

²¹¹ A more systematic review of dependents' allowances case files for non-Aboriginal recipients would have to be completed to fully substantiate this conclusion, but based on the material examined for this project the noted differences appear to be valid.

²¹² Sheffield, *The Red Man's On The Warpath*, 159.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

6.6 MANAGING THE MONEY: ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S REQUESTS FOR FUNDS AND THEIR QUESTIONING OF BUREAUCRATS' HANDLING OF THE ACCOUNTS

Most of the correspondence, so far, has dealt with soldiers making complaints against Indian Agents and officials responding to those complaints. Women are discussed in these examples, but their own perceptions of the situation are rarely provided. How did women interact with bureaucrats? Most of women's interactions involved making requests from their savings accounts. As readers will recall from Chapter 4 on the savings program, recipients were supposed to have access to their savings when they needed them. J.L. Ralston, the Minister of National Defence, had, in fact, confirmed with officials at the Indian Affairs Branch that recipients, upon request, would easily be able to access their money if they were to choose to put it in the Indian Trust Fund as opposed to War Savings Certificates. Despite the fact that officials at the Branch had assured Ralston that the money would be easily accessible, in practice, as the following examples will illustrate, many soldiers' families experienced difficulties when trying to access this money. Many wives sought to limit the involvement of Indian Agents by contacting upper level bureaucrats directly. Perhaps, women wanted to minimize the Agents' knowledge of their financial affairs. Alternatively, women might have believed their requests would be handled more efficiently if they were to contact the officials who issued the cheques directly. Women, who believed that Indian Agents were negligent or made an error, contacted upper level bureaucrats, bureaucrats from other departments, politicians and lawyers in an attempt to get their concerns addressed. They were persistent in pursuing their claims when they believed the answers that they

received, were not sufficiently explanatory. They had clear objectives regarding how they were going to use the money and expressed frustration when there were delays or when they stopped receiving their cheques.

In assessing these cases, it is important to keep in mind that often the Aboriginal women involved were living in family situations that did not reflect the majority of Aboriginal women's experiences. Many of the Aboriginal women who wrote to the Dependents' Allowance Board or Indian Affairs Branch were separated or divorced from their husbands. Some of them had had "illegitimate" children. These circumstances were unusual. Most Aboriginal dependents' allowance recipients remained married and did not have "illegitimate" children. Although these women's situations do not reflect the majority of women's experiences, these letters do express how some women dealt with the bureaucratic hurdles that they faced and the arguments that they used in trying to access their money. These are issues that many recipients had to face when dealing with bureaucracy. Their attitudes towards the money and how they managed it also help to undermine many Indian Agents' claims that there was a link between a perceived lack of "respectability" and an inability to handle money.

Women contacted upper level bureaucrats mostly to make requests from their savings accounts. Corrine MacGregor from Norway House in Manitoba, for example, wrote directly to the Indian Affairs Branch Director when requesting money from her savings account.²¹⁴ In the MacGregor case, D.J. Allan, the Superintendent of the Reserve and Trusts section of the Indian Affairs Branch, wrote a letter to A.G. Hamilton who was

²¹⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6797, File: 452-703, Corrine MacGregor, Winnipeg, Manitoba to McGill, 28 December 1945.

the Inspector of Indian Agencies for Manitoba.²¹⁵ Allan stated that he was forwarding a cheque for the amount MacGregor requested, adding: “It is assumed that you are of the opinion that the money will be properly used.”²¹⁶ He asked for a report on MacGregor’s “behaviour and circumstances at present.”²¹⁷ This type of comment was typical when women made requests from their savings accounts. Upper level bureaucrats required the local male Euro-Canadian official to confirm the women’s need for the money. Women’s own decisions about their finances were questioned.

In contacting upper level officials, many women had clear expectations about what they wanted to use the money for and how they wanted the money managed. A good example of a recipient who had these expectations was Veronica York. Veronica York was a sixteen year old high school student from Deseronto, Ontario who was the daughter of Alistair York, a Corporal in the Army. Veronica York’s guardian was Alistair York’s half sister. The case file did not indicate what happened to Veronica’s mother. As readers will recall from Chapter 1, girls received an allowance until the age of seventeen.²¹⁸ Veronica York received twelve dollars in allowance as was typically assigned by the Board to the first child. The twenty dollars in assigned pay from the soldier, which was required in order to receive the allowance, was also allotted. In total, thirty-two dollars per month was received and was put in an Indian Trust Fund savings account in York’s name at the Indian Affairs Branch. The files do indicate that officials

²¹⁵ Allan most likely asked Hamilton to supervise the expenditure because the woman was working in Winnipeg where Hamilton was located.

²¹⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6797, File: 452-703, D.J. Allan, Superintendent Reserves and Trusts, IAB, Ottawa, Ontario to A.G. Hamilton, Inspector of Indian Agencies, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 14 January 1946.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ Boys received the allowance until they were sixteen. The reason for the difference was not explained in the records, but it appears that there was an assumption that boys could start work earlier than girls. The rule that children could receive the allowance until the age nineteen if they were in school was not put in place until 1943. See LAC, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 25, File: 2-D, File Title: Speeches, “Speech for Rotary Club,” 16 September 1940 and “Dependents’ Allowance Board” by B.W. Mendelsohn, Not dated.

from the Dependents' Allowance Board asked officials from the Indian Affairs Branch to administer the money, but they do not explain the Board's reasoning for this decision. It is possible that due to Veronica's young age and the absence of her mother, Alistair York, while he was overseas, approved of the administration of the money and the set-up of the saving account.²¹⁹

Veronica York's guardian was not involved in the management of the money. Part of the allowance money was supposed to be issued to Alistair York's half sister with whom Veronica was staying. However, the guardian told Indian Agent Jones that she was receiving pay and allowances from her son who had joined the Army. The Indian Agent stated that the guardian "feels that she is not entitled to anything for Veronica York's keep."²²⁰ The guardian believed that she was entitled to the allowance from her son, but not from her niece or half brother. It is not clear why the guardian made the above statement because she presumably had to pay for York's food expenses. Nevertheless, none of the money was issued to the guardian. All the money eventually issued from the account was issued to Veronica York herself.

Veronica York made frequent requests for the money from her account. While still in high school, York wrote to upper level Indian Affairs Branch bureaucrats, "If I receive a sum of fifteen dollars each month, I think that this sum by careful handling will be sufficient for my needs. If this arrangement is satisfactory to this department, I would sincerely appreciate having a cheque sent to me as soon as possible."²²¹ As Dominique

²¹⁹ See LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, Signature illegible, DAB Member, DAB, Ottawa, Ontario to MacInnes, 28 May 1940, and LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, George Patrick, Chief, Trusts and Annuities Division, IAB, Ottawa, Ontario to H.M. Jones, Indian Agent, Deseronto, Ontario, 3 June 1940.

²²⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, Jones to MacInnes, 23 July 1940.

²²¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, Veronica York, Deseronto, Ontario to IAB, 18 July 1940.

Marshall noted in the case of poor families who received family allowances, dependents' allowance recipients also became well versed in using particular types of language and arguments in an attempt to get their requests addressed within the bureaucratic hierarchy.²²² York's tone is diplomatic and polite. She notes herself that she plans to consciously manage the money. Indian Agent Jones supported York's claim noting that she needed the fifteen dollars for clothing and bus fare to high school.²²³ Even though all cheques had to be addressed to the recipient because the Board did not have the legal authority to assign the money to anyone else, in most administration cases the Indian Agents received the cheques at their offices. Despite the usual procedures, Jones opted in this case, to have the monthly cheque of fifteen dollars sent directly to York because she lived far away from the Agent's office.²²⁴ The rest of the money was held in the savings account at the Indian Affairs Branch.

Attempting to access these savings continued to be a bureaucratic hurdle for York. After graduating from high school, York decided to attend a business college and needed her savings for tuition fees and books. By this time, York had turned seventeen and no longer received twelve dollars in allowance, but she continued to receive twenty dollars in assigned pay from her father which was put into her savings account. She was required to use her savings to pay for her tuition because during this time period, the Indian Affairs Branch rarely paid for expenses related to higher education.²²⁵ Officials at

²²² Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State*, Chapter 5, 44.

²²³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, Jones to MacInnes, 23 July 1940.

²²⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, Jones to MacInnes, 27 July 1940.

²²⁵ It was not until the 1950's that the IAB began to provide tuition grants for high school and post secondary education. See Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 164. Band councils also started to lend money to students. In her study of Aboriginal nurses, Mary-Jane McCallum has found that for women who chose to go to nursing school in the 1950's band councils gave loans to women. All the women's purchases had to be approved by the band council, even personal items such as nylons. This continued a pattern of Aboriginal women's purchases being scrutinized. See Mary-Jane McCallum, "Aboriginal Nurses in

the Indian Affairs Branch even interfered with band councils who wanted to provide money so that students could further their education. Instead, officials suggested to the band councils that the students go to Technical or Agricultural College.²²⁶ In part, officials took this stance because they wanted to limit expenditures. They also believed that Aboriginal students were not as capable as other students due to their race and were better suited to menial labour, farming, or jobs in the trades.²²⁷

Despite the limitations that some students faced in accessing further education, York was able to use her savings to attend business college. She continued to manage her money and determined the amount of money she needed per month. She requested through the Indian Agent one hundred dollars from her savings account for tuition. The Indian Agent reported that she also requested that the amount she received each month increase from fifteen dollars to twenty dollars in order to pay for her clothing and books.²²⁸ She then asked the Indian Agent for the amount to increase to thirty dollars when she decided to board in Belleville for the winter instead of commuting from her guardian's home as she had previously done.²²⁹ The Indian Agent, who was now A.D. Moore, approved of these increases and agreed with the former Agent that York should continue to receive the cheque directly.²³⁰ A letter by the principal of the business college in Belleville was required to prove that York was successfully completing her studies. The principal reported that York was an "industrious student" who was "making

Manitoba and Ontario," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Manitoba, forthcoming 2006.

²²⁶ Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 162.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 157-162.

²²⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, A.D. Moore, Indian Agent, Deseronto, Ontario to MacInnes, 25 August 1941.

²²⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, Moore to MacInnes, 13 January 1942.

²³⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, Moore to M. McCrimmon, Trust and Annuities Division, IAB, Ottawa, Ontario, 24 October 1941, and LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, Moore to MacInnes, 13 January 1942.

good progress in her work.”²³¹ In order for York to access the money in her savings account, she needed the approval of Euro-Canadian male authority figures. All the men in this case supported her access to the money and did not attempt to block it as Indian Agents did in other cases. They may have approved of her expenditures because they interpreted her enrollment in business school as a sign she was assimilating and adopting Euro-Canadian values and goals. Their interpretation may not be reflective of what York herself thought about going to business college.

Despite having the approval of Euro-Canadian authority figures, York still experienced delays in receiving her money. Her persistence was key in ensuring that these delays were addressed. When York did not receive her cheques on time, she wrote two additional letters to the Indian Affairs Branch inquiring about why there was a delay.²³² Her cheques were eventually received.

Once she finished business school, York continued to make her own decisions about what she wanted to do with the rest of her money in her account. She informed Indian Agent Moore that she wanted to purchase War Bonds or have the money put in her bank account which she had at Trenton.²³³ Indian Agent Moore then wrote to the Indian Affairs Branch suggesting that they write a letter “direct from the Department” explaining the advantages of keeping the money in the Indian Trust Account due to the higher rate of interest.²³⁴ M. McCrimmon from the Trusts and Annuities Division wrote York a letter informing her that the Indian Trust Fund provided five percent interest as

²³¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, Signature illegible, Principal, Ontario Business College, Belleville, Ontario, to “To whom it may concern,” 14 January 1942.

²³² See her requests LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, York to IAB, 13 October 1941, and LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, York to IAB, 15 June 1942.

²³³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, York to Moore, 30 March 1943.

²³⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, Moore to IAB, 12 April 1943.

opposed to War Bonds that provided only three percent interest.²³⁵ McCrimmon stated, "It is noted that you are now working and have, we believe, no need of this money. It should, therefore, in our opinion be left to accumulate against the day when your father will return from the fighting forces and be used to assist him in re-establishment on his discharge from the Army."²³⁶ As indicated in Chapter 4, officials at the Indian Affairs Branch commonly believed that the money should be saved for the soldiers' return implying, perhaps, that men would make better use of the funds than their female relatives. York agreed to leave money in the departmental savings account as long as she received a statement of the money left in the account. As per her request, York received these statements.²³⁷ York may have been skeptical of the Indian Affairs Branch's accounting procedures and as a result, wanted the statement so she could keep track of the account herself. York did not respond to McCrimmon's comments about saving the money for her father's return. Perhaps she did not agree with his assessment. Many recipients believed that the allowance money, in fact, belonged to them, not their soldier relatives. Despite McCrimmon's suggestion to the contrary, York made two more requests for money from her account, eventually emptying it.²³⁸

The role York's father played in influencing how she spent the money was not indicated in the correspondence examined. York's father perhaps supported his daughter's desire to further her education and had confidence in her abilities to manage the money. He may have disagreed with McCrimmon's assumption that York should

²³⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, McCrimmon to York, 20 April 1943.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ See York's request and the Indian Affairs Branch response LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, York to McCrimmon, 22 April 1943 and LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, A.G. Leslie, Trusts and Annuities Division, IAB, Ottawa, Ontario to York, 29 April 1943.

²³⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, York to IAB, 3 December 1943 and LAC, RG 10, Volume 6798, File: 452-715, York to IAB, 4 August 1944.

save the money for his return because he wanted to ensure his child was well taken care of while he was away. The allowance program, in fact, had been justified on this premise. The father may have also believed that he would receive veterans' benefits when he came home to help him get re-established and would not need his daughter's allowance money.

When a bureaucratic error occurred involving a savings account, some wives asked upper level bureaucrats to investigate the matter. Perhaps they believed their concerns would be handled more expeditiously if they directly contacted the officials responsible. They also kept track of their monthly deductions and the amount owed to them further undermining some officials' claims that Aboriginal women were unable to manage their finances. Mrs. Jim Stanley wrote to the Indian Affairs Branch Secretary, T.R.L. MacInnes, regarding a cheque she received from her savings account. She stated,

I have just received a \$60.00 cheque from your Department; Due me on account of my Dependents' Allowance cheque (Armed Forces) Deductions. My Deductions started in April to November which is exactly 7 months, you still owe me \$10.00 The cheque should have been \$70.00. The cheque No. K077742 B22 was made out No. 23.45 I hope you will oblige.²³⁹

The error was corrected and the cheque was sent to Stanley.²⁴⁰

Sometimes women wrote upper level bureaucrats in an attempt to confirm whether or not the Indian Agent had followed through on a particular request. In the case of Anna Perkins from Oromocto, New Brunswick, she wrote to officials in Ottawa to clarify that Indian Agent Whalen had sent a letter regarding her savings account:

I am writing you these few lines just to let you know that I would

²³⁹ LAC, RG 10 Volume 6805, File: 452-909-Pt 1, Mrs. Jim Stanley, Wikwemikong, Manitoulin Island, Ontario to Not identified, 30 November 1945.

²⁴⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6805, File: 452-909 Pt 1, Leslie to C.R. Johnston, Indian Agent, Manitowaning, Ontario, 11 December 1945.

like to find out. Did you receive a letter from Mr. Whalen since last February in the year 19/43 about the money I was putting to the Indian Trustee...I was putting \$15 every month and know that Im not getting any money know, I think it would be better if you would send me all my money back which I was putting to the Indian Trustee. Its no use keeping it up there cause I can't put any more. So please could you send my money back. Soon.²⁴¹

Indian Agent Whalen tried to undermine Perkins' decision to take money out of her savings account. Whalen informed bureaucrats at the Annuities and Trusts Division section in Ottawa that Perkins was living with a man that was not her husband and had an "illegitimate" child. As noted in Chapter 5, the dependents' allowance regulations stipulated that women were no longer eligible to receive their allowances once they had an "illegitimate" child explaining why Perkins was no longer receiving any money. It is unclear if Perkins was separated from her soldier husband.²⁴² Once again Agents linked what they regarded as "immoral" behavior with an inability to handle money. In regard to her financial situation, Whalen claimed that Mr. McElroy²⁴³ told him that contrary to what Perkins herself said "...she was doing pretty good now as she picked and sold fiddle heads and was doing fine..."²⁴⁴ Whalen concluded, "...Mrs. Perkins would spend her money very fast if she had access to it..."²⁴⁵ Based on the Indian Agent's report, Perkins' request was not granted. Instead, A.G. Leslie, the Chief Clerk for the Trusts and Annuities Division, advised Whalen that he should determine the amount to be received from the savings account. Leslie wrote that the amount left in the savings account should

²⁴¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-752 Pt 1, Anna Perkins, Oromocto, New Brunswick, to Not identified, (Letter sent to Ottawa), 15 May 1944.

²⁴² A letter written by the soldier husband indicating his views on the family's situation was not provided.

²⁴³ It is unclear from the letter what Mr. McElroy's position was.

²⁴⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-752 Pt 1, Whalen to IAB, 8 June 1944.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

be made to last as long as possible.²⁴⁶ Although, according to officials at the Department of National Defence, recipients, upon request, were supposed to be able to access their savings, officials at the Indian Affairs Branch in some cases exerted tight control over this money. They could do this because the money was in the Indian Trust Fund controlled by the Branch. In the Perkins case, instead of checking up on whether the Indian Agent sent the letter, like Perkins had asked, officials in Ottawa were more concerned that the woman's access to the money be limited.

In another example, Allison Lyon from Oka, Quebec, also criticized an Indian Agent when he failed to follow through upon her request. She stated in a letter to the Indian Affairs Branch Secretary, T.R.L. MacInnes: "I am taking this in my own hand. Some months ago I asked our Indian Agent to write for the rest of my allowance which invested...I am now in need of it now And would like to get it soon if possible."²⁴⁷ Indian Agent Brisebois from Caughnawaga, Quebec wrote to Secretary MacInnes noting that all the money from the savings account was paid to Lyon. He said he wanted a statement of Lyon's account "so that she can see by herself that all savings have now been paid."²⁴⁸ The Indian Agent wanted a document to prove his statements. He acknowledged that Lyon was not going to be convinced by what he verbally told her. Lyon wrote again to MacInnes:

Received Dependents Allowance assign pay payments Statements which I had asked for on my Savings Account I drew \$100 in May 31, 1945 And again \$61.95 on Aug 21 1946 And the one in statement for \$103.29. I never got that one So I wish to get an early reply.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-752 Pt 1, Leslie to Whalen, 13 June 1944.

²⁴⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-773 Pt 1, Mrs. Allison Lyon, Oka, Quebec to IAB, 5 August 1946.

²⁴⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-773 Pt 1, Frs. Brisebois, Indian Agent, Caughnawaga, Quebec to IAB, 11 October 1946.

²⁴⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-773 Pt 1, Lyon to IAB, 28 October 1946.

An Indian Affairs Branch official went to the Audit Office and reported that the cheque for \$103.29 was cashed at the bank.²⁵⁰ The bureaucrat investigated Lyon's claim to ensure that the cheque had not been stolen or misplaced. According to the Indian Agent, it was eventually determined that the cheque was in fact received.²⁵¹ In this case, Lyon's inquiry forced bureaucrats to check over their accounting and confirm that no bureaucratic error had been made.

Local Members of Parliament were contacted to put pressure on bureaucrats to provide wives with money from their savings accounts. Some women believed it was a more effective strategy to contact individuals outside the bureaucratic hierarchy. J.R. MacNicol, a Member of Parliament, wrote to the Indian Affairs Branch Director, H.W. McGill, requesting that the Indian Agent be advised to provide Lilly Wilson from the Moravian Reserve near Thamesville, Ontario with the money from her savings account. Wilson, who had previously protested going to the Indian Agent's office to get her cheque, needed the money from her savings account to repair her home. MacNicol remarked, "I know the Indian Agent has all the troubles he can take care of, and likely does the very best he can. I make no complaint, but I have a warm feeling for the Indians on the Moravian Reserve, and will appreciate it, on looking into the matter, to give directions to afford some relief to this family."²⁵² By stating he had "a warm feeling for the Indians," MacNicol, perhaps, was indicating that he felt a paternalistic duty to write on Wilson's behalf. Wilson may have been convinced that a politician would help her case by vouching for her need of the money.

²⁵⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-773 Pt 1, Leslie to Brisebois, 31 October 1946.

²⁵¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-773 Pt 1, Brisebois to IAB, 29 November 1946.

²⁵² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File: 452-737 Pt 1, MacNicol to IAB, 7 December 1944.

Similar to MacNicol, Indian Affairs Branch officials had paternalistic attitudes towards Aboriginal people, but, unlike MacNicol, this sense of duty made them believe they had to restrict women's access to the money rather than facilitate access to it. As we learned in Chapter 4 on the savings program, using money to build or improve a home was considered a "good" use of the money by officials at the Indian Affairs Branch because they believed building an individual dwelling meant that families were giving up their communal ways of living. However, even in cases where the expenditure was considered "worthwhile" by officials at the Indian Affairs Branch, the money was still supervised. In the Wilson case, Director McGill advised MacNicol that Wilson would receive the money to repair her home, but the Indian Agent was going to oversee how the money was spent. McGill remarked, "...I think you will agree that we would be avoiding our responsibility if we did not attempt to supervise the expenditures of the moneys (sic) which Mrs. Wilson received by virtue of her husband being a member of the Armed Forces."²⁵³ McGill implied that there was an obligation to supervise how the money was spent in order to protect the soldier's interests. Contrary to some wives and parents' beliefs, McGill believed that the allowance should be subject to the scrutiny of bureaucrats.

Wives also hired lawyers when they believed that Indian Agents were denying them access to their savings. In a letter to Indian Agent S.H. Simpson from the Duck Lake Agency in Saskatchewan, lawyer J.J.F. MacIsaac, who was previously quoted in the introduction of this thesis, stated that Simpson was withholding a woman's savings.²⁵⁴ The dependents' allowance recipient, Carol Lawson, wanted forty dollars from her

²⁵³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File: 452-737 Pt. 1, McGill to MacNicol, 9 November 1943.

²⁵⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File: 452-747, J.J.F. MacIsaac, Barrister and Solicitor, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan to S.H. Simpson, Indian Agent, Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, 17 May 1943.

savings account to pay for her sister's funeral. In regard to the allowance money, MacIsaac stated,

It seems to me that this woman should have this money that is coming to her. In any event, where a soldier is serving his country in the Army and an allowance is allowed to his wife it should go to her and it is up to her to do what she wishes with it. My submission is that whatever moneys have been sent to Ottawa, should be requisitioned back by you so that you, in turn, may turn them over to this soldier's wife.²⁵⁵

The basis for the lawyer's argument was that the soldier's patriotism and military service entitled his wife to manage the allowance on her own. This belief corresponded with the view of many families. As we have seen time and time again, the perception of the allowance as an entitlement did not correspond with the views of many bureaucrats who believed it was their paternalistic duty to ensure that women did not "waste" or "mispend" the money. In this case, the Indian Agent estimated that Lawson had enough money and did not need additional funds from her savings account in Ottawa.²⁵⁶ He wrote, "I recommend that her Savings Account be kept intact until her husband's return from overseas."²⁵⁷ D.J. Allan, the Superintendent of the Reserves and Trusts Division, agreed with Simpson.²⁵⁸ Similar to the York case, there was a suggestion that the savings be kept for the soldier to spend on his return.

Indian Agent Simpson's refusal to provide the funds from the savings account for the funeral becomes harder to understand when compared to the treatment of non-Aboriginal women in a similar situation. Funeral expenses were considered a "legitimate" expense by officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board. Women who did not have

²⁵⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File: 452-747, MacIsaac to Simpson, 19 May 1943.

²⁵⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6799, File: 452-747, Simpson to IAB, 22 May 1943.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6779, File: 452-747, D.J. Allan, Superintendent Reserves and Trusts, IAB, Ottawa, Ontario to Simpson, 31 May 1943.

savings, could, in fact, apply for a grant from the Dependents' Board of Trustees in order to pay for funeral expenses. This Board, as described in Chapter 1, was set up to provide financial grants to women in "emergencies" such as hospital expenses, funerals, or calamities. Because the grant was for "emergencies," women with savings did not receive the money. In this case, Lawson was doubly disadvantaged due to her racial origin. Because she was Aboriginal she was "encouraged" by officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board and Indian Affairs Branch to save a portion of her allowance money, but she had difficulty accessing this money due to the control of the Indian Agent. Despite this difficulty, the existence of these savings disqualified her from receiving a grant from the Dependents' Board of Trustees to pay for her sister's funeral.

Most often wives contacted upper level bureaucrats, bureaucrats from other departments, local Members of Parliament or lawyers in an attempt to limit the interference of the Indian Agent. In some cases, however, wives did not have a choice about involving the Indian Agent if he were in charge of formally administering the money. In the case of Denise Granger from the Scugog Agency, she had an "illegitimate" child, was living with another man and had separated from her husband. She lost her thirty-five dollars in allowance because she had an "illegitimate" child, but still received the assigned pay and allowances for her other children. The soldier, in this case, had decided to continue to provide the assigned pay because he wanted to ensure the welfare of his children. Granger also still had money in her savings account. Indian Agent Fralick was in charge of administering this money. Before making any requests for money from her savings account, Granger had to ensure that Indian Agent Fralick

approved. In one of the letters, Fralick was identified as the woman's "adviser."²⁵⁹ Even with this approval, there were still delays in the receipt of her cheques. Granger wrote to the officials in Ottawa expressing her frustration that she did not receive her cheque when she already had the Indian Agent's approval. She was also frustrated because she did not believe these officials had the right to withhold money that belonged to her. She stated, "I need it for Christmas and new clothes. I didn't think I would have to ask you more than once as it's my money and Mr. Fralick said the O.K. so you could send me the money at once."²⁶⁰ Granger had clear expectations that she should receive her money in a timely manner. A cheque for the money was eventually forwarded to the Indian Agent.²⁶¹ Fralick was advised by A.G. Leslie of the Annuities and Trusts Division that the money should be spent under his supervision. Fralick wrote back to Leslie that he believed Granger was capable of handling this money and he no longer wanted to be the administrator:

I wish to state that I be relieved as supervisor in regard to the money which is forwarded from Denise Granger's Savings Acc.-No. 27-4- She did agree to save so much each pay while her assigned pay was on (word illegible) future needs. In the last seven months she had deprived herself of wearing apparel and now she needs a large part of the cheque...I feel some of these problems are too much to take over where the mother (Denise) is capable of spending the money wisely. I will see that her debts are all paid first.²⁶²

In most of the examples studied, Indian Agents wanted more control, not less. To this end, they interfered in families' relationships. This case indicates that some Indian Agents wanted less control and did not want to get involved in families' personal

²⁵⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-769 Pt 1, Denise Granger, Scugog, Ontario to Chief Treasury Officer, IAB, Ottawa, Ontario, 12 November 1947.

²⁶⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-769 Pt 1, Granger to IAB, 17 December 1947.

²⁶¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-769 Pt 1, Leslie to Clarence Fralick, Indian Agent, Scugog, Ontario, 22 June 1945.

²⁶² LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-769 Pt. 1, Fralick to Leslie, 25 June 1945.

problems. Unlike some of the other Agents who linked having an “illegitimate” child with an inability to handle money and saw administration as a long term solution, Fralick stated that Granger could manage the money on her own. Leslie informed Fralick that as long as he ensured that the debts were paid first, the account would no longer be administered.²⁶³ Interestingly, despite the fact that Fralick noted that Granger needed new clothes, Leslie emphasized that the debts were a priority over immediate needs. There was an emphasis on paying debts because it was believed such action showed careful financial management and a willingness to plan for the future; skills officials believed that Aboriginal people did not have and needed to be taught.

Even though wives were generally reluctant to involve Indian Agents, there were some exceptional cases where wives contacted Indian Agents when their cheques were stopped. Although the following example does not deal with a savings account, it is an instance where the Indian Agent tried to assist the woman in getting access to her cheque. Mrs. Aaron Macintosh from the Touchwood Agency in Saskatchewan was no longer receiving her cheque because she was in the hospital. She was also not receiving her assigned pay or any money for her daughter. As already noted, when dependents’ allowance recipients were in the hospital, they did not receive their thirty-five dollars in allowance because they were being taken care of in a public institution. The recipients’ children, however, were still supposed to receive their allowance. Assigned pay was also supposed to be received. Regarding her situation, Macintosh wrote to Indian Agent Davis:

I am now coming to you again with my same trouble I had a letter
from the man I am buying the team from And he wanted to know if I

²⁶³LAC, RG 10, Volume 6800, File: 452-769 Pt. 1, Leslie to Fralick, 28 June 1945.

couldn't do anything to pay him by the end of this month. I already paid \$105 on them. I still owe \$35 on them. And I can't possibly pay anymore on them when I am not getting my cheque....As its now six months since I had my last cheque I was paying monthly on the team and store bill my bills all together is \$15 I cannot possibly stay here any longer. If they're not going to give me anything For my part I don't have to worry about anything I'm looked after. But nothing has been done for my little girl at home. She should be getting a cheque monthly...So far I haven't heard anything about it. So can you kindly help me out? If nothing can be done. I'd like to go home in order to get my cheque and support my child And settle my bills. Please and thank you.²⁶⁴

Macintosh noted that she was paying down her debt on the horses monthly and the store bill. Her statements challenged the assumption that women were unable to plan for the future and did not care about accumulating debt.

In trying to get the error corrected, Indian Agent Davis emphasized that the soldier's family was entitled to better treatment:

Her husband, Aaron Macintosh, is in the army overseas. He wasn't made to go, he joined up of his own free will, and if you know the man as we do, you would say that he deserved a lot of credit for his action. It seems most unfair to him that his wife should have to worry about her debts while he is fighting his country's battles, especially as it is his money that she wants to make use of-his money, assigned to her.²⁶⁵

Davis may have been particularly supportive of Macintosh, in this case, because she wanted to pay her family's debts. Officials at the Indian Affairs Branch approved of this goal because they believed it was evidence of the financial prudence they were trying to promote. Like many other Agents, he emphasized his personal experience with the family to substantiate his argument that this soldier and his family deserved better treatment. Interestingly, he referred to the money as belonging to the soldier whereas

²⁶⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 6797, File: 452-708, Macintosh to Davis, 16 February 1943. Also see LAC, RG 10, Volume 6797, File: 452-708, Macintosh to Davis, 7 December, 1942.

²⁶⁵ LAC RG 10, Volume 6797, File: 452-708, Davis to IAB, 18 February 1943.

some wives referred to the money as belonging to them. Regarding the assigned pay, Davis suggested, "I strongly recommend that the \$20. a month Assigned Pay be sent 'in trust' to this office and I will administer it to Mrs. Macintosh's best advantage."²⁶⁶ It is assumed that this money was going to be administered by the Agent only until Macintosh was released from the hospital. There was no reason provided why formal administration in this case would otherwise be justified according to the dependents' allowance regulations. Ultimately, Macintosh's letters did achieve a positive result because Indian Agent Davis was made aware of the error. He eventually ensured the oversight was corrected and the allowance for Macintosh's girl and the assigned pay were received.²⁶⁷

6.7 CONCLUSION

By examining the letters written by Aboriginal families, the voices of protest are heard: the protest against the discriminatory policies, the protest against limited access to the allowance and savings, and above all the protest against the intrusive practices of the Indian Agents. Studying how recipients responded to the regulations and policies of the Dependents' Allowance Program in World War II indicates the demands for both collective and individual rights. Some of the letters written by Aboriginal men showed how military service was linked to collective rights such as the acknowledgement of and fulfillment of treaty agreements. The letters written by soldiers and their parents and wives, however, also illustrate how the Dependents' Allowance Program forced recipients to deal with the State as individuals or as "dependents." By linking financial

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ For the letter asking for the correction of the error in regards to the child's cheque see LAC, RG 10, Volume 6797, File: 452-708, Davis to IAB, 18 February 1943. When there were additional problems with Macintosh's receipt of the money Davis pursued these claims with upper level bureaucrats at the IAB. See correspondence from LAC RG 10, Volume 6797, File: 452-708, Davis to MacInnes, 10 December 1942 to LAC RG 10, Volume 6797, File: 452-708, Davis to IAB, 15 February 1945.

incentives to individual soldiers' rights, the dependents' allowance policies ultimately undermined the notion of collective rights and women's economic rights. In order to access their money, Aboriginal recipients, no matter what their personal political beliefs, were often forced to use arguments that emphasized the individual entitlements that they received through their status as soldiers' relatives. Although many women recognized the paid and unpaid economic contributions they made to their families, this work was not the basis for qualifying for the allowance. Instead, they received monies if they could prove their reliance on their husbands' or sons' income. They were not recognized as full citizens equal to men.

Both wives and parents clearly articulated these entitlements when dealing with government bureaucrats. Many Aboriginal wives and parents, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, believed they were entitled to the allowance. They contested the dependents' allowance regulations which sought to limit their eligibility. Some wives argued against the rule that stated soldiers could assign the allowance to whomever they wished. They believed that their husbands had a duty to financially support them. Parents argued that factors such as their ability to work and the amount of their wages should not prevent them from receiving the full allowance. Since they had formerly supported their sons through their paid and unpaid work, their sons now had a reciprocal obligation to support them. They contested the fact that they received varied amounts while wives received the full allowance. An entitlement, in the minds of many wives and parents, was not something subject to certain rules and conditions arbitrarily imposed by bureaucrats, but was an inalienable right.

This sense of entitlement created certain expectations on the part of dependents'

allowance recipients. Aboriginal families expected that they would manage their allowances independently of the Indian Agent. In trying to challenge Indian Agents' decisions or avoid interaction with the Indian Agent, families used a variety of strategies. One strategy employed was to contact upper level bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch. Through this strategy families could report the actions of Indian Agents to their superiors. Indian Agents subsequently were sometimes asked to justify their actions in a particular case. Families also contacted officials in Ottawa responsible for issuing cheques in an attempt to get their requests handled in a more efficient manner. Again this approach tried to avoid involving the Indian Agent.

Other families contacted officials outside the Indian Affairs Branch such as politicians, lawyers, officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board and military officers. These officials were recognized and "respected" authority figures within Euro-Canadian society. Although families were clear about their entitlements and their abilities to manage them, by having these officials write letters on their behalf, they sought to substantiate their claims in the eyes of bureaucrats. Letters by these officials put pressure on bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch to react, making the criticisms of Aboriginal recipients harder to dismiss or ignore. Even though recipients did not always get what they wanted, bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch were forced to give an explanation of their actions. Families' ability to contact officials in other departments proved to be important in getting their claims addressed in the post-war period as well. When Aboriginal veterans corresponded directly with Veterans' Affairs regarding benefits such as pensions, medical care and hardship support, they were more likely to receive fair treatment than when they had to deal with Indian Agents who often attempted to interfere

with their access to benefits.²⁶⁸

These interactions among families, bureaucrats and politicians involving the allowance were particularly important because they may have influenced post-war protests and policies. As this chapter has illustrated, families experienced problems with Indian Agents trying to undermine their decisions and limit their access to their savings accounts. These individual experiences may have motivated Aboriginal men and women in the post-war period to join political organizations to protest Indian Affairs Branch policies. As well, their experiences with the allowance may have affected the demands they made to the Special Joint Commission in 1946 which focused on lessening the arbitrary control exercised by Indian Agents. Politicians' communications with Aboriginal dependents' allowance recipients may have exposed them to the degree in which Indian Agents were interfering in Aboriginal families' lives and controlling Aboriginal people's money. These experiences, perhaps, influenced the suggestions politicians made when considering post-war policies. During the Special Joint Commission when potential revisions to the Indian Act were being discussed, politicians did suggest amendments that sought to limit the control Indian Agents had. Although the number of letters written by soldiers, wives, parents, and politicians are small in number, the concerns they brought up are reflective of broader concerns.

The other chapters in this thesis have illustrated that much debate occurred among bureaucrats. They debated the following issues: whether or not Aboriginal recipients had to go to the Indian Agent's office to pick up their cheques, under what conditions the allowance should be administered, how savings should be promoted among recipients

²⁶⁸ R. Scott Sheffield, "A Search for Equity: A Study of the Treatment Accorded to First Nations Veterans and Dependents of the Second World War and the Korean Conflict," prepared for the National Round Table on First Nations Veterans' Issues, April 2001, viii.

and how savings accounts should be managed. These discussions aimed to address the issues of Aboriginal women's "wastefulness," "financial incompetence," and "inability to save for the future." This chapter has illustrated how Aboriginal families, by protesting Indian Agents' interference and by demanding that they had the right to make their own financial decisions, undermined the very legitimacy of many of the "problems" bureaucrats sought to "solve." Even though officials' anxieties about recipients' inabilities to make financial decisions were not justified in some cases, officials were still able to exercise strict control over recipients' money. Although there were exceptions, the majority of Indian Agents studied advocated for more control over recipients' money and they believed they were best qualified to decide how the money should be spent. When Agents became involved in families' personal relationships, they sometimes caused tensions between husbands and wives. They claimed to be representing soldiers' interests, but often dismissed and undermined soldiers' wishes. Families' material circumstances were often improved through individual economic benefits, but the money was received at a cost. The regulations and conditions under which the benefits were received affected many families' autonomy—a price which many families believed they should not have to pay, but nevertheless did.

CONCLUSION

As the war ended, Aboriginal soldiers finally returned home to their families in Canada. Weary from the years of separation from their loved ones, but proud they had fulfilled their duty, one wonders what these soldiers thought of the job their country had done in taking care of their families. Had the Dependents' Allowance Program fulfilled its purpose and alleviated their financial anxieties about their families? Did they feel the money their wives and mothers received to be inadequate? Was the role of Indian Agents in administering the program intrusive and oppressive?

When the Dependents' Allowance Board was eventually dismantled in 1948 and its obligations passed onto the Department of Veteran Affairs, one also wonders what lessons officials had learned from their experiences. Were officials at the Indian Affairs Branch merely threatened by the demands of officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board who insisted that Aboriginal soldiers and their family members had a right to consent? Alternatively, did the demands of Board members force Indian Agents to recognize the abilities of soldiers' wives to manage their own money and households? Overall, were federal officials convinced they had been fair to the soldiers who had made such sacrifices for their country?

Studying the Dependents' Allowance Program suggests that such questions can only be answered by recognizing the complex factors involved. Who were the participants? How have their locations, their positions, and their beliefs influenced their arguments? How did categories such as race and gender assign meaning to these debates and in what ways are they intrinsically linked to additional notions of class, morality, sexuality, and cultural beliefs?

Readers have been introduced to the various stakeholders involved in the debates about dependents' allowance policies: bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch and the Department of National Defence, soldiers, wives, parents of both Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian communities, social workers, Indian Agents, Legion representatives, lawyers, politicians and journalists. Prevalent assumptions about race and gender and the meaning of military service were central to influencing the policies that were formed but, as the debates reveal, there were always stakeholders who contested the assumptions made and who attempted to redefine the policies in accordance with their own views. Studying this program provides historians with opportunities to see how, in particular, Aboriginal soldiers and their families dealt with bureaucracy and how they tried to shape policy. Although readers can see similarities in the arguments, there was by no means unanimous agreement among the Euro-Canadian or the Aboriginal stakeholders.

Seeing the categories of gender and race as socially constructed concepts has allowed readers to see how, within the debates about the dependents' allowance policies, these categories were not inevitable or fixed, but were assigned multiple meanings. Through this approach readers have been able to see how assumptions about gender and race intersected in complex ways and were closely related to notions of sexuality, morality, cultural beliefs, and class.

Ideas about gender were fundamental to the formation of dependents' allowance policies. They shaped bureaucrats' attitudes to women's and men's economic roles in the family and the way the status of relationships and types of behavior were evaluated. The very name of recipients as "dependents" implied that women relied on the income of the sole male "breadwinner" and were not themselves workers. Bureaucrats at the

Dependents' Allowance Board failed to recognize the complexities of families' economies where women and children and extended family members, often from poor or working class families, contributed wages and completed unpaid labour which was essential to the overall family income. For men, a permanent wage earning job that could support a wife and children was considered to be the "ideal." The value of the unpaid labour that some men did for their families was also generally not considered by the Board.

The nuclear family consisting of a legally married man and woman was also promoted within the dependents' allowance policy and other family situations were characterized as being "problematic." Only married wives received a standard thirty-five dollars in allowance. Other family members received discretionary amounts that were based on factors such as their ability to work. Many parents, especially widows, and common-law wives relied heavily on the contributions of their sons or partners for their economic survival, but they were expected to survive on amounts ranging from five to twenty-five dollars simply because they did not have the status as wives. Age discrimination played a part in these assessments. Mothers, officials claimed, did not have as many clothing and entertainment expenses as young wives did. The status of being married played a part too. Because common-law wives did not have a marriage certificate, they were seen as not deserving of the same amount of money as legally married wives, even though their living costs could have been similar. In order to receive the allowance, family members, including parents and common-law wives, no matter what their race, were subject to investigations by government officials or representatives from local social agencies. Their claims for assistance were seen as potentially

suspicious and an examination of their financial and personal circumstances was required. In the case of married women doubts were generally not cast on their claims and they were usually not subject to these investigations. Through these restrictions, the Dependents' Allowance Program helped make the nuclear family a part of the institutional structure of the Welfare State, even though the nuclear family model did not characterize many families' experiences.

Idealized notions of "feminine" behavior based on Euro-Canadian middle class values were promoted within the policy. Women were supposed to keep clean neat homes, have tidy appearances, take care of their children and be in life long monogamous unions. A woman's perceived "respectability" was important in assessing her eligibility for the allowance. Women who did not conform to the above ideals could have their allowances administered by a government representative or a local social agency. All women, no matter what their racial origin, were affected by the regulation that wives had to be sexually faithful to their husbands in order to receive the allowance. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women's allowances could be suspended if they had an "illegitimate" child while men's sexual behavior was not linked to their eligibility. Despite the claims of some bureaucrats that the dependents' allowance regulations were based on "unbiased" and "objective" criteria, the subjective moral evaluations of the nineteenth century philanthropic tradition were not fully erased. The Dependents' Allowance Program is one example of how the federal government, in implementing social welfare policies, linked financial incentives to specific goals and values, especially relating to the role women should play in the family.

Despite the common assumptions made about gender and ideal family relationships, assumptions about race divided Euro-Canadian women from other racial groups. Aboriginal wives, in particular, were subjected to different procedures within dependents' allowance policies that Euro-Canadian wives were not. In every case, Aboriginal wives were investigated by Indian Agents. In the case of Euro-Canadian wives, they were only investigated by representatives from local social agencies if they were "mispending" the allowance or were breaking one of the regulations. In their reports based on their investigations, Indian Agents often portrayed Aboriginal wives as living in unkempt homes, having dirty children, not feeding their children, and not dressing well. Indian Agents rarely acknowledged that a lack of adequate government support and poverty might account for poor conditions on reserves. Based on their investigations, Indian Agents argued that the failure of Aboriginal women to meet the idealized standards of "respectability" and feminine behavior made them incapable of handling their allowance money. They advocated more control over the allowances. Even in Euro-Canadian cases where formal administration of the allowance money by a local social agency was considered necessary, the emphasis was on educating the woman so she could eventually manage her own money. Administration was seen as a short term solution whereas Indian Agents believed they should have long term control over the allowance money. The dependents' allowances procedures, by requiring that all Aboriginal wives be investigated, subjected these women to more intense scrutiny by state agents than Euro-Canadian wives. Racial origin made Aboriginal wives more suspect in the minds of bureaucrats than Euro-Canadian wives, no matter what their class status.

Although all recipients were affected by the stipulation that women had to be sexually faithful to their husbands, there was an assumption that Aboriginal wives and, in this case, Afro-Caribbean wives were promiscuous and therefore special procedures were needed for these cases. Board members decided that the parentage of all Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean women's children needed to be verified prior to their receipt of children's allowances. It was assumed that these women had numerous sexual partners and that the soldier was not necessarily the father. The parentage of Euro-Canadian women's children was rarely doubted and no special procedures were deemed necessary for these cases. In comparison to the white majority, recipients of a different racial origin were subject to more scrutiny within dependents' allowance regulations.

Although there were certainly common assumptions made about race and gender, there were nuances in the way these assumptions influenced policy. When dealing with cases of "illegitimate" children, for instance, Indian Agents and social workers did not necessarily believe that the mothers should lose their allowance if their conduct in general conformed to the definitions of "respectability" as outlined above. If women seemed repentant for their actions and were considered to be competent housekeepers and mothers, Indian Agents and representatives from local social agencies were less likely to report these cases to the Board. When they did report the cases, they argued that the mothers should be able to keep their allowances. Generally, having an "illegitimate" child was perceived as being "immoral." However, rather than blanketing all women who had "illegitimate" children with this label, some local officials made exceptions in individual cases. They still did use notions of "respectability" as the basis for their evaluation, but they also saw the need for some flexibility. These types of distinctions

encourage readers to see definitions of race and gender and related notions of sexuality and morality as elastic.

Attempting to see race and gender in their complexity has also led to the consideration of class. Assumptions about Aboriginal people's poor class status materially affected Aboriginal families in terms of the amount of allowance they received. Beliefs that the amount of allowance exceeded Aboriginal families' pre and post enlistment incomes were used by bureaucrats to justify the restrictions on recipients' access to their allowance cheques, the reductions in allowances and the need for Aboriginal wives to save a portion of their allowances. Bennett and some Indian Agents speculated that Aboriginal families could live on less allowance because the cost of living was lower on reserves than in towns or cities. They did not justify what living conditions were maintained at the amounts of money they proposed. They merely stated they were "adequate." These speculations were often made based upon little evidence and the different economic circumstances facing various reserves were not taken into account. Previous poor economic status was perceived as a legitimate enough reason to maintain this standard. The allowance was not seen as a way to improve their economic status. Similar reasoning was used when arguing that Afro-Caribbean families should have their allowances reduced. Although class status was being used as the justification, race did distinguish the treatment families received. It was never suggested that Euro-Canadian working class or poor families should receive less allowance based on pre-enlistment income, cost of living, or geographical location.

Seeing how the categories of race and gender influenced the dependents' allowance forms, procedures, and regulations allows readers to see how the questions

asked were based upon particular assumptions about these categories. Questionnaires from the Dependents' Allowance Board asking Indian Agents about Aboriginal women's spending habits and how much they saved, directed Indian Agents to look for "wastefulness." Even though it was unrealistic that many families would be able to save money due to the rising living costs, asking questions about Aboriginal women's savings highlighted this issue and implied that Aboriginal women were somehow incompetent financial managers. In the case of Afro-Caribbean families, the Chairman of the Dependents' Allowance Board, R.O.G. Bennett, asked Trade Commissioners to note specifically any differences in cost of living based on racial difference. Before he even received an answer, he was focusing Trade Commissioners' attention on the issue of race and guiding how they would organize their answers. Before the allowance was even given out, upper level bureaucrats' anxieties about particular issues directed the attention of local officials. Such findings supported claims for further bureaucratic interference in families' financial and personal affairs and were used by Bennett to justify the need for reductions in allowances for Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean families. A detailed examination of these various forms, procedures and regulations was necessary to see how the constant repetition of questions and inquiries about race and gender reinforced assumptions about these categories in the paperwork that bureaucrats dealt with on a day-to-day basis.

Some soldiers and their families reinforced these definitions of gender, morality, "respectability" and race and others challenged them. Exploring families' reactions to bureaucrats' definitions of these categories has provided some insights into how family members defined their roles and responsibilities. The majority of wives and mothers

believed that their soldier husbands and sons had a reciprocal obligation to financially support their families. Unlike Board members who believed that the man was the sole breadwinner and therefore had to support his “dependent” family members, some wives and mothers saw their families’ economic situation as more complicated. Even though women did rely heavily on the wages of the men in the household, they also pointed out in their letters to the Board that they were not merely “dependents.” They emphasized how their waged and unpaid domestic work had helped their husbands and sons in the past and was vital to the overall families’ income. They recognized that each family member had to contribute to the family economy in some way and it was only fair that when one member had access to a benefit, there was an obligation to share it. The assumptions about gender and family economies evident in the dependents’ allowance regulations were challenged by recipients’ own statements.

In other instances, family members agreed with the Board members’ assumptions about gender roles. Some soldiers accepted the idea that they were the patriarchal head of their families, and wives were supposed to accept their decisions. They agreed with Board members that they should be allowed to assign the allowance to whomever they wished. They believed as well that they should determine whether their wives’ allowances should be stopped and under what circumstances. For Aboriginal soldiers who believed that they were the patriarchal head of the family, this belief led them to question Indian Agents’ paternalism. Although many Indian Agents believed it was their paternalistic duty to interfere in Aboriginal dependents’ allowance cases, soldiers felt their role as the head of the family was undermined when the Indian Agents patronizingly made decisions for them. Many men believed their status as soldiers entitled them to

better treatment. They believed that they should be the ones who made decisions about money in the family and the Indian Agents should not try to change their decisions. They believed they had a responsibility to protect their families' privacy from the interference of Indian Agents. Here readers can see the ways in which notions of race and gender affected one another. On the one hand, assumptions about gender roles were being enforced while assumptions about race were questioned. Examining these relationships reveals that gender and race interacted in multifaceted ways.

In addition to seeing the ways race and gender were assigned meaning in debates about the dependents' allowance, this project has attempted to analyze the nature of relationships amongst bureaucrats, nongovernmental and private organizations and recipients. Looking at soldier families' arguments for or against certain regulations has been essential in trying to understand the complexity of families' relationships with one another and with state agents. Here Stoler and Cooper's idea that bureaucrats re-examined their positions and in some cases altered them based on the protests of other bureaucrats and the demands of recipients has also been useful in trying to get beyond the dichotomy of the "colonizers versus the colonized."

In the Dependents' Allowance Program, there were interdepartmental tensions based on, as Stoler and Cooper would suggest, "conflicting visions and practices."¹ Past administrative practices of bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch at times clashed with the dependents' allowance regulations. In the past, government monies were all controlled through the Indian Agent. Upper level bureaucrats at the Indian Affairs Branch

¹ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 19.

often required little justification from Indian Agents regarding the decisions that they made about Aboriginal people's money. The band councils or individuals had little say over how the money was expended. In contrast, the Dependents' Allowance Board Chairman, R.O.G. Bennett, insisted certain procedures be followed and that the Indian Agents justify their decisions to Board members. Bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board were motivated by a desire to minimize the criticism of their program and maintain morale by ensuring that the treatment of Aboriginal soldiers' families at least appeared to be equal to that of non-Aboriginal soldiers' families. Bennett and the other Board members required that cheques not be addressed to the Indian Agent unless there was blatant mismanagement. Otherwise, all cheques had to be addressed to the recipient. In cases where the allowance was formally administered by the Indian Agents, consent was required by the recipient or the soldier. Money being administered or saved was to be put in accounts subject to government audit. Recipients were to be given the choice about the form of savings. They could choose between purchasing War Savings Certificates or putting their money in the Indian Trust Fund. Previously, Indian Agents had been allowed to handle money in an arbitrary and discretionary manner. The procedures of the Dependents' Allowance Board made these Agents more accountable than they had been. The philosophy of bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board, which valued soldiers' rights and the right to consent, did challenge the extent of Indian Agents' control thereby undermining, in part, the paternalistic philosophy of the Indian Affairs Branch. Examining the bureaucrats' debates has revealed how the history, the philosophy, and past administrative practices of each department affected bureaucrats' thinking on these issues. Clearly, among the bureaucrats from the two departments, there

were “competing agendas for using power” and “competing strategies for maintaining control.”²

Conflicts among bureaucrats were also based on factors other than departmental affiliation. As Stoler and Cooper indicate, factors such as a bureaucrat’s position in the hierarchy and their geographic location are important in affecting their point of view.³ In the case of the dependents’ allowance, the dynamics among upper level officials in Ottawa and local officials on reserves are central to understanding how procedures and policies were negotiated. The decisions of Board members and staff at the Dependents’ Allowance Board were based on legal opinions, legislation, and dependents’ allowance regulations. Although pressured by local officials to make exceptions in some cases when the regulations were too rigid or inflexible, overall these officials emphasized the authority of the law to determine the regulations that lower level bureaucrats were supposed to follow. Local administrative practices were expected to adhere to federal and provincial standards. In the case of Aboriginal families, their eligibility for the allowance was questioned by officials at the Board because they did not register their marriages or births with provincial institutions. The legality of “tribal marriages” was also questioned by these bureaucrats based on the ambiguity of previous court decisions.

Based on their past administrative practices, their personal experience, and the potential reaction of the community, local officials disagreed with upper level officials on certain policies or procedures. On the issue of registration of marriages, officials on reserves argued that their form of registration based on local practice was correct. Some argued that the “tribal” marriages were in fact legal unions based on previous

² *Ibid.*, 6.

³ *Ibid.*, 19.

administrative practice within the Indian Affairs Branch. Upper level officials' questions made some local officials feel defensive because they felt their expertise and authority were being undermined. Sometimes their direct contact with the recipients affected local officials' attitudes. For example, when we look at the reductions in allowances debate, we see that Indian Agents believed there would be much opposition to the reductions by Aboriginal people and they did not want to be perceived as being responsible for the reductions. Since they were the local officials, who lived in the Aboriginal communities, they were aware that their jobs would be more difficult if Aboriginal people were to strongly disagree with a particular policy.

If local officials were not convinced of the legitimacy of the bureaucratic procedures and regulations, they could interfere with how the policy was implemented. In the case of reporting "illegitimate" children to the Board, technically local officials, in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cases, were supposed to report all cases to the Board and the women were to lose their allowances. Despite the regulation, both Indian Agents and representatives from social agencies did not report certain cases to the Board if they believed the women were "respectable" and were sorry for what they had done. Some local officials believed that the regulations should be more flexible, but when the Board refused to change the rules, they found ways to work around it. No matter how well they believed they had conceived a policy, upper level bureaucrats were often forced to contend with the concerns brought up by local officials and adjust their policies accordingly. The conclusions in this dissertation support Stoler and Cooper's suggestions that "an omniscient colonial apparatus" did not exist.⁴

⁴ ibid.

Studying the Dependents' Allowance Program has provided some insights into how within emerging Welfare State policies bureaucrats, representatives from nongovernmental and private organizations, social workers, journalists, and recipients struggled to define the nature of citizens' rights. Stoler and Cooper would see these struggles as central. This diverse group of people from various ages, classes and races with different intentions and perspectives attempted to shape policy rather than having policies imposed upon them. Scholars studying the Welfare State would also emphasize the importance of studying these struggles because they show that policies are not "inevitable advances," but are "the result of painstaking meetings between multiple groups or society as a whole, with varying degrees of influence."⁵

Examples of such "painstaking meetings between multiple groups" are evident when studying the Dependents' Allowance Program, especially when one considers the debate about whether or not the allowance was an entitlement. Board members believed the allowance was a "gratuitous award." As a result of this understanding, they argued that they could stipulate the terms under which the allowance was received and determine recipients' eligibility. Parents had to prove their financial need before they could receive the allowance and factors such as the amount of their wages and their ability to work could affect their eligibility. The allowance was not guaranteed, according to these bureaucrats, and recipients could lose their allowance if they did not conform to certain rules. Federal officials believed, in the case of Euro-Canadian extended family members, common-law partnerships, and all Aboriginal families, that they were justified in

⁵ Dominique Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State: Quebec Families, Compulsory Education and Family Allowances*. Translated by Nicola Danby. (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2005), Introduction, 4.

scrutinizing families' spending habits and intimate relationships by having families investigated by state agents.

Soldiers and their families, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, military wives' organizations, Legion representatives, and journalists were not satisfied to let bureaucrats dictate to them the scope of these benefits. These groups argued that the allowance was a right that soldiers had earned through military service, not a "gratuitous award" as Board members insisted. This difference in opinion led to a series of debates over soldiers' rights. Various groups argued that families had a right to a minimum standard of living. They argued that the amount provided to soldiers' families was inadequate and they demanded an increase in the amount of allowance. Parents, especially mothers, contested the fact that wives received the full thirty-five dollars per month and they received varied amounts. They also argued that wives had an unfair advantage because the amount of wages they earned was not linked to their eligibility for the allowance. Parents could lose their allowances if their wages were to exceed a set amount.

When Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean families had their allowances reduced, there were protests that these soldiers' families were entitled to the full allowance. In response to Board members' decision to reduce the allowances for Afro-Caribbean families, journalists, and representatives from the Legion and the Canadian West Indian League protested against the reductions. The view that soldiers were patriotic and loyal led to demands that soldiers, no matter what their racial origin, were entitled to the same amount of money for their families. Although officials at the Indian Affairs Branch had also protested the reductions in the case of Aboriginal families based on soldiers' loyal military service, at the same time they were reinforcing paternalism by arguing for

increased control over Aboriginal women's cheques. By comparing these arguments, we can see how protests to policies and the degree to which they challenged racial discrimination were distinct based on what group was making the arguments.

Because soldiers and their families believed the allowance was an entitlement, they argued that their spending habits and behavior should not be a factor affecting their ability to receive the monthly cheque. As a result of these beliefs, they stated that they should not be subject to investigations by social workers or Indian Agents. There was public protest by a military wives' auxiliary, the Legion, and journalists to the investigations by social workers. These groups associated investigations with the patronizing moral reform investigators of the nineteenth century. Aboriginal soldiers and their families resented and strongly objected to Indian Agents' investigations.

In reaction to the policy decisions that affected Aboriginal families specifically, some Aboriginal soldiers and their families protested the fact that the cheques were received at the Indian Agents' offices. They also questioned the administration of the allowance by Indian Agents. Savings caused tensions as well. When soldiers and their families decided to stop savings, they argued that Indian Agents were undermining their decisions. Sometimes families tried to elicit assistance from politicians and lawyers. Even though Aboriginal people had contacted these figures in the past to air their grievances, their status as soldiers and soldiers' relatives appears to have made some of these officials more sensitive to their demands. Being a soldier or a soldier's relative provided some Aboriginal families with additional opportunities to get their concerns addressed because they could also contact military officials and bureaucrats at the Dependents' Allowance Board. In the past, many Aboriginal people would have had to

deal with one Indian Agent who may or may not have passed on their grievances to upper level officials.

These various protests did have some impact on bureaucrats' policies.

Throughout the war, Board members maintained their stance that the allowance was a grant rather than a right or entitlement. They never increased the thirty-five dollars that wives received, nor did they give mothers the full amount of allowance. Yet, they did provide a cost of living bonus to all wives to help them deal with increasing living costs due to inflation. They also increased the amount of pay assigned to wives. These same officials did increase the amount of allowance money that other family members, such as mothers, received and raised the amount that other family members could earn before they lost their allowances. In the case of the reductions in the allowances, Board officials, in the face of internal and public pressure, were forced to reconsider their decision. In the end, the reductions were stopped and Aboriginal and Afro-Caribbean soldiers' families once again began to receive the full allowance.

Although investigations still continued throughout the war, officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board tried to distance themselves as much as possible from the moral relief investigators whom families and nongovernmental organizations opposed. Based on accusations that the Board was unfairly investigating women and taking their money away, officials at the Dependents' Allowance Board continued to advise investigators that "gossip" should not be used when investigating families and that the investigators should try to be sympathetic to the family. Their sensitivity to this issue was, in part, created by the criticism the Board received by the public. The protests and bureaucrats' reactions to them have shown how the rules and regulations affecting

recipients' eligibility were negotiated among various stakeholders, rather than imposed. Although the exact demands of the families were not always met, compromises were made.

The protests that occurred not only affected the dependents' allowance policies during the war years, but may have also influenced post-war policies as well. For instance, politicians' experiences with Aboriginal dependents' allowance recipients possibly influenced their perspectives. Whereas in the past, issues regarding Aboriginal people were rarely brought up in the House of Commons, politicians, who had dealt with individual dependents' allowance cases, started to ask more questions about Indian Affairs Branch policies and began to call for an inquiry into the treatment of Aboriginal people in Canada. This was accompanied by the formation of many First Nations' political organizations. Many of these organizations were led by Aboriginal veterans. In 1946, the Special Joint Commission was formed to discuss the status and living conditions of Aboriginal people in Canadian society. By 1951, the Indian Act had been revised, removing many of the sections that gave officials at the Indian Affairs Branch arbitrary control over Aboriginal people's land and money. Although it would still take years before First Nations' collective rights were recognized, these post-war developments did lead to some important changes. Individual soldiers and their families' experiences with the Dependents' Allowance Program in part contributed to this process.

The dependents' allowance debates created dialogues. A variety of voices have been heard as each stakeholder made his or her claim. These dialogues revealed discriminatory policies, exposed attitudes towards Aboriginal people and at times

challenged administrative practices. The historical significance of the Dependents' Allowance Program lays in its ability to provide glimpses of this plurality of voices.

**APPENDIX A: A LIST OF THE NAMES AND POSITIONS OF KEY
BUREAUCRATS MENTIONED FREQUENTLY WITHIN THE
CORRESPONDENCE**

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

MINISTER'S OFFICE

J.L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence

O.J. Waters, Private Secretary to the Minister of National Defence

H. Des Rosiers, Assistant Deputy Minister and Acting Deputy Minister Militia (Army)

DEPENDENTS' ALLOWANCE BOARD

DAB CHAIRMEN

S.H. Hill, 1939-1940

A. MacNamara, 1940-1941

R.O.G. Bennett, 1941-1945¹

G.W. Dunn, 1947

L. Carey, 1948

DAB MEMBERS

Ian A. Sutherland²

R.W. Hawton

A.H. Brown

¹ It is unclear who the Chairman was in 1946.

² The number of years each Board member worked for the DAB was not found.

E. Farquarshon

M. Parry

B.A. Bell

HEAD OF WELFARE DIVISION

Ruth Harvey

DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND RESOURCES

MINISTER'S OFFICE

T.A. Crerar, Minister of Mines and Resources

W.J.F. Pratt, Private Secretary for Minister of Mines and Resources

Charles Camsell, Deputy Minister

INDIAN AFFAIRS BRANCH

Dr. H.W. McGill, Director

T.R.L. MacInnes, Secretary

TRUSTS AND ANNUITIES DIVISION

George Patrick, Chief Trusts and Annuities Division

A.G. Leslie

M. McCrimmon

D.J. Allan

WELFARE AND TRAINING DIVISION

R.A. Hoey, Superintendent of Welfare and Training

TREASURY OFFICER

L.W. McCutcheon, Chief Treasury Officer, Treasury Office, Indian Affairs Branch

PROVINCIAL SUPERINTENDENTS/COMMISSIONERS**SASKATCHEWAN**

Mindy Christianson, General Superintendent of Indian Agencies

BRITISH COLUMBIA

D.M. MacKay, Indian Commissioner

INSPECTORS**MANITOBA**

A.G. Hamilton, Inspector of Indian Agencies

SASKATCHEWAN

Thomas Robertson, Inspector of Indian Agencies

ALBERTA

C. Pant Schmidt, Inspector of Indian Agencies

INDIAN AGENTS AND OTHER FIELD PERSONNEL**ONTARIO**

James Daley, Walpole Island Agency, Wallaceburg

Frank Edwards, Kenora Agency, Kenora

Chas. Ross Johnston, Manitoulin Island Agency, Manitowaning

R.P.G. Laurence, Sault Ste. Marie Agency, Sault Ste. Marie

J.A. Marleau, Sturgeon Falls Agency, Sturgeon Falls

F. Matters, Chapleau Agency, Chapleau

F.W. Tuffnell, Cape Croker Agency, Wiarton

M. W. McCracken, Caradoc Agency, Muncey

H.S. Rawlings, Bessie M. Cowan, G.E. Hurl, Christian Island Agency, Christian Island

Dr. T.J. Orford, James Bay, Moose Factory

R.S. Spence, Moravian Agency, Highgate

S. Devlin, Parry Sound Agency, Parry Sound

D. Robertson, Saugeen Agency, Chippewa Hill

C. Fralick, Scugog Agency, Scugog

E.P. Randle, Six Nations, Brantford

A.D. Moore, H.M. Jones, Tyendinaga Agency, Deseronto

G. Swartman, Sioux Lookout Agency, Sioux Lookout

QUEBEC

H. Lariviere, Abitibi Agency, Amos

J. Berube, Cacouna Agency, Cacouna

F. Brisebois, Caughnawaga Agency, Caughnawaga

J.E. Gendron, Maniwaki Agency, Maniwaki

Nap. Cyr, Maria Agency, Gagne

A.Richard, Edgar Arsenault, Restigouche Agency, Restigouche

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

N. A. McDougall, Summerside, Prince Edward Island

J.E. Daly, Prince Edward Island Agency, Charlottetown

NEW BRUNSWICK

N.H. McPhail, New Brunswick North Agency, Perth

F.J. Hudson, New Brunswick East Agency, Richibucto

E.J. Whalen, New Brunswick West Agency, Fredericton

A.Lee Fraser, Northeastern Agency, (Geographical location not provided)

R. Lee MacCutcheon, Southwestern Agency, Devon

Mr. MacAffe, (Name of Agency not provided), Oromocto

NOVA SCOTIA

J. A. MacLean, Eskasoni Chapel, Grand Banks

E. C. Harry, Annapolis Agency, Lequille,

J.R. McMullen, Colchester Agency, Truro

Rev. A.G. MacNeil, Inverness Agency, Glendale

H.C. Rice, Hants Agency, Shubenacadie,

MANITOBA

A.G. Smith, Birtle Agency, Birtle

E. McPherson, Clandeboye Agency, Selkirk

F.J. Clarke, Fisher River Agency, Hodgson

W. Young, Griswold Agency, Griswold

P.G. Lazenby, Norway House Agency, Norway House

S.J. Waite, Portage Agency, Portage la Prairie

SASKATCHEWAN

Frank Booth, Qu'Appelle Agency, Muscow

John L. Bryant, Pelly Agency, Kamsack

R.S. Davis, Carleton Agency, Leask

E.S. Jones, File Hills Agency, Balcarres

J.P.B. Ostrander, Battleford Agency, Battleford (Later became Inspector of Indian Agencies Saskatchewan)

S.H. Simpson, N.J. McLeod, Duck Lake Agency, Duck Lake

John W. Waddy, Touchwood Agency, Punnichy

ALBERTA

A.McMillan, Blood Agency, Cardston

G.C. Laight, Edmonton Agency, Winterburn

W.P.B. Pugh, Saddle Lake Agency, Saddle Lake

BRITISH COLUMBIA

A.H. Barber, Okanagan Agency, Vernon

William Christie, F. Earl Anfield, Bella Coola Agency, Bella Coola

A.O'N Daunt, New Westminster Agency, New Westminster

J. Gillett, Skeena Agency, Prince Rupert

Robert Howe, Stuart Lake Agency, Vanderhoof

A. Irwin, Kootenay Agency, Cranbrook

B.T. Phillips, Queen Charlotte Agency, Massett

H.E. Taylor, William Lake Agency, William Lake

A. Strang, Lytton Agency, Lytton

Harper Reed, Stikine Agency, Telegraph Creek

M.S. Todd, Kwawkwalth Agency, Alert Bay

J.D. Caldwell, Nicola Agency, Merritt

POLITICIANS

G.H. Castleden, Member of Parliament for Yorkton, Saskatchewan, Co-operative
Commonwealth Federation

Harry Leader, Member of Parliament for Portage la Prairie, Manitoba,

J.E. Matthews, Member of Parliament for Brandon, Manitoba, Liberal

LAWYERS

A.E. Cates, Portage la Prairie, Manitoba

J.J.F. MacIssaac Barrister Solicitor, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

**APPENDIX B: A LIST OF SOCIAL AGENCIES UTILIZED BY THE
DEPENDENTS' ALLOWANCE BOARD**

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Family Welfare Bureau of Greater Vancouver

Family Welfare Bureau of Victoria

ALBERTA

Calgary Welfare Bureau

Edmonton Council of Social Agencies

SASKATCHEWAN

Regina Welfare Bureau

Saskatoon Family Welfare Association

MANITOBA

Family Welfare Bureau, Winnipeg

ONTARIO

Children's Aid Society, Kingston

Children's Aid Society, Windsor

Children's Aid Society Roman Catholic, Windsor

Family Service Bureau, Hamilton

Family Service Bureau, London

Ottawa Welfare Bureau

Catholic Welfare Bureau, Ottawa

Social Service Bureau, Cornwall

Catholic Welfare Bureau of Toronto

Jewish Family Welfare Bureau of Toronto

Toronto Neighborhood Workers Association All except Roman Catholic and Jewish

QUEBEC

Welfare Bureau of St. Patrick's English Roman Catholic

Social Service Council of Quebec, English Protestant

Central Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, French Roman Catholic

Family Welfare Association All except Roman Catholic and Jewish, Montreal

Catholic Welfare Bureau English Roman Catholic, Montreal

Bureau d'Assistance aux Families French Roman Catholic, Montreal

Baron de Hirsch Institute Jewish, Montreal

Philanthropies Family Welfare Department, Montreal

NEW BRUNSWICK

Family Welfare Association, Saint John

NOVA SCOTIA

Council of Social Agencies, Halifax

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Children's Aid Society Charlottetown

SOURCE: Library Archives Canada, RG 36, Series 18, Volume 27, File Title:

Investigations General

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