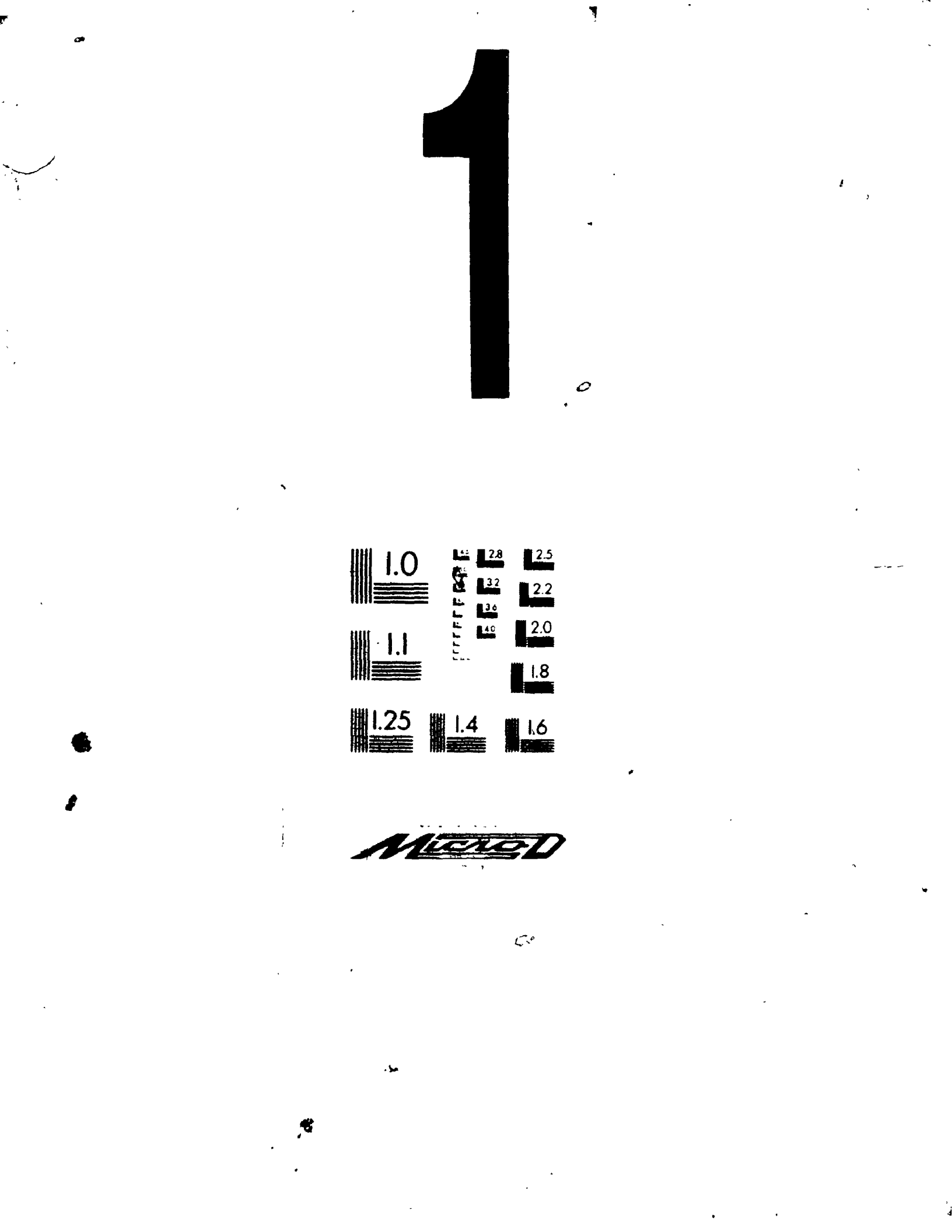
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THE OPPOSITION TO WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN ONTARIO, 1872 to 1917

by

© Sheila Powell, B.A., B.Ed.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Thesis Supervisor

Chairman, Department of History

Carleton University

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ABSTRACT

From 1872 to 1917, the woman suffrage movement in Ontario was opposed by a succession of both men and women who believed that the enfranchisement of women was contrary to the best interests of society. Their ideas helped form the intellectual context of the suffrage debate in Ontario, and an understanding of them is necessary to a complete appreciation of the woman suffrage issue in the province. The earliest opponents of woman suffrage were male and were greatly influenced by intellectuals Goldwin Smith and Andrew Macphail. The antisuffrage movement in Ontario came to be dominated by women, starting with Clementina Fessenden of Hamilton, and culminating with the formation in 1913 of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The most celebrated movement in the history of women in Canada is the woman suffrage movement, the beginnings of which can be traced to the founding of the Toronto Women's Literary Society, a covert woman suffrage organization, in 1877. The struggle for the vote has attracted more study by historians than has any other area in the history of women in this country. Despite the relatively large amount of attention paid to the woman suffrage movement in Canada, an important aspect of the suffrage issue has been largely ignored. In the early 1870s the English-Canadian movement against woman suffrage was born in Ontario, and from that time a diverse movement of both men and women helped to prevent the granting of the franchise to women in Ontario until 1917. In Ontario, the suffrage and antisuffrage movements were the two sides of a hotly contested debate over the fundamental question of woman's place in Canadian society. Because woman suffrage in Ontario had both supporters and opponents, the issue cannot be understood in all its complexity without an understanding of the ideas and tactics of both sides. This thesis is an attempt to provide a long-overdue examination of the Ontario antisuffrage movement and will, it is hoped, contribute to a fuller

understanding of all aspects of the debate over woman suffrage in Canada.

Antisuffragism in Canada has received little more than cursory attention from historians of the woman suffrage movement, and the attention it has received has not done justice to the influence of the movement. A succession of historians has dismissed the antisuffragists for allegedly misunderstanding the aims and ideas of Canadian suffragists; the antis have also been accused of hysteria and misogyny. It is unfortunate that this important component of suffrage debate in Canada has been neglected. One voice in a continuous dialogue has not been heard; how, therefore, can the meaning of the other be understood?

The first sin that has been committed in Canada has been the sin of omission; it may be comforting to know, however, that until recently, antisuffragism has been neglected in the historiography of woman suffrage in the United States and Great Britain as well. The reasons why historians have not been interested in antisuffragism are not surprising: historians, like most everyone else, are interested in progress and winners. Antis have never been perceived as winners or as advocates of progress. Tony Judt, a critic of social history, has pondered over the preference of historians for the study of movements of progress. He has concluded that this preference is a result of our assumptions on the nature of the historical process. "To be modern," he writes, "is to be where the 'historical process' intended you to be. It follows that all evidence

of a willingness to adapt to the demands of a modern society is, on the face of it, confirmation of the modernised nature of the person or group in question."[1] Historians have been conditioned to look first to these movements of progress for their inspiration; it should not be surprising that movements that do not fit into this conception of the historical process receive scant attention.

Brian Harrison, author of Separate Spheres: The Opposition to Woman Suffrage in Britain, a comprehensive study of all aspects of antisuffragism in Britain, grapples with the historian's indifference to conservative movements and to the antisuffrage movement in particular. Harrison concludes that historians tend to view the historical process as linear, with movements of progress leading the way forward. People and movements not identified with progress are believed to be flawed in some way and not deserving of the same attention given the forces of progress. The antisuffragists, Harrison writes, "suffered the threefold penalty - intellectual, mora' and political - incurred by those who back the wrong horse in politics." This penalty was "for the Antis to be ridiculed as misguided and unimportant, consigned to history's rubbish heap."[2]

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[1]Tony Judt, "A Clown in Regal Purple: Social History and the Historians," History Workshop, No. 7, Spring 1979, p. 69.

[2]Brian Harrison, Separate Spheres: The Oppostition to Women's Suffrage in Britain. (London, 1978), p. 13.

Harrison warns that ignoring one side of a political issue, which woman suffrage was, results in a distorted picture of political struggles in the past. He calls for history which takes both sides into account in order that we can experience the controversy of political debate as those in the past did.

The first treatment of suffragism in Canada was the landmark The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada by Catherine Cleverdon, first published in 1950. Ironically, this early work gives Canadian antisuffragism a more serious treatment than most of Cleverdon's successors. Cleverdon provides a brief (less than two pages) but accurate summary of the major arguments against granting women the vote.[3] Writing almost thirty years after Catherine Cleverdon, Wayne Roberts dismisses the antisuffragists as hysterical. In his article " 'Rocking the Cradle for the World': the New Woman and Maternal Feminism, Toronto 1877-1914," included in the influential collection of essays on maternal feminism A Not Unreasonable Claim, Roberts writes that the fears of the antisuffragists "were unfounded:"

> Although we should not treat hysterical reactions to woman suffrage lightly, if only because they suggest what contemporaries saw as the subversive potential of the movement, these fears were unfounded, considering the ultimately conservative bias of women's suffrage thought.[4]

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[3]Catherine L. Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada (Toronto, 1950), p. 5-6.

[4]Wayne Roberts, " 'Rocking the Cradle for the World': the New Woman and Maternal Feminism, Toronto 1877-1914," in Linda Kealey, ed., A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and

The alleged conservatism of Canadian suffragists has been a popular theme of the recent historians of the Canadian woman suffrage movement. No historian has pressed this interpretation as far as Carol Bacchi in her 1983 book Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918. Bacchi believes that after the initial dominance of the Canadian suffrage movement by women influenced by equal rights feminism, the movement was taken over by a strongly conservative group of both women and men who desired the vote for women not as an end in itself but as a means of achieving a set of socially conservative reforms. The depiction of the suffragists in Liberation Deferred? as conservative precludes any meaningful comparison of suffragists and antisuffragists. Because of the insistence on the conservatism of the suffragists, there is no distinction between the ideology of the two sides in the debate. Bacchi must arrive at some means of distinguishing a suffragist from an anti, and she does: the suffragist, while sharing all the distrust of pure democracy of the anti, was a person with enough trust in the system to want to try a few "minor modifications" in order to maintain the status quo. Bacchi views this as a "more sophisticated solution to society's ills" than the antis could propose.[5]

Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s (Toronto, 1979), p. 25.

[5]Carol Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto, 1983), pp. 48-49.

But if the differences between the suffragists and the antis were this minor, why did opposition to woman suffrage continue to exist? It continued to exist because both the actual differences and the perceived differences between the two groups were much greater than Carol Bacchi has recognized.

Canadian historian Deborah Gorham is unique in recognizing that the antis were opposed to the right of women to cast a ballot because they saw woman suffrage as the first step towards the entrenchment of feminism in Canadian society. In an article entitled "The Canadian Suffragists" which appears in the collection Women in the Canadian Mosaic,[6] Gorham points out that the feminism the antisuffragists feared was not the "maternal feminism" that many Canadian historians identify as the dominant ideology of the Canadian suffragists, but equal rights feminism, which Gorham believes played a significant role in the Canadian suffrage movement. Gorham distinguishes between the ideas and tactics of the suffragists. For tactical reasons, Gorham believes, the suffragists may well have stressed the traditionally feminine aspects of the social and political reforms they advocated. By creating an image for themselves as the true defenders of the home and the family, the suffragists hoped to deflect accusations of feminism by antisuffragists. Gorham maintains, however, that while the

[6]Deborah Gorham, "The Canadian Suffragists," in Gwen Matheson (ed.), Women in the Canadian Mosaic (Toronto, 1976), pp. 23-55.

tactics of the suffragists may have been influenced by the antis, suffrage ideas were not.

American and British historians have analysed the impact of antisuffragism more successfully. Aileen Kraditor's influential and early study of the American suffrage movement, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920,[7] devotes a chapter to American antisuffragism. Kraditor believes antisuffragism was an ideology, widely held among native-born, white, Protestant, middle-class Americans, that was a response to the same problems of American society that the suffragist wished to address. The antisuffragist ideology envisioned entrenchment of separate spheres for men and women, while the suffragists wished to expand woman's sphere in an attempt to solve the problems of society.

The antisuffragist ideology was strong enough, according to Kraditor, to influence both the ideas and tactics of the suffragists. "The antis," she writes, "defined the context within which suffragist ideas developed, posed the problems the sufffragists had to solve, and asked the questions they had to answer."[8] So strong was this influence that it contributed to the creation of a new suffrage argument. Kraditor calls the original argument for the vote the argument from justice, which called for the

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[7]Aileen S. Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920 (New York, 1965).

[8]Ibid., p. 14.

franchise for the same reasons that men had the franchise; it was an equal rights argument. The opposition to equal rights feminism the suffragists encountered from antis prompted the development of a new type of argument that was intended to circumvent the opposition. Kraditor calls this the argument from expediency. Those suffragists who used this argument stressed what women would do for the improvement of society once they had the vote and avoided arguments that referred to woman's natural right to the vote. Within the group which embraced this type of argument, Kraditor identifies two furtner divisions, again a result of pressure from the antisuffragists: women who truly did want the vote not as an end in itself but as a means of achieving political and social reform and those who did want the vote as an end in itself but who realized that the vote could best be acnieved through participation in a more general movement of reform. There is much evidence that the Canadian suffragists who argued from expediency can be divided into two groups as well. Carol Bacchi recognizes the argument from expediency, but she does not distinguish between tnose who cared only about social reform and those whose primary concern was the vote, and who became involved in reform movements as a means of achieving tne vote.

Kraditor has dealt with antisuffragism in a more thoughtful manner than has the author of the most recent history of woman suffrage in the United States: In Feminism and Suffrage: the Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869, Ellen DuBois does

not offer much in the way of a general analysis of the reasons for opposition to the enfranchisement of women beyond the inclusion of a statement by Elizabeth Cady Stanton that antisuffragism was the hostile reaction of men to women's challenge for political and ecomomic power.[9] Instead, DuBois deals with antisuffragism on a case-by-case basis, explaining, for example, that the opposition to a woman suffrage campaign in Kansas resulted from the efforts of Republicans to defeat the enfranchisement of white women in favour of the enfranchisement of black men for partisan reasons, and that female unionists in New York were wary of the suffragists' claims that the vote would solve all of the working woman's problems.[10] DuBois' study documents the internal development of a feminist movement rather than a single-minded struggle for the vote; her approach to antisuffragism is not, therefore, inappropriate.

In Separate Spheres: The Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain, Brian Harrison presents a comprehensive analysis of antisuffragism. Unlike the other studies already mentioned, Harrison studies the antis to discover not why they were not suffragists but why they were antis, and the nature of their contribution to the political and intellectual debate over woman suffage. In Separ-

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[9]Ellen Carol DuBois, Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869 (Ithaca, N.Y., 1978), p. 47.

[10]Ibid., pp. 88-90; pp. 134-135.

te Spheres, the ideas of the antis are examined strictly within the intellectual context of their time. As a result, antisuffragism emerges not as a crank movement but as an ideology which was the natural response of a group of people whose political and social beliefs differed from those of the suffragists. Harrison is not as anxious to arrive at an all-encompassing explanation for the existence of antisuffragism as is Aileen Kraditor. Harrison is satisfied with identifying the differences in political philosophy, social class, and ideas on the role of women in society that marked the division between suffragists and antis.

This thesis is an attempt to supplement our knowledge of antisuffragism in Canada by addressing the questions raised by the historians discussed in this introduction, and by testing their hypotheses against the Canadian situation. A study of antisuffragism in one province has been chosen over a general study of antisuffragism in Canada as a whole because during the woman suffrage movement in Canada the creation of voting lists was a provincial responsibility as determined by constitutional precedent. As a result, suffrage and antisuffrage campaigns had to be directed at provincial legislatures, as only these legislatures could determine who would be on the voters lists for both federal and provincial elections. Catherine Cleverdon organized The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada by provincial campaign, with a separate chapter on the granting of the vote to certain women under the Wartime Elections Act by the federal government in 1917. The Province of Ontario has

been chosen as the focus of this study because of the high level and great influence of both suffrage and antisuffrage activity in Toronto. Concentration on one province is of course arbitrary in many respects, and antisuffragist activity and ideas crossed provincial boundaries on many occasions. This study will therefore take the general aspects of the movement into account while concentrating on antisuffagism in Ontario. The ideas of Andrew Macphail, an English-speaking Montrealer, will be included in this analysis; he was widely-read in Ontario, and to separate him from antisuffragism in Ontario would create an artificial intellectual barrier based on geography for the purposes of this thesis when no such barriers existed during the period in question.

I have begun my analysis in March, 1872, when the first article against woman suffrage by Goldwin Smith, writing under his pseudonym "A Bystander," appeared in an Ontario periodical.[11] Goldwin Smith appears to have been the first antisuffragist of any prominence in Ontario, and not only was this his first article opposed to woman suffrage to appear in Canada, it was his first piece of writing on the suffrage issue to appear in print. Smith remained a staunch opponent of feminism and woman suffrage until his death in 1910. This study will end with the granting of woman

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[11]Goldwin Smith (A Bystander), "The Woman's Rights Movement," The Canadian Monthly and National Review, I (1872), pp. 249-64.

suffrage by the Ontario legislature in February, 1917.

This thesis will take an approach similar to that taken by Brian Harrison, which is to examine antisuffragism more or less chronologically and through an examination of the ideas and arguments of the individuals and groups who served as the major proponents of the movement at different times. This approach will avoid the dullness which can result from purely thematic or purely chronological organization. Still following the example of Brian Harrison, all antisuffragists and their ideas, arguments and tactics will be examined within the intellectual context of their time in order that the antisuffragist movement can be understood for its own sake.

The following components of antisuffragism in Ontario have been chosen for examination:

1. The ideas on the physical and mental nature of women current during the woman suffrage debate in Canada. An understanding of these ideas, which were the basis of the tradition of separate spheres of activity for men and women, formed the basis of much antisuffrage thought.

2. Male intellectual antisuffragism in Ontario: Goldwin Smith and Andrew Macphail. Smith was probably the earliest antisuffragist in Ontario, and Macphail succeeded him as the pre-eminent intellectual antisuffragist in Canada. The writing of both men will be studied in the context of their ideas on woman's sphere and on the role of the voter and the state in society.

3. The contribution of Clementina Fessenden to the antisuffrage movement in Ontario. Fessenden was responsible for introducing many British antisuffrage ideas to Ontario and for the popularization of women's role in antisuffragism.

4. A study of organized female antisuffragism in Ontario. The reasons for the formation of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada

will be examined as well as the impact of this last vestige of antisuffragism in Ontario.

5. The contribution of the legislative process in Ontario to the defeat of woman suffrage bills after the initial granting of the vote to propertied spinsters and widows in 1884 until the concession of the provincial franchise in 1917.

This study of the opposition to woman suffrage in Ontario has been hampered by the dearth of sources on antisuffragism. Very few of the papers of individual antisuffragists have survived, and the sole organization devoted to the antisuffragist cause, the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada, has left no records of its activities. A great reliance has been placed, therefore, on the published record of Ontario antisuffragists, whether in the books, articles, columns, and letters to newspapers that they published or in contemporary newspaper accounts of antisuffrage speeches and meetings.

An attempt has been made to discover whether rural Ontarians participated in the opposition to woman suffrage in their province. Issues of the popular rural periodical The Farmer's Advocate have been surveyed from 1911 to 1917 for articles and editorials on the suffrage issue. No sentiment in opposition to woman suffrage was found, however. This study has remained, therefore, exclusively urban in its focus, and antisuffragism in rural Ontario, if it existed, may have been far different from its urban counterpart.

CHAPTER TWO

MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC IDEAS ON THE NATURE OF WOMEN

Antisuffrage thought cannot be understood outside the context of ideas on the physical and mental nature of women current during the debate over woman suffrage in Ontario. These ideas on the biological differences between men and women served as the antisuffragists' rationale for the separation of men and women into different spheres of social activity and the exclusion of women from voting rights and governmental responsibilities. During the suffrage debate in Canada, Great Britain and the United States, these ideas were most often medical in nature, although the newer areas of sociology, psychiatry, and Social Darwinism also contributed to the ideology of antisuffragism. Nineteenth-century physicians did not, of course, originate the concept of separate spheres; nevertheless, many attempted to use the scientific authority of their profession in an effort to entrench the separation of male and female roles in Ontario society.

The evidence against women's participation in government and voting that was produced by male physicians and Social Darwinists influenced male antisuffragists in Ontario. While only one important anti, the physician Andrew Macphail, used such evidence in an explicit fashion, medical and scientific ideas on the restrictions which should be placed on women's role in society were an implicit influence on the ideas of most male Ontario antisuffragists.

The Canadian, American and British historiography of the ideas of the medical profession on the nature of women has concentrated on examining the attitudes of physicians toward female sexuality and higher education for women rather than attitudes toward woman suffrage and women's participation in government. In Canada, Wendy Mitchinson has examined medical journalism and the most influential medical literature read in Canada for attitudes toward female sexuality in general and toward childbirth, birth control and education specifically.[1] In the United States, the most important study of the American medical profession's concern with

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[1]See "Historical Attitudes Toward Women and Childbirth," Atlantis, Vol. 4, No. 2, Part 2 (1979); "Gynecological Operations on the Insane," Archivaria, No. 10 (1980); "Causes of Disease in Women: The Case of Late 19th Century English Canada," in Charles G. Roland (ed.), Health, Disease and Medicine (Toronto, 1984); "Medical Perceptions of Female Sexuality: A Late Nineteenth Century Case," Scientia Canadensis, IX (1985).

sexuality in the nineteenth century to include the attitudes of physicians toward woman suffrage is The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America by John Haller and Robin Haller.[2] A small group of historians, including Rosalind Rosenberg, Charles Rosenberg and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, has written the bulk of the literature on scientific and medical ideas on the nature of women.[3] This body of literature on middle class Victorian and early twentieth-century ideas on the nature of women applies to woman suffrage as well as to the more commonly studied areas of education for women, childbirth and birth control.

It was the medical profession, more than any other area of science, that participated in the formation of attitudes toward women that were used to justify the strict separation of men's and women's spheres and the exclusion of women from the franchise. During the nineteenth century, medical practitioners in Canada, the United States, and Great Britain were involved in a struggle to professionalize their calling. The process of professionalization led to an increase in the outspokeness of doctors on many topics,

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[2]John S. Haller and Robin M. Haller, The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America (Chicago, 1974).

[3]See Rosalind Rosenberg, "In Search of Woman's Nature, 1850-1920," Feminist Studies, III (1975); Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism (New Haven, 1982); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles E. Rosenberg, "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Women in Nineteenth-century America," Journal of American History, LX (1973); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles and Role Conflict in 19th-Century America," Social Research, Vol. 39, (1972).

especially in the new medical journals which cropped up everywhere, including Ontario, during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Writing during the 1970s, Wendy Mitchinson, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg agree, along with Vern Bullough and Martha Voght, authors of "Women, Menstruation, and Nineteenth-Century Medicine,"[4] that doctors shared the attitudes of most other men toward the changing role of women in nineteenth century society. The reaction of men was very often hostile. In their article "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Women in Nineteenth-century America," Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg theorize that men reacted to feminism with moral outrage for two possible reasons: because American men turned their anxiety over the social, economic and sexual problems of the late nineteenth century into hostility toward middle class women; or because middle-class men were angry at sexual deprivation at the hands of their wives, whose feminist goals could only be achieved through birth control in the form of sexual abstinence.[5]

The pioneer feminist historians of the 1970s have probably over-emphasized the hostility of physicians' attitudes toward women. It cannot be denied, however, that the medical profession did play an important role in the debate

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[4] Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XLVII (1973), pp. 66-82.

[5] Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg, "The Female Animal," p. 353.

over woman's nature and proper sphere. Physicians consciously chose to play a role in the debate not only because they shared the attitudes of other men but because the medical profession had much to gain through the suppression of feminism. J. N. Burstyn, writing on the attitudes of physicians toward higher education for females in England, believes that it was only natural for doctors to oppose feminism because they realized that the women who were intent on breaking down barriers to higher education and entry into the professions were interested in entering the medical profession themselves. In England, as well as in Canada and the United States, medicine was the profession most educated women were choosing to enter. Because the most natural areas of medicine for women to enter were obstetrics and gynecology, male obstetricians and gynecologists tended to be the most outspoken against the higher education of women and all other manifestations of feminism.[6] Wendy Mitchinson identifies a similar trend of self-interest on the part of Canadian gynecologists. As the specialization of gynecology grew in Canada, it was in the interests of these doctors to undermine feminism and to maintain the dependency of women on their guidance.[7]

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[6] J. N. Burstyn, "Education and Sex: The Medical Case Against Higher Education for Women in England, 1870-1900," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 117 (1973), pp. 80-81.

[7] Mitchinson, "Causes of Disease in Women: The Case of Late 19th Century English Canada," pp. 382-83.

Physicians played a special role in the reaction against feminism because their ideas had the weight of science, no matter how unscientific or ridiculous their claims were. This influence also extended to the non-medical issues of feminism; physicians probably realized the extent of their authority on such topics and took advantage of opportunities to influence the general public.[8] According to Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg, men who were faced with rapid social change looked to medical and scientific opinion to justify their reactions to feminism.[9]

Physicians in Canada popularized the belief that women's physical nature determined their behavioural characteristics and the role that women could play in society. The characteristics of the ideal woman were passivity, domesticity, nurturance, morality and affection;[10] the only acceptable role for women in English-Canadian society was motherhood. Doctors condemned all factors that kept women from conforming to their ideal characteristics and role; these factors included improper forms of education, excessive sexual pleasure, woman suffrage, and all other manifestations of feminism.[11]

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[8]Bullough and Voght, p. 66.

[9]Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg, "The Female Animal," p. 356.

[10]Ibid., p. 334.

[11]See Mitchinson, "Causes of Disease in Women: The Case of Late 19th Century English Canada," for a discussion of motherhood and the factors that affected it.

The basis of physicians' ideas on women's role in society was the belief that their nature was determined by their physiology, more specifically by their reproductive function and reproductive organs. These ideas were of enormous importance to the formation of both antisuffrage ideas and arguments. Of relevance to antisuffragism were several ideas, which were widespread among physicians in Great Britain, the United States and Canada. First, menstruation, childbirth and menopause rendered most activities outside the sphere of the home inappropriate for women, including voting and participation in government in any capacity. Second, participation in these activities, and in any other "unfeminine" activities would "unsex" women, resulting in social upheaval. Third, women were particulary prone to hysteria and insanity, conditions which physicians believed to be caused by reproductive functions.

Many physicians based their opposition to feminism and suffrage on two widely held ideas: the belief that any physiological differences between men and women were the result of the deviation of women's bodies from the male norm and that women were therefore inferior to men; and the widely-held medical theory that all aspects of woman's nature, including her physical and mental health and emotions, were determined by her reproductive capacity, and by menstruation in particular. Physicians who held these beliefs concluded that women were completely unsuited to involvement in government or any decision-making capacities whatsoever. According to Brian Harrison, this enormous

emphasis on menstruation can be attributed to the medical profession's misunderstanding of the true effects of menstruation on women.[12] Bullough and Voght point out that while doctors overemphasized the effects of menstruation on women, they may have formulated their ideas on menstruation on the basis of their observations of their patients, who, logically, were in poorer health than women who did not seek out medical advice. It is also possible that nineteenth century women did suffer more from menstruation than present-day women due to poor diet and the constricting and heavy clothing fashionable at the time.[13] Regardless of the reasons for the medical profession's obsession with women's reproductive systems, physicians provided some of the strongest and least refutable arguments against woman suffrage.

Two types of antisuffrage argument based on assumptions of the effects of women's reproductive functions can be identified. Physicians could argue against women's activity outside the home on the basis of the physical discomfort, inconvenience and indelicacy of the various physical symptoms of their reproductive capacity. The medical profession could also point to the not-strictly physiological effects of the reproductive capacity on women. Physicians argued that the emotional and mental nature of women,

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[12]Harrison, p. 61.

[13]Bullough and Voght, p. 79.

determined by their biology, was unsuited to the demands of government and conversely that the demands of government would have a serious impact on the nature of women.

The most obvious antisuffrage argument based on the effects of the physical symptoms of reproduction was that women simply could not venture into public during their monthly periods, pregnancy, or while breastfeeding their babies. Physicians calculated that a significant number of women would not be able to cast ballots on any given election day due to their restriction to the home for the above reasons. Another popular argument was based on the common belief that menstruation diverted huge amounts of energy from the other physical and mental functions of women. This belief was the basis of calls for menstruating women and girls to take bedrest for up to five days out of each month and for abstinence from physical and mental activity during menstrual periods, including school work in the case of adolescent girls.[14] Brian Harrison explains this second attitude particularly well in Separate Spheres:

> The anti-suffragist view of woman was governed entirely by concentration on her childbearing role....Antis were much more ready than suffragists to emphasise that at least half the female population are at any one time reacting - through menstruation, pregnancy, breast-feeding and so on - to stimuli not present in the male body at all. Antis argued on the basis of an "energy fund" rather similar to the contemporary wages fund that energies given to politics, study or some other male activity were necessarily abstracted from child-

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[14] see Bullough and Voght, pp. 68-71; Burstyn, pp. 86-87.

bearing, and vice versa.[15]

The medical profession warned that the result of female participation in "male" activities such as voting and politics would be the phenomenon of the "unsexed woman." Women who participated in activities outside of their natural sphere were therefore participating in unnatural activities. The effect of this participation would be the de-feminization, or unsexing, of women. Conversely, unfeminine women, who were those women who did not exhibit the feminine virtues of passivity and domesticity or who did not conform to the normal feminine roles of wifehood and motherhood, would be attracted to politics and voting in much greater numbers than "normal" women, who would of course shun such activity. It was commonly accepted that the movements for equal rights for women in education, the professions, and voting were dominated by "abnormal" women, mainly because such women exhibited the masculine traits of intelligence, outspokenness, and competition. According to J. N. Burstyn, women with these characteristics were assumed to be "physiologically unfeminine" and therefore "suspect in the eyes of the general public."[16] The controversial Dr. Edward Clarke of Harvard University, who argued against co-education for boys and girls in his 1873 book Sex in Education, went as far as to claim that educated women would lose their maternal instincts and their feminine behavioural

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[15]Harrison, p. 60.

[16]Burstyn, p. 84.

characteristics in favour of male characteristics. The ultimate result of the education process would be the creation of a "class of sexless humans analagous to eunuchs," as Vern Bullough and Martha Voght put it.[17] Not surprisingly, "the prospect of the creation of a new class of women completely indifferent to the natural role of women alarmed many; the "unsexed" woman raised the spectre of race suicide as motherhood was shunned in favour of the professions and politics. This extreme view was shared by antisuffragists from the turn of the century well into the twentieth century.

Perhaps the strongest weapon wielded by Victorian physicians against woman suffrage was the charge that women were prone to hysteria as a result of their physiology, rendering them irrational and therefore unfit to vote, and that woman suffragists were often merely hysterics and not to be taken seriously. According to Carroll Smith-Rosenberg in her article "The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles and Role Conflict in 19th-Century America," the concept of hysteria has existed in western culture for thousands of years, and although the actual symptoms attributed to it may have varied throughout history, hysteria has always been considered a particularly female condition.[18] Smith-Rosenberg is most concerned with middle class women, as are most

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[17] Bullough and Voght, p. 71.

[18] Social Research, Vol. 39 (1972), p. 652.

historians of late nineteenth and early twentieth century women.

Nineteenth century physicians observed that hysteria occured most often in middle and upper class women between the ages of fifteen and forty. The most common symptoms were nervousness, depression, pain, fatigue, fits similar to epileptic seizures, numbness and paralysis.[19] In addition to exhibiting these physical symptoms, hysterics were also believed to possess the "hysterical personality," which was marked by narcissism, impressionability, sudden mood changes, egocentricity and depression.[20] Although the signs of hysteria were well-known, Victorian physicians were frustrated by their inability to determine the causes of the condition. The overwhelming proportion of females among hysterics, however, led doctors to conclude that sex was the dominant factor in the creation of a hysteric.[21] The medical profession settled upon two probable causes of hysteria, both rooted in the sexual differences between men and women: the influence of women's reproductive organs upon their mental health and the inferiority of the female lifestyle.[22] Due to the obsession of Victorian physicians with ailments related to women's reproductive organs, hysteria came to be

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[19] Smith-Rosenberg, "The Hysterical Woman," pp. 660-62.

[20] Ibid., pp. 662-63.

[21] Ibid., p. 669.

[22] Ibid., pp. 667 and 669.

seen as practically inevitable in women.[23]

The nascent specialization of psychiatry similarly blamed reproductive organs and functions for insanity in women. Not only were women, especially those experiencing the trauma of puberty or menopause, considered more prone to hysteria, they were believed to be more susceptible to insanity than men.[24] According to Rainer Baehre in an article entitled "Victorian Psychiatry and Canadian Motherhood," medical practitioners believed that since even slight changes in health could trigger insanity in men, women, who experienced enormous changes in health due to their reproductive functions, must be much more susceptible to insanity than men. Practitioners of Victorian psychiatry believed that much female insanity was the direct result of such functions as menstruation, pregnancy, and nursing. Indeed, the insanity that practitioners observed resulting from pregnancy (the "puerperal condition") was called "puerperal insanity."[25]

The seriousness of the medical profession's assumption that insanity in women was caused by problems with women's reproductive organs is illustrated by the use of surgery to "cure" insanity in nineteenth century women. Made possible by advances in anesthesia and gynecological surgery, hyster-

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[23]Smith-Rosenberg, "The Hysterical Woman", p. 669.

[24]Mitchinson, "Causes of Disease in Women: The Case of Late 19th Century English Canada," p. 383.

[25]Rainer Baehre, "Victorian Psychiatry and Canadian Motherhood," Canadian Women's Studies, II (1980), pp. 44-45.

ectomies grew in popularity throughout the second half of the nineteenth century as a cure for mental problems in women. Fortunately, the use of this surgery in the treatment of insanity declined toward the end of the century.[26]

Physicians also blamed hysteria and insanity in women on their unhealthy lifestyles. Doctors who observed hysteria in middle and upper class women judged them lazy, morally weak and self-indulgent women who reacted with hysteria when expected to fulfill their roles as wives and mothers.[27] Puerperal insanity was believed to be more prevalent among the upper classes than among the poor. Doctors attributed this anomaly to the unhealthy lifestyle of fashionable women, who ate too much of the wrong food, took little exercise, and kept late hours.[28]

The reaction of physicians to hysteria and insanity in women had major implications for antisuffragism. Physicians who opposed woman suffrage could justify their stance on the grounds that women were prone to hysteria and therefore could not be trusted to cast ballots or influence government in any other direct capacity: the participation in politics of hysterical women would obviously not result in sober

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[26]Baehre, p. 45; see Wendy Mitchinson, "Gynecological Operations on the Insane," for a case history of this practice.

[27]Smith-Rosenberg, "The Hysterical Woman," pp.667-681.

[28]Baehre, p. 45.

government. In a more subtle vein, physicians could argue that since women's mental and emotional health was very fragile, the private sphere of activity was the only safe sphere in which women could operate. The restriction of women to the sphere of the home for health reasons would necessitate their removal from all other areas of activity and influence that were not directly related to their domestic role, and would prevent the participation of women in the public sphere via enfranchisement. British antisuffragist physicians were able to point to the militant suffragists of the early twentieth century as examples of female hysteria at work in the public sphere.[29]

A late development in the involvement of the medical profession in the debate over woman suffrage was the direct entry of physicians, especially in Great Britain, but in Canada as well, into the antisuffrage camp by writing books and pamphlets arguing against woman suffrage. While antisuffrage doctors did not restrict themselves to expressing medical arguments against the enfranchisement of women, their assumptions on the unsuitability of woman's nature to participation in voting and government underlay their opposition. The most influential of these British antisuffrage physicians were Lionel Tayler and Sir Almroth Wright. Unfortunately, the extent of their influence upon Canadian physicians and antisuffragists is not known. It is likely, however, that their views were known in Canada, especially

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[29]Harrison, p. 193.

those of the controversial Sir Almroth Wright. In Canada, the physician, editor, and university professor Andrew Macphail also participated in this trend. His antisuffragism will be examined in the next chapter.

Lionel Tayler was the author of a 1912 book entitled The Nature of Women. The basis of Tayler's antisuffrage arguments was the assumption that women's physiology determined their domestic role, and he called on women to realize that true emancipation would result only from the acceptance of that role and the renunciation of all activity that hindered the full execution of domestic responsibilities. Wrote Tayler:

> Woman's life will only be expanded, really emancipated, when she becomes conscious that she has a mental and a bodily individuality, and is content to work within it and through it to a self-realised life that has obeyed the healthy calls of her own being.[30]

Too much involvement in the public (male) sphere created emotional and physical problems for women, according to Tayler. Women's minds were more delicate, he wrote, more easily "disorganized" than those of men, and susceptible to the acquisition of vices. Women who went out into the world were known to become combative and irritable because activity in the public sphere was contrary to their true nature. Business women, Tayler pointed out, were harder and more unscrupulous than their sisters who remained at home.[31]

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[30]Lionel J. Tayler, The Nature of Women (London, 1912), p. 83.

[31]Ibid., pp. 27-28.

He also believed that mental and physical exertion were taking their toll. The effects of education and exercise were most severe upon childbirth, which, Tayler claimed, had never been so difficult as in the past fifty years (since the birth of feminism in Britain).[32]

That Tayler expressed these medical opinions against woman suffrage is in itself significant, but his arguments carried extra weight due to the prestige of medical and scientific opinion that existed at the time. The credibility of the physician or scientist in the debate over suffrage is clear in a review of The Nature of Women which appeared in The Woman's Protest, the organ of the American National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, in April, 1913: "The writer's scientific training ensures a rigid restraint in his handling of this difficult subject, but the book is the more suggestive and valuable because of it, and is admirably adapted to reinforce the fundamental beliefs of the anti-suffrage."[33]

"Rigid restraint" was a description which could never have been applied to Sir Almroth Wright. Wright was typical of the cranky variety of male antisuffragist, and his attacks on suffrage and suffragists were controversial to the point that the two most prominent British female antisuffragists, Mrs. Humphrey Ward and Violet Markham,

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[32]Tayler, p. 131.

[33]The Woman's Protest, II (1913), p. 15.

publicly disassociated themselves from his opinions.[34] Wright first came to the public's attention as an antisuffragist with the publication of a letter to the London Times on the subject of "Militant Hysteria" in March 1912. Wright expanded his views in a 1913 pamphlet, The Unexpurgated Case Against Woman Suffrage, which itemized the fallacies in suffragist ideas and then argued against woman suffrage itself.[35] Underlying Wright's arguments were his convictions as to the mental and physical inferiority of women to men, and his contempt for women and men who refused to acknowledge the resulting limits on women's abilities. "The failure to recognise that man is the master, and why he is the master," wrote Wright, "lies at the root of the suffrage movement."[36] The blame for the failure of women to recognize their inferiority lay with the education which women received: they were not taught early enough and strongly enough that women were physiologically required to be wives and mothers, and that it was impossible, even through education, to "abrogate the disqualification of belonging to an inferior intellectual caste."[37]

In Wright's opinion, the women and men who ignored the important distinctions between the capabilities of the sexes

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[34]Harrison, p. 67.

[35]Sir Almroth E. Wright, The Unexpurgated Case Against Woman Suffrage (London, 1913).

[36]Wright, p. 71.

[37]Ibid., p. 72.

became "unsexed." He referred to the male supporters of woman suffrage as "cranks," "male hybrids," and "quasi-males," and claimed that "the ordinary man" held the male suffragist in intellectual and moral contempt.[38] Wright, however, particularly disliked the women who were active in the suffrage movement. He identified three conditions which produced the unwomanly, militant suffragists. First, the effects of menstruation, childbearing, and menopause upset the "mental equilibrium" of women, resulting in the mental disorder which was responsible for militant suffragism. Suffragism was therefore seen as the direct result of women's reproductive capacity. Second, Wright blamed the problem of excess women in the British population for creating a class of spinsters who were either sexually embittered or lacked all sensitivity to sexual tension between men and women and who therefore saw no reason why men and women could not work together at the same tasks and for the same causes. Third, the suffrage movement attracted women who rejected all traditional and scientific distinctions between the sexes. According to Wright, women of this third type were those attracted to the professions, and those attracted to medicine were women with no sense of womanly modesty or reticence.[39] It should not be surprising that Wright singled out women who threatened to join into competition with men in his own discipline. As J. N.

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[38] Wright, p. 54.

[39] Ibid., pp. 78-79.

Burstyn has pointed out, physicians tended to oppose feminism and higher education for women because medicine was the profession most likely to be invaded by women.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, Social Darwinism had started to replace medicine as the major scientific influence on the antisuffragists, and the rhetoric of Darwinist nature became entrenched in the antisuffrage literature in the new century. Social Darwinism was the application of Charles Darwin's natural laws, as outlined in On the Origin of Species (1859), to human society, and not only to biology, as originally intended by Darwin. As a result, biological evolution and social evolution were seen as the same process, and the well-known Darwinian concept of "survival of fittest" was applied to human beings as well as to animals and other organisms. The Social Darwinists equated social evolution with progress, and were concerned with identifying all impediments to this evolutionary process.[40] Many Social Darwinists blamed certain types of women for interfering with the operation of Darwinian natural law in society.

Women were believed to be most responisible for the phenomenon which the Social Darwinists called "race suicide," a regressive process which saw the "biologically superior" Anglo-Saxon race declining in strength relative to the "biologically inferior" non-white races in the popula-

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[40]Donald K. Pickens, Eugenics and the Progressives (Nashville, 1968), p. 9.

tion of Canada and of the world as a whole. The cause of this problem was traced to an unnatural decrease in the Anglo-Saxon birth rate. In Canada, as well as in Great Britain and the United States, the blame for this decrease was placed firmly on the shoulders of Anglo-Saxon women. The observable decline in the numerical strength of Anglo-Saxons was believed by a significant number of suffragists and non-suffragists alike to have resulted from the practice of birth control by middle and upper class Anglo-Saxon women, and the biological effects of the extra-familial activities of these women was blamed for the purported decline in the physical well-being of Anglo-Saxon children.[41] Antisuffragists were understandably quick to adopt Social Darwinism as the scientific justification for their opposition to the extension of voting rights to women.

Both the biological and scientific aspects of Darwinism became part of the vocabulary of antisuffragism. The Darwinist emphasis on natural law provided a useful framework upon which late nineteenth and early twentieth century thinkers could build a view of women's nature. The resulting emphasis on women's biological role as mothers and nurturers provided all the necessary justification for antisuffragist and antifeminist attacks on all "unnatural" female behaviour.[42]

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[41]Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg, "The Female Animal," p. 352.

[42]Rosenberg, "In Search of Woman's Nature," p. 142.

The ideas of medicine, psychiatry and Social Darwinism on the nature of women were each in turn extremely strong influences upon the formulation of antisuffragist thought, and Ontario antisuffragists also took full and conscious advantage of all the justification offered to their cause by these fields. The impact of contemporary ideas on women's nature was a constant factor in the antisuffrage movement in Ontario.

CHAPTER THREE

MALE INTELLECTUAL ANTISUFFRAGISM IN ONTARIO: GOLDWIN SMITH AND ANDREW MACPHAIL

The first articulate antisuffragists in Ontario were male, and the leadership of these antisuffragists was dominated by two intellectuals, Goldwin Smith and Andrew Macphail. While other Ontario intellectuals such as James Mavor and anglophone Quebeckers such as the hugely-popular Stephen Leacock expressed opposition to woman suffrage, Smith and Macphail were unequalled in their production of sophisticated and influential antisuffrage writing.

The earliest male antisuffragists in Ontario were not reacting to actual suffrage activity or propaganda in Ontario; despite the formation of the Toronto Women's Literary Society in 1877, there was very little agitation for the vote in the province. Until the first decade of this century, antisuffragists fought instead against an abstract threat of suffragism and feminism that bore little resemblance to the reality of the woman suffrage issue in Ontario.

Starting with Goldwin Smith, who appears to have been the first antisuffragist in the province, Ontario male antisuffragists derived their conception of suffragism from the British movement. Smith, who did not arrive in Canada

until 1871, had observed the beginnings of the suffrage movement in England, and his writing on the topic after his emigration to North America continued to be concerned with the British suffrage debate. He rarely distinguished between the British and Canadian situations, although he produced all of his antisuffragist writing while living in Toronto. Most of Smith's male antisuffrage successors in Ontario continued to draw their assumptions on the nature of suffragists and the woman suffrage movement from the British suffrage debate, and sometimes from the debate in the United States. Unlike their counterparts in Great Britain and the United States, male antisuffragists in Ontario did not form formal organizations to oppose woman suffrage, but relied on traditional forums for the expression of intellectual opinion. Nevertheless, the antisuffragists managed to reach an audience in Ontario and make their influence felt.

Catherine Cleverdon and Carol Bacchi, the two most important historians of the suffrage issue in Canada, have failed to consider some important characteristics of male antisuffragism. First, historians have not acknowledged that the debate in which most important male antisuffragists participated involved abstract concepts of relevance to the issues of feminism and woman suffrage not only in Ontario but in Britain and the United States as well. Until now, the antisuffragism of the male intellectuals who are the subject of this chapter has been viewed in the context of Canadian and Ontario suffrage activity only. As a result, the arguments of these men against woman suffrage often

appear undemocratic, misogynistic, and absurd.

This chapter will examine the most influential of the intellectual antis in Ontario in the context of their ideas on democracy and on the proper role of women in society. Goldwin Smith, probably the first outspoken antisuffragist in the province, is the main subject of this chapter; an examination of his role in the Ontario antisuffrage movement will be followed by a study of Smith's intellectual successor, Andrew Macphail.

Born in 1823, Goldwin Smith was educated at Oxford in the 1840s. In the 1850s he was a journalist, and was best-known for his literary criticism in the cynical Saturday Review, founded in 1855. Smith was appointed Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford in 1858, and he held this position until 1866, when he retired for family reasons. He emigrated to the United States in 1868 to take up a teaching position at the recently-founded Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Although he enjoyed teaching at Cornell, he left after a short time. One of Smith's biographers, Elisabeth Wallace, cites his opposition to the entry of female students to Cornell as a major reason for his departure. According to Wallace, Smith, while not opposed to separate university education for women, believed that co-education of men and women would lead to a relaxing of academic standards and a decrease of energy in the stu-

dents.[1]

Goldwin Smith eventually settled in Toronto in 1871, again taking up journalism as his profession, writing under the pseudonym "A Bystander" in the the new magazine The Canadian Monthly and National Review, beginning in 1872. He married a widow, Harriet Boulton, in 1875, and took up residence in her elegant Toronto home, "The Grange."

Smith's first article on feminism and woman suffrage, "The Woman's Rights Movement," appeared in The Canadian Monthly and National Review of March, 1872. This article may have been the very first piece of writing on the subject of woman suffrage to appear in Ontario. During the next twenty years he produced other articles on woman suffrage: "Female Suffrage," in Macmillan's Magazine, 1874; "Conservatism and Female Suffrage," in National Review, 1888; "Woman's Place in the State," in The Forum, 1890; and "Woman Suffrage," in his 1893 book of essays, Questions of the Day. It was with "The Woman's Rights Movement" in 1872 that Goldwin Smith set out most of his antisuffragist arguments and he continued to put forth the same arguments in much the same way in his successive antisuffragist writing.

All of Goldwin Smith's antisuffrage writing was dominated by his insistence that the enfranchisement of women was not in the best interests of the state and of society; indeed, the state and society were one and the same

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[1]Elisabeth Wallace, Goldwin Smith: Victorian Liberal (Toronto, 1957), p. 48.

to Smith. Smith firmly believed that individual rights must always be subordinate to the greater good of society and the state. Smith recognized the family as the basic unit of society and of the state. He believed woman suffrage to be a threat to the continued existence of the family, and he warned that its destruction would result in disastrous changes to the structure of society and of government. Smith also warned that the introduction of women into the electorate would pose a serious threat, not only to good government, but to the very survival of the state.

Writing in opposition to the enfranchisement of women in 1872, Smith was not of course responding to ideas expressed by a Canadian suffrage movement as none existed at the time. Smith himself admitted in his 1872 article that the woman's rights movement, which he claimed desired "sweeping changes" in the conjugal, political, legal, educational and industrial relations of the sexes, had only been experienced in Canada in the area of demands for educational rights. He defended his concern for a movement with little influence in Canada by claiming that Canada should take advantage of the opportunity to observe the events of the British and American woman's rights movements before one grew up in Canada. Smith, therefore, wrote in response to the ideas of British feminists and suffragists, the most famous of whom was John Stuart Mill. Smith had signed Mill's 1867 petition to the British parliament calling for the enfranchisement of women. Smith later claimed that he shortly thereafter changed his mind on the woman suffrage

question when he realized that the women he regarded as most worthy of the vote were themselves not in favour of woman suffrage.[2]

Most of Goldwin Smith's antisuffrage articles addressed the arguments raised by John Stuart Mill in his 1869 essay The Subjection of Women. Mill claimed that it was not right to place women in an inferior position to men on the basis of women's nature. Women's nature, he wrote, was impossible to determine, because women had been forced to behave in certain ways by men. "What is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing - the result of forced repression in some directions, unnatural stimulation in others," he wrote.[3] Society, Mill claimed, confused what was merely custom with "nature".[4]

Of all of Mill's claims as to the ill-treatment of women throughout history, Smith was most outraged by the assertion that women were held in slavery by men, including their husbands. Mill traced the master-slave relationship between men and women to primitive times, when a woman had to bind herself to men for protection due to women's lack of physical strength. Mill believed that this system had lasted down through the years, evolving into the dependence

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[2]Goldwin Smith, "Woman's Place in the State," p. 515; "Woman Suffrage," p. 205.

[3]John Stuart Mill, The Subjection of Women (London, 1869), p. 38.

[4]Ibid., p. 22.

of women upon men by the middle of the nineteenth century. "But this dependence," Mill wrote,

> as it exists at present, is not an original institution, taking a fresh start from considerations of justice and social expediency - it is the primitive state of slavery lasting on, through successive mitigations and modifications occasioned by the same causes which have softened the general manners, and brought all human relations more under the control of justice and the influence of humanity. It has not lost the taint of its brutal origin.[5]

Smith vehemently denied that women had been held in slavery by their husbands at any time in history. Even in the most primitive of times, he wrote, "and those in which the subjection of the woman was most complete, the wife was clearly distinguished from the female slave."[6] Smith countered the claims of Mill by contending that until recent times, both men and women had been held in subjection by forces beyond their control. This subjection included that of slavery. Smith pointed out that, historically, men and women have been slaves at the same times and in the same numbers, and that male and female slaves have always experienced emancipation simultaneously.[7]

Smith's disagreement with Mill over the sources and victims of subjection was the result of Smith's views on the separation of the spheres of men and women. Smith rejected

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[5]Mill, pp. 9-10.

[6]Goldwin Smith (A Bystander), "The Woman's Rights Movement," The Canadian Monthly and National Review, I (1872), p. 251.

[7]Ibid., p. 250.

all claims that women received unjust treatment in civilized society, as such claims were a condemnation of the doctrine of separate spheres which was so dear to Smith. To Goldwin Smith, the very existence of civilized society depended on the preservation of the strict division of male and female roles. He therefore saw woman suffrage as a very real threat to the existing social order.

Goldwin Smith was especially concerned that woman suffrage would damage the family. He recognized the family, not the individual, as the basic unit of society, and he predicted that the enfranchisement of women would cause the breakdown of the very relationships between men and women within the family which were responsible for its strength and its contribution to the stability of society. To Smith, the strength of the family unit depended on separate spheres for men and women. As long as men were responsible for all activity in the world outside and women for all domestic duties, the home would be free from conflict and turmoil. Despite the separation of the responsibilities of men and women into different, but equally important spheres, Smith recognized the need for one member of the family, the husband, to act as head. Any challenge to the authority of the man as head of the family unit, regardless of the importance of the woman's work in the home, was a threat to the continued stability and very existence of the family.

Goldwin Smith firmly believed that the separation of spheres conferred no superiority or inferiority on men or women. He did, however, believe that there were fundamental

differences between men and women which rendered the separation of their activities inevitable. This division of responsibilty was, to Smith, based on the strengths of each sex in different areas, and was, therefore, the most efficient and logical way to structure society. Smith extended this strict separation of responsibility to justify the exclusion of women from participation in government. A woman's place was in the home, and there her authority was absolute. Because all of a woman's activity took place inside the home, she had neither the need nor the required experience to take part in the governing of the world outside, which was the sphere and responsibility of the man. Smith wrote in 1872:

> At present, reigning apart in the household the woman does not directly feel those effects of good or bad government which are directly felt by man, who goes forth to labour, and the practical sense of which, more than anything else, forms the political wisdom, such as it is, of the masses of mankind.[8]

Smith took pains to point out in his antisuffrage writing that women were in no way inferior to men because their sphere of activity was different and did not include the right to participate in government. After all, he reminded his readers, men were not inferior to women because men did not do the same things women did:

> It does not follow that [woman] is political any more than man is maternal or adapted for housekeeping. Nor is the absence of political qualities a disgrace to her any more than the absence of maternal or housekeeping qualities is to him. Difference of spheres, the

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[8]Smith, "The Woman's Rights Movement," p. 250.

> spheres being equal in importance, implies no disparagement.9

Government, Smith reiterated in article after article, was a male responsibility, just as the care of the home was a female responsibility. The care of the state and of the home were equal in importance, and should therefore be left in the hands of those most suited to its exercise. Smith bristled at the demands of suffragists for the participation of women in government, for the mingling of male and female responsibilities would disrupt the social stability for which the structure of separate spheres was responsible. He also feared that any tinkering with the spheres would change the fundamental relationship of woman to man from that of helpmate to that of competitor. "If government requires a masculine understanding or temperament," he wrote in 1890,

> and if the practical character by which political questions are likely to be best settled resides in the man, whose sphere is the world, rather than in the woman, whose sphere is home, that is the reason for preferring such government and legislation, quite independent of any invidious comparisons between two beings whose spheres are different, and who are the complements, not the competitors, of each other.10

Of extreme concern to Smith was this prospect of women becoming the competitors of men, which he believed would have disastrous consequences for women themselves, for relations between the sexes, and for the family. The fundamental question posed by the woman suffrage issue, Smith warned, was "not as to the value and dignity of woman

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9Smith, "Woman Suffrage," p. 200.

10Smith, "Womans's Place in the State," p. 519-20.

in her present sphere, but whether she can with advantage, or without ruinous results to herself and humanity, exchange her present sphere for another."[11]

Goldwin Smith was genuinely concerned that the transformation of women from the helpmates of men into their rivals and competitors would strip away from women the special protection given them by men. Smith frequently warned women that if they chose to enter into the male sphere of politics and government they would lose all the special treatment or chivalry, as Smith liked to call it, afforded them as long as they remained in their own home sphere. John Stuart Mill, on the other hand, believed that chivalry was no longer necessary in a modern society in which the weak and tyrannized were protected by law. Women, Mill believed, only required chivalry from men becaused women remained tyrannized by men.[12] If women received equal protection under the law, chivalry would be unnecessary.

Like many other antisuffragists, Smith could not understand why women wanted equal rights when they already enjoyed special privileges and protection under the law not shared by men.[13] Smith had respect only for those women who realized the advantages they gained by adhering to the separation of spheres. He wrote in 1895 that "the true

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[11]Smith, "The Woman's Rights Movement," p. 263.

[12]Mill, p. 160.

[13]Smith, "Woman's Place in the State," p. 525.

representatives of woman-hood take no part in the [suffrage] movement. They value the privileges of their sex, and they know that they cannot in the end have both equality and privilege."[14]

Goldwin Smith seems to have considered the social convention of chivalry to be very fragile indeed. He liked to warn women of the sort of treatment they would receive if they invaded the boundaries of men's sphere:

> Woman may be man's helpmate, or she may be his competitor - both she cannot be. Nor is it possible that man should preserve his present chivalrous sentiments towards woman when he finds himself daily jostling with her as his rival in the rude struggle for subsistence or in the still ruder conflicts of political ambition. Sentiment survives for a time the relations on which it is founded; but it does not survive long.[15]

Smith was quick to realize that the enfranchisement of women would not merely entail the casting of a ballot every now and then. He was fully aware that enfranchised men participated in all aspects of politics and government above and beyond the act of voting and he had no doubt that women would do the same. Smith was sure that, once enfranchised, women would eventually want the right to become lobbyists and political organizers, and to hold elected and appointed offices. Ironically, one of Smith's major objections to women in public office was that, due to the gallantry of men, female officials would be above criticism; Smith does

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[14]Smith, letter to the Toronto Globe, April 12, 1895, p. 3.

[15]Smith, "The Woman's Rights Movement," p. 264.

not appear to have been aware of the contradictions in his stance on the relationship between chivalry and woman suffrage.[16] Smith claimed that women, who were by nature more impetuous and impractical than men, would make dangerous and rash decisions should they become legislators, and he protested that the gallantry of men would prevent them from directing even well-deserved criticism at females. Women, according to Smith, were aware of the reluctance of men to criticize the fair sex, and would use it to their advantage.[17]

Smith predicted that woman suffrage would introduce disagreements over politics into the home. Unlike suffragists, who conveniently ignored the possibility of political disagreements between husbands and wives, Goldwin Smith predicted that such disagreement would be inevitable. He even saw the possibility of husbands and wives running for office against each other.[18] To Smith, the desire of the suffragists to give a political voice to women was in contradiction to the role of the family in society and the state. The family was itself a political unit; its political will, however, could only be expressed by the head of the family, which was the husband. Smith accused the supporters of woman suffrage of attempting to undermine the

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[16]Smith, "Woman's Place in the State," p. 521.

[17]Smith, "Woman Suffrage," p. 200; letter to the Toronto Globe, April 12, 1895, p. 3.

[18]Smith, Weekly Sun, April 6, 1904, quoted in Castell Hopkins, The Canadian Annual Review, 1904, p. 567.

family by tampering with fundamental relationships within it:

> The abolition of subordination in the family, of the authority, usurped or obsolete as Radicals deem it, of its head, and of everything that tends to merge the civil personality of the wife in that of the husband, is the prime object at least of the extreme wing of the party, which would be achieved if man and wife could be seen fighting against each other at elections.19

The introduction of politics, which was of the male sphere, into the home, which was the female sphere, was a fundamental contradiction of the ideology of separate spheres, upon which the stability of the family, and hence of society, depended. Smith also warned that the threat posed by woman suffrage to the authority of the husband would destroy the family. Just as he believed that male chivalry would exist only as long as women remained within their sphere, Goldwin Smith was convinced that men would only continue to take on family responsibilities as long as they were guaranteed unchallenged authority over their wives. Once woman suffrage was achieved, the relationships within the family which guaranteed men authority as the natural consequence of their responsibilities would be destroyed. "That the man should exercise authority over his household will become unnatural and unjust when he ceases to be held responsible for the household," Smith warned. "What the leaders of the woman's rights movement practically seek is, for the woman power without responsibility, for the man,

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[19]Smith, "Woman's Place in the State," p. 517.

responsibility without power."[20] Smith seriously doubted whether men would continue to accept marriage unless their authority over their wives was guaranteed. "A man when he marries takes on him the heavy burden of maintaining a wife and family; he expects as his reward a loving partner and a happy home. Make marriage too onerous and unattractive to man, whether in regard to property or in regard to the civil status of the pair, and what will follow?" Smith asked.[21] The family would no longer be the dominant form of social relationship, he answered, and social upheaval would result.

Goldwin Smith warned not only of social upheaval as a result of the pernicious effects of woman suffrage upon the family, but of the dire consequences of women's participation in government. Smith believed that all voting rights ultimately depended not on abstract or natural rights, but on whether the participation in government of a certain group of people was in the best interests of the state. To Smith, there was absolutely no justification under this criteria for the participation of women in the state in any capacity. Smith endeavoured to convince his readers that women voters and legislators would seriously influence government for the worse. Smith believed women to be irrational, and he predicted the end to rational government and the triumph of the parties should women be granted political power. Smith was also certain that women would

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[20]Smith, "Woman Suffrage," pp. 196-97.

[21]Smith, "Woman's Place in the State," p. 529.

force upon the government issues of purely female interest and he identified the woman suffrage movement with other reform movements, especially the prohibition movement, to which he was strongly opposed. Smith also warned that the security of the state, which ultimately depended on the amount of physical force which could be exerted on its behalf, would be severely undermined by the participation of women.

Goldwin Smith did not only dislike the prospect of women voting, he had reservations about most male voters too. It is not, however, fair to dismiss him as "undemocratic." To those familiar with today's mass participation in politics, almost all British and Canadian political philosophers of the nineteenth century would appear hostile to democracy. Goldwin Smith did not recognize the existence of any abstract or natural right to vote, either for men or for women. Smith questioned the wisdom of all extensions of the franchise; he did not believe that the average man, or woman, had the time and the knowledge required for intelligent participation in government. Smith, who had an extreme dislike for the political party system, was sure that ignorant voters would not be able to make intelligent political decisions on complex political issues and would rely on political parties to simplify voting choices.[22] Smith detested this reduction of govern-

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[22]Wallace, p. 140.

ment to mere fighting for power between factions. Although Smith admitted that political parties were justified when people were divided over specific issues, they should not exist when issues of principle were absent. Smith concluded, therefore, that parties were artificial creations intent only on attaining political power, and did not have the true interests of the state at heart. The results of the reliance of an ignorant electorate upon political parties horrified Smith. "By the successive extensions of the franchise to ignorant, credulous, and irresponsible masses, without any precautionary adjustment," Smith wrote, "Government has been so enfeebled and degraded, that the nation is now hardly able to protect its own existence against conspiracy."[23]

While Goldwin Smith was opposed to the extension of the suffrage to the ignorant of both sexes, he did favour certain extensions of the suffrage which he believed would be in the best interests of the state. Smith believed that the best and most just government should represent all classes in society, including the working class. He believed that a government which incorporated class representation was possible because he was sure that all classes shared a common sense of community that would override class antagonism.[24] Regardless of his advocacy of the participa-

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[23]Smith, "Conservatism and Female Suffrage," pp. 737-38.

[24]Wallace, p. 145.

tion of the working class in government, Smith still refused to recognize abstract voting rights. The unenfranchised, however, could prove themselves worthy of a vote, as long as it was in the best interests of the state. "Abstract right inherent in the unqualified there can be none, though there may be an abstract right in all to qualify if they can," Smith allowed.[25] Smith had educational requirements in mind for working-class voters.

Smith's enthusiasm for the participation in government of qualified voters from all classes did not extend to women. Women did not fit into Smith's model of ideal government because he did not believe that women formed a class. Women were a sex, not a class. They did not, therefore, need to have their interests represented in government, as did the various classes. John Stuart Mill also believed that, in most cases, men and women in any given class would not differ in opinion on political issues. Mill, however, believed that women could have different interests than men, and would therefore need the vote "as their guarantee of just and equal consideration."[26] Smith did not recognize that women could have grievances or special interests which required representation in government. He believed the interests and grievances of women to be the same as those of the men of their respective classes; men were thus perfectly capable of representing all of

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[25]Smith, "Conservatism and Female Suffrage," p. 738.

[26]Mill, pp. 96-97.

women's interests in government.[27]

A major cause of Smith's objections to the participation of women in government was the serious disproportion of women in the British population. The phenomenon of the overpopulation of women in Britain was widely recognized in the second half of the nineteenth century. Goldwin Smith calculated that the dominance of women in the population, estimated at between one and two million more women than men, would mean the dominance of women in the electorate. Logically, women would eventually come to dominate all aspects of government, from political parties to parliament. Smith of course assumed that women would exercise the vote in the same proportions as men voted. Smith also calculated that the ratio of women in the electorate would be increased by the absence of men at elections due to occupational or military obligations.[28] These assumptions were the basis of antisuffragist claims that women would dominate government if they were given the vote, and most Ontario antisuffragists referred to the overpopulation of women as a reason to oppose woman suffrage, despite the absence of evidence that Ontario, with the possible exception of Toronto, was suffering from the overpopulation of women. Neither Smith nor Ontario antisuffragists were concerned that the physical force theory did not logically apply to Ontario. Smith was

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[27]Smith, "Woman's Place in the State," p. 523.

[28]Smith, "Woman Suffrage," p. 186.

mainly concerned with women's potential dominance of the British government, and neither he nor those whom he influenced cared to distinguish between the British case and that of Ontario.

According to Brian Harrison, author of Separate Spheres, antisuffragists and other conservatives were suspicious of the political behaviour which would be demonstrated by enfranchised women. The antisuffragists were joined by many others in believing women to be over-emotional by nature and quite unsuited to the rational decision-making required of voters and legislators.[29] Goldwin Smith was sure that the political parties would take advantage of these very flaws in women's nature. By the early 1890s, he was resigned to the eventual granting of woman suffrage because he recognized that politicians wanted to secure the votes of women for themselves and did not want to alienate the future support of women in any way.[30] Smith continued to warn against the insidious role of the parties up to the end of his life. He wrote to his old friend and fellow antisuffragist, Professor A. V. Dicey of Oxford, in 1909:

> The party system seems to me to stand fundamentally condemned. Agitators of all kinds, Irish and Socialist, have learned to play on the balance of the parties. The woman-suffrage party will do this at the next General Election, and will thus carry female suffrage, and in the end representation of women in

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[29]Harrison, p. 33.

[30]Smith, "Woman Suffrage," p. 185.

Parliament.[31]

Smith accused both British and Canadian Tories of being most in favour of woman suffrage, because Conservative politicians recognized the innate conservatism of women and hoped that, once enfranchised, women would vote for Conservative Party candidates.[32] No fan of political parties, Goldwin Smith especially disliked Conservatives, and thus rejected any extension of the franchise which would serve to enhance the power of the Conservative Parties of Britain and Canada as contrary to the best interests of the state.

Brian Harrison writes that Smith and other liberals who had orginally supported John Stuart Mill in his protest over the subjection of women believed that women, in addition to being innately conservative, were also much more overtly religious than men, and much more susceptible to the influence of priests. Antisuffragists cited the regular churchgoing habits of women as compared to men as evidence of women's greater, if less sophisticated, religiosity.[33] Smith was a well-known opponent of the influence of the Church of England in non-religious matters, especially higher education. He was also apprehensive of the voting behaviour of Roman Catholic women, should women receive the vote. He went so far as to raise the possibility of priests

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[31]Smith to A. V. Dicey, June 8, 1909, in Arnold Haultain (ed.), A Selection from Goldwin Smith's Correspondence (Toronto, ?), p.514.

[32]Smith, "Woman's Place in the State," p. 516.

[33]Harrison, p. 42.

leading Catholic women to the polls in droves in order to vote for candidates and issues that would benefit the Catholic Church.34

Goldwin Smith believed that women were not only inherently conservative and religious, but sentimental and emotional as well. He was afraid that, as a result of these distinctly female characteristics, female voters would prefer "personal government." "Personal government" was rule by a permanent president who would appeal to women's need for emotional and protective leadership and simplify the complex form of parliamentary government favoured by men. Smith believed that women's desire for protection in government was a result of their natural role as mothers. He wrote in 1874:

> the love of liberty and the desire of being governed by law alone appears to be characteristically male. The female need of protection, of which, so long as women remain physically weak, and so long as they are mothers, it will be impossible to get rid, is apparently accompanied by a preference for personal government, which finds its proper satisfaction in the family, but which gives an almost uniform bias to the political sentiments of women.35

Smith warned that precious liberty itself would end were women granted the vote. He wrote that "to give women the franchise is simply to give them the power of putting an end, actually and virtually, to all franchises together ...there can be little doubt that in all cases, if power

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34Smith, "Woman Suffrage", pp. 190-91.

35Smith, "Female Suffrage," p.145.

were put into the hands of the women, free government, and with it liberty of opinion, would fall."[36]

Smith believed that, once enfranchised, women would dominate the political process due to their dominant numbers in the population, and would be able to force government action in the interest of women and children alone. Smith refused to recognize that women had special interests or grievances; women were a sex, and only classes could have interests and grievances. Smith believed, however, that women would contrive to place artificial female issues before government if they were given a chance.

There was some justification for Goldwin Smith's apprehension regarding women's issues. Smith began writing in opposition to woman suffrage during the campaign to repeal the infamous Contagious Diseases Acts, which had been passed by the British parliament in 1864, 1866 and 1869. These acts, which Smith supported, were designed to control the spread of venereal diseases among British soldiers and sailors through the regulation of prostitution. Under these acts, any woman suspected of prostitution could be forced to submit to a medical examination for venereal disease, and to undergo treatment if necessary. Treatment entailed forcible commitment to special "lock" hospitals for up to nine months at a time. From 1870 to 1886 a spirited campaign to repeal the acts was waged by both men and women who believed that they sanctioned a double standard of morality for men and

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[36]Smith, "Female Suffrage," p. 145.

women and that they discriminated against women and against lower class women in particular. The most notable personality of the repeal campaign was Josephine Butler, and her leadership, along with the active participation of large numbers of women in the campaign, led to a prolonged debate over the role of women in medicine, politics, and the state.[37]

Smith believed the repeal campaign to be the sort of emotional women's issue which would come to dominate government were women to receive the vote. In his 1872 article "The Woman's Rights Movement," Smith was writing partly in response to the repeal campaign. In this article he warned that if women were enfranchised, they would make the Contagious Diseases Acts the main issue of a general election, the result of which would be "that all the statesmen who had voted for the Act, including the men of most mark in both parties, would be driven from public life."[38] The repeal campaign no doubt solidified Smith's opposition to the enfranchisement of women and to women in politics. He abhorred the unnatural and unfeminine behaviour of the female repealers, whom he described as exhibiting "fullblown all the violence, narrowness and

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[37]see Judith Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society (Cambridge, 1980), for an excellent study of the Contagious Disease Acts and the repeal campaign.

[38]Smith, "The Woman's Rights Movement," p. 259.

persecuting rancour of the worst male faction fight."[39] If it were not the Contagious Diseases Acts, it would be some other special women's issue that would be seized by the political women. Smith wrote that

> with Female Suffrage there would probably be always a woman's question, of a kind appealing to sentiment such as the question of the Contagious Diseases Act, which demagogues would take care to provide, and which would swallow up every other question, and make a clean sweep of all public men who might refuse to take the woman's pledge.[40]

Reform movements and the woman suffrage movement were synonymous to Smith. His hearty dislike of virtually all reform causes was largely responsible for his disapproval of woman suffrage. Ironically, most historians of woman suffrage movements, including the Canadian suffrage movement, credit the close relationship between woman suffrage and other reform causes with the eventual success of the suffrage movement. Goldwin Smith was opposed to almost all movements of reform due to his ideas on the role of the state in society and on the rights of individuals.

Most British antisuffragists, including Smith, were extremely uncomfortable with the reform mania of the last third of the nineteenth century. According to Brian Harrison, the antisuffragists tended to be conservative and thus suspicious of movements desiring change. "Opposition to a reforming movement often springs less from distaste for the cause itself than from a temperamental dislike of

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[39]Smith, "The Woman's Rights Movement," p. 262.

[40]Smith, "Female Suffrage," p. 148.

reforms in general," writes Harrison. "Many Antis were instinctive conservatives; these were by no means confined to the Conservative party, though many were to be found there."[41] They most disliked the prohibition movement and the aforementioned movement to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts, which were prime examples of emotional, female-dominated reform causes and were also strongly identified with the suffrage and feminist movements. Writes Harrison:

> Many people oppose reforms primarily because they dislike reformers; whereas suffragists could often be found united with every conceivable progressive cause, Antis frequently shunned them all and disliked suffragists as much for their involvement with attacks on state-regulated prostitution, or for their hope that the women's vote would damage the publican - as for their views on the franchise itself.[42]

Goldwin Smith was one of many antisuffragists who rejected reformers' assumption that it was the responsibility of the state to attempt to solve all social problems. According to Wayne Roberts, Smith believed that the more moral and intelligent a society, the less government and the less government compulsion was necessary.[43] Smith identified reform with compulsion and government intervention; he was therefore opposed to the participation of government in reform causes, and rejected woman suffrage for its associa-

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[41]Harrison, p. 27.

[42]Ibid., p. 36.

[43]Wayne Roberts, "Goldwin's Myth: The Nonconformist as Mugwump," Canadian Literature, No. 83, Winter 1979, p. 55.

tion with these causes.

Not surprisingly, Smith was a vocal opponent of the prohibition movements in both Britain and Ontario. Goldwin Smith was fearful of the power of the "mob" in democracy, with which he equated all reform movements which clamoured for the sanction of democratic institutions.[44] He saw the pronibition camp as one of these "mobs." He also believed the pronibition movement to be dominated by woman suffragists who were particularly insensitive to the civil rights of others, most notably working-class men. These women were also stepping outside the bounds of their sphere to meddle in the business of men. "Women are the great prohibitionists," he wrote,

> having only too strong inducement, many of them, to support any supposed antidote to drunkenness, and not seeing that the taste of a man engaged in heavy labour and exposed to the weather for the stimulus of wine or beer may be as natural as the taste of his home-keeping partner for tea.[45]

Even in his eighti[illegible] Smith continued to speak out against prohibition. "We shall not lessen the evils of that trade [in liquor] by making it contraband, which will probably be the result of precipitate action," he wrote to a Kingston, Ontario newspaper in 1909.[46]

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[44]Harrison, p. 37; Goldwin Smith's support of state intervention in the form of the Contagious Diseases Acts was an exception to this conviction, although it may be noted that the subjects of compulsion were women only.

[45]Smith, "Woman Suffrage," p. 187.

[46]Smith to the Editor, Kingston Standard, July 1909, in Haultain (ed.), Goldwin Smith's Correspondence, p. 515.

Perhaps the most influential of Goldwin Smith's ideas on the question of woman suffrage was his belief that women's participation in government was not consistent with the fundamental requirement of physical force as the ultimate source of the state's power. This theory came to be known as the "physical force argument" against woman suffrage, and is one of the most misunderstood of all antisuffragist arguments.

Fundamental to the physical force argument against woman suffrage was the belief that the capacity to wield any sort of political power ultimately depended on the ability to wield force. Goldwin Smith, who denied the existence of any natural right to vote, also rejected all claims of abstract rights to govern. Instead, the power to govern was the natural right only of those who possessed the physical might to enforce decisions by physical compulsion. The cliche "might is right" adequately sums up Smith's ideas on who may hold power in society. Any power held by the physically weak could only be artificial power; a government that depended on this artificial power was not in the best interests of society. Wrote Smith in the essay "Woman Suffrage":

> For an abstract claim of right there appears to be no foundation. Power which is natural carries with it right, though it is subject to the restraints of conscience. Weakness cannot be said to have a right to artificial power...[47]

These ideas formed the basis of the antisuffrage

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[47] Smith, "Woman Suffrage," p. 183.

argument. Smith believed that the physically weak had no right to power; to Smith, women, along with children, formed the class of the physically weak (Smith conveniently ignored the obvious question of the role of old or disabled men in the state). Women, therefore, had no right to power in government, and therefore no right to vote. It must be remembered that Smith believed the vote to be an extremely important form of participation in government. He also believed that demands by woman suffragists for complete participation in government would be inevitable and probably successful if women were to become enfranchised. Denying women the vote, therefore, was the crucial first step in preventing the disintegration of the power of the state into an artificial and meaningless substitution for real power.

The possession of power based on physical force was necessary to the continued existence of the state, the maintenance of national security and the stability of society. All laws passed by parliament were ultimately enforceable only through the use of physical compulsion. National security depended in part on the prevention of war, which could be achieved by the intimidation of potential enemies through demonstrations of physical force. Social stability depended upon the prevention of lawlessness and the constant threat of war, which in turn depended on the ability and willingness of the state to use physical force with skill and thoroughness when necessary. This sort of force, Smith was convinced, could only be wielded by men. Only men possessed the ability to wield force themselves,

and only men possessed the ability to direct the use of physical force by other men in the police and military in the suppression of lawlessness and in the defence of the state. Men were the "natural" governors, Smith wrote. No feminist rhetoric could change the "course of nature."[48]

Because of the dominance of women in the population of Britain, Smith believed that, once enfranchised, women would come to dominate politics and government. The effect of the transference of government to women would be devastating. Men, Smith asserted, would feel no compunction to obey laws devised by a female-dominated parliament. Because women, unlike men, had no recourse to physical compulsion to enforce their laws, lawlessness would be rampant. Smith also assumed that the police and military would choose not to obey the orders of a female government. Complete social breakdown was inevitable under this scenario.

Goldwin Smith's belief that women voters and legislators would force artifical and emotional issues of purely female interest and benefit upon the population strengthened his conviction that laws passed by a female-dominated parliament would be unenforceable. Men, Smith was certain, would not obey laws which were not in their interests or, worse still, were specifically designed to attack specifically male behaviour, such as drinking or smoking. He wrote in 1890:

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[48] Smith, "Woman Suffrage," p. 181.

> That the tendency of a state governed by women would be to arbitrary and sentimental legislation, can hardly be doubted. Prohibitionism in its most extreme form would almost certainly carry the day. Possibly legislation against tobacco might follow. Would men obey, knowing that the law had no force behind it? If they did not, what but disregard of law and consequent confusion would ensue?[49]

The potential for "national emasculation" under a female-dominated electorate and parliament alarmed Goldwin Smith. Armies were by tradition and for practical reasons male, and Smith believed that both political and military power should remain in the hands of men alone. He pointed out that "in the civilised world the duty of defending the country in war falls on the male sex alone, and it would seem that there ought to be some connection between that duty and political power."[50] Smith also warned that allowing the control of the military to fall into the hands of a group that would never be expected to fight in a war would be extremely dangerous. Smith explained that since women would not be affected themselves by an outbreak of war (Smith was somewhat insensitive to the plight of the civilian population during war) female rulers would have no reason to curb their desire to wage war. As Smith put it, "the weak have always loved to wield the thunderbolt."[51] In his essay "Woman Suffrage," he warned that women were "apt to be warlike because their responsibility is less," and he

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[49] Smith, "Woman's Place in the State," p. 520.

[50] Smith, "Woman Suffrage," p. 188.

[51] Smith, "The Woman's Rights Movement," p. 260.

cited a long succession of warring queens in history as evidence for this assertion.[52]

Woman suffrage and its potential effects on the power of the state and the military had serious implications for the fate of the British Empire. Despite the titular presence of Victoria, the Queen-Empress, Goldwin Smith believed the business of Empire to be an exclusively masculine concern. The threat of "national emasculation" was also one of imperial emasculation should women take over as the rulers of the British Empire. Smith was certain not only that women would not have the administrative and political skills to rule a vast empire effectively, but that women could not command the obedience to authority of non-white colonials which was of such great importance to the continued existence of the empire. This was especially important to Britain's interests in India, by far the most important part of the British Empire during Goldwin Smith's career as an antisuffragist. "Imagine the women of England governing India," he exclaimed contemptuously to a prominent British antisuffragist in 1909, according to Brian Harrison.[53]

The physical force argument, originally expressed by Goldwin Smith, found wide and long-lasting acceptance among his fellow antisuffragists in Britain, the United States and

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[52]Smith, "Woman Suffrage," p. 189.

[53]Quoted from the diary of Hensly Henson in Harrison, p. 75.

Canada. Probably due to continued concern over imperial matters, the physical force argument against woman suffrage was very popular in Britain. Most antisuffragists used the argument at one time or another, but two pieces of writing which appeared in Britain in 1912, a pamphlet by A. MacCallum Scott and a short book by Heber Hart, expressed the complex reasoning behind it particularly well.[54]

A. MacCallum Scott's pamphlet, The Physical Force Argument Against Woman Suffrage, was one of a series of pamphlets printed and circulated by Britain's National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage. Scott elaborated on Goldwin Smith's warning that men would not obey laws passed by a female-dominated electorate and parliament. Inherent in Scott's expression of the physical force argument was the assumption that no virile man would submit to the authority of women. The authority of a government, according to Scott, rests not only upon physical force but upon "moral force" as well. When men believe both physical and moral force to be absent in a government, they will inevitably attempt to overthrow it. Scott wrote that men "will not submit to laws or governments which they believe to be unjust or immoral when they know that they have the power to overthrow them if they try." Scott added that "they would be less than men" if they did submit to an immoral govern-

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[54]A. MacCallum Scott, The Physical Force Argument Against Woman Suffrage (London, 1912); Heber Hart, Woman Suffrage: A National Danger (London, 1912).

ment.[55] To Scott, a government dominated by women and women's interests would likely be considered immoral by the majority of true men, both because a female government would not have the right to govern because of its inability to wield physical force and because of its potential to enact laws not in the interests of men. Like Smith, Scott assumed that woman suffrage would result in the dominance of women in government, due to the overpopulation of women in Britain. Although he did not use the term, Scott believed that woman suffrage and rule by a female-dominated parliament would result in "tyranny of the majority." Scott claimed that merely winning a majority of votes in an election would not give women the moral right to govern.[56] He warned that, if "a majority of women with a minority of men" tried to "impose their will upon a majority of men with a minority of women," the majority of men would revolt against the authority of women if the men believed the policies of the majority to be immoral and the "national security and honour" to be at stake.[57]

Heber Hart's book, Woman Suffrage: A National Danger, did not depart far from Goldwin Smith's formulation of the physical force argument. Hart's major contribution to the argument was his emphasis on the role of women in government as advisors only. Men alone, he wrote, were fit to form

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[55] Scott, p. 5.

[56] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[57] Ibid., p. 12.

governments, because only men could enforce the laws they made. Women could not enforce their laws, because they did not possess adequate physical force. Government by men, therefore, was natural, and government by women artificial. Women, Hart allowed, may influence government, but in the interests of national security and stability must never be allowed to play a greater role, including the casting of votes. The following passage from Woman Suffrage: A National Danger summarizes Hart's ideas on women's role in the state as advisors only:

> There is an esssential and well recognized difference between sovereignty and influence; government and guidance; command and exhortation; law and advice. An individual or body are sovereign, or govern, if, and only in so far as, they are able to compel obedience to their ordinances - the power which they are known or believed to possess must be such as to constrain the community to compliance. In order that a rule of conduct may be a law, there must be the power on the part of an executive authority to enforce its provisions or punish the breach of them. However good the rule, unless the sanction exists, there are always some who will infringe it.[58]

A female antisuffragist, Helen Kendrick Johnson, appears to have been the first American anti to use the physical force argument against woman suffrage. The first edition of her influential book, Woman and the Republic, appeared in 1897. In the book, Johnson set the physical force argument in an American context, using historical evidence to prove that even in the idealistic, democratic United States, physical might remained the fundamental basis

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[58]Hart, p. 16.

of political power. Civilization, wrote Johnson, was marked by the use of courts of law and ballots instead of "blows and bullets." She warned, however, that "the blows and bullets must always be ready, in case the arguments and the ballots are unheeded."[59] Because women were not capable of dealing out the blows or firing the bullets, they had no right to vote or to play an active role in government. "In this land, the vote is [italics in original] the 'insignia of actual power,' but it is only the insignia; the power to defend themselves and those who make country and home worth defending, lies with the individual defenders."[60] The defenders were, of course, exclusively male; those who wield the true political power must, therefore, be male. Johnson also doubted that men would ever submit to laws passed in the interests of women at the insistence of women voters.

Another American antisuffragist, James M. Buckley, agreed with Johnson on this point. Buckley believed that while men were usually willing to listen to advice from women, it was inevitable that men would refuse to obey laws devised by and for women. "In man there is a natural instinct which leads him to submit to persuasion by woman and to resist if she resorts to force. This instinct cannot be eradicated by philosophy, refinement or religion and in

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[59]Helen Kendrick Johnson, Woman and the Republic (New York, 1913), p. 58.

[60]Ibid., p. 55.

every generation reappears with undiminished vigour."[61]

The physical force argument against woman suffrage is perhaps the least understood of all antisuffragist arguments. If we consider the possibility that violence played a much greater role in the political process and in society in general during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, the theory becomes more plausible. According to Brian Harrison, the historian of the British antisuffragist movement, the Victorian age was indeed much more violent than most of us realize. Election campaigns and election days were violent affairs, and not suitable for the participation of women. Considering the level of violence in British society at least, it is not surprising that some political thinkers believed that violence was necessary to the enforcement of laws. Harrison also points out that despite the long period of peace that characterized the Victorian era the threat of war and concern over the state of the British Empire were always present. "Given the prominence of Empire," writes Harrison, "the ever-present danger of war, the precariousness of public order and the absence of a welfare state, the manipulation of physical force was indeed a major function of the Victorian state."[62]

There was also a great deal of violence on the American political scene. Helen Kendrick Johnson believed the

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[61]James M. Buckley, The Wrong and Peril of Woman Suffrage (New York, 1909), p. 94.

[62]Harrison, p. 76.

American political arena to be both violent and corrupt. A passing comment in Woman and the Republic on a recent political campaign sheds some light on the extent of violence in American politics before the First World War; the comment is all the more telling because Johnson does not dwell on it. Rejecting the suffragist claim that women could be as effective as policemen by "guarding the morals of society," Johnson wrote:

> A 'moral guard' might be an excellent thing to ward off the ghosts in a country burying-ground, but would hardly prove effective against the riot of a Tammany mob on the night of an exciting election. It is absurd to speak in such fashion of work that is needed every hour. The crust of our civilization is very thin - how thin, the nation learned during the campaign just passed.63

While American Progressive Era fear of city political machines and political corruption and the attempts of reformers to solve the problems of the American electoral process have been studied extensively by historians, there is little knowledge of electoral violence in Canada from the late Victorian age up to the First World War. A study of the incidence of violence in Ontario politics and political campaigns would help to explain the negative attitude of Goldwin Smith in particular toward the participation of women in elections as voters and in parliament as legislators. Historian Kenneth McNaught has drawn some general conclusions on the role of violence in Canadian history. In his article "Violence in Canadian History," McNaught argues

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[63]Johnson, p. 87.

that Canada has been perceived as a peaceful country due to comparisons between the United States and Canada that do not take into account differences in scale between the countries. When these differences are taken into account, violence emerges as quite commonplace in Canadian history. Furthermore, violence in Canada has very often been related to politics and government. According to McNaught, "even a selective review of violence in our [Canadian] domestic affairs suggests the thesis that many, if not most, significant constitutional and policy changes have been directly related to and profoundly affected by collective violence or threatened violence."[64] McNaught's conclusions on the role of violence in our history suggest that there may have been some justification for Smith's reluctance to introduce women into politics.

Goldwin Smith did not live to see the enfranchisement of women in Ontario; he died in 1910, just as woman suffrage was becoming an important issue in the province. Shortly before Smith's death, however, another intellectual, Andrew Macphail, had started to take Smith's place as the foremost intellectual opponent of woman suffrage in Canada. In a review of Essays in Fallacy, a 1910 collection of essays by Macphail which included his two most controversial antisuffrage essays, the Toronto Globe heralded him as a possible successor to Goldwin Smith:

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[64]Kenneth McNaught, "Violence in Canadian History," in John S. Moir (ed.), Character and Circumstance: Essays in Honour of Donald Grant Creighton (Toronto, 1970), p. 75.

> A few of the newspapers have been casting about recently to determine who might properly succeed Mr. Goldwin Smith as the Dean of Canadian letters. The choice in a number of instances fell upon Dr. Andrew Macphail of Montreal, editor, essayist and commentator on things in general. Dr. Macphail undoubtedly possesses the leisure, is widely read, brilliant of style, and, like the late Sage of the Grange, has abundant courage in expressing opinions.[65]

Although Macphail was a resident of Montreal and a professor at McGill University, as an anglophone his influence was most strongly felt in Ontario, in addition to Montreal. Macphail was as controversial an antisuffragist theoretician as Goldwin Smith, and like Smith his antisuffrage writing attracted attention from those for and against woman suffrage not only in Ontario but in Britain and the United States as well.

Andrew Macphail was born in Orwell, Prince Edward Island in 1864. He entered McGill University in 1885 and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1888 and a medical degree in 1891. He left Canada to study medicine in London in 1891, returning to Canada in 1892. Macphail practiced medicine in Montreal until the death of his wife in 1902. He received a sizeable inheritance from her that allowed him to discontinue his medical practice and become professor of the history of medicine at McGill.

In 1907 Andrew Macphail took over as editor of the ailing McGill University Magazine. He renamed it The University Magazine, and under his editorship, which lasted

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[65]Review of Macphail, Essays in Fallacy, Toronto Globe, August 13, 1910.

until 1920, it became one of the best and most influential journals of opinion in Canada.[66] Macphail ran the magazine single-handedly and financed it out of his own pocket. Never a financial success, the magazine suffered from poor circulation; the highest number of subscribers it ever enjoyed was a mere 5300 in 1912.[67]

Andrew Macphail's first antisuffrage essays, "The American Woman" and "The Psychology of the Suffragette," initially were published in The University Magazine in 1909 but gained wider attention in Canada, the United States, and Britain when they were published as part of the 1910 collection Essays in Fallacy. Macphail wrote two other essays specifically dealing with the topic of woman suffrage: "On Certain Aspects of Feminism," which appeared in The University Magazine of February, 1914; and "Women in Democracy," which appeared in the same magazine in February, 1920.

Like the antisuffragist ideas of Goldwin Smith, those of Andrew Macphail must be examined in the context of his ideas on democracy and the role of the public in government, and on the role of women and the family in a stable society. Like Smith's views, Macphail's ideas on these subjects

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[66] Carl Berger, "The Other Mr. Leacock," Canadian Literature, No. 55, (1973), p. 47; Alan Bowker, "Introduction" to Bowker (ed.), The Social Criticism of Stephen Leacock (Toronto, 1973), p. XV.

[67] S. E. D. Shortt, The Search for an Ideal: Six Canadian Intellectuals and their Convictions in an Age of Transition, 1890-1930 (Toronto, 1976), p. 17.

precluded women from any participation in voting and government whatsoever. Unlike Smith, however, Andrew Macphail was influenced by Social Darwinism, a set of ideas on social evolution which were derived from the findings of Charles Darwin. The influence of Social Darwinism upon Macphail placed him in a later generation of antisuffragists than that of Smith.

Macphail, like Goldwin Smith, has been accused of being undemocratic. In this case the accusation is justified to a large extent. Macphail, however, revelled in his rejection of democracy, to which he referred as a type of cancer "which strives to destroy the organs and organization of society, which strives to reduce races, nations, and families to an unorganized congeries of individual units."[68] To Macphail, the ideal system of government was the British parliamentary system, in which only the elite of the nation had a voice. If this was not democratic, that was just fine with Macphail.[69] Macphail appears to have been influenced by British Comtists, or positivists, who favoured government by an elite whose sole responsibility was to govern. Frederic Harrison, a leading British positivist and antisuffragist, was probably a great influence on Macphail. Christopher Kent summarizes Harrison's ideas on the role of the people in government, which were almost identical to

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[68]Andrew Macphail, "Women in Democracy," The University Magazine, XIV (1920), p. 5.

[69]Shortt, p. 34.

those of Macphail, in his study of positivism entitled Brains and Numbers: Elitism, Comtism, and Democracy in Mid-Victorian England:

> There was of course to be popular influence over government of a most pervasive kind, but not government by the people in the strict sense. He opposed what he considered the democratic fallacy, with its denial of the need for leadership from an elite. He felt that it encouraged people to believe, just because they chose their governors, that their governors were on a level with them and that anyone was capable of governing.[70]

Like Goldwin Smith, Macphail was not only opposed to women voting; he was suspicious about the participation of most men in all aspects of government. If Macphail was wary of the participation of men in a democratic government, he was horrified by the prospect of women wielding political power. He was convinced, with some cause, that once women possessed the vote they would force a bevy of legislated social reforms upon the Canadian people. Macphail was opposed to the very principle of legislated reform: his lack of faith in the democratic process made him pessimistic about the efficacy of legislation and the ability of the ignorant masses to bring about beneficial social change; and his Social Darwinist ideas led him to reject reforms which threatened to interfere with the evolutionary process. Macphail was quite correct in associating woman suffrage with social reform movements; most Canadian suffragists themselves trumpeted their devotion to social reform as the

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[70]Christopher Kent, Brains and Numbers: Elitism, Comtism, and Democracy in Mid-Victorian England (Toronto, 1978), p. 146.

principal reason why women should be given the vote. Ironically, the close association between the suffrage movement and various movements of social reform, which most historians of the suffrage movement in Canada credit with winning women the vote, was to a large extent responsible for Andrew Macphail's vehement opposition to woman suffrage. Indeed, Flora MacDonald Denison, president of the Canadian Suffrage Association and the most radical of Canadian suffragists, recognized the harm that could result from the close relationship between the suffragists and some rather questionable reform causes.[71] On May 2, 1913, Denison wrote the National Council of Women to protest their recommendation that flogging should be instituted as the punishment for crimes against women and children by men. Denison argued that the cause of woman suffrage would suffer should it become identified with such a brutal "reform":

> It is most unfortunate to learn that men who formerly favored Woman SUFFRAGE are now asking if this barbarous legislation [to institute flogging] be the work of the 'fair but ferocious sex' and that if women cannot be humane then let the Suffrage door be banged and bolted on Woman."[72]

Macphail traced the origins of the involvement of middle class women in social reform activity to an extremely

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[71] Deborah Gorham, "Flora MacDonald Denison: Canadian Feminist," in Linda Kealey (ed.), A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s (Toronto, 1979), pp. 47-70.

[72] Public Archives of Canada, National Council of Women of Canada Papers, MG 28, I 25, Volume 7, Correspondence-Women's Suffrage Movement, 1912-1919, Denison to NCWC, May 2, 1913.

undesirable situation: as a consequence of the social change resulting from industrialization and urbanization, women no longer played an important economic role as producers and care-givers within the home.[73] According to Macphail, middle class women now handed over their previously time-consuming and fulfilling duties as home-makers and mothers to servants. Women, now "idle busybodies," had to do something with their time and energy, and Macphail believed that women's time and energy came to be devoted to social reform causes or "silly labours," as Macphail put it.[74] He also believed that unmarried women, who were idle because they had no domestic duties whatsoever, turned to reform activity to fill lives devoid of women's natural responsiblities to husband and children. Macphail wrote of the attraction of these female failures to reform activities and of the lure of the vote in an article which appeared in The University Magazine in 1914:

> This desire on the part of the few women, who are otherwise unoccupied, to share in the work of government arises from sheer conscientiousness. They honestly wish to atone for their failure, through no fault of their own, to perform that function which is exclusively theirs....These women with their fine natures, approaching the masculine type, are deficient in the instinct for husband-getting. They are obliged to turn to other avocations and they always find them already preempted by men.[75]

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[73]Andrew Macphail, "The American Woman," in Essays in Fallacy (London, 1910), p. 11.

[74]Ibid., pp. 13-15.

[75]Andrew Macphail, "On Certain Aspects of Feminism," The University Magazine, XIII (1914), reprinted in Ramsay

Macphail was extremely pessimistic about the ability of reformers, male or female, to accomplish anything through the democratic system. The vote, he was convinced, could accomplish nothing of value, and attempts to solve problems through legislation would be equally fruitless. All time and energy spent in the interests of reform was wasted time and energy, according to Macphail. He delighted in pointing out failed reform causes as a means of disproving the claims of the suffragists that woman suffrage would lead to the improvement of Canadian society. Because nothing of lasting value ever resulted from legislated change, Macphail claimed, there was no justification for allowing any more people, that is, female voters, the opportunity to waste more time and money in futile efforts of social reform. "No legislative expedient has gone untried," he wrote. "It may well be excused for doubting that these new volunteers [female reformers and suffragists] are in possession of a magical remedy for things as they are, which will be put into operation so soon as they attain to a political vantage. It is easy to mistake for a panacea an old fallacy in a new guise."[76]

Of great significance to Andrew Macphail's opposition to woman suffrage in Canada was his fervent belief in the importance of mankind's adherence to nature. Macphail had

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Cook and Wendy Mitchinson (eds.), The Proper Sphere (Toronto, 1976), p. 304.

[76]Macphail, "On Certain Aspects of Feminism," p. 303.

little trouble reconciling his conception of nature, which was Darwinian, with his religious beliefs; nature and evolution, he believed, were ordained by God.[77] Natural law and God's law were the same thing to Andrew Macphail; his religious beliefs were couched in the terms of nature so popular in Canada from the 1890s up to the First World War. Macphail's Social Darwinist beliefs on the role of women in society and in the family precluded women from participation in any activities which did not conform to his expectations of natural female behaviour. He was convinced that woman suffrage was unnatural, and therefore immoral, and would be responsible for the downfall of society.

According to S. E. D. Shortt, Macphail created a "system of ethics" for himself from a synthesis of religion and his Darwinian ideas on nature. Under Macphail's system of ethics, morality was determined by the extent to which an individual or group conformed to the dictates of his Darwinian concept of nature. A Social Darwinist, Macphail believed that the continued success of the Anglo-Saxon race (Macphail was a firm believer in the superiority of the northern, preferably British, race), society, and its individual components depended on the extent to which it conformed to nature.[78]

Social Darwinism was partly responsible for Macphail's

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[77] Shortt, pp. 20-21.

[78] Ibid., pp. 13, 22-24.

distaste for social reform, and his resulting opposition to the woman suffrage movement, which he saw as embracing all aspects of legislated social change. Macphail preferred to allow "survival of the fittest" to reign in society, which would weed out the unfit and undesirable classes and allow the fit classes to prosper and multiply unmolested. Social reform tampered with the free operation of this Darwinian law of nature by creating special conditions in which the unfit could escape the workings of natural law and thrive. Because it abetted the breaking of the laws of nature, social reform, according to Macphail's system of ethics, was immoral. Macphail identified the women who advocated the most dangerous and pervasive types of social reform as suffragists. He therefore branded the suffragists as immoral and a threat to the continued success of society.

Of more importance to Andrew Macphail, however, was the threat the woman suffrage and feminist movements posed to the natural and vital roles of wife and mother which women played in the family, the basic unit of society. The effect of the suffrage and feminist movements which Macphail most feared was the "unsexing" of women. "Unsexing," which created "abnormal" women, resulted when women took part in activities or assumed behavioural characteristics which were not natural to their sex, that is, when women assumed male roles and characteristics. To Macphail, any deviation from the dictates of nature was immoral, including that of women from their natural role and characteristics. Furthermore, not only would women themselves suffer grievously due to

their flouting of natural law, but the family and ultimately society and the race would suffer at the hands of women who succumbed to the dubious claims of the suffragists.

Macphail made reference to his insider's expertise as a physician in a particularly telling passage in "The American Woman" in which he related an alarming scenario of the results of suffragism and feminism on women. He also made references which suggest that he viewed women's behavioural patterns as not very far removed from those of animals in the natural scheme of things:

> In a society which has grown up by natural process in the course of slow centuries, the woman performs her duties easily, almost unconsciously. In a society which is the product of only a generation, the woman who aspires beyond her primitive functions is an amateur in a new role. We have all seen and pitied an animal compelled to perform a new and uncongenial task - a dog in a dance, or a monkey sedulous over his sewing. Off the stage, we are told that these animals are subject to fits of ill-temper, to outbursts of emotion, to discontent; that they crave for excitement, and that they finally "break down." It is not disclosing any professional consequences to say that symptoms of a somewhat similar nature have been observed in the case of the type of woman which we are considering, as a result of her performance.[79]

Macphail referred to the abnormal, suffragist-type woman as "The American Woman" in his essay of the same name. His rather lame explanation for this choice was that "American" merely referred to a new type of woman, more prevalent in America, but certainly found elsewhere, and he insisted that no disparagement of all American women was intended (not surprisingly, he failed to convince many of

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[79]Macphail, "The American Woman," p. 17.

this). More importantly, the essay "The American Woman" allowed Macphail to discuss the characteristics of the unsexed woman in detail. The "American Woman," or, more accurately, the "abnormal woman," was one who both failed to conform to society's norm as to how a woman should behave and took on male characteristics and roles which were unnatural for women. The unnatural things done by suffragists and the women they influenced included taking part in political activity, being self-reliant and assertive, possessing "higher intelligence," and trying to be the friends of men.[80] Typical of the natural laws which Macphail observed women breaking was the law "that the physically weak are subject to the physically strong. By no subterfuge or evasion, or resort to simile, analogy, or hyperbole can weak be converted into strong. Things are as they are because the world of life has grown up under this law."[81]

Macphail believed that a woman who did not fulfill her natural role as wife and mother had no rightful place in society. A woman who was not a wife or a mother was a non-person, a useless parasite. The woman who was married and a mother and who abdicated her natural responsibilities to servants and other paid workers was also a useless person, for her usefulness to society only lasted so long as she

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[80] Ibid., p. 29; "On Certain Aspects of Feminism," pp. 303-304, 309.

[81] Macphail, "The American Woman," p. 31.

devoted herself to natural female activities, which included only domestic activities, and not those charitable and reform activities with which middle class women filled their idle days. The unmarried woman or the married woman who neglected her duties was a prime candidate to become an "American Woman." Again, Macphail based this conclusion on a law of nature:

> Idleness alone, which they [New England Puritans] described as the "mother of naughtiness," will account for all those characteristics which are expressed by the term "American Woman." It is an eternal law - at least it has been a law since the beginning of created things - that an organ, an animal, or a species cannot exist independently of its function. Life and growth are bound up with work, and we have not yet grown so mighty that we have emancipated ourselves from the dominion of this law.[82]

To Macphail, woman suffrage agitation was foremost among the results of idleness, a form of unnatural behaviour among women, and if won, woman suffrage would entrench unfeminine and unnatural behaviour among women.

Of most serious consequence for the family and for society, Macphail believed that the women who gave in to the dire influences of the suffragists and feminists and who compromised their femininity as a result were no longer capable of fulfilling their natural roles as wives and mothers. This was a devastating blow to the natural structure of the family and society. The natural relationship between husband and wife could exist only as long as men and women remained complementary to one another. Men

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[82]Macphail, "The American Woman," pp. 10-11.

and women were complementary to one another as long as each sex displayed its proper, natural characteristics. Once women began to take on male characteristics and functions (including voting) they would lose their female characteristics and functions, and the natural relationship between men and women would be threatened.

Macphail warned that the ultimate result of the failure of women (and only the women were at fault) to carry out the duties of wife and mother, encouraged by the suffrage movement, would be race suicide, a Social Darwinist concept of great concern to the imperialist Macphail. Childbearing, Macphail claimed, was really the sole unique function performed by women, and women's last chance to justify their existence in modern society rested on their continued performance of the childbearing function. Yet even in this respect, he was sad to point out, women were not doing their best, and he predicted the ultimate downfall of the Anglo Saxon race in Canada.[83] Macphail blamed the reluctance of modern middle class women to bear children on their preoccupation with reform, politics and woman suffrage. "The fall of the race always comes through the woman. Tempted by the 'subtle beast' towards a false ambition and away from her appointed task, she puts forth her hand to attain to a knowledge which is forbidden, and brings the

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[83]Macphail, "The American Woman," p. 22.

disaster of obliteration. That is the curse of Eve."[84] In the essay "The American Woman," Macphail backed up this contention with American statistics which showed declining birth rates ever since the start of the woman suffrage movement in the United States and he predicted a similar trend in Canada.

A committed and vocal imperialist, Macphail was certain, as were many other contemporary imperialists, that Canada was destined to play a leading role in the British Empire, even to the point of surpassing Great Britain in wealth and power.[85] Like other imperialists, Macphail observed both the increasing immigration of non-Anglo Saxon peoples into Canada and a decline in the birth rate of Anglo Saxons in Canada and concluded that the result of these two conditions would be the decline in relative numbers of the founding Anglo Saxon race and the eventual dominance of the immigrant element. He also feared that while the offspring of Anglo Saxon families was declining in numbers, it was also declining in quality. In "The American Woman" he presented evidence that the first-born child in a family was more apt to inherit disease than successive children. As a result, while middle class, Anglo Saxon families in Canada were having fewer children, there was also a chance that they were producing children of lower quality, a direct

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[84]Macphail, "The American Woman," p. 24.

[85]see Carl Berger, The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914 (Toronto, 1970), for an extensive study of these ideas.

contradiction to those who claimed that lower quantity resulted in higher quality.[86] It should also be remembered that Macphail believed that if women had the vote, they would force the adoption of social legislation which would encourage the continued existence of unfit groups which would have lost the battle of survival of the fittest to the Anglo Saxons in the absence of such legislation.

Macphail was not merely a pessimist and naysayer. He had a vision of an ideal Canada free from the very social problems with which the reforming women and suffragists he so disliked were concerned. There was no need and no place for woman suffrage in Andrew Macphail's ideal society; on the contrary, his Canadian utopia could only exist if woman suffrage and all aspects of feminism were obliterated and women resumed their natural role within the family. S. E. D. Shortt discusses Macphail's vision in the book The Search for an Ideal. Macphail believed the traditional family, in which all family members conformed to the laws of nature, to be the basis of society. Unlike the sizeable and growing numbers of Canadians who sanctioned charitable and reform activities for women as a means of improving society by transferring the values of the home to society at large, Andrew Macphail believed that society could only be improved as long as the family retained its tradition of strict separation of male and female spheres. Far from encouraging

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[86] Macphail, "The American Woman," p. 24.

women to bestow their nurturing qualities upon society and its institutions, Macphail called for women to retreat back to their middle class homes, where their most vital responsibilities lay. It was the neglect of family by women who were attracted to reform and politics that was responsible for the social problems which faced Canada in the early twentieth century; urbanization and industrialization speeded the problems along, but women who spurned their family responsibilities were the party most at fault. The calls of the woman suffragists for more involvement of women in society as legislators and reformers were therefore ridiculous to Macphail.[87]

Like many other Social Darwinists, Andrew Macphail believed the best solution to social problems to be a return to paradise, a completely natural environment in which the laws of nature could operate unmolested.[88] Macphail recalled the rural Prince Edward Island of his childhood, free from the blight of industry and cities, and a place where all family members knew their proper place. Macphail believed that it was not too late for Canada to abandon her flirtation with industry and urban life and return to the natural life of the countryside; there was still plenty of agricultural land to accommodate all the people. This sort of vision has been labelled "backward-looking" by historians, who have tended to reject as conservative and

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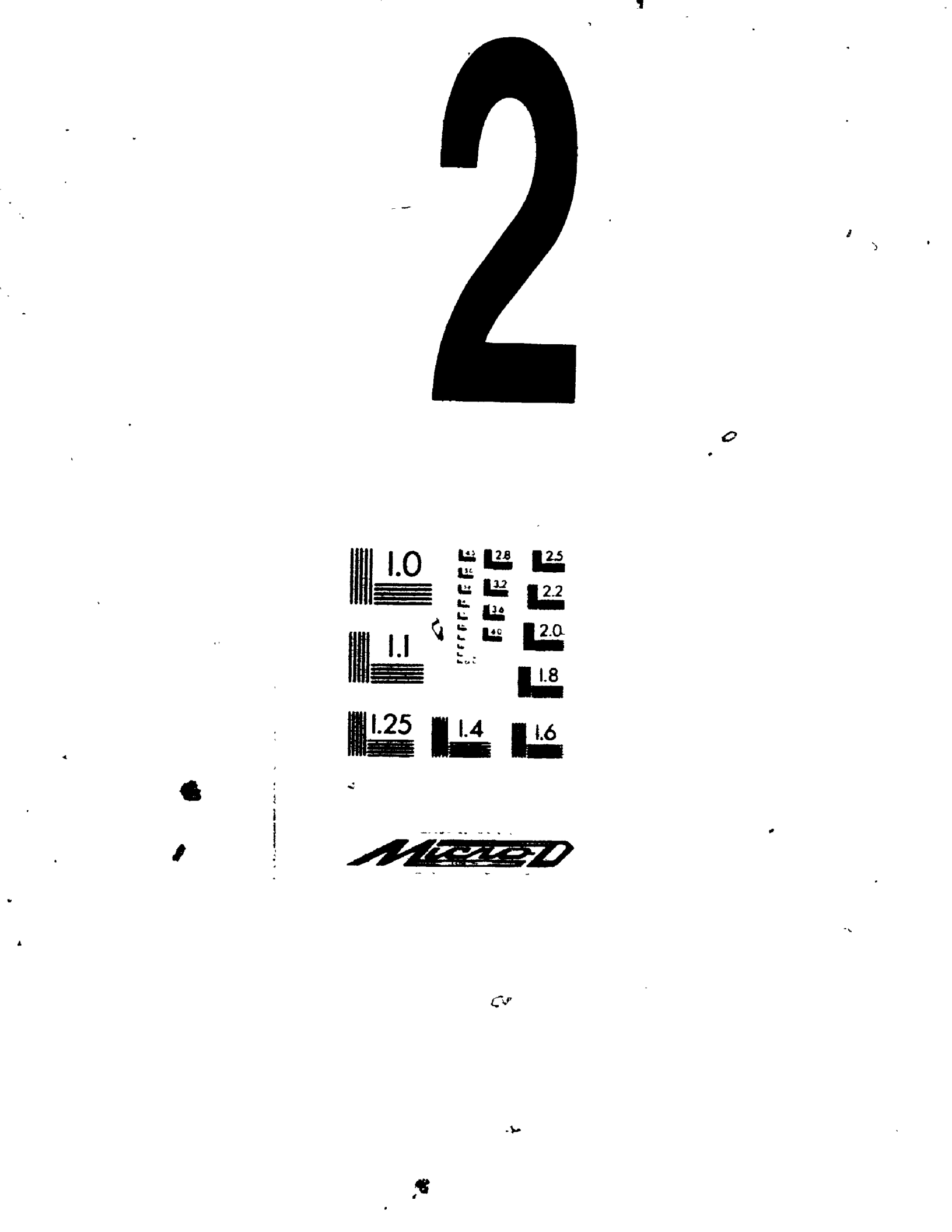
[87]Shortt, pp. 27-29.

[88]Pickens, pp. 197-201.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reactionary all ideas that did not conform to all that was "progressive" in past society. True, Macphail did look back to his childhood environment for the model for his utopia. Yet he was sincere in his belief that Canada's destiny lay in the rejection of materialism and the rapid social change which he blamed on industrialism and the feminist and suffrage movements.

The defeat of woman suffrage and its attendant calls for change in women's social and family role was crucial to the realization of the ideal society in Canada, and Andrew Macphail continued to fight suffragism even after it was a reality at almost all levels of government in Canada. His last antisuffrage essay, "Women in Democracy," appeared in The University Magazine of February, 1920, three years after woman suffrage had been achieved in the province where his readership was greatest, Ontario. Not surprisingly, in this last essay Macphail seemed to have lost all hope that Canada would ever achieve the ideal society he imagined and his attacks on female voters were vicious. Of course, Macphail never wrote in a tone intended to win female support for his antisuffrage campaign. Like the British physician Almwroth Wright, Macphail wrote in a cranky style that could have appealed to very few women.

It is very possible that by the time of the publication of Essays in Fallacy Macphail was an anachronism as an influential male antisuffragist in Canada. In Ontario, a new trend had started to appear around 1908. Women, who hitherto had been silent on the antisuffrage side of the

debate, began to become vocal in their opposition to woman suffrage. Men continued to speak out against giving the vote to women: editorials and letters to editors of the major Ontario newspapers, usually those with a Conservative political bias such as the Toronto Mail and Empire and the Hamilton Herald continued to decry woman suffrage; men participated in public debates over the issue; and public speakers took advantage of opportunities to make reference to the inadvisability of woman suffrage.[89] Women, however, began to take over from men as the most vocal, visible and organized antisuffragists in Ontario.

[89] for examples of male anti-suffrage activity in Ontario, see editorials in the Mail and Empire, October 23, 1909 and in the Herald, January 18, 1910, an April 23, 1913 Toronto Globe notice of a debate over "the woman question" between Dr. James L. Hughes, the prohibitionist, and a Mr. Stewart Muir, which took place on April 24, 1913 and an account of an address delivered by the University of Toronto professor Maurice Hutton to the 1914 annual meeting of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in the October, 1914 issue of Echoes, pp. 28-32.

CHAPTER FOUR

CLEMENTINA FESSENDEN

The trend to the feminization of the antisuffrage movement in Ontario was partly the result of influences from Great Britain and the United States, and partly the result of a backlash against male-dominated antisuffragism. The first women's organizations opposed to woman suffrage were formed in the United States; the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of the Suffrage to Women, which fought (successfully) a 1915 referendum on granting the municipal vote to women, and the New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage were both founded in 1895. Over the next twenty years in the United States, a proliferation of women's antisuffrage organizations appeared, usually on the state level. Organized female opposition to woman suffrage in Great Britain followed behind developments in the United States. The Women's National Anti-Suffrage League was formed in early 1908, following a two-year long antisuffrage letter campaign to the London Times.

The reasons for the strong and quite sudden interest of women in antisuffragism are obscure. Brian Harrison theorizes that antisuffrage women acted out of class interests; he believes the majority of active female antis

in Britain were of a higher social class than the suffragists, and that many female antis possessed significant political influence through their husbands which they didn't want to lose to a pack of middle class female voters. This theory does not, however, sufficiently explain why women came to dominate the antisuffrage movements in the United States and Ontario, where the politics surrounding woman suffrage were quite different from those in Britain. It is more likely that significant numbers of women in Britain, the United States, and Ontario opposed woman suffrage for a variety of reasons, one of which may have been based on class interests, and decided to reject the arguments and tactics of male antisuffragists for a brand of antisuffragism that more accurately reflected the concerns of antisuffrage women. It should not be surprising that twentieth-century antisuffragist women in Ontario would want to devise an antisuffrage ideology that avoided the near-misogyny of Andrew Macphail and was more contemporary and more Canadian than the ideas of Goldwin Smith. Antisuffragist women also came to realize that female arguments against woman suffrage would be more effective than those of men in fighting the predominantly female Ontario suffrage movement. Female antis realized that women campaigning against women over the suffrage issue would be more effective than men fighting against women.

One of the first woman to take up the antisuffragist cause in Ontario was Clementina Fessenden, a remarkable and forgotten woman. Fessenden was directly influenced by

developments in female antisuffragism in Britain to become a vocal opponent of woman suffrage in Ontario, and she was representative of the desire of antisuffrage women to express distinctly female arguments on the subject of women voters and legislators. Although she remained somewhat of a loner in the debate over woman suffrage, she was largely responsible for the transformation of the antisuffrage movement in Ontario into a largely female area of concern, developing at the same time her own uniquely Canadian and imperialist brand of antisuffragism.

Clementina Fessenden is typical of the untold numbers of remarkable Canadian women who have vanished into the void of the past. During her time, she was one of the best-known women in Ontario, and her fame spread beyond the borders of the province. She was a founding member of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and the originator of Empire Day, a day devoted to the celebration of the British Empire in Ontario schools and a concept that spread throughout Canada and to many other nations and colonies in the Empire. For these and her other accomplishments, Clementina Fessenden was hailed as a distinguished Ontarian during her lifetime.

Fessenden was born Clementina Trenholme in 1844 near Sherbrooke, Canada East. Her father, Edward Trenholme, died penniless, leaving his wife and ten children without any means of support. Her financial situation would remain precarious for the rest of her life. Nothing, unfortunately, is known of her education. In 1867 Clementina Trenholme

married an Anglican clergyman, Elisha Fessenden, and struggled to raise a family and run a household on a minister's small salary in a succession of parishes, first in the province of Quebec and then in Ontario. In Ontario, the Fessenden family first settled at Fergus in 1871, then moved to Niagara Falls and to Chippewa, on the Niagara River, both in 1876. One of her four sons, the inventor Reginald Aubrey Fessenden, recalled that the Fessenden home in Chippewa was rarely without house guests, who would stay for days and weeks at a time; one pair arrived for a day's visit and remained for a full year as the guests of the family.[1] Some of the guests were famous people in their time, and included Martin Tupper (1810-1889), an English poet and inventor, and Arthur Stanley (1815-1881), Dean of Westminster and author of the Life and Correspondence of Dr. Arnold (1874), as well as numerous and deservedly-forgotten collections of lectures, sermons and poetry.[2] In an autobiographical sketch, Reginald Fessenden took care to note that his mother had no domestic servants during this busy time in the 1870s.

The Fessenden family's financial difficulties culminated in the suicide of the Reverend Elisha Fessenden in

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[1]Public Archives of Canada, Reginald Aubrey Fessenden Papers, MG 30, B79, microfilm, reel M-4730, p. 294, manuscript autobiography.

[2]Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. 18, pp. 931-35.

January, 1896, which followed closely after the suicide of Clementina and Elisha Fessenden's son Victor in late 1895. Elisha Fessenden was apparently despondent over his debts.[3] Following the suicides of her son and husband in quick succession, Clementina Fessenden seems to have blossomed. Perhaps Fessenden was attempting to fill an empty life; before the tragedies of 1895-96, there is no evidence of any activity on her part outside of her onerous family duties. By the turn of the century, however, she had moved to Hamilton and her name became associated with various causes both historical and imperial. Fessenden became a leading member of the Wentworth Historical Society, a group concerned with the history of the Loyalists (of which she was one) and the preservation of Niagara region sites associated with the War of 1812. In 1900 she became the first curator of Hamilton's Dundurn Castle.[4]

Fessenden was even better known for her activities on behalf of the British Empire. Devotion to the Empire was at the centre of Clementina Fessenden's life. Her most famous and enduring imperialist act was her campaign to set aside a special day to commemorate the British Empire in the schools. Starting in August, 1897, Fessenden bombarded Canadian newspapers with letters calling for a special day.

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[3]Ormond Raby, Radio's First Voice. The Story of Reginald Fessenden (Toronto, 1970), p. 70.

[4]Marjorie Freeman Campbell, A Mountain and a City: The Story of Hamilton (Toronto, 1966), pp. 188-89.

Empire Day was first adopted by the Hamilton, Ontario school board in 1897, and was endorsed by the Dominion Teachers's Association in 1898. The first province-wide Empire Day was observed in Ontario public schools in May, 1899. According to Gerald Killan, author of a history of the Ontario Historical Society, the Empire Day campaign made Clementina Fessenden's name a household word in Ontario.[5] No shrinking violet when it came to claiming responsibility for her accomplishments, Fessenden wrote and had published a pamphlet called "The Genesis of Empire Day," celebrating her role in its creation.[6] She was dismayed by the credit for the creation of the day given to Sir George Ross, Ontario Minister of Education at the time of the inception of Empire Day. Ironically, Ross is given almost full credit for Fessenden's idea to this day.[7] Fessenden was also an original member of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, a women's organization devoted to the promotion of imperialism in Canada, which was founded by a Montreal woman, Margaret Polson Murray, in 1900.

On the surface, Fessenden's antisuffrage ideas do not appear to depart significantly from those of Goldwin Smith

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[5]Gerald Killan, Preserving Ontario's Heritage: A History of the Ontario Historical Society (Ottawa, 1976), p. 70.

[6]Clementina Fessenden, The Genesis of Empire Day (Hamilton?, 1910).

[7]See Carl Berger, The Sense of Power, p. 98. Writes Berger, "Ross gave firm personal backing to the suggestion made by a member of the Wentworth Historical Society that a day be set aside in all schools for patriotic exercises." The unnamed member was Clementina Fessenden.

and Andrew Macphail. On closer examination, however, Fessenden emerges as an antisuffragist distinctly different from her male counterparts in Ontario. Fessenden was not an intellectual on the Smith or Macphail model; although she was intelligent and well-read, she was by no means a sophisticated or systematic philosopher. Rather, Fessenden infused her opposition to woman suffrage with an emotional conviction in the role of God in the ordering of male and female spheres and in the near divinity of motherhood that contrasts with the dispassionate, scientific reason of Andrew Macphail, and while she expressed concern over many of the undesirable consequences of woman suffrage that were identified by Smith and Macphail, Fessenden allowed women a more important extra-familial role than did either of these two male antisuffragists. In the antisuffragism of Clementina Fessenden, one can see the development of a distinctly feminine form of antisuffragism that came to dominate the antisuffrage movement in Ontario in the same way that women and their concerns came to dominate the antisuffrage movements in Britain and in the United States.

Like the antisuffragism of both Goldwin Smith and Andrew Macphail, Clementina Fessenden's antisuffragism was dominated by a conviction that the family formed the basic unit of society, and like her two male predecessors, Fessenden believed woman suffrage to be the greatest threat ever encountered to the stability of the family and hence of society. Unlike Smith and Macphail, however, Fessenden saw a place for the extrafamilial influence of women in society,

provided that women restricted their influence to matters of traditionally-feminine responsibilty and did not demand to the vote in order to bring about change. Fessenden even encouraged the participation of women in municipal government and condoned the enfranchisement of women at that level, a concrete example of how much her brand of antisuffragism differed from that of Smith and Macphail.

Fessenden emerged publicly as an antisuffragist in 1909 with letters to Hamilton and Toronto newspapers decrying the agitation for woman suffrage and as the author of a column in the Hamilton Herald devoted to the antisuffrage cause. The timing of her appearance on the antisuffrage scene can be at least partly explained by an examination of the timing of the Canadian woman suffrage movement. The years 1909 and 1910 seem to have been a time of transition for the suffrage and antisuffrage movements in Ontario. As late as July, 1909, Goldwin Smith's friend, the antisuffragist Earl of Cromer, wrote Smith from Great Britain to say "I am very glad to hear from you that there are no signs of a general and strong interest in the women's-suffrage question in Canada."[8] The situation was undergoing changes at that very time, however. Andrew Macphail's essays in opposition to woman suffrage began to appear in The University Magazine in 1909. That year and the following year also seem to mark

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[8]Letter from the Earl of Cromer to Goldwin Smith, July 5, 1909, in Arnold Haultain (ed.), A Selection from Goldwin Smith's Correspondence (Toronto, ?), p. 514.

the transition between widespread indifference to the issue on the part of both men and women and the emergence of woman suffrage as an important subject for the consideration of Ontarians, mainly those of the middle and upper classes. J. Castell Hopkins assessed the Canadian woman suffrage question in 1909 as "practically, a new issue to Canadians."[9] Carol Bacchi, in Liberation Deferred?, dates the "rebirth" of the Canadian suffrage movement from 1906, but notes that it had little impact until 1910.[10] Developments in the suffrage movement, most notably the militant campaigns carried on by the Women's Social and Political Union, were also responsible for the increased awareness of the controversy over the enfranchisement of women, as symbolized by the visit of Emmeline Pankhurst to Toronto in November, 1909. Fessenden's emergence as a voice in the suffrage debate was part of the growing interest shown by Canadians in the woman suffrage question.

Clementina Fessenden's years of antisuffrage activity lasted from 1909 until approximately 1913. She started her campaign by writing letters to newspapers in Hamilton, her place of residence, and to at least two Toronto newspapers, the Globe and the Mail and Empire. A letter from Fessenden appeared in the Mail and Empire on February 23, 1909; this may have been her first letter to an Ontario newspaper on

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[9]J. Castell Hopkins, The Canadian Annual Review (Toronto, 1909), p. 244.

[10]Bacchi, pp. 30-31.

the subject of antisuffragism. Antisuffrage letters by Fessenden continued to appear in Hamilton and Toronto papers throughout 1912. Letter-writing was popular with female antisuffragists; according to Brian Harrison, Fessenden's fellow female antis in Britain waged a similar campaign from 1906 to 1908. Clementina Fessenden appears to have been the first female voice to speak out against the dangers of the enfranchisement of women in her province through the forum of letters to newspapers. Although a 1910 controversy on the women's page of the Toronto Globe started by a Fessenden letter attracted a large body of published correspondence on both sides of the issue, most letters in opposition to woman suffrage which appeared in the Globe at this time were anonymous, or were from women who did not reappear as active participants on behalf of the antisuffragist cause.

The close resemblance between the letter-writing campaign conducted by British female antisuffragists and that conducted by Clementina Fessenden was probably the result of Fessenden's close ties with organized British female antis. The British letter-writing (consciousness-raising?) campaign culminated in the formation of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League in July, 1908. In the Hamilton Herald of November 8, 1909, Fessenden stated that she was the secretary of the Canadian branch of the League, and that anyone who wanted to join should send a card to her at her home in Hamilton. A complete absence of information on the activities of the Canadian branch of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League suggests that Fessenden may

have been the only member. She made few other attempts at recruitment for the League, although she continued to refer to her association with it, even after its leadership was taken over by male antis in 1911 and its name changed to the National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage. At the very least, Fessenden acted as a Canadian distributor for antisuffragist literature produced by the British leagues and she continued to encourage people, mainly friends, to join up. In February, 1914, she wrote to her friend Minnie Campbell, the wife of the Hon. Colin Campbell, who until 1912 had been the Attorney-General of Manitoba:

> I wish you would join the Anti Suffrage League in Eng....Two dollars makes a member and [a subscription] in their monthly and then you can get for 8/ more lots of literature you would like to read and distribute or loan.[11]

Fessenden also distributed literature to male antisuffragists in Canada. In the same letter to Minnie Campbell, Fessenden wrote: "I'm sorry my [anti] Suffrage literature is nearly out [,] I send it hither and thither - one parcel to Mr. Haultain...." This Mr. Haultain may have been Frederick Haultain (1857-1942), the anti-Catholic and anti-French Chief-Justice of the Superior Court of Saskatchewan and the former leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative

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[11]Public Archives of Canada, Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire Papers, MG 28, I 17, Vol. 20, File 10, Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1912-19, Clementina Fessenden to Mrs. Colin Campbell, February 14, 1913.

Party, previously the Provincial Rights Party.[12] There is also a possibility that Fessenden was referring to Arnold Haultain (1857-1941), private secretary to Goldwin Smith until Smith's death in 1910.

The most important mouthpiece for Clementina Fessenden's antisuffragism was "Anti-Suffrage Notes," the unique column she wrote for the Hamilton Herald from the autumn of 1909 until March, 1910. "Anti-Suffrage Notes" appears to have been the only newspaper column in Ontario devoted to the expression of one person's opinions against woman suffrage. In addition to expressing her own ideas on woman suffrage, Fessenden quoted extensively from British antisuffrage publications, some dating back to the 1890s, and from writing which probably first appeared in the Anti-Suffrage Review, the organ of the British Women's National Anti-Suffrage League. Her choice of material for quotation demonstrates that Fessenden identified very closely with the British antisuffrage movement, much as did Goldwin Smith, although she also included quotations from American antisuffrage material in her column. There is no noticeable difference in content between the British and American antisuffrage writing that was incorporated into Fessenden's columns. The absence of differences may be the result not of any homogeneity of the two movements, however, but of Fessenden's choice of material; her tendency to use excerpts

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[12] Lewis H. Thomas, "The Political and Private Life of F. W. G. Haultain," Saskatchewan History, XXIII (1970), pp. [illegible]-58.

that referred to antisuffragism in a general way instead of references to particular campaigns or issues may have obscured real differences between the American and British antisuffrage movements.

Clementina Fessenden's concept of separate spheres was Biblical, no doubt influenced by her many years as the wife of an Anglican clergyman, and she used references and language not found in the writing of either Goldwin Smith or Andrew Macphail. While Fessenden was not "sophisticated" in her rhetorical use of Bibilical language, she was no doubt persuasive with the more pious of her audience. The effect was often quite poetic. In a November, 1909 "Anti-Suffrage Notes," she wrote that the chief reason against woman suffrage was "that in the beginning male and female created He them, and as such allotted them their place in the divine plan of the universe, and made them [heirs] together of the grace of life."[13] Fessenden was at her most eloquent in the following passage from December, 1909, which makes reference to the Christmas season at the same time as it calls for women to put aside all ambitions that do not conform to their divinely ordained sphere:

> At this blessed time when he who was born of woman made all life glorious through the incarnation let the emulation between men and women be not in the seeking after political place and power, but in the unselfish striving after the more perfect performance of the allotted work of each in the world.[14]

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[13]Hamilton Herald, November 24, 1909, p. 2.

[14]Ibid., December 18, 1909, p. 12.

While Fessenden continued to emphasize the role of God in the ordering of separate spheres, she did now and then use the language of Darwinism. It usually took the form of references to the role of "nature" in establishing separate spheres, usually in combination with references to God, as in the following passage from a letter to the Hamilton Spectator in March, 1913: "However unknowingly, our suffragist women are taking part in a great revolt against God and nature. He who in the beginning created them male and female, and gave to each varying offices, could have created a neuter being had His wisdom so divined."[15] In a more explicitly Darwinist vein, Fessenden quoted the views of an American physician and educator in "Anti-Suffrage Notes" in February, 1910. Dr. James Walsh, dean of Fordham University's medical school, argued that nature, not God, would do away with women should they receive the vote and not conform to their proper sphere:

> Even if women are granted the suffrage they will not keep it long. Nature will eliminate from the race in three or four generations all who care about exercising it. There seems to be a biological law that the woman who takes an interest in things outside the home gets rubbed out. It is not the Creator who does it, but nature. They rub out themselves. It is done quite smoothly and we in the midst of it don't notice it.[16]

Fessenden also used the Social Darwinist term "race suicide" in relation to woman suffrage. "A striking feature in this war [over woman suffrage]," she wrote Ontario premier James

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[15]Hamilton Spectator, March 13, 1913, p. 4.

[16]Herald, February 21, 1910, p. 9.

Whitney in 1912, "is the number of unmarried women and childless wives[.] How else could the wives enter into Parliament, and so there will be a perpetuation of a race suicide, that even now is calling for a halt, the Christianized world over."[17]

Like most other antisuffragists, Fessenden regularly insisted that separation of spheres and differences in responsibilities conferred neither inferiority upon women nor superiority upon men. Fessenden liked to use a metaphor involving silk and rough cloth to represent women and men in order to demonstrate that difference did not automatically mean inferiority for one and superiority for the other. "Difference, not inferiority, is the doctrine preached by the Anti-Suffrage League," she wrote to the editor of the Mail and Empire in February, 1909. "Silk is not considered inferior to tweed because it is not put to the same rough uses."[18] One year later she wrote in "Anti-Suffrage Notes":

> We have so often to remind our readers that it is no question of inferiority that animates this discussion. We take no second place in the struggle for life or its best realizations. It is solely the question of fitness, the wondrous beauty and finished product of the silken loom is not inferior in its uses to the strong serge, but the latter has a place which the former may not forestall.[19]

Clementina Fessenden's "Anti-Suffrage Notes" column of March 1, 1910 began with the following poem:

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[17]Archives of Ontario. Sir James P. Whitney Papers, MU 3129, Fessenden to Whitney, January 18, 1912.

[18]Toronto Mail and Empire, February 23, 1909, p. 6.

[19]Herald, January 25, 1910, p. 3.

A house is built of bricks and stones,
of sills and posts and piers,
But a home is built of loving deeds
that stand a thousand years.
A house, though but a humble cot,
within its walls may hold
A home of priceless beauty, rich in
Love's eternal gold.
The men on earth build houses - halls
and chambers, roofs and domes,
But the women of the earth - God
knows - the women build the homes.[20]

Fessenden didn't give the name of the author of the poem; she might even have written it herself. It does, however, sum up in a very appropriate manner Fessenden's ideas on the importance of the role of women within the home. The highest calling of woman, she believed, was motherhood. Upon the institution of motherhood depended the family, and upon the institution of the family depended the stability of society. Again, Fessenden shared a common characteristic of most antisuffragists: she recognized the family as the basic unit of society, not the individual. The well-being of society depended, therefore, on the health of the family unit. The sphere of the woman was the home, within which she was responsible for fulfilling the material and spiritual needs of her husband and children. Because she believed the family to be of such great importance to society, Fessenden was on the lookout for anything that threatened to upset the perfect balance of responsibility within the home.

The antisuffrage writing of Clementina Fessenden is infused with her belief in the near-divinity of motherhood.

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[20] Herald, March 1, 1910, p. 7.

Again and again she turned to almost Biblical rhetoric to make her case for the importance of motherhood in the face of the suffragist threat to that vital institution. She wrote in "Anti-Suffrage Notes" in December, 1909:

> The woman who has found her highest sphere of usefulness has found also her greatest joy, for the two go hand in hand. To work with God in developing a human soul is a responsibility that may awe any woman, yet it is what motherhood means. Is it not worth consecrative devotion, even sacrifices of pleasure?[21]

In a 1913 letter to the Hamilton Spectator, Fessenden described the home that was cared for by a dutiful wife and mother as "man's earthly paradise." In response to the perceived message of the suffragists as to women's role in the home, Fessenden continued:

> It is cruelly wrong to say of those who have seen the vision of women's power exemplified in the home life that they are against women's betterment. They are not; they stand for the highest ideals of perfected womanhood, through the incarnation, for He that is mighty hath magnified her and holy is His name.[22]

Fessenden believed the woman suffrage movement to be the most serious threat to the family because of the movement's competition for the attention of women at the expense of their attention to the duties of motherhood. Fessenden tried to convince her readers that the fight for woman suffrage was destructively time-consuming. Campaigning for votes for women robbed the families of suffragists of the time and effort that was required of mothers and

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[21] Herald, December 6, 1909, p. 2.

[22] Spectator, March 13, 1913, p. 4.

wives. She could be ruthless in her use of pathos to convince her readers of the cruel neglect that families would suffer should mothers become suffragists. While mother was away campaigning for the vote, she wrote in one of her columns, "baby hands stretch out to a paid nurse or for forgotten father."

> And the cry of "Votes for Women" drowns out the greatest of songs as the "Magnificat" at this glad time reveals to us the glory and power that is her's, who in the holy joy of Christian motherhood realizes that it is more for the good of the world to be the mother of an immortal soul that to vote for any mortal man.[23]

Of a threat by 250,000 British militant suffragists to conduct a "riotous" campaign during an election campaign, Fessenden commented:

> No wonder it will be riotous. When one thinks of this three months' fight, neglected homes, unkempt, unfed children, dinnerless husbands and a general abandonment of all that makes attractive the home life, it need not be expected that peace and harmony will prevail.[24]

Not only did Fessenden warn that women who were drawn into involvement in the woman suffrage movement, however innocently, would risk seriously neglecting their motherly duties, she suggested, quite discreetly, that women interested in votes for women were intent on remaining childless, even after marriage. The woman suffrage movement, she warned, endorsed "the open disavowal of home life and duty" and the avoidance of motherhood by married women.[25] She

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[23] Herald, November 29, 1909, p. 4.

[24] Ibid., October 11, 1909, p. 7.

[25] Spectator, March 13, 1913, p. 4.

also implied in one of her columns that active suffragists might be less than "normal" because of their reluctance to fulfill their natural female role. "It would be interesting," she mused, "to know how many of them [suffragists] are married and have families."[26]

Like Goldwin Smith, Fessenden took care to point out what the suffragists would not admit. She recognized that the logical result of the enfranchisement of women would be the desire on the part of women to hold elected and appointed office. According to Carol Bacchi, by the second decade of the twentieth century, and coinciding with Fessenden's active period of antisuffragism, Canadian suffragists were insisting that they wanted only the right to vote, and had absolutely no ambition for any greater political responsibility. Fessenden would not accept this claim, just as she would not accept that voting entailed nothing more than the mere placing of a ballot in a box once every few years. Office-holding by married women would have an extremely disruptive effect on home life. She wrote in "Anti-Suffrage Notes":

> it is not the question, "shall not women be allowed time to go simply to the ballot box and deposit their votes." Many of us do that already [widows and unmarried women could vote in Ontario municipal elections since 1884], but it is the question of equal suffrage and woman's right to sit in parliament that is being fought for. What man can spare his wife so many months out of his home and family and for such a number of years?[27]

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[26] Herald, October 11, 1909, p. 7.

[27] Ibid., October 18, 1909, p. 7.

Fessenden pointed out in an October 1909 column that, should women win the vote, and should married women decide to seek public office, resulting in the serious neglect of families by female politicians, married women might be barred from exercising the franchise, leaving only unmarried women to represent women as voters. Like many other antisuffragists, Fessenden abhorred the possibility that married women might be excluded from the suffrage when unmarried women would be able to vote.[28] Implicit in the antisuffragist dislike of any suggestion of compromise that would allow only unmarried women the vote was the belief that unmarried women (not including widows) were somehow abnormal because they had either chosen not to marry or had not attracted a husband out of some sort of personal deficiency. Married women, Fessenden and her fellow antisuffragists believed, were the only true representatives of their sex, and therefore should be not be excluded from any proposal for the enfranchisement of women.

According to Clementina Fessenden, the ultimate result of the neglect by suffragist and voting mothers would be felt by society as a whole. Because the family was the basic unit of society, any disruption of family life would be felt as social disruption. Implicit in Fessenden's writing was her belief that the family was the institution primarily responsible for the inculcation into individuals

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[28] Herald, October 18, 1909, p. 7.

of values which were of use to the state, society, and the [Anglo Saxon] race. Within the family, Fessenden held mothers as most responsible for carrying out this process of socialization. The disruption of this process due to the attraction of mothers' time and energy away from their family duties to political activity would be responsible for the social problems which were already experienced in Britain and the United States, and which were starting to appear in Ontario. "In the home life lies the hope of the nation," she wrote in "Anti-Suffrage Notes." She continued:

> Whatever makes against this makes against society and against the race. The modern home is threatened by a false economic system without and a growing indifference within as to the possibilities of a true home life. These are the days when every force available must be brought into the battle for social and moral improvement and not lessened by suffragist action.[29]

The message Fessenden endeavoured to impart to her readers was that women, through poor mothering, were almost singlehandedly responsible for the social problems that were starting to be experienced in Ontario. According to "Anti-Suffrage Notes," the problem of drink, for example, was largely caused by women who failed to provide an inviting home for their husbands, turning them to the taverns instead.[30] Fessenden proceeded to quote an unnamed British commentator who claimed that the solution to the drink problem was not prohibition, but the provision of an attractive home to divert the drunk from the tavern to which

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[29] Herald, February 21, 1910, p. 9.

[30] Ibid., October 4, 1909, p. 3.

he had been driven. According to the commentator, "the existence of the public house is an effect, not a cause, of the desire to drink." The wife was the cause. "If the workingman always had a well-kept home and well-prepared food waiting for him at the end of his hard day's toil," the Briton continued, "would there be so much drunkenness as there is?"[31] Crime, too, was a social problem laid at the feet of mother by Fessenden. In order to prove the necessity of a stable home life to the production of desirable citizens, she quoted statistics from the Illinois women's industrial prison in "Anti-Suffrage Notes" that demonstrated that 90% of the inmates were the products of broken or single-parent homes.[32]

Fessenden implied that the results of the neglect of vital home duties would be even more serious in cases where the mother was already deficient in the execution of her responsibilities. The above-cited examples of drunkenness and crime caused by neglectful mothers reveal the middle class bias of Fessenden and her fellow antis. Drunkenness and crime were much more likely to result from a poor home life in a lower class home than in a middle class one. Fessenden was probably appealing to the prejudices of her readers towards the poor and foreign in Ontario; her message was that by giving the vote to poor women, who already

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[31] Herald, October 4, 1909, p. 3.

[32] Ibid., November 24, 1909, p. 2.

neglected their families, a torrent of social ills would be unleashed upon Ontario.

Clementina Fessenden, in addition to fearing the impact of voting responsibilities upon already neglectful mothers, did not believe that women who were not skillful at home-making had any right to the vote. As an illustration of her attitude to the enfranchisement of poor women, Fessenden quoted a Dr. John Robertson, whom she identified as the medical health officer for Birmingham, in a September, 1909 "Anti-Suffrage Notes" column. Robertson stated that since poor women already had difficulty executing their duties as home-makers, it would be unwise to impose further responsibilities on them in the form of voting rights. Furthermore, poor women who were neglectful mothers had no right to any say in government. According to Robertson:

> In England the average number of deaths of infants every year was 130,000, and the large majority died from preventable causes. What a deplorable addition to this death rate would be the further bringing upon mothers the contentious influence of party politics and affording their already crowded and often ill-regulated lives, one more opportunity for neglecting to learn how to be useful in their own homes. The woman who is too ignorant or too careless to preserve the lives of her own offspring has no claim or ability to take part in legislation.[33]

Curiously, the same sentiments and wording had appeared in a June, 1907 article by a Maud Simon in Busy Man's Magazine, the forerunner of today's Maclean's Magazine. Simon wrote:

> What would be the effect on the mothers in these [lower] classes of bringing the contentious influence of party politics into their already crowded and often

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[33]Herald, September 13, 1909, p. 4.

> ill-regulated lives, thus affording them more opportunity for neglecting to learn how to be useful in their own homes? The woman who is too ignorant or too careless to preserve the lives of her own offspring has no claim or ability to take part in legislation.[34]

Because Fessenden does not give a date for her quotation from Robertson, it is not known who, Robertson or Simon, made the statement first.

Regardless of the statistical evidence she produced or her use of quotations from medical or scientific authorities, Fessenden's attitude towards the importance of motherhood in Ontario society and the threat posed to it by woman suffrage remained highly sentimental. This sentimentality distinguished Fessenden from the male antisuffragists who immediately preceeded her as the most vocal opponents of woman suffrage in Ontario. Her pathos found an excellent outlet in her discussion of home life. She ended her November 15, 1909 "Anti-Suffrage Notes" column with the following plea, a suitable conclusion to this discussion of Fessenden's ideas on motherhood: "So let us continue to hope that the high treble of the suffragist may never impair the sweet melody of Home, Home, Sweet, Sweet Home."[35]

In addition to the apprehension Clementina Fessenden felt at the prospect of the demise of the traditional home through the diversion of women's time and energy to suffrage and political campaigns, she feared the potential effects of

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[34]Maud E. Simon, "Women's Suffrage," Busy Man's Magazine, XIV (1907), pp. 107-108.

[35]Herald, November 15, 1909, p. 4.

suffragist militancy on Ontario society. Encouraged by historians such as Catherine Cleverdon and Carol Bacchi, our present day conception of Canadian suffragists is as conservative and law-abiding women. Fessenden, along with most other antisuffragists, however, believed the majority of woman suffragists to be militant, both in their politics and in their personal values. "Militancy" included many forms of behaviour apart from rock-throwing and mail-box torching. Antisuffragists viewed practically all untraditionally-feminine or immoral behaviour exhibited by female suffragists as militant. The image of the militant suffragette was encouraged by the extensive coverage given by Ontario newspapers to the militant suffrage campaigns conducted by the Women's Social and Political Union (W.S.P.U.) in Britain from 1905 up to the First World War. The prospect of middle class women committing violent and unfeminine acts so alarmed many Ontarians that important distinctions between Canadian and British suffragists, such as the goals and tactics of the two very different suffrage movements in the two countries, were ignored. Fessenden was typical of the antisuffragists who, because of the overwhelming news exposure the relatively small numbers of militant British suffragists received, feared that similar behaviour would be exhibited by suffragists in Ontario.

Fessenden, after years of exposure to news of militant violence, expressed her fears that W.S.P.U.-style militance would be manifested by Ontario woman suffragists in a March, 1913 letter to the Hamilton Spectator. She had no problem

whatsoever in predicting militant behaviour in the hitherto peaceful ranks of the Ontario suffrage movement:

> Having just read the threat to "stagger humanity" if the vote is not granted in England, I would ask what guarantee of security have Hamiltonians from our provincial suffragettes if they do not get the vote? Won't it be a surprise some day to find all the plate glass windows on King and James streets smashed, our court house in flames, our parks destroyed, our postmen blinded, our letters destroyed?[36]

It was, however, not primarily militant violence that concerned Fessenden, but the other forms of militancy associated with the suffrage and feminist movements. Fessenden was certain that the militant behaviour exhibited by the suffragists was part of a deliberate campaign to undermine the stability of society. The granting of woman suffrage would entrench suffragist militancy and immorality in society, Fessenden believed, and she therefore appointed herself to reveal the fate the suffragists had in mind for Ontario via her letter to the Spectator.

First of all, Fessenden believed any "unfeminine" behaviour to be a manifestation of militancy. In the Spectator she pointed to an account in a British newspaper of a woman's refusal to leave a police court which had "an unusually indecent" case before it as evidence of the growing militancy on the the part of women. She quoted the account, which assessed the incident as " 'part of the deliberate attempt to strip the last loin-cloth from any discussion of the relation of sexes and achieve to the last

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[36] Spectator, March 13, 1913, p. 4.

liberty the emancipation of women.' "37

Fessenden claimed that the suffragists wanted to abolish the institution of marriage, and substitute a form of free love in which women could choose and drop men at will. She feared that militant attempts to demolish such traditional institutions as marriage and the family would result in moral anarchy:

> [Woman suffrage] means the beginning of a sex war including a sex hatred that shall undermine the very foundation of the home and imperil the safety of its occupants. For when men no longer feel their need to safeguard the social purity of that home by pure life for themselves and family, encouraged by "emancipated women," the flood gates of licentiousness (as in a noted French regime) will shock the world by its wickedness.[38]

Fessenden was of course referring in this passage to the threat of venereal disease that would be posed by the end of efforts on the part of men to maintain "social" (a euphemism for "sexual") purity in order to prevent the infection of their wives, and consequently of their children. Fessenden must have believed the general devotion of men to their wives to be very fragile indeed.

This fragility extended to social, as well as sexual, relations. Fessenden was convinced, as were Goldwin Smith and Andrew Macphail, that the special treatment received by women was only a result of men's perception that women, like children, were weaker than men, and therefore required and

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[37] Ibid, March 13, 1913, p. 4.

[38] Ibid.

deserved protection. Fessenden warned Spectator readers that the woman suffrage movement was undermining the special position of women in society. She used the convention of "women and children" first in a shipwreck to illustrate the threat to chivalry posed by suffragism in an "Anti-Suffrage Notes" column written three years before her letter to the Spectator:

> Why should women and children go first? Their lives are not more valuable than men's lives; quite the contrary. The unwritten law which decrees this procedure may be courtesy, but it is hardly an empty one, because men are undeniably stronger physically than women, and are also invariably in a majority aboard ship. So that except by their noble self sacrifice and their instinct of protection few women or children would ever likely be saved in great dangers common to both. Be content, women, with what you have.39

The effects of suffrage militancy would also be felt outside the home and the relations between the sexes. Fessenden believed that the anarchy of the suffrage movement also included socialism and agnosticism. As proof of this assertion in her letter to the Spectator, Fessenden referred to statements made by British and American suffragists which supposedly included demands for public ownership of private property and claims that the Bible was the creation of men and not the result of divine inspiration.40

Fessenden's image of the suffragist was the product of stereotypical assumptions as to the characteristics of

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39Herald, January 4, 1910, p. 9.

40Archives of Ontario, Whitney Papers, MU 3129, Fessenden to Whitney, January 18, 1912.

militant British suffragists, characteristics that were rarely found in Ontario suffragists. Nonetheless, an understanding of the ways in which antisuffragists viewed suffragists and the suffragist platform is crucial to a complete understanding of the ideology of antisuffragism. Clementina Fessenden opposed woman suffrage largely because she feared the influence of the women who supported votes for women; she viewed these women not only as unfeminine but as socialists, anarchists, and revolutionaries.[41] Her image of the suffragist was drawn from the British and American cases because Canadian suffragists received little attention from newspapers; rarely did a day go by without coverage of the British militant suffrage campaign in Canadian newspapers.

Clementina Fessenden's opposition to woman suffrage was also very much the result of her strong imperialism. Like Goldwin Smith, who couldn't imagine women ruling India, and Andrew Macphail, Fessenden did not believe women to be capable of taking any part in running the British Empire. While Fessenden, a leading member of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, recognized a role for women as patriotic mothers and supporters within the Empire, she did not believe women possessed or could acquire the experience, knowledge, and physical strength necessary to the governing of the largest empire the world had ever known.

Fessenden was probably influenced a great deal by

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[41] Spectator, March 13, 1913, p. 4.

British antisuffrage literature on the incompatibility of woman suffrage and the efficient running of the British Empire. Even the most moderate of British antisuffragists, who sometimes conceded that women should be allowed a role in municipal or national government, were adamant that women should be excluded from any say in imperial affairs.[42] British antisuffragists often dealt with woman suffrage and the nation and women suffrage and the Empire as two separate issues.[43]

Fessenden's primary objections to the participation of women in imperial affairs were that women did not have the necessary knowledge of naval, military, economic, and technological matters, nor the "qualities" or time required to study the questions of importance to the modern, industrial state,[44] and that women did not possess the physical force necessary to compel the obedience of imperial subjects to imperial laws. The great concern shown by Fessenden, a Canadian, over the fate of the British Empire may seem strange to us today, but as an ardent imperialist, Clementina Fessenden was only one of a large number of

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[42]Harrison, pp. 135-36.

[43]See Violet Markham, "Miss Markham's Great Speech at the Albert Hall, February 28th, 1912," (London, 1912), pp. 2-3, for an example of the separate consideration of the consequences of woman suffrage on the nation and the Empire.

[44]Letter from Fessenden to the Toronto Mail and Empire, February 23, 1909, p. 6; see also an account of an address by Clementina Fessenden to the Women's Canadian Club of Hamilton in the Hamilton Spectator, March 29, 1913, p. 7.

Canadians who believed Canada to be an important power within the British Empire. As a result, the political stability of Canada was as important as the political stability of Britain to the successful governing of the Empire.

Fessenden may have been influenced in her attitude towards the potential effect of woman suffrage upon the British Empire by the 1909 Canadian speaking tour of Ralph Bond, a British antisuffragist, who spoke against woman suffrage in the interests of the Empire. The only accounts of a speaking engagement by Bond on this tour, an address to the Women's Canadian Club of Victoria on December 6, 1909, appeared in two Victoria, B.C. newspapers, the Daily Colonist and the Daily Times, on December 7, 1909.[45] He was introduced to the Club as a resident of London, a member of the Royal Colonial Institute of England, and as a representative of the "Anti-Suffrage League," which was probably the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League, of which Clementina Fessenden was the Canadian secretary.

Bond justified his appeal to Canadians on the topic of woman suffrage and its consequences for the British Empire by asserting that Canada depended on Britain's great imperial and military strength for its defence. All issues which affected either the internal or imperial policies of Britain also affected Canada. The Empire was at a critical

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[45] Victoria Daily Colonist, December 7, 1909, p. 13; Victoria Daily Times, December 7, 1909, p. 7.

stage due to the military build-up in Germany, according to Bond. Bond also hinted, through his commendation of Canada for her recent decision to start a navy, that Britain was dependent to some extent upon her Dominions for support during this period of crisis. It was therefore just as important for Canada to work for the demise of the woman suffrage movement as it was for Britain.

Ralph Bond contended that woman suffrage in Britain and Canada was of danger to the Empire for two main reasons. First, the struggle for and against woman suffrage had led to deep political division that was undesirable in a period of imperial crisis; the solution to this division was the defeat of the woman suffrage movement. Second, were women to win the vote, they would constitute, due to their greater numbers among the population of Britain, the majority of the electorate, and would logically come to dominate parliament and the formation of imperial policy. In support of his first argument against woman suffrage, Bond claimed that the woman suffragists were interested in stirring up political discord because the militant suffragists were dominated by socialists, who saw woman suffrage as the means of realizing their "dangerous doctrines." As with most twentieth century antisuffragists, including Clementina Fessenden, Bond's image of the suffragist was based on the militant W.S.P.U. "suffragette." Bond warned that the inclusion of such undesirable types in the electorate and in parliament would result in socialist anarchy, and would retard British efforts to keep up with Germany in the pre-First World War

arms race.

Bond's second argument against woman suffrage was the physical force argument. Imperial rule was the responsibility of men only, according to Bond. The three hundred million subjects of the British Empire were governed primarily by force; women possessed neither the physical force nor the moral power necessary to command the obedience of the huge and culturally diverse population of the Empire. Moral power, which was necessary to the execution of laws, was the product of physical force only; since women could not exert physical force, they could not wield moral power. There was no justification, therefore, for women playing any part in the electorate or government.

Ralph Bond did, however, recognize one role that women could play in the Empire. The proper role for women was not as legislators but as "mothers and sisters to help in training those who were to be the soldiers, the sailors and the statesmen of Britain," and it was women's "noble duty" to pass on the imperial heritage of Britain to younger generations.[46] These ideas would have appealed very strongly to Clementina Fessenden and may have influenced her ideas on the importance of motherhood to the Empire a great deal.

Clementina Fessenden argued that the important moral influence women exerted over the men who represented the

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[46]Victoria Daily Times, December 7, 1909, p. 7.

interests of women in government would be ended were women to become involved in politics themselves. The valuable work women were already performing in municipal government and social reform would be similarly affected if women were to become influenced by party politics. Fessenden's recognition and acceptance of extra-familial roles for women distinguished her from most male antisuffragists in Ontario, especially from the ideas of Goldwin Smith and her contemporary, Andrew Macphail, and was one of the important changes brought about by the feminization of the antisuffrage movement in Ontario.

In an "Anti-Suffrage Notes" column of September, 1909, Fessenden quoted the position of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League, which was also Fessenden's position, on the value of women's influence and activities and the undesirable effects of direct political involvement:

> We would give the women their full share in the state of social effort and social mechanism; we look for their increasing activity in that higher state which rests on thought, conscience and moral influence; but we protest against their admission to direct power in that state which does rest upon force....Nothing can be further from our minds than to seek to deprecate the position or importance of women. It is because we are keenly alive to the enormous value of their special contribution to the community that we oppose what seems to us likely to endanger that contribution.47

Unlike any male antisuffragists in Ontario, Fessenden called upon women to band together in order to understand each other better and to influence the public in favour of reforms of particular interest to women. She wrote to the

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47 Herald, September 7, 1909, p. 4.

Hamilton Spectator in 1913:

> All reforms which the vote would bring to fulfillment could be obtained by other ways if women would gather together in council, as the channels of public opinion were always open to women, and the true path of progress seemed to lie along better development of women's understanding of each other.[48]

Fessenden believed that women did not need the vote because they already possessed the means to make their influence felt in society. Women, as mothers, wives and sweethearts, were able to influence the men in their lives to do the best possible thing when it came time to make political decisions. In this way, men could always be counted on to vote in a morally correct way and in the best interests of the women for whom they were responsible.[49]

Andrew Macphail would have been horrified by Fessenden's call for women to band together for progressive action, even if such action were to take place without the use of the ballot. Fessenden, unlike Macphail and the antisuffragists who abhorred the involvement of women in social reform causes, accepted and encouraged the participation of women in reform activities, as long as such activities conformed to women's accepted sphere of influence and did not lead women to neglect their families and as long as women depended on their moral influence to achieve their reform goals and did not start to clamour for the vote in order to get the reforms they wanted in the face of male

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[48]Fessenden to Spectator, March 29, 1913, p. 7.

[49]Fessenden to Mail and Empire, February 23, 1909, p. 6.

opposition. She discussed examples of women who achieved great things without using the vote in a letter to the Spectator:

> That women do not suffer from this restriction of "not vote" may by seen in the great work of Florence Nightingale, of Mrs. Browning in her Cry of the Children, in the marvelous work of Madam [sic] Curie, of Jane Addams and thousands of others. It reads much as if it were not public good, but feminine power, that the suffragist seeks.[50]

The admiration Fessenden felt for these women and for the countless other women engaged in reform causes designed to help women and children shines through in the above passage. Her objection was not to women in reform movements, but to reformers who demanded the vote for the achievement of their goals instead of relying on their influence on men.

Clementina Fessenden was genuinely concerned that once women possessed the right to vote they would lose all the influence over men that they already wielded successfully. Fessenden believed, and probably with some justification, that social improvement could be better achieved through non-legislative channels. She was concerned that the enfranchisement of women would lead female reformers to turn to the vote and political means in order to achieve their goals, means which she believed were much less efficient than the use of "gentle and motherly" advice. She warned reform-minded women that men valued women's advice because women were seen as gentle and intuitive. If women did

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[50] Fessenden to Spectator, March 13, 1913, p. 4.

anything to destroy this image, by clamouring for the vote or by trying to force reforms upon men rather than by suggesting reform, women would be despised by men, and all women's influence would be lost. She also feared that once women became politicized they would turn to parties to tell them what to do, and that party differences would end the non-partisan cooperation between women that was essential to their effectiveness as social reformers.

Not only did Fessenden recognize a role for women in reform, as long as they did not want the vote or become involved in politics, she encouraged women to play an active role in municipal government. In Ontario, qualified widows and unmarried women had been granted the right to vote in municipal elections in 1884. Fessenden, however, was probably influenced in her acceptance of women's participation in municipal government by the stand of British antisuffragists on the issue. According to Brian Harrison, British antisuffragists had relatively few qualms about unmarried women, who could vote in elections at the local level if they met the same property qualifications as male voters, playing an active role in local government. In Britain, local government had greater responsibility for social welfare than the national government. The activities of local government corresponded a great deal to women's duties in the home; the participation of women in municipal government was therefore seen as appropriate and as conforming satisfactorily to woman's sphere of activity. British antisuffragists believed national and imperial government to

be a purely male resposibility. Brian Harrison also theorizes that British antisuffragists may have tried to steer women away from national government and into municipal affairs as a way of defusing their desire for the parliamentary franchise.[51]

Clementina Fessenden referred to the existing opportunity for some women to vote in municipal elections in some of her letters to newspapers and in her column. In a December, 1909 "Anti-Suffrage Notes" column, Fessenden quoted another female antisuffragist on the appropriateness of the municipal vote to woman's sphere. Through involvement in local government, women could participate in solving problems that fell within women's sphere, such as housing, education, and the care of children.[52] In a previous column, Fessenden had mourned the defeat in British local government elections of a large number of non-militant female councillors who were successfully carrying out "womanly reforms" via the municipal and school boards. Fessenden blamed their defeat on the backlash against the militancy of the W.S.P.U. suffragettes.[53] Closer to home, Fessenden warned the readers of the Toronto Globe in February, 1910, that the addition of the provincial and federal votes to women's home and municipal duties would be too great a burden, and their

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[51]Harrison, p. 133.

[52]Hamilton Herald, December 20, 1909, p. 9.

[53]Ibid., December 6, 1909, p. 2.

contributions to local government would suffer as a result.54

Of all of Clementina Fessenden's antisuffragist ideas, it was her acceptance of the value of women's reform activity and participation in local government that most distinguished her from male antisuffragists in Ontario, and especially from Goldwin Smith and Andrew Macphail. Fessenden was also much more generous in her recognition of the value of women's extra-familial skills to society, as shown by her attitude towards women in reform and local government. Like male antisuffragists, Fessenden called upon women to give first priority to their family responsibilities. Fessenden, however, raised motherhood, through the use of Biblical examples and language, to near-divinity. Not even Andrew Macphail, who believed that the continued success of society rested upon the mothers of Canada, praised mothers as highly.

Clementina Fessenden appears to have given up her antisuffrage activities after 1913. Obituaries upon her death in 1918 stated that she had been a semi-invalid for a number of years prior to her death. It is likely, therefore, that ill-health was responsible for her silence on the issue. It is also possible that the First World War diverted her attention to patriotic causes, as was the case for most women, both suffragist and antisuffragist. By 1913, however, Fessenden had been responsible for the

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54Fessenden to Toronto Globe, February 11, 1910, p. 4.

feminization of the antisuffrage movement in Ontario, a process which culminated in the founding of what appears to have been the only organization dedicated to opposing woman suffrage in Ontario. In 1913, the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada (A.O.W.S.C.) was formed by a group of Toronto women. Fessenden does not appear to have been involved in the formation of the A.O.W.S.C. in any formal capacity. Her influence on the society was in the attention she drew to the involvement of women in antisuffragism through her column and, more importantly, through her letters to Toronto newspapers. In February, 1910, a letter from Fessenden appeared on the woman's page of the Toronto Globe. This one letter started off a controversy over woman suffrage on the women's page which lasted into March and which attracted letters both for and against woman suffrage, usually anonymous. The controversy helped to heat up debate over the suffrage issue in Ontario and led to the further feminization of the Ontario antisuffrage movement.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ASSOCIATION OPPOSED TO WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN CANADA

The 1913 formation of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada (A.O.W.S.C.) in Toronto was the culmination of the feminization of the antisuffrage movement in Ontario, a process which had started with Clementina Fessenden's letters and newspaper columns. Female antisuffragists in Ontario also followed the example of British and American female antisuffragists who formed organizations for women only. The A.O.W.S.C. was the last hurrah for antisuffragism in Ontario; it was formed too close to the outbreak of the First World War for it to maintain the support of women whose attention and skills were diverted to causes related to the crisis of war. Nevertheless, the A.O.W.S.C., because its form and tactics were designed specifically in response to organized woman suffragists in Toronto, was an extremely significant but now-forgotten development in the Ontario movement against woman suffrage.

On February 11, 1910, Clementina Fessenden sparked off a two month long controversy on the women's page of the Toronto Globe with a letter listing the reasons why women should oppose the woman suffrage bill then before the Ontario legislature. A few days later, Sybil Sketchley,

editor of the Globe's women's page, mused that the letter from Fessenden suggested that other readers might wish to air their opinions on the subject of woman suffrage and extended an invitation to such women to write to her on the topic.[1] The invitation received an overwhelming response as dozens of women sent in letters both for and against the enfranchisement of women in Ontario.

Of the letters published by the Globe, approximately one third opposed woman suffrage. The majority of letters both for and against suffrage appeared anonymously; they were signed with such pseudonyms as "A Mother," "Canadian Woman," or with first names only. Those who wrote in opposition to woman suffrage expressed views very similar to those of Clementina Fessenden. They wrote, for example, that women who wanted the vote were unfeminine and unnatural, that the participation of women in government and politics would destroy home life, that women already had enough responsibilities as home-makers, that women would not use the vote even if they had it, that women were not knowledgeable enough about important issues to vote, and that women were hysterical, and therefore not suited to vote or govern. The letters form a valuable body of opinion of a number of Ontario women opposed to woman suffrage. They are also significant because they were one of the earliest expressions of widespread opposition to the enfranchisement

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[1]Toronto Globe, February 15, 1910, p. 4.

of women and are as such a milestone in the growth of the antisuffrage movement in Ontario. After the appearance of the letters in the Globe, the level of antisuffrage activity among women in Toronto, the centre of woman suffrage activity in the province, escalated.

After the flurry of letters in 1910, more comment and correspondence on the woman suffrage issue appeared on the women's and letters to the editor pages of Toronto newspapers, sometimes catching the eye of the foremost chronicler of Canadian current events, J. Castell Hopkins of the Canadian Annual Review. One such item was a letter from an Edwina Loynd which appeared in the Toronto Mail and Empire of December 23, 1911. Woman suffrage, according to Loynd, was unacceptable for the following reasons: government required expert knowledge, which women did not possess, not decision-making on the basis of emotion and impulse, which women possessed in abundance; women were not educated well enough to make decisions on political matters; women voters would increase the power of the clergy in society; in judicial matters, women would interpret cases according to general and social principles, and not according to fact and law; and women were too fond of legislative change, which would result in social discontinuity.[2]

An important event in the growth of interest in antisuffragism among Toronto women was the appearance of the

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[2]Toronto Mail and Empire, December 13, 1911, p. 21; Hopkins, Canadian Annual Review, 1911(Toronto, 1912), p. 370.

well-known American antisuffragist Helen Kendrick Johnson before the Women's Canadian Club of Toronto on March 30, 1912.[3] The Globe called her address the "companion lecture" to the address given by Emmeline Pankhurst to the club the previous fall. Johnson (1844-1917), a writer and editor, was the author of the antisuffrage book Woman and the Republic, first published in 1897 and the founder of the Guidon Club of New York, an antisuffrage organization.[4] She also edited the American Woman's Journal from 1894 to 1896, and was for a time on the board of managers of the Henry Street Settlement.[5]

According to the Globe, Johnson spoke on the following antisuffragist themes: the vote as the symbol of the physical force that can be wielded in defence of measures supported by the voter; the close relationship between woman suffrage and socialism, both of which emphasized the pre-eminence of the individual in society rather than that of the family; the ties between the suffrage movement and Mormonism, as demonstrated by the implementation of woman suffrage in Utah and Idaho, both Mormon states; and the importance of women's proper and special duties within women's sphere. Unfortunately, the Globe account does not

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[3]Toronto Globe, April 1, 1912, p. 5.

[4]Woman's Who's Who of America...1914-15 (reprint, Detroit, 1976), p. 434.

[5]Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1933), X, pp. 100-101.

discuss these ideas in detail. Johnson may also have presented the important antisuffragist arguments which are found in Woman and the Republic. That book was a chapter by chapter refutation of each article in the American Suffrage Declaration of Sentiments, which had been written in 1848. Johnson was, therefore, arguing against ideas which had been set out fifty years before the 1897 publication of Woman and the Republic. She also attacked the three volumes of The History of Woman Suffrage which appeared between the years 1881 to 1886. Johnson argued her contention that woman suffrage was not a progressive step but a backward step by trying to demonstrate that woman suffrage was more evident in monarchies and anarchistic regimes.[6] She also claimed that the progress of civilization was marked by the steady retreat of women from public roles to the privacy of the home sphere.[7] Nor did she believe woman suffrage to be compatible with democracy. Johnson pointed out that even in the United States, women had wielded more political power when the government was less democratic. As the United States became increasingly democratic in the years following its independence from Britain, Johnson claimed, women gradually lost their political power. The most democratic state, therefore, would require the least political partici-

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[6]Helen Kendrick Johnson, Woman and the Republic (revised edition, New York, 1913), pp. 7-8.

[7]Ibid., pp. 10-27.

pation from women.[8]

Johnson made an important point in Woman and the Republic which she may have repeated before the Toronto women. The woman suffrage movement was backward, she stated, because it was the one movement which had not united all women in order to advance their interests, a reference to the existence of a body of women opposed to their own enfranchisement arrayed against the suffragists. According to Johnson, the existence of both suffrage and antisuffrage movements proved that:

> this matter of suffrage is something essentially distinct from the great series of movements in which women have thus far advanced side by side. It is an instinctive announcement of the belief that the demand for suffrage is not progress; that it does array sex against sex; that woman, like man, can advance only as the race advances; and that here lies the dividing line.[9]

This statement would have been of great interest to the women in Ontario who were beginning to take a more active interest in opposing the enfranchisement of women. Regardless of whether Johnson made this point before the Women's Canadian Club of Toronto, women in Ontario were indeed starting to view woman suffrage as an issue different from the other social causes and efforts at self-improvement which had united, and which continued to unite, middle and upper class women.

Johnson's Toronto speaking engagement appears to have

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[8]Johnson, pp. 28-30.

[9]Ibid., pp. 8-9.

been part of the increasing Americanization of the Ontario antisuffrage movement. Previously, the largest influence over Ontario antis such as Goldwin Smith and Clementina Fessenden had been British antisuffragist ideas, although some American influence had been present. Not only was the American antisuffrage influence in Ontario present in the form of speakers, but the American emphasis on the formation of organizations (American antisuffrage organization took place earlier than in Britain and American antis formed more organizations than did their British counterparts) influenced female antis in the province. Before they turned to forming an antisuffrage association, however, the women opposed to woman suffrage in Ontario confronted the attitudes of the major Canadian women's organizations to woman suffrage.

Division between women over the suffrage issue was evident in two of the largest women's organizations in Canada before the First World War, both of which were headquartered in Toronto. Both the National Council of Women of Canada (N.C.W.C.), founded in 1893 and the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (I.O.D.E.), founded in 1900 were forced to grapple with the question of which side to support. In 1910 the N.C.W.C. decided, after a spirited fight between the suffragists and the antisuffragists in the organization, to declare itself in favour of woman suffrage. The I.O.D.E. adopted a policy of strict neutrality on the question; this policy was easily circumvented by members in favour of woman suffrage, however. The stands of these two

groups was frustrating for the body of antisuffragist women in Toronto; because the two largest women's organizations were either in favour of suffrage or officially neutral, female antisuffragists in Ontario had no forum in which opposition to woman suffrage could be discussed or organized. At the same time, those who supported woman suffrage could both join existing woman suffrage organizations and use sympathetic organizations like the N.C.W.C. as a means of advertising their cause.

According to Veronica Strong-Boag, who has written on the history of the National Council of Women of Canada, the N.C.W.C. had avoided a full endorsement of woman suffrage until 1910 because its members were not yet convinced that a majority of Canadian women supported the enfranchisement of women. Lady Aberdeen, the first president of the N.C.W.C. and its leader from 1893 to 1898, did not believe that most Canadian women were prepared to support woman suffrage; her recognition of the conservatism of most Canadians on the issue prevented the N.C.W.C. from taking an official stand throughout the 1890s.[10] There was, however, growing support for the inclusion of woman suffrage as part of the N.C.W.C.'s platform during the first years of the twentieth century. Conflict over the stand of the National Council came to a head during the July, 1910 annual meeting in

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[10]Veronica Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada 1893-1929 (Ottawa, 1976), pp. 143-144.

Halifax.

The Canadian Suffrage Association, which was an affiliate member of the National Council of Women of Canada, proposed the pro-suffrage resolution to the annual meeting on July 5, 1910. The ensuing debate, the longest at the 1910 meeting, was marked by much bitterness and confusion. Most of the arguments against the suffrage resolution questioned its constitutionality; the question was whether the N.C.W.C. should become involved in political or "propagandist" issues such as woman suffrage.[11] Delegates opposed to the resolution also raised the possiblity of serious division among suffragist and antisuffragist members as a reason for its defeat.

The most bitter opposition to the resolution came from the Hamilton Local Council of Women. In the absence of concrete evidence, one can only speculate as to the influence of Clementina Fessenden over the stand of the Hamilton women. The Hamilton Council argued that division over the suffrage issue would have serious effects on many of the local councils (the local councils were the basis of the N.C.W.C.). The Hamilton delegates warned that endorsement of woman suffrage would "wreck" the Hamilton Local Council, for one.[12] A Mrs. Sexton put forward the argument on the unconstitutionality of the resolution. She pointed

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[11]Public Archives of Canada, National Council of Women of Canada Papers, MG 28, E 25, Volume 20, File 1, Minutes, Annual Meetings, 1910, p. 203.

[12]Ibid., pp. 233 and 235.

out that as the resolution was put forward by the Canadian Suffrage Association, and as there were no antisuffrage societies in affiliation with the N.C.W.C., it was unfair and unconstitutional to endorse "special propaganda" on behalf of the suffragists.[13]

The debate was continued at the evening session on July 5, 1910, the arguments against the resolution becoming more emotional and bitter as the evening progressed. Again, the women from Hamilton dominated the debate. A Miss Carmichael again warned about the potentially divisive effect of the endorsement of woman suffrage on the various local councils although she did not herself express opposition to woman suffrage.[14] Mrs. Sexton warned that the gathering which was about to decide on the issue did not accurately reflect the views of the N.C.W.C.'s 10,000 members, and could not therefore gauge the attitude of those women towards woman suffrage.[15] Lady Margaret Taylor, Vice President of the Hamilton Local Council, was one of the few opponents of the resolution who pointed out the uselessness of woman suffrage. She argued that the vote would be of no use to the reform work carried out by the women in the local councils, because women's votes could be bought as easily as those of

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[13]PAC, MG 28, E 25, vol. 20, file 1, p. 237.

[14]Ibid., p. 249.

[15]Ibid., p. 251.

men.[16]

The Hamilton Local Council proposed the attachment of a rider to the resolution, stating that it was a political matter and therefore against the constitution of the National Council of Women of Canada. They were defeated, and the resolution finally came to a vote at midnight. The result was 71 in favour, 51 against, or in percentages, 58% in favour, 42% against. Lady Taylor lodged a protest over the vote, claiming that the small minority of council members voting was not an accurate expression of the sentiments of the N.C.W.C. in general over the woman suffrage issue.[17] The narrow margin of victory for those in favour of the suffrage resolution and the determined effort by the Hamilton Local Council against it demonstrate that the division in the N.C.W.C. over woman suffrage was serious and that, although they constituted a minority of women within the National Council, the antisuffragists were vocal and a force to be reckoned with. With the passing of the resolution and the adoption of woman suffrage as a plank in the N.C.W.C.'s platform, antisuffragist women in Ontario lost a forum through which they could express their misgivings over the enfranchisement of women.

The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire maintained an officially neutral stand on the woman suffrage issue during this period, but this neutral stand was almost as

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[16]PAC, MG 28, E 25, vol. 20, file 1, p. 247.

[17]Ibid., p. 265.

much of a hindrance to the Ontario antisuffragists among the members as was the N.C.W.C.'s stand in favour of woman suffrage. The I.O.D.E., which stressed the supportive role of women in the British Empire, appears to have attracted a greater number of antisuffragists than the National Council.[18] The I.O.D.E. formed a policy regarding woman suffrage later than the N.C.W.C. Activity on behalf of the suffrage movement by members of local chapters (like the N.C.W.C., the I.O.D.E. was a federation of small chapters under the jurisdiction of a national chapter in Toronto) came to the attention of the National Chapter in 1911. In March, 1911, a debate on woman suffrage had been held by a Toronto chapter, with members Constance Boulton and the suffragist Sonia Leathes in favour, and Mrs. Frank Morgan and Miss Clare McColl opposed. Leathes wrote to the National Executive Committee about the debate, but the committee responded in a manner probably not expected by her. Upon hearing the contents of the letter at the March 15, 1911 meeting, the executive committee agreed "that it would be quite impossible for the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire to become suffragettes."[19] At its April 5,

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[18]For a discussion of the membership and activities of the I.O.D.E., see Nancy M. Sheehan, " 'Tea-sippers or Crusaders?' The IODE as a Women's Organization, 1900-1925," Unpublished Paper No. 62, presented to the Canadian Historical Association, Guelph, Ont., June, 1984.

[19]Public Archives of Canada, Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire Papers, MG 28, I 17, Volume 2, File 1, Minutes - National Executive, February 22, 1911 to January 31, 1912, p. 33.

1911 meeting, the executive committee responded to the woman suffrage issue by declaring it taboo as a topic of discussion at I.O.D.E. chapter meetings, along with other questions of politics and religion.[20]

The I.O.D.E. tried to maintain the neutrality it had decided upon in 1911 in the face of growing interest in woman suffrage among its members. During the following two years, the National Executive Committee continued to warn chapters which discussed or debated the issue that the Order was officially not concerned with the question of woman suffrage.[21] These repeated warnings did not reduce the attention given to woman suffrage by the various chapters. By early 1913, the National Executive Committee appears to have realized the futility of trying to prevent discussion of the suffrage issue. At the February 13, 1913 meeting of the committee, the wording of the April, 1911 resolution was altered from "Religious, Political, and Suffragists Questions must not be discussed at...meetings" to "the suggestion is made to the chapters that Religious, Political, or Suffragist questions should not be discussed by the chapters at their meetings."[22]

While the I.O.D.E. remained officially neutral on the

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[20]PAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 2, file 1, pp. 59 and 61.

[21]See warnings to Brant Chapter, March 12, 1912, PAC, I.O.D.E. Papers, MG 28, I 17, Volume 2, File 2, Minutes - National Executive, p. 89, and to Military Chapter, Saskatoon, January 8, 1913, in Ibid., File 3, pp. 81 and 83.

[22]PAC, MG 28 I 17, file 2, p. 95.

suffrage issue, its stand was so softened by the wording of the February, 1913 resolution that suffragists were given virtual freedom to become involved in the woman suffrage movement in any way they wished. The new resolution was a defeat for the antisuffragists in the I.O.D.E. Although neutrality had applied to them as well as to the suffragists, the more reserved antisuffragists had been satisfied with measures to prevent the suffragists from taking advantage of the I.O.D.E. to advance their cause. With the I.O.D.E., the N.C.W.C., and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, another large Canadian women's organization, dominated by women sympathetic to woman suffrage, the antisuffragists in Ontario obviously needed some other forum in which to discuss the issue on their terms. The move came in 1913, when a group of Toronto women, who were also involved in the I.O.D.E. and other women's groups in the city, formed the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada.

There were plenty of examples upon which the women could model their antisuffragist organization; British antisuffragist women had formed the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League in London in 1908. The League held meetings, charged membership fees, started a monthly magazine, The Anti-Suffrage Review, in December, 1908, and formed branches throughout the country. The League claimed nine thousand members by July, 1909. According to Brian Harrison, 42% of its support was centred in London and the south east of England; very little support came from the north.[23] In the United States, the earliest antisuffrage

organizations dated from 1895, and by the start of the First World War almost every state boasted a women's antisuffrage association. Some, like the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of the Suffrage to Women (M.A.O.F.E.S.W.) and the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, published monthly magazines or newsletters.[24]

The exact date of the formation of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada is not known. The first reference to it appeared in the July, 1913 edition of The Woman's Protest, the publication of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. The short item stated that the A.O.W.S.C. had been formed in order to allow women to express their beliefs on the woman suffrage issue, to stimulate interest in the antisuffragist side, to study laws and "conditions" in Canada, and to distribute antisuffrage literature throughout the country. The Association was also described as taking "an active interest in all questions of civic, social and moral reform," and as believing that these causes could be best advanced without woman suffrage.[25]

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[23]Harrison, p. 121.

[24]The M.A.O.F.E.S.W. paper was The Remonstrance, and the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage published The Woman's Protest.

[25]The Woman's Protest, III, No. 3, July, 1913, p. 15.

The first public meeting of the A.O.W.S.C., described as an "educational meeting," was held on the evening of October 27, 1913 at Toronto's Margaret Eaton Hall, part of the Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression, located on North Street, near the corner of Bay and Bloor Streets. Those attending the meeting at Margaret Eaton Hall, which, although small, was packed, according to the Toronto Daily Star, were addressed by Alice Nelson (Mrs. Andrew) George (b. 1866), the organizing secretary of the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of the Suffrage to Women, a field secretary of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, and a woman associated with numerous Massachusetts women's and labour organizations.[26] It was not an entirely peaceful event; according to the Daily Star report, a number of suffragists in the audience were denied the opportunity to speak in rebuttal, resulting in a noisy protest.

The aims and interests of the A.O.W.S.C. were summarized in its entry, written by a member, Miss Mary Plummer, in the 1915 Canadian Women's Annual and Social Service Directory:

> this Association is formed to give those who are opposed to the movement in favor of woman suffrage an opportunity to express their conviction that such a measure would be against the best interests of the State. The Association takes an active interest in questions of civic, social and moral reform, and it claims that these can best be advanced without the

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[26] Toronto Daily Star, October 28, 1913, p. 2; Woman's Who's Who, p. 321.

extension of the parliamentary franchise to women.[27] This was probably the closest the A.O.W.S.C. ever came to making an official statement of aims; it is very similar in wording to the description of the Association which appeared in The Woman's Protest in 1913.

Most information on the organization of the A.O.W.S.C., and its activities, members and ideas must be derived from Toronto newspaper accounts, scarce though they are. The Association does not appear to have created many records, and if it did, they probably have not survived to this day.[28] The A.O.W.S.C. is known to have published only one pamphlet, a 1915 copy of Alice George's speech to its first public meeting. It is possible, however, to create a picture, albeit blurry, of most aspects of the A.O.W.S.C.

Not surprisingly, a membership list for the A.O.W.S.C. does not appear to be extant. The names of some members appear in newspaper accounts of A.O.W.S.C. meetings and a total of 51 names has been collected.[29] Of these 51 women, additional information, such as full name, name and occupation of husband, place of residence, and additional activi-

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[27] The Canadian Women's Annual and Social Service Directory (Toronto, 1915), pp. 82-82.

[28] A survey of Canadian archival repositories has not uncovered any records of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada.

[29] The names of A.O.W.S.C. members have been taken from newspaper accounts of meetings found in the Toronto Globe, February 5, 1914, p. 14 and April 23, 1914, p. 5; the Toronto Mail and Empire, April 22, 1914, p. 14; the Toronto Daily Star, April 22, 1914, p. 10.

ties has been located for only 35 through the use of Toronto city directories, biographical dictionaries, and other sources. Most of the women in the sample of 35 were married, and are identifiable for that reason. Single women are difficult to trace, because they do not often appear in biographical dictionaries or city directories. Married women, on the other hand, are often referred to by their husbands' full names and can be more easily traced, through their husbands, in biographical dictionaries and city directories.

Of the total 51 A.O.W.S.C. members whose names appear in newspaper stories, the vast majority appear to have been of Anglo Saxon ethnic background. This unscientific observation is based on the women's surnames, if single, or on their husbands' surnames, in the case of married women. Also of the total of 51, 41 (80%) were married or widowed, and 10 (20%) had never been married. The following observations are drawn from the sample of 35 women. Of the sample, only two were employed outside the home, both as teachers, and both of these women were unmarried. Sarah Warren, who took over as chairman of the board of directors of the Gutta Percha and Rubber Company after the death of her husband in 1909, has not been counted as employed, because it is not clear how much actual time and energy she devoted to the company. The occupations of the husbands of the 30 married women out of the sample of 35 were as follows (the number is followed by the percentage of the total of 35): eleven lawyers (37%); ten businessmen, including

bankers, insurance and real estate agents, brokers, and manufacturers (33%); two educators (7%); one physician and one senator (3% each). In addition, one of the lawyers was also a senator, and one of the businessmen was a member of parliament.

Canadian historian Wayne Roberts has examined the characteristics of some of the members of the A.O.W.S.C. in his essay "'Rocking the Cradle for the World': the New Woman and Maternal Feminism, Toronto 1877-1914," which appears in the collection A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s. Roberts concludes that the membership of the A.O.W.S.C. was comprised of "the truly upper-class women" of Toronto.[30] This conclusion appears to be accurate. Two of the identified members were titled: Lady Adelaide Aylesworth (1854 or 1855 - 1940), the wife of Sir Allen Aylesworth, a prominent lawyer and Liberal member of parliament; and Lady Louisa Melvin Jones or Melvin-Jones (d. 1920), the wife of Sir Lyman Melvin Jones, the president of the Massey-Harris Company and a director of many other companies, a senator, and a millionaire according to Saturday Night magazine in 1907. Many other members of the A.O.W.S.C., while they were not titled, were either married to or were the daughters of wealthy and powerful men. Mary Plummer, for example, was the daughter of James Henry

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[30] Wayne Roberts, "'Rocking the Cradle for the World': the New Woman and Maternal Feminism, Toronto 1877-1914," in Linda Kealey (ed.), A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s (Toronto, 1979), p. 261.

Plummer (1848-1932), who was president of Dominion Steel and Coal Corporation and the Canadian Lake Transportation Company, a vice president of the Canadian Life Assurance Company and the Mexican Light, Heat and Power Company, and a director of the National Trust Company, the Bank of Nova Scotia and the Sao Paulo Tramway, Light and Power Company. The Plummers lived at "Sylvan Tower," a white brick house in Rosedale which has been described as resembling a "fairy-tale illustration."[31]

Like most Canadian female suffragists, many members of the A.O.W.S.C. were involved with women's clubs, reform work and political associations. Seven of the sample of 35 members were involved with the Women's Welcome Hostel of Toronto, founded in 1905, a receiving home for female immigrants destined for domestic service. A.O.W.S.C. member Cecil (Mrs. J. K.) Kerr was a founder of the Hostel, and Sarah Warren, the president of the A.O.W.S.C., was on the Board of Management of the Hostel, as were two other A.O.W.S.C. members.[32] Other organizations with which A.O.W.S.C. members were involved included the Girl Guides of Canada, the United Empire Loyalist Society, the Toronto Women's Canadian Club, the Canadian Immigration Guild, the

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[31]Lucy Booth Martyn, Toronto: 100 Years of Grandeur (Toronto, 1978), p. 168. "Sylvan Tower" was demolished in 1933.

[32]Public Archives of Canada, Records of the Immigration Branch, RG 76, Women's Welcome Hostel, Annual Reports, Volume 338, File 356358, Reel C-10247.

Women's Art Association, the League of Empire, the Toronto Ladies' Club, and the Georgina Houses for working girls. Not surprisingly, a large number of A.O.W.S.C. members also belonged to the I.O.D.E.; twelve women out of the sample of 35 belonged to the I.O.D.E. The I.O.D.E. tended to attract women from higher social classes, and was more interested in patriotic work than in social reform causes.[33] Intriguingly, some members of the A.O.W.S.C. were also involved in the the Women's Liberal Association of Toronto and the Centre and South Toronto Conservative Club. A.O.W.S.C. member Gertrude Van Koughnet was president of the latter club. The involvement of female antisuffragists in political organizations such as these raises interesting questions as to the nature of their objections to women's participation in politics. More must be known about the nature of these women's political clubs before conclusions can be drawn, however.

Sarah Warren, the president of the A.O.W.S.C., was a wealthy widow and she was heavily involved in reform and other community activities. She may not have been completely typical of the membership of the A.O.W.S.C., but her role as founder and president of the association makes an examination of her interests necessary. Sarah Trumbull Van Lennep was born in New York in 1862 and came to Canada in 1887. Little is known of her life prior to the death of her husband, Harry Dorman Warren, in 1909. He had been the

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[33]Sheehan, pp. 5-6.

president of the Gutta Percha and Rubber Company of Toronto, and a director of a number of other companies, including the Bank of Commerce, and they had a family of two daughters and two sons. Upon the death of H. D. Warren, Sarah Warren took over as chairman of the board of directors of the Gutta Percha and Rubber Company, a position she held for thirty-five years. In a December, 1914 Maclean's Magazine article, "Some Canadian Women in Business" by Madge MacBeth, Warren was included in an examination of Canadian businesswomen, who were described as those women who had "forged ahead beyond the dead level of others" of their sex, and who had done upon their own initiative "what they [other women] had not the courage or the sense to do."[34] While it is likely that Warren was involved in activities outside of her home before she was widowed, her exposure to the world of business after 1909 probably increased her ability to organize and direct. She was, according to Lady Flora Eaton, "a stimulating person with her crisp, business-like manner, her severely plain clothes, and always her shrewd judgment on matters large and small."[35]

Warren certainly put her business-sense and, presumably, her fortune, to good use. The list of organizations with which she was associated seems almost endless. Apart

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[34]Madge MacBeth, "Some Canadian Women in Business," Maclean's Magazine, December, 1914, p. 25.

[35]Lady Flora Eaton, Memory's Wall. The Autobiography of Flora McCrea Eaton (Toronto, 1956), p. 189.

from her leadership of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada, Warren was at different times Chief Commissioner of the Girl Guides of Canada, vice-chairman of the board of governors of the Royal Ontario Museum, to which she contributed both money and artifacts, a member of the board of management of the Women's Welcome Hostel, and chairman of the committee in charge of Spadina Lodge, Toronto, a home for working girls opened in 1914 by the Georgina Houses Association. She also belonged to the Women's Patriotic League during the First World War, the Big Sisters' Association, the Rose Society, and the Toronto Ladies' Club. Warren's extraordinary contributions to these and other causes did not go unrewarded: she was made a Lady of Grace of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in 1917; she received an honourary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Toronto in 1933; and in 1935 she was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire. She died in January, 1952 at the age of 89.

Although not all members of the A.O.W.S.C. could have matched the accomplishments of Sarah Warren, they remained an active group in Toronto reform and charity circles, joining with suffragists in their attempts to improve life in Ontario. Indeed, both suffragists and antis were found on the board of management of the Women's Welcome Hostel; Warren, Mrs. George Cassels, Mrs. Henry Seaton (Emma) Strathy, and Mrs. W. Murray Alexander represented the A.O.W.S.C. and the suffragists included Constance Boulton, Dr. Helen MacMurchy, Adelaide Plumptre, Mrs. L. A. Hamilton,

and Mrs. Torrington,[36] There is further evidence that suffragists and antisuffragists participated in the same activities. At a women's conference on housing conditions in Toronto, held at Government House on March 1, 1912, one of the speakers was Alexander Laird, the husband of an A.O.W.S.C. member, and among the audience were A.O.W.S.C. members Emma Strathy, Mrs. Arthur Grassett and Miss Marie Macdonnell, and suffragists Dr. Helen MacMurchy and Miss Marjorie MacMurchy.[37] From the extent of the involvement of A.O.W.S.C. members in reform causes, it is apparent that, like Clementina Fessenden, organized female antisuffragists in Ontario embraced the participation of women in social reform activity while rejecting the use of the vote by women to enact the measures that they endorsed.

Using data on leading Canadian suffragists collected and analyzed by Carol Bacchi in Liberation Deferred?, it is possible to compare some characteristics of the suffragists with the Ontario female antisuffragists. Bacchi's sample of suffragists is comprised of 200 members, 156 women and 44 men, of the executives of suffragist societies throughout Canada. Of the women, 60% were employed outside the home. In contrast, only 6% of the sample of 35 antisuffragists were similarly employed. These figures can be compared to the 12% of Canadian women between the ages of twenty-five

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[36]PAC, RG 76, vol. 338, file 356358, Reel C-10247.

[37]Toronto Globe, March 2, 1912, p. 10.

and sixty-four employed outside the home according to the 1911 census of Canada.[38] Seventy-one percent of the suffragists were married, compared to 80% of the antisuffragists (based on the sample of 51). A comparison of the occupations of the husbands of suffragists with those of the husbands of antisuffragists reveals few significant differences between the two groups. Of the suffragist husbands, 17% were businessmen, 11% were in the medical profession, 10% were public servants or members of parliament, 7% were educators, 6% were lawyers, 5.4% were clergymen, and 3.6% were journalists or publishers. The occupations of 39% of the husbands are unknown.[39] The notable differences between these figures and those on the antisuffragist husbands are the absence of clergymen among the antis' husbands, and the greater proportion of lawyers (37%) and businessmen (33%) among the latter group. Bacchi has also analyzed the religious affiliation of the suffragists. Unfortunately, there is not sufficient information on the religious affiliation of the antisuffragists to make an accurate comparison on this basis. Despite the limited scope of the comparison between the Canadian female suffragists and the Ontario female antisuffragists, the antis emerge as a group of women much less likely to be employed outside the home than the suffragists and Canadian women in general. The

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[38]Canada, Department of Trade and Commerce, Census and Statistics Office, Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, Vol. VI (Ottawa, 1915), p. xxvi.

[39]Bacchi, p. 6.

antisuffragists were also much more likely to have been married to men in the high-paying fields of business and the law.

A comparison between the members of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada and members of other female antisuffrage associations is much more difficult to make. Brian Harrison and Louise Stevenson, who have written on British and Massachusetts female antisuffragists respectively, do not include sufficient information on the characteristics of members of antisuffrage organizations in their studies to facilitate a comparison between Ontario antis and British and Massachusetts antis. Stevenson, writing on the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of the Suffrage to Women, concludes that the female antisuffragists appear to have belonged to the upper class, and that they were less likely to have attended college, to have had a career, and to have been club women than the suffragists. She does not believe, however, that the antis were motivated by class interests.[40] Brian Harrison has also found that British female antisuffragists were from a higher social class than the suffragists. Many of the antis were the wives of prominent politians; many of these women could wield considerable political influence through their husbands or in their capacity as political hostesses. Harrison concludes that these women had greater class

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[40]Stevenson, pp. 90-91.

loyalty that sex loyalty, and that they had no interest in supporting the creation of a large body of women voters who would compete for political influence.[41] Constance Rover, the author of Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914, has come to a similar conclusion. She has found that the active female antisuffragists in Britain were of a more "upper-class stamp" than the women in the two most prominent women's suffrage organizations, and believes that antisuffragist women may have felt that they would lose their privileges if sexual equality were achieved.[42]

While many of the members of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada appear to have been from a higher social class than were the members of suffrage organizations in Canada, there is no firm evidence that the A.O.W.S.C. was motivated by class interests, although such motivation could have existed. There is some evidence, however, that the social connections of many A.O.W.S.C. members were a factor in bringing the women together. According to Brian Harrison, the British female antisuffragists tended "to operate through social functions rather than through political demonstrations."[43] A merely casual examination of the social notes in Toronto newspapers in the years between 1910 and 1917 reveals the close social connections between a

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[41]Harrison, p. 82.

[42]Constance Rover, Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914 (Toronto, 1967), p. 172.

[43]Harrison, p. 148.

number of the members of the A.O.W.S.C. Not only did these women belong to the same clubs and attend the same dinners, dances, weddings, and sporting events, there were also close professional and political ties between many of the husbands and fathers of antisuffragists. A number of these ties were within Toronto law firms. Miller Lash and George Cassels, both husbands of A.O.W.S.C. members, were in the law firm of Blake, Lash, Anglin and Cassels; two other antisuffragist husbands, Sir Allen Aylesworth and Charles A. Moss, were with the law firm of Aylesworth, Wright, Moss and Thompson. Two A.O.W.S.C. members, Mrs. Robert A. Lyon, and Miss Mary Plummer, were related, and their fathers were each prominent in the Ontario steel industry. A number of other husbands and fathers were prominent in the Toronto business and financial communities, and professional and social contact between them must have been very common.

There have been attempts by both suffragists and by historians of the suffrage movement in Canada, Britain and the United States to link antisuffragism with the "liquor interests." The "liquor interests" were a usually nameless and faceless group of men who opposed prohibition out of fear that it would hurt their liquor-related businesses. The liquor interests were believed to be hostile to woman suffrage because of the close association between the suffrage and prohibition movements, and many Canadian suffragists believed that the opposition to woman suffrage was secretly funded by them. The National Equal Franchise Union stated in its Woman's Century column that "Anti-

Suffrage and Anti-Temperance have become almost synonymous terms."[44] Carol Bacchi has linked the antisuffragists with the liquor interests in Liberation Deferred?. Her case for the involvement of the liquor interests in the A.O.W.S.C. is as follows:

> The President of Canada's only anti-suffrage society, Mrs. H. D. Warren, was married to a Toronto businessman who in 1902 signed a manifesto against the Prohibition Act, a manifesto Castell Hopkins called the "last of a vigorous campaign put up by liquor interests and those opposed to Prohibition." Taken together, this evidence, though scarcely conclusive, suggests that there may have been powerful or rather well-heeled opponents who insidiously worked against woman suffrage because of its close association with prohibition.[45]

Apart from this tenuous link, no other evidence has been discovered to suggest that the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada was in league with the liquor interests. It is possible that some of the members may have been attracted to antisuffragism due to their opposition to prohibition, just as many men were, but this does not necessarily mean that the A.O.W.S.C. had any ties to the liquor interests, whose motivations were economic.

A general idea of the activities and organization of the A.O.W.S.C. can be derived from newspaper accounts of its meetings. After the October, 1913 meeting, the next A.O.W.S.C. meeting to receive newspaper coverage took place on February 4, 1914 at "Red Gables," the Wellesley Street

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[44] Woman's Century, III (October, 1915), p. 8.

[45] Bacchi, pp. 76-77.

home of Sarah Warren. At the meeting, which attracted approximately 150 women despite the fact that it took place in a private home, papers on antisuffrage topics by Warren and three other members were presented.[46] The Toronto Globe wrote of the meeting: "Increasing interest is being shown, and the burning question of the day gone into by this young society with intelligent inquiry into cause and effect."[47] The 1914 annual meeting took place on April 21, 1914 at the popular Margaret Eaton Hall.[48] The process of organization seems to have been completed at this meeting, which saw the formal acceptance of the constitution by the members. The A.O.W.S.C. executive was comprised of the following: a president, Sarah Warren; a recording secretary, Miss Constance Laing; and a corresponding secretary, Miss Mary Plummer. Another woman, Mrs. George Cassels, seems to have been on the executive, probably in charge of memberships. There was also a Literature Committee headed by a Mrs. Loosemore, who sold antisuffrage pamphlets and "recommended books" at the door. These do not appear to have included any publications of the A.O.W.S.C. itself. The recording secretary reported that several open and drawing room meetings had already been held, and that meetings had been held outside Toronto in Barrie, Ontario, and in other

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[46]Toronto News, February 5, 1914, p. 4.

[47]Globe, February 5, 1914, p. 5.

[48]Globe, April 23, 1914, p. 5; Mail and Empire, April 22, 1914, p. 14.

unspecified places. No exact membership figures were provided at the meeting, but Mrs. Cassels estimated that membership, including branches outside Toronto, was in the hundreds. Unfortunately, no information on these branches has been found, and despite interest outside of Toronto, the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada remained an exclusively Toronto-oriented organization.

The Association maintained contact with Canadian women's organizations and with antisuffrage societies in Britain and the United States. It was reported at the 1914 annual meeting that Miss Laing had attended the meetings of the National Council of Women and the Social Service Congress, and correspondence with antisuffrage societies was related to those in attendance. Mrs. Loosemore read aloud letters from antis in Colorado and California as proof that woman suffrage had not had the promised beneficial results in those states, and Mary P. Plummer reported that she had received letters from prominent English antisuffragists requesting literature that they could use.[49] The highlight of the meeting, however, was an address on the inadvisability of woman suffrage by Herbert M. Mowat, K.C. (1862-1928), a nephew of the late Sir Oliver Mowat, former premier of Ontario. An address by an outside speaker was a tradition at A.O.W.S.C. meetings.

More information is revealed in accounts of the 1915 annual meeting, also held at Margaret Eaton Hall, on April

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[49] Mail and Empire, April 22, 914, p. 14.

14, 1915.[50] This time a treasurer is mentioned, a Miss Barber. The rest of the executive appears to have remained unchanged with the exception of the loss of Mary Plummer, who had undertaken war work in relation to a Canadian hospital ship, a concept which had been orignated by Plummer and another A.O.W.S.C. member, Miss Joan Arnoldi, who was also overseas. It was reported that the A.O.W.S.C. had sponsored a series of lectures by a Mr. J. C. Powys over the winter of 1914-15 which had earned the Association $329. Unfortunately, the subject of the lectures was not mentioned, and no other information on Powys has been found.

It is apparent that the form of organization of the A.O.W.S.C. and the manner in which its meetings were conducted did not differ greatly from the organization and type of meetings held by Ontario suffrage societies. A bemused Toronto Daily News reporter ruminated on the similarities between the meetings of the suffragists and antisuffragists, and the ironies and confusion engendered by the similarities, in an account of the 1914 A.O.W.S.C. annual meeting:

> Yesterday was the day for the anti-suffragists to express their opinions, and to listen to denunciations of all the things which have recently been proclaimed here from the suffrage platform. And if an unbiased person attends suffrage meetings, her mind must indeed be nothing but a deep sea of confusion, with no downright conviction other than that statistics and facts are apparently things that can be judged with and made to interpret the wishes of either side.

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[50] Globe, April 15, 1915, p. 8; Toronto News, April 15, 1915, p. 4.

> At a suffrage meeting you are told in convincing language with a backing up of conditions as they are said to exist, of the advantages of suffrage.
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> Then at an anti-suffrage meeting you are told that such statements are false. So that after all you can but abide by your own judgement, and disbelieve all that you hear.[51]

Comparison between the A.O.W.S.C. and the two organizations on which it appears to have been modeled, the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of the Suffrage to Women (M.A.O.F.E.S.W.) and the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League (W.N.A.S.L.) of Britain, helps to reveal some aspects of the organization and tactics of the A.O.W.S.C. which do not emerge from newspaper accounts. The most important aspect that is revealed is the major difference in the extent to which men became involved in the women's antisuffrage organizations in Ontario, the United States and Great Britain

An important characteristic shared by both the M.A.O.F.E.S.W. and the W.N.A.S.L. was the reliance of the women who formed the organizations upon the advice and eventually upon the active participation of men. According to Louise Stevenson, author of the article "Women Anti-Suffragists in the 1915 Massachusetts Campaign," the M.A.O.F.E.S.W. handed over its strictly political activities to a male auxiliary, because the women believed that political activity on the part of the members did not conform to women's sphere. Men were also employed in the editing of the M.A.O.F.E.S.W.

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[51] Toronto Daily News, April 22, 1914, p. 4.

paper The Remonstrance, and helped the women with planning and publicity. The women maintained control of the educational aspects of antisuffragism, as educational activities were an accepted part of women's sphere.[52] The W.N.A.S.L. also had a "Men's Committee" which in 1910 actually took over the leadership of the League from the women who had founded it in 1908.[53]

The involvement of men in varying degrees in these two organizations was the result of the unwillingness of the female antisuffragists to compromise their femininity as they protested against the unfemininity of the suffragists. According to Brian Harrison, the very act of forming an association or speaking in public in order to fight woman suffrage was contradictory to the stand of the female antisuffragists on the importance of women conforming to the separation of male and female spheres.[54] In handing over unfeminine responsibilities to male auxiliaries, the Massachusetts and British female antisuffragists found a compromise between taking firm action in opposition to a movement they disliked and taking on the characteristics of that movement's supporters in order to fight it effectively. Unfortunately, in the British case the men's committee

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[52]Louise L. Stevenson, "Women Anti-Suffragists in the 1915 Massachusetts Campaign, The New England Quarterly, LII (1979), pp. 81-83.

[53]Harrison, pp. 128-29.

[54]Harrison, p. 111.

became so impatient with the reluctance of the female antis to take decisive action that it staged what amounted to a coup d'etat in order to seize power from the women.

There is no evidence that the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada ever formed a male auxiliary to take over the more political and less feminine aspects of the fight against woman suffrage. There are two possible explanations for this. First, the A.O.W.S.C. had, at the most, the years from 1913 to 1915 to devote to fighting woman suffrage before it was almost permanently distracted by the war effort. For this reason, there may not have been enough time to attract male supporters to take on part of the association's activities, or there may not have been enough political or unfeminine activity on the part of the A.O.W.S.C. to have required a male take-over. Second, the feminization of the antisuffrage movement in Ontario may have been so complete that there was no need for men to play a role in the A.O.W.S.C.

The A.O.W.S.C. does, however, appear to have suffered from reluctance on the part of its members to take serious actions in its opposition to woman suffrage. There is little evidence that the A.O.W.S.C. attempted to lobby government to anywhere near the extent to which the suffragists tried to influence legislators. There is only one instance of the A.O.W.S.C. trying to place its cause directly before a politician. According to Brian Tennyson in his article "Premier Hearst, the War, and Votes for Women," an A.O.W.S.C. delegation called on Hearst in 1915,

but there is no evidence that the A.O.W.S.C. ever sent another delegation to call on other politicians or officials.[55]

While it is possible to derive at least some information on the organizational aspects of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada from newspaper accounts, it is much more difficult to identify the ideas of the Association. Newspaper accounts of A.O.W.S.C. meetings reported the content of the speeches of guest speakers, but not of Sarah Warren, the president. It is very possible that Warren did not speak at length at these meetings, or that she did not address the ideology of the Association. Nor does the A.O.W.S.C. seem to have published pamphlets or other material written by the members themselves; the only known publication was one pamphlet, which was the text of Alice George's speech at the first educational meeting of the A.O.W.S.C. in October, 1913. As a result, the ideas of the A.O.W.S.C. on the reasons why women should not be allowed to vote must be derived from the the speeches of those who were invited to speak at A.O.W.S.C. meetings. One must assume that since Alice George and Herbert Mowat were invited to speak on antisuffragism at A.O.W.S.C. meetings, they represented the A.O.W.S.C. to some extent, and that their ideas were, at least in part, the ideas of the members of the A.O.W.S.C.

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[55]Brian Tennyson, "Premier Hearst, the War, and Votes for Women," Ontario History, LXII (1965), p. 117.

Because her speech was chosen as the text for what was probably the only pamphlet produced by the A.O.W.S.C., Alice George was probably an important influence upon the Toronto female antisuffragists and the ideas expressed in her 1913 address probably corresponded to the ideas which the A.O.W.S.C. wished to convey to women in Ontario. Alice George was an extremely active woman. In addition to her activities on behalf of the Massachusetts and national antisuffrage associations, George belonged to the Massachusetts Child Labour Commission, the American Association for Labour Legislation, the Woman's Educational and Industrial Union of Boston, the Woman's Trade Union League, and the Welfare Department of the National Civic Federation.[56] Other prominent women who were active in the Massachusetts antisuffrage movement shared George's enthusiasm for reform activity. The 1916 collection Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women provides ample proof that opposition to suffrage did not automatically mean opposition to social reform. On the contrary, each antisuffragist who contributed to that volume boasted multiple associations with Massachusetts reform organizations.[57]

Alice George's close association with numerous reform causes no doubt influenced her antisuffrage arguments: her involvement in social reform probably brought her into close

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[56] Woman's Who's Who, p. 321.

[57] Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women (Boston, 1916).

contact with suffragists, enabling her to observe closely suffragist tactics and to adopt the sort of arguments and rhetoric popular with the woman suffrage movement and social reform movements in general. Immediately prior to the outbreak of the First World War, the doctrine of efficiency was very popular with both suffragists and reformers, including those in Canada. Carol Bacchi writes:

> The suffragists and their fellow reformers were equally disturbed by the restlessness and confusion they observed in the world around them. They decided to transform society into a well-run corporation by applying the iron rules of industrial production to the social order. "Efficiency," "control," "planning" became the key words in their programme.[58]

Consciously or unconsciously, Alice George embraced efficiency in government and society and, more significantly, the incompatibility of woman suffrage with efficiency as her major arguments against the enfranchisement of women. Reminiscent of Goldwin Smith, the A.O.W.S.C. pamphlet of George's speech was entitled "How Women May Best Serve the State." Like Smith, George maintained that women should only be allowed to vote if, and only if, their participation in the electorate would be of benefit to the state. George contended that only efficient measures were of benefit, and that, since woman suffrage would not be efficient, it would not be of benefit to the state, and should not therefore be enacted. The efficiency argument depended on the acceptance of George's narrow interpretation of separate spheres. She

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[58]Bacchi, p. 55.

believed that men and women were expert in different fields. Maximum efficiency, therefore, could only be achieved when men and women expended energy in those separate areas. All energy expended by women in the male field of expertise was wasted, and therefore inefficient.[59] Needless to say, George did not believe voting to be compatible with women's area of expertise.

The enfranchisement of women, George contended, could only be justified if women could prove that the legislation which would result from their voting would be different from and vastly superior to the legislation of men. To be truly efficient, the female vote could not be just a duplication of the male vote; the mere doubling of the electorate would cost enormous amounts of money but would not result in markedly better legislation. To George, the burden of proof of the value of woman suffrage rested with the suffragists:

> Let suffragists show, if they can, that woman electors as a body in any one state, have evolved policies unknown to any single other non-suffrage state and distinct from the normal trend of present day progress in which men and women play their part. When such showing can be made, it will be time enough to ask that the ballot should be given women, as a means of social efficiency.[60]

Ironically, even though George stated that woman suffrage would only be justified if the women's vote had significantly different results from those of the male vote, she warned that those very differences would result in social revolu-

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[59] Alice Nelson George, How Women May Best Serve the State (Toronto, 1915), p. 4.

[60] Ibid., p. 8.

tion! "If the woman's vote is to be effective it must fall differently to the man's of the same class, and if this does not mean sex antagonism what does it mean?" she asked. "A complete social revolution' is the cry of the feminist."[61]

George maintained that women could only contribute efficiently to the state by concentrating on those things that women could do better than men, and which were a part of women's sphere. George, perhaps influenced by her social reform involvement or even by the claims of the woman suffragists, called upon women to make their influence for good felt throughout society. She stopped short of calling for action through legislation, however; legislation and voting were part of men's sphere only. Instead, she advised women to work through religion and the education of children, areas in which women had greater expertise than men, to improve society. According to George, women could also participate profitably and efficiently in the administration of hospitals, asylums and libraries, "where the methods of administration demanded are those of domestic life rather than of politics and government."[62]

To Alice George, the most important work a woman could perform in the interests of society was the moral education of her children, especially of her sons. Women, George maintained, wielded an enormous influence in society through

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[61]George, p. 16.

[62]Ibid., p. 10.

their influence on their sons, who would go forth from the family to enter the male sphere of politics, government and business. If women did their jobs properly, the influence they would have in society, via the actions of their sons, would be enormous. This influence, according to George, needed no vote: "we who oppose the enfranchisement of women believe there is something better - a better way to serve the State. We feel first of all that woman has a big slice of life's responsibilities and duties to-day, and that the vote will not help her to their proper performance."[63] George warned women, who, quite admirably, wanted to reform society, that in their zeal to reform they not forget that men were already doing a good job. She reminded women that if they were raising their sons properly, they would pass on to them women's desire for social responsibility and improvement, thus implying that the very existence of a suffrage movement that decried the inactivity of male legislators meant that women were failing utterly in their motherly duties. Why, George asked, should women who could not even influence their sons effectively be expected to make their influence felt on society through the vote? George also believed that women formed an important body of influence for good in politics, a sort of third party completely devoid of political ambition. The exercise of these two vital forms of influence was, to George, the most efficient way in which women could contribute to the state.

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[63]George, p. 17.

"If woman cannot make her influence felt in the education of the child, nor in the standard of public opinion she creates," George said, "she will never moralize society through the ballot."[64]

Alice George touched upon some other antisuffragist arguments in her speech. One such theme that was particularly dear to her heart was the inaccuracy of the suffragist claim that once working women had the vote their wages would rise. This antisuffragist argument was not new to Ontario, but it had previously been mentioned only in passing; it was given its first detailed treatment in the A.O.W.S.C. pamphlet of George's speech. It is possible that, as a result of Alice George's speech or because it was of greater concern to women than to men, the argument that woman suffrage would not benefit working women found more popularity with the A.O.W.S.C. than it had with other Ontario antis. Perhaps as a result of the speech, Constance Laing, a member of the A.O.W.S.C. executive, spoke on the relationship between wages and the vote at the February 4, 1914 meeting.[65]

In response to suffragist claims that the wages and working conditions of women would improve once women had the vote, George presented evidence that poor conditions and low remuneration had nothing to do with women's lack of

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[64]George, p. 18.

[65]Toronto News, February 5, 1914, p. 4.

political power, and could not, therefore, be remedied by the acquisition of political power. According to George, poor technical education for women and basic economics were responsible for working women's problems. Women received low wages because they were unskilled; those workers who received good wages were those with valuable skills. In addition, women were poorly paid because of the elementary economic law of supply and demand. There was a large supply of women willing to perform unskilled jobs in industry. As a result, the supply of female labour exceeded the demand for female labour, the outcome of which was low wages for women.[66]

George believed the promotion by the suffragists of a political solution to these educational and economic problems to be ridiculous and possibly harmful to working women. She was opposed to the promotion of woman suffrage as a solution to the problems of working women because she feared that a dependency on political solutions would prevent improvements in technical education and perhaps union activity among women. One solution which George suggested was improved technical education for women, which would enable women to take higher-paying skilled jobs. Extra evidence of Alice George's enthusiasm for technical education for women is found in the long list of labour and educational organizations with which she was associated. Yet despite her concern for the plight of the working woman,

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[66]George, p. 6.

George also lamented the very presence of women in industry.

Without more information on the Massachusetts women's educational and labour organizations to which she belonged, Alice George's motivations in opposing the vote as a means of solving the problems of working women are obscure. If she truly believed that women had no place in the workforce, it is possible that she believed that the enfranchisement of working women would condone the continued presence of women in industry. On the other hand, if George supported the right of women to work and to improve their ability to command higher wages, she may have opposed giving women the vote because it would distract working women from their efforts at unionization. It is not likely, however, that George objected to the inclusion of working women in the voting population for purely class reasons; she was too heavily involved in organizations devoted to helping working women to have had an extreme distaste for these women. George's argument against suffragist claims that the vote would improve women's working conditions probably appealed to those members of the A.O.W.S.C. who were involved in reform work directed at working women. A number of the members, including the president, Sarah Warren, were involved in the Georgina Houses for working girls. At the very least, the argument was probably attractive to the A.O.W.S.C. because it revealed what the antisuffragists identified as a serious fallacy in the suffragist platform.

The antisuffrage ideas and arguments of Alice George probably came closer to the ideas and arguments of the

Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada than those of the few other speakers who were invited to address its meetings. The speaker at the 1914 annual meeting, Herbert Mowat, may have also influenced the A.O.W.S.C., or have reflected views already held by A.O.W.S.C. members. Mowat's address relied on the repetition of a number of old antisuffrage stand-bys: woman suffragists were unwomanly and unnatural; women should not be allowed to vote on Imperial issues; women were a sex and not a class, and did not, therefore, have any interests which required representation; the basis of government was physical force, which women did not have, and therefore women would not be able to enforce the laws they would pass were they enfranchised; women would accomplish their goals more efficiently if they concentrated on charitable work and left government to men.[67] Demonstrating the differences between the arguments of male and female antisutfragists, Mowat argued that "political play" on women's minds would be disastrous to their health, and that women should be thankful that men were just to women and that men had allowed women property rights. More significantly, Mowat introduced a new, particularly Canadian argument against woman suffrage which probably appealed to the overwhelmingly Anglo Saxon and Protestant members of the A.O.W.S.C. very much. To illustrate his argument that it was acceptable for women to hold

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[67] Mail and Empire, April 22, 1914, p. 14.

civic rights not but the "public" right of voting, Mowat asked: "Women enjoy civil rights the same as men, but would you give public votes, say to 1,000,000 women in an adjacent province where there are two races and two strong and opposing religions?"[68] This may have been the only time that the threat of French Canadian Roman Catholic women voting was raised during the course of the antisuffrage movement in Ontario.

A dramatic change in the activities and focus of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada had taken place by the time of the 1915 meeting. It reacted to the 1914 outbreak of war by virtually ceasing its efforts in opposition to woman suffrage and by concentrating almost exclusively on war work, with the intention of resuming its antisuffrage efforts after the end of the war. Although Sarah Warren urged the members to continue their work against woman suffrage "as unostentatiously as heretofore," the A.O.W.S.C. had so given over its energy to the war effort that it was probably impossible for the members to do anything on behalf of the antisuffrage cause. The A.O.W.S.C. became involved in two projects as its contribution to the war effort: the sewing of items for the needy and the Red Cross by a group called the "Helpers' League," which held meetings at Warren's home every Tuesday and Thursday evening; and the operation of a soldiers' canteen

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[68] Mail and Empire, April 22, 1914, p. 14.

at the Exhibition Camp in Toronto which was overseen by the St. Andrew's Brotherhood. The A.O.W.S.C. had accumulated funds despite its ban on membership fees. At the 1915 annual meeting it was reported that there was $188.29 in the Treasury of the Association Relief Fund and $152.82 in the General Fund.[69] It appears that the A.O.W.S.C. became interested in maintaining funds only after it became involved in war work, but not when it was involved in fighting woman suffrage only. As usual, an outside speaker addressed the meeting, but this time the guest, a Mrs. Ober of Provincetown, Rhode Island, did not speak on the antisuffage movement, but on the work of the British Relief Association.

The Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada was transformed from an antisuffrage organization into a society devoted to the war effort. The A.O.W.S.C. was not alone in giving up its role in the suffrage debate; most suffragists were distracted from active work on behalf of their cause by the war and its consequences. The suffrage page, produced by the National Equal Franchise Union, which appeared each month in Woman's Century, the organ of the National Council of Women of Canada, reported on the inactivity of suffragists and antisuffragists alike in October, 1915: "And so the energies of all - suffragists, antis and neutrals - are directed away from their ordinary activities towards the care of our soldiers, and there is little definitely

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[69] Globe, April 15, 1915, p. 8.

suffrage work to report."[70] A few months later, in January, 1916, the A.O.W.S.C. reported in the American antisuffrage monthly The Woman's Protest that the association had given up its "propaganda work" for war work: "With all our dear ones fighting and every hour taken up in relief work, we have had little time or heart to keep abreast of the question."[71]

The war of words between the suffragists and the antis did not abate due to the First World War, however. Indeed, the main point of contention between the two groups changed from woman suffrage to a quarrel over which of the two sides devoted the most energy to patriotic and relief work. The A.O.W.S.C. accused the suffragists of neglecting their patriotic duty by continuing in their suffrage work. "The suffragists have been going harder than ever," it commented in The Woman's Protest.[72] Even Castell Hopkins of the Canadian Annual Review, who was sympathetic to the suffrage cause, accused some suffragists of unpatriotic behaviour. While most women had devoted themselves to relief work, he wrote of the events of 1915, "women like Mrs. Nellie McClung were labouring earnestly for a vote when their force and eloquence could have done much to aid recruiting."[73]

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[70] Woman's Century, III (October, 1915), p. 8.

[71] The Woman's Protest, VIII (January, 1916), p. 19.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Hopkins, Canadian Annual Review, 1916, p. 427.

Hopkins and the antis had some cause for complaint; according to Carol Bacchi, one major suffrage group, the Canadian Suffrage Association, continued to be active in the struggle for woman suffrage throughout the war.[74] It seems, therefore, that although both suffragists and antis decreased their activities significantly as a result of the start of the First World War, the suffragists, who had operated within better established and more energetic organizations than did the antis prior to the outbreak of war, continued to enjoy these advantages over their opponents after 1914. The efforts of the A.O.W.S.C., which had already been "unostentatious" (in the words of A.O.W.S.C. president Sarah Warren) before the war, fell apart almost completely when faced with the choice of continued work against woman suffrage or participation in patriotic work.

The decision to abandon propaganda work in favour of traditionally feminine work such as nursing, needlework, and helping to feed soldiers may actually have been a deliberate tactic on the part of the A.O.W.S.C. The association's martyr-like renunciation of all work except that which helped Canadian soldiers may have been intended to make the suffragists look like hard-hearted, unpatriotic shirkers in comparison. This tactic backfired, however. The suffragists managed to maintain a careful balance between propaganda and relief work throughout the war; as a result, they continued to spread their message and still appear patrio-

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[74]Bacchi, p. 142.

tic. Ironically, the very work the antisuffragists threw themselves into, in what may have been an effort to distinguish themselves from the suffragists, was seen by many as rewardable only through the granting of the vote to women. In their zeal to contribute to the war effort, the work done by members of the A.O.W.S.C. may have gone beyond the limits of what they themselves considered to be within woman's sphere. A.O.W.S.C. members Mary Plummer and Joan Arnoldi, for example, not only started up the first Canadian hospital ship, but were joint commissioners of the Canadian Field Comforts Commission in England, each receiving the rank of lieutenant.[75] Nursing was one thing, but military rank was hardly traditionally female.

The very act of organizing may have contributed to the ultimate failure of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada to prevent the enfranchisement of women. Ironically, the more active the A.O.W.S.C. was in its antisuffrage and war efforts, the more it helped to prove the claims of the suffragists that women were capable of rational political activity. Constance Rover has pointed out this anomaly in the case of the British female movement against woman suffrage:

> The position of women "antis" was self-defeating, for the more effectively they pressed their contention that women were unsuited to politics, the more competently they campaigned, all the more they established the political capacity of women. It was completely unrealistic to suggest that "just for once" women would

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[75]Hopkins, Canadian Annual Review, 1916, p. 452.

> overcome their natural reticence and conduct a political campaign, so that for ever afterwards they could remain in the background in peace.[76]

Furthermore, because of the close affinity between the tactics of the antisuffragists and the suffragists, including public speaking, the formation of organizations, letter-writing and pamphlet-publishing, Rover goes so far as to call the female antis "new women."[77]

Another important reason for the failure of the A.O.W.S.C. in preventing the granting of the vote to women in Ontario was the large head start enjoyed by the suffragists. The suffragists had been organized since 1877; the antisuffragists formed their association in 1913. The suffragists' thirty-six extra years of organized existence gave them the advantage of experience in public speaking and the lobbying of politicians. Brian Harrison credits the victory of the British suffragists to their fifty more years of experience than the antisuffragists.[78]

The Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada, however, placed the blame for the granting of the vote to women in Ontario in 1917 squarely on the shoulders of the Conservative premier, William Hearst, who had consistently opposed woman suffrage in the past. In a letter to The Woman's Protest, dated February 28, 1917, the day after the vote was granted to women in Ontario, the A.O.W.S.C.

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[76]Rover, p. 177.

[77]Ibid., p. 173.

[78]Harrison, p. 113.

poured out a bitter stream of complaint against the treachery of the provincial Conservative government and of Hearst, whom the letter described as "a weak man."[79] The authors of the "Message from Ontario" refused to accept the excuse that the vote was a reward to women in return for the contributions of Ontario women to the Canadian war effort. They pointed out that the women who called for their "reward" were those who had done little for the war effort, and that those who had sacrificed all for patriotism had neither the need nor the desire for such dubious rewards as the vote:

> We anti-suffragists do not regret any of the war work we have done. We **do** [italics in original] regret that all Canadian women have to submit to being "rewarded" for war work which it has been our pleasure and privilege to do and in which anti-suffragists have far outnumbered the suffragists. It was the latter who, at this most critical time, lay down all war work and at large expense traveled the country pointing out that they were now ready for their reward.[80]

The authors of the "Message from Ontario" stated that the vote was granted not as a reward, for the women who performed the most valuable war work wanted no such thing, but as a pragmatic measure taken by the Ontario government for selfish political reasons and with no regard whatsoever for the well-being of the province:

> There will be much rejoicing, no doubt among your [American] suffragists, that Ontario has declared for

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[79] The Woman's Protest, X (March, 1917), p. 10. The letter is not signed, but it is obviously from the A.O.W.S.C.

[80] Ibid.

> suffrage. To those who know all the inside working it is a matter for no rejoicing, but for real sorrow that politicians can use their trust to thrust upon a whole province such a drastic change when they themselves have declared that they did not consider it for the good of the country but they thought the people wanted it! Meaning in plain English that a very weak government is willing to do anything to save its shaking political skin.[81]

The real reasons why the Ontario government reversed itself on the woman suffrage issue are not clear. The A.O.W.S.C. may have been correct in its assessment of Hearst's sudden change of mind over woman suffrage as a desperate means of garnering political support. The history of opposition to woman suffrage in the Ontario legislature, and the 1917 about-face of the Hearst Conservatives will be studied further in the next chapter.

Although the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada was not successful in its bid to defeat efforts to enfranchise women, it did manage to make its stand on the issue known in Ontario and it did have some influence on the nature of the suffrage movement in the province. Premier Hearst declared himself impressed by the arguments of the A.O.W.S.C. delegation which visited him on February 24, 1915.[82] There is also evidence that suffragists saw an advantage in moderating their stance somewhat in the face of growing organized opposition to woman suffrage. In a 1916 letter from Emily Cummings, corresponding secretary of the pro-suffrage National Council of Women of Canada, to Mrs.

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[81] The Woman's Protest, X, p. 10.

[82] Tennyson, p. 117.

Jessie Glass of the Calgary Local Council of Women, mention is made of the possibility of an organization opposed to woman suffrage becoming affiliated with the N.C.W.C. at some time in the future. Cummings wrote: "Certainly the majority of the members of the National Council are in favour of Suffrage, but as in England, when the Society opposed to Suffrage is organized Nationally, it will be quite free to federate in the Council also, as the two Nationally Organized Suffrage Societies have already done."[83] The national organization of the A.O.W.S.C. never took place, but Cummings' comment is evidence of the public profile of the antisuffragists.

Carol Bacchi admits that the suffragists at times found themselves on the defensive, and were forced to moderate their stances on certain issues. She provides the outspoken Flora Macdonald Denison as an example of a suffragist who had to tone down a radical stand, in this case on the "primal mission of woman" as wife and mother, in the face of opposition.[84] Ontario suffragists were probably aware of opposition to woman suffrage and they very possibly took conscious steps, including placing great emphasis on the suffrage movement's reform goals and the conformity of these goals to women's sphere, in attempts to make their stands on

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[83]PAC, N.C.W.C. Papers, MG 28, I 25, Volume 65, File 9, Correspondence, 1916, Mrs. Emily Cummings to Mrs. Jessie Glass, Toronto, February 3, 1916.

[84]Bacchi, p. 33.

certain issues appear more moderate.

Many intriguing aspects of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada will never be understood. We are left with nagging questions as to the private motivations of the individual women who banded together to oppose woman suffrage. Psychological explanations are tempting, but of no real use in the case of the antisuffragists, as demonstrated by Louise Stevenson's questionable conclusions on the basic motivation of the Massachusetts female suffragists. Stevenson concludes that the antisuffragists acted the way they did because of a psychological flaw not shared with the free-wheeling suffragists. She writes: "The M.A.O.F.L.S.W. members knew that they were women only because they acted as they believed women should; the women suffragists knew that they were women no matter what they did."[85] There is no evidence that the members of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada suffered from a psychological flaw which made them antisuffragists rather than suffragists. Nor is there a need to explain the behaviour of antisuffragist women in terms of why they were not suffragists. Constance Rover has pointed out that, due to their nineteenth century upbringings which emphasized the separation of male and female spheres, it was actually much more likely that women would be opposed to woman suffrage that in support of it.[86]

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[85] Stevenson, p. 92.

[86] Rover, p. 173.

Perhaps the major significance of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada is that its very existence proves that support for woman suffrage was not as widespread as we have believed, that opposition to suffrage was not determined by sex, and that the final victory of woman suffrage was never inevitable. As Constance Rover points out, the female opposition to woman suffrage in Britain demonstrates that there were significant weaknesses in the British suffrage movement. This would appear to be the case in Ontario as well. Rover writes:

> A weakness in the position of women's suffrage supporters was that opposition to the cause included women. Had the opposition been entirely male, it would have been looked on as the defence of privilege, but this was not the case. Groups of men have, at times, been apathetic concerning the acquisition of voting rights and, indeed, there was very little demand for the extension of the franchise, proposed by Asquith, in the years before the First World War, but at least there was no organization of men opposing their own enfranchisement.[87]

The A.O.W.S.C. and other manifestations of opposition to woman suffrage on the part of women are of too great significance not to be taken into account in future studies of suffragism and feminism in Canadian history.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada was the last major manifestation of antisuffragism in Ontario. The last battle over the suffrage issue, however, did not directly involve the A.O.W.S.C. Ultimately, the outcome of the fight

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[87] Ibid., p. 170-71.

over woman suffrage was in the hands of the Ontario legislature, which was responsible for determining who would be able to vote in Ontario provincial and municipal elections.

CHAPTER SIX

OPPOSITION TO WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN THE ONTARIO LEGISLATURE

The Legislative Assembly was the final court of appeal for the woman suffrage question in Ontario. The existing historiography of the woman suffrage movement in Ontario assumes that the eventual granting of the provincial franchise to Ontario women in February, 1917 was inevitable, and came as a result of the success of the long campaign waged by the suffragists in the province. For the most part, however, the suffragists had anything but success within the Legislative Assembly. During the years 1885 to 1893, and from 1903 to 1916, at least one woman suffrage bill was introduced during each legislative session, and every bill was either withdrawn in the face of extreme opposition or soundly defeated when brought to a vote. Ontario politicians made no important or original intellectual contributions to antisuffragism, nor did they play any role in the Ontario antisuffrage movement outside of the Ontario Legislature. Nevertheless, Ontario legislators, due to their continuous apathy or outright opposition, were responsible for the defeat of numerous attempts to give Ontario women the vote. Their arguments must therefore be considered in an analysis of antisuffragism in the province.

An oft-quoted passage from a 1932 lecture on British suffragette militancy by Professor Harold Laski provides an eloquent synopsis of the tactics of the opposition to suffrage that is relevant to the opposition that was found in the Ontario legislature from 1885 to 1917:

> In any society the tactics of a privileged order are always the same tactics. Declare, in the first place, that the demand is impossible; insist when it has been proved to be possible that the time for its translation into statute has not yet come; then when it is clear that there seems to be an urgency about it say that the time is coming but that this is not yet the time; then when an angry clamour surrounds the demand, insist that you cannot yield to violence; and when finally, you are driven to yield, say that it is because you have been intellectually convinced that the perspective of events has changed.[1]

While this model applies in general to the opposition to woman suffrage in the Ontario legislature, it cannot, of course, take into account a number of important conditions found in the Ontario situation.

First of all, the extent to which the Ontario Legislative Assembly constituted a "privileged order" is not clear. We have already examined other manifestations of antisuffragism in Ontario which, one could argue, emanated from groups whose privilege was based on intellectual reputation or class distinctions. It is hard to dispute, however, that the authority and composition of the Ontario legislature rendered it representative of the exclusively male and relatively conservative interests which possessed the bulk

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[1] Quoted in Rover, p. 101; also quoted in Bacchi, p. 133.

of the economic power in the province. Secondly, Laski's model does not take into account the political considerations which interfere with the discussion of issues of principle in a political arena. These political considerations probably played an important role in the prevention of the passing of woman suffrage bills in the Ontario legislature, and were probably the main factor in the eventual granting of the vote to women in Ontario. Nevertheless, the Laski model is valuable as a summary of the course of the political opposition to woman suffrage in Ontario.

The year 1885 serves as the start of this chapter's discussion of the political opposition to woman suffrage within the Ontario Legislative Assembly because it was during the 1885 legislative session that a woman suffrage bill first suffered defeat. In 1885, some Ontario women could vote in certain elections. In 1850, both married and unmarried women were given the vote for school trustees, as long as they met the property qualification required of male voters, and in 1882 the same category of women were granted the right to vote on municipal by-laws, again as long as they met the property qualification.[2] Two years later, in March, 1884, the Ontario legislature voted to grant full municipal voting rights to qualified widows and unmarried women.[3] The municipal vote was considered suitable for

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[2]Cleverdon, pp. 21-22.

[3]Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, Vol. 17 (1884), p. 114.

unmarried women because municipal tasks were generally considered to be "housekeeping tasks" and therefore consistent with the domestic responsibilities within woman's sphere.[4] Married women were specifically excluded from voting rights because the municipal vote was seen as representing one propertied household only, and not two political wills. Thus widows and unmarried women could represent their property, but the property of a married couple was to be represented by the husband only.

There were two distinct waves of suffrage debate in the Ontario Legislature. Bills to give Ontario women the vote were introduced in the years 1885 to 1893 and 1903 to 1917. These bills were introduced as private members' bills until the last round of the suffrage debate. Both sides in the debate over the bills introduced during the first wave of suffrage activity were dominated by Liberals. Between 1885 and 1893 Liberal member John Waters introduced nine woman suffrage bills. Waters' strongest opposition came from fellow Liberals John Dryden (1840-1909), the member for South Ontario, and Christopher Finlay Fraser (1839-1894), the member for Brockville. Members of other parties in the legislature also spoke out against woman suffrage; neither support nor opposition to the enfranchisement of women was determined by political party. Dryden and Fraser, however, stood out among other antisuffrage members due to the consistency with which they spoke out against woman suffrage

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[4]Gorham, "The Canadian Suffragists," p. 33.

in the legislature and the vehemence of the arguments they used.

The antisuffrage side of the second wave of debate was dominated by the premiers. Conservative premiers James Pliny Whitney and William Hearst were unshakable in their opposition to the enfranchisement of women. Year after year, debate over the suffrage issue was quashed by the terse refusals of these men even to consider the possibility of allowing women to vote.

During both phases of the suffrage debate in the Ontario Legislature the content of the suffrage bills introduced in the Ontario legislature contributed to the opposition they encountered. Not all suffrage bills were the same; bills distinguished between the type of franchise sought, municipal or provincial, and for whom it was sought, married women, widows and unmarried women, or all women. Certain aspects of suffrage were acceptable to some members, other aspects were not. Very often, the content of a suffrage bill was cited by members as the reason why they opposed woman suffrage at that time. Of course, this may have been an excuse used by members who were opposed to woman suffrage in any form. However, members used this sort of objection with sufficient frequency to suggest that a significant number of members did base at least part of their objection to woman suffrage on the nature of the suffrage bills presented in the Legislative Assembly. According to Brian Harrison, this was very often the case in Britain. "Resistance to [woman suffrage bills] could be

effectively justified on grounds quite distinct from attitudes to the woman suffrage question itself - out of regard for either the social class or the marital state, or both, of those proposed for enfranchisement," writes Harrison.[5]

From 1885 to 1917, bills introduced in the Ontario legislature on behalf of woman suffrage broadened in their scope. In general, bills introduced during the 1880s called for the enfranchisement of widows and unmarried women only. In the early 1890s, legislators turned their attention to married women, but would only consider the question of allowing them to vote in municipal elections. During the last five years of the suffrage debate in Ontario, the scope of the suffrage bills introduced during each session of the legislature was broad enough to ensure that all women in the province were considered for the franchise.[6]

The arguments used by Liberals John Dryden and Christopher Fraser, the members who spoke in opposition to woman suffrage bills most often during the first wave of suffrage debate in the Ontario legislature, suggest that these men had more than a passing acquaintance with the then-current antisuffrage ideas of Goldwin Smith. Arguments reminiscent of those of Goldwin Smith were used during the

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[5]Harrison, p. 47.

[6]For a summary of suffrage activity in the Ontario Legislative Assembly, see Cleverdon, Chapter Two.

debate over the 1886 bill to give unmarried women and widows the right to vote for members of the legislature, although it is not known how direct the influence of Smith was. John Dryden warned his fellow members that, once enfranchised, women would make no effort to learn about issues, and would therefore vote according to "caprice" and not informed opinion, which would have dangerous results. Very much in the spirit of Smith, Dryden denied that women had any "right" to the vote, and he warned that should women be allowed into politics, they would be forced from their place on the "pedestal" which women had heretofore enjoyed.[7] He also argued that the "best" women would decline the opportunity to vote, leaving the worst women to vote instead, a trend that was already noticeable among men. The "most estimable, modest ~~and~~ learned men," Dryden pointed out, often preferred to avoid the corrupting influences of politics.[8] Fraser argued that if women had the vote, they would be subject to all the responsibilities of citizenship presently shouldered by men, responsibilities which he did not consider suitable for women, such as sitting in parliament, military service, and jury duty. He also pointed out the absurdity of expecting that men would obey laws passed by women; men would not obey, and social chaos would ensue.[9] During the 1888 debate, Fraser warned that

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[7] Globe, March 4, 1886, p. 5.

[8] Mail, March 4, 1886.

[9] Globe, Mail, March 4, 1886.

enabling widows and unmarried women to vote for members of the legislature was the first step on the way to universal suffrage, the "thin end of the wedge" that Goldwin Smith also warned of.[10]

Members of the Legislatave Assembly also quarreled with the content of John Waters' suffrage bills. Waters introduced three different types of suffrage bills to the legislature, proposing giving the municipal vote to married women, the provincial vote to widows and unmarried women, and the provincial vote to both married and unmarried women. This variety in the categories of women to receive the vote did not appear to have attracted more members to the suffrage cause. On the contrary, the very variety in Waters' bills appears to have provided his opponents with new bones of contention to pick at during debate. If Waters proposed that married women be given the municipal vote, he was answered with predictions that women would bring the destructive influence of politics into their homes; if he proposed that widows and unmarried women be allowed to vote for members of the legislature, he was told that he was discriminating against married women.

In 1887, Waters introduced his first bill calling for the municipal vote for married women. Members who opposed woman suffrage in principle again paraded Goldwin Smith-influenced antisuffragist arguments before the legislature:

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[10] Globe, March 22, 1888, p. 5.

nature didn't intend women to vote; woman suffrage would effectively transfer all political power to women, presumably due to the "overpopulation" of women; woman suffrage would lead to prohibition.[11] Also significant were the objections based on opposition to allowing married women to vote in a situation in which widows and unmarried women already voted. The most obvious argument against giving married women the municipal vote was put forward by Fraser, who said that the husband was the rightful municipal voter in a family. As previously mentioned, it was agreed that where there was no husband, the widow or spinster could cast a municipal vote as long as she satisfied the property qualification. Fraser pointed out an inevitable and undesirable outcome of the enfranchisement of married women. Married women would be expected to meet property qualifications. To meet these qualifications, women would claim ownership of property which they had brought into their marriages, property which may have allowed husbands to meet required property qualifications. It was possible, therefore, that for women to be enfranchised, their husbands would have to be disenfranchised. The possibility that men would be disenfranchised in favour of their wives was, to some members, an outrage. Other members opposed the enfranchisement of married women because they feared, as did Goldwin Smith, that politics would be brought into the domestic sphere, with disruptive results. Two members,

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[11] Globe, March 24, 1887, p. 5.

Thomas Craig, a Conservative, and David Creighton, a Liberal-Conservative, warned that giving married women the vote would upset family relations and lead women to neglect their domestic responsibilities.[12]

Ironically, when Waters called for the legislative franchise for widows and unmarried women, specifically excluding married women, he was met with equally strong opposition. In 1886, John Dryden claimed that the restriction of voting rights to widows and unmarried women would discourage women from marrying, since they would lose their right to vote once they married.[13] There was also opposition to the exclusion of married women from Waters' 1889 suffrage bill.[14] Liberal member Arthur Hardy went as far as to suggest that suffragists themselves were against married women voting. He claimed that suffragists assumed that hostility between men and women was a natural state, and that suffragists discriminated against married women because they did not exhibit hostility towards their husbands.[15] Another objection which arose out of the nature of Waters' suffrage bills was that they dealt with the woman suffrage issue on a piece by piece basis by asking for only one form of suffrage for only one group of women at a time. C. F.

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[12] Globe, March 24, 1887, p. 5.

[13] Ibid., March 4, 1886, p. 5.

[14] Ibid., February 28, 1889, p. 4.

[15] Ibid, p. 4.

Fraser and Alpheus Wood, the Liberal-Conservative member for Hastings, raised this objection in 1887. Fraser deplored the piece-meal approach to woman suffrage rather than discussing the issue in its entirety. Wood claimed to favour woman suffrage, but agreed with Fraser that Waters had taken the wrong approach to the question.[16] John Dryden raised the same point in 1889.[17]

Oliver Mowat, the Liberal Premier of Ontario, expressed views in opposition to Waters' suffrage bills that conform to Harold Laski's claim that once a demand has been proved possible the privileged order will declare "that the time for its translation into statute has not yet come." During the debate over the 1886 bill proposing to give widows and unmarried women the right to vote for members of the Legislative Assembly, Mowat stated that he believed women to be equal in intelligence to men and that he did not fear the potential consequences of women voting. He did not, however, believe that the time was right for the enfranchisement of women. He said that the majority of the people in the province were still "shocked" by the very idea of woman suffrage, and that most women themselves did not want the vote because they were satisfied with the representation they were presently receiving and had no special grievances.[18] In 1888 and 1893, Mowat again declared himself in

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[16] Globe, March 24, 1887, p. 5.

[17] Ibid., February 28, 1889, p. 4.

[18] Ibid., March 4, 1886, p. 5.

favour of woman suffrage in principle, but said he would vote against the Waters bill because the time for woman suffrage was not yet right.19

John Dryden stood out among his fellow legislators as the Ontario Legislative Assembly's most passionate opponent of woman suffrage. Dryden, who became the Ontario Minister of Agriculture in 1890, appears to have taken the entire woman suffrage issue more seriously than his fellow members. He spoke at greater length on the issue, and introduced a greater number of more sophisticated arguments in opposition to woman suffrage than did other members of the legislature. Dryden's greatest contribution to the political opposition to woman suffrage was his remarkable speech in response to Waters' 1893 bill proposing to allow all women, married, widowed and never married, to vote for members of the Legislative Assembly. The speech was reported in Toronto newspapers and was published as a pamphlet shortly after it was delivered before the legislature on May 10, 1893.

Dryden prefaced his remarks by stating his conviction as to the importance of the woman suffrage issue. It was, he said, "a most serious question; it invokes far-reaching results, and it is, undoubtedly one of the most revolutionary measures ever submitted to this Legislature."20 The

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[19] Globe, March 22, 1888, p. 5 and May 11, 1893, pp. 6 and 8.

[20] Hon. John Dryden, Womanhood Suffrage (Toronto, 1893), p. 3.

major inspiration for Dryden's opposition to the enfranchisement of women came from Christianity and the Bible. Dryden's most important argument depended on a Biblical interpretation of separate spheres. He said that while the Bible did not, of course, mention woman suffrage, it did set down what the relationship between men and women was to be. The spheres of men and women were, therefore, divinely ordained and could not be changed under any circumstances. "There is no word from beginning to end about women's suffrage, nor indeed about suffrage of any kind," Dryden said of the Bible, "but there is a great deal in it about the relationship of man and woman which determines their respective spheres in the world for all time."[21]

In his speech, Dryden used Biblical examples to prove that woman's role had been determined by God and expressed through the Bible. According to Dryden, woman's submissive and dependent relationship to man was determined at Creation, through the characteristics given to each sex by God. The nature of man and woman, therefore dictated the sphere in which each sex would operate:

> Man's appearance indicates force, authority, decision, self-assertion, while that of a woman shows exactly the opposite, and indicates instead, trust[,] dependence, grace and beauty. In other words, man was made in such a form when compared to woman as stamps him with the attributes of authority, government and control.[22]

After the fall of Adam and Eve, the curse of God on woman

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[21] Dryden, p. 5.

[22] Ibid., p.5.

was that "thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee." Woman suffrage, Dryden said, would impose the rule of women over men, flying in the face of God's own command. Woman suffrage was, therefore, not possible.[23] Dryden said to John Waters:

> When my honorable friend seeks to give them [women] the ballot he in effect says, 'I propose to give woman control of public affairs; I wish to place in her hands governing power to compel man to accept her dictation.' That proposition, according to my argument, is against the teaching of scripture, and therefore is not and cannot be right.[24]

Dryden also drew justification for his antisuffrage stand from the New Testament. Just as the New Testament says that Christ is the head of the Church, so too is the husband the head of the wife, claimed Dryden. In both cases, the Church and the wife are obedient and submit their wills to the higher authority, and in both cases Christ and the husband give back love and kindness. Dryden added that if this relationship were maintained, which could only be accomplished through the defeat of woman suffrage, people would attain the nearest approximation of Eden possible on earth.[25] Interestingly, even John Dryden used the rhetoric of natural law in his defence of separate spheres and the subordination of woman to man. "Do what you will you cannot, and you ought not if you could, reverse nature's law," he warned. "Woman always was and always will be

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[23]Dryden, p. 6.

[24]Ibid., p. 8.

[25]Ibid., p. 7.

dependent upon man, and whether some women who are manhaters like it or not it cannot be changed."[26]

In his speech Dryden went on to present more reasons why women should not be enfranchised. He did not resort as much to the Bible for justification after he had established the divine inspiration of separate spheres. Next to the immutability of separate spheres, Dryden placed most emphasis on the importance of women's existing influence on men, which needed no vote to be successful. Dryden attributed Canada's good living habits, including increasing sobriety, to the "loving persuasion" of Canadian women, not to the use of the ballot or force.[27] He called upon women to increase their influence by increasing the influence of the home, not by calling for the vote. Through the reestablishment of the natural relationship between husband and wife within the family, women would be assured that men would willingly provide all the protection and sustenance the family needed, without any need to resort to force through the vote. Dryden placed the responsibility for the resumption of traditional roles within the family squarely on the shoulders of women, beseeching them to reassume their dependency upon men:

> I appeal to true womanhood if its highest joy is not to know that in man they have a protector, one who loves them, provides for their needs, not by force, but willingly, because he delights to do it, and I appeal

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[26] Dryden, p. 10.

[27] Ibid., p. 9.

> to true manhood if the strongest incentive to active exertion to do their best in every way is not the fact that there is dependent upon them a loving, dutiful wife, or a mother, daughter or sister.[28]

Dryden also peppered his speech with a number of antisuffragist arguments that strongly suggest the influence of Goldwin Smith. Dryden argued that giving a woman the vote and allowing her to hold office (which he believed would be the next step) would take her out of her sphere, effectively robbing her of her identity as a woman. Dryden said that he would deny woman the vote "not because woman is not intelligent, nor because she is not sufficiently educated, but because she is woman, because by putting her thus out of her sphere you unsex [her], you are seeking to make her a man, to induce her to fill the place of a man."[29] The unsexed woman, the result of woman suffrage, was completely unnatural, according to the will of God. She was independent and unsubmissive, "a manly woman - the lowest type of womanhood," according to Dryden.[30]

Continuing to echo Smith, Dryden warned that political disagreements between husbands and wives would destroy the domestic peace that was so important to happy married life and that women would lose all the advantages of male gallantry and would be taken down from their pedestals if they took an equal role in politics. He also expressed

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[28] Dryden, p. 14.

[29] Ibid., p. 13.

[30] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

Goldwin Smith's physical force argument against woman suffrage, using the example of prohibition to illustrate it. Prohibitory legislation, Dryden warned, would not be favoured by the majority of men, but could possibly be passed if women had the vote. The enforcement of such a law would, therefore, be impossible; enfranchised women could force men to make laws, but women could not force men to obey laws.[31]

Like most antisuffragists, Dryden was not without a plan for a better Canadian society and the improvement of woman's position that could serve as an alternative to woman suffrage. Not surprisingly, Dryden turned to Christianity for his plan. He called for both men and women to give in to the "uplifting influences of Christianity" (Dryden did not, unfortunately, identify these) which would restore the harmony between men and women which existed before of fall of man.[32]

Dryden's speech and pamphlet seem to have had their desired effect upon the suffrage issue in Ontario: no woman suffrage bill was introduced in the Ontario Legislative Assembly from the time of his speech and the publication of his pamphlet, both in 1893, until 1903, when there was yet another unsuccessful attempt to win the municipal vote for married women. Among the members who listened to Dryden's speech was one James Pliny Whitney, the future Conservative

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[31] Dryden, pp. 8-9.

[32] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

premier and implacable foe of woman suffrage. Whitney wrote Dryden's widow in December, 1909 to thank her for sending him, through a mutual friend, a copy of her late husband's pamphlet. "I have a distinct recollection of the occasion on which the speech was delivered," Whitney wrote in his letter, "and of the very great effect of it on the minds of the Members of the Legislature."[33] The suffrage issue only gathered steam again in 1905, when John Smith, the Liberal member for Peel, introduced a bill calling for the provincial enfranchisement of all Ontario women; at least one woman suffrage bill was introduced in every legislative session until the vote was granted in 1917. Conservative Premier Sir James Whitney's term of office from 1905 to 1914 was an important transitional phase in the debate over woman suffrage in Ontario.

Whitney fits into Harold Laski's model of the tactics of opposition well. According to Whitney's biographer, Charles Humphries, while the premier was prepared to move in the direction of reform in some areas, he would not alter his position in opposition to woman suffrage. In debate over the suffrage issue, Whitney chose to be vague or facetious.[34] Humphries writes that Whitney was aware of the level of public support for woman suffrage in Ontario and

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[33]Archives of Ontario, James P. Whitney Papers, MU 3125, Whitney to Mrs. John Dryden, December 18, 1909.

[34]Charles W. Humphries, 'Honest Enough to be Bold': The Life and Times of Sir James Pliny Whitney (Toronto, 1985), p. 178.

was politically shrewd enough not to declare support for the issue until the majority of voters was also in support. Humphries' description of Whitney's political thinking on the issue is highly reminiscent of Laski's model:

> [Whitney's] inaction on female suffrage, while at times quite graceless, had the approbation of the majority. The premier was shrewd enough to provide the lead when he was reasonably confident that most in the province would follow, but he had no intention of marching ahead only to discover his supporting army had vanished.[35]

In his own brief contributions to the annual debates over woman suffrage in the Legislative Assembly, Whitney stated again and again that Ontario women did not want the vote, that the time was not right for the enfranchisement of women, and that attempts to secure the vote for the women of Ontario was an insult to them.[36] His objections were not without justification; the introductions of the suffrage bills to the legislature were often inept, allowing Whitney the opportunity to accuse those who put forward the bills of insulting women. In 1906, Whitney accused John Smith, the Liberal member who succeeded John Waters as the most faithful promoter of woman suffrage with the Ontario legislature, of raising the issue only to fulfill a campaign promise. Whitney claimed that Smith did not actually want woman suffrage to pass, but only brought up the issue as a political "football" to be tossed between the two parties.

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[35]Humphries, p. 221.

[36]Globe, April 20, 1906, p. 7; April 20, 1907; April 10, 1908, p. 5.

This, Whitney said, was an insult to Ontario womanhood.[37] In 1911, a suffrage bill introduced by Labour member Allan Studholme faced opposition from William Proudfoot, the Liberal member for Huron Centre, who was expected to be the bill's staunchest supporter, and who introduced suffrage bills himself in future sessions. Proudfoot said in explanation for his action that while he supported woman suffrage "in the abstract," he did not think the time was right for its adoption in Ontario.[38] This incident suggests that Whitney may have been accurate in his assessment of the nature of the suffrage bills introduced to the legislature and the motivations of those who called for woman suffrage in Ontario. There seems to have been a marked absence of communication within the suffrage camp in the Legislative Assembly, and perhaps, in light of the variety of suffrage bills introduced in the legislature, a devastating lack of communication between the woman suffragists and the pro-suffrage MLAs.

The 1913 woman suffrage debate was again marked by the sort of confusion in which Whitney no doubt delighted. Three bills were introduced in the 1913 session, two calling for the provincial franchise and one for the municipal franchise for married women. It was the bill proposing the municipal franchise that attracted the most attention. Conservative member Findlay Macdiarmid moved an amendment to

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[37] Globe, April 20, 1906, p. 7.

[38] Ibid., March 22, 1911, pp. 1 and 8.

the bill which would allow a woman whose husband voted or held office on the basis of her property to choose which of the two partners would cast the vote.[39] The possibility that men would be disenfranchised at the hands of their own wives was rejected by most members, and both the bill and the amendment were defeated. It is possible that Macdiarmid, a Conservative, introduced a severely-flawed bill just so that it would be the object of derision and so that it would suffer sure defeat; it seems inconceivable that woman suffragists in Ontario played any part in drafting easily defeatable suffrage bills such as this one. Just as in the years from 1885 to 1893, the suffrage bills which appeared during Whitney's premiership often seem to have been opposed on the basis of flaws in the bills themselves and not just because the members of the Ontario legislature were opposed to woman suffrage in general. A Conservative member, William J. Hanna, remarked on this phenomenon during the debate over the 1913 Macdiarmid amendment. According to the Globe, Hanna said that the Macdiarmid bill "looked as if it had been prepared hurriedly and without proper consideration as to where it would lead to." The Globe reported that Hanna thought that the bill was inconsistent and that he "was sure it was not a bill that even the warmest friends of the suffragists would

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[39] Globe, April 2, 1913, pp. 1 and 8.

support in its present form."[40]

The 1914 session of the Legislative Assembly saw the last suffrage battle of the Whitney administration and the first reference during debate to organized female opposition to women suffrage in Ontario. In his speech in support of Studholme's bill calling for the municipal and provincial franchises for all women, married or unmarried, over the age of twenty-one, William Proudfoot concentrated on answering the arguments put forward in a pamphlet issued by "the association opposed to woman suffrage," which was apparently the pamphlet, issued in 1913, of Alice George's speech to a meeting of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada.[41] Speaking against another 1914 bill, which proposed granting the municipal vote to married women, provincial treasurer Isaac Lucas stated that he did not believe women in Ontario wanted the vote, citing the active and organized opposition that women were putting up against enfranchisement.[42] In the same speech, Lucas denied that woman suffrage would guarantee increased wages for working women, citing the experiences of American suffrage states as proof, an antisuffrage argument that he may have derived from the A.O.W.S.C. pamphlet of Alice George's speech.

Upon the death of Premier Whitney on September 25, 1914, William Hearst assumed the leadership of the Ontario

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[40] Globe, April 2, 1913, p. 8.

[41] Ibid., April 7, 1914, p. 3.

[42] Ibid., March 31, 1914, pp. 1 and 8.

Conservative Party and became premier of the province. He also carried on Whitney's tradition of opposition to woman suffrage, to the dismay of the suffragists and to the delight of the antis.[43] Like Whitney, Hearst claimed that most women in Ontario did not want the vote. He concluded, therefore, that the time was not yet right for woman suffrage in Ontario, although he openly conceded that woman suffrage would probably be realized at some time in the future. Hearst also believed that voting would be an unwelcome extra burden to add to women's already onerous duties as wives and mothers, and he maintained that the influence of a "Christian woman" was more valuable than any political power woman might gain from enfranchisement.[44] Hearst did not hesitate to make these views known to the suffragists in Ontario. He told a February 24, 1915 suffrage delegation that

> there is a large body of women in this province, particularly mothers, that feel they have ample scope under present conditions to exercise their influence, there is no doubt, and that these women feel that the franchise is a responsibility and burden that they are not called upon to undertake and that they have not the opportunities to freely perform, in view of their responsibilities as wives, mothers and guardians of the home.[45]

He repeated this stance before another suffragist delegation one year later, on March 15, 1916. He also referred to the

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[43]Margaret Prang, N. W. Rowell: Ontario Nationalist (Toronto, 1975), p. 141.

[44]Tennyson, p. 116-7.

[45]Ibid., p. 117.

existence of a group of antisuffragist women in the province, and stated that no action on woman suffrage was possible as long as public opinion on the subject was divided.[46]

Woman suffrage activity in the Ontario Legislature continued under Hearst much as it had under his predecessor. In the 1915 and 1916 sessions, bills to give the provincial vote to both married and unmarried women and the municipal vote to married women were again introduced, and again soundly defeated, although none of the bills was met with much vocal opposition during debate. Hearst himself spoke briefly in opposition to the 1916 bill calling for the extension of the legislative franchise to women. He said that the present was not the proper time even to debate woman suffrage, let alone enact it, warning that discussion of such a contentious issue might divide the women who worked so well for the war effort. There was in 1915 and 1916 little of the emotion, outrage, or attempts at reasoned argument that had marked earlier debates over woman suffrage. To all appearances, the woman suffrage issue in the Ontario Legislative Assembly was dead.

It therefore came as a great shock to the antis when, in February, 1917, the Hearst Conservatives did a complete about-face on the question of woman suffrage. Although the Conservative government itself did not introduce any woman

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[46]Globe, March 16, 1916, p. 8.

suffrage legislation during the 1917 session, Premier Hearst surprised many when, upon the introduction of the usual private member's bill calling for the enfranchisement of women, he suddenly declared himself and his party in favour of woman suffrage in Ontario. With the support of the government, bills to give married women the municipal franchise and all women the legislative franchise were passed unanimously.[47] An attempt to grant women the right to hold elected office was defeated, however. The suffragists of Ontario were of course delighted with the government's change of heart on the issue. The antisuffragists, as demonstrated by the bitter reaction of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada, which was discussed in the previous chapter, were devastated by Hearst's incomprehensible reversal on woman suffrage.

Historians of the woman suffrage movement in Ontario have tried to discover the reasons for the unexpected granting of the vote to women; this exercise also has a place in a study of Ontario antisuffragism. In explanation of his change of opinion on the question, Hearst himself said that public opinion had finally come around to supporting the enfranchisement of women due to the people's recognition of the value of the war work performed by women.[48] This appears quite logical; Hearst always said that he mainly objected to woman suffrage because public

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[47] Cleverdon, pp. 41-2.

[48] Globe, February 28, 1917. pp. 1 and 9.

opinion was not in favour of it. There was, however, more to Hearst's move in 1917 than a reading of public opinion. Both Catherine Cleverdon and Margaret Prang, the biographer of Liberal opposition leader Newton Rowell, have concluded that the sudden support of the Hearst government for woman suffrage was the result of pressure from the federal Conservative government of Robert Borden, which was already considering allowing women to vote in the next federal election if conscription became an issue, and that Hearst, who had observed the granting of the vote in a number of Western Canadian provinces, decided to support the enfranchisement of women so that he and his government would be credited with a progressive move.[49] Carol Bacchi agrees, seeing the granting of the vote to Ontario women as the result of political pragmatism arising from the political conditions of the time.[50] Borden was advised by his Solicitor General, Arthur Meighen, as early as 1916 that giving the federal vote to "patriotic" women who already had the provincial vote would be a "splendid stroke of policy."[51] Meighen also warned Borden in late 1916 that the Conservative Party's opposition to woman suffrage was politically dangerous. "I am further conscious," Meighen

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[49]Cleverdon, pp. 42-3; Prang, p. 184.

[50]Public Archives of Canada, Robert L. Borden Papers, MG 26, H, Microfilm Reel C-4312, pp. 33498-33499, Meighen to Borden, October 17, 1916.

[51]Ibid., Microfilm Reel C-4359, pp. 75208-75209, Meighen to Borden, October 4, 1916.

wrote Borden, "that this course [opposing woman suffrage] will further result in an inclination on the part of women voters in the Equal Suffrage Provinces to oppose us in provincial contests."[52] No historians believe that the vote was granted as a "reward" for the war work performed by women, although women's contribution to the war effort undoubtedly shifted public opinion in favour of womans suffrage.

If we return to Harold Laski's model, we find that Hearst's eventual capitulation to woman suffrage conforms to Laski's analysis of the tactics of opposition: Hearst, in his change of heart over the issue, conceded that (in the words of Harold Laski) "the perspective of events [had] changed." There is unfortunately no evidence, such as today's ubiquitous public opinion polls, to back Hearst's contention that the time for woman suffrage in Ontario was ripe in early 1917. Nor can we know the relative strengths of either side at any of the crucial points during the suffrage debate. Laski's model, though of limited application in the Ontario situation, does however suggest that the efforts of both the suffragists and the antisuffragists may have had little effect on the political outcome of the debate. The Ontario Legislative Assembly was an exclusively male forum, unconcerned for the most part with issues of interest to women. The absence of understanding of women's

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[52] Bacchi, p. 142.

issues among the members of the legislature was demonstrated in both the confused and often bumbling manner in which the suffrage issue was handled by its political supporters and in the disinterested reactions of most members to woman suffrage bills. Ultimately, the victory of the suffragist forces seems much less impressive and the defeat of the antis much less decisive in light of the political machinations that took place in the Ontario legislature from 1885 to 1917.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Like most pieces of historical writing, this thesis on the movement opposed to woman suffrage in Ontario has probably raised more questions than it has answered. I have, however, arrived at a number of conclusions regarding the nature of the Ontario woman suffrage issue as a whole, which was the major aim of the thesis in the first place. As I suspected when I decided to take on this subject, my research into antisuffragism has led me to conclude that the opposition to woman suffrage was much more important to the history of woman suffrage and to feminism in general in Ontario than has been recognized by Canadian historians. There is tantalizing evidence that the antisuffragists played a role in determining the intellectual context in which the suffrage issue would be debated. More research into the actual tactics and pragmatism of the suffragists is required before definitive conclusions can be drawn as to the full influence of the antisuffragists upon the suffrage side of the issue.

It has been difficult to examine the tactics of the antisuffragists. It has really only been possible to analyse one antisuffragist tactic, the writing of articles, pamphlets, and letters to newspapers. More research is

necessary in order to determine the exent to which antisuffragists used speeches, public meetings, demonstrations, and deputations in their efforts to advertise the fight against the enfranchisement of women. A more complete understanding of the relationship between the suffrage and antisuffrage movements will only be achieved through a better understanding of the tactics used by the antisuffragists.

Antisuffragism was part of a complex set of ideas on the true nature of women and their role in society which are interesting in their own right. Contrary to the views of most historians of women in the nineteenth century who have dismissed the ideas of antisuffragists and antifeminists as misguided and intellectually indefensible, those who opposed woman suffrage did so out of a deeply held conviction that the enfranchisement of women was not compatible with the best interests of society. Instead of continuing to point out how wrong we now believe the antisuffragists to have been (the intellectual equivalent of banging one's head against a brick wall), historians must try to understand antisuffragism in the same way that all political, intellectual, and social trends should be understood, which is within their historical context, and not according to our own ideas on what constitutes progress in society.

It is hoped that by placing an emphasis on the trend to feminization that dominated opposition to woman suffrage in Ontario, antisuffragism will no longer be dismissed, rather conveniently actually, as a manifestation of misogyny. The increasingly important and independent role which women

played in antisuffragism in Ontario is strong evidence that opposition to woman suffrage was not merely an instance of men trying to limit the role of women in society or of men attempting to impose upon women an unrealistic view of female nature.

The most fascinating aspect of antisuffragism in Ontario is its eventual domination by women. The female antisuffragists were quite correct in their observation that woman suffrage was an issue like no other issue of social reform that had involved women, for it was one of few that did not bring women together in a united effort. The most important distinction between suffragist and antisuffragist women was the difference in importance placed by the two groups on legislative solutions to social problems. Both suffragist and antisuffragist women were involved in social reform work, yet each faction supported a different means of achieving the same goals. Suffragists believed that women had to gain power through direct participation in government in order to legislate solutions. Antisuffragist women rejected direct participation in the legislative process in favour of non-political activity and moral influence. It is clear from their writing that antisuffragist women, in common with male antis, had much less faith in legislated reforms and the political process in general than did their suffragist sisters. Female antisuffragists therefore campaigned to convince women to reject the vote as a means of solving social problems.

Since political parties and parliaments were at that

time (and are still) dominated by men, the female antisuffragists were in effect passing up the opportunity to play a role in male institutions in favour of a reliance upon the traditional female method of bringing about change, which was to exert influence for the good over fathers, husbands, and sons. We must not be so quick to judge the female antisuffragists as unprogressive and we should give them some credit for their belief in the power of women to contribute to society without having to give up female ways and join the men; after all, the antisuffragists turned out to be right when they predicted that very little change for the better would result from the enfranchisement of women. This is not, of course, to imply that woman suffrage was a bad thing, but let us not completely dismiss the sometimes insightful statements of the antis. A re-examination of the true importance of political solutions to the problems which concerned women in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canada is needed.

There were important differences between male and female antisuffragist ideas. Unlike the male antis who had called for the return of strictly separate male and female spheres and for the retreat of women into the home and purely domestic interests, antisuffragist women in Ontario were influenced by ideas on the widening of women's sphere to the extent that they themselves took up the challenge of activity outside the home. They were also interested enough in the extension of women's influence outside the domestic sphere to call for women to remain committed to social

causes and to avoid detours into direct political involvement. Antisuffragist women attained a level of achievement and influence in their reform and charity work that they were loathe to relinquish, and they rejected their male antisuffragist predecessors' condemnations of women's activities outside the home. A very different strain of antisuffragism was the result.

Many aspects of both the suffrage and antisuffrage movements in Ontario and in Canada as a whole remain unexamined. Indeed, both sides of the suffrage issue should be studied together in order to understand this historical phenomenon in its complete context. First, while the issue of class has been considered in most Canadian treatments of the woman suffrage movement, most historians have studied middle and upper-middle class suffragisim only. Upper class and working class suffragism has been neglected, not to mention upper class and working class antisuffragism. I have attempted to consider upper class ideas on woman suffrage, but I have not able to consider the ideas on woman suffrage of working class men and women. I suspect that the ideas on woman suffrage of both men and women of the working class differed significantly from those of the middle, upper-middle, and upper classes. It has long been assumed that working class men opposed woman suffrage because of the suffrage movement's identification with the prohibition and Sabbatarian movements. There should be a closer examination of the reasons for working class male opposition to woman suffrage as well as a study of working class female opposi-

tion, if any existed. For example, a pro-suffrage editorial in the Hamilton Spectator of February 18, 1913 addressed the opposition of working class women to suffrage. The writer blamed the strong identification of the movement with women of leisure for suffrage's lack of support from working class women, and claimed that these women realized that they would not themselves benefit from the possession of the vote.[1]

It may be that working class antisuffragism was more complex than has been thought. Brian Harrison theorizes that a strict separation of male and female responsibilities may have been essential to survival in poverty-stricken homes, where servants were non-existant, and that working class men may have opposed woman suffrage out of a perceived necessity to maintain this separation of spheres in the face of middle class-imposed ideas on the changing role of women.[2] Harrison also believes that strong conservatism may have led working class men to oppose woman suffrage, and that the middle and upper class-dominated, articulate antisuffrage movement in Britain may have spoken for lower class antisuffragists as well. "Conservatism is by no means the monopoly of the upper classes on this or any other issue, and the conservative's strongest suit is not the

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[1]Hamilton Spectator, February 18, 1913, p. 18.

[2]Harrison, p. 140.

public meeting or the periodical, but custom, tradition, prejudice and unorganised, even semi-articulate, opinion," writes Harrison.[3]

One way to examine working class ideas on woman suffrage is to study the popular culture of antisuffragism. In Britain, the suffragists and antisuffragists waged their war not only in writing and in speeches, but visually through easily accessible and understood postcards and cartoons. Cartoons were also used by American antisuffragists to portray woman suffragists as unwomanly and neglectful of their families, and to arouse sympathy for the husbands and children who were the forgotten victims of suffrage mania. These cartoons found their way into Canada in imported books and magazines and they were reprinted in Canadian publications. An analysis of visual portrayals of suffragists would complement our knowledge of ideas that were expressed in writing. While such cartoons are already used as illustrations in Canadian histories, there has not yet been a satisfactory effort among Canadian historians to understand fully the messages in these cartoons and their impact on those who viewed them in Canadian newspapers and magazines. Carol Bacchi, for example, uses such cartoons as illustrations in Liberation Deferred, and presents all of them as pro-suffrage images. On closer examination, however, at least one, a cartoon by Sam Hunter of the

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[3] Ibid., p. 137.

Toronto World, is actually an antisuffragist cartoon.[4] This cartoon shows "Aunt Suffragette," an enormous, bespectacled, and ugly woman, barging into Premier Whitney's "kitchen," declaring that she is going to clean things up for him. Whitney is portrayed as small and befuddled. A picture hanging crookedly on the wall bears the words "What is Home without a Mother?" These are typical antisuffragist images: the unattractive, pushy, amazon suffragette who claims to have all the anwers; the meek man, completely emasculated by the suffragette; the reference to the motherless home. A search of Canadian newspapers would no doubt uncover many other cartoons such as this. This is but one of many intriguing aspects of antisuffragism that remains to be examined in more detail.

In conclusion, a study of antisuffragism in Canada as a whole would do much to enlarge our knowledge of the true nature of Canadian ideas on suffragism and feminism. Such an analysis would help answer a number of nagging questions: did antisuffragism differ from region to region; did antisuffragist arguments directed against provincial suffrage campaigns differ from those directed at federal legislators; was rural antisuffragism different from urban antisuffragism; was the opposition to woman suffrage in the province of Quebec really significantly different from that in the English-speaking provinces, or has our ignorance of antisuffragism in the rest of Canada led us to assume that

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[4]Bacchi, p. 88.

the arguments of French Canadians against the enfranchisement of women were unique. Although I have only raised these questions, and have not attempted to answer them, I hope that this thesis, by attempting to explore the most basic of questions on the opposition to woman suffrage in Ontario, will encourage others to take up the study of antisuffragism in Canada.

APPENDIX

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OPPOSED TO WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN CANADA

The following is a list of women who were members of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada.

Mrs. W. Murry Alexander
Miss Joan Arnoldi (daughter of Frank Arnoldi)
Mrs. Constance Auden (wife of Henry William Auden)
Lady Adelaide Augusta Aylesworth (wife of Sir Allen Aylesworth)
Miss Barber
Miss Barron
Mrs. E. N. Bate
Mrs. Percy Beatty
Mrs. Burnett
Mrs. Calderwood
Miss Campbell
Mrs. Jane Elizabeth Cartwright (wife of James S. Cartwright)
Mrs. George Cassels
Mrs. Dryden
Mrs. Julia Sophia Du Vernet (wife of Ernest Du Vernet)
Mrs. Ellen Maud Ellis (wife of William Hodgson Ellis)
Mrs. Marion (or Marian) Featherstonhaugh (wife of Frederick Barnard Featherstonhaugh)
Mrs. Arthur Grassett
Mrs. Gunther
Mrs. Elizabeth Hay (wife of John D. Hay)
Mrs. Cecil Kerr (wife of J. K. Kerr)
Mrs. Alice Kingsford (wife of Rupert Kingsford)
Miss Constance Laing
Mrs. Mary Laird (wife of Alexander Laird)
Mrs. Elizabeth Lash (wife of Miller Lash)
Mrs. Loosemore
Mrs. Robert A. Lyon
Miss Marie Macdonnell (daughter of A. Claude Macdonell)
Mrs. Oliver R. Macklem
Miss Edith M. Mairs
Mrs. Mary McIlwraith (wife of Dr. Kennedy Crawford McIlwraith)
Lady Louisa Melvin-Jones (wife of Sir Lyman Melvin-Jones)
Mrs. W. H. Merritt (of St. Catharines, Ontario)
Mrs. Edward L. Morton

Mrs. Charles A. Moss
Mrs. Nation
Mrs. James B. O'Brian
Miss Mary Plummer (daughter of James Henry Plummer)
Mrs. Harry C. Rae
Mrs. Allan Ramsay
Mrs. Guy Robinson
Mrs. James Scott
Miss Skinner
Mrs. Emma Strathy (wife of Henry Seaton Strathy)
Mrs. Florence M. Taylor (wife of F. Denison Taylor)
Mrs. Charles Temple
Mrs. Graham Thompson
Mrs. Gertrude Van Koughnet (wife of Artnur Van Koughnet)
Mrs. E. Walker
Mrs. Sarah Warren (wife of Henry Dorman Warren)
Miss Ethel Wright

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PAC, Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire Papers, MG 28, I 17.

PAC, Andrew Macphail Papers, MG 30, D 150.

PAC, National Council of Women of Canada Papers, MG 28, I 25.

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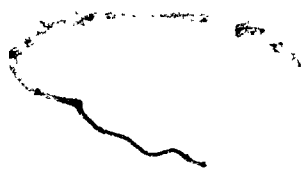

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