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Résumé de l'article

L'étude de la Children's Aid Society de Halifax remet en question les interpretations traditionnelles voulant que l'établissement de cette association ait annoncé le début de la désinstitutionnalisation et de la professionnalisation des services d'aide à l'enfance au début du XXe siècle. À Halifax, la création de cette société ne s'inscrivait pas dans un programme de modernisation délibéré et imposé ; elle avait simplement pour but de renforcer le système existant durant une période critique de crise sociale et économique. Sa fondation était entièrement liée aux particularités de la ville, à la peur de voir s'effriter l'image idéale que l'on s'était faite de l'enfance, et à l'application des prescriptions confessionnelles des institutions en place. En réalité, les services prodigués par les établissement confessionnels et institutionnels gardèrent la cote, ce qui s'explique en grande partie par le fait que les employés des milieux institutionnels et gouvernementaux des soins à l'enfance partageaient sur ce sujet les mêmes préoccupations et les mêmes approches philosophiques.

Modernity and the Denominational Imperative: The Children's Aid Society of Halifax, 1905-1925[1]

RENÉE LAFFERTY

The Children's Aid Society (CAS) traditionally has been envisioned, for better or worse, as a central player in the modernisation and professionalisation of child welfare in Canada. The introduction of these Societies across Canada between 1890 and 1914 removed control of services from amateur institutions run by philanthropists and religious orders, and placed it in the hands of secularly trained professionals whose philosophies and methods were apparently "fundamentally opposed" to those of the institutions. The Orphan Asylums were "forced to operate as temporary shelters" for the CAS, and by controlling intake and discharge policies for these shelters, CAS agents effectively controlled the institutions' mandates. Foster care, a new and improved method of caring for children, replaced long-term care in institutions which were forced either to alter their methods or to close. In this narrative, asylums and orphan homes are not often characterised as participants in their own transformation, but rather as institutions who acquiesced to the changes, offering little opposition to the superior authority of the trained professional. The CAS has thus been designated as an important first step in the de-institutionalisation of Canada's dependent children.[2]

1 Sincere thanks to the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada and the Killam Foundation, who have generously supported the research and writing of this paper. My thanks also to Shirley Tillotson, James Struthers, and the anonymous readers of the CHA *Journal* for their suggestions and comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

2 P. Rooke and R. L. Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English Canada, 1850-1950* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983), 274-277. See also, for example, John Bullen, "J.J. Kelso and the 'New' Child-Savers: The Genesis of the Children's Aid Movement in Ontario," *Ontario History* 82/2 (June 1990): 107-128; Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, *In the Children's Aid: J. J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981); Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976; reprint, Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000); Nancy Christie, *Engendering the State: Family, Work, and Welfare in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000). Christie's argument maintains the link made between CAS promoters and the attack on institutions, particularly for Ontario. However, her argument does note, importantly, that the imperatives of the Ontario CAS's were not secular, but were allied to Protestant interests. See esp. pages 20-26.

The story of the Halifax CAS does not bear this out. When the city's Society was finally and firmly established in 1920, it was meant to support existing welfare services, and not, as has been suggested, to provide an alternative or replacement to them. It was not a deliberate attempt to modernise the city's welfare services, but was provoked by the strains and anxieties of the First World War, the Halifax Explosion of 1917, and importantly, by the meanings attached to dependent childhood and the perception that threats to ideal childhood were increasing in the modern world. As several historians have demonstrated, an understanding of what was ideal for children grew increasingly well articulated in the early twentieth century.[3] The Halifax situation demonstrates, however, that the sharper the sense of the ideal became, the more expansive and threatening was the fear of its absence or loss. This fear, and not a need to modernise or to guarantee an idealised standard to all children, was the chief factor in motivating the establishment of the Halifax Children's Aid Society, particularly amidst the social and economic upheavals of the post-1914 years.

Before 1914, there appeared little reason, material or otherwise, to tamper with the child welfare system as it was then organised. The mandates and policies of child caring agencies in the city, whether of denominational institutions, non-denominational/secular agencies like the CAS, or even governmental departments concerned with child welfare throughout the province, were agreed upon the nature of the threats to the community's children, and the methods needed to contain those threats. Few considered children within the institutions to be in danger, and there were few doubts expressed about the abilities of the Halifax institutions to care properly for their charges. Rather, the children outside of these institutions, on the streets or in corrupt or corruptible families, were the source of concern. Moreover, in the effort to contain these threats, it was considered necessary for the CAS to remain flexible in its dealings with established, denominational institutions. One of the CAS's earliest proponents, the Provincial Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent children, Ernest Blois, was himself an avid supporter of both institutional care *and* the CAS, and for him, as for many other child-welfare advocates in the city, the two systems were far from incongruous. The institutional system for child welfare in Halifax, in fact, was sustained well into the 1950s.

3 See, for example, Cynthia Comacchio, *Nations Are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993); S. E. Houston, "Victorian Origins of Juvenile Delinquency: A Canadian Experience," in *Education and Social Change: Themes from Ontario's Past*, ed. Michael B. Katz and Paul H. Mattingly (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 83-109; Robert McIntosh, *Boys in the Pits: Child Labour in the Coal Mines* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000); Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*; Schnell, "Childhood as Ideology: A Reinterpretation of the Common School," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 27/1 (February 1979): 7-28; Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*.

Through the Province's Poor Laws and the system of indoor relief perpetuated by them, Nova Scotia appears to have had a customary attachment to maintaining institutions longer than other provinces. This institutional "tradition" may seem, at first, a likely explanation for the persistence of child-welfare institutions in Halifax. However, as will be demonstrated, the persistence of institutional care in the child-welfare field was the result of a dynamic specific to the child-welfare community in the city itself, and was not linked to some larger political culture opposing the autonomy of the poor and favouring institutionalisation and indoor relief. Moreover, while institutional poor relief persisted in Nova Scotia because of funding shortages, other factors explain more powerfully the persistence of Halifax's child-welfare institutions.[4] The ongoing use of institutions in Halifax was tied very closely to local context, to the denominational imperatives of the various institutions, and to the fears associated with the childhood ideal. The emerging child-welfare system in the city was not characterised by a modernising impulse which targeted all institutions as outdated or harmful. And the intentions and programs of the CAS, in its earliest years, were not opposed to institutional care, but supportive of it.

In what follows, the history of the CAS in Halifax is removed from a traditional narrative of modernisation and de-institutionalisation. The first part of the paper examines local conditions prior to the establishment of the CAS in 1920, particularly the denominational divisions within the institutional system, and the religious imperatives expressed through these private homes and asylums. These imperatives provided the context in which the CAS was eventually created, and their long-standing presence in the city both reflected and perpetuated the dominant perceptions of dependent childhood and accepted methods of care. The second part of the paper deals with these perceptions of ideal, and more particularly, degenerate childhood. The congruities and continuities between larger trends and local opinions are explored through secondary literature on the imagery of childhood, followed by an in-depth examination of the Annual Reports of the Provincial Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children, Ernest Blois, and those of the Juvenile Court judges. These reports, both of which were introduced in 1912, were each year published together within a single document submitted to the provincial legislature. These documents are an invaluable source for the early history of child welfare in Halifax, not only because of their descriptive thoroughness and the prominent and active position which their authors took within the city, but also because child-caring agencies and institutions made their own annual reports

4 Indeed, shortages of funding provided finally, in the 1950s, the major push towards closing or radically altering the mandates of children's institutions in the city. See Chapter 6 of my doctoral dissertation, in progress. For the factors affecting Nova Scotia's Poor Laws, see Stan Fitzner, *The Development of Social Welfare in Nova Scotia: A History* (Halifax: Nova Scotia, Department of Public Welfare, 1967), 54-57.

available for these publications. For institutions that have left no other records,[5] these published documents provide two valuable kinds of evidence. One is statistical and financial, information whose value in describing the conditions of the institutions is obvious. The other is linguistic. As with most annual reports of this nature, the material "facts and figures" reported by these bodies are expressed with resplendent rhetoric and metaphorical excess. Such rhetoric cannot be dismissed as a facade that misrepresents historical reality. Rather, the linguistic flourishes must be recognised for their contemporary value and impact. For their intended audiences, the reports resonated with familiar, understandable, and powerful symbols which gave order and sense to the content. Thus, while not every assertion in every report can be taken as literally true or as a statement of honest belief, the language of the reports is valuable as an indication of what their authors believed would seem true and compelling.[6]

In Halifax, the first attempt at organising a CAS happened in 1905. In November of that year, J.J. Kelso, Ontario's first Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children, held a number of public meetings in Halifax about "modern methods of helping neglected, delinquent, and dependent" children.[7] Following these meetings, a group of concerned and generally well-to-do individuals drew up a constitution, and had the CAS incorporated in April of 1906. While it is not entirely clear why, this incarnation of the Halifax CAS did not last. Its short life-span contrasts with other "progressive" movements in the city. As elsewhere in Canada, Haligonians participated in a growing number of voluntary civic organisations which sought to revitalise and modernise the community and its citizenry. The Local Council of Women and the Board of Trade were particularly active, and were joined in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the Civic Improvement League, a movement for the reformation of municipal politics. The

5 Wherever possible, the records of the institutions themselves are used to supplement and contrast the information from these reports; however, for this early period, the documentary history of Halifax's institutions is woefully inconsistent. Fairly complete records are available for the St. Paul's Home for Girls (formerly the St. Paul's Alms House of Industry), Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM), MG 20, Vols.1325 - 1333. Partial records for the Executive Board of the Halifax Infants' Home are in NSARM, MG 20, Vol. 177 (Minutes for 1875-79, 1918-20). Some early registers and correspondence for St. Joseph's Orphanage also are available upon request from the Catholic Pastoral Centre (CPC) in Halifax. Other related information can be found in the records pertaining to the Halifax Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, NSARM, MG 20, Vol. 515 #3 (Casebook for Men, Women and Children, 1908-1910).

6 See Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1991).

7 Miriam Jacobson, "A Better Deal for Children: A Half Century of Service (1920-1970): An historical study of the Children's Aid Society of Halifax," NSARM, L-1138, 1996, 6. See also "For the Care and Uplifting of Children,"(Halifax) *Morning Chronicle*, 27 November 1905, 1-2.

city also boasted temperance organisations and several other athletic and voluntary societies and clubs.[8] After a Civic Revival Campaign of 1911, the organisation of the Halifax Welfare Bureau was also begun in an effort "to establish the most efficient means of alleviating and preventing poverty."[9]

According to one historical account, the CAS "had not flourished" in this active reform environment because "there was no permanent official to stimulate and carry on the organisation."[10] However, the basic functions of a CAS, including child rescue and foster placement, had been, and continued to be, carried out by other organisations in the city. In 1914, legislation was passed granting the powers of a CAS to the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty (SPC), the organisation which had operated in this capacity before 1905. The Provincial Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children also acted as a CAS in the city after this office was formed in 1912. Ernest Blois was the first director of this department, and came to the work from the position of Superintendent at the Halifax Industrial School, an office he had held since 1906.[11] As Director of the Provincial Department, he made use of the agents of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty in the administration of case work within the city, and conducted annual visits to foster homes, institutions, and agencies in Halifax and throughout the province. He also maintained a close relationship with the city's Juvenile Court, which was established in 1911 and dealt with cases of neglect and dependency as well as delinquency.[12] The St. Paul's Home for Girls, originally established in 1867, was also given the power

8 See, for example, J. Fingard, J. Guildford, and D. Sutherland, *Halifax: The First 250 Years* (Halifax: Formac, 1999); E. R. Forbes, "Prohibition and the Social Gospel in Nova Scotia," and "Battles in Another War: Edith Archibald and the Halifax Feminist Movement," in *Challenging the Regional Stereotype: Essays on the 20th Century Maritimes* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1989); Henry Roper, "The Halifax Board of Control: The Failure of Municipal Reform, 1906-1919," *Acadiensis* 14/2 (Spring 1985): 46-65. Records for the Halifax Local Council of Women are located in NSARM, MG20, Vol. 204.

9 National Archives of Canada (NAC), MG 28 I10, Vol. 349, Brief history on the founding of the Halifax Welfare Bureau, nd.

10 Jacobson, "A Better Deal," 5-6.

11 Blois had worked as a teacher at this institution since 1901. He remained as the Provincial Superintendent until 1947, a tenure which, as Rooke and Schnell have observed, led to some stagnation in provincial welfare development. See *Discarding the Asylum*, 305-6. See also F. R. MacKinnon, "The Life and Times of Ernest Blois" [on-line] (Halifax, 1992, accessed 2 September 2001); available from http://www15.pair.com/buchanan/genes/docs/ernblois.htm.

12 The first judge of the Juvenile Court in Halifax was W. B. Wallace, who had been connected to Blois and the child-welfare reform movement since the early part of the century. See MacKinnon, "The Life and Times of Ernest Blois." Throughout this period, Wallace and his successors committed both delinquents *and* "neglected" children to the reformatory institutions in the city, often without first consulting the governing boards or superintendents of these institutions, a source of friction between the reformatories and the Court. See, for example, the transcripts of the inquiry into the administration of the Halifax Industrial School, published in full in *The* (Halifax) *Citizen*, 24 October to 5 December 1924.

of a CAS in 1906.[13] To some extent, the work of these agencies and the Juvenile Court, coupled with the work of several other city institutions (most of which had some rudimentary programme of foster placement) meant that a separate CAS did not seem immediately necessary. As one attendee of the public meeting with J. J. Kelso had argued, striking "a new and to some minds a most practical note," Halifax did not need reform, "just development."[14]

Fifteen years later, this story had changed significantly. Halifax had endured five years of "the pleasure seeking attitudes of war time,"[15] a rapidly expanding population, economic upheaval, and a severe housing shortage. Reports from Ernest Blois, the Provincial Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children, as well as from the city's Juvenile Court judges, reveal that the loss of a parent, even if only temporarily, had put enormous pressures on many families and on the city's local institutions. There was a general impression that juvenile delinquency rates had risen and that, overall, children more often were suffering neglect because of what one local official called "the withdrawal of effective parental supervision, in consequence of the absence of a father overseas." Mothers, deprived of "essential moral support" frequently were left "incapable of controlling the conduct" of their children.[16] The language of Blois's reports also reflected these increasing tensions. As the war persisted, his calls for public interest and assistance for his department's work became more frequent, and his expressions of despair more common. In 1917, he wrote, "[as] we are called upon to investigate case after case of children living in the most wretched conditions of extreme poverty, filth, and vile moral surroundings, our task appears greater than our ability, and resources to work with.... We must frankly confess that ... there has been [a] failure to deal with any degree of satisfaction, with many cases brought to our attention."[17]

These pressures on the Department increased significantly after the Halifax Explosion of 6 December 1917, a time which, according to Blois, would "ever stand out as one of extraordinary stress and activity." War conditions already had added to the number of children in institutions, but following the

13 NSARM, MG 20, Vol. 1326 # 2, St. Paul's Home for Girls, Minute Book of the Directors of Management (1898-1910), 4 June 1906.

14 "For the Care and Uplifting of Neglected Children," 2.

15 Jacobson, "A Better Deal," 6-7.

16 Judge W.B. Wallace, "Six Years in a Juvenile Court," in the Fifth Annual Report of the Provincial Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children (hereafter AR), *Journal of the House of Assembly for Nova Scotia* (hereafter JHA) 1918, Pt. 2, App. 28, 60. Wallace frequently laid blame for broken homes upon mothers and in this particular report, argued that the home which suffered with a weak, dissolute mother was "the saddest of all homes"; it was "in relation to such homes that the court officials find their most difficult work." Even in those homes where the mother was not dissipated, she was, "nevertheless almost wholly to blame for the wretched conditions that exist."

17 AR, *JHA* 1917, Pt. 2, App. 28, 7.

Explosion, seventy children had been left full orphans, 120 without their mothers, and 180 without their fathers. A few days following the disaster, a special committee was established to deal specifically with children affected. With Blois as chairman, the committee dealt with an astounding 1,500 children in its first month of operation. Many of these children required hospitalisation, foster care, or adoptive services. The committee sought rapid placement of children either in foster homes or with relatives in order to reduce, as far as possible, the disruption of their lives. For many, however, these placements were disappointing. Following the Explosion, some people felt deep sympathy for the deserted children and so took them in, only to find that there were insufficient resources to keep the children. In other cases, children were returned to Halifax when it was discovered that they had been placed in homes whose religious affiliations clashed with those of the children.[18]

The problems faced by this committee were greatly exacerbated by damages to several of the city's institutions, including the complete destruction of the Protestant Orphans' Home, where only fifteen of forty-one residents survived. In the Home's annual report to Blois, the secretary wrote that while "[t]he terrible disaster of December 6th wiped this Home out of existence," it was "striving to rise from its ashes, and amid many difficulties [to] continue its work."[19] The Home of the Guardian Angel, a Roman Catholic Infants' Home, also suffered substantial damage, including the death of one baby, and the severe injury of several others. Most other institutions in the city suffered some degree of property damage as well, ranging from broken windows to the partial collapse of walls and ceilings, and most, if they were capable, acted as shelters for children and adults left homeless after the Explosion. All of this added greatly to the general disruption of basic services in the city.[20]

Given these conditions, it is not surprising that a CAS was established once again in the city, in 1920. This time, there was no argument about the elimination of institutions, or for a modernisation of services in the city as had been the case in 1905, but instead, the CAS was now seen as meeting demands for the expansion of services and in particular, allowing the community to deal with a greater number of endangered children. According to some accounts, the

18 Janet Kitz, *Shattered City: The Halifax Explosion and The Road to Recovery* (Halifax: Nimbus, 1989), 96-104. See also Janet Kitz, *The Survivors: Children of the Halifax Explosion* (Halifax: Nimbus, 1992) and S. Morton, "To Take an Orphan: Gender and Family Roles Following the Halifax Explosion," in *Gendered Pasts: Historical Essays in Femininity and Masculinity in Canada*, eds. K. McPherson, C. Morgan, and N. M. Forestell (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999), 106-122.

19 The Orphanage found a temporary building in the City's south end, and while this was "not suitable either in situation or accommodation," the work was resumed in April of 1918. It was many months before the Home was rebuilt and fully operational. See AR, *JHA* 1919, Pt. 2, App. 28.

20 See the AR, *JHA* 1919 Pt. 2, App. 28; Kitz, *Shattered City*, and *The Survivors*.

establishment of the CAS came as a direct result of the overload of city cases on the SPC and the provincial department. Indeed, Blois himself asked that a separate agency be established. Moreover, for at least the first year of its operation, the mandate of the Halifax CAS was only to assist the work of the Provincial Superintendent and the Juvenile Court, and it was another five years before the society arranged to assume intake and discharge services for the local orphanages and infants' homes.

In 1925, the Home of the Guardian Angel, the Halifax Infants' Home, St. Joseph's Orphanage, and the Protestant Orphans' Home, "agreed to co-operate with the CAS and have their applications for admission and discharge go through the Society."[21] Each agency paid a sum to the CAS for this service, but only two of them made regular use of CAS investigators, and this service did not override the power of the managing boards to refuse service to any case. Representatives of each institution were members of the Executive Committee of the CAS, which was intended to give them an "opportunity ... to correlate the work of all so that each agency is aware of [its] most important contribution toward solving the whole problem of child dependency."[22] As the interwar records for these institutions indicate, however, the managing boards and superintendents of the institutions had considerable difficulty in securing what they considered to be adequate services from the CAS, and in at least one case, the managing board eventually refused to deal with the CAS at all. Moreover, these institutions continued to take in children directly from families, parish priests, and other institutions, circumventing CAS policy altogether.[23]

A large part of the problem that these institutions had with the CAS was blamed on the Agency's Executive Secretary, Gwendolen Lantz, who was generally considered inflexible and unsympathetic.[24] In Halifax, flexibility in

21 NAC, MG28 I10, Vol. 1, #4, "Annual Report of the Halifax CAS for the Year Ending 1928."

22 Ibid. For the first five years of the CAS's existence, there appears to have been very little correlation between the officers/executive of the CAS, and the managing/executive committees of the institutions. One notable exception was Mrs. H. Conrod, the long-serving President of the Ladies Committee of the Halifax Infants' Home, who was listed as Vice President of the CAS in 1923. Without greater documentation from the institutions, however, the degree of crossover before the 1925 agreement cannot be definitively established.

23 Well into the interwar period, final decisions on intake and discharge were often made by the managing committees of these institutions, although it became increasingly difficult for them to take the initiative with wards of the CAS. See, for example, the records of the St. Paul's Home for Girls (NSARM, MG 20, Vols. 1325-29); the Halifax Infants' Home (NSARM, MG 20, Vol. 177); St. Joseph's Orphanage (CPC, Halifax); and the Protestant Orphanage (NSARM, MG 20, Vols. 417-19). For an account of conflicts between several of these institutions and the CAS in the late 1940s and early 1950s, see the records of the Halifax Welfare Council, NSARM, MG20 Vol. 408, Child Welfare Division, esp. #5.

24 See Shirley Tillotson, "Democracy, Dollars and the Children's Aid Society: The Eclipse of Gwendolen Lantz," in *Mothers of the Municipality: Women's Work in Social Policy in Post 1945 Halifax*, forthcoming.

dealing with existing institutions was perhaps the most important skill that an individual or agency required because of a powerful, denominationally based imperative operating within the institutions and regulating their associations with other child-caring agencies. In Halifax, institutional records as well as private diocesan archives indicate that child-caring institutions were not simply affiliated with a church or a particular religious belief, but drew a powerful sense of place and a rationale for being from that association. Through their religious connection, they established powerful support systems, a specific clientele to whom they directed their services, and a firm belief that no other agency could, or should, do the work that they did. Religious affiliation, while noted in reference to an agency or institution's origins, to its programming, or to its status in relation to secular agents or social workers, is rarely seen as a motivating, *offensive* policy in relation to other parts of the child-welfare network. Moreover, most studies of child-caring institutions have focused on either Protestant or Roman Catholic institutions exclusively. However, considering the ways that Roman Catholic and Protestant institutions worked, or failed to work, together in the community is as important to understanding later institutional arrangements and policies as is noting the conflicts arising between the so-called "charitable tradition" and newer, non-sectarian welfare initiatives.

As in many other Canadian cities, all of the major orphan asylums, boarding homes, industrial schools for delinquents, and infants' homes for unwed mothers and their babies in Halifax were divided along denominational lines, generally between the city's two major religious categories, Roman Catholic and Protestant.[25] There were two homes for delinquent boys, the Halifax Industrial School (Protestant), and St. Patrick's Home for Boys (Roman Catholic). Roman Catholic delinquent girls were housed at the Monastery of the Good Shepherd, and Protestant girls were committed to the Maritime Home for Girls in Truro, or to the smaller, local home run by St. Paul's Anglican Church. (Inmates at the latter were generally of Anglican background.) There were two orphan asylums, the Protestant Orphanage and the Catholic St. Joseph's Orphanage, and in the early decades of the century, the city boasted three homes for unwed mothers and their infants: the Salvation Army Home for Women; the Halifax Infants' Home (Protestant); and the Home of the Guardian Angel (RC).[26] These institutions

25 According to the 1911 and 1921 Canadian Census returns for the city of Halifax, Protestants made up 57.2%, and 58.4% of the total citizenry, respectively, while Roman Catholics accounted for 41.5 and 39.6 percent. *Census of Canada* 1911, Vol. II, Table I, p. 24-25, 34-35; 1921, Vol. I, Table 38, p. 606-7, 612-13. "Protestants" here refers to all religious groups except Roman Catholic, "Eastern" Greek Orthodox, or those listed as "Other."

26 There was also a special home administered by the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire for the care of mentally defective girls, and a Detention Home administered by the Ladies Auxiliary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty. The latter was transferred to the control of the Halifax CAS in 1920.

were established with the explicit purpose of serving particular religious communities, and with the exception of the Salvation Army Home, the boards and superintendents of these agencies would not accept clients of the "wrong" religious persuasion. Instead, families, parents, or mothers-to-be would be referred to the appropriate agency. This religious exclusivity was not taken lightly by these institutions, or considered to be a mere administrative convenience. For example, a fund-raising pamphlet printed in the early decades of the twentieth century for the Home of the Guardian Angel declared that

> [t]his institution has for its object the protection and nurture of infants whose lives are often in peril from exposure, neglect and other causes; above all, it is destined to prevent these little ones from falling into the hands of Protestants – an evil which existed to a great extent previous to the founding of the Catholic Home ... Without such an institution many of these unfortunate little beings would never see the light, and many more would, as in the past, find entrance into the Protestant Home, and thus lose all chance of being brought up in the Catholic Faith.[27]

There were similar concerns within Protestant institutions, and Roman Catholic children were normally turned away.[28] Most, if not all, of these Protestant institutions kept records of the particular Protestant affiliation of their children as well, and if possible, gave them access to denominationally specific baptisms and Sunday schools, and placed them in foster homes of similar religious backgrounds. This practice appears to have been more closely observed between Anglicans, on one hand, and other Protestant groups on the other. For example, the Anglican General Board of Religious Education in Halifax (GBRE) expressed a strong desire to maintain the exclusivity of a peculiarly Anglican education in their Sunday schools, despite potential problems with the teaching materials. In a 1925 report, the Board declared that, "...[I]t is important to retain and foster the sense of unity within our Church engendered by the use of the Church's own publications, even when having to put up with minor defects of chronological arrangement, pedagogical inaccuracies, etc., all of which, if they exist, can be corrected in use by any live superintendent or

27 CPC, Acc No. 995-50-90-7, nd., "An Appeal to the Charity of Catholics in [sic] Behalf of the Foundling Asylum ... in Halifax."

28 One agency in the city which claimed to accept children regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation was the Jost Mission Day Nursery. Later case records kept by the Matron do indicate, however, that religious affiliation and ethnic background were noted as part of the application process, and in one instance in the mid 1920s, a Catholic family was refused service because "Romans" were to "take care of their own." See R. Lafferty, "'A Very Special Service': Day Care, Welfare and Child Development, Jost Mission Day Nursery, Halifax, 1920-1955" (M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1998), 83.

teacher."[29] The Anglican Church also found itself in conflict with other Protestant denominations over the religious education of the inmates at the Maritime Home for Girls in Truro. In March of 1925, the local Anglican Priest reported that the superintendent of the Home had objected to "his holding of Confirmation classes" there. Similarly, there had been an ongoing battle over securing the regular attendance of Anglican girls at Anglican Church services in the town, and there was great tension over the fact that the Superintendent had "cause[d] all the Girls in the Home to attend a Methodist Church." This problem persisted throughout the interwar period, and resulted in several strongly worded resolutions from the Anglican branch of the Council of Social Service for the province, including one which demanded that any Anglican girl who was to be "paroled" into the community, be placed, as far as was possible, in an Anglican home.[30]

The obstinacy of these denominational divisions laid the groundwork for the development of a framework of practice for child welfare in the city. They also sharpened the scarcity of appropriate foster homes, evidenced in part by the chronic shortage of homes for Roman Catholic children, and they restricted the available options for families and children in need. They created potential difficulties for non-sectarian welfare agencies attempting to reach consensus on concerns common to all child-welfare agencies. For example, while most of the church-affiliated institutions had representation on the Child Welfare Division of the local Welfare Council in the interwar period, the existing records of some of these institutions reveal that representatives were likely to attend only if the topic was considered to be of immediate relevance to their own work.[31] These records also reveal that there was very little communication between these agencies, particularly between Roman Catholic and Protestant institutions which provided similar services, such as the Halifax Infants' Home, the

29 "Report of the Board of Religious Education, Diocese of Nova Scotia," dated ca. April 1925, in the Anglican Diocesan Centre Archives, Halifax (ADC), MG 8, Ser 9, Vol. 1:1, Minutes of the GBRE. In the late 1920's, the GBRE also launched a campaign to have an apparently objectionable textbook, W. M. West's *The Study of Modern Progress* (Boston, Allyn and Bacon, 1927), removed from the curriculum of the high schools in the city. In their campaign, they enlisted the assistance of the Canadian Veteran's Association and the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire. The specific basis for this protest was related to the text's characterisation of the history of the Church of England.

30 ADC, MG8, Ser. 12, Vol. 2, Minutes of the Council of Social Services (Anglican) for Nova Scotia, 1921-1943.

31 See, for example, Minutes of the Board of Management of the Halifax Infants' Home, 5 November, 1947, NSARM, MG 20, Vol. 177, #3; Minutes for Division "A" Meetings, 8 November 1934 – 20 February 1956, Child Welfare Division of the Halifax Welfare Council, NSARM, MG 20, Vol. 408, #1.

Salvation Army Home for Women, and the Home of the Guardian Angel.[32] Improving the overall structure of the system was thus very difficult.

Despite the obvious difficulties created by this religious channelling, it was supported both politically and legally. The Provincial Department for Neglected and Dependent Children and the city's Juvenile Court both recognised religion as a significant factor both in the administration of child welfare services, and in the proper growth and education of children. According to Judge W. B. Wallace, who ran the Juvenile Court from 1911 to 1918, the "imperfect success" of modern social work was a direct result of the lack of spiritual emphasis. "[T]o be successful," he declared, social workers "must undertake their work in the spirit of Christian brotherhood." The "love of statistics and a desire to do ... social work in a most 'scientific' way," were ill-calculated to appeal to those in need.[33] Not surprisingly, similar emphasis was put on the importance of religious training for *children*, as well as social workers. A familiar refrain in the annual reports of the Juvenile Court was that the rise in delinquency in the city was a direct result of a general disregard for religious education. Wallace's successor, J. J. Hunt, described religious training as a *right* that was to be protected and developed so that, "somehow and somewhere" every child would receive it. "Such instruction [was] more important than any other," he argued, "[i]mportant to the child, important to the Nation to which the child belongs and in which he is soon to become an active member."[34] That this religious training should be done along denominational lines was entrenched within the Children's Protection Act, which provided that "no Protestant child shall be placed in any Roman Catholic institution or in any family the head of which is a Roman Catholic," and that "no Roman Catholic child shall be placed in any non-Catholic institution or in any family the head of which is not a Roman Catholic."[35]

Support for institutional care allowed for the continued denominational sorting of those children in need of welfare services, a concern that remained paramount among caregivers in Halifax throughout the interwar period. Indeed, the institutions themselves had no small influence on the direction of child welfare development; many of those who sat on the Boards of Directors

32 This contrasts with intra-religious co-operation, for example between the Infants' Home and the Protestant Orphanage, in which the president of each institution had a seat on the managing committee of the other. St. Joseph's and the Home of the Guardian Angel also shared board membership through the religious order responsible for administering the institutions (Sisters of Charity). Neither the Roman Catholic nor the Protestant Homes appear to have had any contact with the Salvation Army Home.

33 AR, *JHA* 1918, Pt. 2, App. 28, 57-8, W. B. Wallace, "Six Years in a Juvenile Court," Report of the Juvenile Court Judge.

34 AR, *JHA* 1919, Pt. 2, App. 28, 23-24, Report of the Juvenile Court Judge (Hunt).

35 Children's Protection Act, *Statutes of Nova Scotia* 1923, Ch.166, Pt. 2, Section 30.

were influential members of the community, with religious, personal, and business connections that lent credibility and an aura of integrity to the continued functioning of these homes. Moreover, while many childcare experts in Canada had begun to condemn the orphan asylum and institutional care, both were vigorously defended in Halifax, not only by these influential board members, but also by the Juvenile Court and the Provincial Department of Neglected and Delinquent Children. The latter's support was significant, as Blois was perhaps the most influential member of the child-welfare community in the province. His own personal connection to the work of institutions through his superintendency of the Halifax Industrial School may well have played a part in his defence of local Homes and asylums. According to Blois, it had

> been the fashion ... to belittle the institutions and to place undue importance upon ... foster homes. So intent have been those holding these latter views in advocating their particular schemes that the good work and importance of the children's institutions are grossly misrepresented. There are some who can see no possible good in an "Orphanage" or Children's Home. The fact is children's institutions are absolutely necessary.[36]

Blois went on to defend Nova Scotia's institutions, in particular, where children were apparently "not kept for any great length of time," and where "[t]he managers of these institutions [were] quite eager to place the children out, when the right homes [became] available." Furthermore, "those who sometimes criticize these institutions should bear in mind [that] they are all comparatively small, and provide ample space and opportunity for outdoor play and exercise." In other words, Nova Scotia's institutions and asylums were fully capable of providing children with as near an ideal childhood as could be expected in adverse circumstances. All that was needed, Blois declared, was a cosmetic change, a means of dissociating these children from the stigma of institutional care:

> We strive towards the ideal of placing every child in a proper private home, and urge the advisability of our institutions eliminating the words "orphanage," "Homes," "Industrial Schools," etc. from their names. No child should be known as an "orphanage" boy or girl, or a "home" boy or girl. Why not

36 AR, *JHA* 1918, Pt. 2, App. 28, 7-8. This statement of institutional defence was offered as part of his general remarks in the Annual Report, and does not appear to have been inspired by any specific event within the city or province generally. Blois could be critical of specific weaknesses within individual institutional programmes (particularly for the partially publicly funded reformatories), but these critiques did not attack institutional care as a method of child welfare. See for example, his reviews of conditions at the Halifax Industrial School, in AR, *JHA* 1912-1924, Pt. 2, App. 28.

call these child caring institutions simply such names as: "Riverside Cottage," "Armdale House," or "Rosebank Farm"?[37]

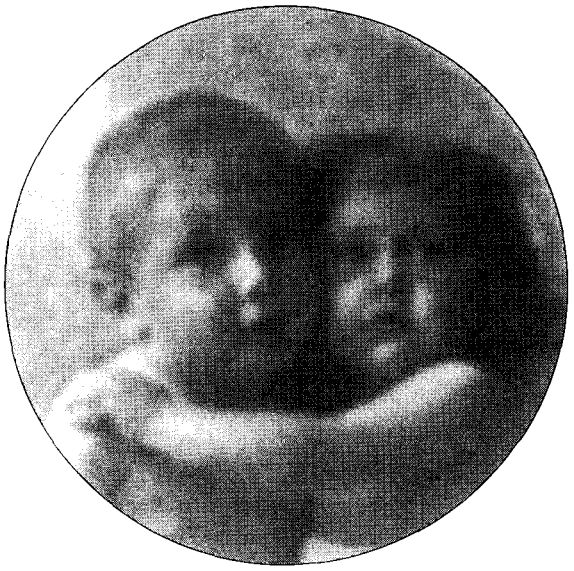
In Halifax, institutionalised children were not a source of concern because they were under good regulation and constant supervision. Deviations in behaviour could be easily identified and corrections made by a staff which had been hired with the specific and "accepted" religious and political mandate of the institution in mind. In the context of the First World War and the Explosion, it was children outside of this institutional system, " children on the streets or in corrupted or corruptible homes" who created the greatest anxiety. It was these children, those in the now familiar categories of "neglected and delinquent," who were not receiving what many considered the ideal childhood experience.

At the end of the nineteenth century, this "ideal" of childhood in Canada had developed into what Neil Sutherland calls a "consensus" about the needs and nature of the young. This consensus, common across North America and in Western Europe, recognised childhood as a distinct and important stage in human development, separate and requiring protection from the adult world. Children were gradually disassociated from the concept of original sin, and over the course of the nineteenth century, were increasingly portrayed as innocent and pure. Their physical and moral state was a "natural" one, separate from the stresses and pressures of modern, urban life. Essentially, childhood was sacralized over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and was conceived as a stage where the virtues of an idealised, long-past age, closer to God, were prominent.[38] This separation of the child and adult world, and the concurrent sacralization of child life, expressed itself in the development of specialised academic disciplines and discourses for the study of children, from medicine and psychiatry to the social sciences. It was also to be found in the basic distinctions between the clothing of adults and children, in the development of specialised literature and recreation, and in both popular and professional artistic representation.[39] The emergence of print and photographic technologies at the end of the nineteenth century made this rhetoric and its images available to an increasingly wide audience. The basic elements

37 AR, *JHA* 1918, Pt. 2, App. 28, 7-8.

38 Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood Since the 17th Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); Anne Higgonet, *Pictures of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998); McIntosh, *Boys in the Pits*, see esp. Chapter 2.

39 See Higgonet, *Pictures of Innocence*; Ina Taylor, *The Art of Kate Greenaway: A Nostalgic Portrait of Childhood* (Pelican, 1991); Victoria Baker, *Paul Peel: A Retrospective, 1860-1892/ Paul Peel un rétrospective, 1860-1892* (London, Ont.: The Gallery, 1986).



of this vision could be found in magazines, pamphlets, and advertisements circulated across the country.[40]

The visual rhetoric of ideal childhood was also frequently used by child-care workers, whether professional or amateur, in the promotion of their efforts and for the solicitation of support. One particular image, used repeatedly in Halifax, was a circular portrait of two young children, shown naked from the waist up, embracing, and staring vacantly upward and away from the camera. Their nakedness emphasises their vulnerability and innocence, while their gaze marks their distance and separation from the adult world. They were not interested in the camera, the photographer, or any part of the world represented by them, but were enclosed in their own distinct environment.[41] This image was used in pamphlets throughout Nova Scotia, promoting conferences and discussions of child welfare issues, and was also used in Blois's 1919 Annual Report. In each case, the image lent a sense of credibility and purpose to its particular

40 The "Women's Pages" of local newspapers, such as the *Chronicle* and the *Mail*, commonly featured such illustrations as part of their advertisements, as well as part of their articles about child-rearing and their announcements of local children's birthdays. Magazines such as *Maclean's* and, later, *Chatelaine* also included numerous examples of this idealised pictorial representation of childhood.

41 This image contrasts sharply with a photograph used to accompany a news article on the Jost City Mission and its work with children, published in the *Halifax Mail*, 31 March 1924. In the latter image, the children are fully clothed in heavy garments, their faces are serious and unsmiling, and they are gazing directly into the camera, engaging their audience, and drawing attention to themselves and their needs. See R. Lafferty, "'A Very Special Service'," 79.

text by emphasising the obvious benefits of a rigorous system of child welfare. But as Anne Higgonet argues in her study of the modern "crisis" of childhood, a "sweetly sunny, innocently cute" image such as this one "stows away a dark side."[42] The urgency of child welfare reform discussed in the pamphlets and the report lay not only in the *promise* implied by the image, but also in the threat of what that image's "dark side" implied. In the case of Blois's report, the image punctuated the story of two young girls, homeless during the war, who were reunited in a foster home after the Halifax Explosion which had killed their only living relative, an older sibling. According to the report, after receiving "unfavourable" information about one of the girls' foster homes, the child was removed, and placed in the same home as her sister; their reunion was "beautiful and touching," and removed a sense of "terror" from the child's "pale appealing face."[43]

This photograph, and its juxtaposition with a story about the near destruction of a helpless child, emphasises the very close ties that existed between the visions of ideal and degenerate childhood. This closeness is central to any discussion of the development of child-welfare services because these services proclaimed themselves as the means by which this ideal would be delivered and the degenerate child saved; these were not simply descriptive images, but had a real impact on the administrative routines of the institutions.[44] In Halifax, the resources of the child-welfare system, whether through the institutions, the provincial department, or the CAS, were dedicated to the containment, or elimination, of the threats to the ideal. As stated earlier, these threats were not believed to exist in institutions; they were found in particular kinds of environments and behaviours, which can be roughly divided into three overlapping types of degeneracy: physical, moral, and racial.

The threat of physical degeneration was often the most obvious, not only because of its simple visibility, but also because the childhood ideal was itself so physically centred. Artistic rendering, from professional canvases to promotional pamphlets used by child-caring agencies, drew attention directly to the child's *body*, thereby presenting innocence not simply as a state of being, but as a physical attribute of childhood.[45] The attention which childcare workers paid to improving a child's physical condition and environment is thus understandable. If the physical impurities were removed from the child's body, or if the child were removed from an environment of physical corruption, progress toward the ideal would be made. Appearances spoke to health, both physical and moral, so the established institutional routines for bathing and clothing new inmates in garments provided by the institutions, served a functional as well as

42 Higgonet, *Pictures of Innocence*, 28-9.

43 AR, *JHA* 1919, Pt. 2, App.28, 18-19.

44 See Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor*, 6.

45 Higgonet, *Pictures of Innocence*, 8.

symbolic purpose. The occasional photographs of institutionalised children published in the annual reports, for example, present images of health, cleanliness and order, while critiques of specific institutions, and descriptions of cases dealt with by the Superintendent, often referred to the physical appearance of the children themselves.[46] In 1919, Blois reported one "typical case" dealt with by his department, where, "in a dark attic room of a wretched hovel in one of the worst districts [of Halifax] a little bundle of rags and filth" was found, with bleeding feet and a "huge, unsightly growth on his neck." Medical treatment was obtained, but not before "a good scrubbing revealed a beautiful boy ... with a sad pathetic face and thin undernourished body." The reclamation of the child was certainly difficult, but its success was secured in this cleansing, and in the revelation of the "beautiful" child beneath the filth.[47]

Moral degeneracy was closely linked to the physical because it was believed to be the direct result of a poor physical environment, such as a filthy, immoral home, or the city sidewalks. Across the country, a concern about children playing, loitering, or working on city streets was a common one in this respect, and the streetscape increasingly was identified as a danger zone for impressionable young Canadians.[48] In Halifax, Blois repeatedly called for a curfew law in that city to curtail the problem. This law, he believed, would also deal with the growing numbers of children engaged in trade on the city sidewalks. In his report to the legislature in 1919, he wrote, "[i]t is not an uncommon sight to see children of a very tender age selling papers, post cards, and small wares ... even until late hours at night ... in many instances they beg ... [or] make a plea of never having the change, and in that way secure many unearned coppers. A great many of these children become exceedingly bold and saucy."[49] If a child was not a delinquent, prolonged exposure to street life would surely make it one, a concern which was also taken up by the city's religious community. The St. Paul's Church Mission, for example, very active in the downtown core, gave its "greatest attention to the boys and girls. There

46 See, for example, the photograph of the residents of the Monastery of the Good Shepherd, AR, *JHA* 1920, Pt. 2, App. 28, p. 45. The girls are all attired in bright white pinafores, and are arranged in rows, with the youngest at front. Photographs of the boys at St. Patrick's published in 1919 demonstrate a similar emphasis on physical appearance, but the passivity of the class photo for the Monastery of the Good Shepherd is replaced by an active staging of boys at work in a hay field at the institution's farm. See AR, *JHA* 1919, Pt. 2, App. 28, 67-68.

47 AR, *JHA* 1919, Pt. 2, App. 28, 6-7. Similar narratives are described in Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*.

48 See esp. Houston, "Victorian Origins"; Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*, 88-96.

49 AR, *JHA* 1919, Pt. 2, App. 28, 30. The presence of children on Halifax streets continued to be a problem well into the interwar period. It was mentioned in virtually every annual report submitted by the Superintendent, and in January of 1928, Blois wrote to Charlotte Whitton, requesting information and copies of the by-laws governing newsboys and other street occupations for children elsewhere in Canada. He was "anxious to get [it] at the earliest possible moment." Letter dated January, 1928, NAC, MG28 I10, Vol. 1:4.

are so many of these swarming the streets, through lack of good play grounds. Considering their familiarity with vice, the influence of profanity and obscenity, the dinginess of their tenement homes, it is a moral miracle that they are not entirely corrupted."[50]

Concerns about childhood in Halifax were also overlaid with concerns about race. This racial fear was subtly, and sometimes flagrantly, entrenched in descriptions of neglected and dependent children. Of one case, Blois described two young children, aged eight and ten, as "dirty, ill-clad, under-nourished, cross-eyed, veritable little street Arabs with 'sub-normal' written all over them." Their heritage was "awful," with "every form of mental and physical defect on the father's side and tuberculosis and alcoholism on the mother's." The children were the "inevitable result" of their parents' unfortunate union and home, which was "a few crowded, evil smelling rooms in a mouldy tenement." When confronted by the child care worker from Blois's department, the parents put up "violent opposition" to their children's removal from the family, and the mother, in particular, was "a pathetic sight," whose grief "was like that of an animal being deprived of her young and her grasp of the situation equally intelligent." The mother was eventually "reconciled" to giving up her daughter, upon witnessing the condition of the Home into which the child would be placed...bathed in sunshine with little girls at their games surrounded by the evidence of love and comfort." The young boy, however, was still "at large," and had been seen roaming the streets, begging. "There is no place for him," Blois despaired, "but ultimately, the poor house or the jail."[51] Not the least of the disturbing issues embedded in this case is that of implicit and explicit racism: implicit in its assumption of a genetic basis to this family's problems, and explicit in its reference to "Little Arabs." The following year, in a discussion of inter-racial unions in the province, these attitudes toward minorities were echoed, and significantly, were entwined with fears about moral and sexual purity, as well as a concern for the physical environment in which children were being raised. "One has only to look about the streets of our cities and towns to see many people of foreign nationality," Blois reported:

> Unquestionably many of these are useful and worthy citizens. We find, however homes where the negro and white races are living together and rearing families. Also where a foreigner from Southern Europe or Asia is living with

50 "The Gospel of Social Service: St. Paul's Mission," *Church Work*, 14 November 1912, 1. "Moral Corruption" of children in Halifax was clearly differentiated by sex, most obviously in the Juvenile Court. For young boys, the fall into corruption or "delinquency " meant petty crime, begging, truancy, theft, or loitering. For young girls, however, the threat of the street was a corporeal one, believed to inspire irreparable sexual immorality. See the annual reports of the Juvenile Court Judges in the *JHA*.

51 AR, *JHA* 1919, Pt. 2, App. 28, 7.

> a native woman and raising a family. In some cases there is no legal marriage. In most cases, the standards of living in such homes are not what we have been accustomed to in this Province. This is especially true in matters of sex morality.[52]

These racist attitudes were unequivocally expressed by the city's institutional arrangements. Most asylums and Homes in Halifax practised an exclusive, "whites only" policy, leaving few options for Black children in need. Thus, in 1915, the Black community in Nova Scotia established a separate institution for its children, the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children, which was finally opened in 1921. The resulting institutional segregation was an almost insurmountable divide, which mirrored similar divides caused by denominationalism.[53]

Overall, whether these threats to the ideal were physical, moral, or racial, controlling them was the first priority of the child welfare system in Halifax, in both its sectarian and non-sectarian agencies. This priority was increasingly articulated as the *right* of all children, particularly by the provincial department and the Juvenile Court, and was closely linked to arguments about the nation's need for hardworking, educated, and morally upright citizens.[54] This fusion of national needs and children's rights resulted in a more complex vision of ideal childhood, one shared, with varying emphases, by all child-caring institutions and agencies in the city. Like many other Canadians concerned with the care and welfare of the nation's young, Haligonians' judgement of what the nation needed was specific to Canada's economic and social development. "The child has a *right* to be cared for, fed, clothed and sent to school," argued J. J. Hunt, but also a "*right above all else* to be trained for future usefulness." Children did not belong only to their parents, but to the country, and were its "greatest and best assets." The country, therefore, had "not only the right but ... [the] duty to protect the child in his rights if necessary ... the purity of child life must be preserved at all costs ... We may save a child and that child may save a nation."[55] In his call for greater staffing and funding of his department in 1918, Blois further argued that the province could not *afford*, "apart altogether from any moral or religious considerations, to have neglected or delinquent children

52 AR, *JHA* 1920, Pt.2, App. 28, 7-8.

53 Re: the establishment of the NSHCC, see Chapter 2 of my Doctoral thesis, in progress. See also Charles Saunders, *Share and Care: The Story of the Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children* (Halifax: Nimbus, 1994).

54 Similar trends across Canada are described by Christie, *Engendering the State*. However, while Christie (20-21) notes that, in the early twentieth century, concerns about quality of citizenship had inspired an attack on institutions, similar trends are not conspicuous in the Halifax situation.

55 AR, *JHA* 1919, Pt. 2, App. 28, 22-3, Report of the Juvenile Court Judge (J. J. Hunt), emphasis mine.

growing up to become delinquent, or anti-social and non-productive men and women."[56] The mandates of several local institutions and agencies in Halifax were similarly focused. Through industrial training and practical education, they "fitted" children for a useful, independent place in the community,[57] while the Children's Aid Society, when it was eventually and firmly established in 1920, had as one of its primary goals, "[t]o endeavor to prevent children from becoming destitute or dependent on public charity."[58] Thus, while cherubic images implying the ideal of childhood innocence were fairly common in the overall representation of the ideal, there is a powerful sense in these records that *innocence* should not equal *ignorance*. While providing a protected, safe, and healthy childhood was important, there was an equal desire to raise children who had not been so sheltered as to be unaware of the challenges they would face as adults. Judge Wallace argued, for example, that parents, teachers, and caregivers had to avoid that "sort of universal soft-heartedness," which declared that "at home, and in the school, a boy's way must be made all sunshine." Otherwise, he continued, "How, in future years, will he be able to stand the hard knocks of the world, to exercise self control, to meet and overcome obstacles, to face unpleasant responsibilities, to confront ill-fortune, or to be patient under the inevitable suffering which awaits every one?"[59]

Here, there was a very close fit between the goals of the secular community, represented here by the Juvenile Court, and the goals of the city's religious communities. In an effort to assist the young in developing the necessary skills to deal with life's "hard knocks," many churches sponsored educational clubs and societies. In many ways, these initiatives reflected the religious imperatives of particular churches. Throughout the minutes of the Anglican GBRE, for example, there were constant discussions and debates about the most effective means of stimulating children's awareness and interest in the missionary efforts of the Church of England, in Canada and abroad. Lessons on the subject were developed for Sunday school curriculum, and children were encouraged to

56 AR, *JHA* 1918, Pt. 2, App. 28, p. 5. Cynthia Commachio notes a similar, consistent use of vocabulary "grounded in economic principles of cost and investment" in advice literature directed at new mothers in Ontario. See *Nations are Built of Babies*, pp. 11 and 126-132.

57 Several historians have noted the industrial nature of this training; boys were generally given education in farm labour or in low-skill trades, while girls were trained in domestic sciences. See, for example, Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*; Saunders, *Share and Care*, 53-57.

58 NAC, MG28 I10, Vol. 1:4, "Report of the Children's Aid Society for the Year Ending September 30, 1928."

59 AR, *JHA* 1918, Pt 2, App. 28, 53-54, Wallace, "Six Years in a Juvenile Court."

60 ADC, MG8, Ser. 9,Vol. 1, #1, Minutes of the GBRE, Diocese of Nova Scotia. The Presbyterian, Baptist, and United Churches administered a similar organisation, called the Maritime Religious Education Council. Local councils for this body ran summer camps for the Canadian Girls in Training, and organised Sunday School competitions and curriculum for local churches. See History and Correspondence of the CGIT, NSARM, MG 20, Vol. 288.

contribute their pennies to the various causes.[60] The Anglican Young People's Association was involved in several charity activities, including the creation of "bales" – bundles of clothing, food, and other necessities – for Aboriginal children in Ontario. The Boys' Mission at the church also was employed in charity endeavour, carving and painting toys for mission boxes. The Anglican Church in Halifax also sponsored a local branch of the "Band of Hope," a group of young children who were pledged, and took part in educational sessions, on the importance of temperate behaviour.[61] The evangelical churches mirrored this concern for temperance education among their children through sponsorship of the Women's Christian Temperance Union's "Little White Ribboners."[62] Many Protestant evangelical churches also promoted the participation of their young girls in the Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT). The latter was not unlike the local Girl Guide and Boy Scout movements, focusing on personal responsibility and community service, and providing recreational activities through supervised meetings, camps, and jamborees. The CGIT also featured regular vespers services and prayer meetings.[63]

The efforts of these religious clubs, as well as those of the denominational institutions, received, in this early period, increasing support from the government and the legal establishment. However, this support did not impede the efforts of these sectarian groups, or attempt to redefine the priorities of their community initiatives. Just as these denominational interests sought to provide an early awareness of social responsibility among children, so too was it argued by the Juvenile Court that the "object of life" for the province's children was that they might "be enabled to serve." "Real life consists of service," Hunt argued, and children "are saved to serve." He went on,

> It is for this reason ... that we realize the place of children is ideal in every nation. Upon their training our development as a nation, politically, socially, and religiously depends. Never can we emphasize too strongly that we, as a nation, if we are to have a bright future, must begin with the child. Many of us have failed to realize the possibilities that are envolved [sic] in the life of a child. "Like arrows in the hand of a giant so are young children."[64]

Controlling these arrows effectively was a major function of the Juvenile Court, in concert with the sectarian agencies, and their efforts were increasingly

61 ADC, MG3, Ser 8 Vol. 4, St. Paul's Parish Yearbooks.

62 Correspondence, pamphlets and promotional materials for the Nova Scotia Little White Ribboners can be found in NSARM, MG 20, Vol. 359. See also Sharon Cook, *Through Sunshine and Shadow: The Women's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 77.

63 NSARM, MG20, Vol. 288, History and Correspondence of the CGIT.

64 AR, *JHA* 1920, Pt. 2, App. 28, 17, Report of the Juvenile Court Judge (Hunt).

supported by a widening legal base in the province. The earliest child welfare legislation in Nova Scotia was the Children's Protection Act, passed in 1880, the first such legislation in Canada. It was followed by laws regulating the work hours and environments for boys and girls, and in 1883, the province passed an act that made education compulsory. This early legislation was the first indication of the government's willingness to actively regulate children's lives. Over the first decades of the twentieth century, additional legislation made the provincial government financially responsible for the support of children sent to institutions by the Juvenile Court, a move applauded by the city's denominational institutions. The enlargement of government responsibility in this field was well in tune with similar movements and attitudes across the country. It was a truth increasingly accepted in the welfare field that "[w]henever the care provided by the natural parents or the guardians of a child is inadequate, there devolves upon the state a parental responsibility proportionate to the need."[65] This opinion was the logical extension of the conflation of children's rights and national interests which J.J. Hunt articulated so clearly in Halifax. However, it must be stressed that the responsibility of the government was conceived in Halifax as a relatively restricted one. In fact, Blois argued, there was "very grave danger" in the possibility that "too much [responsibility] be left to the Government" and taken away from those with "a sympathetic personal touch which every child should have." The government's responsibility, he continued, should be restricted to law enforcement, financial support for children in institutions, and "*co-operation [with] the charitable, philanthropic and religious individuals* in order that we may attain our ideal ... the conservation of the entire child life of our Province."[66]

Thus, while responsibility for ensuring the well-being of the nation's children, and consequently the nation's future, was gradually parcelled out to the state, it continued to be strongly linked with the work of private religious, philanthropic institutions and agencies. And, in these first decades of the twentieth century, as financial constraints restricted the capacities of these institutions and agencies, there was a subtle, yet definite move to compel the wider public's responsibility for child welfare. By ignoring the needs of the city's agencies and institutions, the community was neglecting the welfare of its children. The community, Blois wrote, thus "become the greatest delinquent, and reaps what it has sown."[67] His department made a sustained effort to emphasise the importance and impact of active public involvement. For example, Blois attributed the real increase in numbers of neglected and delinquent

65 NAC, MG 28 I10, Vol. 25: 123, "Canadian Council on Child Welfare, Report of the Section on the Care of Problem Children, 1925-1926."

66 AR, *JHA* 1918, Pt. 2, App. 28, 12. Emphasis mine.

67 AR, *JHA* 1916, Pt. 2, App. 28, 47.

children to a "public conscience [which] demand[ed] better treatment and care of children today than at any time in the past.... today matters formerly held to be of no public interest or concern, come within [the] scope" of the legal system, "and there must be even further enlargement."[68] The city's religious community joined this chorus, and there were frequent calls for increased public awareness of the importance of child life. In 1912, the Anglican Church joined "with two-thirds of Christendom" in the establishment and celebration of a "Children's Day," which was to be observed annually in October. As expressed in *Church Work*, the Anglican paper for the Nova Scotian Diocese, child-life was "rapidly becoming a storm-centre of our modern civilization." The celebration of Children's Day would emphasise its "supreme importance," and encourage adults to make time for young people: "If other things are demanding attention, they should not be allowed to usurp time and interest at the cost of the child. This latter is a responsibility, a joy from God...A world without children is as salt that has lost its saltiness."[69]

When the CAS was re-established in 1920, it thus entered into an arena of services whose demands on, and expectations of, the public and the government had already been clearly defined and agreed upon. Not surprisingly, then, the position of this agency closely mirrored the goals and needs of the institutions, and thus served not to replace them, but to expand the functions of institutional care into the community. A shared set of basic beliefs about sound childcare practices dictated that when home situations became unsatisfactory, children could be removed by a child-care worker, and placed in care. The most popular option for out-of-home care in Halifax was (and remained) institutional. In institutions, children were under the supervision of people who were, theoretically, hired because they had some ability to nurture, control, and educate children properly. Institutional placements were also used in the interim period before a suitable foster home could be secured. The option of foster placement did become increasingly, if only gradually, attractive in the city, in part through the efforts of the CAS. However, given the basic goals and concerns of the local child-welfare system which have been outlined in the preceding pages, the fundamental differences between institutional and foster care become blurred. Just as institutions hired their staff with their particular philosophy of childcare in mind, so too were foster parents chosen because of their potential to provide children with the necessary skills and attitudes for responsible, Christian citizenship. Moreover, both institutions and foster homes were subject to regular visitation by government social workers and

68 AR, *JHA* 1919, Pt. 2, App. 28, 32.

69 "Child Life the Storm Centre of our Modern Civilization," *Church Work*, 26 September 1912, 5.

officials in order to ensure that they continued to fulfil these expectations.[70] Institutional walls were thus provided by the homes of foster families, and foster parents became the *de facto* employees of the child welfare system.

In its promotion of foster care, the Halifax CAS was not part of a conscious project of modernisation, nor did it represent de-institutionalisation. It was an effective method of providing the surveillance necessary for the continued control over various threats to a childhood ideal already well defined before the advent of the local CAS, and it did so by inscribing the functions of the institution onto the community itself. In a fundamental way, foster care laid the responsibility for childcare even more firmly in the hands of the public than had been anticipated by the Anglican Church's arguments for the celebration of Children's Day. Ultimately, this system came to be considered as more economical, and the nuclear family setting it provided was considered more beneficial for the child. It remains to be determined which of these arguments – for economy or for the nuclear family – were more persuasive in the gradual elimination of institutional care in Halifax after the Second World War, particularly given the strained, thin budgets of many of these institutions. The current telling of the development of the CAS has been that it was to provide more humane treatment of dependent children, and to modernise and reorganise the administration of child welfare. In Halifax, both this ideal of modernity and this humanisation of child welfare were more justificatory than they were causal; while these ideas may have been fuel for some to continue with the project represented by the CAS, they were not at its original foundation.

70 In most of his annual reports, Blois argued emphatically about the importance of regular visitation of those children placed in foster homes, in order to ensure that "[w]hen a mistake has been made ... by placing a child in an unsuitable home," appropriate measures could be taken to rectify the situation. See AR, *JHA* 1919, Pt. 2, App. 28, 18. Inspection of the institutions, while clearly done to ensure the health and well-being of the children, was focused more intently on ensuring the stability and hygiene of the physical plant, as opposed to reviewing the qualifications of the staff or their programmes.