

Balancing Equality for the Post-War Woman: Demobilising Canada's Women Workers After World War Two¹

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Abstract

Canadian federal officials assumed women would be uninterested in paid work after World War Two. "I want to get a post-war job," while a familiar refrain, found little accommodation in the post-war regime of the Canadian welfare state. Instead, government officials, women and men alike, carefully balanced liberal rights discourses alongside the priority of female domesticity.

Résumé

Les agents responsables du gouvernement fédéral ont assumé que les femmes ne seraient pas intéressées à un travail rémunéré après la Seconde Guerre mondiale. "Je veux avoir un poste d'après-guerre," quoiqu' un refrain familier, trouva peu d'accommodement dans le régime d'après-guerre du bien-être canadien. Les agents responsables, hommes et femmes, ont plutôt équilibré soigneusement des discours sur les droits libéraux et en même temps la priorité de la domesticité des femmes.

Introduction

The image of post-war woman promised to capture a new spirit of optimism in post-World War Two Canada. Canada's womanpower had helped fuel an economy mobilized for total war. Perhaps Canada's women might look forward to consolidating wartime gains in the spirit of equality and freedom of choice? Gender equality rights for women were guaranteed for the first time through the federal government's Veteran's Charter. According to the terms of the Charter, women who had served in any of the three special women's military services branches were assured equal access to a range of rehabilitation credits and services, including training and education, land grants, and financial aid. Given the formal equality provisions of the Veteran's Charter, then, women's equality appeared to hover at the edges of the policy agenda. But what of the two guiding principles of post-war reconstruction: stabilising the household on the domestic front while ensuring a smooth transition to peacetime economy? For Canada's policy makers, post-war unemployment was to be averted at all costs. The key - and the challenge - lay in encouraging women to withdraw from the formal waged economy, while not violating the gender-equality provisions to which Canada was signatory, through international convention at the United Nations, and in domestic legislation like the Veteran's Charter. Thousands of women had served the war effort well in both military and civilian work.

Public opinion rallied in support, and so did the aspirations of Canada's women. But what would the future hold?

In the early years of the war, the vast majority of women had been approached as a lucrative reserve of female labour. That is, the government bureaucrats considered them key to resolving the wartime labour shortage that had mushroomed into Canada's manpower crisis by 1943. By the post-war period, however, the challenge now was what to do with the massive reserve of skilled women workers. In very short order, notions of the female labour reserve underwent a shift in public discourse. Policy makers now viewed the female labour reserve as a disruptive force capable of destabilising the wage-setting mechanisms of the formal labour market. Should women war workers stay in the labour market, it was feared, the average female wage would depress wage levels overall, while the presence of former war workers would intensify competition for returning male veterans seeking to resume their places in the paid workforce.

This paper considers the post-war planning activities of the federal Department of Labour and the National Selective Service Women's Division (NSSWD) - the wartime agency responsible for mobilisation of human resources during World War Two. The direction post-war employment and training policy for women would take was in part organised through the final report of the Post-war Problems of Women (1943)² and by the findings of the NSSWD Pre-Employment Training Survey (1945).³ Both reflected the same precarious balance between liberal rights discourse and domesticity. Planning for the post-war went hand-in-hand with planning for the war itself. Elsewhere, I have traced the elaborate psychological, economic and managerial techniques that were used in the early years of World War Two to draw women into the labour force, train them for wartime jobs, and ensure they were as efficient at their work as

possible (Stephen 2007). As all eyes turned to planning for the post-war period, these same techniques were used to achieve precisely the opposite effect: to marginalize some women in low-waged occupations, and for the rest - in particular married women - to move them out of the paid labour force altogether. In its attention to the role of the state in the mobilization and regulation of womanpower, this essay contributes to the important literatures on the role played by labour force policy in state regulation of women's labour market access. The policies put in place after World War Two played a significant role in the formation of the post-war welfare state, and women's subsequent struggles for gender equality in the workforce and the workplace. In my study of women during and after World War Two, I bring together several important theoretical paradigms, including discourse analysis, feminist theories of the welfare state, and historical policy analysis. The result is an historical study of the gendering of Canada's welfare state that recognizes the important role played by educated white middle-class women who were also seeking a place of their own in the emerging bureaucracy of the post-war welfare state, while at the same time developing the very policies that would effectively limit the citizenship rights of their working-class sisters by entrenching a two-tiered system of labour market regulation rooted in material relations of class, race/ethnicity, and gender. During World War Two, Canadians witnessed an extended and considerably elaborated role of the state, particularly in the area of labour market regulation, a development that is frequently cited in support of claims that this was a formative period for the construction of welfare state forms. The emergence of modern forms of labour market regulation was signalled in particular by the acceptance of collective bargaining as a legitimate practice - and domain of governance - and of trade unions as legitimate representatives of workers. Labour historians such as

Laurel Sefton MacDowell generally point to the actions of the National Selective Service (NSS), the Wartime Labour Relations Board (WLRB), and the federal Department of Labour as evidence of the increasing role played by government in building the regulatory state (McInnis 1996; Sefton MacDowell 1975). Historians disagree on the question of how extensive such regulatory control was, or ideologically could ever be. Certainly, the federal government sought desperately to assume control of a wartime command economy. Labour department administrators did not entirely succeed in developing, let alone successfully implementing, any such master plan. Prime Minister Mackenzie King's war administration was regularly criticized, even lampooned, for its inability to respond to what was clearly shaping up to be a major manpower crisis by 1943. Recent studies document the considerable opposition to the NSS, positioned as it was between veterans' organisations arguing for the preferential placement of returning enlisted personnel [primarily men], and unions attempting to secure recently won collective bargaining rights by enforcing seniority provisions as the central vehicle for exercising rights under negotiated collective agreements. For example, Michael Stevenson observes how "NSS failed to find a satisfactory compromise between the positions of the unions and the veterans' organisations. This failure illustrates the practical limitations of government interference in the labour market in Canada at the time" (Stevenson 1998, 96). However, when the gendered and racialized dimensions of NSS regulatory measures are placed under the microscope, the impact of NSS practice on women can be seen as profoundly influential.

As Ann Porter has documented in her study of post-war federal labour market policies (Porter 1993), building upon Ruth Roach Pierson's study of the deployment of gender as a central organizing strategy in the development of the unemployment insurance programme (Pierson 1990), the labour

market is itself a social institution deeply informed by relations of gender, in addition to those of class, and race. Viewing the labour market as a key constituent feature of welfare state formation takes the analysis one step further, to challenge conceptualisations of markets as ontologically distinct from government and, therefore, from governance. For the vast majority of women, the public policies of the federal government and its agencies had enduring effect, even though NSS was far from being the well-oiled machine its overseers purported it to be. The need for concerted intervention and diligent community involvement - for social order - was often made through pointed allusions to sexual danger, immorality, excessive and unwholesome leisure activities among women whose taste for such activities was unhealthily whetted by their inflated wartime incomes. Suitable vocation, aptitude, measures of intelligence: these concepts were drawn upon as part of a growing apparatus of manpower policy intended to facilitate the smooth transition into the post-war period. Such terms as "career" were applied readily to men; however, the question of women's employment was framed quite differently and reflexively in relation to men's right to work. As Margaret Hobbs has indicated in her study of women's employment experiences during the 1930s in Canada, the solution to men's unemployment was women's unemployment (Hobbs 1995). In the face of post-war fears of recurring depression, unemployment was framed in terms of economic democracy and the rights of citizenship. The ideal-typical citizen who was the subject of emerging rights discourse was white, male and capable of consolidating his employment rights through his skilled capacity. For women, whatever else might be demanded of her within official policy discourses concerning the war effort and post-war reconstruction, domestic vocation - in her own home or someone else's - was all.

Welfare state regimes which adopted policies of full employment, as Jane Lewis has demonstrated,

incorporated women's economic dependency on men as a given (Lewis 1993). These gendered assumptions formed the conceptual bedrock of public policies about unemployment and the employability of groups within the population during the period in question. The demobilisation of women war workers took the form of clearing the labour market of women, having chosen to withdraw from the paid work force to take up their rightful place within the so-called private household. This stood in direct contrast to the articulation of men's employment rights around which veterans' organisations and trade unions were actively organizing. For the thousands of working-class women, immigrant women, native women and racial/ethnic women whose future paid employment was very much in question, there would be no such political space within which to organize or through which to mobilize similar citizenship claims and entitlements.

World War Two provided a critical opportunity to apply new policy approaches and ideas, building the apparatus of the Canadian welfare state. Studies of that period rarely consider the activities of educational psychologists, industrial psychiatrists and various other self-styled mental hygienists. Mona Gleason has studied the multiplicity of ways in which psyche-experts sought to shape the normal family through middle-class, heterosexual and Anglo/Celtic cultural and sexual norms (Gleason 1999). The science of mental hygiene, particularly as applied through the expanding discipline of educational psychology, took centre stage during World War Two, its practitioners moving into top posts in government departments to oversee personnel selection for industry and the military. Personnel planning transformed the economic fact of employment, such that the inability to find or keep a job of any sort was a function of intelligence, skill or poor vocational choice, driven by an understanding of who the job-seeker was understood to be: lunch counter server, stenographer, domestic worker or manual labourer. Psychological techniques

would have enduring effects into the post-war period as well, as practitioners deliberated over the most appropriate rehabilitation programmes for women and men seeking to take up their private lives in a peacetime economy. Personnel assessment was a rich and promising new area of expertise. Mental testing promised an efficient method for screening military as well as civilian populations. Once applied to matters of labour policy - to diagnose problems of high turnover, absenteeism, manifestations of labour unrest such as strikes or union organizing, or to design and deliver vocational training in an effort to enhance productivity - the promise of mental testing seemed limitless.

The NSSWD and Women War Workers

As director of the vast wartime apparatus known as the NSSWD, Fraudena Eaton was in charge of the mobilization of women for wartime work, and their movement out of the paid workforce once the war was finally over. Eaton was an astute, well-connected Liberal from British Columbia. She knew the issue of female employment to be politically charged, one pitting veterans' organisations against trade unions - and both against women workers. At the same time, she worked as part of a coterie of female bureaucrats who understood women would continue to gain a foothold in the modern economy, educated middle-class women in particular. Eaton worked closely with her trusted ally and confidante, Deputy Minister Arthur MacNamara, to contain and diffuse the potentially fractious issue of women's right to paid employment.⁴ By the summer months of 1944, war production contracts had all but ended, sending thousands of laid off workers back through the plant gates. Manufacturers, aided by government capital depreciation grants, were retooling for the peace. Where bureaucrats talked of war weariness, there was another refrain on the minds of women war workers: "I want to get a post-war job."

NSSWD officials hoped to restore the pre-war pattern of employment in predominantly female occupations. The road ahead was going to be rocky, since the actions of women workers directly contradicted the government's approach. Internal research studies had already been conducted by the Women's Division the previous year. For instance, a 1943 survey by the Toronto NSS office canvassed job applicants across Ontario to find out what women's post-war aspirations were, and to see how closely these might match job opportunities in the post-war job market. The questionnaire canvassed married women over 35 years of age, all applying for work through NSS. The picture painted by the Ontario study did not match the poster-image of the Canadian woman war worker. The study portrayed a disturbing demographic pattern of married women - of whom 85% reported that their husbands had not enlisted - who wanted and needed to work for pay.⁵ When the survey examined women's motivation for seeking paid work, the results fell into a clear pattern. Where NSS promoted war work as patriotic service, survey respondents identified a very different set of priorities: 59% of the married women in the Ontario survey said they needed to work to supplement family income, while another 32% suggested "personal reasons" as their motivation, a finding that underscored the distance between official perception and the intent of women workers.

And what of the post-war intentions of ex-service women? Marion Graham, supervisor of women's rehabilitation training, asked the three women's services to survey their members about post-war plans. At a time when so many assumed that women's top priority was to return to home and domesticity, the surveys suggested otherwise. The Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) reported that only 17% intended to return to/enter marriage and therefore withdraw from paid employment. Another 11% were uncertain of their future plans. That left

72% planning to return to former employment and/or seek training and another job somewhere else, probably somewhere better. Surveys conducted among the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS) and the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) women's service showed a similar pattern. For example, among the WRCNS, 6 % planned to return to their homes, while another 13% had no firm plans as yet. The remaining 81% wanted training and/or paid employment, while fully 77% of RCAF women planned to get a post-war job, with or without the assistance a training course might bring them.⁶

Having "played their full part as responsible citizens," the women of Canada now "expect to be treated consistently as such in the coming years." Service to nation meant the sacrifice of sons, husbands and fathers. It was more than time that women were accepted as "full members of a free community."⁷ So began the "Report on the Post-war Problems of Women." Committee members endorsed a rights-based argument for the recognition of women's position within the paid labour market. It was an even stronger bid to recognise the economic, social and political identity of the married woman in the home, and moreover, of the importance of her voluntary labour to community, state and nation. Such right-to-work arguments superseded the more limited need-to-work rationale already accorded working-class and racial/ethnic women. For example, the Report on The Post-War Problems of Women (the McWilliams report) contended that such discriminatory practices as the ban on married women could no longer be justified - especially since the right to work was accorded as a moral right in the case of working-class women - a right, as the report put it, "conceded to workers in the lower economic ranks, such as laundresses and charwomen," but denied "the ranks of the better-paid women" like the teaching profession. Women who worked out of economic necessity were part of that invisible workforce whose

labour formed the foundation of low-wage industries and occupations such as domestic service, needle trades, lunch-counter server, and hospital ward aid, to name but a few. In contrast, the ideal post-war woman was part of a white, middle-class vanguard signalling stability for post-war social order.

The report found its way into broader circulation as the only statement from Ottawa to consider what the post-war woman might want once the war was over. Would women happily trade their coveralls for aprons? Cede office desk and job to male veterans in exchange for cradle and kitchen? The post-war woman was no fiction. Many feared a return to high unemployment, that the wartime economy would shudder to a halt and pre-war depressed conditions set in once again. The real challenge lay in changing expectations. This, at least, is how the debate about women's post-war employment played out in the popular and business press. For example, the article "Situations Wanted: Female," which appeared in the November 1944 edition of *Canadian Business*, took on the contradictory recommendations found in the McWilliams report. As she took her measure of the government study, author Janet Keith questioned the careful silence that appeared to enshroud the subject of women who would soon find themselves out of a job. Keith, too, pointed out that the right to work was never disputed when applied to, as she described, women in "lower economic ranks, such as laundresses and charwomen."⁸ Did post-war planners intend to include women in their calculations of full employment? Keith drew on contemporary International Labour Organization (ILO) studies of the issue, commenting that ill-advised government policies and employer attitudes served to "drive women out of employment" during economic recession. Such practice had only succeeded in concealing actual levels of female unemployment. This was the real issue, as far as Keith was concerned, one she and others intended to monitor. Whether post-war jobs were plentiful or

scarce mattered little if the government really intended to guarantee that all who wanted to work for pay could.

Confronted by a quizzical press corps, Eaton held the line, promoting the theme of self-sacrifice and service to country. "Bold indeed would be the person who attempted to predict with any certainty the place of women wartime workers in a peacetime world," was her reply.⁹ "The place of women in employment must be made secure and dignified with the door of advancement wide open," Eaton declared, and the NSSWD would attempt to do just that. The wartime recruitment drive had been an outstanding success by all accounts. According to official records of the period, the number of women in the labour force grew by nearly 700,000.¹⁰ By 1944, with victory now in sight, Canada's womanpower was also expected to disappear, apparently back into the household, at war's end. In fact, as Pierson observes, the term womanpower was to disappear from use entirely by war's end (Pierson 1986). The accumulated experience of thousands of women in war industries was a temporary phenomenon, limited to the needs of the war economy. "They cling to the thought that they would like to continue in the industry for which they have been trained," Eaton cautioned, but none could predict whether or not this hope would be realised.¹¹ Certainly training and opportunity should be made available to permit post-war employment for all who wanted it. As if to signal where those opportunities might lie, Eaton pointed to the "natural professions" of health, social services, teaching and welfare where women's "organising genius" had a real opportunity to shine. And then there was the domestic service to which thousands would return "provided wages and hours were reasonable and all social stigma removed." Still, Eaton shared the growing perception that women had earned the right to a work, and to work at equal pay. Speaking to the National Council of Women, she endorsed a platform of equal pay for equal work,

looking to the trade union movement to lead the struggle: "The greatest hope is that organised labour with thousands of new women members will lead the average citizen to accept a fair and liberal approach to the future employment of women."¹²

Surveying for the Right Type of Womanhood

Eaton's reassurances notwithstanding, NSS officials were witnessing a more fractious climate in areas of war production that had in a few short years become the concentrated living and working locales for thousands of women war workers. For example, the Toronto Junction area had quickly emerged as a centre for aircraft production during the war. Thousands of women found jobs working in the well-paid and fast-paced plants located throughout the working-class industrial district. Victory Aircraft, DeHavilland Aircraft, and smaller parts manufacturers in the Junction together employed over 6000 women. Now that the work was drying up, these workers would face the difficult choice: withdraw or accept a low-waged job in one of the traditional female occupations.

The women at Victory Aircraft, it seemed, thought otherwise: high wages were what they expected and high wages were what they would get. But the tide was turning on women at the Victory plant. Returning veterans demanded jobs upon demobilisation. Nearly all of the major industrial unions insisted that pre-war conditions resume, starting with the expulsion of the women. The same women who had been so highly praised for self-sacrifice in the service of Canada's war machine would now find a less sympathetic audience when attention turned to the question of jobs in the post-war economy. Reports of NSS Toronto Junction officials revealed how the change in public mood was taking shape, especially as these state agents confronted a determined group of women workers.¹³ Once the new reality of the post-war period sank in, Eaton and her

colleagues believed these "girls" could be expected to drift out of the labour market altogether, given their proclivity to shun low-waged work. State officials held to the common view that women neither needed to work, nor were they the right type of employee any employer would want to hire. Indeed, they described work at the plant as light, even leisurely.¹⁴ But that was not all. The bureaucrats also believed that high wages and leisurely conditions had clearly gone to the workers' heads. As federal labour officials saw it, the Victory workers, with pink slips in hand, were all of a mind to enjoy "a good holiday, survey the employment field at their leisure and only accept employment at a lower rate if compelled to do so." According to their positive scenario, thousands of women, once faced with the sole option of hard work at low pay in traditional female occupations like domestic service or needle trades, would likely leave the job market, reducing the size of the female labour force and, most importantly, lowering the official female unemployment count. Employment experts seemed quite prepared to wait it out, anticipating that the problem would largely resolve itself.

Faced with a flood of wartime layoffs, the Women's Division developed a coordinated programme under the curiously dry title, the Pre-employment Training Survey [PTS]. PTS was launched through the Committee on Post-war Training at the Department of Labour. It was a survey not of jobs but "pre-employment vocational training opportunities" based on a prescribed list of occupations that was narrow by any measure: household employment - live-in or by the day; hotel and restaurant service; hospital ward aide, retail sales, and stenography; needle trades, dressmaking, and, finally, hairdressing.¹⁵ As Eaton would later explain, the question of jobs for women was best approached through a training strategy. Training, in this case, was described as rudimentary vocational training in basic job skills. By definition, vocational training presumed a lack of work

experience, skill, or occupation on the part of the trainee. The framework for vocational training had been determined through the careful and impartial research of NSSWD, and the new strategy would inform policy at the Unemployment Insurance Commission as well. NSSWD canvassed major employment centres across Canada to develop objective - that is to say actual - regional employment trends. If women wanted post-war work, they would be directed into training, not into jobs per se. Thus the findings, the organisational approach, and administrative priorities of the PTS comprised the foundation for employment and training policy for both ex-service and civilian women, and set the basis for two-tiered research and planning at the federal Department of Labour well into the post-war period.

At a policy level, women's employment was a regulatory matter of containment and control by the state. The plan was to channel war workers through a systematic process of screening, testing and training - all under the rubric of vocational training. This massive bureaucratic initiative marks the first attempt by any level of government directly to intervene in workers' job choices. This was a national strategy that would see the thousands of women moved from jobs in war industry into a narrow range of female job ghettos, or out of the paid labour force altogether. As a reading of regional survey reports suggests, PTS was remarkably effective, one that set the NSS/National Employment Service (NES) firmly on course for the post-war.

Throughout the war, Eaton and her staff had worked to introduce modern principles of personnel planning into industry and policy at the Labour Department. The WD had worked closely with women's personnel associations. Scientific personnel planning had demonstrated proven results in the mobilisation of the female reserve during the war and these experts in women's employment believed that the same techniques would serve just as readily for

the post-war. NSSWD officials joined with NES staff in proposing systematic aptitude testing and regular screening through pre-employment training, a model that promised to transform NES into the efficient placement service policy planners had long advocated. Pre-employment training did not develop job-related skills and knowledge, but instead screened and sorted women workers, scrutinising individual employability as a matter of public policy. In this context, employment policy was a matter of assessing worker aptitude and capacity, suitability and personality, "weeding out" those thought unsuitable.¹⁶ A woman worker's quality became a measure of individual employability. Employability would become a central theme for policy making in the post-war era - taking on a more complex meaning than the simple work test principle of the previous Victorian era. The work test principle of less eligibility approached unemployment as an issue of moral regulation (Struthers 1983). In contrast, ideas about employability adopted the modern scientific discourse, educational psychology in particular. Aptitude testing was just the ticket to ensure that only the right type of "girl" was upgraded, and placed in the right vocation.¹⁷ If unemployment was a matter of "the square peg in the round hole," aptitude testing promised to avert such an outcome. Psychological testing would place the worker in the job for which he or she was best suited. Upgrading the worker, argued officials, would also upgrade the occupation as well, especially in low wage industries like garment, institutional and household domestic work. This was particularly significant given that Canadian employers in low wage sectors were convinced that the best workers had all gone elsewhere during the war, leaving behind those ominously characterised as "unfit."¹⁸ If there was any hope that WD's pre-employment training programme would compel working-class women into domestic labour, however, Eaton and her colleagues must have been disappointed. Across the country, NSS offices

sounded the familiar refrain: women simply were not interested in this type of work.

For their part, employers responded favourably to any public policy aimed at producing good workers, especially programs that promised to instil discipline and prevent absenteeism. Pre-employment training was well on its way to becoming a new condition of employment, inflating hiring criteria by imposing more rigorous standards for personnel selection. Only those bearing a certificate of training would be considered for placement by NSS. But, more importantly, here was a practical and innovative service government ought to provide. As part of their argument for an ongoing women's bureau within the federal Department of Labour, female bureaucrats hoped that their services as experts in women's employment would continue to find a place in the post-war state. And this was the point. Matching supply and demand in the market for labour was far too important a matter to leave to chance - or to some abstract notion of a free market guided by an equally abstract invisible hand. The NSSWD had demonstrated just how effectively government might relieve employers, and the market, of this crucial function. Effective personnel planning, as wartime experience amply demonstrated, enhanced productivity by cultivating the skill - the quality - of the labour supply. In this way, too, the vocational training strategy was an opportunity to publicise an on-going role for the NES, and the utility of a separate women's division within that service.

In the end, the work of the NSSWD went a long way in facilitating women's withdrawal from the formal waged economy - within a distinct policy regime that demobilised both civilian and service women. Of course, no worker could be cajoled into an occupation such as domestic service or the needle trades and still remain a proficient employee. And so, the language of choice was prominent throughout the new policy discourse, a pretext that both legitimised

the market function and demonstrated this new remedial technique of welfare state governance. Women veterans and civilian war workers alike were invited into the new remedial discourse, encouraged to ask themselves "Am I intelligent enough to do this job?" Women veterans in particular would be guided with the aid of a raft of self-help manuals, precursor to what became a mushrooming industry of vocational expertise based on the scientific discourse of educational psychology. In this way, the post-war state accelerated the use of training policies that are often considered the benevolent arm of the welfare state, while simultaneously shoring up boundaries of a labour market divided by race, class and gender distinctions that reflected the thinking of the period.

Conclusion

Middle-class feminist thought during this period acknowledged the right of the educated middle-class woman to work at whatever occupation she might choose, at comparable working conditions with men, equal pay and "opportunity for advancement." Such rights, however, had to be balanced against the post-war challenges confronting the rest of society. Years of sacrifice were recognized, and women had clearly earned the right to full citizenship. Liberal maternalism set out a limited rights discourse that carefully avoided disturbing the bedrock of domesticity in which maternal claims were grounded. Women's first, only and true vocation lay within the home. At the same time, liberal maternalists recognized and argued for a limited rights discourse that acknowledged women's right to and need of paid employment. Women had clearly earned the right to full citizenship and it was more than time that women take their place as "full members of a free community." Like the Report on The Post-War Problems of Women, Eaton recognised a rights-based argument supporting the position of white, middle-class, educated women in the formal waged economy.

This was the woman in whom the state had an investment. Indeed, racialised/ethnic and working-class women received scant attention in this new discourse about the post-war woman. In this way, middle-class white women's organizations advanced a liberal rights discourse that sought to balance the rights of post-war citizenship against women's domestic and maternal obligations within the home, happily finding fulfilment in rearing the next generation of healthy, well-adjusted and productive citizens. "Happy homes" were after all in the national interest. Who could oppose such a claim?

Endnotes

1. This article is based on my paper presented at the "Labouring Feminism and Feminist Working Class History in North America and Beyond," September 29-October 2, 2005, University of Toronto.
2. PAO, RG 7, VII-1, Vol. 9, Marion Findlay Papers, Reconstitution of Post-war Reconstruction Advisory Committees, "Report on the Post-war Problems of Women."
3. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, file 6-24-1, pt. 1. Employment of Women-General. Eaton to MacNamara, August 27, 1945.
4. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, File 6-24-1, pt. 2, "NSS Employment of Women-General." Mrs. E. W. Gerry, Supervisor of the Women's Division, UIC Winnipeg to Eaton, March 1, 1944; Eaton to Gerry, March 15, 1944.
5. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, File 6-24-1, pt. 1, "NSS Employment of Women-General." B. G. Sullivan UIC to Eaton, April 8, 1943. "Questionnaire to Married Female Applicants," dated March 30, 1943.
6. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 744, file 12-14-16-12, vol. 1. W. M. Taylor, Royal Canadian Air Force to Marion Graham, March 29, 1946. D. I. Royal, Lt. Col. Staff Officer, CWAC to Graham, March 18, 1946; Adelaide Sinclair, Captain, WRCNS, Department of national Defence Naval Service to Graham, March 23, 1946.
7. "Report on the Post-war Problems of Women," op. cit., p. 1. See also Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "'Pigeon-Holed and Forgotten': The Work of the Subcommittee on the Post-war Problems of Women, 1943," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 15.29 (mai-May 1982).
8. Janet R. Keith, "Situations Wanted: Female," *Canadian Business* (November 1944): 75.
9. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, File 6-24-1, pt. 1, "NSS Employment of Women-General." Department of Labour News Release, Address of Mrs. Rex Eaton, Assistant Director of National Selective Service to National Council of Women, June 17, 1943, pp. 4-5.
10. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 3044, File 153, "Rehabilitation-General 1943-1946." Allan Peebles and George Luxton, "Suggestions Regarding Research on Post-war Employment" March 9, 1944, pp. 1-3.
11. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, File 6-24-1, pt. 1, "NSS Employment of Women-General." Department of Labour News Release, Address of Mrs. Rex Eaton, Assistant Director of National Selective Service to National Council of Women, June 17, 1943, pp. 4-5.
12. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, File 6-24-1, pt. 1, "NSS Employment of Women-General." Department of Labour News Release, Address of Mrs. Rex Eaton, Assistant Director of National Selective Service to National Council of Women, June 17, 1943, pp. 4-5.
13. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 1516, file 0-26-1. NSS Correspondence with UIC RE: Vocational Training Pre-Employment Courses. Toronto-Junction Report, pp. 2-3.
14. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 1516, file 0-26-1. NSS Correspondence with UIC RE: Vocational Training Pre-Employment Courses. Toronto-Junction Report, pp. 2-3.
15. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 1516, file 0-26-1. NSS Correspondence with UIC Re: Vocational Training Pre-Employment Courses. Pre-Employment Vocational Training for Women Survey-May 1945. Memo to Arthur MacNamara from Fraudena Eaton, may 19, 1945.

Department of Labour. Employment Service and Unemployment Insurance Branch. Employment Circular, May 17, 1945.

16. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 748, file 12-15-5 pt. 1A.

"Vocational Training for Women" (typescript, n.d.), p. 2.

17. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 1516, file 0-26-1. NSS Correspondence with UIC RE: Vocational Training Pre-Employment Courses. London Report, p. 2.

18. NAC, RG 27, Vol. 1516, file 0-26-1. NSS Correspondence with UIC RE: Vocational Training Pre-Employment Courses. Annette E. Coderre, Sherbrooke, July 5, 1945, pp. 1-2.

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