English Militancy and the Canadian Suffrage Movement

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Many people who know very little about nineteenth and early twentieth century English feminism will have heard of Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters Christabel and Sylvia, who led the English militant feminist organization, the Women's Social and Political Union. The techniques used by the suffragettes in the period 1905-1914 captured attention at the time, and although general historical treatment of changes in women's social, political and economic position has been perfunctory, the Pankhursts at least have found a place in general treatments of the period even though they may be regarded as eccentric personalities rather than as leaders of a genuine political movement. In contrast only those interested in the history of feminism know the names of the major non-militant participants in the English suffrage movement. The popular memory reflects the position the Pankhursts held at the time. It was the suffragettes and not the constitutionalists who mounted visible activity in the form of mass demonstrations; it was the suffragettes who made headlines; it was the suffragette leaders who successfully created public personalities for themselves.

The Women's Social and Political Union and its leaders received world-wide publicity. Mrs. Pankhurst herself, her daughters and other members of the militant movement travelled abroad and thus had direct personal contact with women's groups and the general public in other countries. Even when they were not themselves travelling, their activities received widespread coverage in the press. It is true that much of this publicity was hostile and often distorted, but nonetheless it kept not only suffrage, but also wider issues involved in the women's movement in the forefront of public consciousness. In the case of Canada, for instance, the activities of the English militants were often the main or even the only source of news about the equal rights issue. This aspect of their activities has received little attention from historians, who have concerned themselves with the WSPU. Indeed most analyses of the women's movement have been limited to national history and little has been made of the fact that many participants thought of themselves as part of an international movement. It would be useful to know about the sort of activists who thought of themselves in this way. Did they espouse internationalism primarily as a way of strengthening their internal strategies or were their ideas molded and developed by the forging of international links?1

These questions are of particular relevance when one examines the historiography of the women's movement in Canada. Whereas the historiography of the movement in the United States and Britain is relatively well developed, in Canada only the outlines have been sketched out. Localized and specific information about activities in Canada is very scanty. Attempts to formulate conceptual analyses have therefore

rested on uncertain foundations and most of the formulae for analysis have been borrowed from the work of American and British historians. The use of foreign explanatory models is not misleading in itself, but they are best used when they help to illuminate a clearly perceived pattern of influence. At present they are sometimes assumed to fit by analogy a situation about which not enough is yet known.2

Mrs. Pankhurst's visits to Canada and the visits of other members of the WSPU form a focal point for an examination of a specific example of interaction between women activists in Britain and Canada. From an examination of Canadian reaction to these visits and of more generalized Canadian reaction to the women's movement in England, it is hoped that some useful generalizations about the international crosscurrents affecting Canadian women activists will emerge, as well as some new insights into the activities of the English militants.

One major purpose of the comparative analysis will be to examine the concept of the "women's movement" in the British and Canadian context. Although women activists in England, the United States and also in Canada spoke of themselves as participating in a "women's movement" many of their contemporaries denied the validity of their perception. Many historians have also questioned this belief. Barbara Kanner, a historian sympathetic to the causes for which the women activists fought, says that the belief that "there existed in England from the late eighteenth century a steady coherent and consistent continuum of events--comprising a 'movement' by mid-nineteenth century--which eventually 'led' to women's emancipation'" is "an assumption, still largely untested."3 Kanner is writing of the women activists in England, where the activities of the non-militant feminists had generated widespread discussion of the "woman question" before 1905 and where, between 1905-1914, the militant suffragettes became unquestionably an important feature of English political life.

If the existence of a women's movement in England is questionable, it is obviously even more questionable in Canada. Canadian women were never involved in women's emancipation activities to anything like a comparable degree: whether measured by ability to demonstrate mass support or ability to organize independent women's rights or newspapers, or even ability to generate organizational structures, the suffrage movement in Britain had developed further than it did in Canada before the Canadian activists really even got started. Yet female suffrage was achieved in the two countries at approximately the same time. Might this mean that the whole "women's emancipation movement" in England, from the constitutional phase to the militant campaign, was unnecessary and extran-

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eous and that there is little demonstrable connection between the activities of both suffragists and suffragettes and the granting of the suffrage in 1918? If women were given the vote in Canada without any comparable activity, it might be inferred that such activity was not necessary. On the other hand, it might mean that Canadian women activists, although they knew that their numbers were small, identified strongly with activities in England and the United States (and also with those in Australia, New Zealand and the Scandinavian countries) and gathered strength from the successes and struggles of women elsewhere. This investigation of the interaction between English militancy and Canadian activism tends to support the latter interpretation.

Mrs. Pankhurst herself visited North America and spoke about woman suffrage on three occasions in the period before the outbreak of World War I: in 1909, 1911 and 1913.4 In all cases any Canadian engagements were auxiliary to a United States tour. In 1909 she went only to Toronto. In 1911 she made a much more extensive cross-country tour. I have not found records of any Canadian visits during the 1913 tour. In addition to Mrs. Pankhurst, Sylvia Pankhurst also visited Canada. In the last months of 1912, Barbara Wylie, a member of the WSPU whose brother sat in the Saskatchewan legislature, made an extensive tour of Canada in what was initially planned as an attempt to

establish a branch of the WSPU in Canada.5 In addition to these members of the WSPU several other English feminists came to Canada during the years 1909-1912, including Ethel Snowdon, a Labour Party activist and the wife of Labour MP, Philip Snowdon.6

Before beginning to discuss the impact of the ideas and activities of the militant suffragettes on the Canadian scene, it will be necessary to briefly review the origins of the WSPU and explain its place in the development of English feminism. The militant suffrage movement emerged in England after 1903 but non-militant activities for women's emancipation began a half century before that or earlier and the suffrage movement itself has a continuous history dating from 1866.7 In the last decades of the century the "Woman Question" became almost as popular a subject as it is today, one hundred years later. The vote was never the only issue that concerned women's rights advocates. No one really ever thought that the vote by itself was more than a means to a variety of ends but in the climate of liberal individualism out of which the English feminist movement arose, political rights became a symbol of women's recognition as full members of society. The chief set of arguments used in support of the suffrage were an outgrowth of liberal individualist ideology: women, it was argued, were rational human beings, and as rational human beings they had a right to recognition as separate individuals and a right to a voice in society.

There was a paradox involved in the woman suffrage arguments. Male groups fighting for the suffrage (middle-class and working-class groups) also used liberal individualist arguments. But it was clear that these groups wanted the vote for concrete ends--and it was assumed that they would vote as a bloc, at least about those issues where their mutual interests were at stake. Women suffragists, however, wanted the vote less because they believed that women would vote as a bloc than because they saw it as a symbol of women's humanity. The anti-suffragists opposed woman suffrage not so much because they were afraid of the woman's vote as because they too saw votes for women as a symbol. In their case it was a negative symbol, signifying the destruction of family life and ultimately of the social order.

This denial of their humanity was for many feminists the binding force that would hold women together. However, the pressures of social and economic class tended to erase whatever cohesiveness women as a whole might have felt, and it has often been pointed out that, although an intellectual framework was devised which was meant to include all women, the suffrage movement was almost exclusively a movement of middle-class ladies who never fully understood the problems of working-class women. The problem of class cleavage undoubtedly

must be taken into account in any interpretation of the women's movement a and in the case of Britain it has functioned as a primary analytical tool for explaining the "failure" of the movement.8 It certainly can be shown that many English feminists suffered from the same class-consciousness as their bourgeois husbands, fathers and brothers, and that they were primarily concerned with educational, professional, property and political rights for themselves rather than for all women. But it is interesting that recently the historiography of British feminism has been developing an alternative approach, one which emphasizes that there may have been more cohesive and even continuous activity among working-class women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than we have hitherto believed.9 For instance, the WSPU's working-class connections have been re-emphasized recently in an account by Sheila Rowbotham 10 which contrasts with most accounts which treat the few well-known working-class women in the movement as an example of tokenism. The achievement of working-class women has been overlooked because it was, of course, the middle-class women who wrote most of the memoirs and most of the early accounts, and they did tend to be ignorant in many cases about working-class activities and problems. That such activity should have been present among nineteenth-century working-class Englishwomen is not surprising. It would fit well with what we know about male proletarian English radicalism which definitely did see in political enfranchisement a first remedy for exploitation.

Up to the turn of the century the middle-class suffrage societies limited themselves to methods associated with male middle-class radicalism, and they developed these methods with energy, intelligence and persistence. But as the years went by it became evident that diligence and reason would not be rewarded by success. After the failure of women suffrage amendments to the reform bill of 1884, the situation became increasingly disheartening. The problem was that neither the Conservatives nor the Liberals would make women suffrage a party issue, and without support from the party in power, the suffrage was doomed to failure.11

Partly because of the class cleavage discussed above, the emergence of the Labour Party in the first decade of this century did not give women's suffrage a firm ally either. Although it was officially sympathetic, Labour's support was for full, universal suffrage. Because the women's suffrage societies were concerned to enforce the principle that women ought not to be deprived of the vote simply because of sex, they insisted that women should receive the vote "on the same terms as it is now, or may in future be, granted to men."12 Such a measure would have enfranchised a very limited number of propertied women, it is true, but the majority of women's suffrage advocates supported

this limited enfranchisement in spite of, not because of, its limitations. Although they were accused of advocating "votes for ladies" it must be remembered that the women's movement did not create the class division in English society, nor were the women responsible for the anti-democratic nature of parliamentary feeling.

A few Labour Party members did see the justice of the women's cause and opposed sex-discrimination as an issue separate from class discrimination. However, many of the socialist and trade union men of the period could not or would not take this view of the matter. In many cases this had less to do with a defence of working-class interests than with their own male chauvinism.13

The motivating purpose behind the formation of the WSPU was a sense of disenchantment both with the traditional, largely liberal-dominated suffrage societies and with the Independent Labour Party's attitude towards women's rights. The WSPU came into being quietly in Manchester in 1903.14 The nucleus of its organization was a group of ILP women, led by Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, the widow of Richard Pankhurst (a radical barrister who had drawn up the first suffrage bill in 1870). Pankhurst was one of the Manchester socialists who joined the ILP out of intellectual convictions rather than working-class origins. Both Richard and Emmeline Pankhurst had been long-time advocates of women's rights.

During its early years (1903-1906), the WSPU was Manchester-based and drew its support from working-class women, chiefly women textile workers.15 After 1906, the headquarters were moved to London and it quickly grew in efficiency and membership. It also gradually began to draw support from upper-middle-class and even aristocratic women, and over a number of years Christabel and Emmeline Pankhurst began to rely more on the support of these influential upper-class women than on working-class support. This was not true, however, of Sylvia Pankhurst, nor is it true that the Pankhursts and the WSPU as a whole turned their backs on working-class women.16

The distinguishing characteristic of the WSPU, the factor which set it apart from other suffrage organizations, was the technique of militancy. It is the militant activities that have preoccupied historians.17 What does militancy mean when applied to women suffragists? The answer is confusing, and the confusion reveals much about the psychology of Edwardian attitudes towards women and about the essentially irrational quality of much of the opposition to women's suffrage. In the popular mind, militancy meant violent and "unsexed" behaviour on the part of women. It is true that in 1913-1914 genuine attacks against property were carried out but at the beginning "militancy" meant asking a question in a public meeting.

The suffragettes themselves dated the beginning of the militant campaign from October 13, 1905,18 the date of a meeting at Free Trade Hall in Manchester where Sir Edward Grey was addressing a Liberal audience. Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney attempted to force Grey to state the Liberal government's position on votes for women. When Grey refused to answer, they persisted; they were then forcibly ejected from the hall and arrested when they attempted to address the crowd outside. They were both charged with obstruction and in addition Christabel was charged with assaulting a policeman. Christabel Pankhurst's account of this "assault" is revealing. Outside the hall, strong-armed by police, she was determined to get herself and Annie Kenney arrested, but with her arms held back by the police she could not commit a "technical assault" until it occurred to her that she could spit at them: "It was not a real spit, but only, shall we call it, a 'pout' a perfectly dry purse of the mouth. I could not <u>really</u> have done it, even to get the vote, I think."19

This first confrontation is revealing because it established a pattern. The incident was widely reported in the press but, on the whole, the press was unsympathetic to the women.20 Indeed by a curious perversion of fact, violence done to the women (witnesses described the young women as having been mauled by the Liberal stewards who ejected them from the hall) becomes violence done <u>by</u> them. And even the "assault" was symbolic: <u>really</u> spitting in the policeman's face was something that Christabel Pankhurst, as a well-bred young woman, could not contemplate doing. She was inhibited by her own conditioning from performing a genuine assault.

The history of suffragette militancy follows this pattern. From 1905 to 1909, suffragette "violence" was restricted to heckling Liberal speakers (the WSPU's policy of opposing the Liberals regardless of their individual views was based on their accurate estimation that women's suffrage would be successful only when the party in power was forced to make it a government sponsored measure) and successive attempts to send deputations to the House of Commons. In the case of the latter strategy, again it is clear that the "violence" done by the women was symbolic: the only real violence was done to them. Only after repeated numbers of these incidents, in which the women were pushed about by crowds and police--and, in one case at least, sexually molested by the police 21--and then sent to prison on charges of unlawful assembly, did the women begin to break windows as a form of protest.

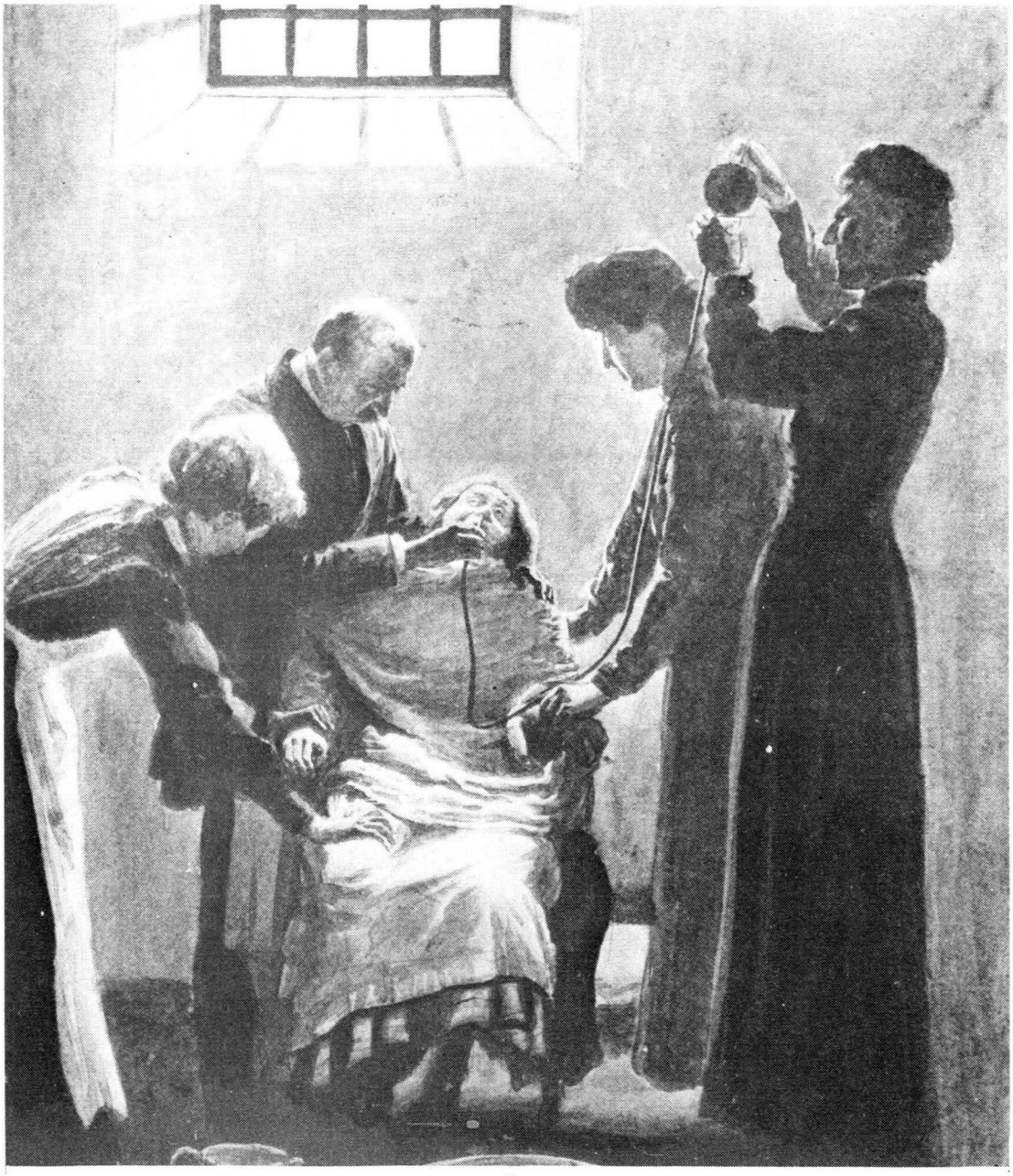
One of the "unlawful assembly" incidents was the occasion when Mrs. Pankhurst was widely reported to have "hit" and "assaulted" a policeman (a featured commentary in one Toronto newspaper says that she "clubbed" him).22 This inci-

dent is an illustration of the way in which the "violence" of the suffragettes was grossly exaggerated by the press. Mrs. Pankhurst was accompanied on this occasion by two frail old women, one of them 76 years old. She struck the policeman in order to force him to arrest the deputation at once so that her companions would be spared the usual buffeting about. Like Christabel's "assault" in 1905, the physical "violence" was purely symbolic. Indeed the first time she struck the officer too lightly, and he told her she would have to do it again--harder.23

The first stone-throwing incidents occurred in June 1908.24 Two small windows at 10 Downing Street were broken by two women acting on their own and not "under orders" form the Union. Window-breaking was then taken up as a tactic by the WSPU and was initially used in a very circumspect manner. The stone throwers at first wrapped their stones in paper and even attached strings to them so as to avoid injury to anyone. As Constance Rover says: "It is difficult to imagine anyone but a middle-class Englishwoman resorting to such a procedure."25 It was during this period (1908-1909) that hunger striking was resorted to. Again, as with window-breaking, the initiative came not from the leadership but from a woman acting on her own, although it soon became general WSPU policy. Within a few months, the government retaliated with forcible feeding.26

The use of forcible feeding is remarkable for its brutality. One can think of only one kind of male prisoner against which similar brutality has been used in twentieth-century British prisons and that is the conscientious objector.27 It is perhaps not coincidental that both kinds of prisoners were engaged in activities that violate sex-role stereotypes. The suffragettes were women who presumed to use (or were thought to use) the male technique of aggression. The conscientious objectors were men who dared to repudiate it. The fury turned against both groups indicates the irrational fear with which society reacts to those who threaten to upset the accepted patterns in these matters.

The final phase of militancy was the arson campaign, confined to 1913 and 1914 and brought to an abrupt end by the war. Again, the first acts of arson were instituted not by the leadership, but by women acting independently; however, in 1913 arson was taken up as WSPU policy.28 Many who had supported the movement before, did not support the arson campaign, but it should be remembered that as with the earlier examples of militancy even this real violence was committed with restraint. All members of the WSPU were enjoined to attack only the "idol of property" and to guard human (and animal) life. Throughout the entire history of the militant campaign, this rule was observed. The suffragettes neither killed nor seriously injured anyone. The



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authorities, on the other hand, were responsible for the loss of several suffragette lives.29

What is the significance of the militant campaign? What did it accomplish? The most important single result of the militant activities was to make women's suffrage newsworthy. It seems fairly clear that publicity was the original aim.30 The suffragettes realized that they were living in a period when the daily mass circulation press had become extremely powerful. But several accounts of the militant movement have seen more in it than merely a successful attempt to achieve publicity. George Dangerfield's Strange Death of Liberal England was one of the first general accounts of the Edwardian period to take the suffrage movement seriously. Dangerfield saw the violence of the suffragettes, the Ulster Irish and the trade union movement as connected and as highly significant. For him, they were all symptoms of the same problem --the breakdown of Victorian liberalism. Dangerfield saw in the suffragette movement a combination of irrationality and a reaching out for freedom. In engaging in aggression, says Dangerfield, the suffragettes were breaking down the traditional image of Victorian womanhood.31

Dangerfield's assessment contains an important element of truth. However, when looked at in another way, the suffragette activities can be seen as representing the height of Victorian female self-sacrifice. As we have seen, the suffragette use of "violence" was remarkably restrained. The successive escalations of activity were always undertaken in response to extreme provocation. If the suffragettes had been men, contemporaries and historians alike would no doubt comment on the "unnatural" mildness of the activists rather than on their "unfeminine violence." The WSPU claimed that the restraint used was a reflection of innate female gentleness. It is better interpreted as evidence that the women could not throw off the strait jacket of Victorian femininity even when behaving in ways which caused their opponents to denounce them as "unsexed."

This, among other reasons, accounts for the disarray which afflicted the movement after 1912. The arson campaign was genuine enough to frighten people but the restraint with which it was carried out meant that the violence was still symbolic, not real. By their restraint the suffragettes were announcing that they were still committed to behaving like Victorian women and not like male revolutionaries. A psychological transformation undoubtedly had begun for some of the women. The experience of being brutalized by police, prison doctors and hostile crowds had forced some of them to realize that chivalry had another face. When society felt genuinely threatened, not with violence but with the fear of a breakdown in sex structures, the veneer of chivalry was

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removed and a hatred and brutality of irrational proportions was revealed.

But only a few women had experienced this partial transformation and still fewer were willing to engage in genuinely violent activities. There were not enough women involved to effect the revolution that for Christabel Pankhurst seemed just around the corner in 1912.32 Isolated in the grip of their intense experiences, the women began to misjudge public opinion and to misjudge their own strength. The activities of the WSPU in the years 1912-1914 have been explained variously as the result of hysteria, lesbianism or most recently as a retreat into millenarianism.33 They might better be described as the activities of a group which was trying to effect a revolution but which misjudged the realities of the situation and therefore failed in the attempt.

As we turn to the Canadian scene and survey the fortunes of the women's movement in Canada during this same period, the first and most striking contrast between the two countries has to do with the difference in tone. The "woman question" was discussed in Canada but the intensity which characterized both the "pros" and the "antis" in England was for the most part lacking. In Canada in 1903 there were suffrage organizations in Ontario, including one which claimed to be national, but in the rest of the country there was very little discernible activity.34 However, women's place in Canadian society was undergoing a radical transformation during this period. These changes were only part of a general process of development characterized by rapid urbanization, industrial growth, new immigration and changes in the structure of agriculture. New social and economic roles for women did not evolve evenly across the country, since there were distinct regional differences in the patterns of general social and economic change. These regional differences make for distinctive regional patterns in the development of Canadian feminism, and therefore each region has to be considered separately. Given the context of this paper it will be best to begin this particular examination of the interaction between English and Canadian feminism by an analysis of the women activists in Ontario, since Ontario appears to be the area where English militancy had its greatest influence.

Although women's activism of other kinds (e.g., temperance activism) was strong in various centres in the province, it appears that at the turn of the century Toronto was very definitely the centre of what suffrage activism there was. Several conditions shaped the transformation of women's roles and the development of women's activism in Toronto at the turn of the century. Toronto's rapid growth in the last decades of the 19th century and the

first decades of this century was based on commercial and industrial development. As one writer says, it was developing from "artisanal production for a local market to industrial production for a hinterland."35 Recent research indicates that this industrialization process was accompanied, as it had been in Britain, by largely unchecked exploitation of child and female labour. Child and female labour was employed for the same reasons as it had been (and was still being) employed in Britain; women and children were more easily exploited than men because they were in a weaker economic, social and psychological position than men were. As in Britain, child and female labour tended to be clustered on the fringes of the economy, in sweatshops and in domestic employment.36

It appears, then, that Toronto in the late nineteenth century was developing a class system characteristic of urban industrial societies, complete with the exploitation of women and children as sweated labour. At the other end of the economic scale a class of leisured bourgeois women was emerging. Although middle and upper-middle-class life in Canada never approached the level of dependence on servants that characterized the English middle classes in this period,37 nonetheless a certain number of women were able to lead a life which allowed them considerable leisure. At the same time some women began to engage in activities expressive of social concern, in response to a growing realization that their society was developing social problems.38 The strength of women's influence in the temperance movement throughout Canada is well known, as is the connection between the Women's Christian Temperance Union and support for the suffrage, but women were involved in a variety of other reform activities as well. From its founding in the 1890s, the National Council of Women acted as a national focal point for some of these activities.

Most women's activities in Ontario, right up to and including the period in which suffrage was achieved, were almost certainly of a reform variety. However, there were also women's equal rights activists in Ontario from the late 1870s. The first known organization concerned with equal rights for women in Canada was Dr. Emily Howard Stowe's Toronto Women's Literary Club, which dates from 1876. In spite of the innocuous name, its founder intended it to be a forum for the women's rights issue from the beginning.39 Dr. Stowe's club met in drawing rooms and was clearly limited to fairly affluent women: all the information at present available indicates that this was also true of the organizations that developed from the literary club, the Toronto Suffrage Society and the Dominion Women's Enfranchisement Association (which later became the Canadian Suffrage Association).

Very little is known at present about the membership of the Toronto-based suffrage societies, either in terms of social class or professional or marital status, or in terms of numbers of members. However, something is known about the leadership. It exhibited remarkable uniformity and homogeneity. The first president of the Dominion Women's Enfranchisement Association was Dr. Stowe. She was succeeded by her daughter, Augusta Stowe-Gullen. Stowe-Gullen was also a physician, the first woman doctor to graduate from the University of Toronto medical school. Most of the leadership of the Toronto movement throughout its history were women physicians.40 The reason for this concentration of medical women in the leadership in Toronto is not clear: it may simply indicate the small circle from which the suffrage activists were drawn. But it is interesting that the only woman who was prominent in the leadership of the Canadian Suffrage Association who was not a medical doctor was also a self-supporting professional woman. This was Flora MacDonald Denison, who played an important role in Toronto activism from 1907. Flora MacDonald Denison is a central figure in the reconstruction of the links between the English militants and the Canadian activists, since it appears that she was the main point of contact between the the English and Canadian women and her newspaper column provides one of the major sources of information about the responses to English militancy in Canada.41

Political Equality Meeting Last Night

Flora MacDonald Denison shares her profession of journalism with a remarkable number of women in the prairie provinces who were active in the suffrage cause. Together, this collection of journalists and doctors adds up to a very large concentration of women professionals among the leadership of the Canadian suffrage movement, in two geographical areas at least, and provides an interesting contrast with their counterparts in Britain and the United States. There were, of course, some self-supporting professional women involved in those two countries, but this was not characteristic of the leadership in either country. Until more is known about the membership as distinct

from the leadership it is difficult to do more than speculate about the reasons for this contrast.

The sorts of activities engaged in by the Toronto suffrage movement in the period from the 1880s to the achievement of the provincial suffrage in 1917 closely parallel the methods used by the constitutionalists in Britain and by the chief suffrage organizations in the United States. The Toronto women employed petition campaigns and public meetings, distributed pamphlets and attempted to get the issue discussed in the press. In the decades leading up to the period of direct concern to us, equal rights for women had made some gains, including the municipal franchise (but only for unmarried women), a married women's property act and admission of women to the University of Toronto. But attempts to secure the provincial suffrage met with failure.

Opposition to the suffrage in Ontario and in the rest of Canada was never organized to the extent that it was in Britain, presumably because it never felt as threatened, but it did exist. It used many of the same arguments that opponents of the suffrage used in Britain (and in the United States). Opponents of the suffrage in Canada saw the vote as a symbol and believed that if women get the vote the consequences would be far more fundamental than the narrow task of exercising the franchise would suggest. Among the most vociferous opponents were some members of the clergy. A member of the Anglican hierarchy preached a sermon in 1909 against divorce, "race suicide" (birth control) and women's suffrage, all of which he saw as tending "to take away the respect for femininity. . . .in England it has reached a pitch of frenzy, of public insanity which we have yet to find in Canada. . . .the end is Down with the Home."[42] Sir James Whitney, the Conservative premier of Ontario from 1905-1914, was a firm opponent of woman suffrage and one of his main arguments against the suffrage was that it would create a "social revolution" for which the province was not ready.[43]

Women's suffrage advocates in Canada characteristically turned this argument around and insisted that they did want the franchise in order to effect a social revolution--a revolution of a beneficial nature. In recent years, a number of American historians have commented extensively on the fact that one commonly used feminist argument accepted the Victorian view of womanhood as more moral, more socially concerned than men.[44] This argument certainly was used in Canada, just as it was in Britain and in the United States. As a general rule, Canadian feminists do seem to have been convinced that they were necessary in politics precisely because they would engage in civic housekeeping. In general their opponents in Canada did not deny this but insisted that women's beneficial moral influence could be exerted best only if women remained outside the male sphere.

In addition to their substantive arguments against the suffrage, its opponents in Ontario (and elsewhere in Canada) had a tactical defence as well. They claimed that the majority of women in Ontario did not want the vote, or were indifferent to the matter.[45] This may in fact have been true, but a comparative analysis of the arguments used in Britain and in Canada reveals the disingenuous nature of this tactical argument. Even after the mass demonstrations and sustained agitation of the suffrage campaign, Asquith, the English Prime Minister, still remained unconvinced in 1914 that women really wanted the vote.[46] Asquith--like Ontario's Premier Whitney--was a staunch opponent of women's suffrage, and it is clear that nothing would have convinced him that women wanted the vote. His demands for evidence were impossible to fulfil. The Ontario suffragists were never in a position to put Whitney to the same sort of test, but one suspects that if they had been, they would have met with the same sort of resistance. An indication of this was Whitney's implied demand that the women obtain the signatures of 51% of the women of Ontario on pro-suffrage petitions.[47] This would have been a monumental task for a large network of organizations and was certainly impossible given the state of suffrage organization in Ontario.

The year of Mrs. Pankhurst's first visit to Canada, 1909, was an eventful year for women activists in Ontario. In March, a deputation of about 300 people (mainly women) presented Premier Whitney with a petition containing 100,000 signatures.[48] In July, the International Council of Women met in Toronto. Its convention was addressed by Anna Howard Shaw, the American suffragist, and in the course of its meetings the International Council of Women came out in favour of women's suffrage. Lady Aberdeen, founder of the Canadian National Council of Women, gave the suffrage her open support.[49] Lady Aberdeen commanded respect from both conservative and progressive women's groups in Canada and her support in 1909 did much to propel the Canadian National Council into (lukewarm) endorsement of the suffrage in 1910.[50] Until this time the Ontario activists lacked any regular public forum for their views. In September 1909, however, the Toronto World's Sunday edition began carrying a weekly suffrage column entitled "Under the Pines." The writer of the column was Flora MacDonald Denison. Her column appeared regularly from September 1909 until February 1911 [51] and it provides a full account of Mrs. Pankhurst's first visit to Toronto and of the effects of English militancy there. The account must be used with care since it expresses the views of only one participant but since she was a major officer in the Canadian Suffrage Association it can be assumed that her views were important even if they were not representative.

When militant action began in England initial reaction to it in Canada from the press and from the local suffragists was negative. The Toronto News ran an editorial in December 1907 which declared that "most people in England regard the suffragettes as . . . intolerable,"52 and described their tactics as "ingenious but discreditable." The "intolerable" and "discreditable" behaviour at this point in time consisted of their disruptive activities during the 1906 election campaign (unfurling banners and shouting, "What are you going to do about Votes for Women") and their first attempts at parliamentary deputations.

Flora MacDonald Denison, who was later such an ardent supporter of Mrs. Pankhurst, had been interviewed by the News more than a year earlier, in June 1906. The News wanted to get the views of "our own suffragettes" on the tactics of the militants. The interviewer records her as saying that "she much deplores the lack of womanly dignity. . . . All suffrage victories hitherto have been won by the might of right rather than the clamor of disturbance." Flora MacDonald Denison was a self-admitted hero-worshipper, and in 1906 her favourite suffrage leader was still Susan B. Anthony, the nineteenth-century American with whom she compared the militants: "Susan B. Anthony defied what she held to be an unjust law upon more than one occasion but with a quiet unsensationalism of determination."53

In June 1906, then, Flora MacDonald Denison was offended by the militants not because they were violent but because she thought they were courting publicity by being sensational, and she saw this as "unwomanly." By labelling the behaviour "unwomanly" she was revealing that she would have felt differently about it had it been employed by men. For Denison, at this time, any form of female protest had to conform to a prescribed set of rules about sex role behaviour in order to be acceptable to her. However, while expressing her disapproval of their methods, she realized even then that press reports of

the militants' activities were exaggerated: "I cannot but think that the newspapers have shockingly exaggerated reports. They always do, don't they?"54

By 1908 there is evidence that a number of women activists had become sympathetic to the struggles of the English militants even though they had no desire to emulate their methods. At the National Council of Women's annual meeting that year a debate occurred in the executive because Dr. Stowe-Gullen had introduced into the report of the citizenship committee, of which she was chairman, an expression of sympathy with the English militants. A number of conservative women objected to this and demanded that the "eulogies of the English suffragettes" be removed from the report. Under pressure, Stowe-Gullen did withdraw her expression of sympathy but in the course of the discussion a number of women expressed support for the aims of the suffragettes if not for their methods.55 Stowe-Gullen's attitude was one of detached sympathy rather than active support and the delegation of women activists who presented Premier Whitney with the large petition in March, 1909, were at pains to reassure both the government and the press that they had no intention of engaging in "riotous scenes" themselves.56

By the middle of 1909, on the eve of Mrs. Pankhurst's first North American journey, suffragette activities were well-known on this continent. But if Toronto is a representative example, these activities functioned rather as a warning and as a deterrent to feminist activity than as an encouragement. Although many of them admired the bravery of the suffragettes and were ready to withhold judgment on the suitability of their methods, they themselves were afraid of being identified with anything associated with "unsexed" behaviour. Since they and the society in which they lived accepted only a fairly narrow range of behaviour as suitable for women, one can surmise that the activities of the militants as they were reported in the press would have made them even more circumspect than usual lest they too be described as "hysterical and half-crazy."57

Mrs. Pankhurst decided to come to America in October 1909 because of the crisis of that year in the WSPU. Their triumphs of 1908 (most notably the giant Hyde Park rally in June where over 30,000 people marched in procession and where the crowd of supporters and spectators was estimated at 500,000) had not succeeded in moving the government and, by 1909, frustration began to mount. It was during this year that stone throwing, hunger striking and forcible feeding began. Mrs. Pankhurst came to America to win support for the cause from people here and also to raise money both for her own family and for the Union. (The family's personal needs were acute because Mrs. Pankhurst's son was gravely ill and in need of expensive medical treatment.)58

The WSPU's newspaper, Votes for Women, describes Mrs. Pankhurst's reception in America as "magnificent" and says that the tour was a "triumph." This was not much of an exaggeration.59 Before her arrival the North American press as a whole had presented its public with a rather lurid picture of both leaders and membership: part of Mrs. Pankhurst's success in North America derived from the fact that she did not look, speak or act the part she had been portrayed as playing. As the editor of Toronto's Saturday Night said, he had been expecting a "hatchet-faced old dame of the Carrie Nation stripe" but instead he found "a singularly attractive lady."60 Every Toronto report mentions her appearance, her manner, her clothing before they reported what it was she had to say. Even today the press is much more interested in the hair colour, dress and domestic habits of female than of male politicians; in the Edwardian period too it is clear that a woman was seen first as a physical object. Mrs. Pankhurst's physical appearance was disarming, because she fitted all the stereotypes of what an Edwardian lady should look like. She was also a remarkably effective speaker, both in her manner and in content. Her main concern during her North American tour was to justify militancy. She made two main points: she emphasized that women had turned to militancy only when other methods had failed and she stressed the quality of self-sacrifice in the women's actions. The press had emphasized their rowdyism; she emphasized their willingness to become martyrs if necessary. As she said in Toronto, "Every one of those women has in her heart the fixed determination that if the sacrifice of her life is demanded she is quite willing to make it."61

During her Toronto visit Mrs. Pankhurst addressed the (men's) Canadian Club and spoke before two large public meetings (one of which was presided over by the Mayor of Toronto). She also had tea with Goldwin Smith who, although opposed to woman suffrage by 1909, was still curious enough about Mrs. Pankhurst to want to meet her. Mrs. Pankhurst received extensive front page coverage in Toronto. Virtually all of the Toronto journalists who commented on her visit were favourably impressed with her. In addition to her arguments in support of militancy, Mrs. Pankhurst also argued generally for women's suffrage in a way that was well-designed to appeal to Toronto audiences. In one speech she was reported as saying that:

> women, being women, needed the vote because the woman's point of view was essentially different from the man's point of view. She hoped it always would be because woman's duties and man's were different . . . . No longer did politics mean just going out to fight . . . but politics had come right down into the homes of the people, and concerned the birth and training of little children.63

Editorial comment in the Toronto press, although moved by her personal presence and the cogency of her arguments in favour of women's suffrage, was anxious to disassociate itself from any support of militancy in Canada. However, the most outspoken pro-suffrage newspaper (The World) was willing to concede that the methods might be justifiable in England. In this period, press opinion on the suffrage in Toronto ranged from hostility, usually masked as indifference, to outright support. The outright expression of support had in fact been stimulated by Mrs. Pankhurst's North American tour. In October, after she had arrived in the States, but before her visit to Toronto, the World ran an editorial in which it urged that the issue of the provincial suffrage in Ontario be taken seriously, "Now that Mrs. Pankhurst is on her way to Toronto."The World declared that politics needed women's "swift intuition, persistence, directness and determination."64 The Mail and Empire, in commenting on the World's editorial, indicated that it thought that women's suffrage was unnecessary and was in any case not a matter of practical politics: "Mrs. Pankhurst . . . has tried to revive interest in a question which on this continent is, generally speaking, beyond the range of practical politics."65

The comments of women journalists in Toronto covered a wider range than that of men. The most hostile comments came from the women's page editor of Saturday Night. Although the general editorial comment in Saturday Night was sympathetic in 1909, the woman's page editor accused Mrs. Pankhurst of "working on . . . warmhearted Canadian women" with tales of Christabel's suffering in jail, and expressed the belief that women only "turned on men" if they "failed to attract." "It may be that personal grievance is at the heart of many an ardent suffragette's campaign," she concludes.66

In contrast to this negative reaction, was Flora MacDonald Denison's overwhelming support. Her June 1906 attitude of disapproval towards the suffragettes had begun to alter later in that same year when she represented Canada at the third International Suffrage Alliance conference in Copenhagen and came away impressed by and sympathetic to the WSPU's spokeswoman there.67 By 1909, her column reflects support and sympathy for the WSPU, and it was apparently on her initiative that Mrs. Pankhurst visited Toronto in 1909 for when the North American tour was originally planned it did not include any Canadian engagements. But Denison's sympathies before she heard Mrs. Pankhurst were restrained in comparison to the ardent support she exhibited after she first heard Mrs. Pankhurst speak in New York.

Denison, who went to New York to be part of the welcoming party, underwent what might best be called a conversion experience. In her autobiography, Chris-

tabel Pankhurst says that the atmosphere that characterized WSPU support was similar to the atmosphere of the Salvation Army.68 Denison's account of her first encounter with Mrs. Pankhurst certainly has an evangelical ring: "At last I felt what it was in human nature that something called divine," she says, and she describes Mrs. Pankhurst as "a woman fighting for the freedom of her sister, a woman willing to die that women might be emancipated." She portrays Mrs. Pankhurst's eloquence as capable of reaching alike the conservative anti-suffragist male and the most deprived among women: "I have seen audiences thrilled, but never thrilled as Mrs. Pankhurst thrilled that vast audience . . . that dear little quiet mannered English woman talking in language that Gladstone or Goldwin Smith would understand and they every factory girl present understood."69

In the next few years, Flora MacDonald Denison continued to express her ardent support for Mrs. Pankhurst and the WSPU in her column in the World. Earlier in this paper it was suggested that suffragette militancy can be interpreted as an extreme manifestation of the Victorian female virtues of self-sacrifice and suffering. It was this aspect of their activities that won Denison's support; she continually stressed the suffering and forbearance of the militants in the face of unreasonableness and brutality, and not their anger. Denison, who was herself very much concerned with the problems of working-class women, was especially receptive to one line of argument used by Mrs. Pankhurst in the course of her North American tour: Mrs. Pankhurst claimed that the suffragettes had "broken down class distinction among women" and that, united in their common cause, only one distinction remained: it was the "privileged" women who were doing "the hardest and most unpleasant part of the work. They think it is their duty to relieve their sisters from this."70 Using this line of argument, the suffragettes could be seen as self-sacrificing not for their own ends but for the good of others.

Did Mrs. Pankhurst's visit in 1909 and her return visit in 1911 have any lasting effect on the fortunes of Toronto suffrage activism? It appears that there was some increase in activity during 1910, an increase felt not only in Toronto, but in the province generally. It was during this period that the Canadian Suffrage Association established for itself a public headquarters on Yonge Street (previously the organization had been run for some years from Flora MacDonald Denison's house). For a time, the Association operated a vegetarian restaurant at the headquarters as a money-making venture. One of the co-managers of the restaurant was an English militant, and it appears clear that the very few incidents of "militancy" in Ontario during this period were the work of a small collection of

WSPU members that remained in Canada after Mrs. Pankhurst's visit as an "advance guard."71

One such incident occurred in March 1910, when, at a session of the Ontario legislature, a woman in the gallery rose and made a short statement objecting to the fact that the legislature had done nothing about enfranchising women. The woman, Olivia Smith, although born in Canada, had spent several years in England, is usually referred to as an Englishwoman, and was associated with the WSPU.72 There appear to have been few such incidents perpetrated by Canadian women. Denison, commenting in November 1910 on the fears expressed by a conservative women's group said: "I assured them there were only two 'suffragettes' in Canada, and these we had to import from England. To be a suffragette, you have to abandon self and work for the the emancipation of your sex. I have been trying to attain this distinction ever since I had the honor and privilege of hearing that master woman Mrs. Pankhurst, but I am miles down the mountain yet."73

Denison herself certainly wanted the Toronto women to take more vigorous action. She was hopeful, for instance, that the suffrage associations would begin holding open-air meetings and at one point she seems to have believed that women in Canada would eventually resort to militancy in some form: "the spirit is spreading, and there is no telling how soon Canada will join her spectacular sisters of England and the U.S."74 But it appears that among the leadership at least it was to Denison alone that the spirit had spread. There is no indication that any of the other members of the Toronto leadership were similarly affected by Mrs. Pankhurst and the English militants. Both Stowe-Gullen and Margaret Johnson publicly repudiated the use of militancy in Canada during the same period that Denison was filling her column with details of the WSPU struggles in England.75 There appears, in fact, to have been a split among the leadership. It must have been clear to Flora MacDonald Denison that she could not manage a one-woman crusade and gradually even the activity generated by the excitement of Mrs. Pankhurst's 1909 visit lapsed. The headquarters on Yonge Street, for instance, closed during 1911 for lack of financial support.76

Mrs. Pankhurst was well-received by the suffragists when she returned to Toronto in December 1911. The autumn of 1911, like the autumn of 1909, was also a period of crisis for the WSPU. Between November 1911 and March 1913, the government killed the Conciliation Bill (an all-party measure drafted by a group of pro-suffrage MP's) after having agreed to give it full facilities for passage; militancy, which had been suspended for a considerable period of time, was once again renewed. Mrs. Pankhurst planned another American tour

at this time to raise money for the WSPU and also because she needed a rest from prison and hunger-striking.77

Although the suffragist's reception of Mrs. Pankhurst appears to have been just about as warm in 1911 as it had been in 1909, press reaction was somewhat less favourable. The new wave of militancy in the autumn of 1911 involved extensive window-breaking for the first time and many of those who had admired her in 1909 found that they could not still do so. This time the front-page editorial coverage in Saturday Night read: "Why should Emmeline come over the ocean to tell us her troubles and the troubles of other female window breakers?"78 But she still attracted a sizeable crowd in Toronto and some of the press coverage remained very favourable.

In 1909, Toronto was Mrs. Pankhurst's only Canadian engagement. In 1911, however, she went to Montreal, Port Arthur, Winnipeg and Victoria as well. All of these places had a nucleus of suffrage activism, enough at least to generate an interest in hearing her speak. But why was there suffrage activism in one city rather than in another? Why, for instance, was there an active suffrage organization at this time in Port Arthur/Fort William and not Regina? The answer may lie partly in the accidents of circumstance: a very small group of people could form the nucleus of a suffrage organization. If they received some encouragement from the local press, they might then be able to generate interest in the subject. That may have been what happened in Port Arthur/Fort William. There was an Equal Suffrage Association there and the Fort William Times-Journal allowed it space in which to run its own column. In this column and on its own women's page, the paper featured a considerable amount of commentary about the needs of working women (significant in a community with an active labour movement) and about the importance of the suffrage.79 When Mrs. Pankhurst appeared as the guest of the Equal Suffrage Association, the paper gave her good coverage.

In contrast, one could have read the Regina Leader during these years and not have known that there was a women's suffrage question. In the paper's general news section, the suffrage news was sparse. The paper did not even run many hostile stories about the suffragettes. The Leader's women's page was almost exclusively devoted to recipes and household hints. At the time of Mrs. Pankhurst's visit to Winnipeg, the paper remarked rather wistfully that "fair Saskatchewan"80 was being bypassed but the Leader itself had done almost nothing to encourage an interest in her or the cause she fought for.

Journalistic indifference did not prevent the growth of suffrage activism in Saskatchewan, but it certainly did not do the suffrage cause any good. In Winnipeg, by contrast, feminist sentiment emanated from a group of women

journalists. It has been pointed out that these feminist women journalists had links to other sorts of progressive activism. These ties to urban reform and to the progressive farmers' movement strengthened women's activism, gave it support and also served to mold the direction it took.

There were two newspapers published in Winnipeg which had progressive, activist women's page editors, the Manitoba Free Press and the Grain Grower's Guide. (The Guide, although its circulation spread throughout the prairies, was published from Winnipeg.) The Guide ran the more interesting women's page. Its most well-known women's page editor, Francis Marion Beynon, took over the job in June 1912. Beynon's predecessor(s) also took a strong interest in the question of women's rights and she/they 81 also displayed a remarkable breadth of knowledge about feminist theory and about the course of women's activism not just in Canada but throughout the world. The women's page editors of the Guide were concerned with the labour, rights and dignity of the farm wife. They were all determined that her essential contribution to the farm economy be recognized by public opinion and by the law. The editor who signed herself "Isobel" ran a vigorous campaign against the provisions of the Homestead Act, which barred all women except widows with children from homesteading on their own. The Guide's women's page emphasized the suffrage, which it continually linked to the problems of urban poverty, child care and the social and economic rights of agricultural women.

The Manitoba Free Press women's page editor "Lilian Laurie" (Lilian Beynon Thomas) became the first president of the Winnipeg Political Equality League in 1912. Her women's page, however, ran much less news about women's activism and especially about suffrage activism than did the women's page of the Grain Grower's Guide. Most of the Free Press woman's page is devoted to service articles and human interest stories. Lilian Beynon Thomas' concern for the problems of working-class women is reflected in those stories of general interest that she did run.

Both the Guide and the Free Press ran stories on their women's pages about the English militants before the arrival of Mrs. Pankhurst. The Guide was the more sympathetic of the two papers. The same aspects of the suffragette campaign that appealed to Flora MacDonald Denison also appealed to the women's page editor of the Guide. She admired their self-sacrifice and their bravery. When two women died as a result of their treatment by the police on "Black Friday" (October 1910), she ran a story about it, saying that they had been brutally treated. She emphasized the working-class support for the movement.82 In one story she told of an Albert Hall meeting at which working-class women had dropped their wedding rings into

the collection box: "having nothing else to contribute . . . they gave their wedding rings. Such splendid self-sacrifice; I wonder if we have such women in the west."83

Lilian Beynon Thomas meanwhile expressed doubts about the wisdom and the justice of suffragette tactics, and urged Canadian women not to employ militant tactics in Canada. She agreed that the militant actions had been distorted by the press, she allowed that conditions in England might be different from those in Canada, but she urged Canadian women to form suffrage organizations "on a sound and reasonable basis, marking their course by conditions in Canada and not by conditions elsewhere."84 She urged her fellow countrywomen not to embark on a "fierce sex war." Thomas became somewhat less negative about the militants themselves if not about their methods in the weeks before Mrs. Pankhurst arrived in Winnipeg and, as with the Guide editor and with Denison, it is the self-sacrifice of the suffragettes that won her sympathy: "No Canadian . . . can ever wish to have such scenes enacted here . . . but there must be some very vital reason that would make women, educated and cared for . . . endure imprisonment, hardship, ridicule and even death for this cause."85

Mrs. Pankhurst came to Winnipeg in December 1911 as the guest of the University Women's Club. She showed herself to be sensitive to local currents of opinion because she was clearly aware of the social concerns that motivated many of the women who were sympathetic to the suffrage in Winnipeg. She emphasized working-class support for the WSPU and stressed that the movement worked for the vote not as an end in itself, but as a prelude to "a whole program of social legislation." She discussed the white slavery issue. She even touched on the homestead issue, warning that the "best" sort of woman emigrant would prefer Australia, or the western states, where they could be "full citizens," to Canada, where women's rights were restricted.86

Editorial comment in both the Guide and the Free Press was favourable. Chipman, the editor of the Guide, was especially impressed by her statements about the program of social reform which would be ushered in by women's suffrage. Both papers commented that her reception "showed that in Winnipeg was a wealth of untapped resources for the rights of women, till now lying dormant and awaiting only the call to awake."87 In fact, the Winnipeg Political Equality Club was launched just a month after her visit (in January 1912). Was this in answer to the "call to awake" uttered by Mrs. Pankhurst? Her visit may well have had some effect. In her autobiography, Nellie McClung mentions it as a contributing factor in the emergence of suffrage activism in Winnipeg at this time.88 But her visit

was probably not decisive, although it may have provided the final push. The Grain Grower's Guide carried reports of two women's conventions early in 1911, one in Regina and one in Winnipeg. At the Winnipeg convention a number of the journalists who were to be active in the Political Equality League were present and made speeches which related to women's place in society. It seems fairly clear that the women were coming together before Mrs. Pankhurst's visit.

In her autobiography, Nellie McClung mentions the visit of another English militant, Barbara Wylie. Barbara Wylie was the sister of a member of the Saskatchewan legislature. She made a speaking tour of Canada in September-December of 1912. In terms of influence on Canadian developments, it is her visit to Regina that was of most importance. Mrs. Pankhurst had not visited Regina because there was no organization in the city to invite her. But Barbara Wylie visited Regina anyway, presumably because of her family connections there. Regina was unused to suffragists, so a suffragette was a novelty indeed. "No More Ladylike Ladies in Regina" said the headline in the Leader: "for the first time in her history, Regina is to be treated to an exposition of the suffrage movement--the militant branch at that."89 Wylie made a rousing speech in Regina and urged the formation of a suffrage society in the city. One historian dates the beginning of an active suffrage movement in Saskatchewan from Barbara Wylie's visit, and it is possible that she provided a decisive impetus.90

Barbara Wylie made a sensible, if rather outspoken speech in Regina and she made the same sort of speech in Winnipeg. But it appears that the intentions with which she came to Canada were originally different from those which appeared on the surface, and far less sensible. There seems little doubt that the WSPU sent Barbara Wylie to Canada on a mission to establish a branch of the WSPU and convert Canada to militancy: a mission both presumptuous and unrealistic. The incident reveals the lack of judgment from which the WSPU was beginning to suffer in 1912. In August 1912 Prime Minister Borden was in England. He was visited by a delegation from the WSPU who demanded to know what he was going to do about women's suffrage and about the homestead act. The women threatened him with militancy in Canada: "your reply this morning will regulate very much the kind of advice we give our friends in Canada."91

Flora MacDonald Denison, the WSPU's best friend in Canada, quickly issued a statement repudiating the deputation to Borden,92 but the WSPU went ahead anyway, and issued their own statement saying that the Union would "take immediate steps to strengthen existing organizations throughout the Dominion."93 The first step they took was to send Barbara Wylie on her speaking

tour, and at her first two stops, Quebec and Montreal, she made militant speeches. The chilly reception she received must have made it evident to her that the original mission was a mistake, because her speeches became progressively less insistent about the need for militancy as she moved westward.

Barbara Wylie's speaking tour represents the last major point of personal interaction between the English militants and the Canadian suffrage activists. The influence of the WSPU on the fortunes of the Canadian movement in the period after 1912 appears to have been uneven. In Toronto, for instance, Flora MacDonald Denison never wavered in her support for the militants, even during the arson campaign. Indeed, during 1913, when she was again in Europe (this time for the International Suffrage Alliance conference at Budapest) she visited England, spoke from a WSPU platform and there is evidence that she joined the WSPU. Although she maintained that these acts represented personal rather than organizational support for the WSPU, her position as head of the Canadian Suffrage Association was weakened, and it appears that she resigned from that position in October 1914 partly as a result of pressure from anti-militant activists in Toronto.

With the outbreak of the War, Christabel and Mrs. Pankhurst transformed the WSPU into a jingoistic pro-war organization. Christabel visited Toronto during her North American tour in November 1914 but she spoke about the evils of Germany, rather than about the suffrage. Mrs. Pankhurst returned to Canada both during and after the War and in the post-war period she lived here for a while, but her post-war activities in Canada, although interesting, are beyond the scope of this paper.94

Canadian suffrage activism was influenced by English militancy, but only by those aspects of the militant movement which genuinely fitted the situation in Canada. The self-sacrifice that Flora MacDonald Denison and others responded to was present in the movement, but other qualities, which seemed less congenial to the Canadian activists, were also present. The suffragettes' supporters in Canada simply ignored those facts from which they did not feel they could draw strength. It is revealing that the Canadian opponents of the suffragettes were much more likely to be aware of the divisions in the militant movement and the autocracy with which the WSPU was run than were the militants' supporters in this country.

But why did the self-sacrifice rather than the anger of the militants appeal to the Canadian activists? The English and Canadian women shared much of the same cultural heritage; why is it that

England produced a strong suffragette movement while Canada produced only a relatively small number of suffragists? Was it true, as George Dangerfield says, that English society was undergoing a major transformation at this time and that the main manifestation of this transformation was irrationality? There may be some truth in this interpretation, but in my view it serves to explain the response of society to the suffragettes more satisfactorily than it explains the behaviour of the suffragettes. Militancy unquestionably had its own momentum, and led its proponents to uncharacteristic behaviour, but its origins are to be found in rational, well-founded frustration. The militants' own interpretation of their behaviour--that they had tried all the usual methods and had met with failure --is in some ways the most satisfactory. The same thing could have happened in Canada had the suffrage not been achieved when it was.

The most important contribution that English and American feminism made to Canadian women activists was to provide them with a sense of connection to an entity larger than the admittedly small group of activists working in any Canadian locality. Some Canadian women sought out such a connection more than others did: they were the "internationalists." Flora MacDonald Denison is one example. E.M. Murray, a relatively obscure Nova Scotia feminist is another. When she was an old woman in the 1940s, E.M. Murray wrote a series of letters to Catherine Cleverdon, in one of which she said: "The suffragette movement in Britain had its effect. It didn't appeal to us to chain ourselves to Parliament railings or to be arrested and undergo hunger strikes but we felt terribly stirred over the terrific fight they were making for freedom."[95]

E.M. Murray's comments bring us back to an issue discussed at the beginning of this paper. E.M. Murray, Flora MacDonald Denison, Nellie McClung--these women and others as well felt that they were part of an international movement for social and political change. They felt connected with women in Canada and elsewhere who were working for the same ends. While it is true that there are problems related to the concept of a "woman's movement," it would seem mistaken to attempt an interpretation of the growth of women's emancipation which discarded the notion. Such an interpretation would be parallel to the interpretation of working-class history in vogue a few decades ago which attributed the amelioration of working-class life to the technological efficiency of industrial capitalism, and denied the existence of a working-class movement. In the case of both women and the proletariat, such a deterministic interpretation violates the authentic feelings of human beings who lived in the past and left records of their feelings. Women in Britain, the

United States, Canada and in other parts of the world felt and said that they were part of a movement. Even if the validity of their beliefs is questioned, these beliefs have to be taken into account in any attempt at an historical interpretation of the changes in women's position during this period.

FOOTNOTES

1. W. Thonnessen, The Emancipation of Women (Frankfurt, 1969), discusses socialist feminist internationalism, but there seems to be little connection between the socialist and non-socialist international conferences.
2. As an example, A. Kraditor's analysis of suffrage arguments as "from justice" and "from expediency" in The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement (New York, 1965). Do they genuinely fit the Canadian situation?
3. Barbara Kanner, "The Women of England in a Century of Social Change," in M. Vicinus (ed.), Suffer and Be Still (Indiana, 1973), p. 175.
4. J. Castell Hopkins, The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1909-1913 gives a good account of the itineraries up to 1912. For the secondary nature of the Canadian tours, see Votes for Women, October 15 - December 10, 1909.
5. Canadian Annual Review, 1912, p. 306 and Toronto Globe, October 8, 1912, p. 5. This paper does not offer a complete account even of all the pre-war tours. For instance, because of limitations of space, I have not given an account of Mrs. Pankhurst's reception in Victoria in 1911: it was very favorable (See for example the account in the Victoria Daily Times, December 21, 1911, p. 13). Nor have I given an account of Sylvia Pankhurst's interesting tour in 1912.
6. Toronto World, December 7, 1909, p. 137.
7. 1866 was the year of the first major petition campaign, in aid of the amendment to the Second Reform Bill, which John Stuart Mill introduced.
8. S. Rowbotham, Hidden from History (London, 1973) for instance.
9. e.g. C. Rover, Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914 (London, 1967), pp. 9-11.
10. S. Rowbotham, Hidden from History, pp. 90-98.
11. C. Rover discusses this fully.
12. Ibid., p. 71.
13. The immediate, precipitating cause of the formation of the WSPU was the discovery that the ILP's new Pankhurst Hall was being used by a branch of the ILP that excluded women. A. Rosen, Rise Up, Women! (London, 1974), p. 29.
14. Ibid., p. 30.
15. S. Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement (London, 1911). Rosen agrees. p. 39, ff.
16. After the expulsion of Sylvia Pankhurst and the East London Federation from the WSPU in 1914, it was true that Christabel and Mrs. Pankhurst completely abandoned their Labour past, but not before that.
17. For example, C. Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England (London, 1936). Andrew Rosen's new book is also preoccupied with militancy.
18. Sylvia Pankhurst (p. 24) uses this date, and most secondary sources follow her. Christabel, however, dates the beginning from an earlier meeting. C. Pankhurst, Unshackled (London, 1959), p. 46.
19. Christabel Pankhurst, p. 52.
20. Sylvia Pankhurst, p. 23.
21. This incident, "Black Friday", November 18, 1910, occurred after the stone throwing had begun. Rosen gives a very full account of the sexual brutality used by the police on this occasion. Pp. 139-142.
22. Mrs. W. Hewes Oliphant in the Toronto Star, November 18, 1909, p. 11.
23. S. Pankhurst, The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst (London, 1935), p. 89, and Rosen, p. 119.
24. Rosen, p. 107.
25. Rover, p. 81.
26. Rosen, p. 123. In view of the fact that the organization of the WSPU is usually described as "autocratic" it is interesting that so many of the significant techniques used by the WSPU (stone-throwing, hunger striking, arson) should have originated not from the leadership but from the membership.
27. Denis Hayes, Conscription Conflict (London, 1947), esp. Chapter 18.
28. Rosen, Chapter 16.
29. At least two women died from the effects of the police brutality on Black Friday. Lady Constance Lytton died of the effects of being forcibly fed during her imprisonment as "Jane Wharton."
30. All the Pankhurst memoirs agree.
31. Dangerfield, pp. 139-214.
32. Christabel Pankhurst was especially isolated, because she was directing the movement from Paris after her flight there in 1912.
33. Dangerfield thought that Christabel's pamphlet, The Great Scourge indicated she was a lesbian. Rosen, although he agrees that Christabel's ideas about sex seem a lot less odd when interpreted in context (Victorian ideas about sex seem very odd to us now), is still interested in her sex life. Rosen's book, which is on the whole very valuable indeed, does go off on unnecessary tangents: he has a lot of charts about the marital status of the WSPU members, but since he never really explains what he's doing with them, one is left wondering if he accepts on some level the charge their enemies made--that they were all unhappy in love. His millenarian analogy is suggestive, but he pushes it too far. The suffragettes were working for a rational, understandable goal, even when they saw things in black and white terms.
34. Manitoba, Ontario and Victoria, B.C. all had activities dating back before 1900 according to Cleverdon, but the earlier Manitoba movement had virtually disappeared and the Victoria group was isolated. See C. Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada (Toronto, 2nd ed., 1974).
35. G.S. Kealey, Hogtown: Working Class Toronto at the Turn of the Century (Toronto, 1974), p. 1.
36. Kealey, provides information about Toronto, as does Women at Work: Ontario, 1850-1930 (Toronto, 1974), especially the article by Klein and Roberts. For Britain, see I. Pinchbeck, Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution (London, 1930) and E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (London, 1963).
37. J. Banks, Prosperity and Parenthood (London, 1954). And for Ontario, the article by Genevieve Leslie in Women at Work: Ontario.
38. Genevieve Leslie maintains that some of this "concern" veiled a desire to maintain a good supply of servant girls, p. 97.
39. Cleverdon, p. 20.
40. This information is obtained from the Canadian Suffrage Association and the Toronto Suffrage Association letterheads in the Flora MacDonald Denison papers (Box 2), University of Toronto Library.
41. I hope to explore Denison's influence further in a future paper.
42. Unidentified clipping dated March 27, 1909, in Augusta Stowe-Gullen Scrapbook, University of Toronto Library.
43. From Toronto Mail and Empire clipping dated March 21, 1911 in Stowe-Gullen Scrapbook.
44. For example, see W. O'Neill, Everyone was Brave (Chicago, 1969).
45. For example, Toronto Saturday Night, December 23, 1911, p. 1.
46. Rosen, p. 244.
47. See Flora MacDonald Denison in the Sunday World, December 19, 1909, from Denison's Scrapbook no. III (Denison papers).

48. H. Ridley, A Synopsis of Woman Suffrage in Canada (n.d.), p. 12. In Stowe-Gullen memorabelia scrapbook. Also see Evening News clipping, March 27, 1909.

49. See Lady Aberdeen's pamphlet, "President's Memorandum on the Fourth Quinquennial Meeting." Papers of the National Council of Women, Volume 20, Public Archives of Canada.

50. NCW minute book, July 5, 1910.

51. Denison continued to publish a column in the Sunday World after this date called "The Open Road to Democracy."

52. Toronto News, December 10, 1907. Clipping in Stowe-Gullen Scrapbook.

53. Toronto News, June 25, 1906. Clipping in Denison's Scrapbook no. 11.

54. Idem.

55. Dr. Stowe-Gullen, Dr. Gordon and Mrs. Yeomans all expressed sympathy for the suffragettes. Lady Taylor of Hamilton (an anti-suffragist) and Mrs. Torrington, Chairman of the Toronto Local Council, expressed their disapproval. NCW minute book, October 30, 1908, NCW papers, Volume 20.

56. Toronto News, March 27, 1909, clipping from Stowe-Gullen Scrapbook.

57. The words of Herbert Gladstone in a memorandum to Grey. Quoted in Rosen, p. 127.

58. S. Pankhurst, Life. . ., p. 94.

59. For Toronto, see Votes for Women, December 10, 1909, p. 170.

60. Toronto Saturday Night, November 27, 1909, p. 170.

61. Toronto Globe, November 22, 1909, p. 1.

62. All the English suffragette reports mention her meeting with Goldwin Smith--e.g., see Votes for Women, December 10, 1909, p. 170. This seemed to offer a seal of recognition.

63. Toronto Globe, November 22, 1909, p. 5.

64. Toronto World, October 18, 1909, p. 5.

65. Toronto Mail and Empire, October 25, 1909, p. 6.

66. Saturday Night, December 4, 1909, p. 27. "Lady Grey's" column. I haven't been able to identify "Lady Grey."

67. See draft of speech to Toronto suffrage group after her return from Copenhagen in 1906: Denison papers, Box 5: and also unidentified 1906 clipping of a Denison column in the unsorted map case clippings, Denison papers.

68. C. Pankhurst, p. 83.

69. Denison's column, Sunday World, October 31, 1909. Denison Scrapbook no. III. On her views in 1908: see the Saint John, N.B. Sun. Denison Scrapbook no. 1.

70. Sunday World, December 26, 1909. Denison Scrapbook, no. III.

71. For the headquarters and restaurant, see Sunday World, October 30, 1910. Denison's column, Denison Scrapbook, no. III.

72. Sunday World, Denison's column, March 27, 1910, Denison Scrapbook no. III. A clipping from the Toronto Star, April 3, 1913 (Map Case Clippings, Denison Papers) says she was originally from Owen Sound.

73. Ibid., November 27, 1910.

74. Ibid., June 12, 1910.

75. On March 30, 1911, the News ran a story about an alleged Toronto suffragette, Miss Browne, who "would welcome a term in jail." Dr. Margaret Johnson, secretary of the Toronto Suffrage Association wrote a letter repudiating militancy and denying the existence of Miss Browne. News, April 6, 1911. Both from Stowe-Gullen Notebook.

76. On its closing: Sunday World. Denison's "Open Road . . ." column, May 7, 1911.

77. C. Pankhurst, Unshackled, p. 186.

78. Saturday Night, December 23, 1911.

79. E.g., Fort William Times-Journal, December 12, 1911, p. 6 on why women factory workers need the vote.

80. Regina Leader, December 15, 1911, p. 2.

81. I have not been able to identify "Isobel" or "Mary Ford." They may be the same person.

82. Grain Grower's Guide, February 22, 1911, p. 37.

83. Ibid., December 20, 1911, p. 23.

84. Manitoba Free Press, January 16, 1911, p. 9.

85. Ibid., December 5, 1911, p. 9.

86. Ibid., December 18, 1911, p. 1.

87. Idem.

88. Nellie McClung, The Stream Runs Fast (Toronto, 1965, first pub. 1945).

89. Regina Leader, December 10, 1912.

90. Christine Macdonald, "How Saskatchewan Women got the Vote," Saskatchewan History, (October, 1948, pp. 1-8).

91. Toronto Globe, August 29, 1912, p. 7.

92. Idem.

93. Ibid., August 30, 1912, p. 1.

94. For Denison's views on the WSPU in 1913, see her Sunday World column "Stray Leaves from a Suffragette's Notebook" n.d. but clearly late summer 1913, in unsorted Map Case Clippings, Denison papers. For split in the Toronto movement, and anti-militant sentiment, see article from the Star Weekly, March 21, 1914, in unsorted Map Case Clippings, Denison papers.

95. E.M. Murray to C. Cleverdon, July 30, 1946. Cleverdon papers, Public Archives of Canada.