

(32)

"If Thine Eye Offend Thee, Pluck it Out":  
Sterilization and the Policing of Female Sexuality in Twentieth Century Western Canada

by


Jennifer K. Roberts  
B.A., University of Victoria, 1997


A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

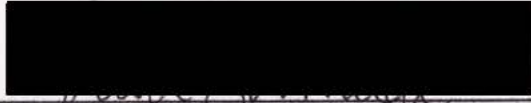
MASTER OF ARTS


in the Department of History

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

  
Dr. A.G. McLaren, Supervisor (Department of History)

  
Dr. L.S./Marks, Departmental Member (Department of History)

  
Dr. L.A. Surridge, Outside Member (Department of English)

  
Dr. M.E. Young, External Member (Faculty of Law)

© Jennifer K. Roberts, 1999

University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part,  
by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

Supervisor: Dr. A.G. McLaren


### Abstract


This thesis examines western Canadian Eugenics Boards' use of sexual sterilization for the purpose of policing young women's sexuality. It focuses on the figure of the feeble-minded female and details how she was perceived and "treated" by eugenicists in western Canada. Its initial analysis of the origins of the eugenics movement in early twentieth-century Canada demonstrates that contemporary preoccupations with "the sex problem" of the feeble-minded female played a critical role in garnering acceptance and support for eugenic legislation. Employing case files from the British Columbia and Alberta Eugenics Boards, this study determines which types of women were targeted by the Boards' administration of eugenic legislation between 1928 and 1972. The Eugenics Boards routinely targeted marginalized young women whom they adjudged as either "unfit" mothers or sexual delinquents. This thesis also presents new evidence which suggests that eugenicists were similarly preoccupied with the potential eugenic problem caused by young women and girls who were suspected of being vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation.

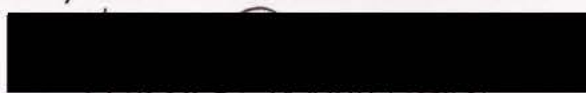
By examining the administration of the Acts from their inception to repeal, this study is able to investigate the Boards' rationale for applying sterilization to solve "the sex problem." Comparison of the explanatory frameworks the Eugenics Boards used to justify their decisions to sterilize young women in the inter-war and post-war periods reveals that a marked shift occurred. Popular acceptance of eugenics in the inter-war period was based on the scapegoating and pathologizing of socially marginal, "unfit" individuals for the socio-economic problems endangering the entire nation. Eugenicists' concern for the society at large overrode humanitarian awareness of the rights of the individual. Consequently, the case files from the inter-


war period suggest that the Eugenics Boards' reasons to sterilize many young women were framed in terms of greater concern for the community than for the sterilization candidate. Conversely, the post-war period witnessed a heightened awareness of the democratic rights of the individual. Working under the cover of discretionary silence, the Alberta Board promoted and applied sterilization as a means by which to protect individual young women whom it perceived as incapable mothers, troubled sexual delinquents, or girls who were vulnerable to sexual exploitation. The Eugenics Board rationalized sterilizations in the post-war period as in the best interests of these categories of women. Although eugenicists' arguments in support of female sterilization shifted from the inter-war motive of protecting society from the menace of the feeble-minded female to the post-war explanation of protecting vulnerable women from the threat of the larger society, one crucial focus of eugenic efforts remained the same--young women whom the Boards perceived as constituting a "sex problem."

Examiners:

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dr. A.G. McLaren, Supervisor (Department of History)

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dr. L.S. Marks, Departmental Member (Department of History)

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dr. L.A. Surridge, Outside Member (Department of English)

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dr. M.E. Young, External Member (Faculty of Law)

Acknowledgments  
Table of Contents

Abstract	With much warmth and gratitude, I want to thank my dear friends Ken, Melissa and Christie, without whom this entire journey would have been less fun. I thank my family and friends for being genuinely interested in what I	ii
Acknowledgments	me to keep it all in perspective. I am very thankful for the kind words and generous wisdom of Susan Johnston, Elizabeth Vibert and	v
Introduction	Bob Menzies. I am appreciative of the help and support that the members of my committee extended to me and I wish to thank Lynne Marks, Lisa Surridge, Margot Young and Ted Wooley for their interest and involvement in my thesis.	1
Chapter One	Setting the Context: The Rise of Eugenic Thought in Western Canada, the Threat of the Feeble-minded Female, and the Sterilization Solution	36
Chapter Two	Protecting Western Canada from "the Sex Problem" of the Feeble-minded Female in the Inter-War Period	65
Chapter Three	For Their Own Good and Protection: Policing Women's Sexuality in the Post-War Period	99
Conclusion	"If Thine Eye Offend Thee, Pluck it Out"	143
Bibliography		151

## Acknowledgments

On January 25, 1996, an Alberta Court awarded Lailani Muir, a former  
 With much warmth and gratitude, I want to thank my dear friends  
 Koni, Melanie and Christie, without whom this entire journey would have been  
 less fun. I thank my family and friends for being genuinely interested in what I  
 do and for helping me to keep it all in perspective. I am very thankful for the  
 kind words and generous wisdom of Susan Johnston, Elizabeth Vibert and  
 Bob Menzies. I am appreciative of the help and support that the members of  
 my committee extended to me and I wish to thank Lynne Marks, Lisa Surridge,  
 Margot Young and Ted Wooley for their interest and involvement in my thesis.  
 And finally, it is to Angus and Michael that I extend my most heartfelt thanks  
 for their roles in seeing me through this degree intact.

that she was to have her appendix out.

Until this well-publicized law suit, the first of its kind in Canada, many  
 Canadians were not aware that there had ever been sterilization programs in western  
 Canada, let alone one in Alberta that until 1972 allowed for compulsory  
 sterilization. The law suit revealed that Lailani Muir was brought to the mental  
 institution after suffering terrible abuse at the hands of her mother. As a young girl  
 Lailani had been starved, beaten and locked away. The Alberta government did not  
 locate and punish Lailani Muir's mother for such reprehensible behaviour; rather, it

---

<sup>1</sup> See, Glynis Whiting, director, "The Sterilization of Lailani Muir," (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, North West Centre, 1996). The Muir law suit was widely covered by the Canadian Press.

<sup>2</sup> In 1937 an amendment to the 1928 Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act negated the need for consent from those patients diagnosed as mentally defective; therefore, the Alberta Eugenics Board could legally order so-called mentally defective patients to undergo sterilization operations without their permission. Where the Eugenics Board files state "passed clear" this indicates that the candidate had been approved for sterilization and his/her consent was not required. "Passed clear" is essentially tantamount to compulsory sterilization.

Introduction

The Muir case brought the issue of Canada's history of eugenics to national attention. On January 25, 1996, an Alberta Court awarded Leilani Muir, a former "trainee" at the Red Deer Provincial Training school, three quarters of a million dollars.<sup>1</sup> In 1957, when Leilani Muir was fourteen, she was brought before a panel of four people she did not know who questioned her for a mere five minutes. Without her permission or even knowledge, the Alberta Eugenics Board decided, based on this brief meeting, that Leilani Muir was a suitable candidate for eugenical sterilization. The Eugenics Board's case summary stated that she was "passed clear" for sterilization because of the "danger of transmission to progeny of mental deficiency" and she was "incapable of intelligent parenthood."<sup>2</sup> She was told only that she was to have her appendix out.

Until this well-publicized law suit, the first of its kind in Canada, many Canadians were not aware that there had ever been sterilization programs in western Canada, let alone one in Alberta that until 1972 allowed for compulsory sterilization. The law suit revealed that Leilani Muir was brought to the mental institution after suffering terrible abuse at the hands of her mother. As a young girl Leilani had been starved, beaten and locked away. The Alberta government did not locate and punish Leilani Muir's mother for such reprehensible behaviour; rather, it

---

<sup>1</sup> See, Glynis Whiting, director, "The Sterilization of Leilani Muir," (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, North West Centre, 1996). The Muir law suit was widely covered by the Canadian Press.

<sup>2</sup> In 1937 an amendment to the 1928 Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act negated the need for consent from those patients diagnosed as mentally defective; therefore, the Alberta Eugenics Board could legally order so-called mentally defective patients to undergo sterilization operations without their permission. Where the Eugenics Board files state "passed clear" this indicates that the candidate had been approved for sterilization and his/her consent was not required. "Passed clear" is essentially tantamount to compulsory sterilization.

placed the daughter in a mental institution and authorized her sterilization.

The Muir case brought the issue of Canada's history of eugenics to national attention and was instrumental in pointing to the Alberta Eugenics Board's use of sterilization for scientifically questionable purposes. For the first time, many Canadians learned that people who were poor and exhibited emotional or behavioural disturbances could have been subjected to compulsory or coerced sterilization in western Canadian mental institutions. Moreover, Ms. Muir's case, despite its horrific and troubling nature, could not be considered an anomaly. There were dozens of examples of young women and men who came before the Alberta and British Columbia Eugenics Boards and were recommended for sterilization, not solely on the basis of having purportedly 'bad genes', but for the purposes of controlling, regulating and policing their behaviour.

The Muir case reminded Canadians that Eugenics Boards employed surgery to police or regulate what they considered unacceptable female behaviour. This is one aspect of eugenics that has not yet been investigated in depth. The starting hypothesis for this thesis was that Eugenic Boards in western Canada routinely prescribed sterilization as a solution to the problem of unregulated female sexuality. The assumption that eugenicists actively employed sterilization to regulate sexual behaviour is shared by other eugenics and feminist historians; however, to date no one has been able to prove that this was the case. To determine whether this hypothesis is correct, this study employed Eugenics Boards' case files generated in British Columbia and Alberta between 1928 and 1972. The evidence revealed that the Eugenics Boards frequently directed their concern at certain categories of women whom the Boards identified and targeted largely on the basis of their threatening

sexuality: women considered to be unfit mothers, sexual delinquents, and adolescents who were assumed to be vulnerable to sexual abuse. Examination of these categories of women and girls suggested that the Eugenics Boards viewed the sterilization of these targeted groups as a solution to the social and economic problems caused by their erratic sexuality. The main point of this thesis--one which has not been made before with such extensive documentation--is that it can be demonstrated that a crucial function of western Canada's Sexual Sterilization Acts was the policing of female sexuality.

To orient this study it is necessary to begin by reviewing the historiography. This chapter will first discuss what British, American and Canadian scholars have told us about the history of eugenics. Second, because histories of the eugenics movement have not explicitly explored the use of sterilization for the purpose of regulating sexuality, this chapter will review scholarship which has addressed the notion of policing sexuality, particularly that of the feebleminded or delinquent female. Third, it examines what historians have concluded about the relationship between women, reproduction and doctors. Finally, this introductory chapter closes by discussing the methodology to be employed in this study.

Let us start by determining what is known about eugenics. Sir Francis Galton, Charles Darwin's cousin, coined the term "eugenics" in 1883 to refer to the notion of improving the human species through controlled reproduction. The goal of eugenics, a word derived from the Greek term meaning "well born", was two-fold. Policies of "positive eugenics" sought to secure racial betterment by encouraging reproduction among those privileged individuals considered to possess socially and biologically desirable traits. Conversely, "negative eugenics" focused on limiting the

reproduction of "unfit" individuals so as to prevent them from passing on undesirable traits to their progeny and thereby weakening the human race as a whole. While the positive eugenic policies often took the form of offering financial incentives to "fit" couples who produced large families, negative eugenics programs focused on the segregation or sterilization of the "unfit" population.<sup>3</sup> It was perhaps no coincidence that Galton was Darwin's cousin as the former's notions of superior and inferior hereditary types bear an uncanny resemblance to the popular Darwinian theory of the "survival of the fittest." It is important to note that both theories privilege members of the dominant socio-cultural group--middle and upper-class Caucasians--as it was precisely these Anglo-Saxon characteristics which eugenicists considered most desirable.

A number of scholars have examined the contemporary fears and preoccupations that created the moral climate in which sterilization of the feeble-minded became a viable option for eugenicists in Britain and North America. In the early twentieth century, the social control of moral behaviour contributed to a mania for scientific categorization, identification and segregation of individuals labeled abnormal.<sup>4</sup> Middle-class preoccupations with developing and applying scientific explanations to individuals blamed with causing social problems facilitated the extension of public control into private lives. This peculiar overlap of medico-moral concerns contributed to what H.H. Goddard, an American expert in mental

---

<sup>3</sup>Amram, Scheinfeld, *The New You and Heredity, With a 1961 Addendum* (Philadelphia and New York: 1939, 1950, 1961): 541-2.

<sup>4</sup>For a history of the development and evolution of the specific terms applied to purportedly varying gradations of mental deficiency over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see: Steven A Gelb, "Not Simply Bad and Incurable": Science, Morality, and Intellectual Deficiency," *History of Education Quarterly* 29:3 (Fall 1989), 359-380.

deficiency, called the "menace of the feeble-minded."

Though eugenic thought first emerged in Britain during the last decades of the nineteenth century, the British eugenics movement was never as radical as its North American counterpart.<sup>5</sup> Historians such as Nancy Stepan have shown that despite initial interest and acceptance of Galton's eugenic ideas, the majority of British scientists and laypersons did not follow their interest in hereditarianism to the extent of calling on the government to implement compulsory programs of negative eugenics.<sup>6</sup> Much of the British scholarship, using class-based analysis of the administration of institutions and reformatories, has focused on the middle-class desire to segregate the purportedly mentally deficient.<sup>7</sup> Mark Jackson explored the political and social implications of eugenic segregation to argue that the turn-of-the-century elite blamed Britain's social and economic problems on the menacing population of "high-grades".<sup>8</sup> By placing in institutions the individuals they associated with the problems of social, moral and economic degeneration, British

---

<sup>5</sup> Robert A. Peel, ed. Essays in the History of Eugenics (London: The Galton Institute, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Nancy Stepan, The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800-1960, (London: MacMillan, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> Terms such as "feeble-minded", "mentally deficient", "mental defective", "moral delinquent" and a host of other turn-of-the-century scientific diagnoses are today recognized as being value-laden classifications that, once deconstructed, reveal more about the describer than the described. These terms, which appear frequently throughout this text, do not appear in quotation marks; however, it must be understood that these terms are recognized as being problematic as well as historically and culturally specific.

<sup>8</sup> The British term "high-grade" is used synonymously with "feeble-minded" to connote "subnormal" individuals who often lived undetected in the community. In the early-twentieth century, high-grades were assumed to pose a particular threat to society because "by virtue of their physical and mental proximity to the normal population [they] could evade immediate recognition and, therefore, more successfully transmit their feeble-mindedness to future generations." Mark Jackson, "Institutional Provision for the Feeble-minded in Edwardian England: Sandlebridge and the Scientific Morality of Permanent Care," in From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency: Historical Perspectives on People with Learning Disabilities, eds. David Wright and Anne Digby (London: Routledge, 1996), 165-66.

eugenicists believed they would eliminate the problem itself.<sup>9</sup>

The British tendency to pursue segregation over sterilization may perhaps be explained by the nation's rigid class structure.<sup>10</sup> A more stable and class-bound society, Britain was less likely to turn to such extreme solutions as sterilization for their social problems. The middle-class preoccupations with "the dangerous classes" facilitated policies of social control which employed segregation but did not venture into the realm of negative eugenics. Conversely, in the United States where immigration was a prevalent social issue, eugenic discourse assumed a far more radical expression among middle-class reformers and experts. The dominant socio-cultural group in North America reacted to the steady influx of immigrants by developing hierarchies of race and power which situated ethnic "others" at the bottom of the scale. The science of eugenics claimed to ameliorate the fearful assumption that immigrant populations would genetically taint the superior racial stock of America. With over thirty states having passed sterilization legislation in the early decades of the twentieth century, more American than British scholars have studied negative eugenic programs as expressions of social control policies.<sup>11</sup> American historians who aligned themselves with feminist politics have been

---

<sup>9</sup> Jackson, "Institutional Provision for the Feeble-minded in Edwardian England," 161-183.

<sup>10</sup> Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics In Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inside cover., 1990), 9.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the social control theory which so many historians are today critiquing, see: John A. Mayer, "Notes Towards a Working Definition of Social Control in Historical Analysis," in *Social Control and the State: Historical and Comparative Essays*, eds. Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull (Oxford: Martin Robinson & Co. Ltd., 1983). Mayer argues that with the economic and social upheaval of the Industrial Revolution it became necessary for the ruling classes to "to instill new habits of self discipline upon the masses." Mayer, "Notes Towards a Working Definition of Social Control," 17-18. He then suggests that this is the concept of social control which historians use to describe late nineteenth century and early twentieth century middle-class reformers' intentions to use welfare agencies, institutions and other reform measures to control and regulate the behaviour of the poor, and often immigrant underclass.

particularly interested in the political repercussions of eugenic principles as they affected the reproductive rights of women.<sup>12</sup>

The first comprehensive overview of the eugenics movement was Daniel Kevles' work which appeared in 1985.<sup>13</sup> Kevles examined both the British and American eugenics movements, providing a thorough chronology of the inception and development of eugenic theories and sterilization programs. He focused on the role of "experts" in this purportedly scientific discourse and explained that their attraction to the eugenics movement was closely connected to the contemporaneous efforts of doctors and scientists to consolidate their professional status.<sup>14</sup> Kevles argued that sterilization was a means by which the dominant class sought to control those "unfit" individuals situated at the bottom of the social hierarchy. According to Kevles' somewhat simplistic interpretation, sterilization was primarily an instrument of social control administered by the social and intellectual elite from the top down.

Philip R. Reilly's The Surgical Solution, published a few years later, offered a similar chronology yet focused more closely on the ways American sterilization programs were applied. Taking a wider view than Kevles of the overlapping issues affecting the development and administration of sterilization programs, Reilly used primary sources, including patient case files, to produce a more complex

---

<sup>12</sup> See: Linda Gordon, Woman's Body Woman's Right: Birth Control in America (New York: Grossman, 1976); Thomas B. Littlewood, The Politics of Population Control (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977); Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, "'Reproductive Choice' in the Contemporary United States: A Social Analysis of Female Sterilization," in And the Poor Get Children: Radical Perspectives on Population Dynamics, ed. Karen L. Michaelson (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1981), 50-84; and Thomas M. Shapiro, Population Control Politics: Women, Sterilization and Reproductive Choice (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> See: Daniel J Kevles, In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

<sup>14</sup> Kevles, In the Name of Eugenics, 76

understanding of sterilization as a policy of social control. His approach resulted in a more critical analysis of sterilization programs. Reilly challenged, for example, the validity of a patient "freely" consenting to sterilization when that consent was given in order to avoid lifelong segregation.<sup>15</sup> Reilly explicitly pointed out that sterilization was frequently prescribed as a medical solution for such social or behavioural problems as out-of-control sexuality.<sup>16</sup> Although Reilly challenged the scientific legitimacy of eugenics programs, he, in contrast to Kevles, was less critical of the active role doctors played in the sterilization campaign.<sup>17</sup>

In the mid-1990s, several more studies entered the field in rapid succession. Among the most useful for this study's purposes was Trent's Inventing the Feeble Mind.<sup>18</sup> Trent prioritized the constructed and impermanent nature of diagnoses of impaired mental or intellectual capacity and emphasized economic issues of control in the health care of socially vulnerable people. Trent recognized the gendered demographics of applied sterilization programs; however, he discussed women more in terms of their social and economic vulnerability--without acknowledging these factors' link to gender--than their marginal status as defined by gender. Using an economic analysis to explain how American mental institutions and their administrators targeted marginal members of society, Trent argued that sterilization

---

<sup>15</sup> Philip R. Reilly, The Surgical Solution: A History of Involuntary Sterilization in the United States (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 101.

<sup>16</sup> Reilly, The Surgical Solution, 48-49.

<sup>17</sup> Reilly is not an historian but a medical doctor whose book fulfilled the thesis requirement for his Yale medical degree.

<sup>18</sup> See also: Carole R. McCann, Birth Control Politics in the United States, 1916-1945 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994); and Diane B. Paul, Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to the Present (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995).

was both utilized and justified in terms of the practical needs of institutions. Inmates in mental institutions, he wrote, were often diagnosed and either segregated or recommended for sterilization and release on the basis of their social value and ability to work.<sup>19</sup> Trent explained the waxing and waning of institutional sterilization programs by looking to social and economic factors in institutions and beyond.<sup>20</sup> Trent concluded, however, that the economics of sterilization were bound up with the desire of doctors and superintendents for increased professional status.<sup>21</sup>

Dowbiggin similarly examined the relationship between medical experts' search for professional legitimacy and the rising popularity of eugenic thought in North America. In Keeping America Sane, Dowbiggin centered on psychiatrists and asked how numerous American and Canadian professionals who sought to help the mentally ill became involved in such a shadowy science as eugenics. His answer was that some psychiatrists adopted an eugenic ideology largely for the purposes of salvaging their wavering professional status. Eugenics, he argued, attracted many psychiatrists because its stress on hereditary determinism explained the problem of incurable patients.<sup>22</sup> Dowbiggin almost exonerated psychiatrists of any personal responsibility for the un-scientific nature of the eugenics programs many of them supported in North America. His work was unduly sympathetic to the men whom he stated were "under fierce pressure from governments" to rationalize and economize

---

<sup>19</sup> James W. Trent Jr., Inventing the Feeble Mind: A History of Mental Retardation in the United States (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 88.

<sup>20</sup> Trent, Inventing the Feeble Mind, 5, 6, 79, 271.

<sup>21</sup> Trent, Inventing the Feeble Mind, 272.

<sup>22</sup> Ian Robert Dowbiggin, Keeping America Sane: Psychiatry and Eugenics in the United States and Canada, 1880-1940 (London: Cornell University Press, 1997), Preface, ix.

their profession. Consequently, Dowbiggin's argument that many psychiatrists endorsed eugenics in hopes of legitimating their status as mental health care professionals did not offer a satisfactory explanation for the widespread acceptance of eugenics in North America.<sup>23</sup>

Although Dowbiggin purported to treat all of North America, he was most interested in the United States. Canadian involvement in eugenics, where only two provinces had legislated sterilization programs, clearly remained on a much lesser scale than that of the United States where over thirty states had official eugenics programs.<sup>24</sup> However, the proportionate rate of Canadian involvement in sterilization programs, most notably in Alberta, has led one observer to conclude that the western Canadian administration of eugenic legislation may be viewed as "one of the world's more robust programs."<sup>25</sup>

In his 1986 article, which later became a chapter of his book, McLaren revealed aspects of Canada's eugenics history which for good reason had been left untouched. In Our Own Master Race, he argued that national interest in eugenics was widespread and should not be dismissed as part of some underground or fringe group's radical ideology. McLaren sought to explain why eugenic discourse held such wide appeal to otherwise "intelligent Canadians."<sup>26</sup> Sterilization, he asserted, was presented to Canadians in the early twentieth century as an alternative to institutional segregation. Rather than expensive life-long segregation, sterilization

---

<sup>23</sup> Dowbiggin, Keeping America Sane, 236.

<sup>24</sup> Reilly, The Surgical Solution, 95-95.

<sup>25</sup> Reilly, The Surgical Solution, 105.

<sup>26</sup> McLaren, Our Own Master Race, 7.

seemed to offer "a far more effective, humane, and cheap method" of controlling the reproduction of the unfit.<sup>27</sup> Respectable and progressive-minded Canadians, McLaren suggested, looked to a eugenic policy as the most effective and economically efficient solution to a host of socio-economic problems.<sup>28</sup> He agreed with Trent that it was important to look at the way in which eugenic programs evolved in the changing socio-economic climate of the early twentieth-century; however, McLaren did not limit himself to a strictly economic explanation for the Canadian expression of eugenic thought. Instead, McLaren asserted that the desire of early twentieth-century political, social, and medical movements for a simple solution to social problems created a climate ripe for the acceptance of eugenics among both professional and lay populations.

Regionally focused studies tell us who came within the purview of western Canada's sterilization programs. Timothy Christian's unpublished manuscript provided an exhaustive quantitative analysis of the administration of Alberta's Sexual Sterilization Act. Using the Eugenics Board's filing cards on sterilization candidates, Christian was able to create a profile of the types of individuals who were most likely to come before the Board. His statistical analysis presented strong evidence that sterilization candidates were most likely to be female, young, single, sexually deviant, unemployed, poor, ethnic and rural.<sup>29</sup> Christian's analysis is extremely useful as it remains the only in-depth quantitative study of a Canadian sterilization program;

---

<sup>27</sup> The concept of "the feeble-minded" or "moron" is attributed to the work of H.H. Goddard, who is considered the father of American eugenics. For more on Goddard and his work, see I. David Smith, *John H. Goddard: The Irish and Legacy of the Yonkers* (Rockville, Maryland).

<sup>27</sup> Angus McLaren, "The Creation of a Haven for 'Human Thoroughbreds': The Sterilization of the Feeble-Minded and the Mentally Ill in British Columbia," *Canadian Historical Review* 67:2 (1986), 132.

<sup>28</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 165-6.

<sup>29</sup> Timothy Christian, "The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta: A Study of the Alberta Sterilization Act," (unpublished manuscript: University of Alberta, n.d.). 123.

however, as Christian did not include a gender breakdown in many of his statistics, his study leaves significant questions about female sterilization in Alberta unanswered.

Ruth McDonald presented a chronological narrative of the Alberta Eugenics Board activities that sought to add context to Christians's statistical work. Her thesis outlined the formulation of Alberta's Sexual Sterilization Act, starting with early twentieth-century fears about rising immigration and "the menace of the feeble-minded".<sup>30</sup> She focused on the development of the United Farm Women of Alberta's policies which called for both positive and negative eugenic programs designed to deal with social problems purportedly caused by the province's degenerates.<sup>31</sup> McDonald provided a thorough review of the "stormy debate" which took place as the Alberta legislature did battle over Minister Hoadley's 1928 Bill proposing the Sexual Sterilization Act.

Focusing on British Columbia, Monica Wosilius looked at how institutions, patients, their families, physicians and provincial social services negotiated the province's sterilization program.<sup>32</sup> Wosilius emphasized the importance of agency in the negotiated process of the Act's administration. Wosilius' work is of particular interest to this study because she claimed that British Columbia's sterilization program was utilized for explicitly behavioural purposes, including the goal of

---

<sup>30</sup> The concept of "the menace" of the feeble-minded or moron is attributed to the work of H.H. Goddard, who is considered the earliest American proponent of eugenics. For more on Goddard and his work, see: J. David Smith, *Minds Made Feeble: The Myth and Legacy of the Kallikaks* (Rockville, Maryland: Aspen Systems Corporation, 1985).

<sup>31</sup> Ruth Marina McDonald, "A Policy of Privilege: The Alberta Sexual Sterilization Program, 1928-1972." (M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1996).

<sup>32</sup> Monica Wosilius, "Eugenics, Insanity and Feeble-mindedness: British Columbia's Sterilization Policy from 1933-43." (M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1995).

regulating immoral behaviour. She noted the double bind women found themselves in as eugenicists exploited the popular notion that mental deficiency was produced by immoral behaviour, and vice versa.<sup>33</sup> Wosilius was primarily interested in how socio-cultural perceptions of ideal motherhood coincided with eugenic discourse to deny ostensibly unfit women the right to parenthood, as well as the examples of agency which can be located in the negotiated implementation of the Act. Both Wosilius and McDonald agreed with McLaren's view that eugenics was marked by multiple, inter-related issues and discourses, including those of moral reform, social hygiene and medical professionalization.

Before concluding this account of the historiography of eugenics, it should be noted that most historians who have looked at the pathologizing effect of eugenic principles have been influenced by Michel Foucault. His works have been instrumental in encouraging scholars to treat value-laden terms such as "normalcy", "deviancy", "criminality" and "sexuality" as socially and culturally constructed as well as historically specific. Where Foucault is most useful to this study is in his work on discourse analysis. According to Foucault, the concept of discourse extended beyond mere communication to the realm of specialized knowledge which was created, exchanged and reinforced among specialists. For Foucault, discourse was closely linked to the connection between knowledge and power as seen in the relationship between the describer and the described. He encouraged scholars to examine the power that accrued to the experts who claimed they had the necessary knowledge to examine, treat, and punish less powerful members of society. Thus, he pointed to discourse analysis as the best means to understand such hierarchies of power as "it is

---

<sup>33</sup> Wosilius, "Eugenics, Insanity and Feeble-mindedness," 18, 51-2, 54, 112.

in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together."<sup>34</sup>

Turning to historians' accounts of the policing of sexuality it is necessary to note that Foucault has been criticized for ignoring issues of gender and agency in his analysis of hierarchies of power. Nevertheless, scholars who are interested in experts' use of medical diagnoses to control women's behaviour frequently build on Foucault's ideas about the power dynamic between the describer and the described. Madeline Bragar, for example, clearly worked with Foucauldian notions of power and knowledge; however, she imbued her work with a gender analysis that was missing in Foucault's. In her remarkably insightful dissertation, Bragar explained that the term "feeble-minded" incorporated multiple early twentieth-century concerns, denoting both generic understandings of mental deficiency --which were closely related to delinquency-- as well as a specific category of purported mental disability.<sup>35</sup> Epitomizing Foucauldian discourse in action, Bragar wrote:

Once the vague ideas about immorality, sex, and class became identified with the phrase 'feeble-minded female', the phrase then became synonymous with the stereotype, which, by virtue of the scientific phrase, rather than open discourse or scientific inquiry, became generally accepted as true.<sup>36</sup>

Bragar's work is of particular value to this study because she inserted issues of gender into her discourse analysis. She argued that the term "feeble-minded" became increasingly gendered in its focus as it was applied by experts to the constructed notion of the promiscuous woman who was primarily responsible for the

<sup>34</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume One, An Introduction*, trans Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 100.

<sup>35</sup> Madeline C. Bragar. "The Feeble-minded Female: An Historical Analysis of Mental Retardation as a Social Definition." (Ph.D. diss., University of Syracuse, New York, 1977), 14.

<sup>36</sup> Bragar, "The Feeble-minded Female," 138.

decline of North American racial stock. Steven Noll also examined the hierarchical relationship between early twentieth-century experts and the figure of the feeble-minded female. In his examination of attitudes towards feeble-mindedness in the southern states, Noll suggested that the feeble-minded female was the target of middle-class paranoia informed by patriarchal assumptions about gender, class, and mental deficiency.<sup>37</sup> He too found that one of the greatest threats posed by the feeble-minded female was her unharnessed sexuality. He noted the dichotomy in the middle-class view of the feeble-minded female's childlike need for protection and the extreme danger she posed by means of moral and genetic contagion to the community at large. Thus, Noll viewed feeble-minded females as "under a double burden" because they were subject to a patriarchal and paternalistic system of scientific authority that sought to institutionalize them for dual purposes, both for their own protection, and for the good of the larger society.<sup>38</sup>

Noll clearly identified what he considered the "prevailing perception that female mental deficiency and sexual immorality went hand in hand,"<sup>39</sup> and he

---

<sup>37</sup> Steven Noll, "'A Far Greater Menace': Feeble-minded Females in the South, 1900-1940" in *Hidden Histories of Women in the New South*, eds. Virginia Bernhard et al (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994), 33. It is interesting to note that Noll did not discuss African American women in his analysis of eugenics programs in the southern states. In an earlier article he made clear his reasons for this apparent omission, stating that "southern states took little notice of their black feeble-minded population." Noll, "Southern Strategies for Handling the Black Feeble-Minded: From Social Control to Profound Indifference," *Journal of Policy History* vol 3 No 2, (1991), 130. He explained that contemporary policies of racial separation enabled white eugenicists to "ignore" feeble-minded African Americans. Noll concluded that early-twentieth century eugenic rhetoric "was expressed in class, rather than strictly racial, terms." Noll, "Southern Strategies," 143. In the era before the Civil Rights movement, the real concern of American eugenicists appears to have been with whites.

<sup>38</sup> Noll, "A Far Greater Menace," 35.

<sup>39</sup> Noll, "A Far Greater Menace," 47.

suggested that institutionalization served as a means by which to regulate feeble-minded women's reproductive capacity. Unfortunately, Noll's focus on segregation did not allow for the extension of his analysis into the similar employment of sterilization. He only touched on this issue, asking at the end of his article whether the gendered demographics of sterilization procedures might reveal a belief among eugenic experts that sterilization itself could be used to serve a wider purpose.<sup>40</sup> Noll challenged the veracity of southern superintendents' explanation for the disproportionate gender ratio in terms that highlighted feeble-minded men's greater ability to evade the authorities, but he did not pursue the matter further. Considering the aggressive sterilization programs that existed in southern states such as Mississippi, Alabama, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia,<sup>41</sup> Noll's decision not to further examine the sterilization of feeble-minded females is somewhat surprising.

The greater tendency among scholars to examine gendered aspects of segregation, but not sterilization, may also be seen in the British context. British scholars Mathew Thomson and Pamela Cox, for example, concentrated on gendered segregation as a social control issue in early twentieth-century England.<sup>42</sup> They demonstrated that British eugenic assumptions worked together with gendered discourses of deficiency and sexual delinquency to control and regulate the behaviour

<sup>40</sup> Noll, "A Far Greater Menace," 49.

<sup>41</sup> L.G. Brock, Report of the Departmental Committee on Sterilization (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office: 1934), 109-112.

<sup>42</sup> Mathew Thomson, The Problem of Mental Deficiency: Eugenics, Democracy, and Social Policy in Britain, c. 1870-1959, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Mathew Thomson, "Family, Community and State: The Micro-politics of Mental Deficiency," in From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency: Historical Perspectives on People With Learning Disorders, 207-230; Pamela Cox, "Girls, Deficiency and Delinquency," in From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency, 184-206.

of young women. Thomson, like a number of younger scholars, was drawn to the issue of *male* delinquency and mental deficiency.<sup>43</sup> Cox explored the gendered issues of social control and middle-class assumptions of the interrelation between female delinquency, crime and mental status. Her work offered an interesting contrast to a body of American works which similarly examined gendered notions of delinquency. Where American scholars like Schlossman and Wallach have determined that the United States' juvenile court system was instrumental in linking female delinquency and deficient mental status, Cox argued that this was not the case in Britain. The British system "effectively ignored" questions of young offenders' mental status, leaving this aspect of diagnoses and treatment entirely to the discretion of custodial institutions.<sup>44</sup> In the United States however, juvenile authorities were not only concerned with female defendants' behavioural and sexual histories but they also played a critical role in channeling young offenders towards mental institutions and reformatories.<sup>45</sup> This study will show that a similar pattern was played out in western Canada as judiciary officials, Guidance Clinics and educators channeled young women whom they considered appropriate sterilization candidates

---

<sup>43</sup> See especially: Thomson, The Problem of Mental Deficiency, 252-55.

<sup>44</sup> Cox, "Girls, Deficiency and Delinquency," 184-192.

<sup>45</sup> See: Steven Schlossman and Stephanie Wallach, "The Crime of Precocious Sexuality: Female Juvenile Delinquency in the Progressive Era," Harvard Educational Review 48:1 (1978): 65-93; Elizabeth Lunbeck, "'A New Generation of Women': Progressive Psychiatrists and the Hypersexual Female," Feminist Studies 13:3(Fall 1987): 513-544; John Hogan, The Disreputable Pleasures: Crime and Deviance in Canada (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1991); Susan S.M. Edwards, Female Sexuality and the Law: A Study of Constructs of Female Sexuality as they Inform Statute and Legal Procedure (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981), especially 50-56, 75-81; and Nicole Hahn Rafter and Elizabeth Anne Stanko, "Introduction," in Judge, Lawyer, Victim, Thief: Women, Gender Roles and Criminal Justice, eds. Nicole Hahn Rafter and Elizabeth Anne Stanko (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1982): 1-28. For contemporary sociological studies of delinquency and deficiency see: Lesley Shacklady Smith, "Sexist Assumptions and Female Delinquency: An Empirical Investigation," in Women, Sexuality and Social Control, eds., Carol Smart and Barry Smart (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978): 74-86.

in the direction of the Eugenics Boards.

The third group of works on which this study is grounded has been produced by a number of North American feminist historians who have addressed turn-of-the-century perceptions of young women's delinquency.<sup>46</sup> Odem presented a nationwide American survey while Alexander concentrated on New York, but both were directly concerned with the causal relationship between professional diagnoses of delinquency and young women's sexual agency. These historians have argued that medical diagnoses of amoral sexuality must not be viewed in simplistic terms of social control, as patients, their families and even the wider communities were all active historical agents in the process of identification, diagnoses and "treatment." While young women deliberately sought to control and define their sexuality through their pursuit of urban pleasures, families sometimes looked to institutions for help as they attempted to control or regulate their daughters' behaviour. These scholars have rejected the top-down model of social control in favour of a perspective that views this policing process more in terms of a negotiated dynamic between various parties with multiple and overlapping interests and concerns.

What was known as "the girl problem" arose out of increasing concern over young women's sexuality in the early twentieth century as rising numbers of single young women entered the cities to join the work force and live free of both family

---

<sup>46</sup> Mary E. Odem, Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North America Press, 1995); Ruth M. Alexander, The 'Girl Problem': Female Sexual Delinquency in New York, 1900-1930 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995); Carolyn Strange, Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasure of the City, 1880-1930 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Regina Kunzel, Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890-1945 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993). See also: Kathy Peiss, "'Charity Girls' and City Pleasures: Historical Notes on Working-Class Sexuality, 1880-1920," in Passion and Power: Sexuality in History, eds. Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons with Robert A. Padgug (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989): 57-69.

and community surveillance. Unburdened by supervision, young employed women had both the means and the opportunity to enjoy the pleasures of city life. Middle-class reformers often assumed that these pleasures went hand in hand with sexual encounters. Awareness of this "girl problem" coincided with a generalized urban malaise manifested by turn-of-the-century fears about social, moral, and economic degeneration. Historians have suggested that urban anxiety coincided with not only patriarchal but also eugenic assumptions about sexuality and gender in which members of the dominant class viewed the young working girl as a moral, genetic and sexual threat.

For similar reasons, the figure of the unwed mother was also the cause of much concern among middle-class reformers. Kunzel has looked at the efforts of social workers to control the moral behaviour of single, "unfit" mothers in turn-of-the-century America. This focus led Kunzel to examine the supposedly causal link between feeble-mindedness and illegitimacy. Social workers who subscribed to eugenic thought viewed the sterilization of unwed mothers as a means by which to stem the tide of illegitimacy.<sup>47</sup> Alexander, Odem and Strange looked more specifically at younger, delinquent girls who had not yet become single mothers. Alexander identified a distinct difference between the perceptions of "alarmist" progressive reformers who maintained impossibly high standards of moral propriety versus the more liberal-minded mental hygienists who did not hold such high moral expectations of female behaviour.<sup>48</sup> However, regardless of "expert" opinions to the contrary, Alexander pointed to the continuing tendency of social workers, the police,

---

<sup>47</sup> Kunzel, Fallen Women, Problem Girls, 54.

<sup>48</sup> Alexander, The 'Girl Problem', 59-60.

probation officers, and judges, to criminalize what they considered female incorrigibility.<sup>49</sup>

Odem similarly argued that eugenic discourse provided scientific validity to the Progressive view that female moral offenders were inherently depraved and thereby constituted a palpable danger to unsuspecting men and the society at large.<sup>50</sup> Strange found the same inextricable links between eugenic thought and middle-class fears of single, young, working women's innate potential for delinquency and feeble-mindedness. If they were not subjected to strict moral regulation, eugenicists warned, young working girls would likely "succumb to moral and biological contagion", and pass on these defects to their progeny.<sup>51</sup> Strange cited Canadian doctor and public health reformer Helen MacMurphy who explained to Canadians that the feeble-minded female constituted a particular eugenic menace precisely because those persons diagnosed with mental deficiency typically experienced "abnormal sensual propensities and lack of moral perception."<sup>52</sup>

These symptoms, MacMurphy implied, led to an unending cycle of social, moral and eugenic degeneration for which feeble-minded females were responsible.

These works have offered an important contribution to the notion of policing sexuality because they suggest that the so-called "girl problem", seen through the eyes of middle-class reformers, social service workers, and public and mental health institutions, fed into paranoid concerns about the delinquency-sexuality connection.

<sup>49</sup> Alexander, *The 'Girl Problem'*, 66.

<sup>50</sup> Odem, *Delinquent Daughters*, 98.

<sup>51</sup> Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem*, 118-124.

<sup>52</sup> Dr. Helen MacMurphy, cited in Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem*, 114.

Vrooman's thesis is of particular relevance to this study as she explored the seemingly contradictory, co-existent discourses of euthenics<sup>53</sup> and eugenics as they contributed to the process by which young women in British Columbia were labeled "delinquent", segregated and institutionalized in reformatories and industrial schools.<sup>54</sup> These historians' study of the "girl problem" has illuminated a medicalized<sup>55</sup> model of erratic female sexual behaviour which played a critical role in both the identification of and treatment for delinquent girls.<sup>56</sup> Key to this was the regulation of their sexuality, and in this sense the very act of institutionalization can be viewed as serving the purpose of policing sexuality. Clearly these historians have recognized the connection between contemporary eugenic thought and "the girl problem." They have examined the relationship between perceived sexualized patterns of behaviour and the diagnoses of feeble-mindedness and delinquency but they do not directly address the notion of policing sexuality through eugenic sterilization.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Vrooman identified euthenic arguments as being morality-based in nature, as opposed to eugenic ideology which stressed the inherent and biological aspects of human development. See: Tamara Rowanne Vrooman, "The Wayward and the Feeble-Minded: Euthenics, Eugenics and the Provincial Industrial Home for Girls, 1914-1929." (M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1994), 2.

<sup>54</sup> Vrooman, 90.

<sup>55</sup> Jane Lewis has offered a useful definition of the term "medicalized," especially as it is understood as applying to women in the context of hierarchical gender, class and power relations. This term "comprises the advances in technology which became the province of professionals; intra-professional issues of status...; the nature of the patient/doctor relationship and the greater authority exerted by the doctor; and the place of treatment which has increasingly become the hospital [or institutions] rather than the clinic or home." See: Jane Lewis, "'Motherhood Issues' in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries, eds. Katherine Arnup, Andrée Lévesque, Ruth Roach Pierson, and the assistance of Margaret Brennan (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 1.

<sup>56</sup> Vrooman, 26, 59-60.

<sup>57</sup> Kunzel, Fallen Women, Problem Girls, 53-63; Alexander, The 'Girl Problem', 89; Odem, Delinquent Daughters, 98; Strange, Toronto's Girl Problem, 114.

Finally, this historiographic review turns to social historians of medicine who have examined the relationship between supposedly unwell women and medical men. This branch of historical inquiry has shown that nineteenth and early twentieth-century attempts to regulate women's sexuality were brought to bear on the medical diagnoses some doctors ascribed to their female patients. Psychiatric and medical classifications of women's health, sanity, sexuality and reproductive capability have long been identified as historically and culturally specific.<sup>58</sup> Constance A. Nathanson has suggested that even though the arguments used to justify medical policies of intervention evolved over time, the intent of such programs, whether grounded in moral, medical, eugenic or psychiatric discourse, remained the same--the regulation and control of young women's sexuality.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps the best examples were the drastic operations some doctors performed in the late nineteenth century on the women they diagnosed as hysterical. Mitchinson argued that some, though certainly not all, doctors blamed female hysteria on "the very development and functioning of the sexual/reproductive system" and, as such, the cure frequently involved the removal of these menacing organs.<sup>60</sup> Wosilius noted the importance of this

---

<sup>58</sup> For a concise, brief overview of evolving diagnoses, particularly as applied to women under the umbrella term "nerves", see: Susan E. Cayleff, "Prisoners of their Own Feebleness': Women, Nerves and Western Medicine - A Historical Overview," *Social Science and Medicine* 26:12 (1988): 1199-1208. L.J. Jordanova also examined changing medical diagnoses of women's mental health; however, she urged historians to move away from the simplistic social control theory which pits male medical experts against passive and vulnerable female patients, see: L.J. Jordanova, "Mental Illness, Mental Health: Changing Norms and Expectations," in *Women in Society: Interdisciplinary Essays*, (London: Virago Press Ltd., 1981): 95-114. Nancy Theriot seemed to heed Jordanova's advice in her article, "Women's Voices in Nineteenth Century Medical Discourse: A Step Toward Deconstructing Science," *Signs* 19:1 (1993): 1-31.

<sup>59</sup> Constance A. Nathanson, *Dangerous Passage: The Social Control of Sexuality in Women's Adolescence* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 105.

<sup>60</sup> Wendy Mitchinson, "Hysteria and Insanity in Women: A Nineteenth-Century Perspective," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 21:3 (Fall 1986): 91, 100. See also: F.G. Gosling and Joyce M. Ray, "The

connection in her thesis, explaining that nineteenth-century gender ideologies of medical treatment provide important context for twentieth-century patterns of eugenical sterilization. She was incorrect, however, in stating that other historians "have completely overlooked this link between insanity and female reproductive organs."<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth Lunbeck, for example, did not see early twentieth-century notions of feeble-mindedness as a distinct diagnosis specific to that era but, rather, suggested that they may be viewed as part of a continuum of the medicalization of female behaviour.<sup>62</sup> Lunbeck's Psychiatric Persuasion charted how mental health diagnoses that aimed at regulating women's everyday lives, and in particular their sexuality, were bound up in some psychiatrists' search for professional legitimacy.

Like Lunbeck, Jeffrey Weeks attached much of the responsibility for oppressive and repressive constructions of human sexuality to sexologists' pursuit of professional status.<sup>63</sup> Weeks, a pioneer in the history of sexuality, asserted that our understandings of "sexuality" itself are historically, culturally and socially constructed.<sup>64</sup> In Sex, Politics and Society, Weeks asked why sexually deviant behaviour has repeatedly been scape-goated for much larger and broader social

---

Right to be Sick: American Physicians and Nervous Patients, 1885-1910," Journal of Social History, 20:3 (Spring 1986): 251-267; and Andrew Scull and Diane Favreau, "The Clitoridectomy Craze," Social Research: An International Quarterly of the Social Sciences; Sexuality and Madness, 53:2 (Summer 1986): 243-260.

<sup>61</sup> Wosilius, "Eugenics, Insanity and Feeble-mindedness," 112.

<sup>62</sup> Elizabeth Lunbeck, The Psychiatric Persuasion: Knowledge, Gender and Power in Modern America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 56, 185-191.

<sup>63</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, Sexuality (Chichester: Ellis Horwood Ltd., 1986), 17, 111-113.

<sup>64</sup> For more on the constructed nature of historically specific understandings of sex and sexuality, see also: Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality: An Introduction; Richard Johnson, "Contested Borders, Contingent Lives: An Introduction," in Border Patrols: Policing the Boundaries of Heterosexuality, eds., Deborah Lynn Steinberg, Debbie Epstein and Richard Johnson (London: Cassell, 1997): 1-22.

problems. He suggested that in the case of a "moral panic",<sup>65</sup> generalized social anxieties were often displaced onto marginal community members of an undesirable social group. Issues of sexual concern, he wrote, "have had a peculiar centrality in such panics, and sexual 'deviants' have been omnipresent scapegoats."<sup>66</sup> While Weeks said little about the eugenics movement in his explorations of sexuality, his findings are clearly of importance to our discussion of how sterilization has been used as a means of regulating and controlling women's sexuality.

Wendy Mitchinson and Angus McLaren, along with others, have examined the complex, changing relationships of Canadian women and their doctors.<sup>67</sup> While such issues may seem to be only tangentially related to our focus on eugenic sterilization and the policing of sexuality, their works have gone a long way toward explaining how women's bodies came to be viewed primarily in terms of their

---

<sup>65</sup> This term is often wrongly attributed to Weeks, see Iacovetta, "Parents, Daughters and Family Court Intrusions into Working-Class Life," in On the Case, 316. According to Weeks himself, however, it was actually coined by Stan Cohen in Folk Devils and Moral Panics. See: Weeks, Sexuality and the Historian (New York: Longman, 1989) 14.

<sup>66</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, Sexuality and the Historian, 14.

<sup>67</sup> See Wendy Mitchinson, "Causes of Disease in Women: The Case of Late Nineteenth Century Canada," in Health, Disease and Medicine: Essays in Canadian History: Proceedings of the First Hannah Conference on the History of Medicine, McMaster University, June 3-5, 1982., ed. Charles G. Roland (Toronto: Clark Irwin Inside cover., 1983): 381-398; Mitchinson, "Hysteria and Insanity in Women: A Nineteenth Century Canadian Perspective," Journal Of Canadian Studies 21:3 (Fall 1986):87-104; Mitchinson, "The Medical Treatment of Women," in Changing Patterns: Women in Canada, eds., Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code, and Lindsay Dorney (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inside cover., 1993): 391-421; Mitchinson, "Reasons for Committal to a Mid-Nineteenth Century Ontario Insane Asylum: The Case of Toronto," in Essays in the History of Canadian Medicine, eds., Wendy Mitchinson and Janice Dickin McGinnis (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988): 88-109. See also: Angus McLaren, "Birth Control and Abortion in Canada, 1870-1920," in Medicine in Canadian Society: Historical Perspectives, ed., S.E.D. Shortt (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1981): 285-313; Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, The Bedroom and the State: Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1986); McLaren, "'Not a stranger, a doctor': Medical Men and Sexual Matters in the Late Nineteenth Century," in Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science, eds., Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 267-283.

biological destiny as reproductive vessels. Once it is understood that doctors' treatment of women has long been informed by contemporary gender and sexual ideologies, particularly with regard to women's capacity for reproduction, it becomes easier to fathom how "eugenical" sterilization might have been seen by some as a solution to the social or sexual problems supposedly caused by certain visible categories of women.

Although McLaren primarily focused on the history of birth control, he recognized the connection between it and the pervasiveness of eugenic thought. He noted the "cruel irony that many eugenically-minded doctors" who, in the inter-war period, refused to help ostensibly "fit" women control their reproduction were meanwhile aggressively pursuing involuntary sterilization for "unfit" women.<sup>68</sup> Many doctors were more enthusiastic about sterilization programs than birth control because sterilization offered the opportunity for the sort of interventionist medical control that they were used to; whereas providing means of birth control would offer women the ability to limit their reproduction without input from doctors.<sup>69</sup> Such a transfer of control, from medical experts to women themselves, would perhaps violate the authority that doctors had developed. Additionally, as doctors, medical men were able to achieve a sort of physical intimacy with women that was without parallel to any other social relationship. Simply because they were doctors, these male experts could potentially assume a position of privilege with regard to advising, probing, and evaluating women.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, 30-31.

<sup>69</sup> McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, 122.

<sup>70</sup> McLaren, "'Not a Stranger, a Doctor.'" 397.

Mitchinson similarly focused on the doctor-patient relationship as she explored the prevailing medical perception of women as "victims of their own bodies."<sup>71</sup> She suggested that this assumption facilitated greater levels of medical intervention on the part of doctors with their female patients than that which male patients would ever experience. To this end, Mitchinson's early work was less concerned with contemporary debates about the issue of agency than the historians discussed above and instead devoted more energy to demonstrating how the male paradigm of medical science frequently functioned to situate male experts in direct and active opposition to passive and vulnerable female patients.<sup>72</sup> Medical intervention was often justified for asomatic reasons, as doctors jockeyed for the position of moral arbiters in turn-of-the-century Canadian society.

Mitchinson suggested that because moral and social ideologies informed many doctors' definition of "female good health", it bore a striking resemblance to patriarchal fantasies of the female gender.<sup>73</sup> Some doctors employed diagnoses of sickness to counter the threat posed by women who did not conform to gender ideals. Jane M. Ussher looked specifically at discourses about the female body and reproduction and wrote that diagnoses of mental ill-health have traditionally been applied for the purposes of nullifying the anxiety aroused by "problem women". She pointed to

---

<sup>71</sup> Mitchinson, "Causes of Disease in Women," 382.

<sup>72</sup> Conversely, in a later publication, Mitchinson expressly addressed issues of agency and the critical importance that historians do not view historical actors in terms which either accord total agency or a complete lack thereof. She argued instead that agency is a complex and negotiated aspect of power dynamics. See: Wendy Mitchinson, "Problematic Bodies and Agency: Women Patients in Canada, 1900-1950," in *On the Case: Explorations in Social History*, eds., Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998): 266-286.

<sup>73</sup> Mitchinson, "Causes of Disease in Women," 397.

the use of diagnoses of illness to neutralize those who posed a threat to the dominant social order, invalidating and depoliticizing the challenge which these women presented by locating their problems within an individual pathology.<sup>74</sup>

Having discussed a wide array of scholars whose works are useful to this study, what can be concluded from this historiographical overview? Histories of eugenics make clear that sterilization programs were employed to achieve social and moral rather than only explicitly eugenic goals. It is also known that enthusiasm for eugenic programs grew out of moral reform and social hygiene movements which had long been preoccupied with the task of policing female sexuality. Middle-class reformist fears about national degeneration and moral contamination were routinely displaced onto the figure of the feeble-minded female and the particular menace she posed to the wider society. Scholars who have studied the early twentieth-century expert preoccupation with delinquent or feeble-minded women inform us that erratic sexual behaviour served as both proof and confirmation of diagnoses of mental deficiency. Finally, turning to the historical relationship between female patients and male medical professionals, it appears that some doctors exacerbated popular assumptions about the connection between women's sexual behaviour and physical or mental illness. By identifying women's purportedly unhealthy sexuality as the root cause of their illness, doctors could then claim to cure female sickness by concentrating on the locus of the problem--their sexual organs. That being the case, this project builds on the history of eugenics, as well as those works which examine the social construction and control of women's bodies and their sexuality. Because none of these histories have specifically focused on the overlap of eugenics

---

<sup>74</sup> Jane M. Ussher, The Psychology of the Female Body (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 4.

with contemporary paranoia about the threat of women's sexuality, there exists a crucial gap which this study intends to fill. This study will concentrate on the figure of the delinquent or feebleminded female as the site of convergence for overlapping medico-moral anxieties of the early twentieth century. Using the files of the British Columbia Provincial Secretary and the Alberta Eugenics Board case files, it seeks to identify three general categories of young women who, because of their outward behaviour, were identified by the Eugenics Boards as posing a particular sexual threat. Why was the decision made to sterilize those feebleminded women whom the Eugenics Boards considered to be either unfit mothers of illegitimate children or sexual delinquents, as well as those young women and girls who were suspected of having already been sexually abused, or likely to be attacked in the future? Did the Eugenics Boards' rationale for these sterilization operations change between 1928 and 1972? By adopting a case-study approach to the administration of both British Columbia and Alberta's eugenic programs, this thesis charts new territory as it demonstrates how sterilization functioned as a means of controlling marginalized women's sexuality.

Given that this study employs case files, a word needs to be said about its methodology. It is easy for historians to mistakenly assume that the information case files contain reveals, at long last, the truth about the lives of the marginalized people who otherwise might have no voice or place in history. For social historians who dedicate their careers to this task, the case file may seem too good to be true. However, Natalie Zemon Davis' study of sixteenth-century pardon tales demonstrated

<sup>1</sup> Francis J. C. ...

<sup>2</sup> Francis J. C. ...

representation, the "truth" of history is not so easily discovered.<sup>75</sup> Davis' warning does not negate the value of primary research but, instead, challenges historians to be aware of the complexities involved.

The case files upon which this study's sample population is based contain a variety of documents, written by and for different people over varying periods of time. Historians working with case files need to consider who wrote the documents, under what circumstances, within what sort of institutional infrastructure, for what purpose, and for which readers.<sup>76</sup> The case files, government reports, internal correspondences, and newspaper clippings used in this study were all generated, recorded and preserved by middle-class politicians, reformers, or social and medical experts whose observations frequently reflected the power differential between the describer and the described. The lack of consistency between comparable case files creates further challenges as each case file is unique, a factor which makes drawing general conclusions from single situations problematic. This problem is particularly evident when it comes to comparing the quantity and quality of the provincial sources.

Historians are charged with a serious responsibility in employing the private and complicated data in case files. A recent and helpful book on the methodological issues which are bound up in the use of case files for historical scholarship is On the Case: Explorations in Social History.<sup>77</sup> A collection of articles

---

<sup>75</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

<sup>76</sup> Iacovetta and Mitchinson, "Social History and Case Files Research," in On the Case: Explorations in Social History, 12.

<sup>77</sup> Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, eds., On the Case: Explorations in Social History.

contributed by historians who are well versed in the use of case files, this book effectively illustrated some of the most important considerations historians must face before translating their research notes on *real people* into historical narratives.

When scholars do discover what appears to be the voices of historical subjects, it is imperative to be aware of the multiple filtering processes these voices have already gone through even before they are subjected to the historians'. Ruth Roach Pierson has spoken to the misguided expectation of some women's historians who have looked to examples of women's experience as sources which offer "ultimate 'authenticity' and 'accuracy.'" <sup>78</sup> Instead, she advised, the issue of wider historical context is imperative. For some historians, this broader context can be found through discourse analysis, while others prioritize the importance of material analysis. <sup>79</sup> A growing number of historians, including several represented in On the Case, are refusing to limit themselves to the historical perspectives and analysis offered by one theoretical approach. <sup>80</sup> With regard to Pierson's advice to situate the experiences found in these eugenics documents within their wider historical context, this less restrictive theoretical approach is extremely useful. This study seeks to supplement the evidence revealed in case files with an understanding of the wider

---

<sup>78</sup> Ruth Roach Pierson, "Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice in the Writing of Women's History," in Writing Women's History: International Perspectives, eds., Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson and Jane Rendall (Hampshire: MacMillan, 1991): 85.

<sup>79</sup> For an example of this debate among historians over discursive versus materialist analysis, see Signs 15 (Summer 1990): Joan Scott, review of Gordon's Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics of History and Family Violence, 848-852; Linda Gordon, "Response to Scott," 852-853; Linda Gordon, review of Scott's Gender and the Politics of History, 853-858; Joan Wallach Scott, "Response to Gordon," 859-860.

<sup>80</sup> Steven Maynard, for example, uses psychiatric case files to work through what he terms the "material/discursive impasse." Maynard, "On the Case of the Case: The Emergence of the Homosexual as a Case History in Early twentieth Century Ontario," in On the Case, 66.

historical context as revealed through analysis of contemporary discourses of eugenics and women's sexuality.

Not only must historians be aware of legal considerations with regard to access to and the use of case files, they also need to be courteous and sensitive to the privacy rights of the individuals discussed in these files. The vast majority of British Columbia materials on sterilization were destroyed at some point over the past seventy years and the documents that remain have been stripped of any information pointing to the identity of sterilization candidates. The Alberta Eugenics Board files, on the other hand, contain highly charged and personal information on sterilization candidates right up until 1972. It is imperative, therefore, that this study should not include the actual names or identifiable characteristics of the women are discussed. To this end, great care has been taken to protect the privacy of the individuals involved. In all discussion of sterilization candidates, names and other identifying characteristics, such as specific ethnicity and dates of presentation to the Eugenics Board, have been generalized or altered. Additionally, those names of doctors and institutional staff that are not part of the public record are also withheld.<sup>81</sup>

This thesis is based on the comparison of two sample populations, totaling ninety-three women from western Canada who came before provincial Eugenics Boards and were sterilized under the British Columbia and Alberta Sexual

---

<sup>80</sup> M. Stewart, "Some Aspects of Eugenic Sterilization in British Columbia with Special Reference to Patients Sterilized from Esquimalt Provincial Mental Hospital Since 1935," August 17, 1945. BCARS, OR 547.

<sup>81</sup> Iacovetta and Mitchinson warned that the desire on the part of historians to protect the identity of individuals found in case files can inadvertently lead historians to once again render marginal historical players invisible. Iacovetta and Mitchinson, "Social History and Case Files Research," in *On the Case*, 6. Although taking such precautionary measures may well increase the level of detachment between readers and the evidence contained in this study, the far greater risk would be that of publicly exposing the private experiences of living individuals. It is integral for feminist social historians to balance any political agendas with the utmost respect for their sources.

Sterilization Acts. The British Columbia sample comprises thirty-six cases culled from what is known as the Stewart Report.<sup>82</sup> Written in 1945, M. Stewart's paper profiled sixty-four patients at the Essondale Provincial Hospital who were sterilized between 1935 and 1943. As the most explicit surviving document speaking to the administration of sterilization in British Columbia, the Stewart Report provides a valuable point of comparison to the Alberta materials. The sample population from Alberta includes fifty-seven cases which provincial institutions and guidance clinics recommended to the Eugenics Board between 1928 and 1972.<sup>83</sup> Sometime after 1972, it appears that the Alberta Eugenics Board purged five out of every six of the case summaries that it kept on filing cards. This creates significant gaps and inconsistency in the materials as in some cases correspondence exists about patients for whom there is no corresponding case summary, thus making it impossible to even determine the Board's decision with regard to some sterilization candidates.

As the Alberta and British Columbia Eugenics Boards were loathe to admit they were using sterilization for other than eugenic reasons, this sample is based on a deliberate search for cases in which the policing of sexuality played a determining factor in the Board's decision to sterilize particular women. The numbers are not large but, the crux lies in the cultural and symbolic importance of middle-class efforts to employ twentieth-century eugenic legislation for the purpose of policing

---

<sup>82</sup> M. Stewart, "Some Aspects of Eugenic Sterilization in British Columbia with Special Reference to Patients Sterilized from Essondale Provincial Mental Hospital Since 1935," August 17, 1945. BCARS, GR 542, Box 11, File 4. Hereafter called the Stewart Report.

<sup>83</sup> The Alberta Eugenics Board's statistics reveal that the cumulative total of cases passed by the Board was 4739, 2556 of which were women and 2183 were men. The total number of sterilization operations was 2832, 1651 of which were performed on women, while 1181 were performed on men. Eugenics Board Files, "Cases Presented and Passed To March 1972," and "Operations Only, to March 1972." Provincial Archives of Alberta, Acc. No. F88.211.

marginalized women's sexuality. Historians have already established that sterilization legislation targeted the marginal members of Canadian society, and that the Eugenics Boards were preoccupied with social and moral rather than scientific concerns. It is also known that the Eugenics Boards were more likely to sterilize women, as the potential mothers of defective offspring, than men who played much less visible roles in reproduction. What historians have heretofore assumed, and several have alluded to but not yet demonstrated, is that women were also sterilized to control their sexuality. The purpose of this thesis is to firmly establish that ostensibly scientific sterilization legislation was turned to the purpose of moral repression of purportedly immoral women.

It is not suggested that issues of sexuality were the dominant or sole concern of the Eugenics Boards in Alberta or British Columbia. Rather, this discussion is intended to shed light on an unexplored application of sterilization legislation.

Scholars have clearly shown that eugenic thought involved multiple, overlapping and intersecting discourses in which issues of class, gender, race, physical and intellectual ability, and sexuality are salient features. This study attempts to concentrate on a crucial area which has hitherto been unexplored in an in-depth manner, the use of sterilization for the purpose of policing young women's sexuality. Its focus on the relationship between sterilization legislation and contemporary fears of female sexuality offers new insight into eugenic preoccupations, particularly in explaining the disproportionate number of young women who were targeted by the Acts.

From the inception of eugenic proposals in the 1920s, to the repeal of both British Columbia and Alberta's legislation in 1972, Eugenics Board members, institutional doctors, guidance clinic workers, social workers, law enforcement

authorities, and educators targeted young women who exhibited public and overt proof of their sexuality. This thesis explores a sample of these cases using categories that are consistent with what other scholars have identified as critical areas of concern with regard to young, sexually active women -- eugenic fears of unfit motherhood and moral concerns regarding sexual delinquency. However, this study also examines an unexplored application of the eugenic legislation, the use of sterilization to prevent incidents of sexual assault. In organizing the inquiry along both thematic and chronological lines, the study reveals that the motivations and rationalizations for sterilizing young women evolved over time.

Chapter One lays the groundwork for the rest of the study by providing critical background information to help place in its wider context the Eugenics Boards' use of sterilization to police young women's sexuality. The goal of this chapter is two-fold. It covers the rise and development of eugenic thought in western Canada, thereby providing important context for the analysis of case files in the second and third chapters. It also seeks to demonstrate the contemporary connection between diagnoses of feeble-mindedness, assumptions of sexual immorality and the Eugenics Board's administration of the Sexual Sterilization Acts. The next two chapters use case files to examine the application of sterilization in the inter-war and post-war periods respectively. These chapters focus on the way in which the Eugenics Boards targeted specific groups of young women based on their behavioural characteristics. Chapter Two examines the case histories of those women who came before the British Columbia and Alberta Eugenics Boards in the inter-war era. This chapter argues that the Eugenics Boards' recommendation and justification of sterilizations performed in the inter-war period reflect the Boards' sense of moral and eugenic

concern for the health and strength of the wider society, rather than for the well-being of the individual sterilization candidate.

Chapter Three then turns to the post-war period, exploring the hitherto uncharted territory of the application of the Sexual Sterilization Act in Alberta up until its repeal in 1972. Because all British Columbian documents treating this era of eugenic legislation have been destroyed, by necessity Chapter Three focuses entirely on Alberta. In this time period the study continues to examine the categories of unfit mother, sexual delinquent and sexually abused girl. The research demonstrates that these categories of women remained consistently targeted throughout the life of the Sexual Sterilization Act. However, a closer examination of these cases reveals a subtle shift in terms of how the Alberta Eugenics Board justified its decisions to sterilize such women in the post-war period. Rather than continuing to talk of sterilization serving the greater good of Canadian society, institutional doctors and the Eugenics Board now depicted sterilization in terms of the post-war democratic awareness of the rights of the individual.

Using case files to examine how the Eugenics Boards administered sterilization legislation to police sexuality presents an exciting opportunity to observe the degree to which the Boards' application of the Sexual Sterilization Acts upheld their official mandate. The notion of policing young women's sexuality by means of eugenic sterilization was never explicitly stated in either province's legislation, nor was it cited among the reasons for repealing the Acts in 1972. But, by combining a case files approach with an analysis of what was occurring within and beyond the institutions, this thesis demonstrates that the control of female sexuality was indeed a covert function of the Sexual Sterilization Acts of Alberta and British Columbia.

## Chapter One

Setting the Context: The Rise of Eugenic Thought in Western Canada, the Threat of the Feeble-minded Female, and the Sterilization Solution to distressing social problems.

This thesis contends that while the policing of sexuality was only one of the reasons many twentieth-century Canadians called for and supported eugenic programs it was, nevertheless, an important aspect of the administration of western Canada's sterilization programs. To date, no historian has adequately explored this issue.<sup>1</sup> This chapter provides the necessary context for the case files analysis of chapters two and three. It will examine the chronological rise of eugenic thought and the development of eugenic programs in western Canada up until World War Two. The purpose is to demonstrate the interrelation between the perceived threat of the feeble-minded female, the elitist assumptions of her sexual impropriety, and the reason why western Canadian authorities turned to sterilization as the solution to the problems she purportedly caused.

Historians have gone a long way toward explaining why thousands of otherwise intelligent Canadians jumped on the early twentieth-century eugenics bandwagon.<sup>2</sup> North American historians have described the eugenics movement as emerging out of a conflation of nineteenth-century Protestant moral reform tendencies and the early twentieth-century, quasi-scientific, medical preoccupations

<sup>1</sup> Historians such as Angus McLaren, Monica Wosilius, and Rosalind P. Petchesky, among others, have indeed clearly noted the use of sterilization for patently social rather than eugenic purposes, some going so far as to see the connection between the perceived sexual threat posed by certain women and the contemporary eugenic response to that threat--sterilization; however, to date, the use of sterilization as a means to police sexuality has not yet been the focus of a major work.

<sup>2</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 7.

of social hygienists.<sup>3</sup> From recent Canadian works this study has gained an understanding of this bizarre mix of reformist concerns, and why many conservative Canadians viewed eugenic principles as the most progressive medical solutions to distressing social problems.<sup>4</sup>

Middle-class Canadians with social reform tendencies hailed the peculiar overlap of medico-moral concerns offered by eugenic principles as the solution to the nationally degenerative problems of crime, poverty, prostitution, illegitimacy, immigration and delinquency. Historians now know how these middle-class eugenics supporters saw themselves, as well as some of the reasons why they were attracted to hereditarian principles.<sup>5</sup> By comparison, virtually nothing is known of the way in which these advocates understood and applied sterilization as a means by which to regulate or police the sexuality of marginalized young women.

Among the social problems which many middle-class Canadians hoped to be curable through eugenic programs were illegitimacy, prostitution, and delinquency. This litany of offenses was part of a larger group of social reform concerns that progressive reformist women's groups considered their domain. Consequently, these same women's groups were among the earliest proponents of eugenic legislation in

as 1915, the National Council of Women asked Premier Borden to launch a special

---

<sup>3</sup> For more on the legacy of nineteenth-century reform interests in Canada, see: Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991). For more on the origins of eugenic thought in the nineteenth century, see: Reilly, The Surgical Solution; Kevles, In the Name of Eugenics; Stephen Jay Gould, The Mismeasure of Man (New York: Norton, 1981); and Nicole Hahn Rafter, White Trash: The Eugenic Family Studies, 1877-1919 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> See, McLaren, Our Own Master Race, 139, 165-6 and McDonald, "A Policy of Privilege," 66.

<sup>5</sup> See Mariana Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism," in Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History, eds. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 3-26.

Canada.<sup>6</sup> Women reformers viewed eugenics as a progressive weapon in their battle to save the Anglo-Saxon race from degeneration.

Although Canada was lacking in eugenic experts, there were numerous self-proclaimed authorities who purported to understand the nature of feeble-mindedness and the problems it caused. Among the earliest Canadian proponents was Helen MacMurchy who, as early as 1908, advocated sterilization of the feeble-minded.<sup>7</sup>

MacMurchy employed the term "feeble-minded" to refer to a "higher class" of mental defectives whose outward "normal" appearance belied the threat they posed to society.<sup>8</sup> MacMurchy's position as a medical doctor and an advocate of infant and maternal health likely facilitated her emphasis on the reproductive capacity of feeble-minded women as the transmission source for increasing numbers of mentally deficient Canadians.

In response to contemporary concerns about social degeneration, women's groups, educators, medical authorities, government officials and social reformers demanded scientifically generated statistical information about the problem. These demands spawned a multitude of government reports and commissions which investigated the extent of social problems and arrived at potential solutions. As early as 1915, the National Council of Women asked Premier Borden to launch a special Royal Commission on mental defectives. Within seven years, both British Columbia and Alberta had instigated their own provincial studies investigating the same

<sup>6</sup> See: Angus McLaren, "The Creation of a Haven for 'Human Thoroughbreds': The Sterilization of the Feeble-Minded and the Mentally Ill in British Columbia," *Canadian Historical Review* 67:2 (1986), 127-150.

<sup>7</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 42.

<sup>8</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 107.

problem.<sup>9</sup> Both surveys were carried out under the supervision of Clarence Meredith Hincks of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene. Hincks remained a key player in the history of Canada's eugenic and social hygiene movements, and as early as 1920 he argued that there was an inherent link between "mental defect" and overtly sexual women. After examining 438 "mentally abnormal prostitutes" in Toronto, Hincks arrived at the conclusion that immorality was as contagious as venereal disease.<sup>10</sup> At this time, however, Hincks proposed segregation and not sterilization, suggesting that "special classes for mental abnormals" be established. It was not until 1927 that Hincks publicly aligned his mental hygiene crusade with eugenic principles.<sup>11</sup>

With new methods of testing and improved means by which to assess the mental health of expanding provincial populations, it is not surprising that every survey launched in the early decades of the twentieth century reported exponential growth in the numbers of mental defects.<sup>12</sup> Hincks described the penchant for I.Q. testing as a "wave" that started in mental institutions and spread to public schools,

well known Briton, Dr. Tredgold, who had purportedly proven that "feeble-minded women are almost invariably immoral, become carriers of venereal disease, or give

---

<sup>9</sup> British Columbia and Alberta requested that the Canadian National Committee on Mental Hygiene carry out surveys in 1919 and 1921 respectively.

<sup>10</sup> C.M. Hincks, "Mental Defects Need Attention," Mail and Empire (April 13, 1920). British Columbia Archives and Record Services (hereafter BCARS), GR 542, Box 22 Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, File 1, 1921-1929.

<sup>11</sup> "Mental Disease Check Possible Dr. Hincks Avers," Vancouver Star (May 26 & 27). BCARS GR 865, Box 2, File 14. Clippings from Newspapers.

<sup>12</sup> H.H. Goddard translated the French Binet-Simon test into English and in the early twentieth-century the Intelligence Quotient or I.Q. test rapidly became the standard means to measure human intelligence. Smith, Minds Made Feeble, 41. For a critique of the use of I.Q. tests, see: Gould, The Mismeasure of Man. For a recent controversial study which continues to assume a connection between intelligence and socio-economic status see: Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray, The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life (New York and London: The Free Press, 1994).

reformatories and communities.<sup>13</sup> Statistics predicting that the cost of institutionalizing the nation's 60,000 feeble-minded would reach sixty million dollars, with eighteen million in annual maintenance costs, confirmed the fears of the middle-class: the menace was real.<sup>14</sup> Health and reform authorities used these statistics in conjunction with contemporary demands for increased rationalization and efficacy to argue for a more economically efficient way to address the problems caused by enormous numbers of the unfit. It was simply not feasible to institutionalize such a large percentage of the population, nor were there funds to support this demand. Eugenic proponents argued that segregation alone would never be able to solve the social and economic problems caused by heredity.

Proud of their progressive views, members of the United Farm Women of Alberta viewed sterilization as in keeping with what is now termed their maternal feminist politics.<sup>15</sup> In the early days of 1924, the UFWA heard the honorable Mrs. Irene Parlby, in her address on mental deficiency, stress the hereditary nature of social problems and their connection to sexually active, unfit women. She cited the well known Briton, Dr. Tredgold, who had purportedly proven that "feeble-minded women are almost invariably immoral, become carriers of venereal disease, or give

<sup>13</sup> The Hon. Mrs. Parlby, "Mental Deficiency: An Address before the U.F.W.A., January 1924," 7, Alberta Archives, Edmonton, 75.131 SE. It should be noted that by the end of 1924, Tredgold was claiming that it was surgically ineffective, and would only add to social problems.

<sup>13</sup> Dr. C.M. Hincks, "Recent Additions to our Knowledge of Feeble-mindedness," *Social Welfare* 7:5 (February 1925), 92. Hincks claimed that the feeble-minded had "a mental age of less than 13 years." He conceded, however, that "the real test of mental deficiency is the social test," which determined to what extent an individual could function independently in the community.

<sup>14</sup> Hincks, "Recent Additions to our Knowledge of Feeble-mindedness," 93.

<sup>15</sup> See also: Valverde, "When the Mother of the Race is Free"; Carol Bacchi, "Race, Regeneration and Social Purity: A Study of the Social Attitudes of Canada's English-Speaking Feminists," *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 11 (1978), 460-74; and McDonald, "A Policy of Privilege," especially Chapter Two.

birth to children as defective as themselves."<sup>16</sup> One year later, the National Council of Women indicated its support for eugenical sterilization.

The *Western Women's Weekly* led the campaign for sterilization in British Columbia and acted as the mouthpiece for women's issues.<sup>17</sup> Although it, too, focused on issues of immigration, it did not overlook the connection between women's sexuality and contemporary social problems. Numerous issues of the magazine published between 1919 and 1922 made clear that mentally defective girls represented a particular "social and moral menace" and furthermore, that sterilization offered the only solution to the multiple problems caused by unfit Canadians.<sup>18</sup>

By the early 1920s, renowned North American medical experts, such as the American Surgeon General, were presenting the interrelation between "irregular sex life," delinquency and subnormal mentality as a fact.<sup>19</sup> This is not to say that social hygienists considered "irregular" sexuality the only by-product of mental defect. The socially degenerative results of feeble-mindedness were, in fact, considered to be much broader. In a collection of addresses by "American Authorities" included in

---

<sup>16</sup> The Hon. Mrs. Parly, "Mental Deficiency: An Address before the U.F.W.A., January 1924," 7. Alberta Archives, Edmonton, 75.181 SE. It should be noted that by the end of 1926, Tredgold was speaking openly against sterilization, claiming that it was eugenically ineffective, and would only add to social problems by leading to increased sexual irregularity among defects who no longer feared pregnancy and would therefore spread venereal disease. See BCARS, GR 865, Box 1, File 5. "Mental Deficiency: From a Report of Conference of the Central Association for Mental Welfare, London, December 2-3, 1926." *The Lancet* (December 11, 1927).

<sup>17</sup> McLaren, "The Creation of a Haven for 'Human Thoroughbreds,'" 134.

<sup>18</sup> McLaren, "The Creation of a Haven for 'Human Thoroughbreds,'" 125.

<sup>19</sup> Hugh S. Cumming, M.D., Surgeon General, U.S. Public Health Service, Washington, D.C. typed excerpts from *Journal of Social Hygiene*, February 1924. In BCARS, GR 865, Box 1, File 9.

the British Columbia Royal Commission's files, Yale Professor Maurice Davie described mental defect as "a causative factor in delinquency, dependency, illegitimacy, vagrancy, prostitution, and unemployment, [all of which] are related to questions of health, industry and education."<sup>20</sup> Historians have suggested that eugenicists targeted in particular the sexually active and feebleminded female, however, because of her visibility in the role of reproduction.<sup>21</sup> Women scientifically diagnosed as feebleminded bore a burden of "double deviancy", informed by contemporary understandings of both deficiency and gender.<sup>22</sup> To fully appreciate the gendered notions of feeblemindedness, it is necessary to compare contemporary assumptions about the inherent sexuality of the feebleminded female to the specifically asexualized image of the feebleminded male. The Human Betterment Foundation, a Californian organization dedicated to promoting the success of eugenic sterilization, made this distinction blatantly clear. It described the feebleminded male as undersexed physiologically, a trait that went hand in hand with his general physical inferiority.<sup>23</sup> In Darwinian terms, the eugenic threat of the feebleminded male was essentially eliminated because of his inability to compete with normal, aggressive and economically competent men for reproductive access to women. Understandings of feebleminded men, therefore, were in direct opposition to perceptions of feebleminded women who were assumed to be

<sup>20</sup> Maurice R. Davie, Ph.D., "Social Aspects of Mental Hygiene," in Collection of Addresses by American Authorities, (Yale University Press, n.d.). BCARS, GR 865, Box 1, File 9, Feebleminded.

<sup>21</sup> See for example: Bragar, "The Feebleminded Female," 27-28.

<sup>22</sup> Bragar, "The Feebleminded Female," 3.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Popenoe and E.S. Gosney, Twenty-Eight Years of Sterilization in California: A Publication of the Human Betterment Foundation (Pasadena, California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1939), 33.

dangerously invisible, passing for normal because they could not be identified by any physiological indicator. If anything, high-grade defective girls and young women posed an especially dangerous threat precisely because they were so attractive.<sup>24</sup>

The women whom medical authorities diagnosed as feebleminded had usually transgressed standards of female propriety as well as the vague but stringent perceptions of intellectual adequacy. By diagnosing and pathologizing socially undesirable women as feebleminded, medical professionals and social reformers were able to blame these purportedly sick individuals for the social problems caused by their illness, such as illegitimacy, prostitution and sexual immorality. This tendency to blame marginalized, vulnerable individuals for much broader social problems was a middle-class tactic that avoided critical examination of the socio-economic infrastructure of the status quo.<sup>25</sup>

It is no coincidence then that those charged with causing what Professor Davie identified as the early twentieth-century problems of delinquency, dependency, illegitimacy, vagrancy, prostitution, and unemployment, were by and large delinquent, dependent, and either illegitimate themselves or the mothers of illegitimate children. Many of the scapegoats were those who were socially marginalized by virtue of their socio-economic instability, which for women was often coupled with either suspicion or conviction of prostitution, and for men, unemployment.<sup>26</sup> Although the middle class linked unemployment almost exclusively

---

<sup>24</sup> Steven Noll cited American institutional records which indicate that superintendents were particularly concerned about the "unsterilized, physically attractive young woman." See: Noll, "A Far Greater Menace," 50.

<sup>25</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 37; McDonald, "A Policy of Privilege," 42.

<sup>26</sup> Maurice Davie, Ph.D., Yale. "Social Aspects of Mental Hygiene."

with unfit young men, other items in Davie's feeble-minded list, notably delinquency, dependency, illegitimacy, and prostitution, were symptomatic of marginalized women. Consequently, women who demonstrated one or more traits or behaviours in this list were likely to be diagnosed by experts as feeble-minded. For eugenicists, the validity of this diagnosis was immediately substantiated by the presence of these traits and behaviours. The result was a self-affirming circular diagnosis:

Once the vague ideas about immorality, sex, and class became identified with the phrase 'feeble-minded female,' the phrase then became synonymous with the stereotype, which by virtue of the scientific phrase, rather than open discussion or scientific inquiry, became generally accepted as true.<sup>27</sup>

That scientific experts could diagnose and describe the feeble-minded female in predominantly sexualized terms illuminates the importance of investigating the use of sterilization to police young women's sexuality. By situating these decisions within the context of contemporary eugenic discussions in western Canada, it is possible to see that Canadian experts, influenced by American experience, similarly employed young women's sexual behaviour to inform both their diagnoses and their support for sterilization.

In 1925 the British Columbia legislature approved the creation of the Royal Commission on Mental Hygiene to determine how the province would address the problems posed by its defectives. Because Canada never produced any internationally known eugenic experts, the Commission frequently relied on the authority, expertise and experience of its neighbour to the south.<sup>28</sup> The closest state

<sup>27</sup> Bragar, "The Feeble-minded Female," 138.

<sup>28</sup> McLaren, Our Own Master Race, 9-10. Two studies of eugenics were published in Canada but they appeared only after eugenic legislation had been passed. See: Antoine D'Eschambault, Eugenical Sterilization, Second Edition (Winnipeg: Canadian Publishers, Ltd., 1937), 85; and Helen MacMurchy,

to western Canada with a lengthy record of extensive sterilization legislation was California and accordingly British Columbia and Alberta considered its experience to "be of particular value."<sup>29</sup> The Assistant Secretary to the British Columbia Mental Hygiene Commission, J.A. Macdonald, repeatedly looked to California for advice and the state's influence in the Report was palpable.<sup>30</sup> During the Commission meetings in mid-January of 1926, members "decided that the system of insanity prevention in force in California should be carefully studied."<sup>31</sup>

Despite the fact that the province did not determine its legislated course of action until 1933, one year into the Commission's investigation the Assistant Secretary felt himself to be enough of an authority on the matter to chastise a British physician for his countrymen's reluctance to fully consider sterilization as a viable alternative to segregation:

Out here we have got far past the stage of talking about "some method" and call a spade a spade. Our Local Councils of Women make no bones about calling it sterilization in their discussions and the many resolutions they have passed demanding legalization of the operation.<sup>32</sup>

The evidence suggests that the support of women's groups was part of the

---

Sterilization? Birth Control? A Book for Family Welfare and Safety (Toronto: Macmillan Company, 1934).

<sup>29</sup> Correspondence between Assistant Secretary J.A. Macdonald to General Victor W. Odium, M.L.A., May 17th, 1926. BCARS, GR 865, Box 2, File 1.

<sup>30</sup> Californian opinion was regarded so highly that Paul Popenoe of the Human Betterment Foundation of Pasadena was invited to submit a special appendix to the final report. See: McLaren, "The Creation of a Haven for 'Human Thoroughbreds,'" footnote 45.

<sup>31</sup> Minutes from Royal Commission Committee Meetings, January 11, 12, 13, & 14, 1926. BCARS, GR 865, Box 1, File 6.

<sup>32</sup> Correspondence between Macdonald and Dr. John A MacGregor of London, England. July 16, 1926. BCARS GR 865 Box 1, File 2.

Royal Commission's deliberate strategy for winning public approval of a eugenics program in western Canada. In November of 1925, at the Committee on Lunacy held at the Victoria Empress Hotel, the Chairman grilled Senator Daniel Morgan from Spokane, Washington, asking, "What method of propaganda work did you undertake to prepare the public for the reception of your sterilization Bill?" The Senator referred to a "very enthusiastic" federated women's group, organized into local district clubs, stating that it was "to them, largely, we credit with preparing the laymen's mind for putting into effect and force the sterilization measure."<sup>33</sup>

After assembling as many expert opinions on "the vexed subject of sterilization"<sup>34</sup> as possible, the Commission held a series of hearings in the spring of 1926 to openly discuss the options available in the treatment of mental defectives. Sterilization was at the center of these discussions. The minutes of numerous meetings reveal the agendas of individual authorities as they came before the Commission to state their position on the matter of legislating sterilization. The most explicit comments on the topic are found in the minutes from the April 1926 hearings in Vancouver and Victoria. Numerous institutional superintendents, psychiatrists, physicians, members of the police and representatives of women's groups assembled to state, for the Commission's record, their authoritative opinions on sterilization.

Dr. J.G. McKay, Medical Superintendent of the Hollywood Sanitarium in the British Columbia, was so enthusiastically in favour of sterilization that he claimed

because the girl's actions fall outside of his jurisdiction. Without the backing of

<sup>33</sup> Minutes from the Meeting of the Committee on Lunacy, Held at the Empress Hotel, November 27, 1925, 8:30 p.m. BCARS, GR 865, Box 1, File 6.

<sup>34</sup> Correspondence between Macdonald and Dr. W.C. Laidlaw, Deputy Minister of Public Health in Edmonton, Alberta, July 30, 1926. Here Macdonald described the difficulty of negotiating conflicting experts' claims regarding sterilization and identified himself as being very concerned about the critical role mental defectiveness played as "the root of many of our other troubles." BCARS, GR 865, Box 1, File 2.

there could not be "a sane man" in his field who disagreed with it.<sup>35</sup> In contrast, the Provincial Health Officer of British Columbia, H.E. Young, expressed his concern regarding the inefficacy of sterilization to accomplish eugenic goals. Young described sterilization as a futile response to the problem of mental deficiency because the program would take eight thousand years to reduce the population of mental defectives to one per cent.<sup>36</sup>

Other provincial experts' testimony reveals that they looked to sterilization as a method of protecting the community from the moral danger posed by mental defects. The provincial authorities represented at the Commission hearings frequently framed their comments about protecting the community from the menace of the feeble-minded in patently gendered terms. According to eugenicists and social reform authorities, the menace that the feeble-minded female posed was largely sexual and reproductive in nature, and this perception was reflected in the transcripts of the Commission hearings. Because contemporary views of the female gender were inextricably bound up with notions of women's reproductive capacity, many of the assembled experts considered the feeble-minded female a threat to the whole community. Their statements reveal a greater concern for the wider society than for the rights of the individual women involved.

Mr. M. Stuart Jamieson, the Police Magistrate for Burnaby, BC, described the particular case of a sexually delinquent, feeble-minded girl which had vexed him because the girl's actions fell outside of his jurisdiction. Without the backing of

---

<sup>35</sup> Dr. J.G. McKay, Medical Superintendent of Hollywood Sanitarium. Report of the Commission Held in Vancouver, 13 & 14 April 1926, and Victoria, 16 April, 1926. Transcript of Proceedings. BCARS, GR 865, Box 1, File 7, p. 19.

<sup>36</sup> Provincial Health Officer, Dr. H.E. Young. Transcript of Proceedings, p. 50.

eugenic legislation he was powerless to punish her behaviour. He described her as a "young girl of 18, who accused an old man, her guardian, of having improper relations with her." Jamieson dismissed her allegations of sexual abuse on the basis of his evaluation of her mental age, which he pinned at "about 8 or 9." Frustrated by his lack of authority to act on the case, he contacted the Attorney General who replied that there was nothing they could do. Jamieson warned the hearing, "now that girl is a sexual pervert and she has cunning," a combination of character traits he felt certain would lead to an illegitimate pregnancy and life on the streets. When asked for his suggestion as to how such cases should be handled, Jamieson replied:

Segregation and sterilization. Sterilization would be perfectly safe, and she would be like a harmless child of twelve.... She would be happier, and would be, more or less a suitable citizen. There is no doubt that sterilization is essential.<sup>37</sup>

Jamieson's belief that sterilization was a suitable means to counter the reproductive threat of this young "pervert" was mirrored in Herbert W. Collier's comments to the same hearing. As Superintendent of a detention home and Chief Probation Officer for the Vancouver Juvenile Court, Collier considered himself well aware of the link between "the sex problem" and sterilization.<sup>38</sup> He claimed he had "no hesitation in recommending sterilization for the delinquent defective" because, in his experience, "many of the girls who submit to that sort of thing are mental defects." What was unusual about Collier's comments was that he conflated environmental problems with eugenic solutions, blaming poor parenting and a bad environment as he sought to explain the factors which gave rise to delinquent

<sup>37</sup> Police Magistrate, Mr. M. Stuart Jamieson. Transcript of Proceedings, p. 20.

<sup>38</sup> Herbert W. Collier. Transcript of Proceedings, p. 21.

behaviours.<sup>39</sup> Collier did not comment upon this apparent contradiction, nor did he explain how he thought sterilization would solve "the sex problem." The Commission transcripts reveal that provincial authorities not only debated the issue of introducing eugenic legislation as an answer to social problems but they also argued about whether or not sterilization would effect the sexual behaviour of sterilized individuals. The social commentators D'Eschambault and Myerson, from Canada and the United States respectively, argued that upon being freed of the fears of pregnancy, delinquents and defectives were liable to become even more sexually erratic.<sup>40</sup> The view that sterilization would lead to increased promiscuity played a critical role in preventing British doctors from supporting compulsory eugenic programs.<sup>41</sup> Dr. Irene Bastow Hudson of the Victoria Council of Women similarly opposed sterilization on the grounds that it would "create monsters of sex-perversion, and glorify sense gratification."<sup>42</sup> Hudson went on, however, to suggest that in cases where it was economically impossible to segregate male sex perverts, it might be "temporarily" necessary to "descend to the measure of castration [so as to] ...remove

<sup>39</sup> This strange conglomeration of promoting eugenic solutions for environmental problems has been noted by other historians. See, for example, McLaren, "Creation of a Haven for 'Human Thoroughbreds,'" 138.

<sup>40</sup> For studies which question the benefit or validity of using sterilization in cases of sexual immorality, see: D'Eschambault, Eugenical Sterilization; and, Abraham Myerson et al., Eugenical Sterilization: A Reorientation of the Problem, (New York, Macmillan Co., 1936).

<sup>41</sup> "Mental Deficiency: From the Report of Conference of the Central Association for Mental Welfare, London, December 2 & 3, 1926," The Lancet December 11, 1927), 6. BCARS, GR 865 Box 1, File 4. E.J. Rothwell.

<sup>42</sup> Dr. Irene Bastow Hudson, Representative of the Local Council of Women, Victoria. Transcript Proceedings, p. 43.

sex gratification."<sup>43</sup>

Other eugenic experts, most notably Gosney and Popenoe of California's Human Betterment Foundation, suggested that sterilization had a positive impact on the sexual behaviour of feeble-minded delinquents.<sup>44</sup> This view was also represented in the Transcript of Proceedings of the Royal Commission hearings of April 1926. Dr. C.B. Farrer of the Toronto Psychiatric Hospital was so much in favour of using sterilization in cases of promiscuity that he told the hearing "no medical man would have much hesitation" in prescribing it for the immoral "higher grade defective" who exhibited "that tendency of over-development."<sup>45</sup>

Both the British Columbia and Alberta Eugenics Boards had copies of the Human Betterment Foundation's study which found that where nine in twelve feeble-minded young women had been sexually delinquent prior to sterilization, only one in twelve was sexually delinquent after the salpingectomy.<sup>46</sup> Gosney and

---

<sup>43</sup> Hudson made it clear that she did not speak for the Victoria Council as a whole; however, a clipping from the Victoria *Colonist*, "Mental Hospitals are Overcrowded," (February 10, 1927), revealed that although the Provincial Council of Women sent a resolution to the BC government in support of sterilization, the Victoria chapter had protested, "feeling much more knowledge was needed." BCARS, GR 865, Box 2, File 14, Clippings from Newspapers.

<sup>44</sup> For studies arguing that sterilization was beneficial in cases of sexual excess, see: Paul Popenoe, "Success on Parole after Sterilization," in *Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California*, (Pasadena: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930):1-18; E.S. Gosney and Paul Popenoe, *Sterilization for Human Betterment: A Summary of Results of 6,000 Operations in California, 1909-1929*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1929) especially Chapter V, "Effect on the Patient's Behaviour"; and Rev. Samuel Wales Dickinson, "Sterilization of the Habitual Criminal, Epileptic, Insane and Feeble-minded. Is it Feasible?" (Paper read at conference of state Superintendents at Boise, Idaho.) For a collection of articles which represents several viewpoints on the issue, see: Robert Cloutman Dexter, ed., *The Case for and Against Sterilization*. (Girard, Kansas: Haldeman-Julius Publications, 1929).

<sup>45</sup> Dr C.B. Farrer, Director of the Toronto Psychopathic Hospital. BCARS, GR 865, Box 1, File 7. Report of the Commission, Transcript Proceedings, p. 27.

<sup>46</sup> The Alberta Eugenics Board Meeting Minutes of Friday October 29, 1929, stated that copies of the Foundation's book were ordered for each member of the Board. The BCARS record groups 542 and 865 contain numerous examples of correspondence between provincial officials and the Human

Popenoe promoted this statistic to garner support for the efficacy of sterilization as a method of addressing social problems. The proof they offered appeared to address concerns about what to do with the feeble-minded female who, according to the Human Betterment Foundation:

is characteristically a sex delinquent. She is oversexed, feebly inhibited, lacks other interests, and is not merely a ready prey to unscrupulous males, but too often herself is an aggressor in this field.<sup>47</sup>

The Foundation qualified its seventy-five per cent success rate, however, by stating that a sterilization program without adequate post-operative supervision "is a misconception of the proper function of sterilization in any scheme of social betterment."<sup>48</sup> The authors went on to state that "of course, this decrease in delinquency was not due to sterilization," but instead the result of "careful placing and effective supervision on parole." As if aware that such a statement raised the question as to why sterilization should be used at all if undesirable sexual behaviour could be so effectively modified through supervision alone, Gosney and Popenoe claimed that it was sterilization which permitted the re-release of these morally and eugenically dangerous women into the community.<sup>49</sup> Their study implied that sterilization operations were seventy-five per cent successful at reducing sexual

---

Betterment Foundation, dated between 1926 and 1939. Among these is a letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Foundation, Frank C. Reid, to the Secretary of the British Columbia Board of Eugenics, dated May 24, 1939, which stated that a copy of the Foundation's latest publication had just been posted to the Eugenics Board. BCARS, GR 542, Box 11, file 4. E.S. Gosney and Paul Popenoe, Sterilization for Human Betterment: A Summary of Results of 6000 Operations in California, 1909-1929 (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1929), xv.

<sup>47</sup> Gosney and Popenoe, Sterilization for Human Betterment, 40.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Popenoe, "A Study of Patients Coming to California State Institutions for Sterilization Only," in Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results in 6000 Cases, ed., E.S. Gosney, (Pasadena: California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930), 75.

<sup>49</sup> Gosney and Popenoe, Sterilization for Human Betterment, 40-41.

delinquency, and 100 per cent effective at eliminating reproductive threat, a combination of which permitted problem women to return to community living.

The Human Betterment Foundation's emphasis on the role of sterilization in the ability to release institution inmates likely set an important precedent for eugenic proponents in western Canada. When, after gathering much information through provincial surveys and reports, the sterilization bills first entered parliamentary debate in British Columbia and Alberta in the late 1920s, advocates in western Canada similarly argued that sterilization was both necessary and beneficial because it offered the only possibility for the release of socially competent but eugenically dangerous patients.<sup>50</sup> A review of contemporary newspaper articles suggests that western Canadians concentrated on two benefits, economic and social, that were expected to accrue if the bills passed. Not only would sterilization prevent the expenditure of millions in the institutional costs of segregation, newspaper articles argued that it would also save money as the population of mental defectives eventually declined.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, other advocates emphasized the humanitarian benefits of sterilization programs, pointing to the improved quality of life for individuals who would no longer have to endure life-long segregation.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Helen MacMurchy, "Sterilization and the Unfit," Saturday Night (March 31, 1934), 6.

<sup>51</sup> For British Columbia newspaper articles on this topic, see: "Millions for 'Cure'-- Nothing for Prevention," Vancouver Sun (April 4, 1927); "B.C. Expected to Pass Moron Law this Year," Vancouver Morning Star (January 7, 1928); "Greater Aid for Mentally Deficient: Many Morons Can be Made Useful Members of Society," Vancouver Province, (December 29, 1927). For Alberta articles, see: "Sterilization Bill Strongly Opposed, Went to Committee," Medicine Hat News (February 25, 1928).

<sup>52</sup> For British Columbia newspaper articles on the topic, see: "Sterilization of Paroled 'Insane' Urged," Vancouver Sun (March 4, 1927); "Speaker Urges Sterilization of Imbeciles: Bill to be Introduced at Next Session, J.A. McIntosh Predicts," Vancouver Morning Star, (November 3, 1927); "Mental Disease Check Positive, Dr. Hincks Avers," Vancouver Star, (May 26, 1927). For Alberta articles, see: "Sterilization Mentally Unfit Keenly Debated in Legislature," Lethbridge Herald, (February 24, 1928).

Some, like Dr. McCullough of the Provincial Mental Hospital in Ponoka Alberta, conflated the two arguments stating that "Sterilization is more humane than segregation and much less costly."<sup>53</sup>

In the spring of 1927 Hincks, as head of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, made a lengthy visit to the west coast and commended the western provinces for "the energetic statesmanlike manner in which they [were] attacking the problems of mental abnormality."<sup>54</sup> The Sexual Sterilization Bill had already gone through one reading in the Alberta legislature and Hincks singled out that province for "giving Dominion leadership" and praised the Minister of Health for his "courage to introduce a sterilization bill." Hincks predicted that because the bill was "couched in such a conservative way" it would probably be "passed at the next session."<sup>55</sup> Despite the overwhelming support for the Acts in both provinces, there was enough opposition, particularly in Alberta, to delay an immediate passing of the Act.<sup>56</sup> The bill was steadily debated throughout its second and third readings before

---

<sup>53</sup> Dr. McCullough, "Address on the Prevention of Nervous and Mental Breakdown," Report of the Annual Convention of Alberta's Women's Institutes, (May 24-27, 1927). Provincial Archives of Alberta, 74.1 Box 9/228.

<sup>54</sup> "Is Specially Pleased with School for the Feeble-minded at Red Deer, Alberta." The Bulletin: Official Organ of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene (July 1927), 1. BCARS, BR 542, Box 22, File 1. Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, 1921-1929.

<sup>55</sup> "Is Specially Pleased with School for the Feeble-minded at Red Deer, Alberta." The Bulletin (July 1927).

<sup>56</sup> Opponents in Alberta expressed concern about the lack of safeguards present in the Act, the infringement it represented to individuals' right to liberty, as well as concern about the lack of expertise and experience among members of the proposed Eugenics Board. See, for example, "Sterilization Mentally Unfit Keenly Debated in Legislature," Lethbridge Herald, (February 24, 1928). In British Columbia, the most well-known opponents of Sterilization were Ada and Alan Muir. See: "Challenges Right of Any Government to Sterilize Anyone, no Matter How Unfit," Vancouver Sun, Editorial. (June 1, 1929). For more on the Muirs, see: McLaren, "The Creation of a Haven for 'Human Thoroughbreds.'"

the Alberta legislature finally passed it on March 6, 1928.<sup>57</sup> The British Columbia legislature did not pass a similar Act until April 7, 1933, five years after both the Royal Commission's Report recommending sterilization had been released to the public and the passing of Alberta's Act. Historians suggest that this delay was likely due to a change in government as Tolmie's conservatives were not about to take action on a Report they did not commission.<sup>58</sup> In the meantime, public calls for a eugenic program mounted and frequent newspaper articles pressed the government to act.<sup>59</sup> In the spring of 1932 the Legislative Assembly agreed to consider the bill, and twelve months later, it passed after only a cursory debate.<sup>60</sup> That the Sexual Sterilization Act appeared to be much less controversial in British Columbia may be explained by two reasons. First, the province had for several years witnessed extensive discussion and support for sterilization with the Royal Commission's investigation and hearings in the mid-1920's. Second, their neighbouring province had already set the precedent by introducing a similar Act five years earlier.

---

<sup>57</sup> *Edmonton Journal*, (March 7, 1928), p. 5.

<sup>58</sup> McLaren, "The Creation of a Haven for 'Human Thoroughbreds,'" 139.

<sup>59</sup> McLaren argued that the elite's political reticence for the bill was due to concern about opposition from what they considered to be an uneducated public. He suggested that, by 1933, politicians assumed the process of educating the province into acceptance was complete. See: McLaren, "The Creation of a Haven for 'Human Thoroughbreds,'" 142.

<sup>60</sup> Alberta's proposed bill for sexual sterilization received a tremendous amount of press coverage and was the subject of much controversy but, after it passed in 1928, it seems as though it set the necessary precedent, making British Columbia's efforts to pass a similar bill in 1933 significantly less controversial and apparently a less news-worthy event. For more on the controversy surrounding Alberta's Sexual Sterilization Act, see: McDonald, "A Policy of Privilege," Chapter Three; and for the British Columbia experience with the new Bill, see McLaren, "The Creation of a Haven for 'Human Thoroughbreds,'" 141-146.

Although a word should be said about the nature of the two Acts. The Alberta and British Columbia Sexual Sterilization Acts shared the same basic eugenic purpose of preventing the reproduction of the mentally deficient; however, the written legislation and administration of each reveals numerous distinctions. The most notable difference lay in the more conservative nature of the British Columbia sterilization legislation. Where the Alberta Act underwent several amendments designed for the purpose of expanding the Eugenics Board's mandate, the British Columbia Act remained unchanged for the duration of its existence. The introduction to the Stewart Report points to some of the discrepancies between the two Acts and concludes that the British Columbia Act "is extremely conservative and more limited in scope than is Alberta's."<sup>61</sup> For instance, while in British Columbia candidacy for sterilization was contingent upon residence in a mental institution, after the 1937 legislative amendment in Alberta, candidates could be community members who were recommended to the Eugenics Board by Provincial Guidance Clinics, social workers, private physicians, as well as superintendents of institutions. This broader-reaching network in Alberta meant that the base population from which sterilization candidates could be selected was drastically larger than the population of persons living in British Columbia's mental institutions.

Scholars estimate that around three hundred men and women had been sterilized in British Columbia by the time the Act was repealed in 1972, a dramatic contrast to the nearly three thousand who were rendered sterile in Alberta.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> The Stewart Report contains a helpful table which juxtaposes the two acts, enabling readers to easily determine the differences between them. See The Stewart Report, Table 1.

<sup>62</sup> McLaren suggested that the BC total was "not more than a few hundred." See, McLaren, "Creating a Haven for 'Human Thoroughbreds,'" 145. Tim Christian, in his off-cited but unpublished

Although there is no final tally for the numbers of sterilization candidates in British Columbia, in the first five years of the Act's existence the Eugenics Board ordered thirty-six operations, thirty-one of which were performed on female patients.<sup>63</sup> When compared to Alberta's total of 438 sterilizations performed by 1938, the British Columbia sterilization policy may be viewed as much less aggressive.<sup>64</sup>

British Columbia's more conservative program may be explained by the fact that its Eugenics Board was further limited by the necessity of obtaining written consent from either the patients or their guardians. Both Bills actually started with this stipulation, with a provision allowing for the consent of an individual's spouse, parent or guardian if the patient was deemed unable to provide consent. A marked shift occurred after 1937 when, in Alberta, the consent of "mentally defective" persons was no longer necessary for the Board to authorize the sterilization operation. In addition to their eugenic threat, the Eugenics Board considered mentally defective people unable to make an intelligent decision about their reproductive future. In 1937 the Alberta Eugenics Board granted itself the right to decide whether the sterilization of these individuals was necessary, with or without their consent. The 1937 amendment is of particular importance to this study's

---

paper, estimated that 350 British Columbians were sterilized under the Act. See, Christian, "The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta," 30.

<sup>63</sup> The "Report of Sterilizations Performed in the Province of British Columbia, Canada From the Beginning of the Operation of the Eugenic Sterilization Law up to and Including, December 31, 1938," BCARS, GR 542, Box 11, file 4.

<sup>64</sup> 398 of the 438 operations completed in Alberta's first nine years of the sterilization program were performed on female patients. "Cases Presented and Passed, to March 31, 1972," Eugenics Board Files. To help put these comparative numbers into their wider context, it is useful to note that the 1931 provincial populations for British Columbia and Alberta were 694, 263 and 731, 605 respectively. By 1941, British Columbia had 817, 861 people and Alberta had 796, 169. Historical Statistics of Canada, Second Edition, eds., F.H. Leacy with M.C. Urquhard and K.A.H. Buckley (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1983): A1-A14.

interest in how perceptions of young women's sexual "irregularity" and eugenicists' assessment of their mental capacity were linked. After 1937, if the Board could diagnose sexually active young women as mental defectives, it could then order compulsory sterilization.<sup>65</sup>

The ability of the British Columbia and Alberta Sexual Sterilization Acts to target feeble-minded young women was facilitated by the Acts' remarkable lack of specificity with regard to the identification and selection of individuals for sterilization. When the provinces introduced their Acts, they were framed in such a way as to assure the wider public that the sterilization programs would be limited and carefully safeguarded against abuses by focusing only on those institutionalized individuals who were considered safe for return to the community.<sup>66</sup> Section 5(1) of the British Columbia Act stated that once recommended by a Superintendent, a patient could be presented to the Eugenics Board and,

If upon such examination of the inmate the Board of Eugenics is unanimously of the opinion that procreation by the inmate would be likely to produce children who by reason of inheritance would have a tendency to serious mental disease or mental deficiency, the Board may by an order in writing signed by its members direct such surgical operation for sexual sterilization...<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Although the Alberta Eugenics Board sought to sterilize individuals diagnosed as having a wide variety of mental and physical disabilities, this study has focused solely on cases which bore diagnoses of "mental defect."

<sup>66</sup> At the third meeting of the Alberta Eugenics Board, members voiced their desire to expand the Act to include people not currently in institutions. Additionally, when the Alberta Act was amended in 1937, a new clause was added which explicitly stated that persons who were not to be released from institutions could be sterilized. It should be noted that within less than ten years of both Acts' introduction, they were being used to sterilize individuals who were never intended for release from mental hospitals.

<sup>67</sup> "An Act Respecting Sexual Sterilization," Bill No. 82, 1933. Certified Correct as passed Third Reading on the 7th day of April, 1933. C.K. Courtney, Law Clerk. (Victoria, Charles F. Banfield, King's Printer, 1933).

The fifth section of the 1928 Alberta Act read:

If upon such examination, the Board is unanimously of the opinion that the patient might safely be discharged if the danger of procreation with its attendant risk of multiplication of the evil by transmission of the disability to progeny were eliminated, the Board may direct in writing such surgical operation for sexual sterilization of the inmate as may be specified in the written direction.<sup>68</sup>

Although the Acts demonstrated some agreement between the provinces as to the purpose of the legislation, they differed in other areas of the Acts' administration. Both Acts made the duty and liability of doctors in each province quite clear. While British Columbia's Act stated that sterilization candidates or their guardians could select their own surgeon to perform the operation, Alberta made a point of naming specific surgeons who were charged with all the eugenic operations in the province. Both provinces made it explicitly clear that doctors performing the surgeries would be immune to civil liability. In sharp contrast to this specificity, neither Act made any attempt to clarify the terms "mental deficiency" or "mental disease," both of which were critical in permitting the Eugenics Boards to authorize sterilizations. The lack of clarity with regard to the medical diagnoses necessary for the Eugenics Boards' recommendation of sterilization points to the critical role played by vague eugenic terminology in the sterilization programs.

The Acts' vagueness in defining who fell within their mandates may well have been a reflection of eugenicists' confusion and lack of agreement in identifying and diagnosing supposedly inherited disorders such as feeble-mindedness and mental deficiency. Moreover, the failure of the Sexual Sterilization Acts to define their terms

---

<sup>68</sup> "The Sexual Sterilization Act, 1928, Chapter 37." Assented to March 21, 1928. (Edmonton: W.D. McLean, King's Printer, 1928). The amendments of 1937 removed the section which stated that only those persons who could be safely discharged were to be sterilized. See: "1937. Chapter 47. An Act to Amend the Sexual Sterilization Act." Assented to April 14, 1937. Section 6.

and conditions facilitated the Eugenics Boards' efforts to apply the Acts as widely as possible. In particular, the ability to broadly interpret terms such as "mental deficiency" played a key role in enabling the Eugenics Boards to administer the Acts for the purpose of policing young women's sexuality. The critical factor at play here was that the Eugenics Boards and other eugenics experts frequently considered the presence of immoral sexual behaviour proof of mental deficiency which in turn could be treated by involuntary sterilization.

The Eugenics Boards gave no indication of being aware of the role these diagnoses, or the linkage of women's sexual agency and purported mental deficiency, played in the disproportionate number of women who were targeted by eugenic legislation. The authors of an article written four years after the Sexual Sterilization Act had been introduced in Alberta commented upon the large number of women who had been sterilized; however, they were not at all concerned by this imbalance. Instead they suggested that it was due to the "greater reluctance on the part of males than females to seek or submit to [the] operation."<sup>69</sup> Four years later, two members of the Eugenics Board published a follow-up article in which they continued to explain the distorted gender ratio of sterilization operations by pointing to the difficulty of obtaining consent from the male patient because "the operation would be a blow to his pride or vanity."<sup>70</sup>

Mary Frost, social worker to the Alberta Eugenics Board, in her 1942 M.A. thesis introduced another explanation as to why more female than male patients were

E. Mary Frost, "Sterilization in Alberta: A Summary of Cases Presented to the Eugenics Board for the Province of Alberta from 1929 to 1941." (M.A. Thesis, Department of Psychology, University of Alberta, 1942), 49. Frost further stated that the female mental defective group represented 92% "of all such cases."

<sup>69</sup> C.A. Baragar, George A. Davidson, W.J. McAlister, and D.L. McCullough, "Sexual Sterilization: Four Years Experience in Alberta," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 91 (January, 1935), 902.

<sup>70</sup> R.R. MacLean, and E.J. Kibblewhite, "Sexual Sterilization in Alberta: Eight Years Experience, 1929 to May 31, 1937," *The Canadian Public Health Journal* (December 1937), 588.

being sterilized in the inter-war period. She suggested that it was because "the parents or guardians of female mentally defective persons more frequently acknowledge the dangers and disadvantages attendant to procreation among them, than do the parents of similarly afflicted male persons."<sup>71</sup> Frost did not, however, make the connection between sexually active women, the diagnosis of mental defect, and the gendered application of sterilization operations.

The article analyzing Alberta's first four years of sterilization legislation did imply, however, that the Eugenics Board perceived a patient's sexual behaviour as a justifiable reason for ordering their sterilization. The authors asserted that a study of the "sexually moral reactions and childbearing records of the 201 female patients [brought] out in sharp relief some of the most cogent reasons for sterilization."<sup>72</sup> This suggests that the medical doctors who both orchestrated the study and authored the article interpreted women's purportedly immoral sexual behaviour as grounds for sterilization. The authors claimed, however, that the sterilization program had not been in effect long enough to "ascertain definitely whether there have been any effects whatever with respect to potency, sex desire and sex satisfaction" in patients after the operation.<sup>73</sup> Thus, even after the Sexual Sterilization Acts had been in existence in Alberta and British Columbia for several years, Canadian eugenicists remained uncertain as to whether or not sterilization actually affected human sexual

---

<sup>71</sup> E. Mary Frost, "Sterilization in Alberta: A Summary of Cases Presented to the Eugenics Board for the Province of Alberta from 1929 to 1941." (M.A. Thesis, Department of Psychology, University of Alberta, 1942), 49. Frost further stated that the female mental defective group represented 92% "of all such cases undergoing operation." See, Frost, 60.

<sup>72</sup> Baragar et al., "Sexual Sterilization: Four Years Experience in Alberta," 902.

<sup>73</sup> Baragar et al., "Sexual Sterilization: Four Years Experience in Alberta," 900.

response. In a little-known Canadian anti-sterilization publication, Antoine D'Eschambault claimed that it was "false to pretend" that sterilization did not effect sexual function:

The sexual powers are radically changed after the operation as, for instance, the powers of speech would be changed by a surgical intervention to permit the emission of sound, but prevent a purposeful utterance.<sup>74</sup>

Other commentators began to distinguish between the types of sterilization and claimed that each had distinct consequences for sexual function. Experts such as Helen MacMurchy told Canadians that in male sterilizations, the simpler procedure was the vasectomy, as compared to castration (orchidectomy) which was more complicated and, because it involved removal of the testes, had more severe sexual effects. Although all female operations were far more complicated than a vasectomy, tubal ligation (salpingectomy), was considered safer and less drastic than removal of the ovaries (oophorectomy) or uterus (hysterectomy).<sup>75</sup> Some experts argued that while oophorectomies and hysterectomies did indeed impact women's sexuality, the salpingectomy was "harmless" as it did not alter sexuality.

In 1934, the same year that MacMurchy came out strongly against the more extreme sterilization operations, the Alberta Eugenics Board sought permission to broaden its mandate to authorize castrations. MacMurchy wrote that castration was "wrong and cruel...No one approves of this operation. No one advises it. No one

<sup>73</sup> MacMurchy, *Sterilization? Birth Control?*, 50.

<sup>74</sup> Antoine D'Eschambault, *Eugenical Sterilization*, 105.

<sup>75</sup> Helen MacMurchy, *Sterilization? Birth Control?*, Chapter IV, "Operations for Sterilization."

does it."<sup>76</sup> About the "unwise and unnecessary procedure" of removing ovaries, she claimed that it "alters the feelings, often the health, often the disposition of the woman operated on." Similarly, MacMurchy claimed that "no one does this operation if it is possible to avoid it."<sup>77</sup> Meanwhile, in meetings in June and September of 1934, the Alberta Eugenics Board unsuccessfully sought permission from the Attorney-General's office to castrate certain "types" of men with "morbid sexual propensities."<sup>78</sup> Nonetheless, the first documented orchidectomies were recorded in the Alberta Eugenics Board Minutes of April 23, 1937.

In the Stewart Report's review of sixty-four British Columbia sterilization cases, there was no indication of the type of operations prescribed and performed. The preface to the Report did indicate, however, that the province's more conservative administration of the Sexual Sterilization Act extended to the type of operations performed. Stewart made clear the distinction between castrations or "ovariectomies" and the more straightforward sterilization operation which, "contrary to popular misconception...in no way unsexes the individual or interferes with his sexual life."<sup>79</sup> That Stewart would make a point of differentiating between the effects of the two types of operations in order to garner more support for the Act suggests that the British Columbia Eugenics Board did not recommend the more severe and drastic types of sterilization operations.

---

<sup>76</sup> MacMurchy, *Sterilization? Birth Control?*, 50.

<sup>77</sup> MacMurchy, *Sterilization? Birth Control?*, 50.

<sup>78</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Minutes, June 15, 1934, 5-6. The Alberta Eugenics Board actually made repeated requests for permission to castrate individuals who had committed or were suspected of sexual irregularities. This was the first request.

<sup>79</sup> The Stewart Report, 7.

Having In Alberta, the Board's deliberate use of oophorectomies and orchidectomies to police sexuality in both women and men was clearly evinced in a 1946 letter its Secretary wrote to counter criticism that the Board was operating illegally in sterilizing "sex perverts."<sup>80</sup> The letter, addressed to the Catholic Knights of Columbus, implied that the Board was well aware of the ability of certain operations to impair sexual function:

Mental defectives are incapable for the most part of exercising self-discipline in sexual matters.... Sterilization, moreover, does not remove sexual feeling and sexual potency, except in rare cases where orchidectomy and oophorectomy may be urgently indicated.<sup>81</sup>

The purpose of this chapter has been to lay the appropriate foundation for the study's analysis of inter-war case files in Chapter Two. Following a loose chronology, it explored the rise of eugenic interest in Canada and the development of sterilization programs in the two western-most provinces. Throughout this chronology, the chapter zeroed in on the figure of the feeble-minded female and eugenic assumptions about the threat she purportedly posed to Canadian society. It has found that western Canadian eugenicists linked "the sex problem" of the feeble-minded female and the eugenic solution of sterilization. In the inter-war period, the Boards explained the sterilization of purportedly immoral feeble-minded women in terms which reflected the Boards's greater concern for the socio-economic health of the nation. The Eugenics Boards targeted these women because they purportedly threatened the eugenic health and strength of the larger community.

---

<sup>80</sup> Correspondence, Grand Knight, C.C. Connolly, of the Knights of Columbus. This letter is a copy of the Catholic Order's 7 page resolution to repeal the Act. (n.d.) Contained in Eugenics Board Minutes, November 28, 1946.

<sup>81</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, November 28, 1946.

In Alberta, the Board's deliberate use of oophorectomies and orchidectomies to police sexuality in both women and men was clearly evinced in a 1946 letter its Secretary wrote to counter criticism that the Board was operating illegally in sterilizing "sex perverts."<sup>80</sup> The letter, addressed to the Catholic Knights of Columbus, implied that the Board was well aware of the ability of certain operations to impair sexual function:

Mental defectives are incapable for the most part of exercising self-discipline in sexual matters.... Sterilization, moreover, does not remove sexual feeling and sexual potency, except in rare cases where orchidectomy and oophorectomy may be urgently indicated.<sup>81</sup>

The purpose of this chapter has been to lay the appropriate foundation for the study's analysis of inter-war case files in Chapter Two. Following a loose chronology, it explored the rise of eugenic interest in Canada and the development of sterilization programs in the two western-most provinces. Throughout this chronology, the chapter zeroed in on the figure of the feeble-minded female and eugenic assumptions about the threat she purportedly posed to Canadian society. It has found that western Canadian eugenicists linked "the sex problem" of the feeble-minded female and the eugenic solution of sterilization. In the inter-war period, the Boards explained the sterilization of purportedly immoral feeble-minded women in terms which reflected the Boards's greater concern for the socio-economic health of the nation. The Eugenics Boards targeted these women because they purportedly threatened the eugenic health and strength of the larger community.

---

<sup>80</sup> Correspondence, Grand Knight, C.C. Connolly, of the Knights of Columbus. This letter is a copy of the Catholic Order's 7 page resolution to repeal the Act. (n.d.) Contained in Eugenics Board Minutes, November 28, 1946.

<sup>81</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, November 28, 1946.

Having provided the necessary context within which the Eugenics Boards of western Canada administered their Sexual Sterilization Acts, in Chapters Two and Three this study will employ case files to analyze the Eugenics Boards' use of eugenic legislation for the purpose of policing young women's sexuality in the inter-war and post-war periods.

This chapter looks at the ways in which the British Columbia and Alberta Eugenics Boards employed sterilization to deal with the problem of the feeble-minded female's sexuality. This is the first study to examine, in depth, the Eugenics Board materials and case files of Alberta and British Columbia from the inception of the Acts in 1928 and 1933 respectively, to their repeal in 1972. These sources offer a richly detailed understanding of much of the ideology that informed the Eugenics Boards' decisions. The multiple correspondences and reports produced by the Eugenics Boards, Provincial Guidance Clinics, social workers, local, national and international physicians, as well as interested or concerned individuals, reveal experts' remarkable level of concern with the sexuality of sterilization candidates throughout the Acts' existence.

This chapter will first start by examining the ways in which western Canadian eugenicists expressed their fears regarding the feeble-minded female's overt sexuality, particularly as regards to unfit motherhood and delinquent sexuality. Second, it will look at the Eugenics Boards' use of sterilization in cases where sexual assault was either known, suspected or anticipated in the case histories of sterilization candidates. Third, it will discuss the numerous cases in which there are examples of agency as parents actively sought the sterilization of their daughters to protect them from sexual assault or from becoming unfit parents. And finally, this chapter will close by examining the eugenicists' system of evaluation for the relative success or

## Chapter Two

### Protecting Western Canada from "The Sex Problem"

of the Feeble-minded Female in the Inter-war Period

This chapter looks at the ways in which the British Columbia and Alberta Eugenics Boards employed sterilization to deal with the problem of the feeble-minded female's sexuality. This is the first study to examine, in depth, the Eugenics Board materials and case files of Alberta and British Columbia from the inception of the Acts in 1928 and 1933 respectively, to their repeal in 1972. These sources offer a richly detailed understanding of much of the ideology that informed the Eugenics Boards' decisions. The multiple correspondences and reports produced by the Eugenics Boards, Provincial Guidance Clinics, social workers, local, national and international physicians, as well as interested or concerned individuals, reveal experts' remarkable level of concern with the sexuality of sterilization candidates throughout the Acts' existence.

This chapter will first start by examining the ways in which western Canadian eugenicists expressed their fears regarding the feeble-minded female's overt sexuality, particularly as regards to unfit motherhood and delinquent sexuality. Second, it will look at the Eugenics Boards' use of sterilization in cases where sexual assault was either known, suspected or anticipated in the case histories of sterilization candidates. Third, it will discuss the numerous cases in which there are examples of agency as parents actively sought the sterilization of their daughters to protect them from sexual assault or from becoming unfit parents. And finally, this chapter will close by examining the eugenicists' system of evaluation for the relative success or

failure of the sterilization of purportedly immoral young women.

Before launching into an analysis of case files, a few words should be said about the complicated and somewhat arbitrary nature of making thematic distinctions among the cases detailed below. In the preliminary stages of this study, I envisaged exploring sterilization based on doctors diagnosing women as feeble-minded, delinquent, or "unfit" mothers of illegitimate children. Although these types of women are repeatedly identified in Eugenics Board correspondences, case studies, and follow-up reports, their diagnoses constantly overlap. The difficulty of separating cases on the basis of their diagnoses is made more difficult due to the inconsistent nature of the diagnoses. Not only did eugenic experts contradict themselves, and each other, in diagnosing individual patients, sometimes within a single case file they conflated distinct diagnoses into vague and broadly definable terms. Frequently doctors offered several diagnoses, such as moron, mentally deficient, feeble-minded and delinquent, all of which might appear within a single case file.

Examination of eugenic case files of delinquents and unfit mothers from Alberta and British Columbia reveals that the Eugenics Boards assumed these feeble-minded young women had committed multiple transgressions, which rendered them doubly, triply, or even quadruply deviant. L.R.,<sup>1</sup> for example, came before the

---

<sup>1</sup> It is critical to remind readers that out of respect for the women who came into contact with the Alberta Eugenics Board over the course of the Sexual Sterilization Act, their names have been withheld and instead un-related initials are used and overtly identifying characteristics have been changed so as to protect their right to privacy. For the sake of historical integrity and verification, the original Eugenics Board Case Summary numbers remain unchanged; however, this is done with the understanding that access to these materials is highly restricted and consequently very few people are privy to the information contained within. In the case of British Columbian women discussed in the Stewart Report, the names and characteristics of individual patients were already removed and case numbers substituted.

Alberta Eugenics Board in 1933, at age fifteen. Her diagnosis of "mental deficiency with behaviour difficulty and sex delinquency", in conjunction with the Eugenics Board's express reasons for her sterilization, which included, "possibility of illegitimate children if not sterilized," makes it difficult to assign her case to a particular category on the basis of her diagnoses.<sup>2</sup> L.R. might ostensibly fit into several categories due to her purported mental deficiency, or delinquency, or the Eugenics Board's prediction that she would become an unwed mother.

The western Canadian Eugenics Boards were frequently preoccupied by the connection between what they adjudged immoral sexual activity and the eugenic threat of feeble-minded, unfit, unwed mothers. The Boards directed much of their efforts towards targeting those feeble-minded young women whom they considered ineligible to be mothers of the race, regardless of whether or not they had actually borne children. Fears of the feeble-minded woman were not the exclusive domain of eugenicists in the early twentieth century, but eugenicists were unique in recommending that the problem be solved at its source, by preventing unwed mothers from producing any further feeble-minded illegitimate children. According to eugenicists, even one unfit illegitimate child was one too many and the offense became more rank with each pregnancy. Illegitimate child-bearing was so vile and socially dangerous that some eugenicists believed its existence alone constituted proof of mental deficiency and the necessity of sterilization. In keeping with larger eugenic concerns about the racial health of the nation, these experts viewed unwed mothers with disdain for their selfish irresponsibility, rather than with compassion for their socio-economic position.

---

<sup>2</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 242.

illegitim Eugenicists were concerned primarily with the threat that such women posed to the moral fibre of the institutions of family, community, and society. Historians who focus on the historical perceptions of unwed mothers have demonstrated that middle-class reformist images of illegitimate child-bearing have gradually shifted between the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. Motivated by religious concern, reformers of the 1890s portrayed these young women as vulnerable victims in a heartless, industrialized society.<sup>3</sup> A generation later, social workers saw it as their duty to "cure" unwed mothers within the wider context of early twentieth-century crises in morality and social hygiene.<sup>4</sup> Canadian historians have found that in the inter-war period, feebleminded unwed mothers were often "criminalized" by the very reformers and doctors that professed to be helping them.<sup>5</sup>

In the context of the Depression era, middle-class notions of immorality and illegitimacy were bound up in contemporary socio-economic and moral fears. Eugenicists and reformers alike claimed that feebleminded females, in addition to being an economic burden, threatened to contaminate whole communities with their immoral presence. Eugenicists saw both unwed mothers and the sexual delinquents who would inevitably become unfit mothers of illegitimate children as constituting a prime eugenic target for both moral and economic reasons. Eugenic solutions may have been so popular among the middle-class because, by rendering unwed mothers sterile, they purported to address both the moral and economic problems

<sup>3</sup>Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls*, 50.

<sup>4</sup>Kunzel, *Fallen Women: Problem Girls*, 52.

<sup>5</sup>Andrée Lévesque, *Making and Breaking the Rules: Women In Quebec, 1919-1939*, trans., Yvonne M. Klein (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1994), 102.

illegitimacy posed.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, in the inter-war case files, the Eugenics Boards expressed their fears about the immoral sexuality of both delinquents and unwed mothers in ostensibly eugenic terms that prioritized the protection of the community and society over the rights of the individual.

The case of K.T. effectively demonstrates the Alberta Eugenics Board's preoccupation with the menace unwed mothers were assumed to pose to their communities. K.T. was presented to the Board at the end of 1934 and, without doubt, the most prominent feature presented in her file was her status as the mother of six illegitimate children.<sup>7</sup> She was Canadian, in her late twenties with an I.Q. of 77, and was successfully employed as a waitress. Although her I.Q. was within the so-called low-normal range and she was self-supporting, the Eugenics Board diagnosed K.T. as having "inadequate social adjustment, [and] borderline intelligence."<sup>8</sup> When presented to the Board, she admitted that although each of her children did have a different father, these had been her only "indiscretions" and she had been fond of each man, "but that each of them has left her." Under "present problem", the Board noted that "despite the above history patient creates a rather favourable impression."

In the case of K.T., the Alberta Eugenics Board illustrated the tendency among middle-class reformers and scientific experts to want to solve socio-economic

---

<sup>6</sup> See: Molly Ladd-Taylor, "Saving Babies and Sterilizing Mothers: Eugenics and Welfare Politics in the Interwar United States," *Journal of Social Politics* (Spring 1997): 136-153.

<sup>7</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 472.

<sup>8</sup> An Intelligence Quotient of 70 was generally the agreed upon number indicating "borderline intelligence." Persons with an IQ below 25 were diagnosed "idiots"; "imbeciles" had IQ's between 25-59; and "borderline cases" hovered around 70. See, for example, Amram Scheinfeld, *The New You and Heredity: With a 1961 Addendum*, 332. An I.Q. of 77, then, is certainly within the so-called "normal" range.

problems with eugenic solutions by blaming, in part, the sexual threat of feeble-minded women. Despite her intelligence quotient, her ability to be self-supporting, and the "favourable impression" she gave, the Eugenics Board framed its reasons for K.T.'s sterilization in terms that reflected their greater interest in the negative impact they assumed she had on her community. The stated reasons for K.T.'s operation spoke to the Eugenics Board's assumptions of the moral, social and economic threat she posed to the wider society as a mother of illegitimate children:

Reasons for sterilization: 1. Subnormal mental level with her inadequate social adjustment. 2. Danger of transmission of mental subnormality. 3. Desirability of preventing further illegitimate children.<sup>9</sup>

The similarities between K.T.'s file and that of W.A. are striking. W.A. was not quite thirty when she came before the Eugenics Board in the autumn of 1935.<sup>10</sup> She too worked in a restaurant, supporting herself right up until her recent marriage to a man much older than herself. Although seemingly within the respectable confines of marriage, W.A.'s file noted that she had been promiscuous from the age of twenty right up until her marriage. The Eugenics Board noted that W.A. had already had four illegitimate pregnancies, two of which were miscarriages that the Board suspected were the result of self-induced abortions. The remaining two pregnancies led to live births, but only one child survived infancy. Three weeks before W.A.'s admission to the mental institution she had been hospitalized for yet another miscarriage which the Eugenics Board considered similarly suspect.

Even though W.A. was married, the Board still considered her an unfit mother

---

<sup>9</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 472.

<sup>10</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 666. Alberta Eugenics Board Files.

because of her undesirable history and what they described as "unsatisfactory social adjustment both before and after marriage." The Board was alluding to the violent and unhappy marriage in which it assumed W.A. had been the aggressor. The case file revealed that the police had been called to W.A.'s home on several occasions for instances of domestic abuse which each spouse blamed on the other. After one of these instances, a social service worker evidently went to the home. Field notes indicated that W.A.'s husband described her to the social worker as "quite passionate sexually," but "always very difficult to get along with." The social worker also interviewed W.A.'s neighbour to ascertain the wife's behaviour and learn how effectively W.A. mothered her only living child, then five years old. The social worker did not interview W.A..<sup>11</sup>

Within a few days, Child Welfare Services took her young girl out of W.A.'s care. After unsuccessfully challenging this court order, W.A. locked herself in the basement, threatening suicide. This led to an official inquiry held at the Edmonton City Police Court, in which Dr. C.A. Baragar was asked to assess W.A.'s mental state. Upon being questioned "in what way is she mentally defective?" Baragar referred to her inability to mother her child. When asked "will treatment help her," Baragar answered, "Yes, I think treatment will help her." W.A. was admitted to the Provincial Mental Hospital that same day and two months later presented to the Eugenics Board and sterilized. A short time after this "treatment," W.A. left the institution and nothing more is known of her.

That the Eugenics Board focused so heavily on K.T. and W.A.'s status as mothers of illegitimate children rather than their proven ability to function as socially

---

<sup>11</sup> Social Worker's Field Notes, W.A.'s Case Summary, Alberta Eugenics Board Files.

competent, self-supporting women, prompts us to question whether the Board targeted unwed mothers largely due to the *visibility* of their transgressions. Earlier expert opinions informed by late nineteenth-century assumptions that unwed mothers were victims of male sexual deceit might have ascertained K.T. and W.A. as being in need of support, assistance, and moral encouragement. Among western Canadian eugenicists in the 1930s however, K.T. and W.A. were viewed as feeble-minded women who posed a moral and socio-economic threat which necessitated eugenic intervention.

A similar pattern was made apparent in the 1945 Stewart Report on sterilization in British Columbia. The Stewart Report detailed a preponderance of cases in which women were recommended for sterilization largely because of their status as unwed mothers. For each case detailed in the Report, Stewart provided a brief description which often revealed the reasons why the British Columbia Eugenics Board had recommended the patient for sterilization. Out of the sixty-four cases described, fifty-seven were women, and twenty-two of them were known to have had illegitimate pregnancies. The Report mentions each pregnancy, as though it were testimony to a woman's transgressions, regardless of whether it resulted in the birth of a live infant. As McLaren concluded from his reading of this document, it is "obvious that the operation was frequently carried out for the purposes of preventing illegitimate births."<sup>12</sup>

Based on the twenty-two cases of women who had already had at least one illegitimate pregnancy, there are several identifiable patterns. The report consistently spoke of the sexual threat these women posed to their communities. The British

---

<sup>12</sup> McLaren, "The Creation of a Haven for 'Human Thoroughbreds,'" 148.

Columbia Eugenics Board apparently considered the threat that unmarried mothers posed to be so serious that it justified "eugenic" action which in other contexts would have been illegal. Indeed, one-fifth of the women identified as having had illegitimate pregnancies were given abortions after their admission to the Provincial Mental Hospital at Essondale.<sup>13</sup> In each case, the Report was careful to make clear that it was an "illegitimate pregnancy" which was terminated. The report indicated that in four of the six cases in which illegitimate pregnancies were terminated before the woman was sterilized, the abortion was conducted within one to two months of admission to hospital.<sup>14</sup> What the Stewart Report does not say, however, is whether or not these women requested their abortions or if they even knew they had occurred.<sup>15</sup>

The Eugenics Board assumed that further illegitimate pregnancies would follow unless the patient was sterilized following her abortion. About case number 59, a twenty-seven year-old unmarried woman, the Superintendent of Essondale, Dr. Ryan, stated:

She has already had one illegitimate child, and at the time of admission to hospital was again pregnant. She has no realization of her condition, and we feel further illegitimate pregnancies will occur

---

<sup>13</sup> See: The Stewart Report, Cases 31, 32, 43, 44, 59. Cases 34 & 38 refer to illegitimate pregnancies that do not correspond to the number of illegitimate children the patients had, thereby suggesting that the pregnancies had been terminated through miscarriage or abortion.

<sup>14</sup> It may be no coincidence that it is within one to two months of hospital admission that the staff would likely have realized that a female patient had missed a menstrual period, thereby indicating the necessity of testing for pregnancy. In the remaining two cases of terminated pregnancies, the dates of admission, termination and sterilization are either unclear or incomplete.

<sup>15</sup> Given that the consent of the patient, family member or guardian was absolutely necessary in every sterilization operation that took place in B.C., it is likely that these women, or their families, did know that their pregnancies were going to be terminated.

unless she is sexually sterilized.<sup>16</sup> Ryan recommended case number 31 for sterilization following an abortion because "she has already had one affair and shows no realization or judgment." Along seemingly more eugenic lines, Ryan advocated the sterilization of this twenty-six year old woman because "the tendency in this case would be to produce children of the same type as herself."<sup>17</sup> According to the Report, her type was that of a "mongolian imbecile."<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the cases in which women were sterilized after having had abortions, the Stewart Report contained twenty-one cases in which the Eugenics Board concentrated on the patient's ineligibility for motherhood. The British Columbia Board demonstrated fears similar to those of the Alberta Board with regard to unfit, unwed motherhood. The Eugenics Boards' reasons for recommending unfit young women for sterilization suggest that eugenicists assumed that these women, by virtue of their tainted heredity and immoral tendencies, would produce innumerable children of undesirable "types."

---

<sup>16</sup> The Stewart Report. BCARS, GR 542, Box 11, file 4.

<sup>17</sup> The Stewart Report, Case 31.

<sup>18</sup> Information produced by other eugenic experts, such as the Human Betterment Foundation and the Journal of the American Medical Association, which stated that the fecundity of the feeble-minded had been grossly overestimated in the first decades of the twentieth-century, did not cause western Canadian eugenicists to rethink their strategy of employing sterilization to reduce the numbers of unfit. Letters between Popenoe of the Foundation and J.A. Macdonald of the British Columbia Royal Commission revealed that the two men agreed that the feeble-minded were not as fertile as had formerly been assumed. BCARS, GB 865, Box 1, File 3. Correspondence, Popenoe to Macdonald, September 15, 1927. Correspondence, Macdonald to Popenoe, September 20, 1927. The Alberta Eugenics Board was evidently aware of recent studies which claimed that so-called "mongolian imbeciles" (persons with Down's Syndrome), were not only "undersexed", but many were also infertile. One such report concluded that "mongoloids who are idiots or imbeciles do not need sterilization." "Mongolism and Fertility," Journal of the American Medical Association (January 13, 1940), file clipping in the Alberta Eugenics Board Minutes, August 8, 1940. For the next thirty-two years the Alberta Board continued to order the sterilization of "mongolian imbeciles."

Dr. Ryan started his comments about case 16, a fifteen year-old girl, by making some vague references to her poor heredity before launching into an attack on the girl's sexual history. Ryan explained that "this patient has already had one pregnancy, and shows marked sexual tendencies in ideas and propensities." Ryan interpreted this information as proof that "she shows definite lack of judgement and reasoning."<sup>19</sup> Case 38 was a woman of twenty-five who, according to Ryan, had a history of three illegitimate pregnancies, but only two illegitimate children. Ryan demonstrated the perceived relationship between mental deficiency and sexuality by stating that case 38 "is of a limited mental capacity, showing marked sexual tendencies."<sup>20</sup> He concluded that she "would tend to reproduce children of the same type," noting that she had already had two children out of wedlock who were being cared for by the state. This pattern was repeatedly played out as the Eugenics Board gave two stated reasons for recommending the sterilization of the women, between nineteen and thirty-two years of age, described in cases 46, 52, 55 and 60. In each case the first reason reflected the Board's assessment of the patients' limited intellectual ability in terms such as "low mentality, immature judgement,"<sup>21</sup> or "mental deficiency."<sup>22</sup> The Eugenics Board's second reason for sterilization in each of these cases focused entirely on the threat of the women's "sexual propensities" which they believed had been proven by the existence of the women's illegitimate children.

---

<sup>19</sup> Case 16, The Stewart Report.

<sup>20</sup> Case 38, The Stewart Report.

<sup>21</sup> Case 46, The Stewart Report.

<sup>22</sup> Cases 50, 52, 55, The Stewart Report.

The above cases in which the British Columbia and Alberta Eugenics Boards either witnessed, suspected or anticipated illegitimacy reflected the Boards' fears that both the women themselves and their progeny would wreak havoc on the larger society. Turning to files on so-called delinquent girls, it appears that the Boards were equally concerned about the threat of moral contamination through uninhibited sexual contact even when unattended by illegitimate pregnancies. The Boards saw the delinquent girl as posing a *potential* eugenic threat even though she had not yet become pregnant. Case 37 of the Stewart Report typified the fears about sexually active delinquent girls. This girl was fourteen when the British Columbia Eugenics Board decided she should be sterilized because she was considered "a source of danger to herself and to the community." In her file social service workers commented upon the fact that she was not only "too friendly towards strangers", but she did not have "the appearance" of being a mental deficient.<sup>23</sup>

Eugenicists' apprehension about the attractive feebleminded girl raises the unsettling question as to whether a delinquent girl's nubile appearance may have played a role in the Eugenics Boards' decision to sterilize her. That the British Columbia Eugenics Board thought the threat case 37 posed *increased* due to her physical appearance calls to mind the comments Clarence Hincks made to a Saskatchewan audience five years after this particular girl's sterilization. In trying to convince the prairie province to consider introducing a Sexual Sterilization Act based on the success of similar legislation in Alberta, Hincks apparently "declared there was a special recommendation for sterilization in connection with physically attractive

*Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results in 6000 Cases*, ed. E.S. Gosney (Pasadena, California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930), 13. Reprinted from, "Proceedings of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Session of the American Association for the Study of the Feebleminded," held at Cincinnati, Ohio, June 2-6, 1927.

---

<sup>23</sup> Case 37, The Stewart Report. "After Sterilization," 13.

moron girls before they are discharged from the residential school."<sup>24</sup> That Hincks, the director of the Canadian National Committee on Mental Hygiene, would use this comment as part of his reasons to encourage Saskatchewan to adopt similar legislation suggests that this line of thinking was commonplace among his contemporaries.

Eugenic concerns about delinquent girls were certainly widespread in the early twentieth century. In California, for example, the Sonoma State Home classified its female inmates according to varying degrees of delinquency even before they were admitted. While the institution framed its categories for both girls and boys in explicitly behavioural terms, there was a marked difference along gender lines with regard to the type of behaviour. Sonoma described boys as in need of training, troublesome, a nuisance, or incorrigible criminals.<sup>25</sup> Girls, in contrast, were channeled into Sonoma by public health officials and juvenile courts for much more sexualized reasons based on their perceived level of sexual activity. The least delinquent were institutionalized because they only needed training or protection. In the middle categories were girls that institution doctors described as either having had "occasional or even frequent sex experiences" or those "who had been quite promiscuous."<sup>26</sup> The most serious category of delinquents were sent to the institution for sterilization because they "had been virtually professional prostitutes."

---

<sup>24</sup> "Sterilization Act Success in Alberta," hand-dated Dec 6, 1945. Newspaper clipping from unknown newspaper, contained within Alberta Eugenics Board Minutes, Dec 6, 1945.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Popenoe, "Success on Parole After Sterilization," in Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results in 6000 Cases, ed. E.S. Gosney (Pasadena, California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930), 13. Reprinted from, "Proceedings of the Fifty-First Annual Session of the American Association for the Study of the Feebleminded," held at Cincinnati, Ohio, June 4-6, 1927.

<sup>26</sup> Popenoe, "Success on Parole After Sterilization," 13.

The case files examined for this study show that, apart from the likelihood that delinquent girls were often younger than unwed mothers, there were numerous examples of overlap in cases of delinquency and unfit motherhood. The Eugenics Boards themselves may well have promoted the inseparable characteristics in these types of cases, assuming that the unfit mother of illegitimate children necessarily had also been a sexual delinquent. Once a Eugenics Board either detected or suspected illegitimate pregnancies, the case could be promoted from the slightly more nebulous status of deviancy to the verifiable realm of inadequate motherhood and there was no going back to the more curable diagnosis of delinquency. Regardless of whether the Eugenics Boards were dealing with delinquents or unfit mothers, they were primarily preoccupied with the needs of the wider society, rather than those of the women themselves.

This chapter now turns to the issue of sterilization and sexual assault. It is perhaps understandable, from an economic viewpoint, that Eugenics Boards would manipulate eugenic principles to justify sterilizations so as to prevent "delinquent daughters" from becoming dependent, unwed mothers. What remains unclear, however, is why and how eugenicists in western Canada thought sterilization could prevent sexual exploitation. In fact, it appears that the Alberta and British Columbia Eugenics Boards frequently employed sterilization primarily for the purpose of averting the undesired consequences of sexual exploitation, such as rape and incest. By rendering the problem invisible through negating the possibility of pregnancy, the Eugenics Boards viewed sterilization as a solution to the vulnerability of feebleminded girls and women to sexual exploitation.

The Human Betterment Foundation of California, to which western Canada

looked for both eugenic authority and inspiration, pointed out this defense of sterilization.<sup>27</sup> After discussing the socio-economic burden posed by unmarried, feeble-minded mothers, Paul Popenoe went on to state that it was not uncommon for parents to seek sterilization for their daughters "to prevent pregnancy in case some man should take advantage of the girl."<sup>28</sup> One year earlier, the Foundation had argued for the merits of sterilization over segregation on the basis that feeble-minded girls were vulnerable to sexual exploitation whether at home or in institutional care; therefore, even if institutionalized, these girls ought to be sterilized. The Foundation warned that feeble-minded girls were "always subject to rape," no matter where they lived.<sup>29</sup> While it is easy to believe that socially vulnerable women of questionable intellectual capacity were prone to sexual attack, Popenoe's logic behind using sterilization as an ostensibly precautionary measure where such attacks were anticipated is difficult to understand.

This logic is also at work in British Columbia's Stewart Report, where there were two cases in which incest figured in the patient's history, as well as numerous examples where concern was expressed for a patient who could be "easily led." Neither the author of the report nor the Essondale institution staff valued the female patients' well-being as much as they feared the threat of unfit progeny which could

---

<sup>27</sup> Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results in 6000 Cases, ed. E.S. Gosney (Pasadena, California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930).

<sup>28</sup> Paul Popenoe, "A Study of Patients Coming to California State Institutions for Sterilization Only," in Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results in 6000 Cases, ed., E.S. Gosney (Pasadena: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930), 174.

<sup>29</sup> Gosney and Popenoe, Sterilization for Human Betterment, 103. The assumption at work here was that the sexual passivity of mentally challenged girls and women made them ideal targets for aggressive male sexuality.

result from sexual attack. In case 49, for example, the author presented the fact that the woman's father had served time in prison for incest as proof of the family's poor heredity. The report mentioned it as the fourth item in a list of reasons attesting to the "marked heredity in the history of the family." No reasons were given in this case as to why the Eugenics Board authorized the operation for a woman who was in her thirties and had an I.Q. of 83. The case description made clear, however, that the woman had two illegitimate children and evinced "marked sexual propensities."<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, it may be surmised that she was sterilized due to the Eugenics Board's concern regarding her "poor heredity" and sexual inclinations. Certainly, the Eugenics Board sometimes expressed concern for the patients' own safety in these cases but, by and large, this particular rationalization for sterilization was not consistently offered until the 1950s.

Reference to incest was more explicit in case 60 of the Stewart Report, as it appeared to play a role in the hospital's decision to keep the patient institutionalized. Even though the patient had already been sterilized, she was not released because, as the social worker's field report stated, "the brother, to whom [the] patient had shown abnormal sexual behaviour was still in the home."<sup>31</sup> This strategy could be read as a precautionary measure to protect the patient from further abuse; however, given the context of the rest of the case file, it is doubtful. This twenty-year-old girl was described in behavioural terms which suggested that her "problems" were attributed to her mental deficiency and sexual proclivities. Not only was she "childish" and "simple", her behaviour was described as foolish. The

---

<sup>30</sup> Case 49, The Stewart Report.

<sup>31</sup> Case 60, The Stewart Report.

Eugenics Board's reasons for the operation were "1. Mental deficiency. 2. Family history of mental illness. 3. No insight. 4. Sexual propensities." The file's only mention of sexual activity was that which took place with her brother. After referring to the patient's "abnormal" relationship with her brother, the case worker concluded that her parents would be unable to supervise the girl if she returned home. Evidently, both the social worker and the Eugenics Board considered this girl to be the source of the problem and first sterilized her, then decided to keep her in the institution so as to prevent any further "difficulties." There was no evidence that the social worker or Eugenics Board considered the possibility of removing the brother from the home or placing the young woman in foster care.

Eugenicists' tendency to pathologize the feeble-minded woman and the social problems or danger she posed to her community was further evident in the cases highlighting the eugenic threat engendered by a patient's vulnerability to extra-familial sexual attack. Case 28 in the Stewart Report, for example, was an unmarried woman of twenty-four, and although there existed no proof of any "difficulties", as she had neither illegitimate children, previous committals, nor any history of insane relatives, she was sterilized. According to Dr. Crease, "this girl<sup>32</sup> is easily led, and talked freely of sex experiences, and on account of being a low-grade moron, it is felt that she should be sterilized before discharge."<sup>33</sup> This case suggests

---

<sup>32</sup> The habit of calling women "girls" is one that was played out repeatedly in the Eugenics Boards' case files. By viewing adolescent and adult women as "girls", doctors, social workers, and public health workers were in a position to be doubly shocked by their sexuality. As sterilization effectively removed the most adult consequence of female sexuality--pregnancy--it is plausible that the sterilization operation served a useful function in rendering ostensibly dangerous women harmless, as though they were again pre-pubescent "girls." As Police Magistrate Jamieson stated to the British Columbia Royal Commission in 1926, sterilization had the ability to make a sexual pervert of 18 as harmless as a child of 12. M. Stuart Jamieson, Transcript Proceedings, p. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Case 28, The Stewart Report. Summary File # 500.

that the Eugenics Board did not treat young women who were vulnerable to sexual exploitation any differently than those whom it perceived as posing a eugenic threat via their sexual indiscretions and illegitimate pregnancies. Whether the sex was forced or consensual appears to have been irrelevant to the Eugenics Boards which were more concerned with the reproductive consequences of feebleminded women's sexual encounters.

In the inter-war period, although some concern for the individual patients was present, eugenicists typically approached cases of sexual attack and incest with greater concern for the eugenic contamination of the community than for the health and well-being of the patients themselves. Some parents, on the other hand, actively sought out sterilization for the purpose of protecting their daughters from sexual attack and exploitation. In contrast to the Eugenics Boards, however, parents did not see their decision as being for the good of the community or nation. Rather, as the case of B.F. suggests, at least some parents appear to have believed that sexual sterilization would actually protect their daughters from harm.

B.F. was fifteen at the time of her presentation to the Alberta Eugenics Board. Her mother made clear to the Board that she did not want her daughter to know she was being sterilized. Instead, in a pattern that was played out for the duration of the Act's existence in Alberta, B.F. was led to believe that she was merely having her appendix removed. The Eugenics Board Case Summary observed that B.F. "has never given any trouble in a behaviour way but the mother wishes the sterilization operation as a precautionary measure."<sup>34</sup> B.F., who had shown no interest in the opposite sex, was described as a shy girl with few friends. At first glance it appears

---

<sup>34</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 580.

that B.F.'s mother sought the operation for the primary purpose of preventing an unfortunate pregnancy; however, after piecing together the numerous correspondences and field reports that constitute this case file, it becomes clear that the Eugenics Board agreed to the sterilization for more eugenic reasons.<sup>35</sup>

Where B.F.'s mother expressed her desire for the operation in terms that reflected her concern for protecting the girl, the Eugenics Board was far more concerned with protecting the society from the likelihood that B.F. would "defective" have children. The Eugenics Board's stance was in keeping with the general pattern of employing sterilization as a means by which to protect the larger society from the sexual threat of certain young women during the inter-war era. From the stated reasons for B.F.'s sterilization, it seemed that the key motive in the Board's decision was to prevent a pregnancy resulting from a sexual attack:

Reasons for sterilization: mentally deficient condition of the patient and the possibility of her being taken advantage of by some unscrupulous person. Probability of her offspring being mentally defective.<sup>36</sup>

The case of L.R. illustrates that some parents desired sterilization for their delinquent daughters for reasons which were unrelated to the question of sexual vulnerability. Like B.F., L.R. was only fifteen when she came before the Alberta Eugenics Board in 1934. She was evidently difficult to control, having been expelled from her school for smoking and swearing. L.R. admitted to the Board that she had

<sup>35</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 234.

<sup>35</sup> It is worth noting that a letter from a social worker to a Calgary doctor, written in the spring of 1935, suggested that the idea for sterilization did not originate with B.F.'s mother as indicated in the Eugenics Board Case Summary. The letter stated that "the question of sterilization was discussed with the mother and it seems probable that the case will be dealt with by the Eugenics Board." Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 580.

<sup>36</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 580.

already had "sexual indiscretions with 4 or 5 different boys."<sup>37</sup> L.R.'s disreputable behaviour, in conjunction with the psychometric assessment of her ability to reason as being that of a twelve year old, enabled the Board to label her mentally deficient.

That her parents requested L.R.'s sterilization suggests that families were not always passive victims of top-down social control policies manifested in the Sexual Sterilization Act.<sup>38</sup> The Eugenics Board carefully noted her parents' request:

the parents do not wish [L.R.] to know what the operation is for. They prefer that she think she is to have her appendix removed... they say they would tell her of the sterilization if she were ever to marry.<sup>39</sup>

While they may well have appreciated that their wishes were respected by the Board, what L.R.'s parents did not know was that the Board described them as "probably subnormal", which in part contributed to its decision to authorize sterilization.

Moreover, the Board demonstrated that it retained sole control in authorizing sterilizations by noting more purportedly eugenic reasons for L.R.'s sterilization which were unconnected to her parents' original request for the operation:

Reasons for sterilization: 1. Poor general family background. 2. Subnormal mental level of the patient with poor social adjustment. 3. Possibility of illegitimate children if not sterilized.<sup>40</sup>

According to the Eugenics Board, L.R.'s rights or wants were, for all intents and purposes, negligible. L.R. came before the Board on the initiative of her parents, yet

---

<sup>37</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 234.

<sup>38</sup> The pattern of families attempting to use mental institutions for their own purposes, rather than bending passively to the authority and expertise of medical experts, has been further explored by Mary-Ellen Kelm in her article, "The only place likely to do her any good': The Admission of Women to British Columbia's Provincial Hospital for the Insane," *BC Studies* No. 96 (Winter 1992/93): 66-89.

<sup>39</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 234.

<sup>40</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 234.

her case was decided on the basis of the eugenic threat she posed to the larger society.

Due to the 1937 Amendment to Alberta's Sexual Sterilization Act which nullified the need for consent from so-called mental defectives, there were numerous examples of women (and men) who did not realize until many years after their release into the community that they had been sterilized. Upon realizing what had happened, many women complained about the operation. The Eugenics Board of Alberta received numerous heart-wrenching letters from women who had married after leaving the institution and, upon being unable to conceive, learned they had been sterilized. Now they wanted the Eugenics Board to reverse the operation. With ironclad consistency, the Board's response remained the same: the operation had been done for the greater good, and if the patient was unable to comprehend that, it was only because her mental deficiency prevented her. The Board repeatedly exploited its legal authority, after the amendments of 1937, to authorize compulsory sterilization; however, it responded to requests for "un-doing" the operation by claiming that it did not have the power to reverse an operation which had been prescribed according to provincial law.<sup>41</sup>

Numerous women believed they had a right to seek reversal of the operation, expressing shock and dismay that they had been sterilized without their knowledge.

A generation ago, historians examined such abuses of human rights as evidence of

---

<sup>40</sup> For example, a letter from Eugenics Board # 1318, requested that her operation be undone because she and her husband desired a family. Eugenics Board Minutes, January 23, 1941, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> A typical response, on the part of the Board, was to advise the patient "that so far as [the Board] is concerned there is no way in which it can act further in the matter." Eugenics Board Minutes, January 23, 1941, p. 2. Focusing entirely upon what it claimed as its legal position, the Board never stated whether it was even technically possible to reverse a tubal ligation.

social control exercised from the top-down.<sup>42</sup> Younger historians have suggested that presenting such women as passive victims of social control risks further silencing them and compounding historical injustices.<sup>43</sup> These letters demonstrate that many women felt their rights had been violated and some contacted the group they believed responsible for their suffering.<sup>44</sup> Their letters were often cited in Board meetings and frequently dismissed as irrational or interpreted as further evidence of the patient's mental incompetence. What is striking, however, is just how logical, cogent, articulate and heart-felt these letters actually were.

The best example is provided by the three letters from D.B., written between 1943 and 1949, and the two responses from the Red Deer Provincial Training School.<sup>45</sup> It is possible to piece together fragments of D.B.'s story as scores of documents pertaining to her file are scattered haphazardly throughout the Eugenics Board minutes and files. D.B. was institutionalized after her mother deserted her

---

<sup>42</sup> For an example of a study which emphasizes social control practices of institutions, see: Andrew T. Scull, Decarceration, Community Treatment and the Deviant: A Radical View (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inside cover., 1977).

<sup>43</sup> Wendy Mitchinson has recently played a key role in this change as she has increasingly emphasized the importance of giving equal voice to forms of women's resistance, passive or otherwise. Her later works have been instrumental in encouraging historians of women in particular to look at the hierarchical relationship between female patients and male medical professionals as one which is *negotiated*, rather than prioritizing the oppressive power of doctors and the passivity of patients. Compare, for example, Mitchinson's 1986 article, "Hysteria and Insanity in Women: A Nineteenth Century Canadian Perspective," to, "The Medical Treatment of Women," printed in 1993, and her article in On the Case, "Problematic Bodies and Agency: Women Patients in Canada, 1900-1950," which was published in 1998.

<sup>44</sup> For example, a letter from Eugenics Board # 1318, requested that her operation be undone because she and her husband desired a family. Eugenics Board Minutes, January 23, 1941, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> The first letter, which was written in early 1943 and remained unanswered, as well as a second letter written in the spring of 1943, were both read out at a Eugenics Board meeting, over two years later, on June 14, 1945. The third letter was dated in the spring of 1949 and is part of D.B.'s case file, Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 460.

family and her father was unable to care for their four children. Her sisters were adopted out and D.B. was the only sibling placed in the Provincial Training School. In 1935, she was sterilized as a young teenager for the stated reason that she was mentally deficient.<sup>46</sup> As a government ward, D.B.'s consent form was signed by George Hoadley, the minister of Health, presumably because D.B. herself, diagnosed mentally deficient, was considered incapable.<sup>47</sup> There was, nonetheless, a consent form with her signature carefully written at the bottom but D.B. later claimed she never knew about the operation. From her physical examination before presentation to the Eugenics Board, the Board learned that D.B.'s hymen was found to be intact, proof that her delinquency had not gone too far. Her Provincial Training School Case Summary stated that although she "has been too young for sex misdemeanors [she] is moderately interested in the boys and some smutty notes have been intercepted."<sup>48</sup> Although she was only in early adolescence, the report concluded that D.B. "realizes she could never bring up a child properly and has consented."

In early 1943, D.B. wrote to ask if the hospital still had the records from her operation and if it was possible to have the procedure reversed, begging the doctor

---

<sup>46</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 460.

<sup>47</sup> Persons who were wards of the government, either because they were neglected children or aboriginals or métis, could be sterilized without their consent up until the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act's repeal in 1972. In October 1969, the Director of the Alberta Guidance Clinic wrote to the Director of the Division of Mental Health about the practice of the Superintendent of Child Welfare signing these candidates' consent forms. The Guidance Clinic Director expressed his doubts as to the validity of the eugenic legislation, admitting that he "sometimes wonder[ed] how much thought he is able to give to this problem" before signing the forms and handing them over to the Eugenics Board. Correspondence between the Director of Guidance Clinic to the Director of the Division of Mental Health, stamped: Received, October 28, 1969. Alberta Eugenics Board Files.

<sup>48</sup> Red Deer Provincial Training School Summary # 76, in Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 460.

to respond as soon as possible. The next letter, dated over two years later, indicated that her previous correspondence went unanswered. "I guess by the delay of answering my letter that you must be pretty busy." This time, her doctor answered within two days, but it was not until the last paragraph of his letter that he addressed her most serious concern:

So far as I know, your operation can not be undone. Remember always [D.B.] that it was done for your own good. You would not want children who might have to come here and spend many years or perhaps their whole life in an Institution.<sup>49</sup>

He closed the letter by telling D.B. how much it pleased him to know how much she had "improved" since leaving the Training School.

The Eugenics Board materials contain no word of D.B. again until 1949, when her former physician at the Provincial Training School sent another of her letters to the Eugenics Board "just as a matter of eugenic interest."<sup>50</sup> In this letter D.B. was visibly more distressed by the doctor's refusal to validate her concerns:

I do wish you'd stop saying that ruination of an operation is for my own good, for how can it do me or any other person any good, if it just stops me from having a happy married life with children of our own?... Some people praise the operation, but I'll blasphem [sic] it till kingdom come. I think that's the worse money making scheme that the Doctors ever invented.<sup>51</sup>

D.B. then explained that she had recently tried for the second time to adopt a child and was again refused by the Child Welfare Department. But D.B. did not have to

---

<sup>49</sup> Correspondence between Provincial Training School physician and D.B., dated March 25, 1945. Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 460.

<sup>50</sup> Correspondence between a physician at the Provincial Training School and Mr Kibblewhite of the Eugenics Board, May 3, 1949. Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 460.

<sup>51</sup> Correspondence between D.B. and the Provincial Training School physician, dated April 22, 1949. Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 460.

tell her doctor this--he already knew. The Eugenics Board had taken it upon itself to write to the Child Welfare Department regarding D.B.'s mental ability and had received a reply from the department stating that her application for adoption was refused.<sup>52</sup>

When the Provincial Training School physician sent a copy of D.B.'s 1949 letter to the Eugenics Board, he prefaced it with his own unsolicited rationalization of the operation. As if aware of the need to defend the initial decision to operate, D.B.'s former doctor wrote:

her husband, of course, is a deteriorated epileptic, so sterilization was certainly justified in this case, though speaking from memory I think [D.B.] had an IQ of about 74 or 77, an impulsive temperament and a strong sex appetite.<sup>53</sup>

The Board's Secretary wrote back, commenting that D.B. "certainly has a good deal of feeling regarding the fact that she cannot have children herself."<sup>54</sup> She then dismissed D.B.'s "feeling", suggesting that she was too incompetent to even fully understand what had happened and why. The Secretary told the Board that the statement made in her letter "probably indicates the depth of her appreciation of the actual situation."

Similar resistance and opposition was evident in the Stewart Report. Several examples of patient-agency suggest that the British Columbia Eugenics Board was not always able to use sterilization as an uncontested method of social control.

---

<sup>52</sup> Follow-up notes, D.B. Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 460.

<sup>53</sup> Correspondence, between a Provincial Training School physician and Kibblewhite, May 3, 1949. Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 460.

<sup>54</sup> Correspondence between Eugenics Board Secretary and D.B.'s physician at the Provincial Training School, May 11, 1949. Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 460.

Cases 2 and 17 reveal that these young women, aged fourteen and twenty respectively, escaped from custodial care, albeit after they had been operated upon. Case 2 was successful enough in this endeavour that the Stewart Report noted, "nothing further heard."<sup>55</sup> The twenty-year old, however, was evidently so unhappy that after her escape she attempted to drown herself.<sup>56</sup> Another case, however, demonstrated that at least some women actively resisted the sterilization operation itself. In 1939, a twenty-three year old woman whom Ryan described as "a recurrent case, with marked sexual tendencies," took her opposition to being sterilized to the Appeal Board. The file for case 25 revealed that her Appeal, however, was rejected.<sup>57</sup>

In conclusion, what was sterilization supposed to achieve? When evaluating the relative success or failure of sterilization operations, eugenicists were more concerned with the effect sterilizing feeble-minded women had on the wider society than how the women themselves felt about the operation. By examining the extent to which the Eugenics Boards perceived a sterilization operation as meeting its objective, it is possible to better understand their initial motivations for ordering the sterilization of feeble-minded women. This chapter has already shown that the Boards frequently assessed and verified women's mental ability on the adjudged state of their "sex reactions" or "deviance".<sup>58</sup> This pattern was clearly evident in the

---

<sup>55</sup> Case 2, The Stewart Report.

<sup>56</sup> Case 17, The Stewart Report.

<sup>57</sup> Case 25, The Stewart Report. There are no surviving documents which can attest to the composition and function of the Appeal Board.

<sup>58</sup> For statistical information on this see: Christian, "The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta," 100.

Alberta Eugenics Board files and the Stewart Report where the perceived success of sterilization was contingent upon a patient's acceptance of appropriate standards of sexuality within the confines of matrimony. It is no coincidence then that the western Canadian Eugenics Boards considered marriage the best proof that an operation had produced the desired results. In the case of unmarried patients, evaluations of unsuccessful sterilization operations were replete with references to sexual indiscretions, sexual thoughts and masturbation.

The Alberta Eugenics Board commissioned two reports specifically for the purposes of evaluating the success of sexual sterilization operations in the inter-war period.<sup>59</sup> The Eugenics Board Minutes revealed that the Board frequently requested follow-up reports during the 1930's; however, the first which was included in the Eugenics Board Minutes was dated January 22, 1942.<sup>60</sup> The author's overt focus on the sterilized patients' behaviour was remarkable. Her report contained evaluations of eleven cases, seven being women, all of whom had been referred to the Board by one Guidance Clinic. The report discussed three adolescent girls whose post-

---

<sup>59</sup> To date, no other reports have been found which speak to the evaluative methods applied to sterilization operations, either in British Columbia or Alberta, for any subsequent time period.

<sup>60</sup> The issue of securing adequate follow-up information was one that evidently plagued the Eugenics Board in the inter-war period. As early as the spring of 1930, the Eugenics Board spoke of the lack of social workers available to its work and the dearth of follow-up information available on sterilized patients. Eugenics Board Minutes, April 16, 1930. At the end of 1931, the Board expressed concern about "unfavourable follow-up reports" and the need for "some better system of follow-up and control of all cases dealt with by the Board." Eugenics Board Minutes, December 19, 1931. In the spring of 1935, the Board again raised the issue, this time in conjunction with the rapid expansion of its work, when it requested that another full-time social worker be assigned for the purpose of securing more post-operative information. Eugenics Board Minutes March 27, 1935, p. 7. At the end of 1939, the issue reappeared and the Minutes noted that it was lack of funding which prevented the Eugenics Board from receiving support from social workers. "The present personnel available, and the amount available for travelling expenses, does not allow much investigative work to be done in many of the cases." The Board again requested a full-time social worker "whose primary duties would be in connection with Eugenics Board cases." Eugenics Board Minutes, December 18, 1939.

operation contact with the opposite sex worried the Board. The social worker measured the success of these operations as proportionate to the girls' proximity to boys. P.M., for example, was apparently still living at home with her parents and doing housework for the family six years after her operation. The report states that she was now a regular church-goer, and "she does not go out with boys but has a few girl friends."<sup>61</sup> About D.P. and E.S., the social worker similarly noted that they were adequately social, but did not go out with boys.<sup>62</sup>

While this first report suggested that there was a behavioral scale by which the Eugenics Board measured the successful results of sterilization, a second report revealed that a much more explicitly sexual focus was the motivating factor behind certain, more drastic, sterilization operations. At a Eugenics Board meeting in the spring of 1943, Dr. Mason, member of the Board, suggested that the Board should request another report from its social worker. This second report would be of a rather different nature,

regarding the effects of the operation in the case of patients who have been orchidectomized and oophorectomized with particular attention being paid to the sexual habits and disposition of the patients concerned.<sup>63</sup>

At the Board's next meeting two months later, each member received a copy of the social worker's latest report which revealed much about the expectations in ordering these operations.

---

<sup>61</sup> "Follow-up Notes for the Eugenics Board Meeting on January 22, 1942 on Calgary Clinic Cases." Submitted by the Board's social worker. Eugenics Board Minutes, January 22, 1942, attachment, p.1.

<sup>62</sup> "Follow-up Notes", p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, March 24, 1943.

This report was significantly longer than the first, and appeared in two parts, the majority of which addressed cases in which castration (orchidectomy) had been performed. The first section evaluated ten oophorectomies performed on women between the ages of 17 and 43.<sup>64</sup> The report was much concerned with the behavioural development of these patients, especially whether or not they still constituted a sex problem after their ovaries had been removed. The results of the operation were described as clearly favourable in one case because, according to the institution staff, the patient no longer masturbated and she posed no behaviour problems after her surgery. The social worker took this observation as proof that "her general behaviour and conduct appears to have improved since the operation."<sup>65</sup> Another case, with less favourable results, was described as constituting "a masturbation problem."<sup>66</sup> Two more uncertain cases were similarly evaluated with the comments "probably masturbates"<sup>67</sup> or "probably does not masturbate."<sup>68</sup>

Just as the report demonstrated that oophorectomy was apparently "useful" strategy in quelling the sexualized behaviour of certain women, the results of castration operations were similarly evaluated in terms which reflected the

<sup>64</sup> "Information Concerning Patients who have been Orchidectomized Previous to May 4, 1943," prepared at the Request of the Eugenics Board by the Board's social worker, on May 27, 1943.

<sup>65</sup> It is worth noting that the remaining patients ranged in age from 9 to 33, a markedly younger age group than the first report.

<sup>64</sup> The age of one woman, who died shortly after the operation, was not given.

<sup>65</sup> "Information Concerning Patients who have been Oophorectomized Previous to May 4, 1943", p. 1. Prepared at the Request of the Eugenics Board by the Board's social worker, on May 27, 1943. Eugenics Board Minutes, May 27, 1943.

<sup>66</sup> "Information Concerning Patients who have been Oophorectomized," 2.

<sup>67</sup> "Information Concerning Patients who have been Oophorectomized," 2.

<sup>68</sup> "Information Concerning Patients who have been Oophorectomized," 1.

expectation that the offending attributes of these male patients would be removed.<sup>69</sup> In the vast majority of the twenty-six cases of male castration, the social worker found that the patients' sexual proclivities had been drastically reduced.<sup>70</sup> The report's praise for the efficacy of sterilization, in particular the removal of ovaries and testes, may well have encouraged the Alberta Eugenics Board's use of sterilization in the fight to protect society from the sexual menace of the feeble-minded woman.

In British Columbia, the Stewart Report was commissioned for the explicit purpose of evaluating the effects of sterilization in that province up to 1943.<sup>71</sup> The Report commented upon the results of each operation as "unknown," "doubtful" or "successful."<sup>72</sup> The operations Stewart deemed successful frequently involved either subsequent marriage or else secure guardianship in conjunction with steady employment.<sup>73</sup> In the case of single women or young girls who were too young to wed, evaluations were also based on whether or not, upon release, these women came into contact with social service agencies, thereby suggesting that they were not economically self-sufficient and, thus, "unsuccessful."<sup>74</sup>

In the case of those women whom the British Columbia Eugenics Board

---

<sup>69</sup> "Information Concerning Patients who have been Orchidectomized Previous to May 4, 1943." Prepared at the Request of the Eugenics Board by the Board's social worker, on May 27, 1943.

<sup>70</sup> It is worth noting that the castration patients ranged in age from 9 to 33, a markedly younger age group than oophorectomy patients.

<sup>71</sup> The Stewart Report, 1.

<sup>72</sup> As is the situation when dealing with institutional case files, the Stewart Report is fraught with frustrating inconsistencies in its reportage of the sixty-four cases it treats. For more on overcoming and working with the gaps in case files, see: *On the Case*, especially, Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, "Introduction: Social History and Case Files Research."

<sup>73</sup> Case 7, The Stewart Report.

<sup>74</sup> Cases 1 & 40, The Stewart Report.

recommended for sterilization to regulate their out-of-control sexuality, successful operations were characterized by the transfer of responsibility for supervision of the young woman from the institution to either a husband or other suitable guardian.<sup>75</sup> Successful operations ideally produced women who were no longer the autonomous sexual beings that they were prior to institutionalization and sterilization. In the case of sexually abused girls and women, the Boards appeared to believe that sterilization operations mitigated the very worst problem or side effect that could result from their vulnerability to sexual attack. The common denominator in these successful cases was that the purported eugenic threat posed by such highly sexual (or sexually vulnerable) women had been removed by sterilization. Conversely, unsuccessful operations were characterized by either assumptions or proof of the individual's continued erratic sexual behaviour.<sup>76</sup>

In none of these post-operative evaluations of the success of sterilization operations did the Eugenics Boards approach the patients for their own thoughts regarding the operation. In his preface, Stewart made it very clear that it was never his intention to contact patients for the purposes of drawing his conclusions about the success of sterilization in British Columbia. To do so, he argued, "might easily jeopardize a patient's adjustment," though he acknowledged that this approach sacrificed the amount of information available and the strength of conclusions reached.<sup>77</sup> The author of the Alberta follow-up report was much more explicit about her decision not to interview the women about the operation. Although she visited

<sup>75</sup> Cases 16, 18, 32, 34, 36, & 38 The Stewart Report.

<sup>76</sup> Paul Popance, "A Study of Patients Coming to California State Institutions for Sterilization

Only," Cases 32 & 36, The Stewart Report.

<sup>77</sup> The Stewart Report, 2.

each young woman in her institutional residence, the social worker claimed that "in no case was it possible to interview the patient herself regarding the effect of the operation because of the degree of mental deficiency or mental deterioration."<sup>78</sup>

Perhaps western Canada was merely following California's lead in determining that the recipients' understandings of their sterilization experience were not important. Although California state institutions did send follow-up letters of inquiry to psychotic and manic depressive out-patients who had been sterilized, they "made no effort to get direct expressions of opinion from those sterilized at the state home for the feeble-minded, believing that their testimony would not be valuable, in view of their mental levels."<sup>79</sup> The California study dismissed the value of negative or "bitter" responses claiming that "none of those who disapproved gave a rational or cogent reason for disapproving of the operation."<sup>80</sup> The logic at play here dictated that if someone was intelligent enough to understand the operation, they would not oppose it. Thus, by resenting, resisting or complaining about the operation, a woman proved her inability to understand its greater value, and thereby demonstrated why she had been sterilized in the first place.

The purpose of this chapter has been to explain how the Eugenics Boards employed and rationalized sterilization in the inter-war period as a means by which to police young women's sexuality. It started by investigating the eugenicists' assumption of a biological connection between immoral behaviour and mental

---

<sup>78</sup> "Information Concerning Patients who Have been Oophorectomized Previous to May 4, 1943," p.3.

<sup>79</sup> Paul Popenoe, "A Study of Patients Coming to California State Institutions for Sterilization Only," in Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California, 283.

<sup>80</sup> Gosney, "A Study of Patients," 282.

defect. Once eugenicists had established a case for the menace of the feeble-minded female, western Canadian Eugenics Boards reformulated their apprehensions about immoral mental deficiency in terms of eugenic fears of the threat of unfit motherhood and sexual delinquency. By expressing their moral anxiety along scientific lines, the Eugenics Boards were able to justify their interventionist measures as being for the greater good. Consequently, the Boards were not much concerned about the rights and well-being of the sterilization candidates themselves. Even in cases where the Eugenics Boards authorized sterilizations for the ostensible purpose of preventing sexual exploitation, they continued to rationalize the operations by emphasizing that the prevention of pregnancies which could result from sexual attacks would in fact protect the whole community.

This chapter also demonstrated that the Eugenics Boards' administration of the Sexual Sterilization Acts in western Canada must not be regarded simply as a one-way social control policy. The Sexual Sterilization Acts were open to a small degree of negotiation from family members. Numerous parents sought out the operation for their daughters, both to prevent them from becoming "unfit mothers" and to protect them from sexual attack. Examples of historical agency were also reflected in patients actively resisting and complaining about their surgeries. Nevertheless, where parents sought to protect their daughters, and some patients looked to the eugenicists to help prevent or reverse their surgeries, the Eugenics Boards rationalized their decisions as being for the primary purpose of checking eugenic contamination. Ultimately, the Eugenics Boards retained tight control of the administration of the Acts.

Finally, this chapter analyzed the Boards' own evaluations of the relative

success of sterilization operations. Examination of the manner in which the Alberta and British Columbia Eugenics Boards determined the success or failure of sterilization operations revealed that the Boards employed sterilization as a strategy to ward off the much-feared repercussions of the feeble-minded female's sexuality. Chapter Two will demonstrate that in the post-war period, the Eugenics Boards had no intention of repealing, modifying or scaling down their eugenic work. Rather, the Boards interpreted the purported success of their work in the inter-war period as a testament to the legitimacy of eugenic science and proof of their success in employing sterilization to do battle with the sexual threat posed by the feeble-minded woman.

Board perceived and rationalized its functions in the new climate of post-war Canada. These post-war documents suggest sterilization for the purposes of policing women's sexuality continued; the question this chapter asks is how sterilizations could be considered necessary and justifiable after 1945. Second, it will use case files to discuss the Eugenics Board's fears regarding young women's sexuality and how they were manifested in the post-war era. Chapter Three will examine cases of young women and girls whom the Board targeted because of their visible proof of erotic sexuality, based on the eugenicists' assumptions of either sexual delinquency, unfit motherhood or experiences of sexual exploitation. Third, it turns to the changing relationship between the Eugenics Board and parents of female sterilization candidates and examines the new purposes for the Sexual Sterilization Act as perceived by the increasing numbers of parents who appear to have deliberately sought out the operation for their daughters. In examining the dynamic

---

<sup>1</sup> To date no one has examined the Alberta Eugenics Board files for the purpose of analyzing the Board's application and administration of the Sexual Sterilization Act after the War.

### Chapter Three

#### For Their Own Good and Protection:

#### Policing Women's Sexuality in the Post-War Period

This chapter turns to the Alberta Eugenics Board's use of sterilization to combat the threat of women's sexuality in the post-war period.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this chapter is to discover the extent to which the Eugenics Board's explanatory framework for sterilizing young women changed after the end of World War Two. To accomplish this goal, the chapter will start by examining the way in which the Eugenics Board perceived and rationalized its functions in the new climate of post-war Canada. These post-war documents suggest sterilization for the purposes of policing women's sexuality continued; the question this chapter asks is how sterilizations could be considered necessary and justifiable after 1945. Second, it will use case files to discuss the Eugenics Board's fears regarding young women's sexuality and how they were manifested in the post-war era. Chapter Three will examine cases of young women and girls whom the Board targeted because of their visible proof of erratic sexuality, based on the eugenicists' assumptions of either sexual delinquency, unfit motherhood or experiences of sexual exploitation. Third, it turns to the changing relationship between the Eugenics Board and parents of female sterilization candidates and examines the new purposes for the Sexual Sterilization Act as perceived by the increasing numbers of parents who appear to have deliberately sought out the operation for their daughters. In examining the dynamic

<sup>1</sup> To date no one has examined the Alberta Eugenics Board files for the purpose of analyzing the Board's application and administration of the Sexual Sterilization Act after the War.

between the Eugenics Board, families and patients, the chapter will look at the somewhat negotiated process of controlling the use of sterilization operations. This chapter's final focus is on the crucial change in the number of aboriginal and métis<sup>2</sup> women whom the Eugenics Board targeted as sexual threats in the post-war period.

Let us start by discussing the evident changes in the Eugenics Board's operation after the end of World War Two. Although the Depression era had marked the "zenith" of the eugenics movement in Canada, the movement did not die out with the end of World War Two. Eugenecists adapted their principles to better suit the post-war world. At the end of the second World War increased attention was paid to the rights of the individual. Case files from the post-war period began to reflect this change as eugenecists now sought to justify their principles as being in the best interest of the individual. This gradual change represented a shift away from the "crude individualism" of inter-war eugenecists towards a more liberal notion of social intervention advocated by the welfare-minded of the post-war era.<sup>3</sup> Instead of protecting the community from evil transmission by infected individuals, eugenecists started to promote and apply their rhetoric for the purpose of protecting the vulnerable and feebleminded from the complicated and fast-paced patterns of modern life.

After the end of the war, the Alberta Eugenics Board began to turn away from early twentieth-century notions of blaming and pathologizing individual women for

---

<sup>2</sup> This study's use of the term "métis" is intended to denote the more inclusive term referring to a group of people who identify themselves as having a shared ethnic heritage. In contrast, the term "Métis" is understood as referring to a more specifically political organization of peoples. For more on this, see: Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S.H. Brown, eds., The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985).

<sup>3</sup> McLaren, Our Own Master Race, 157.

their detrimental and degenerative effect on the larger society. This is not to suggest that there is no evidence of overlap in rationalization between the two time periods. In the 1950s, however, the logic the Board used to justify its decision to sterilize certain women began to develop a slightly different framework from that of the inter-war period, one which emphasized the purpose and function of sterilization in terms that highlighted the value and benefit it brought to the individual. Policies such as these meshed well with post-war political and social preoccupation with the health and welfare of each Canadian.

This shift in the Board's explanatory framework was in keeping with broader changes occurring in Canadian national policies. Where in the first half of the century much policy propaganda concentrated on creating a strong nation out of "pure" Canadians of good stock, in the post-war decades, Canadian policy-makers expressed greater concern about the well-being of individuals and their families. The end of World War Two brought two important changes which informed the unofficial mandate of the Eugenics Board. Not only had the end of the war marked the introduction of national welfare policies, the Allied victory had also revealed the unspeakably devastating consequences of extreme eugenic practices in Nazi Germany.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, explicit Canadian defenses of eugenics, as being for the good of the nation, died out.

The change in rhetoric did not mean that eugenic ideology was a fatal casualty of the Second World War but, rather, that the ideology was forced to adapt to the conditions of the post-war world. Historians have suggested that after 1945

---

<sup>4</sup> See, Chapter 8, "The Death of Eugenics?", in McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*. McLaren noted that the association of eugenics with Nazi extremism effectively killed Canada's only nation-wide organization, the Eugenics Society.

the Alberta Eugenics Board shrouded its activities in secrecy;<sup>5</sup> however, the evidence suggests that discretion was always a priority of the Board. An article written by the Medical Superintendent of the Ponoka Mental Institution and the Eugenics Board's social worker suggested that from the first days of the legislation this pattern of discretion was deliberate. After evaluating the early years of the Act's existence, the authors concluded that "the work of sterilization in the province of Alberta has been carried on very quietly and efficiently" with pleasing results.<sup>6</sup> In early 1958, when the Board had to appoint a new surgeon to the Board, the Minister of Public Health, J. Donovan Ross advised Dr. R.R. MacLean, the Director of the Division of Mental Health (and later Eugenics Board member), that discretion and consistency were attractive characteristics in a potential replacement. Ross explained that it was important to find a discreet surgeon who was prepared to commit his services for several years "because of the fact that some people in the general public question these sterilization operations."<sup>7</sup> It seems that the Board's policy of discretion may well have been pursued to avoid embarrassing the provincial government. The last Chair of the Board, Kenneth Thomson, suggested as much when he wrote to the Acting Director of the Division of Mental Health in 1972:

In the past the Eugenics Board in its administration of the Act has consciously tried to avoid creating any disturbance or embarrassment

<sup>5</sup> Correspondence between E.K. Thomson and Dr. C.P. Mellon, Acting Director, Division of Mental Health, March 14, 1972. Eugenics Board Files.

<sup>5</sup> McDonald, "A Policy of Privilege," 123.

<sup>6</sup> R.R. MacLean, M.D., and E.J. Kibblewhite, M.A., B. Educ., "Sexual Sterilization in Alberta: Eight Years' Experience, 1929 to May 31, 1937" in The Canadian Public Health Journal (December, 1937), 590.

<sup>7</sup> Correspondence between Dr. J. Donovan Ross, Minister of Health to Dr. R.R. MacLean, Director, Division of Mental Health, January 3, 1958. Eugenics Board Files.

for the government and it is no different at this time.<sup>8</sup>

Although the Board had always been cautiously private in its activities, a change took place, however, in the detail of reportage the Board offered on its activities in the post-war period. Immediately following the end of the war, the Alberta Eugenics Board's official reports became much less explicit, offering fewer details. Where the inter-war minutes of the Eugenics Board meetings were rich with excerpts of correspondence and conversations, by the 1950s the Secretary had pared them down to mere lists of names of those passed for sterilization. Similarly, the Provincial Annual Reports developed a more quantitative bent during the 1940's, relying heavily on statistical figures explained in scientific language.<sup>9</sup>

This reduction in publicly available information on the activities of the Eugenics Board did not mean that it scaled down its program or that the medical community lost interest in the Board's work. On the contrary, both the work of the Eugenics Board and the level of interest expressed by its colleagues increased in the post-war era.<sup>10</sup> The Eugenics Board minutes suggest that growing numbers of health care workers were interested in the Eugenics Board's activities and attending the meetings during which the Board examined and evaluated sterilization candidates.

<sup>8</sup> Correspondence between R.K. Thomson and Dr. C.P. Hellon, Acting Director, Division of Mental Health, March 14, 1972. Eugenics Board Files.

<sup>9</sup> The 1942 Annual Report of the Alberta Eugenics Board, for instance, did not even mention the most recent amendment expanding the scope of the Sexual Sterilization Act. "Annual Report of the Department of Public Health, Province of Alberta, Including Vital Statistics Branch, 1942." Published by Order of the Legislative Assembly. Edmonton, 1944.

<sup>10</sup> In the spring of 1946, the Secretary noted nation-wide interest in Alberta's activities, reporting that "there is an increasing number of inquiries regarding the Eugenics Board work in Alberta - notably from Ontario, where there has been some discussion regarding legislation for sterilization." Eugenics Board Minutes, April 18, 1946, p. 2.

In the inter-war period, such meetings usually consisted of the four board members, an observer or two, and the candidate.<sup>11</sup> By the late 1940s, over ten and up to thirteen observers were present--a number that was likely intimidating for the candidates themselves.<sup>12</sup> It appears that the Eugenics Board was now compensating for war-time shortages which had slowed down the number of sterilization operations to an unacceptable rate.<sup>13</sup> In the spring of 1946, the Eugenics Board Minutes noted that the "Board work is expected to increase during the post-war period" and extra meetings to deal with "overflow" had already been scheduled.<sup>14</sup>

Having determined that eugenic activity did continue, albeit discreetly, in the post-war era, this study will now examine the way in which eugenic principles fit into the wider context of contemporary sentiment about young women's sexuality. In the post-war period, there was a gradual shift away from earlier twentieth-century eugenicists' notions of blaming and pathologizing individual women for their detrimental and degenerative effect on the larger society. In this later time period, the Eugenics Board emphasized the purpose and function of sterilization in terms that highlighted the value and benefit it brought to the individual. Given the context of

---

<sup>11</sup> See for example, the eleventh meeting of the Eugenics Board, June 24, 1930, at which the Board members and two surgeons, who were invited as observers, were present. Eugenics Board Minutes, June 24, 1930, p.1.

<sup>12</sup> For example, at the Eugenics Board meeting on September 25, 1947, in addition to the four Board members, in attendance were the Medical Superintendent and Assistant Medical Superintendent of Provincial Mental Hospital, two Senior Medical Officers, the Superintendent of Nurses, a member of the Hospital Medical Staff, a stenographer and a Secretary. Eugenics Board Minutes Sept 25, 1947.

<sup>13</sup> The 1945 Annual Report of the Eugenics Board stated that "during the war years,...it was necessary to curtail the number of eugenical operations performed." In that year, 121 operations were approved (55 men, and 66 women) and only 48 were performed (18 men and 30 women). "Annual Report of the Department of Public Health, Province of Alberta including Vital Statistics Branch, 1945," 142-43.

<sup>14</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, June 27, 1946, p 3.

post-war liberalism which emphasized the necessity of providing far more extensive and centrally organized welfare policies, it appears that eugenic enthusiasts turned this new attitude to justify or rationalize sterilization as in the best interests of the individual.

The Eugenics Board and the parents or guardians of patients continued to express great concern about the moral susceptibility of young women in the post-war era. It is important to note, however, that they were not alone in this concern.

Historians have argued that this period was in fact marked by middle-class professionals' increasing preoccupations with the corruptibility of youth, particularly young females.<sup>15</sup> In the years following the war, Canadians placed unprecedented importance on the need to protect youth, as representatives of the future, from moral harm.<sup>16</sup> Some scholars have gone so far as to make a direct link between Cold War political issues and the health and welfare workers' campaigns for sexual order.<sup>17</sup> Moral and sexual control, it has been argued, were paramount in the middle-class's construction of a post-war "national-security state that equated the 'good' nuclear family with a moral arsenal in the fight for democracy."<sup>18</sup> Given that health and welfare authorities interpreted teenage girls' expressions of sexuality

became evident only upon examining the Board's expressed or implied reasons for authorizing female sterilization operations in the post-war era. Key to this subtle shift

<sup>15</sup> Mary Louise Adams, The Trouble With Normal: Post-War Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 4, 54-56, 167.

<sup>16</sup> Adams, The Trouble with Normal, 4, 40-42.

<sup>17</sup> Mariana Valverde, "Building Anti-Delinquent Communities: Morality, Gender, and Generation in the City," in A Diversity of Women: Ontario 1945-1980, ed., Joy Parr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 23-25.

<sup>18</sup> Franca Iacovetta, "Parents, Daughters, and Family Court Intrusions into Working-Class Life," in On the Case, 315.

as “symptomatic of the fragility of post-war democracy and morality,”<sup>19</sup> it is possible to better comprehend the Eugenics Board’s sense of anxiety. It is not surprising, considering the uproar among public health experts and social commentators about the erratic sexual habits of young women after the end of the war, that the Eugenics Board continued to concentrate on the figure of the feeble-minded or delinquent female. Case files demonstrate that the Board’s fears about young women’s sexual behaviour continued to be expressed in the same generic phrases about unfit motherhood and delinquency; but there was a gradual evolution in the reasons they used to justify sterilizations. The older notion of a young woman’s sexual behaviour threatening her community and wider society was slowly, although not altogether consistently, replaced by the Eugenics Board’s new focus on the benefits sterilization would provide to vulnerable, weak, incapable, and incompetent women who could be freed from the potential burden, strain and emotional stress of parenthood. The content and descriptions in these cases suggest that the validating evidence of mental deficiency, such as promiscuity and the suspicion or proof of illegitimate pregnancy, did not change over the course of the Act’s existence. The shift that can be observed, however, is more subtle and becomes evident only upon examining the Board’s expressed or implied reasons for authorizing female sterilization operations in the post-war era. Key to this subtle shift was a new phrase that began to appear on Eugenics Board files in the 1950s: “incapable of intelligent parenthood.”

E.M., for example, was evaluated in precisely these terms. She had lived at the Red Deer Provincial Training School for several years before she was presented to the board. The board is unanimously of opinion that the patient might safely be discharged if the danger of multiplication of evil by transmission of the disability to progeny were eliminated. The Board may deem it wading such surgical operation for sexual sterilization of the inmate.

<sup>19</sup> Iacovetta, “Parents, Daughters and Family Court Intrusions into Working-Class Life,” 316.

the Eugenics Board in the late spring of 1960. The Board was likely surprised to learn that E.M., at age fifteen, had not yet expressed any interest in boys; however, the Board's focus was on this mental defective's "homosexual tendencies" and masturbation.<sup>20</sup> Her history file noted that prior to admission at the Training School, E.M. had been something of a delinquent, stealing, smoking, sniffing gas, and running away from home. When her parents could no longer "handle" her behaviour problems, she was sent to the Provincial Training School. E.M.'s case summary stated that she required supervision in both cleanliness and hygiene and, perhaps more importantly, that she "will require custodial care for life."<sup>21</sup> The Board's decision to sterilize E.M., who was destined never to leave the institution, was in direct opposition to the original purpose of the eugenic legislation which was to facilitate the release of individuals back into the community provided the risk of procreation had been removed.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, four years after her admission to the school, due to the likelihood of the transmission of her supposed defect to progeny and, because she was deemed "incapable of intelligent parenthood", the Board declared that E.M. was "passed clear" for sterilization. As E.M. was never to be released from institutional care, the Eugenics Board's inter-war preoccupation with protecting society from menacing individuals did not apply.

---

<sup>20</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 3950.

<sup>21</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 3950.

<sup>22</sup> Sections 4 and 5 of the 1928 Sexual Sterilization Act read as follows: "4. When it is proposed to discharge any inmate of a mental hospital, the Medical Superintendent or other officer in charge thereof may cause such inmate to be examined by or in the presence of the Board of examiners. 5. If upon such examination, the board is unanimously of opinion that the patient might safely be discharged if the danger of procreation with its attendant risk of multiplication of evil by transmission of the disability to progeny were eliminated, the Board may direct in writing such surgical operation for sexual sterilization of the inmate...."

Three other cases further demonstrate that the Board's motivations for sterilization were no longer rationalized out of fear for the health of the society but, rather, expressed in terms of concern for the individual. One such case involved Y.H., a Ukranian woman of the Greek Orthodox faith, first examined in 1956 -- probably by a provincial Guidance Clinic--and nine years later presented to the Eugenics Board. By this time Y.H. had married and separated from her husband. Although a grown woman by the time the Board met her, Y.H.'s case file focused on her adolescence, stating that she had been "very promiscuous, [and] was thought to have been a prostitute as a juvenile."<sup>23</sup> The Board heard that she had two illegitimate children who, along with one child from her brief marriage, had been surrendered to the welfare department. The file included a letter from her doctor who informed the Board that he did "not think that this girl has the emotional ability or intelligence to adequately protect herself from again becoming pregnant."<sup>24</sup>

Ten years passed between the time W.R., an Irish-Ukranian girl, was first recommended for sterilization by the Calgary Guidance Clinic and when she met with the Eugenics Board. Her case summary provided dates which indicate that W.R. was only four years old when examined at the Calgary Clinic and a young teenager when the Board passed her clear for sterilization. During the years between these meetings, W.R. lived at home with her parents and siblings. The file included information about W.R.'s interactions with young children, which were described as

---

<sup>23</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4175.

<sup>24</sup> Correspondence between Dr. B. to the Department of Public Health, May 19, 1965. Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4175. Note: unless doctors' names have become a part of the public record, they are not included in this thesis.

"inclined to be rough or overly demonstrative."<sup>25</sup> Although she was "happy" and "cooperative," the Board felt W.R.'s judgement was "immature", she could not tell right from wrong, and she could be "easily led." Her case disclosed that even though there had been "no difficulty" yet, W.R.'s doctors and parents felt she was prone to be "taken advantage of due to her limited intelligence and poor judgement." The stated reasons for the Board's decision to sterilize W.R. were as follows: "protection of the patient, and her probably [sic] inability to care for children and the chances of transmitting the mental deficiency to her progeny."<sup>26</sup>

J.P. appears to have been sterilized for reasons so blatantly un-scientific that the Eugenics Board had cause to rethink them. The young Catholic girl of eastern European descent became a ward of the state, along with her older sister, after the girls' mother left their alcoholic father. Her file mentioned that when she was recommended to the Eugenics Board in 1967--probably after examination at a Guidance Clinic--J.P. had been living with her sister, helping her in the home and showing "potential for self-supporting skills in future."<sup>27</sup> A friendly, cooperative, and attractive teen, J.P. was described as becoming "increasingly attracted to boys." The file stated that J.P. had not yet had any "difficulty" but her sister "would like to have the sexual sterilization to be performed now before any trouble arises." The Board stated that J.P. was passed clear for the operation for the following reasons:

[J.P.] would be incapable of exercising the judgement needed to care

---

<sup>25</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4175.

<sup>26</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4175.

<sup>27</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File for J.P. Unfortunately the Eugenics Board number is illegible on her Case Summary. Based on her presentation date, her Eugenics Board number was likely around 4400.

for a child. Because she is a fairly attractive girl and she is becoming increasingly attracted to boys and delighted by their attentions, there is a great risk that she could become pregnant.<sup>28</sup>

As an afterthought, the Board later included a further comment, in a different type-face, at the bottom of the page. Under the heading *additional information* appeared the standard eugenic explanation as agreed upon in Eugenics Board meetings:<sup>29</sup>

the danger of transmission to the progeny of mental disability or deficiency. The danger that the exercise of the power of procreation may involve risk of mental injury to the patient or to her progeny.<sup>30</sup>

Not only did the Eugenics Board continue to explain its actions using the vague rhetoric of unfit motherhood, in the post-war period the Board also continued to apply sterilization as a cure or preventative measure in cases of sexual exploitation. Chapter Two demonstrated that the Eugenics Boards prescribed sterilization in cases where sexual assault or incest had already been known to occur, and also in those where the Boards suspected that it might. What was clear in the inter-war period, however, was that eugenicists did not treat cases of sexual abuse any differently than cases where delinquency or unfit motherhood were the Boards' main concerns. They all constituted the same eugenic threat in the eyes of the

---

<sup>28</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File for J.P.

<sup>29</sup> In a fall 1947 meeting, the Board discussed the importance of mentioning the "eugenic" reason behind every sterilization by "giving the general reasons in the language of the Act." Eugenics Board Minutes September 25, 1947. In December 1964, the Board ratified this policy, stating that sterilizations be recommended in terms that reflect the eugenic goal "to eliminate the danger of procreation, with its attendant risk of transmission of the disability to progeny, or the risk of mental injury to him/her, or to his/her progeny." This phrase, or one closely imitating it, became a standard feature in every Eugenics Board Case Summary under the heading *Reasons for Sterilization*. Eugenics Board Minutes December 10, 1964.

<sup>30</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File for J.P.

Eugenics Board. Although never stated explicitly, cases of sexual attack in the inter-war era implied that the Boards were most concerned with preventing illegitimate pregnancy as a result of sexual assaults. The Alberta Eugenics Board's rationale for sterilization in such cases appears to have remained unchanged in the post-war period; however, the Board's stated reasons developed a more ironic tone. The Board appeared to believe that by sterilizing young women who were considered extremely vulnerable to sexual abuse or rape, it was somehow protecting the girl from the assault itself.

R.L., a twelve year old girl of English and Finnish ancestry, had already been sexually assaulted twice before her case came to the attention of the Eugenics Board in the autumn of 1961. The Board's case summary reported that she had been "seduced" by a man of sixty "who offered her candy and a ride in his car" and then "attempted sexual relations" with her in his apartment.<sup>31</sup> Upon medical examination, which apparently concerned itself with determining R.L.'s virginity, her hymen was found to be torn but not broken. The next winter, R.L. was again sexually assaulted, this time by a neighbour who "coaxed her down into his basement." Rather than seeking alternative measures, such as prosecuting the men who "seduced" R.L., the girl's mother evidently agreed to sign the consent form for her sterilization. The Board learned that R.L.'s mother was "afraid the patient will get into further sexual difficulty, and therefore, she feels that sterilization is best since the patient does not fully comprehend the meaning of her actions."<sup>32</sup>

In the case of A.V., a thirteen-year-old German girl who had become a

---

<sup>31</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 3740.

<sup>32</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 3740.

temporary ward of the state when her mother moved out of the province, the Board heard that she had been "involved in some sex play with an older man."<sup>33</sup> Upon investigating further, it found that A.V. had previously been the victim of an attempted rape and, earlier still, she had been incestuously assaulted by her grandfather. The Eugenics Board was concerned that now A.V. preferred the company of boys to girls and recently she had run away from the Salvation Army Children's Home to spend the weekend with her fifteen-year-old boyfriend. She was passed clear for sterilization because the Eugenics Board believed A.V. had received very little moral instruction from her mother and the "danger of her being taken advantage of is great."<sup>34</sup>

When H.A.'s case first came before the Eugenics Board she had just given birth to an illegitimate baby, although she claimed to have no recollection of the circumstances surrounding its conception. The Board "assumed that she was taken advantage of by some of the neighbours when she went to watch T.V."<sup>35</sup> The Director of the Alberta Guidance Clinic reported to Dr. le Vann, Superintendent of the Provincial Training School, that H.A. "was allegedly raped last summer," and he added that she was "an idiopathic mental defective and I would strongly urge that she be sterilized."<sup>36</sup> Perhaps concerned that a further "difficulty" had arisen, that summer le Vann wrote to the Oak Villa institution, where H.A. was to be sterilized the

---

<sup>33</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4314.

<sup>34</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4314.

<sup>35</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4247.

<sup>36</sup> Correspondence between the Director of the Alberta Guidance Clinic and Dr. le Vann, April 14, 1966. Eugenics Board Files.

following week, requesting that they perform a pregnancy test prior to her surgery.<sup>37</sup> A later piece of correspondence revealed that H.A., a Roman Catholic of "parentage unknown", never showed up for her eugenic surgery. The Alberta Guidance Clinic Director informed Dr. le Vann of this, stating "it is felt that [the operation] should be done for her own protection, and also some of the ladies of the district with sons are concerned about H.A.'s susceptibility."<sup>38</sup> These cases suggest that the Board's solution to the problem of a young woman's vulnerability to sexual assault was to sterilize her rather than turning to the persons who were responsible for perpetrating the assaults.

In the post-war era, there was an increasing level of apparent parental involvement in the decision to sterilize young women. In many instances parents either sought or agreed to sterilization out of their own concern for their daughters' sexual curiosity. Fourteen year-old L.K.'s case revealed that her parents were "concerned about [her] interest in boys and the possibility of pregnancy as she is friendly and could be easily led."<sup>39</sup> Coming before the Eugenics Board in 1967, this English-Ukrainian girl's case summary indicated that although she "enjoys helping to care for babies" it was thought "unlikely that she could handle children responsibly. Her own care of herself and ability to control herself sexually are poor." In this case, however, the Board was careful to also include the requisite eugenic reasons, adding

---

<sup>37</sup> Correspondence between Dr. le Vann, Medical Superintendent of the Provincial Training School and Case, to the Director of the Red Deer Provincial Guidance Clinic, dated February 5, 1965. Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4024.

<sup>37</sup> Correspondence between Dr. le Vann to the Oak Villa Institution, dated July 14, 1966. Eugenics Board Files.

<sup>38</sup> Correspondence between the Director of the Alberta Guidance Clinic to le Vann, December 23, 1966. Eugenics Board Files.

<sup>39</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File for L.K. Unfortunately the Eugenics Board file number is illegible on her Case Summary. Based on her presentation date, it is likely that her Eugenics Board number was approximately 4600.

that, "these factors, together with the danger of transmission of the disability to progeny, or the risk of mental injury to her, or to her progeny, confirm our recommendation for sterilization."<sup>40</sup>

In 1965, the director of the Red Deer Guidance Clinic wrote to Dr. le Vann explaining that fourteen-year-old C.G.'s parents were "concerned about their daughter's interest in the opposite sex and have requested that she be sterilized."<sup>41</sup> Similarly, P.B., a sixteen-year-old of Russian descent<sup>42</sup> was sterilized apparently in accordance with her parents fears regarding her reactions to boys. P.B. would start "giggling and grinning" whenever she passed boys, and the file noted that even though there had not yet been any "difficulty", "the parents realize she has not normal intelligence and is lacking in good judgement. Therefore they would like to have the sexual sterilization performed now before any trouble arises."<sup>43</sup>

By eliminating the sexual threat of adolescence early, before any problems arose, the Eugenics Board may have felt that it was bolstering the "sexual order" of the post-war world.<sup>44</sup> The Board was so preoccupied with the task of sterilizing adolescents that it made a concerted effort to determine precisely how early in the lives of sterilization candidates it should be intervening. In 1962, Dr. le Vann wrote

---

<sup>40</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File for L.K.

<sup>41</sup> Correspondence between Dr. le Vann, Medical Superintendent of the Provincial Training School in Red Deer, to the Director of the Red Deer Provincial Guidance Clinic, dated February 5, 1965. Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4152.

<sup>42</sup> It was perhaps no coincidence that P.B. was described in the Eugenics Board case summary with stereotypically *Russian* adjectives which stated she was a "medium sized, coarse, vacant looking girl. She is awkward and clumsy, gawky in movement." Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4094.

<sup>43</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4095.

<sup>44</sup> Valverde, "Building Anti-Delinquent Communities," 23.

to the Board's Secretary complaining that his institution was filling up with increasingly younger, unsterilized, trainees.<sup>45</sup> He asked the Board at "what age they would like to see children, both for interview as well as Eugenics operation."<sup>46</sup> After the next Eugenics Board meeting, the Secretary wrote back stating that the exact age of sterilization candidates was left to his discretion but, as far as the Eugenics Board was concerned, "any time after the age of 12" was acceptable.<sup>47</sup> The reason why the Board selected the age of twelve becomes clear in the response Chairman Thomson sent to an inquiring social work student in 1971. Thomson explained that, upon reaching puberty, individuals could come before the Board as "puberty usually determines the presence and absence of interest in the opposite sex."<sup>48</sup>

In addition to concerns about potential sexual "difficulties", it seems that some parents may also have requested the sterilization of their adolescent daughters simply to end their menstruation and so to facilitate home care. A.K., for example, was described at her presentation to the Board in the fall of 1960 as an "overactive,

---

<sup>45</sup> "Trainee" was the term le Vann and the Eugenics Board used to refer to inmates of the Provincial Training School, presumably because, once properly "trained" an inmate could be released into the community.

<sup>46</sup> Correspondence from Dr. le Vann to Mrs. James, Secretary to the Eugenics Board, December 1962. Eugenics Board Files.

<sup>47</sup> James' letter concluded by noting that "exceptions to this rule will be considered by the Eugenics Board upon application to the Board." Correspondence from Mrs. James to Dr. le Vann, February 6, 1963. Eugenics Board Files.

<sup>48</sup> Correspondence between R.K. Thomson, Chairman of the Eugenics Board, and a German student of social work, September 23, 1971. This rule may not have been strictly adhered to, as in 1970, an 11 year old girl was recommended by the Eugenics Board for the removal of either her ovaries or uterus "at the discretion of the operating surgeon." That she was such a young age prompts us to question whether or not she had indeed gone through puberty. Eugenics Board Minutes, December 2, 1970.

anxious child" who had not yet shown any interest in the opposite sex.<sup>49</sup> The parents of this eleven year old apparently requested her sterilization because they feared she would "not be able to look after her own bodily needs." Her case summary stated that A.K.'s parents requested her sterilization, by hysterectomy, "now before any trouble arises and to facilitate hygienic care."<sup>50</sup> The use of Alberta's sterilization legislation for the purposes of relieving the burden of hygienic care during menstruation continued right up until the final year of the Act's existence. At one of the very last meetings, the case of M.C., a thirteen-year-old diagnosed with epilepsy and intellectual inadequacy, came before the Board. The Board heard that M.C. required "almost total care" and her menstrual periods necessitated tremendous care-work from her mother.<sup>51</sup> M.C. was "passed clear for hysterectomy or oophorectomy at the discretion of the surgeon" for the stated reason that "[Mrs. C.] would like [M.C.] to undergo a complete hysterectomy in order to eliminate the work involved in keeping her clean during her menstruation."<sup>52</sup>

That parents like those of A.K. and M.C. were increasingly seeking specific sterilization operations for the purpose of ending their daughters' menstruation was raised as an item of discussion at a Eugenics Board meeting in the early summer of 1963. At issue was the dilemma regarding which operation would be best suited to this purpose, the oophorectomy (removal of the ovaries) or hysterectomy (removal of

---

<sup>49</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 3634.

<sup>50</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 3634.

<sup>51</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4698. November 20, 1963.

<sup>52</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4698.

the uterus).<sup>53</sup> Seeking expert gynecological advice, the inquiry carried on into the fall.<sup>54</sup> By the end of 1963, the Board learned that the oophorectomy was preferable in adults because it was "easy and effective" and "also dampens the sexual urge and in some cases this may be of value."<sup>55</sup> In children or adolescents, however, the specialist warned that removal of the ovaries "causes a eunuchoid development." To this end, he recommended hysterectomy because it caused permanent infertility and cessation of menses "but retains an ovarian function which is desirable." He noted that the preferred operation "takes slightly longer and carries a slightly greater risk," but ultimately he advocated that its advantages outweighed any risks involved. The gynaecologist concluded that the choice should be left up to the operating surgeon. Thus, on the basis of the specialist's advice, the Board began to advise, in certain cases, that oophorectomy or hysterectomy be performed "at the discretion of the surgeon."<sup>56</sup>

Whether parents were seeking these sterilizations entirely of their own volition remains unclear; what is certain, however, is the apparent increased desire on the part of the Eugenics Board to note that some parents supported sterilization during the post-war period. It may or may not be a mere coincidence that the exact words the Board used to denote familial support or requests for the operation were frequently repeated. The remarkable similarity in the Board's recorded reasons why family members apparently requested the operation can be read in several ways.

---

<sup>53</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, June 21, 1963.

<sup>54</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, October 9, 1963.

<sup>55</sup> Correspondence between Dr. le Vann and Dr. Thomson, November 20, 1963.

<sup>56</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, February 6, 1964.

Parents or relatives were perhaps subjected to pressure from social workers, Guidance Clinics or public health workers, to agree to the sterilization of their ward. Conversely, the Eugenics Board may have translated lay expressions of interest in the operation into more suitably bureaucratic language. In either case, what seems clear is that the Eugenics Board made a point of including in its files evidence of family support for the operation.

Based on the above case files, it seems that some parents actively sought sterilization of their daughters as a result of the girls' growing interest or curiosity about sex. There are clearly some cases where relatives of sterilization candidates appear to have attempted to use the eugenic legislation for their own purposes. While it is important to note that families tried to turn eugenic legislation to their own interests, it was also the case that the Eugenics Board routinely ignored the wishes of both the families and the patients.

Not all parents were in agreement with this method of solving the problem. For example, it was F.P.'s school principal who recommended her to both the Guidance Clinic and then to the Eugenics Board.<sup>57</sup> Even though her German-French-Canadian parents did not feel she expressed undue interest in boys, the principal felt F.P. should be sterilized and he discussed the matter with them. Dr. le Vann, who saw F.P. when she attended the Red Deer Guidance Clinic, agreed with her principal, writing:

It is very likely that she will be seduced in the comparatively near future if she has not already engaged in heterosexual activities. Sterilization was suggested to the parents, who thought they would like to wait until

<sup>56</sup> In the early 1930s the Board sought a directive from the Minister of Health as to what it should do with regard to informing the parents of mental defectives who had been passed clear for sterilization. *Eugenics Board Minutes, November 21, 1932.*

<sup>57</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 3775.

a more overt interest was demonstrated.<sup>58</sup> Le Vann concluded his comments by stating that the matter should be left up to F.P.'s parents to decide, but the Board apparently did not agree. When the eighteen-year-old woman was brought before them in the autumn of 1961, she was passed clear for sterilization on the basis that she would transmit her defect to any progeny and also because she would be "incapable of intelligent parenthood." F.P.'s parents were certainly not the first to object to their daughter's proposed sterilization. The occurrence of parental objection was so common that the Eugenics Board began to wonder if it should be discussing the matter at all with the parents of sterilization candidates.<sup>59</sup> When the Board elected to respond to letters of opposition, it did so with a polite acknowledgment of the parents' concern followed by refusal to retract its decision. In the case of J.G., a girl whose mother wrote to protest the Board's decision to pass her clear for sterilization, the Board decided to answer the letter and invite further discussion on the matter. But their response also stated, however, "that the Board was unanimous in its opinion that the Salpingectomy should be performed before [J.G.'s] discharge from the School."<sup>60</sup> The Board was willing to talk with parents but had no intention of changing its decision. The Board's stance implied that unless J.G. was sterilized, she would not be released from the institution. This issue of compulsory consent has already been

---

<sup>58</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 3775.

<sup>59</sup> In the early 1950s the Board sought a directive from the Minister of Health as to what it should do with regard to informing the parents of mental defectives who had been passed clear for sterilization. Eugenics Board Minutes, November 21, 1952.

<sup>60</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, January 27, 1956.

addressed by several historians;<sup>61</sup> however, less has been written about the eugenicists' manipulative tactics in gaining consent from parents. The Alberta Eugenics Board was prepared to threaten parents so that their goal of obtaining consent could be achieved. In contradiction to the original stated purpose of the Sexual Sterilization Act --to release institutionalized patients back into the community once their ability to reproduce had been checked-- the Board told some parents that if they did not consent to their children's sterilization, it would be necessary to remove them from the institution. In the case of N.F., whose mother also wrote to express her objection to the operation, the Board stated that if, after some cajoling, the mother still refused to give her consent, "the Medical Superintendent would be justified in attempting to persuade [Mrs. F] to remove her daughter from the School."<sup>62</sup> Similarly, the Board informed B.B.'s mother that if she continued to refuse to consent to the operation, "it might be advisable for the mother to remove this girl from the School."<sup>63</sup>

Ultimately, the decision whether to even discuss sterilization with the patient's parents was left to the discretion of the Superintendent. This meant that in at least some cases, parents were not informed of the operation. By 1964 there was considerable confusion, however, as the Eugenics Board had apparently gone through several changes of mind with regard to what, or whether, to tell parents about their children's sterilization. In a letter to Dr. R.R. MacLean of the Eugenics Board, le Vann outlined his uncertainty regarding the varying directives that the

---

<sup>61</sup> See, for example: Reilly, *The Surgical Solution*, 101.

<sup>62</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, October 27, 1963.

<sup>63</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, April 11, 1958.

Eugenics Board had issued over the years. Initially, the hospital staff were instructed to obtain consent forms, then they were directed not to discuss the matter with parents. Next, le Vann continued, staff were told to discuss the issue with the parents so that they could indicate on the patient's file whether the parents were agreeable to the matter. The last direction the Board gave le Vann had advised that it was best to discuss sterilization with the parents only in cases of doubt. As a result of this confusion, le Vann complained, the Provincial Training School had a backlog of trainees about whom the staff had no knowledge as to how the parents felt about sterilization, even though they had been passed clear by the Board.<sup>64</sup>

The Eugenics Board further demonstrated its power to control the use of the Act when it refused to help the numerous women who deliberately requested sterilization as a means of birth control in an era when other methods of contraception remained illegal. In 1965 the Board rejected the case of a "normal" woman even though the Director of the Red Deer Guidance Clinic had recommended her on the basis that she had already had four "mentally defective" children. The Chair's response was to tell the Director that this case was not within the scope of the Sexual Sterilization Act, and to provide him with a copy of the Act for future reference. The Director wrote back thanking Thomson for the copy of the Act, which the Red Deer Guidance Clinic apparently did not have. He concluded by noting that he "was not aware that the actual patient to be sterilized must be either defective or psychotic."<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, September 10, 1946, p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> Correspondence between Dr. le Vann and Dr. Randall R. MacLean, March 31, 1964. Eugenics Board Files.

<sup>65</sup> Correspondence between Dr. R.K. Thomson, Chair of the Eugenics Board, and the Director of the Red Deer Guidance Clinic, December 1965. Eugenics Board Files.

Board. A closely related question that plagued the Eugenics Board concerned what they should do about the problem cases who "refused to cooperate" with the recommendations of the Eugenics Board.<sup>66</sup> Immediately following the end of the war, the Board expressed its concern about "certain cases of mental defectives procreating, sometimes illegitimately, who are averse to the Eugenic operation."<sup>67</sup> The Board was well aware that the 1937 amendments eliminated the need for a mental defective's consent to the operation but, as yet, there existed "no really satisfactory way of getting these people presented to the Board and the operation authorized." The Board decided that the best course to take was to use the authority of the Minister of Health.<sup>68</sup> The Minister was empowered to order such problem cases to appear before the Board, provided they had first come into contact with a provincial institution, like the police or the welfare department.

The case of the W. sisters demonstrated how this worked. The two "negro" women had been sent to a provincial Guidance Clinic at the request of the City of Edmonton Welfare Department in the late 1950s. Even though they had apparently consented to sterilization, they refused to accompany the social worker to the Board meeting. The social worker appeared at the meeting in their place and asked "if there might be any way to 'force' the women in question to come before the Board."<sup>69</sup> She told the Board that both women had several illegitimate children and the Board agreed with her "that neither would appear suited to motherhood." The

---

<sup>66</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, September 10, 1946, p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, June 27, 1946, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, September 10, 1946, p. 3.

<sup>69</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, October 29, 1959, p. 1.

Board then assured the W.'s social worker that, indeed, the Minister of Public Health did have the authority to seek an Order in Council to have the women placed in an institution, where they would no longer be able to refuse the operation. Or alternatively, "it was suggested that if either of these women became involved with the law," provincial authorities could bring them before the Board.<sup>70</sup> Either way, the Board felt fairly confident that the W. sisters would one day come within its purview.

The key to the Board's ability to institute compulsory sterilization was the elastic definition applicable to the term "mental defective." From the inception of the 1937 amendment doing away with the necessity of mental defectives' consent, the Board widely interpreted the term's meaning. The amendment's own definition stated that "'Mentally defective person' means any person in whom there is a condition of arrested development of mind existing before the age of eighteen years, whether arising from inherent causes or induced by disease or injury."<sup>71</sup> After the end of the War, the Board encountered numerous cases of female patients who, by virtue of their intelligence, did not appear to fall within the scope of its jurisdiction.<sup>72</sup> Accordingly, the Eugenics Board reported to the Minister of Health that it needed some clearer guidelines as to what constituted a mental defective.

In the spring of 1949, the Board discussed the problem of interpreting the term mental deficiency, and "suggested that there might be some further definition for this term, say in terms of I.Q., which would act as a guide for them in considering

<sup>70</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, October 29, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> An Act to Amend the Sexual Sterilization Act, Assented to April 14, 1937. Chapter 47, 2 (c). (Edmonton: A. Shnitka, King's Printer, 1937).

<sup>72</sup> For example, early in 1949, in one meeting of the Eugenics Board, three separate women had to be deferred specifically because they were stated to be "too high-grade or borderline to fall within the scope of the Act at present." Eugenics Board Minutes, January 27, 1949.

borderline cases."<sup>73</sup> In the future, the Eugenics Board reacted to borderline cases that were considered "too high" by ordering them to be retested. In the example of the first case to be deferred in 1951, the Board recommended that another psychometric exam be conducted to determine "whether or not her intellectual status had shown any deterioration since she was last tested" two years ago.<sup>74</sup> The same pattern was played out in the case of L.P., who was passed for sterilization --subject to her own consent-- with the proviso that if she refused, she would "be re-tested and, should the psychometric examination indicate mental deficiency, the patient then be represented to the Board prior to discharge."<sup>75</sup> If L.D. could be diagnosed mentally deficient, her consent to the operation would no longer be necessary.

Turning to the alarming number of First Nations and métis women who were sterilized in the post-war period, it quickly becomes evident that the Eugenics Board had a far less difficult time rationalizing or justifying sterilization for these women. Christian's extensive statistical analysis revealed that aboriginal and métis persons were sterilized at a rate that was totally out of proportion to their population in the province.<sup>76</sup> In the very last years of the Act's existence, aboriginal and métis persons constituted fully one quarter of all operations recommended--and carried out--under the Board's recommendation.<sup>77</sup> Although the figures were drastically higher in the

---

<sup>73</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, March 31, 1949. It appears the Board interpreted the Act to state that no mental defective could be discharged from an institution unless he or she was sterilized and believed capable of earning a living in the community.

<sup>74</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, June 22, 1951, p. 2.

<sup>75</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, September 20, 1957, p. 1. Eugenics Board # 3230.

<sup>76</sup> Christian, "The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta," 86.

<sup>77</sup> See, Christian, "The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta," table 38 and table 39.

last few years of the Act's jurisdiction, some aboriginal and métis people had come before the Eugenics Board long before the 1960s. A small number of native patients were among the earliest sterilization candidates.<sup>78</sup>

The end of the war, however, witnessed a marked increase in eugenicists' interest in First Nations women. With the decline in xenophobic fears and increased attention being paid to the health and welfare of aboriginals, eugenic concern increasingly turned to a newly identified group of racially undesirable stock: First Nations people.<sup>79</sup> In conjunction with post-war enthusiasm for greater levels of state intervention in the name of liberal welfare policies, Canada developed a far more interventionist Indian Act.<sup>80</sup> Up until this time there had existed a longstanding and "basic notion that First Nations were, by nature, unclean and diseased."<sup>81</sup> Older medical assumptions of ill-health co-existed with racist stereotypes held by members of the white, middle-class, helping professions which perceived native women as

---

<sup>78</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, March 18, 1932. A female patient was passed subject to her husband's consent, and failing that, to the consent of the Indian Agent. Her own consent was never at issue in the case. Eugenics Board # 138. Aboriginal and métis women are not discussed earlier in this thesis because First Nations people in Canada, like black people in the United States, were not explicitly targeted for sterilization until after World War Two. Until that time, social services had virtually no contact with aboriginal people. It is no small irony that it was only upon being "included" in national welfare policies that First Nations people were perceived as constituting a eugenic problem.

<sup>79</sup> Joan Sangster has shown that the tendency to direct social control measures against aboriginal women in the form of incarceration similarly increased after 1945. Sangster, "Criminalizing the Colonized: Native Women Confront the Criminal Justice System," *The Canadian Historical Review* 80:1 (March 1999):58.

<sup>80</sup> In 1951, the Indian Act was drastically revised, thereby enabling a far greater level of intervention and extension of governmental control into the lives of aboriginal and métis people. For more on the 1951 Amendments to the Indian Act see: Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1994), Chapter 22.

<sup>81</sup> Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 57.

"easily 'demoralized' sexually, and a threat to both public morality and health."<sup>82</sup>

These expert opinions gave rise to purportedly liberal policies of government intervention in the lives of aboriginals in the post-war period which included enforced attendance at residential schools. Such policies were essentially developed with the intent of saving "Indians" from their destiny of disease and destitution. The most modern applications of westernized medicine were imposed upon aboriginals by the dominant white culture who claimed the authority of knowing what was best. There was no shame attached to such colonial policies, rather, Canadians were proud of their "humanitarian" treatment of aboriginals.<sup>83</sup> Beneath the guise of concern for the welfare of aboriginal people, the more covert agenda of these government policies was to assimilate the First Nations and to cleanse the land they had contaminated for the benefit of more deserving Canadians.

Although the issue of race is not the primary analytical focus of this study, it is impossible to work towards an understanding of the disproportionate numbers of aboriginal and métis people sterilized in the later years of the Act without noting the racialized motivations that situated them as targets. Christian's demographic analysis provided a general sense of the trends which situated minority groups as targets of the Act. In the inter-war period, the Eugenics Board invested most of its energy in targeting patients who were either immigrants themselves or the children of immigrants who were considered to possess racial or ethnic backgrounds

<sup>82</sup> Sangster, "Criminalizing the Colonized," 44. Jean Barman has shown that the dominant society's assumptions of aboriginal licentiousness were not new to the twentieth century but had in fact played a crucial role in race relations since the contact era. Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power, and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900," *BC Studies: Special Double Issue: Native Peoples and Colonialism* 115&116: (Autumn/Winter 1997/98):237-266.

<sup>83</sup> Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, 61-2, 126.

unfavourable to the creation of good Canadian stock.<sup>84</sup> These findings are in keeping with what is now known about the heavy infusion of racism and xenophobia driving early eugenic principles. After the war, the number of immigrants who came before the Eugenics Board dropped significantly, while those of aboriginals and métis escalated.<sup>85</sup> Taking into account the class and race-informed logic of an all-Anglo Saxon Eugenics Board, it is comprehensible that once the threat of European war had been removed and the economy recovered, Eastern European immigrants no longer seemed to pose such a serious threat. The simultaneous shift in the level of government involvement and intrusion in aboriginal lives resulted in a dramatic change in terms of the minority groups targeted by the Act. Christian estimated that, on average throughout the Act's existence, aboriginal and métis persons represented about 2.5% of the total Alberta population and they constituted 8.2% of the patient population who were approved for sterilization.<sup>86</sup>

Historians have recently suggested that paternalistic government, educational

---

<sup>84</sup> Christian demonstrated that during the Second World War, patients with Eastern European backgrounds, while representing only 15.4% of the provincial population, constituted 29.7% of patients approved for sterilization, and 35.1% of all patients sterilized by the Eugenics Board. Christian, "The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta," 89-90.

<sup>85</sup> Christian's Table 44, for example, shows that during World War Two, the number of Eastern Europeans who were diagnosed "mentally deficient" and sterilized represented 42% of all sterilizations performed at that time. Conversely, "mentally deficient" Aboriginals represented 0% of sterilizations performed in the same period. In the post-war era, the percentage of sterilized mentally deficient Eastern Europeans fell to approximately 23% of all operations and the same category of Aboriginals rose to as much as 25%.

<sup>86</sup> Christian, "The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta," 86. In the very last time period Christian treated, 1969-72, sterilization candidates of native descent represented 25% of the total population of people approved by the Board for sterilization and 25.7% of the total population who were actually sterilized. Unfortunately, as Christian does not include a gender analysis of these statistics, the percentages of aboriginal women presented to the Board and later sterilized remains unknown.

and health care policies towards aboriginal peoples in the twentieth century can be viewed as instruments of colonial oppression.<sup>87</sup> Even some social welfare and medical personnel who were totally unconnected to eugenics espoused policies regarding Aboriginals that bore a marked resemblance to those of the eugenics movement. The earliest demands for greater health care intervention in aboriginal communities had far more to do with white fears of contamination than benign concern for aboriginal well-being.<sup>88</sup> Near the end of the Second World War, the department of National Health and Welfare assumed control of Indian Health Services. In the immediate post-war years, administrative control over Indian Health Services was tightened, particularly with regard to enforced compulsory treatment for contagious diseases such as tuberculosis and venereal diseases.<sup>89</sup> Since national "racist policies of 'overregulation'" were already in place, the Eugenics Board's post-war preoccupation with native women as sterilization candidates is hardly surprising.<sup>90</sup>

Publicly, the Eugenics Board claimed to be ignorant of the critical influence ideas about race and ethnicity played in the identification, selection and recommendation of certain marginal groups for sterilization.<sup>91</sup> Privately, however, the Eugenics Board appeared to have been aware of minority groups' perception that sterilization posed a particular threat to specific ethnic groups, especially First

---

<sup>87</sup> See: Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*; and Sangster, "Criminalizing the Colonized."

<sup>88</sup> Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, 107.

<sup>89</sup> Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, 115.

<sup>90</sup> Sangster, "Criminalizing the Colonized," 34.

<sup>91</sup> Mary Frost, "Sterilization in Alberta: A Summary of the Cases Presented to the Eugenics Board for the Province of Alberta from 1929-1941," (M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1942), 68.

Nations patients. As early as 1937, the Acting Director of Indian Affairs, T.R.L. MacInnes outlined his position regarding the sterilization of his charges. He explained to the Medical Superintendent of Ponoka that, in principle, he was not opposed to the notion of sterilizing "Indians", provided consent was obtained.<sup>92</sup> The Medical Superintendent had previously written to the Director of Indian Affairs to inform him that the Board had recently authorized sterilization for an Aboriginal man and, under the new amendment to the Act, the patient's consent was no longer necessary.<sup>93</sup> MacInnes responded that he did not have the authority to authorize such an operation but if the surgery were carried out in accordance with provincial law, and written consent of the aboriginal patient's relatives was secured, the Department of Indian Affairs would not object. Consent was necessary because, as MacInnes wrote,

It is not beyond the realm of possibility that Indians might get an impression that there was a conspiracy for the elimination of the race by this means.<sup>94</sup>

Therefore, the Department advocated that "the greatest care be taken" that consent be responsibly obtained before the operation was performed.<sup>95</sup>

Judging from the post-war administration of the sterilization legislation, the Board appears to have forgotten its promise to obtain consent from both aboriginal

---

<sup>92</sup> Correspondence between T.R.L. MacInnes, Acting Director of Indian Affairs to the Medical Superintendent of Ponoka, Provincial Mental Hospital. April 29, 1937. Eugenics Board Files.

<sup>93</sup> Correspondence between Medical Superintendent, Ponoka, and the Indian Agent, Edmonton Indian Agency, Edmonton, Alberta. Eugenics Board Minutes, May 31, 1937.

<sup>94</sup> Correspondence between T.R.L. MacInnes, for the Director of Indian Affairs, "for the Information of the Medical Superintendent," Provincial Mental Hospital, Ponoka, Alberta. May 11, 1937. Eugenics Board Files.

<sup>95</sup> Eugenics Board Minutes, May 31, 1937.

patients and their relatives. Discourses of race played a crucial role in the identification and selection of First Nations patients, and it followed that virtually every aboriginal person whom the Board recommended for the operation ended up on the operating table.<sup>96</sup> Although the 1951 revision of the Indian Act granted people of aboriginal descent purportedly greater citizenship privileges, such as the rights to vote and hold land, anti-native sentiment was still increasing. Historians suggest that racist stereotypes of "Indians," women in particular, increasingly informed post-war government policies which intervened in nearly every area of aboriginals' lives, including land ownership, community government, finances, education and health services.<sup>97</sup> Federal policies set the precedent for wide-scale regulation of natives' lives and consequently, provincial health care workers, social workers, educators and private physicians may well have assumed it was their duty to intervene in cases of aboriginal women whom they considered to fall under the purview of the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act.

As a result, the last twelve years of the Act's existence saw a startling number of Eugenics Board cases in which aboriginal or métis young women were compulsorily sterilized. Yet, the province made a point of publicly stating that no compulsory sterilizations were occurring, despite the fact that the Eugenics Board had the mandate to order them. This false claim was made in part due to the failure of the Eugenics Board and the provincial Guidance Clinics to communicate their activities. Contrary to the government's sweeping statements that doctors only performed voluntary sterilizations, the province learned in the late 1960s that this

---

<sup>96</sup> Christian, "The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta," tables 38 and 39.

<sup>97</sup> Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*; Sangster, "Criminalizing the Colonized."

was not true. The Ponoka Institution, in answering a 1969 survey about Provincial Guidance Clinic practices, informed the Division of Mental Health that it did not always seek consent in the case of mental defectives who had been passed clear by the Eugenics Board.<sup>98</sup>

More germane to the case of aboriginal sterilization candidates, the Sexual Sterilization Act did not require consent from those individuals who were wards of the state. Instead, the Eugenics Board obtained consent from their legal guardians who, in the case of First Nations persons, was the Indian Agent. Consequently, there was a disturbing pattern in the cases of aboriginal sterilization candidates in which the decision to operate was recommended, and passed clear, without regard to the patient's right to have a say in the matter. As wards of the state, aboriginal and métis Albertans were channeled towards the Eugenics Board via the provincial health care, welfare and education systems, all of which claimed to act in their best interests.

This pattern was clearly played out in T.M.'s file. Hers was one of the last cases to be considered by the Eugenics Board before the Act's repeal. She came to the Board's attention when the principal of the school where her sisters attended wrote to the local Guidance Clinic.<sup>99</sup> The principal had only seen T.M. on occasions

---

<sup>98</sup> During the 1960s, the Guidance Clinics did not follow a standard procedure with regard to contacting parents of patients, obtaining consent, and informing patients and their relatives that they had the right to make representation to the Board about their own case. A survey was developed with the intention of developing a province-wide standard. According to this survey, sent out to all the Guidance Clinics in the fall of 1969, "the Board is always willing to accept and hear representation in person or in writing from the patient or the next of kin." Exemplifying the lack of communication between mental health institutions at this time, every respondent to the survey stated that they did not know such representation was an option for sterilization candidates and their families. Internal memorandum, sent to all Provincial Guidance Clinics, by A. Ralph Schrag, Director, Division of Mental Health. Eugenics Board Files.

<sup>99</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4697.

when he had to visit the M. home due to the elder girls' truancy. Upon adjudging T.M. to be in "a desperate situation" the principal pressured the Social Welfare Department to investigate. The resulting Social Services Report focused entirely on T.M.'s mother, stating that she was known to have had fifteen pregnancies, was a heavy drinker, and was involved in what was described as an "incestuous" relationship with her son-in-law. T.M. herself was not mentioned until the very end of the report which concluded that "the Social Service Department would strongly recommend that the Child in Question be sterilized for her own good and protection."<sup>100</sup>

Before sterilization candidates could come before the Eugenics Board, it was necessary for them to undergo psychometric testing. It was not until the time of her testing that the Board learned T.M. could speak only a few words of English. The examiner's solution to this problem was to test T.M.'s mother, twice.<sup>101</sup> The Cardston Guidance Clinic had previously noted that T.M. was untestable because she spoke only a native language. Despite his inability to communicate with her, the Clinic staff member claimed T.M. suffered from gross retardation and he stated that he "would agree with sterilization and would suggest oophorectomy" to facilitate hygienic care.<sup>102</sup> When T.M. came before the Board at age fifteen, the members were concerned with her home life and its "loose attitude towards sex, which constitutes a potential danger for the patient." The Board decided that T.M. should have either her uterus or ovaries removed, "at the discretion of the surgeon" because

---

<sup>100</sup> Social Services Report on T.M., Case Summary for Eugenics Board # 4697.

<sup>101</sup> Psychometric Examination, August 1966. Case Summary for Eugenics Board # 4697.

<sup>102</sup> Memo from Dr. D. of the Cardston Clinic, 20, August 1971. Eugenics Board Files.

"procreation will involve the risk of mental injury to herself or to her offspring."<sup>103</sup>

She was passed clear.

T.M.'s case demonstrated an overlap of several of the themes that have emerged in this study. The Board sterilized T.M. not only because it feared her highly sexualized home environment and her supposed inability to parent, but also because, as the principal so clearly stated, it was "for her own good and protection." In the cases of J.G. and I.T., who were both thirteen when they came before the Eugenics Board at its winter meeting in 1966, it is apparent that the Board also sterilized native young women because it feared for their sexual vulnerability. The Board passed both girls clear for sterilization, purportedly to prevent the likelihood that they would suffer future sexual attacks. Members of the Board already suspected that J.G. had been exposed to "questionable experiences" in her home where everyone lived in one room.<sup>104</sup> Now living in foster care, J.G.'s new guardians expressed uneasiness that she was showing interest in boys and worried that "she may be easily taken advantage of."<sup>105</sup> The case summary stated that her guardians were seeking sterilization "now, before any trouble arises." I.T., on the other hand, was not known to have had any sexual experiences, nor was she showing interest in boys; however, the Board learned that I.T.'s mother was seeking her sterilization out of concern for her future "in regard to sexual matters."<sup>106</sup> As the family lived on a reserve, the Board agreed that, with members in the community being "somewhat

---

<sup>103</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4697.

<sup>104</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4314.

<sup>105</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4314.

<sup>106</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4318.

loose, morally," it was best to have I.T. sterilized. The Eugenics Board's self-appointed authority in ordering what was tantamount to compulsory sterilization extended to cases of purported unfit motherhood. R.O. had been a government ward "for years"--a fact that was repeated several times in her short case summary--when she came to the attention of the Eugenics Board in the spring of 1971.<sup>107</sup> Apart from recurring ingrown toenails, her health was described as good, with no adverse heredity apart from her parents' drinking problems. Described as pretty, pleasant and easily led, the Board was concerned by her growing interest in boys. Upon making its decision to sterilize R.O., the Board referred to her supposedly aggressive behaviour towards babies, evidenced by games in which she "hanged" her dolls.<sup>108</sup> Thus, adjudged to be "incapable of intelligent parenthood," at fourteen, this quadruply deviant girl -- diagnosed mentally deficient, métis, female, and demonstrating proof of unfit motherhood-- was passed clear for sterilization.

Several other aboriginal case files speak to eugenic assumptions of unfit or incapable motherhood. What is particularly striking about these cases is that they involved adult aboriginal women who, despite their age and "stable" status as married women, were treated by the Eugenics Board as wards of the state by virtue of their aboriginal heritage. These women had histories of abusive relationships which the Eugenics Board interpreted as reflecting badly upon their moral character and further justification for their decision to sterilize.

R.F. was twenty and married to a man who was frequently in jail, and had

---

<sup>107</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4198.

<sup>107</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4672.

<sup>108</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4672.

been jailed herself several times for drunkenness, prior to institutionalization. The Board heard that she was believed to have been "living off the avails of prostitution" as she apparently stayed with "any man who comes along and offers her something to drink."<sup>109</sup> When she came before the Board, she was sporting an abdominal gun-shot wound which was dismissed as "not serious." Just days prior to her scheduled appearance, she apparently shot herself, in what may have been a suicide attempt to "get a way from a man who was bothering and threatening her." Rather than investigating this aspect of her case, the Board passed R.F. clear for salpingectomy on the basis that she had been defective since birth, was unable to care for her illegitimate children, and had been having sexual relations since the age of fifteen.<sup>110</sup>

M.V. was among the eldest of the sterilization candidates in this sample, being in her early thirties when she was presented to the Eugenics Board in the winter of 1966. The Board noted that she had three illegitimate children and four children from a marriage that was evidently extremely abusive. M.V.'s children had been apprehended by Child Welfare Services the previous spring due to her supposed inability to adequately mother them.<sup>111</sup> Described as a heavy drinker who was "dirty in her house-keeping" and neglectful of her children, the Board recommended M.V. for sterilization with the apparent agreement of her husband.<sup>112</sup> What the Board appeared to be less concerned with were the details of her marriage to an abusive

---

<sup>109</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4198.

<sup>110</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4198.

<sup>111</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4245.

<sup>112</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4245. Summary File # 4192.

man. As if sympathetic to the husband's plight, the case file revealed the Board's interpretation of events as follows:

She has been fighting with her husband and had threatened to kill him. They fight a great deal and the husband gets beaten up in an attempt to beat up his wife in order to get her to look after the home properly.<sup>113</sup>

The following case of B.T. demonstrates, perhaps more clearly than any other, that the Eugenics Board applied sterilization as a solution to what it perceived to be sexual problems. In 1966 B.T. came before the Board at age fifteen. Her case file stated that she was a slight girl, small for her age and had "the basic introvert, shy, personality of the Indian."<sup>114</sup> Under *family history*, the file noted that B.T. "apparently had an incestuous relationship with her father since the age of 11. She also had relations with an uncle and cousin." B.T.'s father was currently in jail, charged with incest involving his older daughter, and the Eugenics Board observed that the mother "knew nothing" and "did not seem to care."<sup>115</sup>

Taken from her home by Child Welfare Services, B.T. was placed in foster care until she evidently "involved a ten year old daughter of the foster parents in a homosexual way."<sup>116</sup> Her foster parents immediately sent her to one of Alberta's governmental institutions whereupon she experienced auditory and visual hallucinations. The Eugenics Board concluded its remarks in B.T.'s file by affirming that "because of her poor home condition with the incestuous relationships with the

---

<sup>113</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4245.

<sup>114</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4192.

<sup>115</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4192.

<sup>116</sup> Social Services Report, Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4192.

father and relationships with other relatives, it is obvious that this girl does not have judgement to keep her out of trouble and she is obviously not capable of caring for a child if she becomes pregnant."<sup>117</sup> The decision of the Board: passed clear for sterilization.

That B.T.'s file described her as extremely withdrawn, seclusive and "flattened," would today set off alarm bells for any social worker trained in the area of sexual abuse. Yet, in 1966, such evidence functioned to verify that sterilization was necessary. In the earlier years of the Act's administration, cases of incest had often been interpreted as justifying eugenic intervention because of the purported moral and eugenic risk the girl posed to the larger society. In the post-war period, however, the Eugenics Board appeared to have been aware of the need to change its tack, and began placing greater emphasis on sterilization as a means of protecting and benefitting the candidate herself. The Eugenics Board framed its decision to sterilize B.T. in terms of a quasi-benevolent sort of paternalism. By claiming that B.T. lacked the "judgement" to avoid "trouble," the Eugenics Board justified eugenic intervention as a means by which to protect her. What the Board did not specify was whether sterilization would end the abuse B.T. was suffering, or if it was prescribed merely to prevent a pregnancy from occurring. Regardless, in the post-war period the Eugenics Board proudly rationalized its decisions to sterilize cases similar to B.T.'s as being in their best interests. Young women like B.T. were sterilized for their own good and protection.

In the last decade of the Sexual Sterilization Act's existence, growing numbers of critics began to challenge the notion of sterilizing socially marginal individuals. In

---

<sup>117</sup> Alberta Eugenics Board Case Summary File # 4192.

conjunction with increased contemporary awareness of human and civil rights, critics viewed eugenic legislation as in direct contravention to the rights of the very individuals the Act claimed to be protecting.<sup>118</sup> Perhaps the most well-known critique of the Act, one which may be largely credited with initiating pressure for the Act's repeal, was written by McWhirter and Weijer. Their 1969 article challenged the legal, social, and scientific validity of the Act and boldly stated that it ought to be "consigned to the rubbish heap."<sup>119</sup> Eugenicians in Alberta were well aware of the dearth of scientific evidence in support of the Sexual Sterilization Act. The Director of the Alberta Guidance Clinic admitted in an undated memo to A. Ralph Schrag, the director of the Division of Mental Health, that he had "always had grave doubts as to the validity of this Act, which as you are aware, is completely unscientific."<sup>120</sup> The Clinic Director was not against the principle of sterilization as a means by which to protect "some defectives" but, as he told Schrag, he "would be happier if it were on an honest basis, ie. that they would be unfit to look after children, et. cetera, than on some highly debatable genetic grounds."<sup>121</sup> Despite open criticism, and awareness on the part of at least some eugenicists of the blatantly unscientific reasons informing the Board's decision to sterilize certain individuals, the Act continued in full force until the spring of 1972.

---

<sup>118</sup> See: Elyce Zenoof, Ferster, "Eliminating the Unfit - Is Sterilization the Answer?" Ohio State Law Journal 27 (1966):591-633.

<sup>119</sup> K.G. McWhirter and J. Weijer, "The Alberta Sterilization Act: A Genetic Critique," University of Toronto Law Journal 19 (1969), 430.

<sup>120</sup> Correspondence, the Director of the Alberta Guidance Clinic, to Dr. A. Ralph Schrag, no date. Eugenics Board Files.

<sup>121</sup> Correspondence, Director of the Alberta Guidance Clinic to Dr. A. Ralph Schrag, no date. Eugenics Board Files.

The Board countered growing criticisms by drawing attention to the liberal manner in which the Act was being administered, focusing on the benefits that accrued to the individuals they protected through eugenic sterilization. Using a strange conglomeration of eugenic, hereditarian and quasi-liberal arguments, eugenicists defended their continued support of the legislation. When it became clear to the Eugenics Board that the Sexual Sterilization Act was going to be repealed by Loughheed's government in 1972, proponents bemoaned the fact that potential sterilization candidates would no longer have the right to seek the protection offered by this legislation. Rather than fearing for the imminent moral and eugenic threat to the wider society, as might have been the case in the inter-war period, the Chair of the Eugenics Board framed his concern for the Act's repeal in terms which emphasized the necessity of protecting the health and well-being of the individual sterilization candidates. In February of 1972, Thomson wrote to Acting Director of the provincial Division of Mental Health, Dr. C.P. Hellon, expressing his apprehension about repealing the Act without introducing something else to take its place:

The mentally retarded who are incapable of defending themselves have a basic right to be protected by society from uncontrolled sexual aggression by some members of that society.<sup>122</sup>

Two days later, Hellon wrote back, assuring Thomson that he was certain there was "still room for discussion of the Sexual Sterilization Act." Hellon promised Thomson that he was on-side, writing, "I do share your concerns re protection of the

---

<sup>122</sup> Correspondence from R.K. Thomson to C.P. Hellon, Acting Director, Division of Mental Health, February 29, 1972. Eugenics Board Files. Thomson, March 2, 1972. Eugenics Board Files.

retarded."<sup>123</sup> The Eugenics Board held fast to its post-war self-perception as a protector of marginalized and vulnerable individuals in western Canada right up to the Act's repeal in 1972.

Did the theories and practices of the Eugenics Board change after World War Two? This chapter has revealed that while the "types" of cases in which the Eugenics Board recommended sterilization did not undergo drastic change after the end of the war, there was a marked change in the explanatory framework the Board used to justify these sterilizations. Despite the changing social climate after 1945, the Board continued to focus on female sterilization candidates whom it believed had demonstrated some visible evidence of sexual immorality. The preponderance of eugenics case files on sexually active young women in the post-war period were replete with broad references to the candidates' inability to be intelligent parents and fears of their erratic sexuality. However, this chapter has pointed to a departure from the inter-war tendency to pathologize the young women responsible for "the sex problem", and the move towards a purported greater awareness of the vulnerability and need for protection on the part of these individuals. While in the inter-war period the Board appeared preoccupied with the task of saving the nation from the menace of the feeble-minded female, after the end of the war, the Board professed to prioritize the health and well-being of the sterilization candidates themselves. In the post-war period, the Board claimed to be protecting these women from the burden of unfit parenthood or, in cases of sexual assault or incest, it appeared to believe that sterilization alone would somehow eradicate the problem of the candidates' vulnerability to sexual exploitation. The Board no longer advocated sterilization as

---

<sup>123</sup> Correspondence, C.P. Hellon to R.K. Thomson, March 2, 1972. Eugenics Board Files.

being for the good of the nation but, rather, as in the best interest of the individuals involved. Board could order native girls and women, as wards of the state, to be

sterilized. This chapter also demonstrated that there were a growing number of cases in which the impetus for sterilization came from parents, to either stem their daughters' sexual curiosity or to stop their menstruation for the sake of easier hygienic care.

While this pattern suggests that at least some parents and families sought to use the Sexual Sterilization Act for their own purposes, ultimately it was the Eugenics Board which decided who would be sterilized and why. This was particularly evident in the Board's refusal to help those women who specifically wanted the operation, as well as in cases where the Board coerced and manipulated parents into giving their consent for operations on their children. The Eugenics Board deliberately administered the Act as a social control policy which, in many instances, concerned itself with policing the sexuality of marginalized young women.

In no instance was this more clear than in this chapter's investigation of the dramatic increase in the numbers of First Nations and métis women the Eugenics Board sterilized in the last years of the Act. The Board's ideological assumptions about gender and sexuality were compounded with contemporary racist prejudices against aboriginal people in post-war Canada. In the context of federal policies being put in place that subjected First Nations people to interventionist health and welfare measures, it is not surprising that the Eugenics Board felt little remorse for its concentration on aboriginal women. The Board followed a pattern of generally focusing on native women whose supposed sexual activity or illegitimate pregnancies indicated a history of immorality and "lack of judgement." The explanations the Board gave for the sterilization of aboriginal and métis women revealed, in addition

to their preoccupation with the sex problem, blatantly racist overtones. Moreover, the Eugenics Board could order native girls and women, as wards of the state, to be sterilized under the consent of the Minister of Health. Although this manipulative strategy was tantamount to compulsory sterilization, the Alberta Eugenics Board and the provincial government continued to laud their eugenics program for its humane consideration in gaining consent for every sterilization operation.

This investigation of the post-war Alberta Eugenics Board case files has demonstrated that, although eugenicists claimed to believe they were pursuing their work for benign and humanitarian purposes, sterilization legislation in western Canada continued to be employed for reasons clearly unrelated to the science of eugenics. Chapter Three has illustrated that among the Board's purportedly "eugenic" motives for pursuing its sterilization program was the notion of applying sterilization to "sex problem" cases which, in the post-war period, the Board justified as being for the candidates' own good and protection.

Historians of eugenics now agree that late nineteenth and early twentieth-century gender ideologies made it virtually impossible for social reformers to separate notions of female purity from the professed female responsibility for

---

<sup>1</sup> Cited from Harold Cox, "The Mentally Unfit: Increasing Numbers. A Transmitted Taint," *The Sunday Times* (London, September 12, 1920).

<sup>2</sup> Madeline Sturge, "The Foolhardy Female," 135.

## Conclusion

### "If Thine Eye Offend Thee, Pluck it Out"

For some strange reason many people seem to have formed the belief that there is something inherently sacred in the act of procreation, and that no person ought to be deprived of the power to procreate. It is difficult to understand that mental attitude. Certainly it is quite inconsistent with the Scriptures. According to the Gospel of St. Matthew, Christ said: *If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out*. By precise analogy, if the power of procreation in certain persons involves injury to the human race, those persons ought to be deprived of that power.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis has argued that western Canadian eugenicists were often preoccupied with the task of employing sterilization as a solution to the "sex problem" posed by the feeble-minded female. Purportedly eugenic cases of unfit motherhood, delinquency and sexual exploitation appear to have offended the members of the Eugenics Boards who took it upon themselves to act as moral arbiters for the duration of the Acts' existence. With remarkable consistency, Alberta and British Columbia's eugenic programs concentrated on the individual weakness, immorality and threat posed by these certain "types" of eugenics cases. By this means, "the individual becomes not only the source for the problem, but the focus for solving the problem as well."<sup>2</sup>

Historians of eugenics now agree that late nineteenth and early twentieth-century gender ideologies made it virtually impossible for social reformers to separate notions of sexual purity from the professed female responsibility for

---

<sup>1</sup> Cited from, Harold Cox, "The Mentally Unfit. Increasing Numbers. A Transmitted Taint." The Sunday Times, (London, September 12, 1926).

<sup>2</sup> Madeline Braga, "The Feeble-minded Female," 135.

upholding community and national standards of social and moral propriety. That, in conjunction with the assumed connection between women's mental illness and their erratic sexuality, helps to explain how reformers and medical professionals alike could diagnose women who defied social and moral propriety as "mentally deficient." The traditional association between sex and mental disorder remained a dominant force informing Eugenics Boards' decisions between 1928 and 1972. Controlling the female body was "irrevocably connected to fears of the terrible consequences of unleashed sexuality, of the body without boundaries."<sup>3</sup> Consequently, by solving the problem of feeble-minded women's "unleashed sexuality," the Eugenics Boards believed they were employing eugenical sterilization to address social issues of a much broader scope.

This thesis has concentrated on the patterns detected in the Eugenics Boards' actions as they pursued eugenic programs as a means by which to police women's sexuality. The study is based on the evidence revealed in case files of women in British Columbia and Alberta whom institutional doctors, social workers, and the Eugenics Boards described as unfit, incapable mothers or sexual delinquents. This study has shown that a primary reason why these women came before the Eugenics Board was because of the visibility of their sexuality. Illicit sexual relations, according to the Boards, were ostensibly proven by the existence of either illegitimate children, accusations of delinquency and allegations or suspicion of sexual exploitation. Where this study has particularly broken new ground is in its examination of cases in which sexual assault or incest were at issue. Young women and girls who had

---

<sup>3</sup> Jane M. Ussher, *Fantasies of Femininity: Reforming the Boundaries of Sex* (New Brunswick and New York: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 29, 52.

suffered abuse, incest or rape constituted a eugenic threat that the Boards treated no differently than they did unfit mothers or delinquent girls. With a view to determining whether the Eugenics Boards' rationale for deciding to sterilize women whom it perceived as sexual threats changed between the inter-war and post-war periods, the thesis followed the Boards' tendency to target these categories of cases over the course of the Acts' existence.

To this end, after situating the study historiographically, Chapter One set the context for the thesis, providing the necessary foundation for the subsequent case file analyses. This chapter discussed the rise of eugenic thought and development of legislated sterilization programs in western Canada. The goal of the chapter was to establish firmly the contemporary connections between medical diagnoses of female feeble-mindedness, middle-class reformist assumptions of sexual immorality and the Eugenics Boards' administration of the Sexual Sterilization Acts. The next two chapters employed case files from the Alberta and British Columbia Eugenics Boards to examine more closely the application of sterilization in the inter-war and post-war periods.

Chapter Two focused on case files from the inter-war period and demonstrated that the Eugenics Boards recommended and justified sterilizations largely out of moral and eugenic concern for the health and strength of the wider society. By sterilizing women and girls who were assumed responsible for "the sex problem", eugenicists believed they were protecting the entire nation from the moral and eugenic menace of the feeble-minded female. Chapter Three turned to the post-war period, focusing entirely on the case files of the Alberta Eugenics Board. This chapter revealed that the Eugenics Board continued to target the categories of unfit

mother, sexual delinquent and sexually abused girl. However, the post-war period witnessed a shift in terms of the Board's explanatory framework for the sterilization operations it ordered. After 1945, institutional doctors and the Eugenics Board depicted sterilization as being in keeping with the post-war democratic awareness of the rights of the individual. Eugenecists were now preoccupied with their self-proclaimed responsibility to protect vulnerable, mentally deficient young women from the danger and threat of the post-war world. Here the study also examined the issue of race as it played a critical role in the Eugenics Board's decision to sterilize increasing numbers of aboriginal and métis women in the last years of the Act's existence. While the Eugenics Board targeted aboriginal women for the same sexualized reasons as non-aboriginal sterilization candidates, the disproportionate number of native women sterilized in the last decade of the Sexual Sterilization Act can not be ignored.

The notion of policing young women's sexuality by means of eugenic sterilization was never explicitly stated in either British Columbia or Alberta's legislation, nor was it cited among the reasons for repealing the Acts in 1972. However, this study's case-file analysis has shown that this was indeed a crucial function of the Acts. Using the British Columbia and Alberta Eugenics Boards' materials from the inter-war and post-war periods, this thesis investigated whether the categories or "types" of women eugenicists targeted shifted with the changing political climate after the end of World War Two. The evidence suggested that eugenicists' preoccupation with unfit motherhood, sexual delinquency and sexual abuse did not change over the duration of the Acts' existence. However, an observable shift did occur in the Boards' rationalization for sterilization operations as

a means by which to solve the "sex problem". The evidence presented here demonstrates that until 1945, widespread concerns regarding national degeneration and racial purity were clearly reflected in eugenic rhetoric which focused on the evil menace feeble-minded females posed to the wider society.<sup>4</sup> By sterilizing purportedly unfit mothers, delinquents and sexually abused girls, the Eugenics Boards claimed to be protecting western Canadian society from imminent moral, economic and eugenic danger. Eugenicists looked to the science of eugenics to provide ostensibly scientific solutions to the menace of the feeble-minded female. By contrast, in the post-war period, the Alberta Eugenics Board appeared to have changed its tune in keeping with the new sensitivities to individual well-being. In the last decades of the Sexual Sterilization Act's existence, the Eugenics Board defended its decision to operate in terms which reflected post-war assumptions of the democratic rights of the individual. Those groups that the Eugenics Board targeted in the post-war era continued to be among the most socially vulnerable and marginalized, yet there was a marked shift in terms of those who, by means of their race, the Board considered eugenically undesirable. This study's analysis of the dramatically increasing numbers of métis and aboriginal women sterilized in the post-war period demonstrated, however, that the Board continued to be preoccupied with unfit motherhood, delinquency and sexual abuse, no matter the race of a sterilization candidate. Under the protection of discretionary

---

<sup>4</sup> Christian has done extensive demographic analysis of the Alberta Eugenics Board files to demonstrate that particularly in the 1930's, sterilization candidates were not middle-class, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Canadians but rather, poor, rural immigrants. During the Second World War this tendency was played out to its fullest as the percentage of Eastern European immigrants sterilized reached its peak, followed by a notable decline in the years immediately following the war. Christian, "The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta," 84-97. See especially Table 39.

administration, the Eugenics Boards clandestinely pursued their eugenic work by rationalizing the sterilization of socially marginal women as being in the best interest of the women themselves. Claiming to protect the rights of individual women, the Board continued to authorize sterilization operations until 1972.

This thesis has made a concerted effort to avoid presenting a simplistic notion of sterilization legislation as a top-down form of social control. It explicitly looked for examples of agency to counter this problematic approach and in some instances it found that families and patients sought to employ the sterilization operation for their own purposes. It is important to recognize that there were narrow margins of manoeuver as several patients' families wrote directly to the Eugenics Boards to make inquiries as to how they might arrange for their relatives to be sterilized. However, the Eugenics Boards ultimately remained in control of who would be sterilized and for what reasons. In many cases, people who deliberately requested sterilization for purposes that were in contravention to eugenics, such as birth control, were refused by the Board. Moreover, the western Canadian Eugenics Boards frequently ignored or denied requests from patients and families to prevent the operation or even to have it reversed. Marginalized and vulnerable women who came before the Eugenics Boards were no match for the weighty moral and legal authority of the middle-class, white, self-proclaimed eugenic experts. The Eugenics Boards wielded enormous power in selecting sterilization candidates and ordering their operations.

This is not to say that sterilizations did not take place before the Sexual Sterilization Acts came into existence, or even that sterilizations stopped with the repeal of the Acts. Historians who have studied the legacy of nineteenth-century

somatic treatments for those women diagnosed with mental disorder have demonstrated that the precedent for applying sexual surgery as a cure for women's mental problems had been well established by the time the eugenic movement picked up speed in North America.<sup>5</sup> Correspondence between two Canadian doctors revealed that the greatest contribution of sterilization legislation was merely to "make legal what ha[d] been done for years." The Medical Superintendent of British Columbia's Provincial Mental Hospital confided to a colleague that sterilization of women had long been advocated by Canadian doctors:

You and I know that sterilization and the removing of ovaries has gone on in the gynaecological services, and no particular reports with regard to the subject have been kept. People do not seem to object to this at all but when sterilization for the males comes up there is quite a stir.<sup>6</sup>

With the introduction of sterilization legislation, however, reformers, doctors, social workers, and educators were empowered with legal and scientific authority to manipulate eugenic rhetoric to address their concerns about the moral, economic and eugenic aspects of "the sex problem."

Sterilization for the purpose of policing women's sexuality provides a powerful

---

<sup>5</sup> See: Andrew T. Scull, "'A Chance to Cut is a Chance to Cure': Sexual Surgery for Psychosis in three Nineteenth Century Societies," in *Research in Law, Deviance and Social Control, a Research Annual*, eds., Steven Spitzer and Andrew T. Scull, Vol 8 (London: JAI Press Inc., 1986): 3-40; Scull and Favreau, "The Clitoridectomy Craze," 241-260.

<sup>6</sup> Correspondence between Medical Superintendent of British Columbia Provincial Mental Hospital to B.T. McGhie, Director of Hospital Services, Office of the Deputy Minister of Hospitals, May 1, 1933. BCARS GR 542, Box 11, File 4.

example of the "misogynist dogma which masqueraded as medical knowledge."<sup>7</sup>

With hindsight, historians now view the policies and activities of the Eugenics Boards as ethically, scientifically, and legally reprehensible; yet, for most of the twentieth century the Boards and their doctors were immune from civil liability for their actions. It is no small irony that the same century which saw numerous social and political advances for women also witnessed legislated programs which turned new medical techniques to the old goal of policing women's sexuality. Sterilization programs in western Canada effectively silenced many vulnerable or marginalized women in their struggles to claim autonomy over their bodies. Nonetheless, the long-standing silence regarding Canada's history of eugenic programs has begun to be shattered as increasing numbers of sterilized Canadians are coming forward to assert that their legal rights as human beings were violated by the Eugenics Boards who claimed the supreme authority to render them unable to bear children.

Legislation, Acc. 75.126(Bill) GS. Re: Mental Defectives Act, File Nos. 1309, 1310.

Legislation, Acc. 77.250(Bill) GS. Re: Mental Defectives Act, Mental Diseases Act, Mental Health Act, File Nos. 291, 292, 293, 550, 822, 823, 932.

Mental Deficiency. A Speech delivered by Irene Parlay to UFWA, January 1924, Acc. 75.181 SE.

Mental Diseases Act, 1929, Acc. 76.347 GS, Item 229.

Mental Health. Miscellaneous Pamphlets, 1917-1929, Acc. 85.212 GS.

Mental Diseases Survey of the Province of Alberta 1921, Acc. 90.173 GSE.

---

<sup>7</sup> Jane M. Ussher, *The Psychology of the Female Body*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 8-9.

## Bibliography

## Unpublished Primary Sources

## Provincial Archives of Alberta: Cultural Facilities and Historical Resources

Advisory Committee on Mental Health and Miscellaneous Pamphlets. Acc. 75.608 GS.

Annual Reports of Eugenics Board, 1928-1974. In Department of Public Health, Section: Provincial Training School, Red Deer. Acc. 88.38 and 68. 148.

Deputy Minister of Health's Files, 1959-65. Acc. 73.42 GS. File Nos. 23, 72, 128, 187, 38, 295, 352.

Eugenics Board, 1928-1972. Acc. F88.211

Legislation. Acc 70.426(Bills) GS. Re: Sexual Sterilization Act, Mental Defectives Act and Mental Diseases Act, File Nos.: 1944, 2030, 3711, 2169, 3711, 2169, 2557, 3105, 3708, 2147, 2365, 2556, 3104, 5088, 5489,

Legislation. Acc 70.427(Bills) GS. Re: Sexual Sterilization Act, Mental Defectives Act, Mental Diseases Act, File Nos. 652, 928, 649, 911, 650.

Legislation. Acc. 75.126(Bills) GS. Re: Mental Defectives Act, File Nos. 1309, 1310.

Legislation. Acc. 77.280(Bills) GS. Re: Mental Defectives Act, Mental Diseases Act, Mental Health Act, File Nos. 291, 292, 293, 555a, 822, 823, 932.

Mental Deficiency. A Speech delivered by Irene Parlby to UFWA, January 1924. Acc. 75.181 SE.

Mental Diseases Act, 1929. Acc. 76.347 GS, Item 229.

Mental Health. Miscellaneous Pamphlets, 1917-1929. Acc. 85.212 GS.

Mental Hygiene Survey of the Province of Alberta 1921. Acc. 90. 173 GSE.

Miscellaneous Reports from Michener Centre and Provincial Training School,

Red Deer. Acc. 88.38 Offsite.

Orders-in-Council, 1905-1950. Re: Eugenics Board, Mental Defectives Act, Sexual Sterilization Act, Acc. 70.427 GS.

Orders-in-Council, 1950-1950. Re: Eugenics Board, Mental Defectives, Sexual Sterilization Act, Acc. 72.62 GS.

Orders-in-Council, 1960-1969. Re: Eugenics Board, Sexual Sterilization Act, Acc. 81.2 GS.

Orders-in-Council, 1970-1974. Re: Eugenics Board, Sexual Sterilization Act, Acc. 85.194 GS.

Parlby, Irene. "Mental Deficiency." An Address Delivered by the Hon. Mrs. Parlby, before the UFWA, January 1924. Acc. 71.420, File No. 19.

Ponoka Mental Hospital, Commissioner's Report on Conditions, 1929. Acc. 83.212 GS, Box 3, Item 81.

Premier's Papers, Acc. 69.289 mi. Eugenics: File No. 434.

Premier's Papers, Acc. 69.289 mi. Mental Hygiene: File Nos. 159, 433, 434, 886, 1384, 1522, 1724, 1725.

Scrapbook Hansard. Acc. 76.427 Mi.

Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly, Acc. 70.414, File Nos. 2369, 1173, 1311, 1421, 1689, 917, 920.

United Farm Women of Alberta: Sterilization of Criminals and Defectives, File No. 886.

British Columbia Archives and Records Services

GR 133. Box 6. Files: Eugenics Board. "Summary of Social History for Board of Eugenics" and "Eugenics Board: Sexual Sterilization." "Cases from Provincial Mental Hospital."

GR 530. Box 14, File P-9. Provincial Secretary. "Suggested Changes in the Mental Hospital Act."

GR 542. Box 11, Files 2, 4, 6. Provincial Secretary. "Subject Files."

GR 542, Box 22, Files 1,2,3,4,5.

GR 679. Box 2, File 32. Department of Health Services. "Hospital Insurance Services: Sterilization."

GR 865, Box 1, Files 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12.

GR 865 Box 2, Files 1,3,5, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

Child Guidance Clinic. Open House, May 1st, 1957. 4450 Grandview Highway. Burnaby BC. Mental Health Centre. Dir., R.E.McNair. BCARS, NW 971.61 C5360.

"Health Development in British Columbia, Various dates. Articles on All Phases of Public Health." N/A/H34.

Madness Unmasked. The Mental Patients Publishing Project. 2146 Yew St., Vancouver. 1974. BCARS NW 828 M182.

Myers, Thomas Arnold. "Mental Hospitals in BC, 1953: A Daily Colonist Pamphlet." Reprinted from previously published articles in the Daily Colonist. N.P. N.D. BCARS: NWP 362.21 M996.

Putman, Marie. Mentely Handicapped Love. Madiera Par, B.C.: Harbour, 1981. BCARS, NWP 305.90826 P988.

Woodlands School, New Westminster, BC. "Open House at Woodlands, April 23, Wednesday." (no date): n.p. NWP 362.21. W891e.

#### Published Primary Sources

"A Symposium. The Opinion of a Selected List of Men Whose Work Entitles Them to Rank as Authorities." In The Case For and Against Sexual Sterilization Ed. by Robert C. Dexter et al., 51-70. Girard Kansas: Haldman-Julius Publications, 1928.

Baragar, C.A. et al. "Sexual Sterilization: Four Years Experience in Alberta." American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol 91 (January 1935):897-923.

Cath, Otis H. "Law and Human Sterilization." An Address. In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 555-574. Pasadena California: The Human Betterment

Foundation, 1930.

- Chase, Wilfred. "Voluntary Sterilization." In The Case For and Against Sexual Sterilization Ed. by Robert C. Dexter et al., 42-43. Girard Kansas: Haldman-Julius Publications, 1928.
- Chicano, E.L. "Sterilization of the Unfit." The Canadian Doctor: A Business Journal of the Medical Profession. Vol 2, No.1 (January 1936): 16, 17, 46, 47.
- D'Eshambault, Antoine. Eugenical Sterilization. Second Edition. Winnipeg,: Canadian Publishers Ltd., 1937.
- Davis, Katharine Bement, Ph.D. Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-Two Hundred Women. New York: Harper and Brothers Publisher, 1929.
- Dexter, Robert C. "Introduction." In The Case For and Against Sexual Sterilization Ed. by Robert C. Dexter et al., 6-8. Girard Kansas: Haldman-Julius Publications, 1928.
- Dexter, Robert C. "Sterilization as a Social Measure." In The Case For and Against Sexual Sterilization Ed. by Robert C. Dexter et al., 11-13. Girard Kansas: Haldman-Julius Publications, 1928.
- Dickinson, Robert L. "Sterilization Without Unsexing: Surgical Review with Especial Reference to 5820 Operations On Insane and Feebleminded in California." In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 373-379. Pasadena California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930.
- Flemming, Meredith and Terrence C.R. Joyce. "Effective Sterilization of the Human Male (Vasectomy)." Canadian Hospital (June 1968): 39-41.
- Furman, Walter and Friedrich Vogel. Genetic Counseling: A Guide for the Practicing Physician. Trans. Sabine Kurth. New York: Springer-Verlag, 1969.
- Genetics Society of Canada, The. "Genetic Engineering." Vol. 1 No. 3 (Jan 1970):1.
- Gosney, E.S., and Paul Popenoe. Sterilization for Human Betterment: A Summary of Results of 6000 Operations in California, 1909-1929. New York: The Macmillan CO., 1929.
- Hincks, Clarence M. "Sterilize the Unfit." Maclean's Magazine (February 15, 1946):

19, 39, 40, 42. Human Betterment Foundation, 1930.

- Hodson, Cora B.S. Human Sterilization Today: A Survey of the Present Position. London: Watts & Co., 1934.
- Kinsey, Alfred C., Wardell B. Pomeroy, Clyde E. Martin. "Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male (1946)." In Medicine and Western Civilization. Ed. by David J. Rothman, Steven Marcus and Stephanie A. Kiceluk, 109-116. New Brunswick and New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1995.
- Laughlin, Harry H. "Legal Status of Eugenic Sterilization." In The Case For and Against Sexual Sterilization Ed. by Robert C. Dexter et al., 22-32. Girard Kansas: Haldman-Julius Publications, 1928.
- MacLean, R.R. and E.J. Kibblewhite. "Sexual Sterilization in Alberta: Eight Years' Experience, 1929 to May 31, 1937." Canadian Public Health Journal (December 1937): 587-590.
- MacMurchy, Helen. Sterilization? Birth Control? A Book for Family Welfare and Safety. Toronto: Macmillan Co. Ltd., 1934.
- MacMurchy, Helen. "Sterilization and the Unfit." Saturday Night. (March 31, 1934): 5.
- Myerson, Abraham, M.D. "Some Objections to Sterilization." In The Case For and Against Sexual Sterilization Ed. by Robert C. Dexter et al., 33-36. Girard Kansas: Haldman-Julius Publications, 1928.
- Popenoe, Paul and E.S. Gosney. Twenty-Eight Years of Sterilization in California. Pasadena: A Publication of the Human Betterment Foundation, 1939.
- Popenoe, Paul. "The Feeble-minded." In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 321-330. Pasadena California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930.
- Popenoe, Paul. "Success on Parole After Sterilization." In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 1-18. Pasadena California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930.
- Popenoe, Paul. "Menstruation and Salpingectomy Among the Feeble-minded." In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 303-311. Pasadena California:

The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930. *London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1934.*

Popenoe, Paul. "A Study of Patients Coming to California State Institutions for Sterilization Only." In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 168-176. Pasadena California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930.

Popenoe, Paul. "Eugenic Sterilization in California: Attitude of Patients Toward the Operation." In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 280-285. Pasadena California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930.

Popenoe, Paul. "Attitude of Patients' Relatives Toward the Operation." In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 271-280. Pasadena California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930.

Popenoe, Paul. "Social and Economic Status of the Sterilized Feeble-minded." In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 304-316. Pasadena California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930.

Popenoe, Paul. "Marriage After Eugenic Sterilization." In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 1-15. Pasadena California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930.

Popenoe, Paul. "The Number of Persons Needing Sterilization." In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 405-411. Pasadena California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930.

Popenoe, Paul. "Sterilization and Criminality." An Address. In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 575-581. Pasadena California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930.

Popenoe, Paul. "Effect of Salpingectomy on the Sexual Life." In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 1-8. Pasadena California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930.

Report of the Departmental Committee on Sterilization. (The Brock Report) Presented

- Advised by the Minister of Health to Parliament. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1934.
- Sangster, Margaret. "Family Limitation, (1914)." In The Sexuality Debates. Ed. by Sheila Jeffreys, 534-552. New York and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987.
- Scheinfeld, Amram. The New You and Heredity: With a 1961 Addendum. Tenth Printing. Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1939, 1950 and 1961.
- Swanwick, Helena M. "Committee of Inquiry into Sexual Morality. (1918)" In The Sexuality Debates. Ed. by Sheila Jeffreys, 210-215. New York and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987.
- Swiney, Frances. "The Bar of Isis or the Law of the Mother. (1912)." In The Sexuality Debates. Ed. by Sheila Jeffreys, 468-488. New York and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987.
- Thompson, Warren S. "Sterilization: A Social View." In The Case For and Against Sexual Sterilization Ed. by Robert C. Dexter et al., 14-21. Girard Kansas: Haldman-Julius Publications, 1928.
- Thomson, Walter D. "Alberta's Experiment With Sterilization." Saturday Night (July 8, 1933).
- Vruwink, John, M.D., and Paul Popenoe. "Post-Operative Changes in the Libido Following Sterilization." An Address. In Collected Papers on Eugenic Sterilization in California: A Critical Study of Results of 6000 Cases. Ed. by E.S. Gosney, 3-8. Pasadena California: The Human Betterment Foundation, 1930.
- Woodside, Moya. Sterilization in North Carolina: A Sociological and Psychological Study. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1950.
- Published Secondary Sources:**
- Achilles, Rona. "Desperately Seeking Babies: New Technologies of Hope and Despair." In Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Ed. by Katherine Arnup, Andrée Lévesque, Ruth Roach Pierson and assisted by Margaret Brennan, 284-312. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.

- Adams, Mary Louise. The Trouble With Normal: Post-War Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
- Alexander, Ruth M. The 'Girl Problem': Female Sexual Delinquency in New York: 1900-1930. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995.
- Arnup, Katherine. "Educating Mothers: Government Advice for Women in the Inter-War Years." In Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Ed. by Katherine Arnup, Andrée Lévesque, Ruth Roach Pierson and assisted by Margaret Brennan, 190-210. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Backhouse, Constance. "Prosecutions of Abortions under Canadian Law, 1900-1950." In Essays in the History of Canadian Law: Vol. 5 Crime and Criminal Justice. Ed. by Jim Philips, Tina Loo, and Susan Lewthwaite, 252-292. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.
- Barman, Jean. "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power, and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900." BC Studies: Special Double Issue: Native Peoples and Colonialism. Vol 115 & 116 (Autumn/Winter 1997/98): 237-266.
- Barret, Michèle and Helen Roberts. "Doctors and Their Patients: The Social Control of Women in General Practice." In Women, Sexuality and Social Control. Ed. by Carol Smart and Barry Smart, 41-52. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.
- Bass, Medora S. "Attitudes of Parents of Retarded Children Toward Voluntary Sterilization." Eugenics Quarterly Vol 14, No.1 (March 1967):45-53.
- Bernhard, Virginia, et al. "Editors' Intro." In Hidden Histories of Women in the New South. Ed. by Virginia Bernhard, Betty Brandon, Elizabeth Fox-Gerovese, Theda Perdue, Elizabeth Hayes Turner, 1-7. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994.
- Black, Elinor F.E., M.D. "Abortion and Sterilization." Manitoba Bar News Vol. 33 No.2. (April 1961):33-45.
- Blaikie, Andrew. "From 'Immorality' to 'Underclass': The Current and Historical Context of Illegitimacy." In Sexual Cultures: Communities, Values, and Intimacy. Ed. by Jeffrey Weeks and Janet Holland, 115-136. *Explorations in Sociology* 48: British Sociological Association. London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996.

- Bland, Lucy. "The Shock of the *Freewoman* Journal: Feminists Speaking on Heterosexuality in Early 20th Century England." In Sexual Cultures: Communities, Values, and Intimacy. Ed. by Jeffrey Weeks and Janet Holland, 75-96. *Explorations in Sociology 48: British Sociological Association*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996.
- Boehnert, Joanna B. "The Psychology of Women." In Changing Patterns: Women in Canada. Ed. by Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code, Lindsay Dorney, 452-487. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Inc.
- Brown, Thomas E. "Dr. Ernest Jones, Psychoanalysis and the Canadian Medical Profession, 1908-1913." In Medicine In Canadian Society. Ed. by S.E.D. Shortt, 315-360. Montreal: McGill-Queens' University Press, 1981.
- Buckley, Suzann and Janice Dickin McGinnis. "Venereal Disease and Public Health Reform in Canada." Canadian Historical Review Vol. 83 No. 3, (1982): 337-354.
- Bullough, Vern L. "The Development of Sexology in the U.S.A. in the Early Twentieth Century." In Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science: The History of Attitudes to Sexuality. Ed. by Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich, 303-322. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Burns, Matthew W. "Wyatt v. Aderholt: Constitutional Standards for Statutory and Consensual Sterilization in State Mental Institutions." Law & Psychology Review (Spring 1975):79-111.
- Bynum, Victoria, E. Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992.
- Campion, Mukuti Jain. Who's Fit to be a Parent?. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Carey, Allison C. "Gender and Compulsory Sterilization Programs in America: 1907-1950." Journal of Historical Sociology. Vol 11 No 1 (March 1998): 74-105.
- Castellano, Marlene Brant and Janice Hill. "First Nations Women: Reclaiming Our Responsibilities." In A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980. Ed. by Joy Parr, 232-45. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995.
- Cayleff, Susan E. "'Prisoners of Their Own Feebleness': Women, Nerves and Western Medicine - A Historical Overview." Journal of Social Science and

- Medicine. Vol. 26 No. 12 (1988): 1199-1208.
- Chapman, Terry L. "Early Eugenics Movement in Western Canada." Alberta History. Vol 25, No. 4. (August 1977): 9-17.
- Chez, Ronald A. "Mental Disability as a Basis for Contraception and Sterilization." Journal of Social Biology Vol 18: Supplement, (1971): S120-S126.
- Cour, Lykke de la, and Geoffrey Reaume. "Patient Perspectives in Psychiatric Case Files." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 242-265. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Cox, Pamela. "Girls, Deficiency and Delinquency." In From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency: Historical Perspectives on People with Learning Disabilities. New York: Routledge, 1996:184-205.
- Craft, Michael and Ann. Sex and the Mentally Handicapped: A Guide for Parents and Carers. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.
- Currie, Dawn H., and Valerie Raoul, eds. The Anatomy of Gender: Women's Struggle for the Body. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1992.
- D'Emilio, John and Estelle D. Freedman. Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1988.
- Davies, Megan J. "Snapshots: Three Women and Psychiatry, 1920-1935." Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme. Vol 8, No. 4 (1987): 47-48.
- Dickason, Olive Patricia. Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1994.
- Digby, Anne. Madness, Morality, and Medicine: A Study of the York Retreat, 1796-1914. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Dodd, Dianne. "Women's Involvement in the Canadian Birth Control Movement of the 1930s: The Hamilton Clinic." In Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Ed. by Katherine Arup, Andrée Lévesque, Ruth Roach Pierson and assisted by Margaret Brenan, 150-172. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Dollimore, Jonathan. Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991 & 1993.

- Dowbiggin, Ian Robert. Keeping America Sane: Psychiatry and Eugenics in the United States and Canada, 1880-1940. London: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Dubinsky, Karen. "Afterword. Telling Stories About Dead People." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 359-366. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Dubinsky, Karen. Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Dubois, Ellen Carol and Linda Gordon. "Seeking Ecstasy on the Battlefield: Danger and Pleasure in Nineteenth Century Feminist Sexual Thought." In Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality. Ed. by Carol Vance, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.
- Duder, Karen. "Exposure the Sexual Subject: Desire, Subjectivity and Women's Sexuality." Paper Presented at the Canadian Historical Association Annual Meeting. St. Catharines Ontario, 31 May, 1996.
- Edwards, Susan S.M. Female Sexuality and the Law: A Study of Constructs of Female Sexualities as they Inform Statute and Legal Procedure. Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara, and Deirdre English. For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women. Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1979.
- Fee, Elizabeth. "Venereal Disease: The Wages of Sin?". In Passion and Power: Sexuality in History Ed. by Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons with Robert A. Padgug, 178-198. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.
- Ferster, Elyce Zenoff. "Eliminating the Unfit - Is Sterilization the Answer?" Ohio State Law Journal Vol. 27 No. 27 (1966):591-633.
- Flandrin, Jean-Louis. Sex in the Western World: The Development of Attitudes and Behaviours. Trans. Sue Collins. Chur, Switzerland,: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991.
- Fort, Arthur T. "Abortion and Sterilization: An Insight into Obstetrician-Gynecologists' Attitudes." Journal of Social Biology Vol 18: Supplement, (1971): S192-S194.
- Horn, Margo. "See, Officer Krupke, What are We to Do? The Politics of

- Freedman, Estelle. "'Uncontrolled Desires': The Response to the Sexual Psychopath, 1920-1960." In Passion and Power: Sexuality in History Ed. by Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons with Robert A. Padgug, 199-225. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.
- Gelb, Steven A. "'Not Simply Bad and Incurable': Science, Morality, and Intellectual Deficiency." History of Education Quarterly Vol. 29 No.3 (Fall 1989): 359-380.
- Gilfoyle, Timothy J. "Policing of Sexuality." In Inventing Times Square: Commerce and Culture at the Crossroads of the World. Ed. by William R. Taylor, 297-314. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1991.
- Golz, Annalee. "Uncovering and Reconstructing Family Violence: Ontario Criminal Case Files." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 289-311. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Goode, Erich and Nachman Ben-Yehuda. Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.
- Gordon, Linda. Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America. New York: Grossman Publishers, 1976.
- Gordon, Sol. Sexual Rights for the People... Who Happen to be Handicapped. Syracuse: Centre on Human Policy, Syracuse University, 1974 & 1979.
- Grob, Gerald N. Mental Illness and American Society, 1875-1940. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- Hagan, John. The Disreputable Pleasures: Crime and Deviance in Canada. 3rd Ed. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1991.
- Hall, Lesley. "Women, Feminism and Eugenics." In Essays in the History of Eugenics: Proceedings of a Conference Organized by the Galton Institute. Ed. by Robert A. Peel, 36-51. London: The Galton Institute, 1998.
- Hodgson, Jane E. and Renee Ward. "The Provision and Organization of Abortion and Sterilization Services in the United States." In Abortion and Sterilization: Medical and Social Aspects. Ed. by Jane E. Hodgson and Renee Ward, 519-542. London: Academic Press, Inc., 1981.
- Horn, Margo. "'Gee, Officer Krupke, What are We to Do?': The Politics of

- Kelm, Professions and the Prevention of Delinquency, 1909-1940. Research in Law, Deviance and Social Control: A Research Annual. Ed. by Steven Spitzer and Andrew T. Scull. Vol. 8 (1986): 57-84.
- Horwitz, Allan V. The Logic of Social Control. New York: Plenum Press, 1990.
- Iacovetta, Franca. "Parents, Daughters, and Family Court Intrusions into Working-Class Life." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 312-337. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Iacovetta, Franca and Wendy Mitchinson. "Introduction. Social History and Case Files Research." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 3-24. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Ingleby, David. "Mental Health and Social Order." In Social Control and the State: Historical and Comparative Essays. Ed. by Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull, 141-188. Oxford: Martin Robinson and Co. Ltd., 1983.
- Jackson, Margaret. The Real Facts of Life: Feminism and the Politics of Sexuality C. 1850-1940. London: Taylor and Francis Ltd., 1994.
- Jackson, Mark. "Institutional Provision for the Feebleminded in Edwardian England." In From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency: Historical Perspectives on People with Learning Disabilities. New York: Routledge, 1996: 161-183.
- Johnson, Richard. "Contested Borders, Contingent Lives: An Introduction." In Border Patrols: Policing the Boundaries of Heterosexuality. Ed. by Deborah Lynn Steinberg, Debbie Epstein, and Richard Johnson, 5-22. London: Cassell, 1997.
- Jordanova, L.J. "Mental Illness, Mental Health: Changing Norms and Expectations." In Women In Society: Interdisciplinary Essays, 95-114. London: Virago Press Ltd., 1981.
- Katz, Gregor, ed., trans. Gunhild Horvath. Sexuality and Subnormality: A Swedish View. London: The National Society for Mentally Handicapped Children, 1972.
- Kelm, Mary-Ellen. Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998.

- Kelm, Mary-Ellen. "'The Only Place Likely to Do Her Any Good': The Admission of Women to British Columbia's Provincial Hospital for the Insane." BC Studies. No. 96 (Winter 1992-93): 66-89.
- Kevles, Daniel J. "Eugenics in North America." In Essays in the History of Eugenics: Proceedings of a Conference Organized by the Galton Institute. Ed. by Robert A. Peel, 208-226. London: The Galton Institute, 1998.
- Kluge, Eike-Henner W. Biomedical Ethics: In a Canadian Context. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1992.
- Koonz, Claudia. "Eugenics, Gender, and Ethics in Nazi Germany: The Debate About Involuntary Sterilization, 1933-1936." In Reevaluating the Third Reich. Ed. by T. Childers and J. Caplan, 66-81. New York: Homes and Meier, 1993.
- Kunzel, Regina. Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890-1945. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Ladd-Taylor, Molly. "Saving Babies and Sterilizing Mothers: Eugenics and Welfare Politics in the Interwar United States." Journal of Social Policy (Spring 1997): 136-153.
- Larson, Edward J. "The Rhetoric of Eugenics: Expert Authority and the Mental Deficiency Bill." British Journal for the History of Science Vol. 24, Part 1, No. 80 (March 1991): 45-60.
- Leung, Marianne. "'Better Babies': Birth Control in Arkansas During the 1930s." In Hidden Histories of Women in the New South. Ed. by Virginia Berhard, Betty Brandon, Elizabeth Fox-Gerovesse, Theda Perdue, Elizabeth Hayes Turner, 1-7. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994.
- Lévesque, Andrée. Making and Breaking the Rules: Women in Quebec, 1919-1939. Trans. Yvonne M. Klein. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1994.
- Lévesque, Andrée. "Deviants Anonymous: Single Mothers at the Hospital de la Misericorde in Montreal, 1929-1939." In Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Ed. by Katherine Arnup, Andrée Lévesque, Ruth Roach Pierson and assisted by Margaret Brenan, 108-125. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Lewis, Jane. "'Motherhood Issues' in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries." In Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and

- 20th Centuries. Ed. by Katherine Arnup, Andrée Lévesque, Ruth Roach Pierson and assisted by Margaret Brenan, 1-19. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Mayer, John A. "Notes Towards a Working Definition of Social Control in Historical Context." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 227-241. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Mitchinson, Wendy. "On the Case of the Case: The Emergence of the Homosexual as a Social Category." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 65-87. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Littlewood, Thomas B. The Politics of Population Control. Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977.
- Lunbeck, Elizabeth. The Psychiatric Persuasion: Knowledge, Gender and Power in Modern America. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- MacLennan, David. "Beyond the Asylum: Professionalization and the Mental Hygiene Movement in Canada 1914-1928." Canadian Bulletin of Mental Health Vol. 4 (1987): 7-23.
- McCann, Carole R. Birth Control Politics in the United States, 1916-1945. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- McLaren, Angus. "'Not a Stranger, a Doctor': Medical men and Sexual Matters in the Late Nineteenth Century." In Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science: The History of Attitudes to Sexuality. Ed. by Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich, 267-283. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- McLaren, Angus. Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada 1885-1945. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1990.
- Mitchinson, Wendy. "Hygiene and Insanity in Women: A Nineteenth Century Case Study." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 264-287. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- McLaren, Angus. "Birth Control and Abortion in Canada, 1870-1920." In Medicine in Canadian Society. Ed. by S.E.D. Shortt, 285-313. Montreal: McGill-Queens' University Press, 1981.
- Mitchinson, Wendy. "The Medical Treatment of Women." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 264-287. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- McLaren, Angus, and Arlene Tigar McLaren. The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1986.
- Mitchinson, Wendy. "Reasons for Commitment to a Mid-Nineteenth Century Ontario Asylum." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 264-287. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- McLaren, Angus. "The Creation of a Haven for 'Human Thoroughbreds': The Sterilization of the Feebleminded and the Mentally Ill in British Columbia." Canadian Historical Review 67:2 (1986), 127-150.
- McLaren, John. "Chasing the Social Evil: Moral Fervour and the Evolution of

- Canada's Prostitution Laws, 1867-1917." Canadian Journal of Law and Society. (1986): 125-165.
- Mayer, John A. "Notes Towards a Working Definition of Social Control in Historical Analysis." In Social Control and the State: Historical and Comparative Essays. Ed. by Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull, 17-38. Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983.
- Maynard, Steven. "On the Case of the Case: The Emergence of the Homosexual as a Case History in Early Twentieth-Century Ontario." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 65-87. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- McWhirter, K.G., and J. Weijer. "The Alberta Sterilization Act: A Genetic Critique." University of Toronto Law Journal Vol. 19 (1969): 424-431.
- Milligan, Don. Sex-Life: A Critical Commentary on the History of Sexuality. London: Pluto Press, 1993.
- Mills, Elizabeth Anne. "One Hundred Years of Fear: Rape and the Medical Profession." In Judge, Lawyer, Victim, Thief: Women, Gender Roles and Criminal Justice. Ed. by Nicole Hahn Rafter and Elizabeth Anne Stanko, 29-62. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1982.
- Mitchinson, Wendy. "Problematic Bodies and Agency: Women Patients in Canada, 1900-1950." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 266-287. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Mitchinson, Wendy. "Hysteria and Insanity in Women: A Nineteenth Century Canadian Perspective." Journal of Canadian Studies 21:3 (Fall 1986): 87-104.
- Mitchinson, Wendy. "The Medical Treatment of Women." In Changing Patterns: Women in Canada. Ed. by Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code and Lindsay Dorney, 391-421. 2nd Edition. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1993.
- Mitchinson, Wendy. "Reasons for Committal to a Mid-Nineteenth Century Ontario Insane Asylum: The Case of Toronto." In Essays in the History of Canadian Medicine. Ed. by Wendy Mitchinson and Janice Dickin McGinnis, 88-109. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988.
- Mitchinson, Wendy. "Causes of Disease in Women: The Case of Late Nineteenth

- Peiser, "Century English Canada." In Health, Disease and Medicine: Essays in Canadian History. Ed. by Charles G. Roland, 381-398. Proceedings from the First Hannah Conference on the History of Medicine, McMaster University, June 3-5, 1982. Toronto: Clarke Irwin Inc, 1983.
- Mort, Frank. Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England Since 1830. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987.
- Nathanson, Constance A. Dangerous Passage: The Social Control of Sexuality in Women's Adolescence. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991.
- Nielsen, Joyce McCarl. Sex and Gender in Society: Perspectives on Stratification. Second Edition. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press Inside cover:., 1990.
- Noll, Steven. "'A Far Greater Menace': Feeble-minded Females in the South, 1900-1940." In Hidden Histories Hidden Histories of Women in the New South. Ed. by Virginia Bernhard, Betty Brandon, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Theda Perdue and Elizabeth Hayes Turner, 31-51. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994.
- Noll, Steven. "Southern Strategies for Handling the Black Feeble-Mind: From Social Control to Profound Indifference." Journal of Policy History Vol 3 No.2 (1991): 130-151.
- Oakley, Ann. The Captured Womb: A History of the Medical Care of Pregnant Woman. New York: Basil Blackwell, Ltd., 1984.
- Odem, Mary E. Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.
- Osborn, Frederick. "Eugenics (Encyclopaedia Britannica)." Eugenics Quarterly Vol. 13, No.2 (June 1966): 155-164.
- Packard, Vance. The People Shapers. Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1977.
- Parr, Joy. "Introduction." In A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980. Ed. by Joy Parr, 3-18. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995.
- Paul, Diane B. Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to the Present. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995.

- Peiss, Kathy. "'Charity Girls' and City Pleasures: Historical Notes on Working-Class Sexuality, 1880-1920." In Passion and Power: Sexuality in History. Ed. by Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons with Robert A. Padgug, 57-69. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.
- Petchesky, Rosalind Pollack. "'Reproductive Choice' in the Contemporary United States: A Social Analysis of Female Sterilization." In And the Poor Get Children: Radical Perspectives on Population Dynamics. Ed. by Karen L. Michaelson, 50-88. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1981.
- Pierson, Ruth Roach. "Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice in the Writing of Women's History." In Writing Women's History: International Perspectives. Ed. by Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson, and Jane Rendall, 79-106. Hampshire: Macmillan, 1991.
- Pilpel, Harriet. "Discussion: Family Planning and the Law." Journal of Social Biology Vol 18: Supplement, (1971): S127-S133.
- Price, Monroe E. and Robert A. Burt. "Sterilization, State Action, and the Concept of Consent." Law & Psychology Review (Spring 1975): 57-78.
- Rafter, Nicole Hahn. White Trash: The Eugenic Family Studies, 1877-1919. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988.
- Rafter, Nicole, H. "Hard Times: Custodial Prisons for Women and the Example of the New York State Prison for Women at Auburn, 1893-1933." In Judge, Lawyer, Victim, Thief: Women, Gender Roles and Criminal Justice. Ed. by Nicole Hahn Rafter and Elizabeth Anne Stanko, 237-260. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1982.
- Rafter, N.H. and E.A. Stanko. "Introduction." In Judge, Lawyer, Victim, Thief: Women, Gender Roles and Criminal Justice. Ed. by Nicole Hahn Rafter and Elizabeth Anne Stank, 1-28. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1982.
- Rafter, Nicole H. "Claims-making and Socio-Cultural Context in the First U.S. Eugenics Campaign." Journal of Social Problems Vol. 39 No. 1 (February 1992): 17-37.
- Rafter, Nicole Hahn. "Chastizing the Unchaste: Social Control Functions of a Women's Reformatory, 1894-1931." In Social Control and the State: Historical and Comparative Essays. Ed. by Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull, 288-309. Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983.
- Reed, Elizabeth W. "Mental Retardation and Fertility." Journal of Social Biology Vol

- 18: Supplement, (1971): S42-S50.
- Reed, Sheldon, C. "Discussion: Mental Illness and Reproduction." Journal of Social Biology Vol 18: Supplement, (1971): S95-S102.
- Reilly, Philip R., M.D., J.D. The Surgical Solution: A History of Involuntary Sterilization in the United States. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
- Reissman, Catherine Kohler. "Women and Medicalization: A New Perspective." In Inventing Women: Science, Technology and Gender. Ed. by Gill Kirkup and Laurie Smith Keller, 123-144. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992.
- Robinault, Isabel P. Sex, Society, and the Disabled: A Developmental Inquiry into Roles, Reactions, and Responsibilities. Hagerstown, Maryland: Harper and Row, Publishers Inc., 1978.
- Roos, Philip. "Psychological Impact of Sterilization on the Individual." Law & Psychology Review (Spring 1975):45-58.
- Ross, Ellen. Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918. Ch. 7. "'The Value of Babies': Transforming Motherhood, 1900-1918." New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Rothman, David J. Strangers at the Bedside: A History of How Law and Bioethics Transformed Medical Decision Making. New York: BasicBooks, 1991.
- Rothman, David J. "Social Control: The Uses and Abuses of the Concept in the History of Incarceration." In Social Control and the State: Historical and Comparative Essays. Ed. by Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull, 106-117. Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983.
- Rothman, David J. Conscience and Convenience: The Asylum and Its Alternatives in Progressive America. Boston and Toronto: Little , Brown, and Co., 1980.
- Sangster, Joan. "Criminalizing the Colonized: Native Women Confront the Criminal Justice System." Canadian Historical Review. Vol 80 No 1 (March 1999).
- Schlossman, Steven and Stephanie Wallach. "The Crime of Precocious Sexuality: Female Juvenile Delinquency in the Progressive Era." Harvard Educational Review. Vol. 48 No. 1, (1978): 65-93.
- Schur, Edwin M. Labeling Women Deviant: Gender, Stigma and Social Control.

- Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983.
- Scull, Andrew. Social Order/Mental Disorder: Anglo-American Psychiatry in Historical Perspective. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989.
- Scull, Andrew. "The Domestication of Madness." Medical History Vol 27 (1983): 233-248.
- Scull, Andrew and Diane Favreau. "The Clitoridectomy Craze." Journal of Social Research Vol. 53 No.2 (Summer 1986): 241-260.
- Scull, Andrew T. and Diane Favreau. "'A Chance to Cut is a Chance to Cure': Sexual Surgery for Psychosis in Three Nineteenth Century Societies." Research in Law, Deviance and Social Control: A Research Annual. Ed. by Steven Spitzer and Andrew T. Scull. Vol. 8 (1986):3-40.
- Scull, Andrew T. Decarceration: Community Treatment and the Deviant: A Radical View. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Inc., 1977.
- Shapiro, Thomas M. Population Control Politics: Women, Sterilization and Reproductive Choice. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985.
- Shaw, Nancy Stoller. "Female Patients and the Medical Profession in Jails and Prisons: A Case of Quintuple Jeopardy." In Judge, Lawyer, Victim, Thief: Women, Gender Roles and Criminal Justice. Ed. by Nicole Hahn Rafter and Elizabeth Anne Stank, 261-273. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1982.
- Showalter, Elaine. Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle. New York: Penguin, 1990.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Victoria Women and Insanity." In Madhouses, Mad-Doctors, and Madmen: The Social History of Psychiatry in the Victorian Era. Ed. by Andrew Scull, 313-336. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981.
- Simmons, Christina. "Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression." In Passion and Power: Sexuality in History Ed. by Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons with Robert A. Padgug, 57-177. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.
- Skulton, Vieda. Madness and Morals: Ideas on Insanity in the Nineteenth Century. (University of Bristol, Department of Mental Health). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.
- Smith, David J. Minds Made Feeble: The Myth and Legacy of the Kallikaks. Rockville,

- Maryland: Aspen Systems Corporation, 1985.
- Smith, Lesley Shacklady. "Sexist Assumptions and Female Delinquency: An Empirical Investigation." In Women, Sexuality and Social Control. Ed. by Carol Smart and Barry Smart, 74-86. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.
- Snell, James G., and Cynthia Comacchio Abeele. "Regulating Nuptiality: Restricting Access to Marriage in Early Twentieth-Century English-Speaking Canada." Canadian Historical Review Vol. 69 No. 4 (1988): 466-489.
- Snell, James G. "'The White Life for Two': The Defense of Marriage and Sexual Morality in Canada, 1890-1914." Histoire Sociale/ Social History Vol 16 No. 31 (May 1983): 111-128.
- Steinberg, Deborah Lynn. "Technologies of Heterosexuality: Eugenic Reproduction Under Glass." In Border Patrols: Policing the Boundaries of Heterosexuality. Ed. by Deborah Lynn Steinberg, Debbie Epstein, and Richard Johnson, 66-79. London: Cassell, 1997.
- Stepan, Nancy. "Eugenics and Race, 1900-25." Chapter 5 in The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800-1960. Chapter 5: "Eugenics and Race, 1900-25." London: Macmillan, 1982.
- Strange, Carolyn. "Patriarchy Modified: The Criminal Prosecution of Rape in York County, Ontario, 1880-1930." in Essays in the History of Canadian Law: Vol 5. Crime and Criminal Justice. Ed. by Jim Phillips, Tina Loo, Susan Lewthwaite, 207-251. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.
- Strange, Carolyn. "Stories of Their Lives: the Historian and the Capital Case File." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 25-49. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Strange, Carolyn. Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995.
- Strong-Boag, Veronica and Kathryn McPherson. "The Confinement of Women: Childbirth and Hospitalization in Vancouver, 1919-1939." In British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women. Ed. by Gillian Crease and Veronica Strong-Boag. Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1992.
- Theriot, Nancy. "Women's Voices in the Nineteenth Century. Medical Discourse: A Step Toward Deconstructing Science." Signs 19:1 (1993):1-31.

- Thomson, Mathew. "Family, Community and State: The Micro-Politics of Mental Deficiency." In From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency: Historical Perspectives on People with Learning Disabilities. New York: Routledge, 1996: 207-230.
- Thomson, Mathew. The Problem of Mental Deficiency: Eugenics, Democracy and Social Policy in Britain c. 1870-1959. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998
- Trombley, Stephen. The Right to Reproduce: A History of Coercive Sterilization. London: Butler and Tanner Ltd., 1988.
- Trent, James W. Jr. Inventing the Feeble Mind: A History of Mental Retardation in the United States. Berkeley: University of California, 1994.
- Tyor, Peter. "'Denied the Power to Choose the Good': Sexuality and Mental Defect in American Medical Practice, 1850-1920." Journal of Social History Vol. 10, No.4 (June 1977): 472-489.
- Ussher, Jane M. Fantasies of Femininity: Reforming the Boundaries of Sex. New Brunswick and New York: Rutgers University Press, 1997.
- Ussher, Jane M. The Psychology of the Female Body. London and New York: Routledge, 1989.
- Unpublished Secondary Sources:*
- Valverde, Mariana. "Building Anti-Delinquent Communities: Morality, Gender and Generation in the City." In A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980. Ed. by Joy Parr, 19-45. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995.
- Valverde, Mariana. "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism." In Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, 3-26. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- Valverde, Mariana. The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991.
- Valverde, Mariana. Sex, Power and Pleasure. Toronto: The Women's Press, 1985.
- Walker, James W. St. G. "A Case for Morality: The Quong Wing Files." In On the Case: Explorations in Social History. Ed. by Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, 204-223. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Walkowitz, Judith R. "Male Vice and Female Virtue: Feminism and the Politics of Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Britain." In Powers of Desire: The Politics of

Merrill, Sexuality. Ed. by Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, Sharon Thompson, 419-438. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983.

Warren, Marguerite Q. "Delinquency Causation in Female Offenders." In Judge, Lawyer, Victim, Thief: Women, Gender Roles and Criminal Justice. Ed. by Nicole Hahn Rafter and Elizabeth Anne Stank, 181-202. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1982.

Warsh, Cheryl Krasnick. Moments of Unreason: The Practice of Canadian Psychiatry and the Homewood Retreat, 1883-1923. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1989.

Weeks, Jeffrey. Sexuality. Chichester: Ellis Horwood, Ltd., 1986.

Weeks, Jeffrey. Sex Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800. London: Longman Press, 1989.

Wilson, Deirdre. "Sexual Codes and Conduct: A Study of Teenage Girls." In Women, Sexuality and Social Control. Ed. by Carol Smart and Barry Smart, 65-73. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

#### Unpublished Secondary Sources:

Adolph, Valerie R. With foreword by William Vander Zalm. Woodlands: 1878-1978. n.p. 1978. BCARS. NWP 362.21. W891A.

Bragar, Madeline, C. "The Feeble-minded Female: An Historical Analysis of Mental Retardation as a Social Definition." Ph.D. diss, Syracuse University, New York, 1979.

Christian, Tim. "The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta: A Study of the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act." Faculty of Law, University of Alberta, n.d.

Davies, Megan Jean. "The Patients' World: British Columbia Mental Health Facilities, 1910-1935. M.A. Thesis, University of Waterloo, 1989.

Frost, Mary E. "Sterilization in Alberta: A Summary of the Cases Presented to the Eugenics Board for the Province of Alberta from 1929 to 1941." M.A. Thesis, Department of Psychology, University of Alberta, 1942.

McDonald, Ruth Marina. "A Policy of Privilege: The Alberta Sexual Sterilization Program 1928-1972." M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1996.

- Menzies, Robert and Dorothy E. Chunn. "The Gender Politics of Criminal Insanity: 'Order-in-Council' Women in British Columbia, 1888-1950." 1998.
- Report on Sterilization. *The Committee on Institutional Psychiatry*. April 30, 1973.
- Schauer, James L. "Historical Review of Sterilization of the Mentally Retarded in Wisconsin." M.Sc. Thesis. Wisconsin State University, Eau Claire. 1967.
- Schoen, Johanna. "The State and Women's Sexuality: The Birth Control and Sterilization Program in North Carolina, 1929-75." M.A. Thesis, University of North Carolina, 1989.
- Vrooman, Tamara Rowanne. "The Wayward and the Feeble-minded: Euthenics, Eugenics, and the Provincial Industrial Home for Girls, 1914-1929." M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1994.
- Wahlsten, Douglas. "Leilani Muir versus the Philosopher King: Eugenics on Trial in Alberta." Unpublished paper, Department of Psychology, University of Alberta. N.D.
- Wosilius, Monica. "Eugenics, Insanity and Feeble-mindedness: British Columbia's Sterilization Policy from 1933-43." M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1995.

#### Government Documents

- "Alberta: Mental Health Section of the Survey of Alberta's Health, 1950." M-1250-11.53. n.p., n.d.
- Blair, Dr. W.R.N. Mental Health in Alberta. Vol. II. Edmonton, Alberta: Queen's Printer, 1973.
- Bowker, Marjorie, Montgomery. "Brief on Mental Retardation for A Special Legislative and Lay Committee Appointed by The Legislative Assembly of Alberta for the Study of Preventative Health Services in Alberta. December 1965.
- Department of Health. Regulations Under the Mental Health Act. Alberta Regulation 675/64. Amended by Alberta Regulations 15/65, 263/66, 13/67, 185/67, 14/68, 197/68. Edmonton: L.S. Wall, 1968.
- Institute of Law Research and Reform, Edmonton, Alberta. Report Competence and

Human Reproduction. No. 52 (February 1989). Gov Doc CA2 AL LRR 90R052 C-4.

Kopp, James J. "Sexual Sterilization of the Mentally Retarded." National Library of Medicine Literature Search. January 1975-December 1980. No. 80-20. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Public Health Service; National Institutes of Health. N.D.

Mental Hygiene Survey of the Province of Alberta. Conducted by the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, October and November, 1921. Department of Public Health, Parliament Buildings, Edmonton, Alberta.

Staats, Elmer B. "Investigation of Allegations Concerning Indian Health Service. B-164031(5); HRD-77-3. Washington, D.C.: Comptroller General of the United States. (November 4, 1976). Released November 23, 1976.

Thomson, Robert Henry, Director of Information Services of the Mental Health Branch. "A Summary of the Growth and Development of Mental Health Facilities and Services in British Columbia, 1850-1970." (April 1972).

- University of Victoria Department of History Fellowship 1998
- Hutchinson Prize for Academic Excellence 1997
- The Victoria Municipal Chapter, IODE History Scholarship 1997
- Hutchinson Prize for Academic Excellence 1995
- President's Regional Scholarship 1994

Surname: Roberts

Given Names: Jennifer K.

Place of Birth: Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Victoria

1994 to 1999

Camosun College

1992 to 1994

Degrees Awarded: B.A., University of Victoria,

1997

Honours and Awards:

University of Victoria Department of History Scholarship

1997 to 1999

University of Victoria Department of History Fellowship

1998

Hutchinson Prize for Academic Excellence

1997

The Victoria Municipal Chapter, IODE History Scholarship

1997

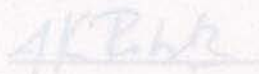
Hutchinson Prize for Academic Excellence

1995

President's Regional Scholarship

1994

Author



Jennifer K. Roberts

September 7, 1999

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant the right to lend my thesis to users of the University of Victoria Library, and to make single copies only for such users or in response to request from the Library of any other university, or similar institution, on its behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or a member of the university designated by me. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis:

"If Thine Eye Offends Thee, Pluck It Out": Sterilization And The Policing Of Female Sexuality  
In Twentieth Century Western Canada

Author



Jennifer K. Roberts

September 7, 1999