Where Charity Ended:
A Study of Welfare in the Yukon Territory,
1917-1938.

by

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## ABSTRACT

The records of the Yukon Welfare program between 1917-1938 were examined to determine the nature of the programme. All new applications to the programme were closely examined, to build a profile of the clients and circumstances of their need for aid. Financial records were used to determine the scope of the programme in relation to other governmental expenditures. The programme was found to be an outdoor relief programme, which was used mainly as an equivalent to the Old Age Pensions offered in some southern Canadian provinces. The programme's cost rose from 0.008% of the total annual expenditures in 1917 to 32% of total Government expenditures in 1938. Initially the head of the Yukon Government had singular authority to offer aid; in 1925 an administrative officer was appointed, using the R.C.M.P. as field officers. The provision of charity by the head of government could be seen as palliative measure, since the Yukon had an appointed government, rather than wholly elected and responsible to the voters.

Government charity during the Gold Rush entailed replacing lost tools for prospectors, to make them dependent again upon their own labour for support. After the Gold Rush, charity was given to any who asked for it, as the fierce northern climate could kill those without sufficient food, clothing or shelter. In the interwar period this same monthly aid of twenty dollars worth of food, plus fuel, clothing and medicine as needed, was given to the aging pioneer population. This was donated by the Yukon Government to the elderly who then lived out their later years in the Yukon without death from cold or hunger, after they could no longer work for a living. The public image of the Yukon was preserved by the government donations, as well as the myth of the Yukon as a neighbourly place.

Four groups were aided. The first was the old, formerly the working poor. The second was women without patriarchally legitimated access to male income: widows, deserted wives, unmarried mothers, and spinsters. The third group was partly native families, where one parent had died, and children required support. The fourth group was aided in 1933 only; they were older men affected by structural unemployment in the mining industry. Distinctions in the level of assistance rendered to various clients were based on the administrator's judgment of the client's level of fault for their own misfortune. Those

applicants made dependent through aging were considered blameless; widows as well were absolved of responsibility for their own poverty. Women who had failed marriages, and morally suspect women were observed and coerced into more acceptable behaviour in order to continue receiving aid. Natives were excluded from receiving aid; those partly native were encouraged to emulate a non-native lifestyle to avoid scrutiny and racial slurs. Aid was not expected to be repaid, except where the client was considered able to earn income; the Keno miners of 1933 were aided as a loan from the Government, until they could find new work. This assignment of blame follows the pattern suggested by David Thomson in his article `Welfare and the Historians.'

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for Cheryl,

without whom....

## Chapter One: Historiographical Study of the Poor.[1]

I have always been interested in how society dealt with the outsiders, those who acted differently or had unusual characteristics. The interplay between the powerful and the less powerful, those who were part of a norm and those outside the norm, are fertile grounds for study as they can illuminate the creation of the norm, and the consequences, if any, of difference. After an undergraduate training in women's studies and history, I went on to take a Master's Degree in History. I had just finished reading Linda Gordon's Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence when I went on a search in the Yukon Territorial Archives for the records upon which I would write my thesis. When I found the terse title "Welfare" on a group of government files stretching from 1917 through to 1938, I was intrigued. After first inspection I decided this was "it." While the nature of the record group was not immediately apparent, it appeared to be a public relief fund whose guidelines had not survived.

The unusual nature of the Yukon welfare system only becomes apparent when one looks at the system through which the needy were helped, as well as at the poor who were having some of their needs met. The Yukon welfare system differed from other Canadian systems of relief in at least six ways. First, it was a relatively early example of systematized Government funded relief. Second there was an absence of secular and religious charitable groups active in the area, despite the great effect the Social Gospel movement was having in the rest of Canada in the early part of the century. Third there was an absence of legislation requiring the Government to participate in this costly exercise, and yet they did devote an increasing proportion of the Government budget towards relief. Fourth, without legislation there was neither a maximum nor a minimum amount of assistance which could be rendered. Fifth, the delivery system of relief was

[1]Poor is defined for the purpose of this monograph as "lacking adequate money or means to live comfortably" in the Oxford Concise Dictionary, 8th Edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, p. 926. Poverty is defined as "the state of being poor; want of the necessities of life," p. 934.

different from every other in Canada, as it was exclusively the Royal North West Mounted Police [R.N.C.M.P, later the Royal Western Mounted Police, R.C.M.P.] who were its everyday investigating officers, managers of transportation, and procurers of gossip. The use of the police rather than civil servants, charity workers, or a mixture of these, as in the rest of North America is a significant difference in the interweaving of social powers behind the welfare system. Finally, the head of the Government, in the Yukon the Gold Comissioner, granted or refused relief requests personally for almost the entire period of study; it was seen as his individual political privilege to grant relief until 1925. The Yukon's economic cycles and governmental structure were different from the rest of Canada; and the transiency of the non-native population, together with these other enumerated factors made the welfare files worth further investigation. To prepare myself for their study, I read the historiography of welfare issues.

Writing on the subject of both poor relief and on the poor is a recent historical phenomenon. The majority of writings concentrate on one or the other subject, those providing or receiving welfare. This thesis will look at both the givers and receivers, and highlight some of the political, administrative and geographic considerations which differentiate this system of relief from other early Canadian ventures into systematized charity. The historiographical currents of previous writings on the subject of poor relief and the poor will be examined in the first chapter, to guide the reader, as the subjects have received quite different treatment at the hands of a variety of historians.

The examination of the historiography which makes up the majority of this chapter falls into three main periods: the late nineteenth century, the first half of the twentieth century, and the second half of the twentieth century. This historiographical overview of the study of the poor begins with a consideration of the absence of the poor from the written record. It then discusses the type of histories which included the poor, their main focus, and the types of sources upon which these studies were based. The significant intellectual currents which affected the ideas about the poor will provide context for this

discussion. Finally an attempt will be made to situate the study into welfare historiography.

Prior to the nineteenth century, the poor were mostly absent from written history. Histories were written about political and military events, in which the poor acted as a backdrop to occurrences which were largely not in their control. The leaders of society were chronicled; ordinary working people and the poor were only described on rare occasions when they stepped out of the normal social order, such as in labour unrest, riots and plagues. In their appearances in historical texts the poor were 'the poor': an anonymous mass of persons, undistinguished by any individual detail.

There were in the nineteenth century two sources which could be used by historians to make histories: material artifacts and written accounts. The poor owned no magnificent goods which by surviving the centuries, would point to their existence, their tastes and their ideals, either religious or secular. The scarcity of written works by the poor is unsurprising: free, universal, compulsory elementary education did not arrive in the western world until the late nineteenth century. The poor had little leisure time in which to write, as so much of their time was taken up working to keep food in their mouths and shelter over their heads, and they had little spare money to acquire even the pen, ink, paper and candles required.

An additional factor in the absence of the poor from the historical record is that the survival of any historical work is haphazard; documents need to be kept in the right humidity and level of light for the preservation of the paper on which they are written, and the documents need to be made known to historians and researchers. The documents need to be part of a collection such as those in museums and archives, so they can be indexed, accessed, read and incorporated into historical research and writing.

The chances of being included in an archival collection is directly related to how important a work is judged to be; in this selection all cultural biases on the part of the archivist come into play, including racism and sexism. Also, the financial resources of

institutions like archives are not limitless: problems of space and public interest make document collection a difficult process. For example, we have in archives the personal papers of many politicians, but few of the papers of their domestic servants because the politicians' thoughts were considered to be more important, and worthy of preservation because they made a mark in society by making its rules, and the servants followed those rules. There are also many Christian prohibitions on women speaking or writing their own mind; silence on a woman's part was considered a sign of religious and social propriety. When the barriers to the writing of and the survival of documents by the poor, especially ethnic minorities and women are considered, it is understandable that their perspective is missing from our record of the past.

In late nineteenth century Britain and North America, various social reform movements bloomed. The new industrial, urban poverty was perceived as a potential threat by wealthier city dwellers and factory owners, due to the sheer number of the poor crowded together and their proximity to the property of the rich. The French Revolution had long ago dispelled the idea that the masses were content with their lot. A number of reforms were opening up the social structure. Mass education and extension of the voting franchise were two of the most pervasive changes, but many small programmes were launched, such as individual factory owners providing housing for their workers. These attempts at reform created some of the first histories wherein the poor figured at least in a small way, usually as the subjects on which the reformers operated. In an attempt to forestall complete change in the political order, the voting franchise was extended to men with less and less property throughout the late nineteenth century, and to women in the early twentieth century. Elementary education was made mandatory for all children in Britain, and in most of North America. Part of the goal of that education was to provide children the discipline and skills they would need to work for their living in a rapidly industrializing world. Another part of the programme was to create obedient civil subjects, who knew their duties under the law: to be governed and to be loyal.

The concept of 'social control' stems from the early industrializing period in Britain. The accepted social norms at the time for the masses involved both self-reliance on the individual's ability to work for his or her living, and on a certain amount of trust in others to care for an individual as a neighbour and family member, if a person were unable to work for any length of time. Part of that social contract was that the poor living in the parish should be given sufficient food and shelter to keep body and soul together, those who committed crimes would be punished, and the interests of the poor, the weak, and the helpless would be taken into consideration by the wealthy and powerful who ruled. The role of the landlord was to provide both employment on his lands, or charity to those who could not work, and to provide justice as the local judge for his common people. By the nineteenth century the bonds between the local landlord and the people were breaking down under the pressures of industrialization, and the resulting transiency of the young. The fear of being known as a troublemaker, or criminal by everyone who had ever known your family, and the potential severing of the ties of generosity from the lord to your family had functioned as substantial deterrents to socially unacceptable behaviour in small communities. Higher mobility and lack of local generational ties were common for the new wage labourers in the factories; the new factory owners considered that effectively, the old bonds of obedience and with it, social control, had broken down. Part of the impetus for new social reforms can be traced to a desire on the part of the new elite to establish a system of rewards and deterrents to replace the old village ties of deference to the landlord.[2]

Secular and religious groups both did their duty towards the new urban poor, founding institutions to care for their needs. The first appearances of the subject of poverty in written history was in the histories of institutions founded to care for the poor. Histories of poor relief in the nineteenth century were often closer to being biographies of the

[2]James Leiby, "Social Control and Historical Explanation: Historians View the Piven and Cloward Thesis" Social Welfare or Social Control? Some Historical Reflections on *Regulating the Poor* Walter I. Trattner, ed. Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1983, pp. 97-98.

philanthropists, written to display the generous and humanitarian values of those who worked to relieve the material and moral distress of the poor. Those who had the powers to give or withhold were studied, but not the recipients. The sources for these histories included the papers of the great philanthropists, records of government debate on reform bills, and the somewhat sketchy records of institutions of poor relief.

The methods of relieving the distress of the poor were varied and encountered much debate in the nineteenth century. Indoor relief was the provision of a house, an institution, a poorhouse. Rigid discipline was the rule inside, so that the poor could not slide into loose ways, and work was enforced both to provide saleable items to offset the cost of keeping the poor and to ward off slothfulness on the part of the inmates. These institutions were hierarchically run, and imparted a punitive version of Christianity.[3]

Histories written about these institutions were prone to praise and condemn, but left little middle ground in their pronouncements.[4] For example, one of the reformers' greatest fears was that alms to the poor would be used for alcohol and tobacco rather than necessities of life. This was based on the assumption that the poor had little impulse control and were prone to profligacy. The dyadic opposition of moral characteristics is apparent in that the reformers stereotyped themselves as prudent and the poor as improvident, and anything else was explained as an exception. These histories were written by reformers, about reformers, and were noticeably lacking in self-analysis. For example, the poor were shown as static and unmoving in their poverty, forever poor, as opposed to transient and socially mobile; their rescuers were painted equally flatly, undifferentiated in ethnicity, gender or motivation. There were many different motivations for engaging in social reform work, from the most conservative of self protection through

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[3]Patricia T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell, Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English Canada (1800-1950). Lanham: University Press of America. 1983.

[4]The chronicling reformers included Charles Booth's Life and Labour of the People of London. First series: Poverty. 1902, and Pauperism, a picture: and the endowment of old age, an argument, London: Macmillan, 1892, and Sidney and Beatrice Webb's English Poor Law History, London: F.Cass, 1927 and 1929.

riot and theft prevention to the most generous, in desiring simply to lessen human suffering.

The late nineteenth century reform histories were descriptions of the political processes of reform, which included no analysis of why certain methods of relief were chosen by the reformers. These books did not analyse how large social or natural forces created individual need, such as those of seasonal labourers, war widows or epidemic survivors. They did not question why reformers responded to certain groups and not others. The reform writers did not question the established social order by suggesting major redistributions of power or wealth; the individual poor person was seen as the creator of his/her own predicament, yet was also portrayed as passive. Agency was shown to be the natural purview of the middle and upper classes, whose superior planning and discipline were to be emulated. In short, these were descriptive and didactic works rather than analytical ones. Clarke A. Chambers summed up the failings of these histories in this way:

> The literature did not seek to understand the ways in which populations used nineteenth century institutions for their own ends. It did not address the strategies by which the needy struggled to escape the spider web of control. It rarely considered the possibility that the recitation of behavioral norms by which the architects of social programs was more effective in enforcing and justifying values for those who dwelled on the higher class side than ever it was in persuading or coercing the lower classes to adopt bourgeois norms in their own lives." [5]

Three ideological changes took place at the end of the nineteenth century which are germane to the issues of the welfare of the poor. Charles Darwin's startling assertion that evolution created the diversity of species took the world by storm. His suggestion that the fittest animals would survive to breed, pushing aside other species was applied as a model of human behaviour. Here, the ideas were inverted, as the most fit groups in society, [as deemed by themselves] the wealthy, were not producing as many offspring as the poor

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[5]Clarke A. Chambers "Toward a Redefinition of Welfare History," *Journal of American History,* 73 (Sept. 1986), p.420.

did. Concerns about the management of the poor came more to the forefront in the content of the ideology of Social Darwinism. The fear of the prolific breeding powers of the Chinese labourers imported to North America, called the 'Yellow Menace', resulted in racial legislation, such as the Head Tax on Chinese entering British Columbia, despite the fact that the small numbers of Chinese females in that province precluded startling levels of breeding. The higher death rate of the poor was not taken into account in these fears of Malthusian overpopulation, where the number of poor people was supposed to grow more quickly than the available food supply, followed by their numbers shrinking due to starvation.[6]

The second ideology of importance was created by a visitor to England. Karl Marx's ideas were quietly written in the British Museum's Reading Room in the late nineteenth century, and came to political fruition later in Russia, in 1917.[7] Marxism came to the historical profession half a century later, but provides an interesting window through which to examine the workings of charity. Given that the central tenets of Marxist analysis center around class formation, the relief of the material distress of the poor by those with resources would seem to be a fertile ground for study.

The third ideological shift was not authored by any one individual, but had wide-reaching consequences for the poor. The nineteenth century world was in love with discovery, with method, and with science. Science, it was argued, would save Man, rather than God saving Man. When Darwinism and scientific method were applied to charity, a very different entity came into being: scientific charity. The core of scientific charity was a management ideal, wherein the human capital of society was to be organized by a new core of social workers who would see that the aged, the mentally deficient, the abused, the poor and the physically imperfect were cared for in appropriate institutions and programmes. Part of this management plan involved discouraging too much dependency

[6]Geoffrey Gilbert, "Toward the Welfare State: Some British Views on the Right to Subsistence, 1768-1834" *Review of Social Economy* Vol. XLVI No. 2, October 1988, p. 150.
[7]Karl Marx, Kapital, London: 1898.

on aid, and maintaining work as a more palatable alternative to most forms of charity. This was known as the principle of less eligibility and it remains at the core of most welfare programs in the late twentieth century.

Scientific charity takes us into the second main period, the early twentieth century. Scientific charity was the most pervasive of the ideological currents of the nineteenth century. Its passion for organization collided with the birth of the new urban manger: the social worker was replacing the priest or minister as the organizing force of social programming. Sidney and Beatrice Webb used Britain's pre-industrial age as a beginning for their positivist history of the British Poor Law; their conclusions predict that expanding benevolence and charity, tempered with scientific reform would create a golden age of reform. These were common sentiments from reformers in what became known as the Progressive Era, from 1910-1930.

The relief of the material wants of the poor shifted in moral responsibility from the religious caregivers to the secular mangers in the early twentieth century. It was an age where Man lost God, and where fewer social responsibilities were being fulfilled by religious organizations. The effect of this shift was that the poor came to depend on a new group of persons for assistance, who were working from different motivations. In the Middle Ages donors gave to the poor and crippled to subtract from the amount of spiritual torment the donors might suffer in Purgatory, atoning their own sins. In an early Twentieth century context, which believed less in numerical calculations of sin and penance, the desire to assist the poor was more often directed from a desire to create human order by lessening human and earthly suffering, not to reduce the amount of suffering a charitable individual would have to undergo before his soul would pass from purgatory to Heaven. Without the appeal of reduction in ones' own load of sins, the social responsibility of charity shifted, perhaps with a lessening in a belief in a spiritual afterlife, to the idea that ones' reward should occur in life. The materialism of the Victorian era, with its manifold creations of consumer goods, and social structuring according to what

one owned was an expression of the new moral hierarchy, removed from the social order based on closeness to the crown, and aristocracy. There was still a correlation between wealth and obligation to the poor; wealthy women were expected to perform acts of charity towards the poor as a demonstration of their own social worth. However, in the choice of subject material, the charitably minded chose those who reinforced the rightness of the extant social hierarchy. It followed then that the blameless and good should be assisted in life, and the less morally pure should be left to suffer visibly, to deter others from following the poor example of conduct. Here the function of charity shifted from assisting anyone who asked, for your own good, to weighing the moral and social worth of the applicant, and only rewarding those who fit in the morally and socially constructed categories of 'deserving poor.' Charity ended and welfare began.

The writing of social work histories was an almost internal process for the developing profession. After the wealthy reformers' projects were established, the diurnal workings of the programs devolved into the hands of the new charitable professionals. The goal of these new histories was to educate the professionals in techniques, bureaucratic and hierarchical structures for the maintenance of these new systems of charity. As such, they made dry reading for a general reader, which was not their intended audience. The central font of welfare history publishing was one journal, the *Social Service Review* started in 1927 at the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration. The content of the published material reflected the School's emphasis on law, economics, government, public affairs and history.[8]

Clark Chambers summed up the welfare histories in this way:

> "In short, the writing of welfare history generally reflected the profession of social work itself with its emphasis on technical expertise, its bureaucratic and hierarchical structure that placed wide social distance between the providers and the recipients of

[8]Clarke A. Chambers "Towards a Re-definition of Welfare History," p. 411.

social service, and its perception of clients as victims either of circumstance or of social injustice, not as actors in their own right." [9]

Part of this view of the clients of welfare systems as distant objects occurred because these histories were written from the administrative records of the organizations, not from the case files of the clients. Histories such as those by Booth, written of social work institutions from the early twentieth century were overwhelmingly positivist, narrative and descriptive, and were based on administrative records rather than case files.[10] This work was then ignorant of any efforts the poor made to help themselves before coming to institutions for help, and re-enforced the stereotype that the poor were shiftless and showed no drive to help themselves. One aspect of self-help for the poor was the informal network of giving and receiving help in largely female lending networks; detailed information on these networks are unavailable to us as their informality precluded written records.[11] This lack of documentation made the study of such networks difficult and re-inforces the concentration on formal organizations of welfare rather than on the efforts of the poor to help themselves.

One interesting ideological shift which had occurred was towards children. While in the early nineteenth century, the child paying for his father's sins or mistakes was considered morally appropriate, and a process of inter-generational learning, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reformers and social workers wanted to shelter children from the consequences of their parents' mistakes and misfortunes. One can see this offering of many second chances, in free milk programs, in reform schools and in the whole concept of juvenile delinquency. The core idea in the evolving concept of juvenile delinquency was that a mistake on the parents' part or lack in the child's life caused the child's criminal behaviour. Therefore, theoretically, to stop the child from further criminal

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[9]Clarke A. Chambers "Towards a Re-definition of Welfare History," p. 415.

[10]Charles Booth Life and Labour of the People of London. First series: Poverty. 1902, and Pauperism, a picture: and the endowment of old age, an argument, London: Macmillan, 1892.

[11]Ellen Ross, "Survival Networks: Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London Before World War I" *History Workshop Journal* Issue 15, (Spring 1983), pp. 4-9.

acts, one had to make up for whatever the child lacked or for the negative experience in the child's upbringing, in order to turn the child into a moral, civil subject.[12]

These early twentieth century social welfare works suffered from twin flaws: they contained an uncritically Whiggish interpretation of history, where the past was seen as one unending stream of discoveries which led naturally to the present, and vision of the future which continues onward in a spiral of progress. As the Romans discovered while the Goths sacked the capital of the Empire, all change is not progress.

The main focus of these new histories in which the poor formed the backdrop, such as those found printed in the Social Service Review, was to educate more social workers.[13] Most of the early twentieth century work was produced by social work educators who characterized the rise of their profession and the growth of the public's generosity as natural progressions to a state of perfection in which the helpless would be cared for by competent, organized professionals.[14] Little mention was given to the causes of dependency or of the goals and choices made by charitable groups, administrators and politicians in the methods of providing relief. These authors did not examine the strife between different groups among the poor and the various groups of reformers which arose from the differing goals and actions of the different groups. For example, in Saskatoon the municipality, in an attempt to reduce the cost of supplying food relief to families, operated its own Relief Store, where relief recipients could purchase items with the relief vouchers. This act was viewed very differently by members of the business community, the reliefers and the city council. The reliefers accused the city fathers of being rampant capitalists, selling them shoddy goods, such as butter smelling of fish, and turning a profit in the Relief Store on their misery. The women in particular criticized the monopoly of

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[12]Walter I. Trattner, From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America, 3rd edition, New York: The Free Press, pp 119-120.

[13]*Social Service Review*, University of Chicago, founded in 1927.

[14]James Struthers, " A Profession in Crisis: Charlotte Whitton and Canadian Social Work in the 1930's," New Canadian Readings: The Depression in Canada, J.L. Granatstein, ed., Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman, Ltd., p. 233.

the store for its lack of variety, and the difference of dealing with a monopoly which was unwilling to make trades in the relief vouchers, perhaps to include matches and sewing needles in the tally, rather than exclusively food items. The merchants of Saskatoon accused the municipal government of being Communists, since they were depriving the merchants of their customers by only issuing vouchers to the Relief Store, thereby removing the staple of business, the customer on relief.[15]

In particular the 1930's were ridden with strife around the setting of an acceptable minimum standard of living from the point of view of employers, employed and unemployed workers, and other groups. These arguments showed a divided society, classified into those who were considered naturally or properly powerful and others rendered powerless by natural inferiority. The illusion of a passive underclass was contradicted by the social planners' and politicians' perception of the poor as dangerous, as those who needed to be controlled continually, in case this 'natural' order should be fractured. If the concentration of power was natural, the perception by authorities of a constant need for re-enforcement of this order belied it. These social work histories did not ask about the source of their system of classification for individuals, nor did they try to justify it in more than a descriptive way. Progressive Era welfare histories did not question who benefited from, and whose interests were served by social welfare policy.[16]

The role of the social worker's class, race or gender was not analysed in these early twentieth century histories. Conservative social work historians concentrated on "policy, administration and ideology, who said what to whom, and why [using administrative records] rather than with measuring and assessing who got what from whom, when, how

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[15]Theresa Healy, "Neither Reasonable Nor Adequate: Women and Relief in Saskatoon, 1929-1939. A Paper for Presentation at the Qualicum Conference, Qualicum Beach, B. C., January 25-27, 1991." Simon Fraser University, 1991.

[16]James Leiby, `Social Control and Historical Explanation,' in Social Welfare or Social Control? Some Historical Explanations on Regulating the Poor, ed. Walter I. Trattner Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983, p.95.

often, and at what cost to the giver, receiver and to society at large."[17] More to the point, those who received welfare were ignored, and the administrative structures and political motivations of those who had the power to give or withhold were studied. A level of gender bias is also noticeable here, in that it is the (mostly male) administrators and politicians who were considered worthy of study, not the largely female case workers. Clarke A. Chambers' view of the gendered aspects of the reception of welfare history was that "two thirds to three quarters of those who provided hands on services were female, and society generally perceived that anything women did could not be all that important."[18]

The second half of the twentieth century contained two different streams of welfare history, one from the field of social work and one contained within the new social history. Technological advances and new record bases were examined and used; new styles of historical analysis were developed to use on the new computer database systems. The intellectual currents which affected much of the study of the poor by these two streams were Marxism and social control theory; their twin flaws and mutual contradictions will be explored. Finally, the new literature on women, children, the family and the aged will be briefly examined, as they are the populations which have formed the majority of the world's poor throughout time.

During the Second World War industry went back into full operating capacity. The unemployed of the Great Depression were inducted either into war industries or military service. Poverty's poignancy faded in the face of fascist invasion. After the War, the general economic boom which followed also masked the persistence of poverty. However, the poor continued to exist and in the mid 1950's, they were 'discovered' again.

The positive reception of Robert H. Bremmer's From the Depths: the Discovery of Poverty in the United States in 1956 stimulated the next development of welfare history.

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[17] David Thomson, `Welfare and the Historians,' in The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure, eds. Lloyd Bonafield et. al, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986,

[18] Clarke A. Chambers "Towards a Re-definition of Welfare History," p. 416.

The Council on Social Work Education met in July of 1956 to organize a committee on the History of Social Welfare, drawing upon itself, the American Historical Association, and the National Association of Social Workers. A year later nearly one hundred persons were members of the new committee. To quote from its newsletter its goal was to coordinate the skills of the historian and the current social work practitioner, for "the historian can turn the light of history upon contemporary social welfare and the social worker can view the past from the vantage of a discipline acquired in relating social practice and social policy."[19] Members of that group published research, and historical interest was stimulated in the field of social work. The University of Minnesota established the Social Welfare History Archives in 1963, which acquired the records of many social work institutions. However, the welfare history produced by this group remained separate from the furor of new social history occurring in the 1960's, and was still largely read by social workers in training rather than by historians. As its main utility was for the profession of social work, these new welfare histories bear little influence on this thesis.

The post World War II economic boom was also followed by an educational boom, as many countries had schemes in place where ex-service personnel could enter universities and colleges. In these institutions a plethora of historical ideas and new theories about how the past functioned abounded. The diversity in background of both students and professors is generally credited with expanding the interest of the historical profession into the lives of ethnic minorities, women and other socially marginal groups.[20] The 1960's was recognized as a time of shifting social values, from conservative and orderly long term goals to a freer, less conventional attitude. Distrust of authority figures and movement away from conventional, Christian religious practices left few idols intact. In the historical profession, this was characterized by a movement away from the study of great men and

[19]Committee on the History of Social Welfare, *Newsletter*, no. 3 (Nov. 1957), 1, quoted in Clarke A. Chambers, p. 414.
[20]Clarke A. Chambers, p. 417.

towards a study of society in the aggregate and those considered outsiders. It is out of these new social histories that the foundation for this thesis lies.

Technology was remaking society in its own image, and changing how many tasks were accomplished. Just as industrialization and mechanization had replaced hand labour, so was computerized technology now replacing mechanized labour. One of the things computers allowed was mass, centralized data storage; droves of records could be contained in the spinning tapes, the huge mainframe computers which dwelt like demons in the basements of buildings. Cliometricians looked at the possibilities contained within so many mass record groupings and set to work quantifying. Census data was one of the first areas historians approached, then on to any other record grouping which seemed promising. Quantification as a historical method sparked a controversy within the profession which lasted roughly twenty years. By the end of that period it was generally accepted that the quality of the questions asked had more influence on the quality of historical work than whether the quantification used was implicit and in word use, or overt and recorded in tabular form.

The rise of sociology and sociological theory had occurred quietly in the 1950's, and, by the 1970's, historians were examining the works of theory their daughter discipline had created. An entity known as the Social Science History Association was even formed, boasting of many members and promising a bright future for such cross-disciplinary work.[21] Some historians had the idea of testing sociological theories historically, as in Social Welfare or Social Control? Some Historical Explanations on Regulating the Poor, edited by Walter I. Trattner. This is a theoretically flawed enterprise which resembles the mythical pushmepullyou, as a sociological theory moves from an incident in a specific time and place, and expands out into a generalized theory, and a historical proof moves from a

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[21]J. Morgan Kousser, "The State of Social Science History in the Late 1980's" *Historical Methods,* Winter 1989, Volume 22, Number 1, p. 13, 17-18.

general idea to a specific event in a specific time and place.[22] Nevertheless, historical testing of sociological theory was attempted, possibly due to the prevailing belief at the time, that sociology was presumed to be the receptacle of theory and history of the case study.

It was not solely theoretical invention which spurred much of the new history, but material sources. Mass record keeping had created vast arrays of information for a historian's perusal, allowing the historian at least a limited window into the situation of the poor, who still left few personal writings. Out of this conglomeration of computers, quantification, sociological theories, historical testing, women's liberation movement ideas, ethnic rediscovery and racial strife came the new social history. Part of the new social history was the dismantling of previous whole entities, such as looking at ethnic minorities separately from the majority culture, looking at women and children separately from 'the family'. This new social history process of separating groups out from their mileu to examine them critically and distinctly is an essential component of this thesis.

Concepts of power in society and how it was distributed were also critically examined, and historical theory became an overtly declared part of history, rather than an understood or subsumed thread in the writing of history. The sub-field of history multiplied in the 1970's and 1980's, to include ethnic history, women's history, urban history, oral history, population history and so on. New academic journals were founded in great numbers: *Labour History* (1960), *Journal of Social History* (1967), *Historical Methods Newsletter* (1967), *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (1970), *Feminist Studies* (1972), *Journal of Ethnic Studies* (1973), *Journal of Urban History* (1974), *Ethnicity* (1974), *American Indian Quarterly* (1974), *Signs* (1975), *Social Science History* (1976), and the *Journal of Family History* (1976). These media carried the new research to a larger and larger academic community, who in response produced more such research. The content of the

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[22]Gareth Stedman Jones, "From Historical Sociology to Theoretical History" *British Journal of Sociology* Volume 27 Number 3 September 1976, pp 295-296.

new social history included the areas contained in welfare history, but did so separately from it, and with the enthusiasm of first discovery. Almshouses, orphanages, prisons, mental institutions, workhouses, unmarried mothers' homes, immigration houses, were all examined as part of the new social history. What was novel about these examinations was that *the clients* were the focus of the investigations, not the administrators. It was the lives of women, children, the aged and immigrants which were being examined for the first time.

Central to the re-examination of received historical accounts were efforts to understand the ways in which and to judge the degree to which institutions of education, health and welfare had arisen from benevolent and humanitarian impulses and had on the one hand in fact ameliorated conditions and enlarged economic and social opportunities for disadvantaged groups-or, on the other, been designed to impose order on society, to create a tractable and low-wage labour force and to enforce discipline in the workplace, to impose middle-class values and norms on lower class and immigrant folk, and thus to control the 'dangerous' classes.[23] Social control theory was developed in the 1960's, along with concepts like Gramsci's hegemony, which is the cultural domination of a ruling class over subordinate strata in society. Marxist theory competed for adherents with social control theory; social control theory defined charity as "the diverse ways in which punitive and manipulative programs of charity set out to enforce middle-class values and to socialize immigrants and the working poor to norms appropriate to an aggressive, expansive capitalist society."[24] Both of these theories explored how the few and powerful have retained and exercised power, and related to the masses with their dispersed power; less was explored originally of the dispersed powers, if any existed, of the masses. Social control theory can be important in the study of agency in poverty related histories as the central tenets of the theory revolve around the individual's ability,

[23]Clarke A. Chambers, p. 416.
[24]Clarke A. Chambers, p. 418, p. 417

and therefore power, to act and how access to that power is differentially available to different segments of a population. Social control theory also explored the methods through which the few exert authority over the many, and postulates why and how that control is retained. Peggy Pascoe's work on women's orgnization is a good example of this kind.[25]

One of the prime flaws of social control theory is that the term social control has been applied to so many different systems, techniques and forcefulness of behaviours, that it has lost its meaning. For example, the term 'social control' has been used to refer to moral stewardship provided by the middle classes for the working class, the attempt by the upper classes to restore the working classes to an appropriate level of submissiveness, the inculcation and enforcement of routines in institutions, and the enforcement of gender norms and the punishments for deviation from those norms.[26] As with the undefined use of the term 'class', social control must be specifically defined in its use for it to hold analytical meaning.

For the historian, both Marxist and social control theory have temporal flaws. Social control theory posits a preexisting state of control, the fracture of that control due to some event, and a reassertion of control by some group, although not necessarily the original one. For the application of this theory it is unfortunate that it is so deeply staged; aside from brief events such as riots, it is difficult to know when a state of control is in existence and when it is not. Marxist theory contains a different staged model, where the workers begin to realize their plight, they become self-aware as a group, and then they rebel against the capitalists. Unfortunately for the Marxists, we appear to be stalled in stage one, that of latent class conflict and vague class identification. If a layer of Marxism is added over the social control theory, the proletariat theoretically become unaware of their plight, and

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[25]Peggy Pascoe, Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

[26]Stormy Stuart, "The Inmates of the Wellington County, Ontario House of Industry," M.A. thesis, Victoria: University of Victoria, Press, 1990, p. 12.

are either ignorant dupes or unaware of their self-interest; as such, social control is "bad Marxism".[27] While it has not been thoroughly investigated, Marxist theory could be a useful exploratory tool, around the borders and boundaries of class relations in the practices of relief. The acts of giving and receiving could be seen to define the classes, therefore resistance to either could be seen as resistance to class stratificaton. The term "social control" has been so expanded that other more specific descriptions shall be used in this thesis.

Social control theory has been a prolific area of historical investigation, with a number of near celebrity writers. In the tumultuous 1960's a pair of authors emerged who exemplified the new breed of academic writers of welfare history: Frances Fox-Piven and Richard A. Cloward were activists on poverty issues and welfare historians. Unlike many of their predecessors, their 1971 work, Regulating the Poor: The Function of Public Welfare, had high readership, and their work organizing political lobbies garnered them a good deal of press. Cloward had done work on deviancy and created youth-empowerment strategies, and together their analysis of policy towards the poor contained within it an acceptance of the social control thesis of public charity. The novelty of their suggestion was that the actual function of public charity was to maintain a "disciplined and tractable labour force in times of prosperity and the amelioration of grievances and softening of discontent in hard times." Piven and Cloward's work generated a historical response in 1983 in the form of a collection of research edited by Walter Trattner, wherein a variety of historians tested the Piven-Cloward thesis in specific times and places that the duo had not examined. Results were mixed, with more finding against Piven and Cloward than for them.

Another area into which social control theory was carried was into the study of women's history. The relative lateness of the application of gender based studies to the field of social control theory is not a good indicator of their analytical strength and

[27]Stormy Stuart, pp 14-15.

diversity, which is considerable. Revisionist work on gender issues in social control theory is illuminating. Sociologist Anne Edwards identifies a multitude of types of control of women: "these include ideological manipulation, psychological persuasion, emotional pressure, material advantage, patriarchal authority, legal and moral codes of conduct, legitimate use of physical and social coercion as well as violence," in her 1988 work examining social control theory. Another pair of sociologists, Smart and Smart, put it slightly differently:

> "clearly in a class-divided society both women and men are subject to material, repressive and ideological forms of social control, although they are usually affected differently, women being subjected to control principally within the private domain where they are in fact economically and legally subordinate to men. In addition, however, there are dimensions of social control which women alone experience; these are in relation to the following: (a) the reproductive cycle; (b) a double standard of morality; (c) a subordinate social and legal status (vis-a-vis men) in the family; (d) the separation of `home' and `work' and the ideology of the women's place."[28]

These four criteria are directly relevant to women's receipt of welfare in the Yukon as they played an intrinsic part of the assessment of the applicant's suitability for public aid.

Piven and Cloward's theories were also examined and expanded upon by Mimi Abramovitz's text, Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy From Colonial Times to the Present; the book is more illuminating on the effect of policies on race and gender, and she acknowledges her debt to Piven and Cloward for ideology while going forward with her own theory formation. She applies a `gender-lens' to American policy and finds a consistent `family ethic.' This family ethic tells men that they belong in the labor market regardless of prevailing wages and working conditions, whereas "it tells women that their primary place is marriage and the home, regardless of its safety and security...." In addition to this there is discrimination between `deserving women and undeserving women' which explains this complex string of questions which she posed:

> Why, for example, are widows with young children considered to be among those `deserving' of aid, while other single mothers are treated harshly? How can we explain the long history of channeling destitute mothers into the labor market even though the

[28]Smart and Smart, quoted in Anne Edwards, Regulation and Repression: The Study of Social Control, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1988, p.47.

> family ethic requires them to stay home? Why do universal programs serving the middle class as well as the poor, such as Social Security, favor married over single persons, homemakers over working wives, and one-earner over two-earner couples? Why do Unemployment Insurance policies make it difficult for women to combine work and family responsibilities?... In brief, such programs have tended to reward women whose lives include marriage, motherhood and homemaking but to penalize women who did not or could not choose such pursuits. Denied the `rights of womanhood' this latter group could not expect protection or respectability and instead faced social stigma, economic insecurity and such penalties as mandatory work requirements, child removal and strict government supervision of their parenting, sexual and social life. ...The differential impact of welfare state policies on women by class, race, and marital status adversely affected many women but meshed with the needs of the political economy. By setting a strict standard which judged women as `deserving' or `undeserving,' the welfare state has upheld a certain view of women's roles and has simultaneously helped to meet the economy's need for women's unpaid labour in the home and their low-paid labor in the market."[29]

The historical re-examination of women's lives has often involved theoretically removing women's lives from the unit of the family, to see the life cycles of women; similar attempts to see children separately occurred in the 1970's. The rise in histories about children, child welfare and juvenile delinquency in the early 1970's in the USA also matched social concern about children's rights, which in particular was piqued by the defeat of American juvenile delinquency laws which would not be crimes if committed by adults. In the 1970's and early 1980's there was a proliferation of work published in Canada on the family, and on child welfare. The work on children is in four areas: family structure, child labour, education and child welfare. Child welfare can also be divided into four main areas: nineteenth-century reformers' discovery of the malleability of children and the social benefits that would result from proper childhood training; the overwhelming dominance of middle class values and players in new welfare schemes; the gradual transference of welfare responsibilities from family to state with private agencies acting as intermediaries; and the continuing practice of child labour under the guise of

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[29]Mimi Abramovitz, Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present, Boston: South End Press, 1988, pp 3-4.

apprenticeship.[30] Canadian works on childhood and welfare have been compassionate in feeling, but short on documenting childrens' resistance to the socialization process, particularly when this was compounded by ethnic differences, such as Native childrens' experience of European style education.

The historical re-examination of the power structures in women's and children's lives has involved seeing them as separate from families, but also with seeing the family as a variable unit. The studies of relief in times of social stress have concentrated on the administrative workings of relief, but very little is known about how that help was distributed once it reached the designated family. The field of family history has progressed in the 1980's to deconstructing the unit of the family. Family historians began to examine the differential power and access to resources held by differing members of the family unit, i.e. elder sons over aged mothers, never married sisters and younger offspring. The unit of the family was often assumed to be `natural' needing no explanation or examination of ethnic differences in definition of kin, or of alterations over time. One `norm' of a male-headed nuclear family was posited and used exclusively in theory development. This emphasis was particularly strong in sociology, where women were subsumed into the dynamic of the family, where the women's reproductive and productive capacities were included as part of the larger unit, rather than as potentially a variable in families. Historian Bettina Bradbury's study of Victorian Montreal demonstrated that families reformed themselves in the face of health and economic crises, often placing out young siblings in institutional care or with kin in order to weather the crisis, reuniting later when conditions were more favourable.[31] This may also be the case in the St. Paul's

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[30]John Bullen, "Orphans, Lunatics and Historians: Recent Approaches to the History of Child Welfare in Canada," *Histoire Sociale-Social History,* |Vol. XVIII, No 35(mai-May 1985), pp 135-6.

[31]Bettina Bradbury, "The Fragmented Family: Family Strategies in the Face of Death, Illness, and Poverty, Montreal, 1860-1885" in Joy Parr, ed. Childhood and Family in Canadian History, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982, pp. 116-128.

Hostel in Dawson, referred to various times in the record group.[32] This counters the idea that institutions swallowed family members never to release them again; institutionalization was a phase in client's lives, but not an end to their independence. This counters the idea that institutions like orphan asylums controlled the destiny of their clients; it is clear in Bradbury's work that the poor were using the orphanage for their own purposes. It could also be inferred that the poor valued their own members differently, and that view was not necessarily tied to the economic ability of each member. Bradbury's work in general is a good example of a breakdown of the powerless/powerful dichotomy set up by some social control views of welfare.

The last undiscovered members of the family were the aged. They are absent from histories in general, assumed to be in their 'traditional place'; however, we do not know what that was, or whether it varied over time, ethnically, demographically, etc. The assumption that governments took control of welfare responsibilities previously held by kin groupings was challenged by population historians in the 1970's, particularly in reference to care for aging populations. David Thomson's thesis is that there was not a massive shift from families taking responsibility for their own needy members, the aged, the infirm, pregnant mothers and young children, which the rhetoric of the 1834 Reform Bill in Britain and of early social welfare historians would suggest.[33] In his view the assumption that these responsibilities have passed from individual families to the state is untrue, as the community and the state bore a good deal of the collective responsibility for the dependent and aged poor. The earlier historical understanding of care for the aged rests on the assumption that either families would take in elder relatives to live with them, supporting them directly, or that there would be transfer of monies to support that elder in her or his own home. Population historians working with British census data have found

[32]Saint Paul's Hostel for Indigent and Halfbreed Children operated in Dawson from the 1920's through the 1940's, however written records survive only from the period 1945-1948, precluding a study of its interrelationship with the early public welfare system of the Yukon.

[33]David Thomson, "Welfare and the Historians" in The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure ed. Lloyd Bonafield, et al, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, p. 370.

very few elders residing with adult children; Thomson has found no evidence of the large and consistent transfers of goods or money which would have been required to support elderly kin. A study by E. A. Wrigley published in 1978, shows that there was a one in three chance that an elderly person's heirs would die before he or she did, which certainly limits the idea of family support. Retirement ages were roughly similar to the present, standard ages varying by trade from 55 to 65, which leads one to ask how the aged in Britain were supported before the welfare state. Thomson suggests that there are two loci of responsibility whose extremes would be total family responsibility and total community responsibility, and that:

> "the location of the balance of responsibilities between these two poles changes over time, shifting continually according to a multitude of social, economic demographic, political, religious and ideological pressures.... At the core of the welfare commitment have been the elderly, a group who have been accepted fairly consistently as dependent by force of circumstances and to whom therefore no sense of blame attaches.... To such blameless and harmless dependents the community has been willing to commit its collective resources while expecting little complementary expenditure by families in return. Further removed from this `welfare core' lie a number of other more marginal dependent groups. Varying degrees of personal and familial responsibility attach to these groups - the physically and mentally handicapped, the sick, the child born out of wedlock, the mother of such a child, children in general or the unemployed. A sense that such needy persons are in some part the architects of their own predicaments, coupled with a belief that it could be dangerous for the community if it were seen to encourage certain forms of behaviour by assuming too much of the responsibility for their consequences, has meant that the community's accepted level of commitment to the welfare of these groups has been more attenuated than in the case of the aged." [34]

All three of the chronological periods described here had fashionable causes, and fashionable ways of writing about them. In the Victorian era, the work of social reformers was to be praised, and the victims of circumstance were exhorted to emulate their betters. The style of historical writing was bibliographic, Whiggish and written largely from the public legislative record and the personal correspondence of reform movement leaders. The works were marked by extremes of emotion, deplorable wrongs and angelic

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[34]David Thomson, pp 366-7; E. A. Wrigley's "Fertility strategy for the individual and the group" cited in Thomson pp 360-363.

crusaders; despite its melodramatic style, welfare history has never regained the level of readership it attained in the Victorian era. The focus of these works remains unmistakably on the reformers, not on their clients, who were merely a passive backdrop. The effect of social Darwinism and scientific charity remains today as the framework behind welfare and immigration policy, part of the accepted social viewpoint. The motivations of the reformers were never plumbed, nor was the composition of the aid seekers analysed.

The triumph of the secular over the religious changed the meaning of charity, and the organizers of charity. In the Progressive Era, the emerging profession of social work held a dialogue with itself, about the history of social work, as part of a training programme. The educational material held the same focus as its practitioners; it highlighted policy, bureaucracy and professional distance from the clients. The sources of these histories were the institutional, administrative records they created; this also re-enforced the stereotype that clients of welfare agencies were shiftless, as only the aid they sought from that agency was recorded in the institutional history, and other attempts to help themselves through kith and kin remained unrecorded. The focus of the writings was on improvement, of society, of their programs and in the spread of the profession of social work. Likewise it contained an uncomplicated view of progress; it held a view of the client as a passive victim of circumstances or character flaws.

Welfare history in the second half of the twentieth century was more analytical, more specific and contained less generalizations. The works inspired by the Committee on the History of Social Welfare in the 1950's and 1960's were more academically rigorous, but maintained a focus more useful to social work than to history. Piven and Cloward's 1971 work touched off both social activism on poverty and academic interest in the subject, or to be more accurate, in those who were poor. Other social control theory based works followed, and in particular the new social history of the period focused on those previously left out of history: the poor, women, children and the aged. The new analyses suggested that there were many areas of domination and many of resistance, and that the

weak also had powers, dispersed amongst their masses. The works of this period also examined the structural inequalities which beset the poor, the crippled and the deviant, and the social actions which kept the barriers in place. The unfortunate result of the proliferation of social control theory studies was the weakening and dissolution of meaning in the term, making it analytically useless due to its inexactitude. All attempts to help the poor were now viewed either as attempts at class control or social control.

The insights into the condition of specific groups gained in the new social histories have been extensive. That the lives of women, children and the aged have been marked by their social position is not bizarre; to decipher the tangle of relations which hold persons in certain social and economic positions is difficult, but has been achieved by many of the authors of the new social histories, notably David Thomson, Linda Gordon and Bettina Bradbury. With these authors in mind, the next chapter will explore the context of this study, its geography, climate, population, economy and governmental structures.

## Chapter Two: Context
## Time, Place and Topic

This study is about the Yukon Territory's welfare system, its people, its economy and its government. The history of the Yukon Territory can be classified into distinct periods, such as the autonomous Native State, a period of exploration and contact with white western people and their culture in the late nineteenth century, the Gold Rush period of 1895-1900, followed by an era of white settlement and the rise of a primary industry economy 1901-1939, and a period of massive infrastructure and population change during the Second World War, when the Yukon Territory essentially, through modern technology, joined Canada. For the purposes of this study, the historical overview provided will commence with the entrance of white explorers and end with the beginning of the Second World War.

The Yukon Territory is a geographically large area north of British Columbia, stretching to the Arctic Circle. Its climate is typically cold, with a brief summer which barely melts the permafrost. It was a land full of jack pine and rivers, and frozen tundra further north.[35] During the period of study, transportation was primarily along the rivers, which divided the year into two portions; these were after the spring break-up of the ice when the rivers were navigable, and the winter portion of the year when the rivers were frozen, shutting the Yukon off from what was colloquially known as 'the Outside'.

Prior to the major gold strike of 1897, there were a few white male fur traders in the Yukon who were scattered amongst a thriving Native culture and economy. The white people amongst the dominant culture adapted to the Native people's norms. The Natives were familiar with the climate and topography of the North and had appropriate technologies to deal with those conditions.[36] Increase in mineral prospecting in the Yukon

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[35]Robert M. Bone, The Geography of the Canadian North: Issues and Challenges, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 17-26.
[36]*ibid.*, pp 83-4.

caused the federal government to separate the Yukon into an administrative district separate from the North-West Territories in 1895[37]. The gold strike of 1897 brought a plethora of people to the area of Bonanza Creek, all seeking to improve their fortunes either by seeking gold themselves, or supplying the necessities and luxuries of life to those who panned the creeks for gold.

A majority of the gold-seekers were American, who came up the coast of North America, often by way of San Francisco. The influx of non-British nationals alarmed the Canadian Government, who feared that the northern land would be annexed by the United States of America.[38] This political climate resulted in the enforcement of British Canadian rule; Ottawa severed the Yukon from the North West Territories for separate, and more direct government in the Yukon Territory Act of 1898. A Territorial Governor was appointed by the Federal Government; he was known by a title which reflected his most important role: Gold Commissioner. The new government was re-enforced by the Royal Northwest Canadian Mounted Police assigned to the district to enforce the Governor's law and order. The government was to deal with "a multitude of minor affairs of a purely municipal nature."[39] Also appointed was a six man council which consisted of the leading Federal administrators: the Gold Commissioner, judge, land titles registrar, legal advisor, and R.N.W.M.P. superintendent. The council became elected in 1908, with ten members serving. Along with the severe decline in local population during and after the First World War there was a corresponding decline in the numbers of those in government; between 1918 and 1920, the offices of the commissioner and the gold commissioner were combined, and the council reduced to three members.[40] Much administration was in the hands of the R. N.W.M.P. during the Gold Rush, who functioned as mail service, land

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[37]Kenneth Coates, Canada's Colonies: A History of the Yukon and Northwest Territories, Toronto, James Lorimer & Co., 1985, pp 87-8.
[38]*ibid.*, pp 73-79.
[39]Terry Cook, Sources for the Study of the Canadian North, Ottawa: Federal Archives Division, Minister of Supply Services Canada, 1980, pp 6, 10.
[40]*ibid.*, pp 10-11.

agents, mining recorders, coroners, returning officers at elections, animal health inspectors for the Department of Agriculture, assisted the tax collector, and so on. [41]

The new Gold Rush followers had a very different experience of the North than the previous white traders. Unlike the fur traders, the Gold Rush followers did not have extended contact with the Natives of the North, especially the experience of living amongst a numerically superior Native population and culture. The European, Asian and North American people who came to the North were ethnically and racially diverse, and they were largely in contact with each other rather than the Northern Native inhabitants. The demographic structure of the two populations was different. The majority of immigrants to the North were between the ages of twenty and forty, male, not living in any recognizable family unit nor even settled in social encampments, whereas, the Northern Natives lived in villages, tribal and kinship groups, had an even number of men and women in their population, which included a full age span, from infants and children to the elderly. While the Natives were affected by the new Northerners occupation of the Natives' traditional lands, and by the injection of the new world market economy, the new Northerners were not as affected by the Natives as the fur traders had been. The Gold Rush followers may have learned something about how to transport goods in the Northern climate from the Natives, but the newcomers learned very little about the Natives' world view since they were not suspended in a Native world as the fur traders had been. The gold rush followers and the Natives lived in separate worlds and separate economies. Missionaries and the N.W.M.P. encouraged this because they believed the white population would have a corrupting influence on the Natives. The N.W.M.P.'s largest contact with the Native population was their attempt to enforce the ban on the sale of alcohol to the Natives.[42]

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[41]William R. Morrison, Showing the Flag: The Mounted Police and Canadian Sovereignty in the North, 1894-1925, Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1985, pp 50-61.
[42]Kenneth Coates, p. 122.

This separation of cultures allowed stereotypes about each culture to flourish. The dominant white image of Native peoples as childlike and primitive continued, exemplified in some of Laura Berton's writings. She posits that the Natives around her area at Dawson were spoiled by the presence of the whites, and describes the Natives from more Northern regions as still held in the grip of "some primitive, noble and childlike condition,"

> "with a great jangling of sleigh bells and a great swirl of powdered snow, the fast dog-teams of the Peel River Indians whisked into town on their annual pilgrimage down the Arctic Circle to Dawson. They were a dramatic and colourful group of natives. Their dogs were decorated with great pompons of brightly coloured wool and their harnesses were alive with little bells. The men wore handsome caps bright with beads and the women wore intricate beaded shawls. They were a magnificent-looking people, with long black hair of great sleekness, high foreheads, good noses, strong white teeth and a straight look in the eyes. They carried themselves with race and dignity and did everything with a certain air. They wore jaunty buckskin jackets, heavy beaded gauntlets and fur caps decorated with the tails of wild animals.
>
> They were a clever, intelligent people, rather different from the Moosehide Indians. ... But they were a child-like people these Indians." [43]

What the Native stereotypes of the new white populations was is unknown to posterity, as they did not favour history with a written account in English.

While the Gold Rush was at its height there was no census taken, however other evidence, such as ship manifests show the number of persons arriving in the north was high. A R.N.W.M.P. census of Dawson City in 1898 gives a population of sixteen thousand residents, exclusive of those out on the creeks.[44] Canadian Census figures for this area begin in 1901, and continue every decade thereafter. [refer to Table 1]

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[43] Laura Beatrice Berton, I Married the Klondike, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1954, pp 61-62.
[44] Kenneth Coates, p. 80.

Table One. Population by five year age groups and sex, for the Yukon 1901-1951. [45]

| Year | Total Population | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1901 | 27219 | 23084 | 4135 |
| 1911 | 8512 | 6508 | 2004 |
| 1921 | 4157 | 2819 | 1338 |
| 1931 | 4230 | 2825 | 1405 |
| 1941 | 4914 | 3153 | 1761 |

Almost all histories of the North concentrate on two events: the Gold Rush of 1899, and the Road Rush of 1939-44, the building of the Alaska Highway. While these two are focal points in the economy of the North, both are almost self-contained, and involve different populations than those normally resident in the North. Each of these events imported a large population of temporary residents. Those who remained after the first influx in 1899 became northern residents. In between these two great events was the everyday of northern life, community building, subsistence hunting and trapping, and the development of the staple labours of life, logging and mining. The economy was dominated by the climate, which determined which activities could be undertaken at any specific time, for example road building and vegetable growing in the brief summer, wood cutting and fur trapping in the winter. Transportation of goods and people was largely along the rivers, and thus was dominated by the events of winter freeze-up and spring break-up of the ice.

After the height of gold prospecting was past, corporate mining was one of the two major industries in the Yukon. Gold was the first metal of significance for the Territory, but it was quickly superseded by others, such as silver, lead and copper. High transportation costs versus the high quality of mineral deposits meant that mining was precarious in the Yukon, and its commercial viability was highly dependent on world

[45]Table 19. Population by five year age groups and sex, for provinces and territories, 1901-1951, Census of Canada.

market prices. The Yukon percentage of Canadian gold production shrank from a height of 80 percent of the national total in 1900 to 1.1 percent of the national production in 1935. Silver and lead deposits were discovered in 1906 near Mayo, with commercial operations functioning by 1914 supported by a system of steamboats and the White Pass and Yukon Route railway. A number of smaller companies merged in 1929, in order to field the expenses of modern technology, new dredges, and improved hydraulic techniques. The economy of the Yukon was in fact, almost synonymous with the fortunes of the Yukon Consolidated Gold Company.[46] This partially explains the difference in the timing of economic depressions, as gold and silver prices on the world market drove the bulk of the Northern economy. For example, the Yukon gold fields were expanding in the 1930's due to the rise in world gold prices from $21 per ounce in 1931 to $35 per ounce in 1935, with annual production mounting as well, from 40 000 fine ounces in the early 1930's to 80 000 fine ounces in the latter part of the decade. Machinery was purchased and the increase in employees was largely an absorption of unemployed men from southern Canada, who once again came to seek their fortunes in the Yukon gold fields.

Table Two: Gold Production by Ounces

| | |
|---|---|
| 1900 | 1 000 000 |
| 1920 | 211 000 |
| 1926 | 26 000 |
| 1939 | 88 000 |

The second major industry in the Yukon was Canada's first industry, the fur trade. While settlement, agriculture and industrialization had superseded the fur trade in southern Canada, it remained central in the economy of the north. The fur trade was important on both the macro and micro levels: it was the other major northern economic sector; and its financial viability allowed the Native subsistence lifestyle to continue into the twentieth century. For example, in the Yukon in 1921 the Yukon and Northwest Territories

[46]Kenneth Coates, pp 101-104.

exported over $1 700 000 worth of minerals; for that same year $2 000 000 worth of furs were exported to southern Canada. The industry experienced many fluctuations, as it was dependent on fashions in styles of fur, and type of pelt. The figure of two million dollars worth of furs in 1921 is an example of the high price for the popular silver fox pelt.[47] The fur trade was an industry which was dependent on labour, as opposed to the mining industry which was heavily capital dependent, for machinery and processing. The primary labourers of the fur trade were mainly Native, and large companies dominated the industry, such as the Hudson's Bay Company and Taylor and Drury, who retained the loyalty of their trading partners by offering credit at trading posts and in the case of the Hudson's Bay Company, assistance to the aged and indigent Natives [for which they billed the federal government!].[48] A number of smaller companies were also active in the 1920's and 1930's, but the collapse of the fur market during the Great Depression allowed the Hudson's Bay Company to buy out their competitors: Lampson and Hubbard (1924), Revillion Freres (1936), and Northern Trading Company (1936). Modes of transportation, such as steamships for river travel were also mainly owned by fur trapping and mining companies.

The social organization of the North acquired a veneer of similarity to the south. When the Gold Rush left a core of permanent white population on the banks of the rivers, Government officials in Ottawa provided a budget to build roads, schools, and hospitals similar to their southern counterparts. The dominion telegraph service came to Dawson in 1901, allowing rapid communication with 'the Outside'.[49] The people of the Yukon had a representative in the House of Parliament, Mr. George Black. During the first world war, the residents of the Yukon prided themselves on out producing other areas of Canada proportionally, in the number of men who enlisted, the quality of equipment, which included two entire machine gun equipages, and the volume of Red Cross work

[47]Kenneth Coates, pp 107-110.
[48]Kenneth Coates, p. 111.
[49]Kenneth Coates, p. 118.

undertaken.[50] Yukoners demonstrated their belief in their position as part of Canadian society.

The Yukon joined other Canadian juridictions in experimentation with welfare in the early twentieth century. The Territorial Government created administrative records of its relief efforts. These records were variously referred to as the Indigent Fund, the Relief Fund or the Territorial Welfare Fund, and the extant records begin in 1917. Many records were lost to fire in the Government buildings, and some were lost when the Government moved its offices to Whitehorse in 1951. The fragmentary nature of these records stands as a barrier to absolute pronouncements about the nature of this system. The early records refer to the fund having been used for one time expenditures to replace the goods of trappers and gold prospectors who had lost them in accidents on the rivers. The assumption about the use of the funds was that after the one expenditure, the individuals would then be self-sufficient. The vast majority of actions of relief, receiving and granting appeals was done by the Gold Commissioner himself, and his secretary. The majority of early records show notations on the office copies in the Gold Commissioner's own hand, with his initials approving actions. On Thursday, May 14, 1925 the Yukon Council passed a resolution to formalize and make the relief system more businesslike; but, change was slow. In 1932, the duties of Gold Commissioner were joined with those of the Territorial Comptroller to reduce administrative costs. G.A. Jeckell filled this position between 1932 and 1945, and its portfolios included Agent for Public Works, Income Tax Inspector, ex-officio Mayor of Dawson, and Chief Registrar of Land Titles.[51] The R.N.W.M.P. officers commanding each detachment were appointed the local relief officers; this required them to investigate cases of indigency and destitution, to make reports, forwarded up the police chain of command, eventually to the Gold Commissioner. It was the R.N.W.M.P.'s

[50]Kenneth Coates, pp 118-120.
[51]Kenneth Coates, pp 130-1.

knowledge of local people and the prestige supplied by the use of the R.N.W.M.P. which allowed the relief system to function in an orderly fashion.

I examined the records of the fund to see when one-time expenditures of charity gave way to support which was on-going, and essentially to support paupers- those dependent for their livelihood on donations from charitable individuals or groups. The record base was examined to find out about the shift between public responsibility and private responsibility for the poor. When did neighbours divest themselves of responsibility and who stepped in? Did it change over the period of the study? Further, were there private, middle class, winter poverty relief campaigns for food and fuel, such as those in pre-industrial eastern Canada documented by Judith Fingard? Was the caribou hunting and delivery by the RCMP the Yukon equivalent, or was it perhaps an adaptation of the Native view that resources were there to support all of the members of a community?

The division of welfare services into Native and non-Native echoes that primary social divide. Indians were to be given assistance through their Federally appointed Indian Agent, and whites [all others] could apply through the Territorial government for assistance. This is based in the constitutional division of powers, where Indians are a federal responsibility, and welfare a provincial matter. Functionally in southern Canada this responsibility devolved onto the municipalities; in the Yukon, the one municipality, Dawson, was governed by the head of the Territory. The provision of two racially separate welfare services, Indian welfare from the Indian Agents, and non-Indian welfare from the Territorial Government, makes the logical body of demographic data, the census, less useful for comparisons of difference or similarity from the general population, as we do not know how many Natives or non-Natives of any category would have been eligible for each system of care. One serious flaw in the census records, from this point of view, is that when the population is broken down into the various census question categories, it is the total population, i.e. both white and native, for which it is done.

Welfare echoes the primary division of Yukon society into Native and non-Native, which existed in the all white mining camps, and the mainly Native trapping industry, in the separation of schools into white and Native, to the separation of the white and Native patients into different wards in St. Mary's Hospital. However, this divisiveness is countered by the very provision of welfare, in that it is a primary statement of community. With this underlying contradiction at the centre of Yukon society, the workings of welfare will be more closely examined in the following chapters: Chapter Three highlighting the role of the givers, and Chapters Four and Five, examining the record base for information about the recipients.

## Chapter Three: Giving

In this chapter the financial records of the Yukon Territorial Government will be used to show how the Government went from providing hospital care for a few emergency cases in 1900, to having a large number of persons dependent on the Government for their daily bread- in essence creating a population of paupers. An increasing portion of the Government's annual budget between 1917 and 1938 was devoted to the care of those who could not care for themselves, or to social programmes deemed to be in the public interest, such as in the provision of vaccines. In particular the growth of one avenue of care, the budgetary growth of the category Hospitals, Charities and Public Health will be reviewed. Elements of this budget sector will be examined, to determine what remained relatively stable and what were responsible for the massive growth in Government spending in this area. The results will be used as signposts for further research, completed in the remaining chapters of this thesis. Evidence for these efforts at community care are evinced from the bills the Government paid, Government and hospital correspondence and the annual financial statements of the Yukon Territorial Government.

The Yukon Government's annual revenue and expenditure statements survive from 1905 onward. The Yukon Government received money from the federal Department of the Interior, for purposes such as funding schools, the court system, hospitals and libraries. A certain portion of the grant was earmarked for the building and maintenance of roads, which due to the severe climate required much attention. Property taxes, mining claim fees and fines generated revenue for the Territory; when the Territory's income began to fall after the Gold Rush of 1898 the Government entered into a new money making scheme. This was the running of Government liquor stores, whose profits were re-invested in the general revenue fund; in many years this amount equalled the amount of the general operating grant received from the Federal Government. The Territorial Government's expenditures fell into nine major areas: the expenses of the members of the

Yukon Council; government salaries; schools; libraries; fire department; grants to cities and towns, i.e. Dawson, Bonanza and later Whitehorse; roads and other public works; hospitals, charities and quarrantine; and a contingency fund.[52]

The Hospitals, Charities and Quarrantine budget, renamed Hospitals, Charities and Public Health in 1910, received money for what we would now term "social spending". This area was comprised of grants to hospitals, the payment of medical health officers, supplies to deal with communicable illnesses through quarrantine or vaccination, and the provision of charity to indigents. The relationship of this spending category to the total amounts spent annually by the Territorial Government is shown in Table Three.

Table Three: Relationship Between the Government of the Yukon's Overall Territorial Expenditures, and those of the Budgetary Category of Hospitals, Charities and Public Health.

| YEAR | EXPENDITURES | H, C, & P H | H,C,&PH, AS % of EXPENDITURES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1905 | 454 390.52 | 53 545.84 | 11.70 |
| 1906 | 308 849.47 | 42 060.14 | 13.60 |
| 1907 | 400 452.94 | 30 267.37 | 7.50 |
| 1908 | n/a | 31 268.40 | n/a |
| 1909 | 303 821.77 | 34 318.64 | 11.20 |
| 1910* | 234 362.52 | 22 107.70 | 9.40 |
| 1911 | 315 303.28 | 32 088.12 | 10.10 |
| 1912 | 337 885.37 | 51 223.51 | 15.10 |
| 1913 | 353 954.40 | 28 499.35 | 8.00 |
| 1914 | 373 626.94 | 32 096.*7 | 8.50 |
| 1915 | 319 867.16 | 29 516.75 | 9.20 |
| 1916 | 326 766.91 | 52 685.87 | 16.10 |
| 1917 | 309 478.13 | 38 762.58 | 12.50 |
| 1918 | 278 106.46 | 35 312.28 | 12.60 |
| 1919 | 169 445.52 | 22 982.64 | 13.50 |
| 1920 | 191 419.19 | 28 439.40 | 14.80 |
| 1921 | 193 658.09 | 27 433.99 | 14.10 |
| 1922 | 152 220.09 | 19 929.35 | 13.00 |
| 1923 | 239 374.16 | 49 329.31 | 20.60 |
| 1924 | 253 963.41 | 33 846.16 | 13.30 |
| 1925 | 235 732.89 | 32 619.44 | 13.80 |

[52]Revenue and Expenditure, Yukon Territory, at the time no archives reference number available as the documents were undergoing cataloguing.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1926 | 258 249.80 | 35 230.36 | 13.60 |
| 1927 | 228 277.28 | 36 299.34 | 15.90 |
| 1928 | 214 424.37 | 39 185.98 | 18.20 |
| 1929 | 220 268.34 | 35 333.57 | 16.00 |
| 1930 | 257 625.45 | 36 426.44 | 14.40 |
| 1931 | 262 409.85 | 41 559.06 | 15.80 |
| 1932 | 232 445.55 | 39 264.11 | 16.80 |
| 1933 | 208 474.77 | 42 895.63 | 20.50 |
| 1934 | 168 686.21 | 44 884.38 | 26.60 |
| 1935 | n/a | 47 550.78 | n/a |
| 1936 | 182 025.60 | 52 573.13 | 28.80 |
| 1937 | 210 785.77 | 65 944. ** | 31.20 |
| 1938 | 225 472.01 | 73 184.80 | 32.40 |
| average | 263 182.00 | 38 784.24 | 15.58 |

*prior to 1910 year ends were June 30th; from 1910 onwards year ends were March 31st.

In broad terms, the growth of social spending can be seen in the category Hospitals, Charities and Public Health, tabled above, which grew from 12% of the annual Territorial expenditures in 1905 to 32% of the total in 1938.[53] This occurred in a period when the Yukon population was halved, from 8 512 residents in 1911, with a per capita spending of $3.76, to only 4 914 residents in 1941, and a per capita social spending of $14.89.[54] In 1905 the portion of the Territorial budget devoted exclusively to direct indigent care[55] was 0.003% of the annual expenditures of the Territory; in 1917, the beginning of this study in general, the figure was 0.008% of the annual expenditures,whereas by 1938 it was 14% of that figure.

It is useful to categorize the types of care that the Government underwrote and to explore the motivation underlying such care. The commitment towards those who are ill is justifiable in the medieval meaning of charity: it is a gift of care during a needy incident, such as an illness or accident. Given the state of medicine at the turn of the century, patients either recovered, or died, but did not need long-term expensive care, as those

[53]Revenue and Expenditure, Yukon Territory.

[54] 1951 Census of Canada, Table 19, p. 19-7. This figure does not show the seasonality of the white population, many of whom left to winter outside the Territory. It is also unlikely that the figure accurately includes the number of Natives resident in their homeland.

[55]Direct indigent care as referred to in this thesis is comprised of transportation, burial and care of indigent costs, plus other sundry indigent expense, as classified by Government records of the time.

types of therapies did not yet exist. This type of care fits within a charitable structure which wishes to avoid the creation of a pauper population; citizens either recovered or died, but went on beyond the purview of the medical care provided by the Government into self-reliance. Serious questions about the Government's attitude towards the needy can only really be explored when we examine the areas of intervention which led to long term relationships between those in need and those with the means to give.

In this the particular situation of a Government is interesting, as it stands in for society as a whole, when it performs charitable acts. It is a statement of community, of care and of commitment. When mediated by giving through a charity, one achieves a greater statement of distance; giving to 'them', somehow names the receivers as outside of society, or at least creates a more distant relationship. With these thoughts in mind, the direct assistance rendered to individuals in need by the Territorial Government is significant. It is a direct relationship of care, of assistance and of community building. It can also be inferred as a paternalistic model of care, where the fatherly figure provides for the child-like citizen. As a system of government which provides care, who is assisted is a crucial question. Of all of its citizens, who did the Government help? Did it help any who asked, or a selection of applicants? An examination of class formation, as in the British model of assistance, could be a valuable approach for this study.

In the British medieval to early modern model of society, the landlord, allied to the Crown, from whom he received his landrights and title, stood as a father figure to those who were dependant on his land, for the waged work it provided or for the food it produced for his own retainers. The landlord acted as judge for the Crown, and kept the King's peace by punishing those who erred and rewarding those who were faithful and respectful of the established order. The local people's fortunes rose and fell according to the work or charity provided by the landlord; it was this ability to provide economic opportunity and security that cemented the position of the powerholder, in a direct conduit

from the working poor and charity recipients to the Crown.[56] This adhesive, a combination of work opportunity and charity, can be seen in the actions of another non-elected government, that of the Yukon between 1905 and 1938. In a system where the leadership is non-elected, the provision of these incentives to individual citizens for respecting the established order is essential in establishing a trust of and dependency on the established order, confirming its rightness. That access to waged labour on the roadways in summer and to Government charity was directly and exclusively through the person of the Gold Commissioner, appointed by Her Majesty's loyal Government, underlines this system's similarity to the British model.

While both the British and the Yukon Governments provided charity, a more precise examination of the scope of government care in the Yukon will suggest its motivation. An examination of the content of the category Hospitals, Charities and Public Health in the Government budget statements is appropriate at this point. It is self-evident that it included funding for hospitals throughout the Territory, but we can learn more about the Government's position and practices towards the poor from the records of Government activity in this area. An early surviving record from September 19, 1904 is a letter of agreement between Whitehorse Hospital and the Commissioner of the Territory which makes payment of the Government grant to that hospital contingent on the hospital taking any case which is presented to them, regardless of the patient's ability to pay. This is quite a remarkable document on two levels. First, it states that the other Territorial hospitals operate under the same agreement. Second, legally and politically it is interesting because it asks the boards of all three Territorial hospitals, Good Samaritan and St. Mary's in Dawson and Whitehorse General Hospital, to set aside their legal rights to funding under "An Ordinance to Regulate Public Aid to Hospitals" in favour of this new agreement on Hospital Regulations. The agreement offers a monthly grant:

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[56]Geoffrey Gilbert, "Toward the Welfare State: Some British Views on the Right to Subsistence, 1768-1834." *Review of Social Economy* Vol. XLVI No. 2, October 1988.

> "but such payments shall only be made monthly in respect to the month next preceding such payment and upon the particulars set out in schedule 'A" in respect to every patient treated at said hospital during such months being furnished to the Commissioner, and provide further, that each of the said hospitals receives, cares for and treats every person applying to be so received and in need of such care and treatment, without regard to the ability of such person to pay..."[57]

The regulations required the hospitals to send copies of their rates, fill in a monthly report form which showed who was charged, the rate, and who was not, as well as other miscellaneous information. The one surviving monthly report indicates that most of the Government patients did not have family in the Territory. This is an important point, borne out throughout the data. The absence of local family, or any family at all, allowed institutions to step into what was widely considered to be the private domain of care provision for the sick and the elderly, without compromising the widely held ideal of family care.

The state of affairs prior to these regulations can be discerned from a letter dated May 18th, 1904, from the secretary-treasurer of Whitehorse Hospital, Mr. Percy R. Pelle to the Comptroller of the Territory, Mr. J.T. Lithgow: Mr. Pelle wrote, "in the past we have always made it a practice to get rid of indigents as quickly as possible as we find it hardly pays to keep them."[58] The attitude of the hospital administrators can be inferred from the actions of Mr. Pelle in the previous year. He informed the Comptroller that as a matter of routine, any patient which the Hospital had taken in who was unlikely to be able to pay was required to give a promissory note for the expenses of their care, as Mr. Pelle believed a debt was better for "this class of patient" than charity.[59]

Some poor patients preferred to be individually liable for their bills, rather than be treated as indigent, and the Hospital only pressed the Government for payment after some time had elapsed without payment.[60] However the means testing and declaration forms by

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[57]File 237-1A, Whitehorse Hospital, Vol. 9, 1 of 2.
[58]File 237-1A, Whitehorse Hospital, Vol. 9, 1 of 2.
[59]File 237-1A, Whitehorse Hospital, Vol. 9, 1 of 2.
[60]File 237-1A, Whitehorse Hospital, Vol. 9, 1 of 2.

which the Hospital administration decided who was eligible for care under the Government purse could have been a deterrent as "a thorough investigation is always made into the affairs of any patient who is admitted into this hospital without means and we satisfy ourselves on this point before we render our accounts to you [the Government Comptroller]."[61]

Hospitals mostly complied with this requirement to provide service to indigents, but did occasionally resist. Mayo Hospital tried to pay their doctor a monthly fee of $50.00 for attending indigent patients, out of the general grant paid to the hospital, if it did not overrun the budget. When the board queried the Government Comptroller on the allowability of this point on October 9, 1934, he refused permission.[62] The Comptroller's decision reaffirmed the Government's position that indigents should be treated by the hospital staff and the doctor employed by the hospital was required to provide this care to maintain the hospital's funding.

It is evident that the Government's practice of paying for hospital care continued throughout the period of study, as indigents billed to the Government appear in later financial year end statements. For example 10 out of 149 patients in the 1917-1918 year at Whitehorse General Hospital were Government funded indigents. In some years, such as 1934-35, at Whitehorse Hospital there were a higher number of paying patients, 59, but the few indigent patients, 4, had lengthy stays in the hospital, averaging 58 days, rather than the 9 days average stay for the private paying clients.[63] The list of "Non-Paying Patients at St. Mary's Hospital, Fiscal Year Ending 1924," shows very lengthy stays for indigent patients, one man remaining in hospital for 366 [!] days of the year, eight patients out of thirty-one remaining in care more than 122 days in that fiscal year. Also, of the ten Government funded indigent burials in 1924, seven of the indigents had been admitted to

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[61]*Ibid.*
[62]Gov 1929, Series 4, Vol. 24, 403-2, 4 of 5.
[63] Gov 2029, TS 7, Vol. 2, 135 H, Part 2.

the hospital that year under the Government agreement.[64] For the year ending March 31, 1935 at Mayo General Hospital, the proportion of patient days is similar, with the paying patients spending a total of 314 days in Hospital in the year, and the Government indigents spending 1087 days.[65] It is clear that the Government expected the hospitals to treat indigents, and considered that the payment of the grant to the hospital was sufficient exchange. It is not clear whether all of the hospitals were permitted or encouraged to bill those same patients, in the hope of eventual payment on top of the government operating grant, which did not increase if more poor patients were treated, but remained at the amount set for the year. The following example however, implies that the Government condoned the billing of patients after they were treated, and only drew the line at non-treatment of the poor.

While the hospitals' practice of providing treatment to indigents continued, as times became leaner for the hospitals, a reversion to the attitudes of the early part of the century occurred. The Good Samaritan Hospital at Dawson was dismantled in 1924 and the majority of its buildings and fixtures taken to Mayo, where it was erected as the Mayo General Hospital. By May of 1927 Mayo General Hospital was experiencing financial difficulties, as the number of patients paying their bills declined. It is uncertain whether the patients were originally treated as privately paying patients or whether they were conditionally indigents, but given a bill so as to make them more responsible persons, as per the opinions of Mr. Pelle. The Resolution passed by the Mayo Hospital Board is suggestive of this practice:

"... Whereas there is a considerable amount which is long past due and is now owing to the said hospital by people who have been cared for and treated in said Hospital at public expense, which persons so far have apparently made little or no effort to liquidate their said accounts, notwithstanding earnest entreaty for payment in the past."[66]

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[64]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2.
[65]Gov 2029, TS 7, Vol. 2, 135 H, Part 2.
[66]Gov 1929, Series 4, Vol. 24, 403-2.
[67]Gov 1929, Series 4, Vol. 24, 403-2, 1 of 5.

On October 8, 1928 the board of the Mayo Hospital took legal advice regarding collection of overdue accounts, and found that unless the debts were acknowledged in writing by the debtor, that they would soon be beyond the statute of limitations on the bill; however, if acknowledged, the Hospital would have another six years in which to try to collect the bill. In a response two days later the Gold Commissioner advised the Board to press for payment in Court from "these delinquents." In March of 1929, the Gold Commissioner again wrote to the Mayo Board to see what had resulted. The Secretary of the Board said that the Hospital Board "had not taken any definite action so far" but would consider it at their upcoming annual general meeting. The secretary appeared to be on the side of leniency, stating that "collections on these outstanding accounts have been average, most of them paying something, that were able to pay." Mr. White, the secretary, also countered the Gold Commissioner's suggestion of suing the delinquent patients, as the Board was told by the late Mr. Percy Reid that they had "no legal right to sue, not being incorporated." On April 19, 1929, the Board sent along to the Gold Commissioner three of the overdue accounts, for him to try to collect, and passed eight others to the public administrator, the debtors presumably now being dead, with their affairs being closed by that official. While these efforts had dragged on for a number of years, the results were far from fruitful; in the case of one deceased patient owing $110.00, his estate only paid out at 1.28% on any debts, or $1.42 on his hospital bill.[67]

Eventually, in July of 1932, the Mayo Board again enquired of the Government what the legal route for collecting late bills was, and were advised to incorporate under the "Ordinance respecting Benevolent and other Societies, Chapter 84, Consolidated Ordinances, 1914," which the Gold Commissioner said could be done without any expense to the society.[68] However, little action was taken, and on January 8, 1937, outstanding accounts for that hospital were again rendered to the Acting Comptroller, C.E. MacLeod,

[67]Gov 1929, Series 4, Vol. 24, 403-2, 1 of 5.
[68]Gov 1929, Series 4, Vol. 24, 403-2, 2 of 5.

which stretched back to the inception of the hospital in 1924. Mr. MacLeod was asked to comment on the list, and on the chances of receiving payment from the debtors.

MacLeod annnotated the list, describing some as too poor, some as out of the Territory, and noted partial payments on some accounts. The Comptroller's responses highlight an interesting category of person, hitherto unmentioned in the hospital records, that of a pensioner. The Yukon Territory did not provide old age pensions, as they had declined to enter into the Federal-Provincial agreement offered in 1926-7. From whence came these pensions? Also another category of person, the indigent, remained part of the list. Why was the hospital billing indigents in the first place, for whom service should have been provided for free, let alone still trying to collect from them years later? This divided attitude towards the poor is indicative of the attitudes towards pauperism outlined in the first chapter. The desire to assist the poor was also tempered with a belief that too much aid would create an apathetic and growing poor population, so that while aid was offered, the poor were also discouraged from taking it.

It is on the conflation of these two categories, the pensioner and the indigent, that the majority of the content of this thesis will focus. Table Four indicates that while hospitial grants continued, such grants did not account for all of the Hospitals, Charities and Public Health budget. In this chapter the change in focus of government social spending, from annual funding for universal hospital care to individually supplying the means of life to the elderly will be shown through reference to financial records. This new relationship of care will be further described in chapter four, with the detailed information available from the welfare records. In the category of Hospitals, Charities and Public Health, it has been shown that hospital expenditures grew, but not enough to explain the overall rise in the category's expenditure. The amount stated below in Table Four as the hospital grant is comprised of operating grants, money to finance capital expenditures such as new buildings and new equipment.

Table Four: Hospital Grants as Percentage of the Hospitals,Charities and Public Health Budget, 1905-1938.

| YEAR | H.C.&P.H | HOSPITAL GRANTS | GRANT AS % OF H.C. & P. H. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1905 | 53 545.84 | 51773.00 | 97 |
| 1906 | 42 060.14 | 22200.00 | 53 |
| 1907 | 30 267.37 | 26400.00 | 87 |
| 1908 | 31 268.40 | 26900.00 | 86 |
| 1909 | 34 318.64 | 27600.00 | 80 |
| 1910* | 22 107.70 | 20200.00 | 91 |
| 1911 | 32 088.12 | 29100.00 | 91 |
| 1912 | 51 223.51 | 29600.00 | 58 |
| 1913 | 28 499.35 | 23600.00 | 83 |
| 1914 | 32 096.*7 | 21600.00 | 67 |
| 1915 | 29 516.75 | 23600.00 | 80 |
| 1916 | 52 685.87 | 46000.00 | 87 |
| 1917 | 38 762.58 | 30999.66 | 80 |
| 1918 | 35 312.28 | 28500.00 | 81 |
| 1919 | 22 982.64 | 14000.00 | 61 |
| 1920 | 28 439.40 | 16000.00 | 56 |
| 1921 | 27 433.99 | 16000.00 | 58 |
| 1922 | 19 929.35 | 14000.00 | 70 |
| 1923 | 49 329.31 | 42607.05 | 86 |
| 1924 | 33 846.16 | 25800.00 | 76 |
| 1925 | 32 619.44 | 24000.00 | 74 |
| 1926 | 35 230.36 | 27500.00 | 78 |
| 1927 | 36 299.34 | 28000.00 | 77 |
| 1928 | 39 185.98 | 30000.00 | 77 |
| 1929 | 35 333.57 | 26500.00 | 75 |
| 1930 | 36 426.44 | 31500.00 | 86 |
| 1931 | 41 559.06 | 25500.00 | 61 |
| 1932 | 39 264.11 | 25500.00 | 65 |
| 1933 | 42 895.63 | 25550.00 | 60 |
| 1934 | 44 884.38 | 25550.00 | 57 |
| 1935 | 47 550.78 | 25550.00 | 54 |
| 1936 | 52 573.13 | 26500.00 | 50 |
| 1937 | 65 944. ** | 30500.00 | 46 |
| 1938 | 73 184.80 | 38500.00 | 53 |

The latter aspect of the Hospitals,Charities and Public Health budget was expenditure on Public Health. Actual expenditure on public health was minimal; some years passed

with no expenditure, such as 1925, while other years were as low as $11.00 for supplies such as vaccines in 1923. The average expenditure in this area drops dramatically if one looks at averages by decade. Between 1908 and 1917, the average expenditure on the public health was $3133.81; for the middle decade, 1918 through 1927, the average expenditure was $830.25, whereas for the last decade of this study, 1928-1937, the average expenditure on the public health had fallen to below a hundred dollars per year, $93.48. In years without the large expenses in this category, vaccination and quarantine, the public health was largely a contingency line item rather than a consistent area of government activity. The general decline in epidemics resulted in declining expenses for this area even as the total budget for Hospitals, Charities and Public Health incurred massive budgetary overruns. It is evident that the activities of the Territorial Government in preventing and treating communicable illnesses was not responsible for budget overruns between the years 1921 and 1938.

Table Five: Other Items in Hospitals, Charities and Public Health Care's Budget, 1905-1938.

| YEAR | H.C.&P.H. | PUBLIC HEALTH | MORGUE RENT | M.H.O. SALARIES[1] | CEMETARY COSTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1905 | 53 545.84 | 114.15 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 0.00 |
| 1906 | 42 060.14 | 104.13 | 140.00 | 735.48 | 0.00 |
| 1907 | 30 267.37 | 749.75 | 110.00 | 1200.00 | 0.00 |
| 1908 | 31 268.40 | 1116.95 | 130.00 | 1200.00 | 0.00 |
| 1909 | 34 318.64 | 1995.95 | 120.00 | 2197.00 | 0.00 |
| 1910* | 22 107.70 | 216.85 | 50.00 | 300.00 | 0.00 |
| 1911 | 32 088.12 | 600.35 | 150.00 | u/k | 0.00 |
| 1912 | 51 223.51 | 20034.31 | 120.00 | u/k | 0.00 |
| 1913 | 28 499.35 | 1217.00 | 80.00 | 880.00 | 1441.89 |
| 1914 | 32 096.*7 | 4127.77[2] | 110.00 | 3927.00[3] | 0.00 |
| 1915 | 29 516.75 | 218.50 | 120.00 | 2700.00 | 0.00 |
| 1916 | 52 685.87 | 55.2[4] | 120.00 | 3000.00 | 37.50 |
| 1917 | 38 762.58 | 1755.27 | 100.00 | 3000.00 | 54.00 |
| 1918 | 35 312.28 | 153.75 | 130.00 | 3000.00 | 107.25 |
| 1919 | 22 982.64 | 1410.06 | 140.00 | 3123.50 | 56.35 |
| 1920 | 28 439.40 | 4689.18 | 110.00 | 3049.00 | 37.50 |
| 1921 | 27 433.99 | 1332.41 | 120.00 | 1900.00 | 37.50 |
| 1922 | 19 929.35 | 134.25 | 110.00 | 1800.00 | 45.00 |
| 1923 | 49 329.31 | 11.00 | 140.00 | 2126.67 | 45.00 |
| 1924 | 33 846.16 | 49.25 | 120.00 | 2400.00 | 69.37 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1925 | 32 619.44 | 0.00 | 120.00 | 2400.00 | 60.00 |
| 1926 | 35 230.36 | 124.80 | 120.00 | 2400.00 | 45.00 |
| 1927 | 36 299.34 | 397.85 | 120.00 | 2400.00 | 60.00 |
| 1928 | 39 185.98 | 23.00 | 120.00 | 2400.00 | 60.00 |
| 1929 | 35 333.57 | 24.00 | 120.00 | 1443.56 | 90.00 |
| 1930 | 36 426.44 | 17.00 | 120.00 | 1550.00 | 110.00 |
| 1931 | 41 559.06 | 0.00 | 120.00 | 1556.00 | 60.00 |
| 1932 | 39 264.11 | 158.13 | 120.00 | 1550.00 | 60.00 |
| 1933 | 42 895.63 | 65.10 | 120.00 | 1500.00 | 85.00 |
| 1934 | 44 884.38 | 0.00 | 120.00 | 1350.00 | 54.00 |
| 1935 | 47 550.78 | 0.00 | 120.00 | 1620.00 | 74.25 |
| 1936 | 52 573.13 | 70.80 | u/k | 1600.25 | 99.66 |
| 1937 | 65 944. ** | 576.87 | 120.00 | 1727.82 | 0.00 |
| 1938 | 73 184.80 | 31.60 | 150.00 | 1800.00 | 0.00 |

[1]Medical Health Officers', Slaughterhouse and Meat Inspectors', Sanitary Inspectors' salaries, including expenses.

[2]Includes expenses from 1911 Smallpox Epidemic.

[3]Includes back salaries from 1912-1913.

[4]Includes expenses from 1914 Scarlet Fever Epidemic.

So, the question remains, from whence came the rise? Medical Health Officer and Assistant's, and the Slaughterhouse Inspector's salaries were paid out of the Hospitals,Charities and Public Health budget category, but they drop from $3000.00 in 1917, to $1800.00 in 1938. Morgue rent and the care of the public cemetery were also small costs; the morgue figure being between $100.00 and $150.00 for most years, and the cemetary upkeep and repair averaging a figure below $100 most years.

The remaining budgetary item with which we are left can only be inferred from the catgory's title: Hospitals, Charities and Public Health: it is Charity. The work in this area was always discretely accounted for under the sub-heading of Public Health; however, actual medical public health activity was accounted for in a different set of line items. The

sub-heading title was modified over the years to Public Health and Care of Indigents, to illustrate from whence came the budget overruns. The Yukon Government's foray into the area of charity was expensive, and accounted for almost all of the unusual rise in the costs in the category of Hospitals, Charities and Public Health. It is also the only area of the Government budget in which it was usual for the amount voted for that pupose to be overexpended; very seldom did this category come in under budget, despite the allotment larger and larger sums on the poor. The growth in the need for public charity outstripped the amount voted for that purpose after every increase by the government planners, who were presumably those knew the situation best. Any government overexpenditure was explained in a verbal introduction to the annual government statement of revenue and expenditure. The tone of these explanations bcame more shrill with each passing year. In 1932, the reports states that "Public Health and Care of Indigents overexpended by $3214.11, due to the increase in the number of indigent old people requiring the bare necessities of life." In 1933 the combination of climate and economic conditions were blamed: "the reason of such a large over-expenditure on this account is that the Yukon Territory was practically compelled to supply a large number of unemployed throughout the winter with fuel and provisions, without any assistance from the Federal Government." In 1935, Frank Osborne, the Territorial Treasurer, explained at length for the ten thousand dollar overexpenditure:

> "a very large increase in the number of men who, with increasing years and failing health, find themselves no longer able to earn a living, accounts for the large expenditure this year. Most of these men have been in the country from the early days of the camp. Most have kept themselves going in recent years by the proceeds of their guns and snaring small game, but they are getting too feeble to continue this precarious means of procuring a livelihood and have had reluctantly to ask the Government for assistance."

By 1936, the Treasurer simply noted "It is impossible to supply the requirements of the indigent population and keep within the appropriation." Examination of Table Six will demonstrate the growth of costs which brought him to this conclusion.

Table Six: Hospitals and Charities: Grants and Expenditures, Some Comparisons.

| Year | H.,C., &P.H. Expenditure | Hospitals Grant | P. H. and Indigents Grant[69] | Indigent Expenditure |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1914 | 32 096.*7 | 21600.00 | 3000.00 | 1852.96 |
| 1915 | 29 516.75 | 23600.00 | 2400.00 | 3014.85 |
| 1916 | 52 685.87 | 46000.00 | 3000.00 | 2770.37 |
| 1917 | 38 762.58 | 30999.66 | 3000.00 | 2559.13 |
| 1918 | 35 312.28 | 28500.00 | 4000.00 | 3421.28 |
| 1919 | 22 982.64 | 14000.00 | 3500.00 | 3756.63 |
| 1920 | 28 439.40 | 16000.00 | 3500.00 | 4053.72 |
| 1921 | 27 433.99 | 16000.00 | 4000.00 | 4846.59 |
| 1922 | 19 929.35 | 14000.00 | 4000.00 | 3840.1 |
| 1923 | 49 329.31 | 42607.05 | 4000.00 | 4374.59 |
| 1924 | 33 846.16 | 25800.00 | 4000.00 | 5407.54 |
| 1925 | 32 619.44 | 24000.00 | 5000.00 | 6039.44 |
| 1926 | 35 230.36 | 27500.00 | 5000.00 | 5040.56 |
| 1927 | 36 299.34 | 28500.00 | 5000.00 | 3861.99 |
| 1928 | 39 185.98 | 30000.00 | 5500.00 | 6814.31 |
| 1929 | 35 333.57 | 26500.00 | 5500.00 | 6477.54 |
| 1930 | 36 426.44 | 31500.00 | 5900.00 | 8099.03 |
| 1931 | 41 559.06 | 25500.00 | 8500.00 | 8323.06 |
| 1932 | 39 264.11 | 25500.00 | 9000.00 | 11875.98 |
| 1933 | 42 895.63 | 25550.00 | 12500.00 | 15520.68 |
| 1934 | 44 884.38 | 25550.00 | 13100.00 | 17785.38 |
| 1935 | 47 550.78 | 25550.00 | [over by $10 452.78] | 20246.53 |
| 1936 | 52 573.13 | 26500.00 | 15000.00 | 24302.42 |
| 1937 | 65 944. ** | 30500.00 | 20000.00 | 33019.75 |
| 1938 | 73 184.80 | 38500.00 | 24000.00 | 32241.70 |

The Government began its charitable efforts during the Gold Rush, when it assisted a few prospectors who had lost their equipment, bought them replacements, and sent them back to depend on their own labour. The Government assisted people they called indigents, those who could not support themselves, or in the Victorian terminology, paupers. The Government assisted by providing transportation if they needed to go to hospital, or to a place where they would have other means of being cared for, either by

[69]While the accounting of Public Health and Care of Indigents together as a sole appropriation item does not allow us to state absolutely which items the bureaucrats had predicted would rise in the following year, the low public health expenditures charted in Table Three, compared with the Indigent expenditures shown here allow the conclusion that it was indigency which accounted for the rise in cost, not public health.

their own labour, or through some other person, such as family or neighbours if the destination was their own property. The majority of assistance given by the government was in the form of food orders, authorizing the local retailer to give the indigent $20.00 per month of food, and bill the Government for it.

Table Seven: Charity, or Direct Indigent Costs, 1905-1938.

| YEAR | TRANSPORTATION | BURIAL | CARE | SUNDRIES | TOTAL CARE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1905 | 1095.00 | 320.00 | 166.19 | 0.00 | 1581.19 |
| 1906 | 860.00 | 335.00 | 510.53 | 575.00 | 2280.53 |
| 1907 | 1178.00 | 280.00 | 349.62 | 0.00 | 1807.62 |
| 1908 | 1 170.75 | 500.00 | 248.20 | 0.00 | 1918.95 |
| 1909 | 1 478.75 | 409.00 | 488.44 | 991.32 | 3367.51 |
| 1910 * | 372.00 | 131.90 | 633.95 | 0.00 | 1137.85 |
| 1911 | 639.00 | 375.00 | 357.16 | 0.00 | 1371.16 |
| 1912 | 770.00 | 472.00 | 436.20 | 0.00 | 1678.20 |
| 1913 | 859.50 | 334.13 | 539.08 | 0.00 | 1732.71 |
| 1914 | 954.00 | 300.00 | 598.96 | 0.00 | 1852.96 |
| 1915 | 1 865.60 | 60.00 | 1076.50 | 12.75 | 3014.85 |
| 1916 | 1 267.30 | 240.00 | 1 263.07 | 702.80 | 2770.37 |
| 1917 | 861.00 | 265.50 | 1 461.65 | 0.00 | 2559.13 |
| 1918 | 753.25 | 560.50 | 2 107.53 | 304.50 | 3421.28 |
| 1919 | 1 176.00 | 279.50 | 2 301.13 | 0.00 | 3756.63 |
| 1920 | 352.50 | 200.00 | 3 501.22 | 0.00 | 4053.72 |
| 1921 | 468.10 | 200.00 | 4 178.49 | 0.00 | 4846.59 |
| 1922 | 279.66 | 284.50 | 3 275.94 | 0.00 | 3840.10 |
| 1923 | 518.35 | 191.00 | 3 665.24 | 0.00 | 4374.59 |
| 1924 | 353.50 | 578.00 | 4 476.04 | 0.00 | 5407.54 |
| 1925 | 212.00 | 360.00 | 5 467.44 | 0.00 | 6039.44 |
| 1926 | 595.52 | 657.50 | 3 517.54 | 270.00 | 5040.56 |
| 1927 | 0.00 | 594.65 | 3 267.34 | 270.00 | 3861.99 |
| 1928 | 151.00 | 840.00 | 5 163.31 | 660.00 | 6814.31 |
| 1929 | 406.17 | 333.00 | 5 378.37 | 360.00 | 6477.54 |
| 1930 | 172.94 | 555.41 | 7 010.68 | 360.00 | 8099.03 |
| 1931 | 212.44 | 248.83 | 7 501.79 | 360.00 | 8323.06 |
| 1932 | 273.55 | 716.00 | 10 526.43 | 360.00 | 11875.98 |
| 1933 | 282.50 | 812.30 | 14 065.88 | 360.00 | 15520.68 |
| 1934 | 342.00 | 476.85 | 16 606.53 | 360.00 | 17785.38 |
| 1935 | 139.00 | 415.75 | 19 331.78 | 360.00 | 20246.53 |
| 1936 | 616.50 | 360.00 | 22 965.92 | 360.00 | 24302.42 |
| 1937 | 844.95 | 1 046.27 | 30 768.53 | 360.00 | 33019.75 |
| 1938 | 542.25 | 1 126.69 | 30 212.76 | 330.00 | 32241.70 |

The area in which expenditures grew the most, and exponentially, was in providing the means to sustain life: food and warmth. It was the rise in the number of people dependent upon the Government which overexpended the budget yearly, rather than any significant rise in the standard of living that the Government provided. The poor people of the Territory required money to pay for food; flour, oats, sugar, tea, baking powder, beans, canned goods, and lamp oil, items which could not be produced domestically in the Territory. The Government also provided meat, through the efforts of the R.C.M.P. who shot caribou while out on patrol, cleaned the kill and divided it up for distribution amongst the needy.[70] Occasionally other material items were purchased, but they generally fell under the need for food, or warmth, such as stovepipes, axes, and warm clothing. It was an essential statement of the Government's humanity: they would not let someone freeze or starve to death if they could intervene.

Lack of housing was not a significant problem in the Territory at this time, as the number of log cabins, both in isolated areas and within the towns was high, and the population was declining, leaving many vacancies. Alternatively, cabins could be built as the raw materials were at hand; logs, for those who could perform the labour, and land were plentiful. Fuel was scarce in the towns, and had to be hauled from areas not already denuded by the predations of the population. This item was much in demand by women, the elderly and those who were not able-bodied. Cold was the enemy of the poor, and the possibility of people freezing to death was a significant motivator in the Government's expenditures. The length and ferocity of the winter were as much the creator of poverty as any other identifiable cause, as the economy was seasonal, with waged labour occurring in the summer when the rivers flowed.

In their final hour and beyond the poor were not forgotten by their government, as the Government buried those who had no one else to bury them, but this cost was not significant, although it did triple over the period of study.

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[70]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 1 of 2.

The Government's entrance into sustaining life and dignifiying death for its citizens, who were often isolated on the creeks in the back country, marked a very significant assumption of power. Whereas in most of Canada, private charitable groups attended to the needs of the poor, in the Yukon, the primary attendant was the Government. The isolation of the clients is also significant in two ways, as their lack of family allowed the Government to intervene without challenging the social ideal of family care for the elderly, and their isolation even from neighbours required that the elderly poor have someone upon which to rely to deliver their food and wood, in this case some agent of the Government or firm of merchants contracted to supply that individual. This personal level of interaction with the Government is also significant; the immediate need of the poor to ask for and receive their supplies brought the Government much closer than it was for many Canadians, for whom provincial politicans and bureaucrats were remote creators of laws and speeches, delivered in a building usually notable for its imposing and classical architecture. The remainder of this chapter describes the process and bureacracy which built up around this personal interaction between Government and governed. Methods of acquiring assistance are delineated, both from action of the clients and the bureacrats. With the personal nature of the questions asked and answered the Government began to know its own citizens better than before. The government formed an administration which dealt with its poor; the poor also formed reciprocal expectations of care from their Government. The remainder of this chapter gives an overview of the relief administration procedures from their early and more random state, to the more regulated environment the Territorial Government developed, to standardize the welfare system and to control costs. While this chapter describes the administrators' welfare practices, little is known of them as individuals, other than their administrative responses to the needs the poor expressed to them. The responses of the R.C.M.P. to the poor is more fully known, as they generated most of the routine reports on which this thesis is based. The R.C.M.P. officers were

compassionate in tone, except when the officer felt that the poor person was the author of his/her own predicament.

At the beginning of the period of study, in the year 1917-18, the provision of relief by the Yukon Territorial Government was already systematized. The process by which an applicant acquired relief changed only once during the period of study, in 1926. The method of acquiring assistance was varied. Some individuals appealed directly by letter to the Gold Commissioner, some to the R.C.M.P. detachment, and others asked prominent members of their community, such as businessmen to appeal for them. In other cases, letters went out from the Government as the instigator, which state that it was rumoured that an individual or family was in need of assistance. Formal systems were employed by the Government for both instructions and for payment. Inspector Telford, the Officer Commanding "B" Division of the R.C.M.P. replied to the Gold Commisioner's letter of the 23rd, "I would say that we shall be pleased to cooperate with you in investigating and reporting on cases of destitution that may be brought to our notice. Detachments will be instructed to report, giving details as to the actual requirements of each individual."[71] After the report, the Commissioner made a decision about how much aid a person would receive, and in what way.

After 1926, standardized forms, procedures and questions were used by the newly appointed staff of the relief adminstration. The Relief Officer, Frank Osborne, replaced the Gold Commissioner as the sole benefactor of the poor in the Territory, although some residents still appealed for aid through politicians they knew. For example in 1926, the Relief Officer of the Government sent this note to the Officer Commanding, the R.C.M.P: "M-110[72] has made application for relief in the way of food supplies, and as it is customary for a report from the officer on Town duty as to the general character of the

[71]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.

[72]This is the archival gender identified number for name substitution which gives each client a unique identifier, allowing for the tracing of individuals. Males were given an "M", females an "F", and those whose sex could not be determined in the record were designated with a "U", all then follwed with a number.

case, I ask that you investigate and advise for use on file."[73] The R.C.M.P. were also required to file a report on any person they found to be destitute, which was forwarded to the area of government concerned with relief. It was uncertain whether the R.C.M.P. had the authority, but sometimes they did authorize that temporary assistance be granted to an individual, such as $10.00 worth of groceries from the local store. The officer's report, on his return to his detachment would then be forwarded to the Officer Commanding the R.C.M.P., and a copy sent to the Relief Officer. He then authorized aid in the form of monthly grocery orders from the local store. Considerable latitude was available to the Relief Officer, either to give aid without expectation of it being repaid, or to require repayment by a promissory note with a time deadline. The distinction was mainly made along the lines of earning capacity, as this report shows:

> "I beg to state that in my opinion this is not a case that the territory should be called upon to bear the expense. It would appear that Mr. U-31 is an able bodied man, and should not call upon the Territory for such Assistance. While we do not care to see persons suffer from the lack of the necessities of life, especially children, it would appear that the only course for us to pursue would be to extend to Mr. U-31 credit in order that the children might not suffer, and in consequence thereof we are allowing him credit to the extent of $20.00 per month for March and April after which time U-31 should at least provide for his family and not call upon the Territorial Government for further assistance."[74]

This separation of the applicants into deserving poor and undeserving poor is consistent with welfare ideology all over the Western world at this time. The divisions were often mutually contradictory, such as it was better to be personally responsible for ones' own hospital bill, and be in debt for it, but also it was considered to be a sign of bad character to be in debt. The emotional characteristics which the Government preferred included self-reliance and hardiness, but also an appropriate amount of submissiveness, and an anglophile background. When these characteristics were not demonstrated, or if the applicant fell into the shadowy area in between being white and Native, the applicant was less likely to be given help, but offered a loan instead, or an opportunity to partake in hard

[73]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 1 of 2.
[74]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.

manual waged labour such as road work, to wean the individual away from a more Native mode of economic survival, the hunting and gathering lifestyle.[75] The assistance of neighbours also would lapse if an individual did not attempt to care for themselves if they could, as in this example from 1920:

> "Mrs. ( ) informed me that she knew the man well and that he was hard up, but was in good health and able to work, if he wanted to but was too lazy and indolent and would rather loaf around than work. She informed me that her husband and herself had helped him out on different occasions, but did not feel like doing it any more as the man, altho perfectly able to do so, was unwilling to do anything for himself."[76]

Shopkeepers and neighbours co-operated with this information exchange with the Gold Commissioner concerning a known indigent, sometimes divulging information the indigent person had given them about the situation of their relatives, their location or address.[77] The Government often followed up on this information and wrote to the families of indigents, even going so far as to indicate that their Yukon relative had taken to drink.[78] This move towards true paternalism on the part of the Government, where it believed that it could make the best arrangements for its people, especially its poor, who became reduced to economic minors, with the Government as knowing father. In some cases this relationship was legally enacted, when the Government held power of attorney for some of its indigent clients.

This position of welfare provider was a novel position for the Government, who did not have the specialization of the emerging field of social work or even the lengthy volunteer experience of many charity workers elsewhere in America. The position of provisioner for so many also involved learning for the administrators, with better cost controls, contracting procedures and quality controls being created as the administrators acquired more experience.

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[75]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.
[76]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 1 of 2.
[77]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 2 of 2.
[78]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 2 of 2.

At the inception of the system, most business was conducted by formal letter between the Commissioner, the police, the storekeepers and clients. The flexibility with which the whole policy was arranged spread into the details. With no precedents available in the early years cases were decided on individual merit. When the Officer Commanding "B" Division of the R.C.M.P. enquired what supplies the government would furnish indigents, George MacKenzie, the Gold Commissioner replied that "as the funds available for such purposes is very limited, only necessities are supplied, but no attempt has ever been made to classify what is a necessity..."[79] By 1924, the Government was using order forms to secure goods from merchants to give to indigents.[80] Controls over groceries became more firm in 1929, when clients were docked on the following month if the previous month's grocery bill from the merchant showed even a few cents over the twenty dollar mark. The Government occasionally pressed matters of "excessive prices" with merchants, demanding more reasonable prices from them for goods. The response illustrates one of the problems of relief, even on such a small scale, in such a large and uninhabited country. While the merchant offered to lower his price on bacon, he compared the prices of white beans in Dawson with the prices for the inferior brown beans in his more northerly locale, and wrote that the freight fees would not allow him to lower his price on sugar any further. Clearly the sheer physical problems of the transport of goods over terrain frozen for eight months of the year, and bog the remainder were considerable.[81]

The difficulties of supplying goods to remote regions at any kind of reasonable price stood as an insurmountable difficulty for the Government, because although the Government or the clients could complain that they were not receiving good value, most remote regions had only one merchant, who could in essence make his own prices. Further difficulties often ensued if the remote trader ceased to operate, where the Government had been using them as a supplier for an indigent. The additional costs of

[79]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 1 of 2.
[80]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.
[81]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 1 of 2.

sending an R.C.M.P officer to the location with several months food supplies had to be borne by the Government on top of the grocery costs. Having entered into the relationship of supplier to the poor, the Government could not back out easily when it became more expensive.

Efforts to control costs were made by administrators. Some items became ineligible for Government payment, such as tobacco in 1930. By 1930, the Government was requiring bills in duplicate from the merchant, signed by the recipient, delivered to the office for payment.[82] Controls over wood were the most extensive, as it required eventually that an officer of the Government be present to measure the wood on the truck before it was dumped at the delivery site, to ensure that the Government and the poor were neither being given shoddy goods nor being overbilled.[83] This wariness only came with the recognition that much of the budget overrun in Government was in the care of the indigent. However, these were small economies when the scale of government relief responsibilities continued to rise.

The essential nature of the Government's work in this endeavour did not seem to waver from their view, even as the financial consequences mounted. In this letter dated April 26, 1935, from the Comptroller of the Territory to the Secretary of State for Canada, the Government's compassionate priorities remained intact:

> "Whereas, the reductions which have been made in the financial grants to the Territory have brought its available funds below the minimum at which it is possible to maintain the essential public services among which one of the most vital is Care of Indigents and support of Hospitals which alone imperatively absorb a considerable part of the total funds."[84]

With this affirmation on their lips, the Government continued to pay the spiraling costs of indigent care, with no further complaints to Ottawa. The secondary place in which the Territorial Government placed economic stimulation through infrastructure spending is a heartening level of commitment. In the following chapter, the more individualized level of

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[82]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 1 of 2.
[83]YRG Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.
[84]Gov 2029, TS 7, Vol. 2, 135 H, Part 1, Vol. 2.

interaction will be examined, and a picture of the client population may shed light on the reasons for the Government's commitment.

# Chapter Four: Receiving: Favoured Clients

In this chapter those who received support most easily from the Yukon Territorial Government will be examined. The answer to the question "who is served by this policy?" will assist in providing an answer to the broader question of "why was this government involved in a costly aid program?' The groups into which the clients fell, European, white and male, European white and female, and those of different or mixed ancestry, will be examined in the order of their acceptability to the welfare system. The first group, the favoured men will be examined in chapter four, the less acceptable clients in chapter five, and the uses and abuses of the welfare system in chapter six. As much as possible the client's own words will be quoted to reveal their situations. Relief patterns will be delineated. Interaction will also be examined between R.C.M.P. and clients, neighbours and clients, merchants and clients, natives and clients. Client agency will be underlined.

The data for the analysis is drawn from three types of sources. Government financial data show only that money was spent for the purpose of welfare, but on whom the records are silent, due to Archival regulations regarding confidentiality of the client. At this level, we have both aggregate data, compiled by the Government in their Annual Financial Reports, and some surviving Annual Reports from the area of Hospitals, Charities and Public Health. A very rich data source is the fragmented records of individual transactions between clients of the relief system and their donor, the Territorial Government. What these case records can reveal about the clients is considerable, and occasionally surprising. This record group contains letters not only written by government officials, but also by clients and community members, speaking on their own and on the client's behalf. This individual level welfare data, or case records, have 'holes' in it due to the fragmented survival of the record group, for example, a six month period of time in 1929 is missing, as is all but two of the records for 1934 and all of 1935. As much information as is available will be used to flesh out the circumstances and actions of the clients. These full

descriptions often come from the intake reports filed by the R.C.M.P. officers who investigated the applications. All surviving intake reports between 1925 and 1933 were analyzed, to look at commonly reported factors in the client's lives, namely: age, sex, time of residence in the Yukon Territory, birthplace, citizenship, health, work background, family status, and the system's response to the client's request. [85]

**Methodology: Intake Group 1925-1933**

In a more exact look at available data on the individual clients of welfare, I analyzed the intake records of the welfare system which had survived from between 1925 and 1933. The intake records were a very particular kind of record from the welfare system; this single report contains the largest range of demographic and social questions put to the client in the application process for relief. Other welfare records survive but contain less concentrated information for the historian. In June of 1925 all current and new relief recipients were put through a newly instituted intake record system, as part of the new and more business-like arrangement mandated by the Yukon Council. This concentrated information became a source for a more detailed analysis of welfare activities contained in this thesis. All surviving intake records were analyzed and the results reveal a good deal about the nature of the Yukon welfare system. It is also important to state that this 'sample', was not pre-selected by the researcher, but all surviving intake records, no matter how incomplete were used. The intake group's main significance is that it is the same in profile as the general clients of the programme during 1925-1933. From this researcher's reading of the total body of records, with their qualitative force, no other client group is revealed, nor are any significant sociological differences present. The experiences and

[85]The questions asked in all R.C.M.P. reports on destitution were 1. Name, Age, Citizenship and Residence. 2. Property and Value. 3. Provisions on hand. 4. What he is most in need of. 5. List of provisions required for one month and will be required regularly. 6. How long relief is liable to be required. The reports closed with a section headed "Remarks:"

characteristics of the intake group reflect that of the general population in the Yukon in receipt of welfare at that time; the advantage to a research project of concentrating on this smaller group of individuals is based in the standardization of information collected, rather than a desire to exclude any group or type which could be more difficult to explain. I am confident that generalizing from this group to the rest of the population receiving welfare would be accurate and representative.

Two things immediately became apparent from the intake records. The first was a very odd gender balance in the system: there was a preponderance of men in the welfare system. In fact, nine out of ten welfare clients were men. This is very different from other Canadian welfare systems in the 1930's, as revealed by work on the subject by Healy on the Prairies.[86] How these men made legitimate claim on their government for support is significant, as it falls within a gender sanctified model. Men identified themselves as model citizens, as originators of the country through prospecting and they identified themselves as morally correct through their patriotism, having served their country as soldiers. Men's public activities were scrutinized to assess their suitability, and their willingness to work when they could. Their value as pioneers proved their citizenship, no matter from whence they came to live in the Yukon. Women identified themselves as moral, hardworking, and thrifty in their homemaking.

The second major finding of the analysis was in the area of age. Between 1925 and 1933, 156 client's intake information survives; in 117 cases the client's age is recorded. Seventy-two percent of clients were aged 60 or over. The Yukon had a declining population, and it never regained its youthful component of men after they went off to the First World War. Some died, but many simply did not return to the North. The high average age of clients is in keeping with the general social confusion about the nature of

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[86]Theresa Healy, "Neither Reasonable Nor Adequate: Women and Relief in Saskatoon, 1929-1939. A Paper for Presentation at the Qualicum Conference, Qualicum Beach, B. C., January 25-27, 1991." Draft: for the purposes of quotation. Simon Fraser University, 1991.

this government program, whether it was or was not an old age pension equivalent to those offered by several provinces in the late 1920's in southern Canada.

Clients and the R.C.M.P. administrators were all confused about the Old Age Pension, and whether the Territory was going to offer it. The Territory did enter into negotiations with the Federal Government over the Old Age Pension in 1927, and a bill was considered by the Yukon Council, but the pension plan was not adopted by the Yukon Government even by 1941.[87] Later refusals of individual claims for pension reiterated that relief was not a pension, but the client group which received relief belied that statement. For example when a 76 year old man was in need in August of 1928, he conveyed to the R.C.M.P. officer investigating that "If the Old Age Pension Act is in force in this Territory, this man desires to apply for it. He states that he has been informed that this Act is now in force."[88]

Two views of the welfare system remained in the mind of the public. In 1931 U-36 phrased his request based on his disability, rather than as a pension application, "I am writing to ascertain whether the Government will assist me with twenty dollars per month as they do other people who are in ill health and are unable to do work to earn a living."[89] This confusion over whether welfare was a pension or not grew over time, as more and more old people received assistance. This is typified in one old man's request in 1936: "I am at the end of my resources. I am obliged to ask for old age pension or relief," as if the two were synonymous.[90] The difference between them is important, although to the successful applicants it does not seem so, as $20.00 per month of support was $20.00 worth of support, no matter if the money came from the Federal Government directly or from the Territorial Government. While both plans were means tested, qualification for the old age pension was solely on the grounds of age, income, and residency; the welfare

[87]Canada 1941: The Official Handbook of Present Conditions and Recent Progress, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Department of Trade and Commerce, King's Printer, Ottawa, Canada, 1941, p. 181.
[88]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4.
[89]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 6, 1 of 2.
[90]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 2 of 2.

system of the Yukon differentiated between clients' acceptability on those grounds and also on grounds of morality, work ethic and race.

The analysis of the intake group reveals that three basically different groups received welfare. The first group was aged men. The second group was women without men, and the third was unemployed middle-aged men. This last group is important as its appearance reinforces the flexibility of this non-legislated programme. With no legally stated bounds, the Territorial Government was, for example, free to adapt and expand the program to meet the needs of miners dislocated by the Keno area shutdown of the 1930's. However, the most significant finding is simply in the distinctiveness of the three client groups.

Eighty four of the clients in the intake group were sixty or over, and all but four of these elders were men.[91] The vast majority of these men were bachelors; a small number of men had children from mixed native-White marriages which occurred in the man's sunset years. The women in the intake group fell into two age groups, those under fifty and those above it. The younger group were usually women without men, who had children to support. These women were caught between the societal belief in motherhood as a profession, which said that women should remain in the home and raise their children, and the lack of financial support for this from the fathers of the children. The middle aged women were usually single or widowed with no children; for these women the low wages paid for 'women's work' meant difficulty supporting themselves on their labour. Five female clients did not have an age recorded in the records; taboos about asking women their age may have played their part in this omission, at 29% non-reporting, but the percentage of missing ages for the male clients is similar, at 24%. More men than women are described with words rather than an exact age, but there were five times more men than women in the intake group. The words used were old, very old, aged and the last one, who was suffering from senility no longer knew his age.[92] Because of the differences

[91]Old is used in this context to refer to those from 60 to 69 years of age; elderly is used to refer to people aged 70 and over.
[92]CH4DATAG.XLS, pp 1-3.

in the client population according to sex, both will be dealt with in greater depth separately, beginning with men.

Table Eight, Age and Sex of the Intake Group, 1925-1933.

| Year | Intakes | 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70-79 | 80 + | F no age | M no age |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1925 | 24 | | | 1F,1M | 2M | 1F, 7M | 1F, 5M | 5M | 1 | |
| 1926 | 6 | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| 1927 | 5 | | | | 1F | 1F | 2M | | 1 | |
| 1928 | 11 | | | | | 3M | 3M | | 1 | 4 |
| 1929 | 14 | | | | 1F,1M | 1M | 6M | 1M | | 4 |
| 1930 | 7 | | | | | 1M | 3M | 1M | | 2 |
| 1931 | 14 | | | 1M | 1F | 1M | 5M | | | 5 |
| 1932 | 11 | | | | 1M | 1F, 7M | 2M | | | 1 |
| 1933 | 60 | 3F | 1F, 2M | 3M | 1F,10 M | 17 M | 9M | 1M | 1 | 13 |
| 1934 | 2* | | | | | | | | | |
| | n/a | | | | | | | | | |
| Totals: | 152 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 18 | 40 | 36 | 8 | 5 | 30 |

**Pioneers: Supporting the Originators of the Yukon**

The age the relief recipients had achieved by 1925 suggests that these men and women could have been remnants of the gold seekers who came to the Yukon in 1898. When this was checked against intake report information, the number of relief recipients in the intake group who were resident in the Yukon at the start of the Gold Rush in 1898, or earlier, was found to be 29%.[93] If one looks at the first year of the sample, 1925, 63% were resident in the Yukon in 1898 or up to ten years earlier.[94] The number of "old-timers" declined as a percentage of the client population each year. Some may have left the Territory under their own financial power, and others may have died. It is also useful to recall that the sample dates from the middle of the period when relief was granted; a higher percentage of clients at the inception of welfare may have been '98ers.

[93]NCAS2535.XLS, p. 2, 12, 22, 32.
[94]NCAS2535.XLS, p. 2.

The respect shown the originators of white society in the North should not be underestimated. Almost all the R.C.M.P. reports used respectful words such as "old time resident," "member Pioneer," most frequently "old man" and when describing their failing health, the words are gentle rather than scornful.[95] The strength of this respect was used to garner resources for these people. When the Auditor General of Canada, Georges Gauthier visited Dawson in the summer of 1925, he toured St. Mary's Hospital, where the majority of the Territory's infirm, aged men were in care. Gauthier promised to secure some warm clothing to be given to these old men, "who are without any means of support and in many cases destitute for want of clothing."[96] The then Acting Gold Commissioner, Percy Reid, used this feeling on the part of Yukoners to ask for financial help getting the donated goods to the Yukon. He implored Mr. Greenfield, of Greenfield and Pickering, the transport firm, to let the clothes be shipped at a special freight rate for charitable purposes or free of charge, "in view of the fact that these supplies are for the old timers in the Territory, many of them perhaps personally known to you, ...."[97]

An example of how this identification with the pioneering role worked is illustrated by the case of M-236. He was a man who perfectly fit the image of an old-time prospector; this positively influenced his chances of receiving relief. As Corpl. Blatta recorded in the intake report:

> "I would recommend the above application for the following reasons. M-236 is an old time resident of this Territory, having spent about thirty years here in actual prospecting for minerals, twice he has located promising properties which he has sold for considerable sums, the majority he spent in other mining activities and further prospecting. In his pursuits of prospecting he endured all sorts of hardship and privation as the result he became afflicted with Rheumatism so at this time he is hardly able to work. For the last four years M-236 has not been able to support himself...."[98]

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[95]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 1 of 2. YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.
[96]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.
[97]*ibid.*
[98]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 8, 1 of 3.

Corpl. Blatta stated an expectation on the part of the people of their Territorial Government when he closed his report with, "In my opinion he is deserving of the assistance asked for and I trust his application be looked upon with favour."[99]

Few women existed in the great myth of a new country in the North, a land where legend had it men prospected and women worked in saloons. It was primarily a male myth, and "good" women, such as would be allowed Government relief, did not fit in its mythic shapes. Many women whose characters were more salubrious did venture to the Yukon in the Gold Rush, but theirs was not the legendary fame of the dance hall girls, who moved on to Nome, Alaska with the next gold discovery. Only two women in the intake group had been living in the Yukon Territory since 1898. One elderly woman on relief, F-10, seemed to have lost her adventurous spirit, if she had ever had it. There on the edge of the greatest wilderness in North America, she wrote that "I never go out of the yard."[100]

**Virtuous Men:**

Men who received relief demonstrated the minimum necessary qualities: need, and appropriate character. Positive moral qualities were stressed by R.C.M.P. officers as reasons to recommend that a man be given assistance. M-301 continued to work until he was 73, when he was laid off because he was thought to be too old for further employment. Between 1925 and 1933, he "ha[d] been supplied by residents of the town." This man's restraint is praised by the R.C.M.P. corporal forwarding the case report to his superior, "He is a most deserving case and has not made any application previously although he has been in straitened circumstances for some years."[101] Another man was praised by the R.C.M.P. officer for his strict morality, as M-110 "is a total abstainer and does not gamble," although one wonders against what other individuals his abstemious

[99]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 8, 1 of 3.
[100]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.
[101]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 2 of 2.

behaviour stood out.[102] Another man's drive to work was one of the sources of his being recommended for relief; the report lists six reasons why the R.C.M.P. officer is "of the opinion that this man is a deserving subject for Government assistance":

> "U-53 is a man past 60 years of age, has been a resident of the Territory since 1897, is a British subject, is in very poor health at the present time, upon searching his premises it was found that he is without food, and is without means to procure any, he is willing to work at any odd jobs that he can procure, has been employed on one of the wood saws since Fall, but owing to his illness is unable to continue at this work, so has been laid off and is without employment at the present time."[103]

Reluctance to give up life on their own and scraping by in difficult circumstances demonstrated some of the qualities the relief system workers valued the most: independence and self-reliance. This R.C.M.P. report shows the lengths to which clients would struggle to keep their independence. The compassionate tone of the report shows the attitude of the R.C.M.P. to those whose health was failing through no fault of their own :

> "On my way out to Granville this last trip I made further enquiries and found out about a week ago, M-A was found wandering about down on the Creek, he couldn't see to find his way back to the road, this in daylight, his cries were heard by Smith and Delhi and some of their men engaged in mining some few claims above and he was taken home. M-A has an old horse and he spends the winter months in catching rabbits in box traps and taking them into Dawson where he finds a ready sale for them to the fox ranchers, these box traps are all along the Hunker road for about a mile both below and above his cabin. It is apparent that with these short days M-A may lose his way while on his daily visits to his rabbit traps. His neighbours say he is almost totally blind and when I approached him he had to squint at me for some time before he recognized me. I have asked the people along Hunker anywheres near M-A's place to keep an eye on him until such time as some disposition of his plight can be taken. M-A does not want to go to the hospital but I would respectfully recommend that he be admitted there."[104]

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[102]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 1 of 2.

[103]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 2 of 2.

[104]The identifier M, U or F followed by a letter is used when the materials are from the uncensored record sample taken at the archives during the initial records survey. YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.

In another case, two reasons for helping the man were given. The first is a clear examination of the economic opportunities in the Champagne district, "The man did not appear physically capable of doing any hard work which is the only visible means of subsistence in this district, he appeared to be crippled by rheumatism."[105] The man's isolation was also stressed: "In view of the above circumstances and the fact that he has neither kith nor kin from whom he could expect any support in any shape or form, .... Further I would respectfully recommend that this man who has no visible means of subsistence, and through circumstances of failing health unable to support himself, be granted permanent assistance to the extent of $20.00 per month."[106]

**Men and Family:**

It should not be assumed that because the majority of men in the system were bachelors that they were uninvolved in family life. Men often lived with their brothers. They supported sisters and brothers living elsewhere. A minority did create families of their own in the Territory. M-361's family relations were revealed when he was in need of help for the coming winter in 1937, as his prospecting of late had been unsuccessful. M-361 had pulled out of his dump $15.00 worth of gold, after he paid for his summer "grubstake". He was given a cabin in which to reside for the winter by Mr. Alguire, where he could obtain his own wood, but needed food for the winter. Constable Moore wrote that "Until a very short time ago M-361 supported a single sister; Miss - of Mass., U.S.A., sending her funds whenever possible; besides the sister there is one brother living in Lawrencetown, N.S., but M-361 receives no assistance from him."[107] Attention to this application was urged to be "prompt," as the man had tried to wait as long as he could before applying for relief, and was in need at that time.

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[105]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.
[106]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.
[107]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 11, 1 of 4.

Bachelor uncles were often involved in the life of their family of origin, even if they did not have family in the Territory. M-278, for example, had sent his spare money for the last twelve years to help support his brother, who was an invalid, married with children. He regretted that he could not continue this support, but did not rue that because of it he had no savings on which to fall back when mining in the Keno area ceased to provide a living. The R.C.M.P. officer praised the man, writing "he is of a sober and industrious nature," recommending him for relief.[108]

The most common family relationship was co-resident brothers. M-189 asked for relief in October of 1931 because family duties kept him from being able to move to find work.:

> "Up to two years ago I was able to make a good living, then My brother had a paralytic stroke which incapacitated him entirely and I have been forced to look after him in everyway, this together with other bad conditions in this Territory and not finding employment near Tagish I am practically destitute. It appears that I will have to look after my brother for the rest of his life. Up to this time I have been able to keep clear of debts but I cannot see how we are going to get along during this coming winter. I respectfully request assistance in either provisions or a cash allowance to carry us over this winter."[109]

M-189 does not mention that he had an Indian wife and a daughter who would then have been 12 years old, despite the fact that it was likely they that performed the female tasks of nursing the ill man.

M-348 asked for relief for a second time in November of 1937, with impending fatherhood as his primary reason for not being able to work on his trap line at the time. "We have practically nothing left from the last one & I see no way of making any money just at present owing to the lack of snow. it is impossible to get any fur & my wife will be going to the hospital soon as she is expecting another child shortly. so you see it is impossible for me to get away to do anything just at present."[110] While some men did, as

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[108]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 1 of 2.
[109]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 6, 1 of 2.
[110]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 11, 1 of 4.

M-348 described, start new families, most men applying for relief were older when they did so and did not have children capable of supporting them economically in their old age.

A significant finding of this thesis is the social isolation of the clients. Clients were people who were largely without family in two ways. Few of these men and women had formed a nuclear family of their own, with a spouse and dependents. In only 15 cases out of 156 clients in the intake group, or .19%, are children co-resident with the applicant, and in those only 12 times are the children under the age of 12.[111] The treatment of children in general moved between the Victorian idea that the client must be let to see his children suffer, so he will learn better ways, and the early twentieth century desire to shelter children from the consequences of their parent's actions.[112] The treatment of family also enters the dichotomies between the native and White worlds, as the majority of children encountered in the system were half-breeds.

The other sign of social isolation is the number of clients who indicated that they no longer had any living relatives, or were not in contact with their family of origin. Of the 141 clients examined, 127 or 90% did not give names and addresses of their family of origin.[113] This finding should be qualified by the reality that it was in the client's best interests **not** to give this information at intake, as government administrators could refer them to their relatives for aid. Some came up with relatives' addresses later when they decided that they wished the Government to finance their repatriation; in other cases, storekeepers noticed return addresses on the client's mail, and handed the information on when the merchant pleased.

The Government pursued family members when they could, and tried to get them to assume responsibility for the financial burden of their relative. The payment of relief in this Territory in no way diminished the belief of the Government in the primacy of family

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[111]NCAS2535.XLS, pp 25-28.
[112]John Bullen, "Orphans, Lunatics and Historians: Recent Approaches to the History of Child Welfare in Canada," *Histoire Sociale-Social History,* Vol. VIII, No 35(mai-May 1985).
[113]NCAS2535.XLS, pp 9- 12

responsibility for the elderly. A son who had set up an account for his father at the local trader's was cut off for lack of payment, and his father was again found to be without wood or food. The R.C.M.P. report stated: "It appears the Gold Commissioner is familiar with this case, and there appears to be every indication that an effort is being made to throw responsibility on the Government, for the maintenance of this old man and the son who is in the employ of the Customs Department at Whitehorse, is not in the position, or is avoiding this responsibility."[114]

Children in particular, rather than siblings from the client's family of origin, were considered responsible for their parent's welfare. In an extreme case, Mr. Jeckell the Comptroller had the R.C.M.P. advise one man's children of their responsibility to support their parent! "In the questionnaire completed with this applicant, I note that he has ten children. While some of these may be small, yet there are some of this applicants children of mature age. These should be interviewed and reminded of their obligation to assist in the support of their parents."[115] In another case a man was told that "he could not expect to receive relief indefinitely from the Territorial Government, especially since his son and daughter were working." The R.C.M.P. officer and M-210 discussed the matter and a date two months distant was agreed upon, when M-210 would likely be able to do work of some kind again, and would no longer receive relief. His elder children were expected to help in supporting their younger siblings, and their parents.[116]

The client base of the Yukon welfare system allowed for this system of welfare to exist. The prevailing ideology of family care dictated that when an individual needed something, the family was supposed to act as the social safety net. The range of responses included shared accommodation, child and elder care, and pooling of several family

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[114]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 6, 1 of 2.
[115]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 11, 1 of 4.
[116]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 11, 1 of 4.

member's incomes to weather times of scarcity.[117] That the vast majority of clients had not formed nuclear families of their own allowed for a paternalistic government to step in and offer substitute family care. The supplying of relief did not alter the prevailing belief in family responsibility. Any time the Government could contact the family, with the expectation of assistance for their relative, the family was asked to assume responsibility for their member. In cases where the family declined to provide for their member, the Government sometimes forced their hand, threatening to cut off support for the client, and placed the family in the position of assisting, or allowing their relative to suffer privation.

**Working Class Reality: Working into Old Age Despite Health**

Generally, the work available to men in the Yukon Territory was heavy manual labour in the resource extraction industries, or the equally physical but independent work of prospecting and trapping, along with some vegetable raising. The late age at which clients ceased to work reflects the reality for working class Canadians in the early twentieth century- work continued as long as possible, until the body gave out. As such, many clients supported their qualification for relief with a doctor's examination and certification that the client could no longer work without harm to himself.

The terseness of one R.C.M.P. report suggests the frequency with which he issued the same recommendation: the client "is in a very feeble condition, unfit to work and in need of food supplies."[118] The frequency of this type of recommendation lends support to David Thomson's work on the blamelessness of aging.[119] As old age will strike all

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[117]Bettina Bradbury, "The Fragmented Family: Family Strategies in the Face of Death, Illness, and Poverty, Montreal, 1860-1885" in Joy Parr, ed. Childhood and Family in Canadian History, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982.

[118]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.

[119]David Thompson, "Welfare and the Historians", in The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure: Essays Presented to Peter Laslett on his Seventieth Birthday, ed. Lloyd Bonafield, *et al*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, pp 366-368.

citizens, it is not a sign of moral fault to ask for assistance when age cripples the wage-earner.

A step beyond relief was the committal of aged people to the hospital for the winter. Poor health as a barrier to employment, or a self-supporting level of employment was cited in 60 cases out of 156, or in 38% of intake reports. The most common complaint was rheumatism, probably modernly known as rheumatoid arthritis, totaling 8 out of 60 stated complaints. The Territorial Government, it will be recalled, had a financial agreement with the hospitals which required them to treat all indigent patients in order to receive their operating grant. No additional charges could be levied to the Government no matter how many indigents the hospital cared for and housed. It made financial sense for the Government to send the aged to hospital rather than put them on relief in winter, as it would cost the Government twenty dollars a month less. The Government did not abuse this right; they only sent the aged who were too infirm to support themselves through harsh winter on their own. Then when rheumatism prevented M-179 from chopping wood or carrying water at the age of 73, the R.C.M.P. officer wrote:

> "He is in ill health and incapable of fending for himself. He resides in a small cabin on the outskirts of Mayo, has little or no fuel, and is too infirm to cut wood for himself, and from my personal observations of him I am of the opinion that he will not last the winter if he remains here under the existing circumstances."[120]

Accordingly he was moved to hospital for the winter.

Doctors could also initiate relief procedures. Frank Osborne, the Territorial Relief Officer, instructed the R.C.M.P. detachment at Dawson to investigate the circumstances of M-159 based on this information, Dr. LaChapelle's note that M-159 "is in need of supplies, being afflicted with Rheumatism, and unable to obtain same."[121] Health problems referred to in relief records were stated vaguely, and in terms of restrictions placed on the person, rather than in medical terms, such as "unable to cut own wood or

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[120]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 6, 1 of 2.
[121]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 2 of 2.
[122]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 1 of 2.

keep own garden"[122] and "losing power in legs."[123] Twenty-one of the intake clients, when asked about their occupation said explicitly that they could not work at all any more due to their failing health.[124] Others continued to work, but with no expectation on the part of the relief system that this would make them independent of aid again, R.C.M.P. officers often wrote that whatever amount of work the client did would assist in keeping the client healthy and alert, and demonstrated appropriate moral qualities.

The daily administrators of relief, Osborne and his assistants, and the R.C.M.P. officers, understood and responded to the personalities of the men they served, and the clients' response to the prospect of dependency. The administrators correctly intuited that these men, who had lived highly independent and isolated lives as prospectors, would not easily give up their independent habits, even when the Government professed to be acting in their best interests. For example one man in 1918 complained of stomach trouble, but when the R.C.M.P. officer thought he had persuaded him to go into a hospital, and had made all of the transportation arrangements for the seven hour journey, the man decided he was feeling better. As the fear of medical or dental treatment can have a falsely restorative effect, the opinion of the man's brother, with whom he lived was sought. He agreed that if his brother did feel better, he should stay at Indian River. The R.C.M.P. officer noticed the client some days later, "Yesterday afternoon he came to the Road House looking very shaky, so that night I advised him that it would be best for him to go to the hospital, at the time he did not like the idea of Hospitals, being of a rather independent nature, however I told him that it would be best if he came with me the next morning which he agreed to do."[125]

The R.C.M.P. were not so mild about men who were apparently heedless of their health, causing themselves to become public charges. Constable Unia was sent to

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[122]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 1 of 2.
[123]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 1 of 2.
[124]NCAS2526, p. 5, 15, 25, 35.
[125]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 2 of 2.

investigate the health of M-326. "Traveling down river by Mail Launch we arrived at M-326's at 3 p.m. and found him in very poor health he was hardly able to walk and stated that he was bothered with a stomach complaint, M-326 is also still suffering from a froze foot from the previous Winter ( report rendered 29-5-35) which from his own neglect had never healed up." The constable's sentiments were echoed by Superintendent Caulkin, when he passed on the report with his own comments appended, "This patrol and its results is [sic] identical with Constable Unia's experience a year ago. This man is evidently neglectfull and seems incapable of caring for himself."[126]

Medical ignorance was as much a threat to health in the period as was the weather. Another case of self-neglect was that of M-B, of Granville. Constable Burt of Granville detachment reported that M-B:

> "was severely burned by steam points about the legs some few months ago, and he spent a considerable time in the hospital in Dawson and was discharged with his legs all mostly healed and only needing good care that he could do himself in his cabin. Mr. Predo a neighbour of M-B told me that M-B had been putting common muck on his legs with the mistaken impression that it was clay or Denver mud, be that as it may, his legs are, just now in pretty bad shape, running sores and swollen and discoloured, I would respectfully suggest that the hospital is the place for him, in his present shape."[127]

Alcoholism was present amongst relief clients, just as it was in the general population. In 1919 an alcoholic's unmarried sister was asked to receive her brother, to take him off the Government's hands. She "was very much surprised & sorry to hear that my brother M-26 was in such poor circumstances as he has never complained to me in any of his letters, but if he is addicted to drink he would not," as it was a subject upon which there was social silence. She declined to receive him, writing that she could "barely make enough to keep myself in these hard times" at her work at the Fraser Institute, and was "getting on in years."[128] Her brother was considered mentally incompetent to make decisions for himself and was placed in St. Mary's Hospital to "dry out". Another

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[126]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 2 of 2.
[127]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.
[128]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 2 of 2.

alcoholic's case was investigated by Sergt. Cronkite on November 17, 1928; he reported back to his superiors his findings of M-137's condition. He found "that this man has no wood, also is without any provisions, he is just living on what other people give him, this man is a heavy drinker any money that he receives is spent on liquor, noone will give him any employment as they cannot depend upon him, he is also slightly demented. M-137 is a man between 60 and 65 years of age, he has been a resident of the Territory for years, he is in such a condition now from excessive drinking that he cannot look after himself properly."[129] Two days after the investigation the man was found dead in his cabin assistance having been left too late.

With a view to stemming the flow of alcohol to indigents, on December 11th, 1937 the Territorial Treasurer instructed the legal vendors of liquor, in this Territory the Government Liquor stores, that "Should any indigents visit the Liquor Store for the purposes of purchasing liquor, either for themselves or for someone else, will you please notify Mr. Jeckell of same." A list of indigents was attached to the original of this instruction.[130] This was not a prohibition of the sale of alcohol to relief recipients, but an area of control and observation. It was also an admission of the independence of the clients by the Government and of only partial knowledge of client's financial standing on the part of the Government, as the clients would have to earn their own money to spend on liquor, since the relief system, was carried on entirely by vouchers assigned to food merchants.

**Men and Insanity**

Insanity was poorly understood and the mad received little social support in this period. While colloquial expressions allowed that sometimes circumstances or individuals

[129]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 1 of 2.
[130]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 11, 1 of 4.

could drive one insane, the moral fault or weakness which caused insanity resided in the victim, or in his or her family background. The treatment of such persons was one of distance, and fear. The treatment of the insane in the Yukon welfare system follows this distancing and fear reaction almost perfectly. The administrators and R.C.M.P. officers written reports show that they left intervention into cases of destitution among the insane longer than with more approachable clients, and displayed a more 'hands off' attitude. At times the records suggest that the officers were fearful of such clients and reluctant to speak to them.

M-189 provides one example of this tendency to delay taking action concerning such cases. M-189 began to show signs of mental decay later in life. He had been off and on relief since 1924. His behaviour became more erratic after his brother's death in 1934. At the same time as brother's passing, M-189's daughter gave birth to an illegitimate child, and suffered poor physical health after the birth. It was not until June, 1936, however, that the Officer Commanding the R.C.M.P. Detachment and the Gold Commissioner took a more active interest in M-189. M-189 was certified by a doctor to be "definitely mentally deranged in addition to other physical disabilities" and the Gold Commissioner wrote, "In view of this I am of the opinion that a charge of insanity should be laid, and it be definitely decided by a Magistrate on the evidence of the Doctor and others if this case should not be one for institutional care at the asylum at Essondale. If it is determined that he is not mentally deranged, then this case will have to be taken care of at the Whitehorse hospital."[131] The R.C.M.P. corporal did not assist the man until he was "absolutely bed-ridden and helpless."[132] The treatment of this man demonstrated clear reluctance to intervene and assist with "mentally deranged" cases.

The threat of mentally deranged action also spurred a resolution to the case of an elderly Mediterranean man, who according to the R.C.M.P. "had a mania for writing

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[131]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 2 of 2.
[132]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.

letters of all kinds, which are without foundation."[133] The man insisted that he had been blackballed from working in the Territory, and demanded that the Gold Commissioner do something about it in 1919.[134] After little work was forthcoming, he changed his demand to passage first to Butte, Montana. The Gold Commissioner stated that he had no control over the affairs of private companies, but that he had investigated the matter and found that no blackballing had taken place.[135] M-47 demanded the Gold Commissioner tell Mr. Coffey "not to stick his snout in my way, any place I start to work, but to let me alone," more fancifully later suggesting that "it should be more honourable to take the six shooter and come in front of me, instead of going behind me in zig-zags like all old hag and harlot."[136] The extravagance of M-47's claims revealed a persecution complex. On January 12th, 1920, he claimed that Mr. Coffey "has spies and detectives all over".[137] One echo of Mr. Coffey's response to these accusations was present in one of M-47's "long and tiresome letters" to the Gold Commissioner; M-47 reported another potential employers' telephone conversation with Mr. Coffey, who reputedly said that M-47 "couldn't agree with the rest of the gang" on worksites.

In 1926, M-47 changed his demand to that of passage back to his homeland, still insisting that blackballing had hampered his employability in the Territory. The Government in Whitehorse went as far as to investigate with the Federal Immigration authorities the possibilities of transporting the man back to his country of birth. F.C. Blair, the Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Immigration and Colonization in Ottawa advised the Territorial Government to offer passage in a quiet way, rather than having the hand of the Canadian Government too visible, as the man had been naturalized in Canada as a citizen in 1908. M-47 was then reported to have acted very erratically, uttering threats, and engaging in behaviour which fit the stereotype of a Baltic anarchist.

[133]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 2 of 2.
[134]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 2 of 2.
[135]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 1 of 2.
[136]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 1 of 2.
[137]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 1 of 2.

After this action the Territorial administrators agreed to Blair's plan, and volunteered to pay M-47's passage to Montreal, where he would get passage to his homeland, working on a freighter and coached him on how to lie to immigration authorities after he had arrived home.[138] The Yukon Government's fear of this old man's potentially deranged behaviour was so great that they counseled the smuggling of an illegal alien.

Three weeks later Percy Reid, the Gold Commissioner of the Yukon Territory decided he was uncomfortable with the underhandedness of the plan and sent a wire to Blair, asking him to put the matter before the Consul-General of Greece, for his permission. This delay took from July 20th through September 27th, 1926, at which point the Consul-General agreed to furnish M-47 a Greek passport.

The Gold Commissioner decided to offer the Greek passage: "My own opinion is, in which I think you [the local R.C.M.P. officer} will agree, that M-47 is not entirely mentally responsible, and may possibly do harm to himself or someone else if not properly watched."[139] M-47 led the Territorial Government a merry dance, where he would ask for a new destination, or add another condition on to leaving just as the tickets were ready for him. At this point M-47 asked to be sent to Montreal instead of Greece, as there were many of his countrymen in Montreal.[140] One year later M-47 had again agreed to accept deportation to Greece, but with the condition that the Government pay his accumulated debts of approximately $125 first. Evidently this deal did not suit the Territorial Government, who instead had him on their books as an indigent, being given $20 per month in groceries from April through December of 1927. In July of 1928 passage was again arranged for M-47, this time to Montreal. After all was arranged, he simply disappeared, getting on the boat for Pennington.

In Pennington he accepted work for the winter on the White Pass and Yukon Section Gang, and was to leave for Montreal the following Spring, possibly paying his own

[138]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 1 of 2.
[139]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 1 of 2.
[140]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 2 of 2.

passage. There he decided that the foreman on the job was prostituting out his own wife; M-47 decided to leave there for Whitehorse, "for I never worked for brothelhouse."[141] In Whitehorse again the offer of transportation was made by the Government, with $25.00 for expenses. R.C.M.P. Inspector Bruce increased the amount to thirty dollars, the amount which M-47 requested, saying "It would be ridiculous if the Yukon can get rid of the man to hold up the whole proceeding for the lack of $5.00."[142] This man's activities demonstrate both the patience of the welfare system administrators and how with tenacity, clients could get what they wanted and how they wanted it.

**Men and Violence: Suicidal Threats**

Male clients on several occasions threatened violence to themselves if not given assistance, as in the above case of M-47. This last resort demonstrated again the isolation of the client, particularly for men without family. One man went into an R.C.M.P. Detachment office on July 27, 1936, and "asked for a permit to kill himself for the reason that he was of no further use in the world." This Nova Scotian had been in need for some years, but had refused relief. On the 22nd of July he asked the R.C.M.P. to arrange for him to be sent to live with his relatives in Nova Scotia, and gave details of their address, etc. He had "$304.00 in the Bank of Montreal at Mayo, Y.T. but as he is unable to work for a living he would rather the Terr. Gov't. send him to his relatives rather than keep him after his money is gone."[143] He was employed in road work on Duncan Creek in July, and acted peculiarly. His odd behaviour worried his supervisor, who asked the R.C.M.P. to check on his sanity. The man walked off into the bush after saying the work was too much for him, leaving before the R.C.M.P. could interview him. A few days later he

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[141]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 1 of 2.
[142]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 2 of 2. YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 2 of 2. YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 1 of 2.
[143]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.

appeared at the Keno detachment office, and spoke to the R.C.M.P. officer on duty, "M-313 came into Keno on July 27th and appeared to act very queerly. Upon speaking to him he informed me that he was seriously contemplating committing suicide and asked me if he had my permission to do so. He further stated that if he returned to the cabin in which he was living, about one mile from Keno, he would not leave it alive."[144] A medical doctor certified that he had a mental and physical breakdown due to lack of care, and lack of proper food.[145] He was admitted to hospital. The man had been living off the land, eating mainly rabbit for several years. It is in cases such as this one that one can see a preference for a certain kind of relief client; this is demonstrated by the R.C.M.P.'s knowledge of M-313's need several years before approaching him to offer help.

Financial disaster was perhaps the final blow which brought M-34 to despondency. He had been convicted on an indecent assault charge, and while absent from the territory to serve the sentence in British Columbia, he was robbed of all of his goods, his cabin and his money. On his return, he discovered this condition and he threatened to kill himself, equating his financial worth with his personal worth. M-34 was staying in the Occidental Hotel when the innkeeper inquired after his welfare, and was told "that he had no home, no friends and no money, that noone cared what happened to him and that he wanted to die." The R.C.M.P. were summoned by the innkeeper, and they concluded that he "is despondent and feeble, and he is brooding over the treatment he had received and may, if nothing is done for him, do himself some harm."[146]

Gender stereotypes about male independence and men's lack of need of help played a potentially fatal role in the lives of these men. Gender roles demanded that when a man needed anything desperately, such as material help, he needed to ask from a position of strength, to demand rather than to humbly ask, as would be considered acceptable for a woman. In these cases, the suicidal threats can be likened to a hostage taking. However,

[144]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.
[145]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.
[146]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 2 of 2.

if he was not violent to others, the only hostage left was himself. He would then be within his gender role, and demand to have his needs met, or he would shoot. The latter case of suicide was a different kind of threat, based in the man's own materialism, where a man's worth was literally considered to be in what he owned, in this case, nothing. In contrast, only one woman in the relief system was ever described as despondent, in a phone message to Mr. Maltby, "appears to be in distress, sick, out of grub, despondent, etc." but she did not threaten herself with any harm.[147] This contrast in behaviour may have stemmed from gender based socialization for men to act, and express anger, and for women to be passive and turn rage inward.

**Relief and Income:**

Relief recipients were watched for additional income, although no threshold of earnings was ever stated as a cut-off point. M-184 was the recipient of Inspector T.B. Caulkin's watchful eye in 1931, when he wrote to his superiors that "Care will be exercised in these issues and if it is found that any applicant is in receipt of any income at some future date from trapping or other sources, the issue will cease or be moderated accordingly."[148] The Special Game Wardens responsible for managing trapping on occasion wrote to the Gold Commissioner, reporting the take and value of furs trapped by indigents, and even upon what the money was spent. M-29, when questioned by a visiting R.C.M.P. officer, after his application for relief, stated what goods in the house came from the provisional relief, and which he had bought himself. He was able to keep his own dog and a boarding dog on the proceeds of the latter's keep, buying oats for oatmeal dog feed.[149] A dog in this northern climate was much like a telephone; if the man became ill

[147]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.
[148]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 6, 1 of 2.
[149]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.

and needed to get to help, he could use his dog sled to get to help even if he could no longer walk.

Another man, M-134, who had been approved to receive relief on November 14, 1928, by December 6th the R.C.M.P. officer in charge of the case wrote to his superiors "I have now the honour to report that this man has succeeded in obtaining a few odd jobs here and $20.00 worth of provisions, authorized to be paid for in the report above referred to, will be paid for by himself and there will be no further charge against the Territorial Government on this account."[150] R.C.M.P. officers also occasionally helped indigents who had tried to obtain employment by going to employers in the area and asking about the possibility of employment for individual relief applicants, particularly if the type of employment would need to be light labour, of which there was little in the Territory.

One source of client income which did appear in the relief records with some regularity was the sale of alcohol to Indians, an action which the Indian Act prohibited. Several clients in their intake reports had convictions for this crime listed, with fines paid or jail times served listed as well. One client fit the English idea of a black sheep shipped to the colonies so as not to further disgrace his family. M-224's intake report originally showed the name under which he entered the Territory, and his reason for changing it, as his mother's family had threatened to cut him off financially if he continued its use. He had been convicted five times of the sale of alcohol to Indians, and once of cruelty to animals.[151] This did not bar him from receiving relief. Another old man, this one with a granddaughter aged 12 to support, was found to be making an alcoholic beverage from dried fruit bought in relief supplies in 1937. M-310 applied for relief in 1936, two years after his first conviction; he was investigated extremely thoroughly, possibly with a view to delaying the provision of relief to him.[152] Corporal Mason-Rooke visited M-310 "from time to time, in connection with police duties." He reported :

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[150]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 1 of 2.
[151]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 8, 1 of 3.
[152]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 2 of 2. YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.

"that there appeared to be a rather undue amount of liquor consumed both by M-310 and his friends, for on nearly each visit evidence shewed that there was some sort of liquor being, or having recently been, imbibed by M-310. It has been noted from time to time that M-310 is rather too frequent a visitor at the local Government Liquor Store for one who is recipient of Government Relief. Furthermore on Aug. 19th, 1937 a conviction was obtained in court against this man under Sec. 126 (a) of the Indian Act. Evidence in this case disclosed that M-310 had used a quantity of dried fruit procured at a local store through relief measures and manufactured a quantity of wine or cider of an intoxicating nature, with which he proceeded to supply an Indian. A perusal of the court record book at this detachment shows that M-310 was convicted of a similar offense at Mayo on Sept. 5th, 1934. In both instances a fine of $50.00 was paid into court by M-310.

3. Until this indigent places the resources available to him to better advantage than heretofore, I cannot under an[y] circumstances recommend that additional relief measures, supplied from Government funds, be tendered him. It is solely on account of this man's advanced age, together with the fact that he is assisting in the support of a grandchild, that a recommendation has not been previously made to have this man's relief discontinued for a few months."[153]

This sharp drop in standard of living was meant to teach the man a lesson. Unfortunately, it likely made the illegal sale of alcohol to Indians one of the few potential sources of income, as at eighty years of age, with a child to care for, little employment was open to M-310.

M-27's use of his income was investigated by the R.C.M.P. on the order of the Gold Commissioner; M-27 had been on relief previously, and then supported himself through his labour. He had earned $117.50 working on the Government road. The R.C.M.P. reported from his statement that M-27:

"Paid Miss Wilson, of the Yukon Hotel, 50 dollars for board, and lodging, spent 22 dollars for meals, paid 3 dollars and fifty cents for a pair of Gum boots, took 8 dollars worth of food to the creeks, to work for a man named Gus Lynn, purchased some socks and underwear, prices unknown, and spent some money on liquor, which he obtained at the Principal Hotel, having met three friends from Rampart House."[154]

The Gold Commissioner's investigative powers were not questioned, but if an individual had been in receipt of relief, it appears the Commissioner could have an individual

[153]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 11, 1 of 4.
[154]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 1 of 2.

questioned even several years after they were off relief as to their disposal of monies earned.

This power was in evidence in later years as well. In a case four years later, in March of 1929, the Territorial Treasurer wrote to M-85, "Sir: You will remember that some years ago when in need, you applied to the Government of the Yukon Territory for assistance. Our records show that you were provided relief amounting to in all $272.98. As it would now appear that you are in a position to pay this amount, I am directing by the Gold Commissioner to direct your attention to the matter and request that you reimburse the Government by the amount advanced to you."[155] Marginally noted is that this account was paid in full.

The situation of men on relief, although the income was obviously low, admitted few other indignities. Men's private lives were left mostly unobserved and undisturbed. The qualities which were preferred were demonstrated by public actions: their work ethic and their bravery in battle, or even less in contention, simply their fit with the economy of the north, which was primarily a male working environment. The situation of women on relief was the mirror opposite of that of men. It was women's private lives and domestic work which were examined to assess their suitability. It was their passivity and lack of a public 'past' which qualified them for relief. While there was little difference in the standard of living between women's working wages and the rate of relief, the scrutiny of their conduct was intense. The next chapter describes the interaction of women with the relief system, and that of other outsiders and less preferred clients, natives and *metis*.

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[155]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 2 of 2.

## Chapter Five: Marginal Clients:

## Women, Natives and Others

### Women Receiving:

The situation of the one out of ten clients of welfare who were women was typical of the profiles of women on welfare, characterized in work by Linda Gordon[156]. For women, as for men, aging was the most acceptable reason for needing aid. Younger women with legitimate children were the next most deserving group, and after them, women with illegitimate children. The treatment of these women suggests the treatment of single women without dependents, as those 'illegitimate' mothers were told to board out their children and to go out and work as though they were single. No single woman without children appears to have received government relief. The relief administrators often tried to find some male in the social circle around the woman applicant, and make him financially responsible for the woman; the government was reluctant to give younger women the same consistency of aid it gave to the elderly. Lastly, the moral policing of women recipients will be explored through several incidents. Women on welfare were women without legitimated patriarchal access to male income, being without fathers, or husbands. For women, this was a fragile position; in applying for relief, women were vulnerable instead to the judgment of men, in this system the R.C.M.P and the administrators.

### Women in Later Life: Getting By

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[156]Linda Gordon, Heroes of their Own Lives: the Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston, 1880-1960, New York: Penguin Books, 1988, pp 1-26, 146-149.

One typical problem for widows who needed relief, was that their nationality changed at marriage to that of their husband. Relief eligibility was often based on nationality as well as residency. One woman chose her words very carefully, perhaps hoping to counter her earlier statement that she was American, by birth and allegiance. She wrote to the Relief Officer, Mr. Frank Osborne on June 5, 1925, "I forgot to tell you my husband ---, an architect, was an Englishman, born in England, and he was my lawful wedded husband and I have never married since his death," which would make her eligible for relief in Canada, as a British subject.[157] The situation echoes another Englishwoman's thoughts on the subject; in 1924 Virginia Woolf wrote that "as a woman I have no country" because women were disinherited from their nationality at each union, although in this instance, it benefited the client.

Another problem women faced was that even if they worked, female wages were often not enough to keep the wolf from the door, particularly if they had children to support as well. F-10, an elderly Dawson woman, utilized her skill with the needle and thrift with fabric scraps; despite the vast number of hours required to piece and quilt the items, she only was able to get a few days worth of food for them. She wrote: "I am old and lame. I traded two bed quilts and a stand for some vegetables so I got along. I don't like to ask for things but I don't see no other way."[158]

Thriftiness was an issue in evaluating clients for aid, particularly women. F-19 was in need of wood in December 6, 1924. The R.C.M.P. officer wrote, "She is using two stoves or heaters, in her house at the present time. I suggested to her, to close up one of her rooms, and to use only one heater, so as to economize in wood."[159]

Another woman, F-20 did laundry in summer for men working for wages; perhaps she was restricted to that because of her age, 58, or her health, nearly blind in one eye, and little sight in the other, and that she was Negro. The R.C.M.P. officer reported that she

[157]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.
[158]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.
[159]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.

"has made her living doing housework" and yet it is obvious that she cannot live on that "living."[160] Occupations other than laundry paid low wages; F-39 made $6.75 in the last month before she applied for relief, sometimes a week passed by without a customer coming in to her hairdressing shop. Despite the fact that F-39 owned her own business, she needed relief.[161] The R.C.M.P. monitored all relief recipients' work, and decided if they still needed relief; these women were watched, but women's low paying work in the service industry was never prohibited.

**Women with Legitimate Children**

When women's small incomes needed to stretch to support children, privation was often the result. One woman, deserted by her husband, tried to make the income from occasional work at the Cascade Laundry stretch for her and her child. She put her son out to work after school delivering papers for $5.00 per month, and did other odd jobs, and yet, "this is not sufficient to keep them in wood as well as food."[162]

One of the most tragic cases of a woman trying to provide for her family came in 1927. F-9's abusive husband deserted her, leaving her with two small children, who she sent to Dawson Public School. She then lived with an Indian called Happy Jack; he helped her support her children, but even the R.C.M.P. reported and knew that there was "always trouble," between the two adults. "Trouble" was an R.C.M.P. euphemism for violence. At some point, she threw him out, and then tried to make her family's living doing "any odd job that she can procure, such as washing clothes, or house work; she is willing to do any kind of work so that she can make a few dollars and be able to keep her children in school."[163] She resorted to selling some of her furniture to buy food for her family in

[160]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 1 of 2.
[161]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.
[162]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 2 of 2.
[163]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 2 of 2.

October of 1927, before being willing to apply for relief. For that month her total earnings, furniture sale and all, were $7.00. Perhaps she expected the scrutiny of her past sexual behaviour, and to be monitored during her receipt of help. This monitoring was a disincentive for her to apply, and she was willing to undergo privation before humiliation. The R.C.M.P. officer stated that he was of the opinion that F-9 should be given some help, "providing she does not start living with the Indian again, or any whiteman, and behaves herself, and looks after her children and keeps them in school." This admonition is laughable, as if after her Herculean efforts on their behalf, she would not care for her children. Her efforts to survive cost F-9 more in personal resources than she had to give; she died April 12, 1928.[164]

The letters written by women with children have a sameness: each incident's ability to invoke pity hampered by the understanding that any woman with children, even socially approved, legally conceived children was adrift without access to male income. Mrs. C. wrote to the Gold Commissioner on September 28, 1920. She apologized for writing, " I know you are busy and I did not want to bother you" but she needed help. She wrote, "I find it impossible to provide for my children. Goods are so high. I work hard all summer 12 hours a day and I could not make it meet up. I would like you to please send me wood to keep my family warm as they are all sick with cold."[165] The same woman had been given $125 worth of groceries the previous year to try "to make it meet up" along with caribou for meat. The male centredness of the relief system is evident in the treatment of these women, whose need for support was shown in the records, but for whom the Government administrators would only give occasional aid rather than the same regular support given the elderly.

The administrators' belief that the support of women was a matter belonging in the private sphere is shown by their actions towards the men who were closely related to

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[164]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 1 of 2.
[165]GOV 1682, Series 1 Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1.

women applicants. Men emotionally, sexually or familially, however distantly involved with women, were badgered into supporting the woman. One man was made to fully support one of his two sisters, one of whom, F-34, the Government determined he had invited to live in the Yukon. The second sister, F-36 was reluctantly given relief for the period of time her husband was in jail for selling alcohol to Indians. She protested bitterly, demanding more and more items for the comfort and survival of herself and her four year old son. She reclaimed the moral high ground in her fight with the Government: "My husband may have acted illegally but he would never sink so low that he would leave two women and a child without food, wood or winter clothes."[166] She continued her protests, poking holes in the behaviour of the R.C.M.P., "Did the police come 115 miles from Whitehorse to catch a bootlegger because they could find none nearer?"[167] She implied police incompetence when she named a number of bootleggers in between Whitehorse and Dezadeash Lake, and followed it with scathing remarks about the service level on relief, "Since the police were in such a hurry to arrest my husband and take him across the lake to Champagne when the ice was breaking the same police force should be a little more active in seeing that we are provided for before the lake is unfit for traffic."[168]

The tug of war between F-36 and the relief administration went on for the period of her husband's incarceration. She actively demanded something, and the government would refuse anything more than $20.00 worth of food, redirecting her requests to her brother, whose earnings of $30 per day they had closely investigated. In the end, her protests garnered her the early release of her husband, after he had served only half of his term of imprisonment. In his absence, F-36 had managed to provide very well for her family, with a combination of tenacity and browbeating on the more tender, chivalric side of the administrators beliefs about women and family.

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[166]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 7, 1 of 2.
[167]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 7, 1 of 2.
[168]*ibid.*

Fleeing husbands were often the source of women's financial disasters. F-4 had a husband who had deserted her for work on the railroad in Alaska, where he earned $150 per month, while she was left her to ask the Government for the small sum of $20 per month for the support of both her and her children.[169] F-33 asked the Yukon Government to make her husband support her and her family of five children, as she had run through the list of relatives who could possibly support her. The R.C.M.P. officer investigating the case pointed out another hard fact of Northern life, that "There is no employment for women around Whitehorse even if she would accept same."[170] The R.C.M.P. attempted to try to trace these light of foot husbands. While they could often find the men, if the husband resided out of the Territory, legal opinion in 1927 was that the wife "had no legal recourse against him for non-support."[171] Legally subordinate to men, these wives had little hope of social change happening quickly enough for them to raise their children in a more comfortable manner, and these women, with children to support, did not have time to agitate for any of the legal changes that could have aided them.

**Women with Illegitimate Children:**

The relief administration's treatment of women who had given birth to illegitimate children was the equivalent of the cold shoulder. One woman, F-36, who had a child aged two and a half was refused relief twice, in February of 1933, and August 1933, despite desperate need. Her requests to the government were written on her behalf by the local trader, as she was illiterate. He had given her a tent in which to live, after her father, aged 74, threw her out "to go work for herself." Such work as she could do was to care for others' dogs in summer, and to go fishing. Neither of these occupations held through the winter, and as Eugene Jacquet, her brother-in-law, amanuensis and the local merchant put

[169]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 1 of 2.
[170]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 7, 1 of 2.,
[171]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 7, 1 of 2.

it, "with a child of that age she is entirely handicapped as far as trapping is concerned." He said he was concerned about her well-being, but this is belied by his threat to cut her off from the provisions he had been supplying to her family. This threat may have been window dressing, but he still urged the R.C.M.P. to "kindly give this immediate attention as any delay through red tape etc. will impose serious suffering on this poor woman and her child." The father of the child was Indian, and she had another illegitimate child with him, which was born in March of 1927 and died in June of that year. The father of the children deserted her. Another Indian lent F-36 a cabin in which to live, when the weather became too cold to live in her tent. The recommendation of the first R.C.M.P. officer was to give her a reduced amount of relief, $15 per month, to keep her uncomfortable but not starving, which the R.C.M.P. officer thought she could combine with her fishing activities to make a living. The response of the Government was to tell her to place her child with her sister, a married woman, and go out and work. This response fits with Mimi Abramovitz's analysis in which she points out that some women, widows and deserted wives, were allowed to stay at home with their children and receive welfare, while others, particularly mothers of illegitimate children, were denied the rights of motherhood, and sent out to work.[172] Even the more compassionate R.C.M.P. officer's suggestion would have turned the woman into a public example of the negative consequences of unmarried motherhood, a public deterrent to other women who might fall prey to such behaviour. This public reluctance to condone or encourage women with illegitimate children is a key part of David Thomson's welfare core/welfare fringe argument, where the community actively discourages its members from becoming dependent on public aid, preferentially supporting the blamelessly dependent.[173]

The response of such women, denied public aid and knowing themselves incapable of combining paid work and caring for their prospective infant, often led to desperate

[172]Mimi Abramovitz, Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present. Boston: South End Press, 1988, pp 3-4.
[173]David Thompson, pp 366-7.

decisions. In rural England such women commonly named their child's father by hanging themselves in his barn, having found their way out of the dilemma. The scale of options for these women included suicide, abortion or secretive birth and adoption.[174] This same set of choices existed in Canada in this period. The case of F-38 in 1936 contains all of the contradictions of women adjudged under patriarchal law in cases of infanticide and abortion, such as those documented in Constance Backhouse's book Petticoats and Prejudice.[175] F-38 was the daughter of M-189 and his Indian wife; F-38 was born in 1917 in the Yukon Territory. She lived with her family and watched her father become partially paralyzed, and insane after the death of her uncle. F-38's mother divorced her father, and she remarried in the Tagish area, leaving her daughter behind. After the death of her father, F-38 lived alone in her uncle's house. At the age of 17 she had her first illegitimate child. Twenty-one months later she was tried for abortion in the Whitehorse Court. The judgment was that: "Due to her youth and the environment of her childhood she was released on suspended sentence."[176]

At the time she committed the crime of abortion, she had in her cabin to feed herself and her toddler, one half package of rolled oats, two cans of milk, half a pound of tea, two pounds of sugar, and one can of pork and beans. Ironically, the judge demanded that the R.C.M.P. make application for assistance from the Territorial Government on behalf of her and her child, with the expectation that they would give enough to keep her from want. It was ascertained that she had enough winter clothing and half a cord of firewood, but needed provisions. To keep her uncomfortable, and help deter any others who could follow her example, the Government gave her $10 per month assistance, an amount blatantly inadequate for nourishing her family.[177]

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[174]Patricia Knight, "Women and Abortion in Victorian and Edwardian England." *History Workshop Journal,* Issue 4 (Autumn 1977), pp 57-69.
[175]Constance Backhouse, Petticoats and Prejudice: Women and the Law in Nineteenth Century Canada, Toronto: the Osgoode Society/the Women's Press, 1991.
[176]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.
[177]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 11, 1 of 4.

**Behaving Themselves: Women and Sexual Relationships**

In assessing women's suitability for relief, it was primarily their family circumstances that were investigated. Those women who did try to access male income in ways not morally sanctioned by the patriarchy found themselves cut adrift from the welfare system. The primarily White standards of cleanliness and serial monogamy were used to determine how F-4, "a half-breed," and unmarried mother of two, received her relief. The R.C.M.P. officer reported that "the cabin is in a filthy condition with dirt and refuse, all over the place, and I am of the opinion that it should be inspected by the Medical Health Officer [MHO] as the cabin is in a deplorable condition, and this woman should be made to clean the place up, as the cabin is in such a condition that it is not fit to live in." The MHO was asked to inspect the cabin periodically to check F-4's compliance. Whether the circumstances of her family or her own health contributed to undone house work was never considered; she did have to care for a half-witted teenaged son and a three month old baby. The R.C.M.P. were asked to inspect frequently, as the administrators wrote that "she is of a loose character" and had her house full of Indians from the Moosehide area all of the time, "as a lot of them just come to have something to eat."[178] Evidently the starvation of Indians was less important in this society than the starvation of someone half White and half Indian. Stereotypes about the morality and cleanliness of Indians played their part in how F-4 was treated by the welfare system. She was granted relief "on the understanding that she behaves herself and does not encourage the Indians from Moosehide, and other parties, to visit her place. ...It may also be advisable for him [the local R.C.M.P. officer] to visit the place and see that she is carrying out her part of the

[178]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 1 of 2.

agreement."[179] Whether she had any option to agree or not is questionable, as starvation would have been the result of non-compliance.

The treatment of men on relief in sexual relationships with Indian women is markedly different. It is characterized by a silence, a general reference to the women as wives, in the style of the country, and an understanding of these liaisons as natural.[180] These relationships were not a disqualifying factor for men wanting to receive relief. That these men, often in their seventies, started new families with these women; that these families were then in turn an increase in the number of persons depending on the Government for relief was never even questioned. For men the right to procreate was absolute.

The one case where a man applied for relief when he had started to live with a woman already on relief, he gave his situation away, asking for a case of gasoline to be included in his first month's grocery order. This was not a usual item, and caught the eye of the Gold Commissioner, who with a perfect patriarchal attitude, stated to the Keno R.C.M.P. detachment that "relief from the Territorial Government will not be furnished to Miss F-31 if this man continues to live with her. Respecting Corporal MacAskill's report re the condition of this man, M-206, I would conclude that he was not in very great need of assistance from the Territorial Government when he requisitioned for a case of gasoline."[181] The Gold Commissioner threatened to throw the woman off relief with the intention of making her dependent on the man, through being financially in need and in relationship with him. The Commissioner suggested in his letter to the R.C.M.P. Officer Commanding the Yukon District that the man could later apply for both of them, more properly supporting the woman. This was in keeping with the patriarchal view of women as the natural wards of men.

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[179]*ibid.*

[180]Sylvia Van Kirk, "Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870, Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1980.

[181]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 1 of 2.

"Behaving themselves" was a euphemism for not engaging in sexual behaviour, and consequences were generally swift. Rumours of black women on welfare having men over at their houses for immoral purposes, and feeding them chicken dinners, reached the Gold Commissioner in May of 1925. These allegations were loosely enough characterized to fit either of the coloured women in their late fifties on relief in Dawson, so both were investigated by the R.C.M.P. for this "disgraceful" behaviour. The R.C.M.P. found that the women had done nothing morally wrong, nor were they lacking thrift, but were trying to make extra money plucking chickens for wealthier women in town who did not like this task.[182] That the R.C.M.P. had the power to enter and search these women's houses was never questioned. In fact, every month when either of these two coloured women needed food or wood, their requests were verified by a search of their premises, as if they had a penchant for lying to the government.[183] White women were not routinely subjected to this treatment.

Even women personally known to the R.C.M.P. often came to be held suspect. "Of late from all appearances her associations with one M-40 here is altogether too intimate to be strictly moral. I am reporting this in case you deem it advisable to inform the Gold Commissioner, as I understand the Yukon Government is supplying her with rations, and under the circumstances may decide to make different arrangements about her. I may say that I have known this woman a number of years and have never heard anything against her character, and even now I would hesitate to make any statements except that the circumstances look very suspicious"[184] Women, relieving relief became, in effect, moral minors. The Gold Commissioner wrote to the R.C.M.P. detachment before January of 1921, asking them to watch F-4's son, who was "prone to break into cabins and stealing." The staff sergeant suggested that it would be advisable to make the woman move to Dawson, so she could be "looked after and advised," or supervised, by the Daughters of

[182]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.
[183]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 1 of 2.
[184]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 1 of 2.

the Empire.[185] F-4's children in later years appear in the records of St. Paul's Hostel for Halfbreed and Indigent Children, with a suggestion that they were apprehended rather than sent by their mother.

**Women Under Welfare**

The treatment of women under welfare in the Yukon Territory is the treatment of women under patriarchal rule. Women were evaluated under the strict rules of the sexual double standard of morality, and in relation to their place within a patriarchal family structure. Womens' economic vulnerability when alone must also have acted as an incentive to become part of an extended or nuclear patriarchal family, for the alternative shown here, the receipt of welfare, was not the most palatable situation. Once receiving welfare women were treated with the degree of civility to which their position in the patriarchal hierarchy of "good women" and "bad women" entitled them. Those who were flawless, were treated with some respect; the more flawed a woman was viewed to be, the greater the observation or control under which she was put. Women were given what a group of white anglophile men believed women deserved. In this outcome, the women, and the natives whose discussion follows this, suffered from being other, not men, not always white, and therefore difficult for the administrators to classify as "good and wholly deserving." All women applicants, no matter how virtuous they appeared to a patriarchal eye, were treated with greater suspicion than any male applicants who were perhaps known to be criminal, immoral or ethnically different.

**Otherness: Between the Worlds of Native and White**

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[185]*ibid.*

Often families were assisted by Indians when one of the parents of the family was native. Indians treated other persons as Indian or not according to the person's birth and lifestyle, rather than according to the definitions in the Indian act. To be partly native, or live as an Indian in a formal or informal marital relationship to an Indian, was enough to elicit help from other Indians. The native community was more accepting of those people partly white than the White community was of those partly native. The White community also allowed highly placed administrators distant from the situation to decide who belonged to which community. The native community appeared to act autonomously, deciding on who was native based on their actions, and the heritage of both of their parents, rather than just that of the father. M-186 was a 70 year old trapper, married to an Indian woman of about 65 years of age; they had a 16 year old son living with them when the father became ill. When he applied for relief, he had no provisions on hand "except 30 lbs. of Moose Meat given him by Indians."[186] The tent in which he lived had "been loaned to him by Indians" and was in poor repair. The R.C.M.P. officer ignored the Indian Act definition which would define that M-186 as a white man when the R.C.M.P. considered his housing requirements: as "he lives the life of an indian and a tent would be most useful to him in order to live and move around to where he can obtain fish and game."[187] On this level of day to day interactions and common sense logic, often the person's lifestyle was allowed to show into which group the person fitted, but when more official decisions were requested, the letter of the law counted.

The children of M-311 were a source of concern in two different jurisdictions. He lived on the B.C.-Yukon border, spending part of his year in B.C. trapping and spending his winters in his cabin six miles over the border in the Yukon Territory, where he was legally resident. His children were aged 13, 12, 7 and 6 years; his Indian wife had died in 1933. The R.C.M.P. argued that he was economically a resident of B.C., but the British

[186]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 7, 1 of 1.
[187]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 7, 1 of 1.

Columbia Government, in this case represented by Isobel Harvey, the Deputy Superintendent of Neglected Children, found that she could do nothing about the case as he lived over the border. Harvey wrote to the Gold Commissioner of the Yukon, that "the reports have been most contradictory, - at times we are told that the children are starving and then again that M-311, who is a trapper, is providing for them adequately. The children are half-breeds. We are therefore, referring the case to you, hoping that something can be done to protect the children and to satisfy the residents of the community, who feel that there is definite evidence of neglect."[188]

The Gold Commissioner referred the inquiry to the R.C.M.P., and requested that when the next patrol was made in that region, that he wished their circumstances to be investigated. The area was remote from the Yukon, "the nearest Detachment which is Teslin Lake, and is almost inaccessible by trail owing to the mountain ranges between Teslin and the Liard," but a patrol was scheduled to be made during that winter. The patrol was made and "before Const. Meek of the B.C. Prov. Police and myself, M-311 stated that he did not wish any relief from any Government."[189] M-311 either did not understand or care that if the B.C. Government could get jurisdiction, Harvey would "take steps to get the children committed under our Infant's Act."[190] The two policemen were of the opinion that the children were in need of assistance, even if their father declined it. Corpl. Blatta of the Yukon R.C.M.P. investigated the trapping earnings of M-311 in the last three years, which had been $205.00 in 1934-35, $345.00 in 1935-36, and about $140.00 so far in the winter 1936-1937. M-311's credit was cut off at the Hudson's Bay trading post at Lower Post, B.C., as the supplies he had been given on credit before each year's fur catch had exceeded his take. M-311 appeared to be unconcerned about how he was to provide for his family in the coming winter.

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[188]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.
[189]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 11, 2 of 4.
[190]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.

Since the adults threatened but took no action on behalf of the children of M-311, the children attempted to provide for themselves. The children went out with a party of Indian hunters, did camp chores and helped dry the meat in exchange for a supply of dried meat. It was this unsupervised association with the Indian hunting party that drew an emotional and racist response from the R.C.M.P.: "it is most unsatisfactory to have young girls around the camps of Indian bucks." The Indians were providing for these half native children by treating them as part of their community, involved in both work and reward, while the response of the R.C.M.P. was to identify the Indian men as sexual predators, purely based on racist stereotyping.

To be between the worlds of white and native was precarious. On November 30th, 1924, the R.C.M.P. officer wrote of a relief applicant, "I would have put him or his wife on the Destitute Indian list, but he is a quarter breed, & his wife although a native woman, I presume takes the same status as her husband." So because of his lifestyle, and his ancestry, the man was seen as native. In the next sentence, he was evidently historically employed as a white man, "U-28 is an Ex. S/Constable of the R.N.W.M.Police and was stationed on the Upper Yukon during the early days of the stampede." The R.C.M.P. officer follows with his compromise, "I have had the account made out to the Terr. Govt. whether I did right or not in this respect I do not know, therefore I am forwarding the account to you. I issued him on the same scale that is allowed the destitute Indians, except that I doubled the amount of the flour." So in terms of payment responsibility, U-28 was white, but was given the food of an Indian as that was his lifestyle. The R.C.M.P. officer later suggested that if U-28 was not found to be white, his wife, although put into the gray area between native and white by her marriage, could make application for relief as a native woman to the Indian Agent.[191] U-28's wife's fur catch for the winter was monitored, as the payment of relief to this family was provisional, and repayment was expected. As another example of the male right to procreate, no fuss was made by the

[191]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.

Government when foxes she caught went to buy clothing for their three young children, rather than to repay the Government for provisions received.[192]

The mixed lifestyle and ancestry of U-31 and his wife led to years of administrative wrangling. He arrived at Rampart House in March of 1925, with his Indian wife's body, and with two children aged four and eight months to support. He was given temporary aid for two months, although much admonished by the Gold Commissioner, as "It would appear that Mr. U-31 is an able bodied man, and should not call upon the Territory for such assistance."[193] U-31 then placed the children in the care of an Indian family, who it was later revealed, were the children's maternal grandparents, and left to get work. This was at the urging of the trader who supplied him with food, who pointed out the precarious moral ground on which U-31 walked; this moral ground was policed by public opinion, which was reported by local trader William Schofield as, "Nobody here has any sympathy for this U-31 as he has never tried to pay up any of his obligations, but how can a man do anything when he is fool enough to hamper himself with a squaw."[194]

The R.C.M.P. officer found U-31's service record as a soldier relevant in evaluating him as a candidate for aid; he served 4 years and 3 months with the 22nd Battery, Canadian Expeditionary Force, and was both gassed and wounded by shrapnel in the line of duty. This positive information was followed by censorious remarks on the part of the R.C.M.P. about U-31: he followed a native way of life, he spent recklessly, previously having bought his then ill wife a pair of high-heeled shoes; he considered that caring for his ill wife and doing the housework and raising his children was enough of an occupation. Those who evaluated an applicants' suitability for aid looked at moral issues, health and employment prospects, as well as gender role performance. When U-31 stepped out of a male role and performed these female assigned tasks, he was censured by his neighbours and the police. "U-31 is inclined to be lazy; he had a good chance to make money this Fall

[192]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.
[193]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.
[194]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.

by cutting wood for W.J. Marshall, but states the house-work kept him busy cooking and washing clothes and looking after the children"[195] Both the R.C.M.P. and the trader urged him back into a male and White role, doing waged labour rather than adopting either a native or feminine lifestyle.

U-31 was later convicted of manslaughter and sent to jail. The children then had to be supported throughout their childhood. The Territorial Government looked upon them as orphans, having no family, but whether it or the Indian Agent was responsible for them, especially in the area of payment for and extent of education remained unclear. The native community viewed these children as part of a system of extended family, and felt them to be well provided for, cared for by a member of the Moosehide Band. The children's race was decided by J.D. McLean, Assistant Deputy, Department of Indian Affairs, in Ottawa, on May 20, 1926:

> "I beg to say that the two children therein referred to whose father is a White man named U-31 are not Indians. The fact that the mother of the children is the daughter of a Moosehide Indian who is at present caring for them has no direct bearing on the matter.....The funds which are placed at this department's disposal can be used only on behalf of Indians. I regret to state therefore, that assistance cannot be extended to the U-31 children as they hold the status of whites."[196]

Ironically, at the same time the Superintendent of Indian Education approved the placement of the children of U-31 at an all Indian Residential School, at Carcross. Ostensibly this was done so that the children could grow up somewhere where their father's manslaughter conviction would not be known.[197] The children of U-31 were placed by those in authority, who did not know how to categorize them, back in between the two worlds of the North. As such, these children would be under different rules, laws and systems of government than their only living relatives; they would unable to reside on, fish or hunt in, or participate in the political life of the Moosehide band, but were equally

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[195]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.
[196]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 1 of 2.
[197]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 2 of 2.
[198]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.

unprepared for white culture and life, having been exposed only to a native style of life and then denied it.

M-304, an Indian who had been enfranchised by Order in Council No. P.C. 26-5-31 in March 1928 was in fact legally between the worlds of native and White. M-304 fell ill on July 1st, 1936 at Liard Post, B.C. where he had been buying supplies for his family, a wife and five children. He was taken by motor boat to the nearest doctor, in Telegraph Creek, B.C. The doctor examined him, diagnosed a severe hemorrhage of the lungs and pronounced that M-304 "had a chance to live if he rested for several months as his condition was serious."[198] The B.C. Government Agent gave him supplies for a week and a Roman Catholic priest gave him and his family shelter and fuel. On August 28th, the B.C. Government Agent sent M-304 back to the Yukon, to Carcross, his previous residence. M-304 rested for some further months, during which time he was "depending upon assistance from Indian families in this District who have a hard time supporting themselves."[199] Although he had been enfranchised and was technically no longer an Indian, the Indian people at Carcross considered him to be a part of their community, and supported him despite their own marginal condition. The R.C.M.P. officer suggested that M-304 be given assistance because of his wife and five children. Perhaps because of his 'change of sides' or simply because of his heritage, the R.C.M.P. suggest that M-304 "could be kept under surveillance to see that he did not abuse the Territorial assistance."[200] Although his medical condition necessitated bed rest the R.C.M.P. still considered him a potential abuser of the system.

Even as a single adult, to be indigenous created a host of problems. In 1926, the relief administration spend the majority of its time trying to arrange for the repatriation of two of their relief clients, M-47 and M-108. M-108 was a man who was commonly known as being Finnish; he asked to be returned to his native Norway in a letter to the Gold

[198]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.
[199]*ibid.*
[200]*ibid.*

Commissioner on May 20th, 1926. This is the only time he appears to be literate; on all other occasions he is referred to by the relief administration as illiterate in English. It is unclear whether he actually wrote this letter, or dictated it in Finnish and his amanuensis translated it.

> "I the undersigned, a "Finn" and as such a ward of the Norwegian Government, respectfully request the aid of the Yukon Government in obtaining my passage back to my home "Roros" in Norway. In 1898 I was imported in charge of a small Reindeerheard by Mr. Scroggie, merchant at that time of St. Catharines St. Montreal, P.Q. whom had to give a guarantee to return me to Norway, but whom left me here, unable to speak English, and am now an old man, whom will be a burden upon the Government if not restored to my home, where my wife and children has a farm and Reindeer to support us. I believe the Norwegian Consul in Montreal should be able to throw some light on this subject. I have none here whom can ~~wright~~ write for me. Kindly let me know if you can take any steps on my behalf."[201]

However, upon investigation it became clear that he was a man without a country. The problem was this: M-108 was actually a Laplander, one of the indigenous peoples of northern Europe. M-108 "does not know definitely whether he is a citizen of Sweden, Norway, Finland or Lapland, although he is usually spoken of as being a Laplander"[202] as the territories inhabited by the reindeer herding Laplanders crossed three different nations' jurisdictions. Norway refused him entrance as his daughter there, whom M-108 said would support him, wrote that she could not take care of her father. As such, he was refused any documentation or entrance to Norway. The Norwegian authorities did discover M-108's actual birthplace and date as January 6th, 1853, at Skjokerfjellet, Kali Sechen and Pastorate, Sweden. With this information the Yukon and Federal Immigration and Colonization authorities tried to gain entrance to Sweden for M-108. While this administrative legwork was taking place M-108, although described by his neighbour Mr. Gooding as "none too robust," worked cutting some wood for another neighbour, was given meat by local trappers and hunters, grew his own vegetables, and bought staple goods to the amount of $10.00 per month on Government relief.[203] Attempts to repatriate

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[201]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 1 of 2.
[202]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 2 of 2.
[203]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 2 of 2.

M-108 to Sweden also failed, the Royal Consul General of Sweden determining on December 17th, 1927 that M-108 had "lost his Swedish Citizenship already in 1908."[204] Swedish authorities asked that the Canadian Government allow M-108 to remain in Canada "for humanitarian reasons, especially as he is so aged, and he has lived outside of Sweden for about thirty years and lost all contact with his old country." The Swedish Consul also pointed out that a British citizen in similar circumstances, having lost his British citizenship, would be allowed to remain in Sweden according to a 1922 agreement between those countries.[205] The result was that M-108, being part of a nomadic indigenous people, was not a citizen of any of the lands in which he grew to manhood, and in old age, was similarly refused entrance to those countries. He suffered with other indigenous peoples of the world the lack of full citizenship rights. M-108 remained a public charge of the Yukon Government until his death. He eventually was brought at Government expense each fall from Stewart River to winter at St. Mary's Hospital in Dawson, and returned to Stewart River each summer, to live there in his cabin on relief.[206]

The rights of native and partly native peoples to control their own destiny were hampered by the imposition of foreign governments. Even in the provision of charity, which ideally would be supposed to differentiate very little between the hunger of a white man and the hunger of a native man, the government discriminated. The treatment native and partly native peoples received at the hands of those appointed to help, from the Gold Rush to World War II, awakened in this population an eventual hunger for change and self-determination amongst the native peoples of the north, who have identified their primary social issues as health care, social services and economic opportunity. However, minority men received better treatment at the hands of the welfare system than did white women, and white women were treated far more respectfully than minority women. This

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[204]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 2 of 2.
[205]*ibid.*
[206]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 2 of 2. YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 1 of 2. YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, 1 of 2. YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 8, 2 of 3.

division is made particularly clear through the use of officer's time to regularly police women clients for compliance to moral and sanitary norms. Minority women, in these cases black and partly native women received more than their proportional share of this attention.

## Chapter Six: Use and Abuses of the Yukon Welfare System

### Welfare and the Economy

The secularization of charity in the twentieth century helped to make the economic underpinnings of charity visible. The need for charity was directly tied to the economy. In the Yukon, the harshness of winter, and the boom-and-bust cycles of its resource based economy clearly demonstrate this connection. There was marked seasonality to the need for relief. Just as M-189 asked for provisions to tide himself and his brother through the winter, so did many others. This annotated indigent list made up by Mr. Maltby, the Territorial Treasurer, and sent to Mr. Percy Reid in November of 1924, showed twenty-one recipients, with one-third of clients receiving either only in the winter months, or receiving additional supplies, such as wood during the winter.[207] The duration of winter in the Yukon made its economic force felt. Needs became higher, fuel and goods were difficult to transport in the transitional periods of freeze-up and break-up of ice, and industry in general slowed down. This relief system followed the economic cycles of industry in the North, need for charity rising and overrunning the budget allotment after economic setbacks. This fits models which equate welfare to a softening force applied to capitalism.

### 1933: Welfare as Unemployment Insurance:

The welfare system's flexibility can be seen by its shifting client base in 1933. Two differences stand out in 1933, the first was that the average age of the applicants was much lower than was usual. If all of the intake reports between 1926 and 1931 are analyzed regarding client age at application, 74% are over age sixty. However, if the year

[207]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.

1933 is excluded from that analysis, as it was such an unusual year, the number of clients whose age is sixty or over jumps to 85%. In such a small set of data one unusual year can change any aggregates. The volume of surviving applications for 1933 was 60; there are 11 surviving from 1932. To frame those numbers, the indigent list from January 1, 1930 lists thirty four recipients, as the number of intakes swells the total number already on welfare. The average number of intake reports surviving in a year between 1926-1931 was ten. The second item which draws the large number of surviving intake reports to attention is its geographic concentration. Most applicants in 1933 were from the Keno area. In February of 1932 a government listing of all Territorial indigents listed only two persons in Keno receiving assistance before the economic crisis.[208] In the Keno area the Wernecke mining camp shut down in April 1932, and everyone dependent on the wages brought out and spent by those displaced workers was deeply affected.[209] If the age profile of relief recipients of that year is compared to other years, such as 1932, its differences are dramatic.

Table Nine, Age of Clients Before and After 1933.

| Year | # of Intakes | # Age Given | 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70-79 | 80+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1932 | 11 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 0 |
| 1933 | 60 | 47 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 11 | 17 | 9 | 1 |
| Extract, Men Only | | | | | | | | | |
| 1933 | 55 | 42 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 17 | 9 | 1 |

The youth of relief applicants in 1933 is evident. The majority of the youngest relief applicants were women, and the intake records for that year show that their need was not due to the lack of mining activity in Keno. The records also show the occupations of the

[208]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 8, 3 of 3.
[209]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 1 of 2.

men who applied for relief; many worked difficult manual labour jobs in their fifties and sixties. The intake reports show that repayment of relief given to these younger men was clearly in the minds of both the giver and recipients of aid. The youngest man applying for aid, aged 34, was "agreeable to repay any assistance that he is granted as soon as he is in a position to do so."[210] This man's motives were not suspect, as he had entered the Yukon as an R.C.M.P. officer and served a three year term in that position; since then he had been employed as a miner in the Keno area. The R.C.M.P. officer who investigated relief applications included a common phrase about the circumstances the people of Keno encountered; he said the applicant "was up against it at present," with no definition of what "it" was. We can speculate as to his meaning; "it" could be poverty, or unemployment, or bad luck. This phrase also demonstrated the local belief that the economic setback was temporary in nature. This kind of structural unemployment even then was clearly recognized not to be the fault of the applicant. Despite some censorious words, this applicant is also praised:

> "Applicant has been idle for the past year and for the past twelve years he has been sending most of his earnings to an invalid brother that married and has a family. Applicant has no prospects of any work in the near future but expects to secure some during the winter. In the meantime he is pretty up against it and have no other means by which he earns his livelihood. He is of sober and industrious nature and as soon as there is anything doing in the district he will be going to work and will reimburse any assistance that may be granted to him in the meantime."[211]

The bulk of applications for relief were submitted in July, at the point that all of the clients resources had been used. Table Eight shows all applicants for relief in 1933, of which 29 were from the Keno area. The range of occupations shown by the Keno applicants was not broad, but all of them were affected by the Keno mining shutdown. Twenty were miners and/or prospectors, five were labourers, two were woodcutters, one was the resident manager of the Palmer Hotel, one was formerly the cook at the camp, and one labourer was landlord to another labourer normally employed in the area. Other

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[210]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 1 of 2.
[211]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 1 of 2.

area applicants were simply described as unemployed, and in need of relief. Taylor and Drury, the major merchant in the area recognized the breadth of the economic interruption and shut down all credit at the Keno branch. Two applicants made their living selling potatoes grown on their homesteads; both lost portions of their crop from the previous year, due to an early freeze in the area. One lost further portions of his saleable crop due to a lack of dry, frost free storage space in which to keep the tubers until the point of sale.[212]

Table Ten: Surviving Applications by Month, 1933

| Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | Jun. | Jul. | Aug. | Sep. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 16 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 1 |

Relief was freely granted to those who were out of work due to the mining shut-down. The expectation of eventual repayment was clear in the minds of the applicants, who tried to sell spare properties in town, unsuccessfully as the area was depopulating due to the lack of work, and who tried to sell mining claims. Many of the miners and prospectors amongst the applicants had mining claims; these were divided up into two categories by Sgt. McAskill of the R.C.M.P.. They were either of "no value whatsoever" or their value was "problematical" since to receive relief, a person had to have no property of value. McAskill's dilemma was solved by the frozen market in Keno properties; even if the mining claims were valuable, or potentially valuable, no one was buying mining claims in the area, so they were not negotiable at that time. Government approval letters to the Keno R.C.M.P. detachment ended with statements like "It should be explained to the applicant that he is expected to reimburse the Government for any assistance granted."[213] and "I note that the applicant has promised to reimburse the Government for any relief granted."[214]

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[212]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 1 of 2.
[213]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 1 of 2.
[214]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 1 of 2.

The 1933 Keno Crisis was interesting in what it revealed about the administrators' treatment of clients at the time, and in what it revealed three years later in the distance between politicians and administrators' views over how the system should function. The clients were believed at the point of application when they said they had no money and no food; local economic conditions were bad, making the individuals blameless. As these men were able-bodied, relief was given on the basis of a loan. This was in keeping with the ideological underpinning of the program; incentive to work was required, and personal debt was used as a spur. Three years later, however, differences about the degree to which the working poor could be held accountable for such debts divided the political and administrative arms of the Yukon Government.

In 1936 Yukon Councilor Mr. E. J. Corp handed R.C.M.P. Constable Gray a list of men then working, who had been in receipt of relief in 1933. He told the R.C.M.P. officer to collect from them, either "the total amount in a lump sum" or "it might be advisable, in some cases, to collect the money in installments." Gray refused to do so and handed the matter on to his divisional commander, Superintendent Caulkin, who referred the matter to the Comptroller, Jeckell. Caulkin wrote to Mr. Jeckell, "in reference to our conversation a short time ago on this subject. This request is somewhat unusual and I could not authorize our members to proceed without first obtaining the Commissioner's sanction...."[215] Jeckell's response was this:

> "...the question of making these collections was discussed with me by Mr. E.J. Corp, Member of the Yukon Council for the Mayo District. It was his suggestion that the collections be made by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I informed Mr. Corp at the time that I did not approve of this course, and would not make any request to you to have collections made by those in charge of your Mayo-Keno Detachments. If those who receive relief wish to make payment, the Territorial Government will be pleased to accept the amounts, but I do not propose to make any collection effort through Government Agencies to force collections."[216]

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[215]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 2 of 2.
[216]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.

This response is evidence of Government knowledge of the borrowed authority of the R.C.M.P.. To this particular Comptroller, it was acceptable to borrow this authority in order to get truthful answers from relief applicants about their condition, and to reduce spurious applications, but it was not acceptable to him to use police authority to enforce collection. Superintendent Caulkin acknowledged Jeckell's answer and instructed the members of his Mayo and Keno detachments to ignore the wishes of the junior politician, Mr. Corp.[217]

The Territorial Government did try to protect its investment in these clients in another way. The Gold Commissioner thought:

> "it would be advisable if some of the applicants for relief residing in the vicinity of Keno were advised to leave that locality and come to the Dawson district where there are opportunities of securing employment. The able-bodied men could easily reach the Stewart River and come to Dawson by small boat or raft before the close of navigation. I would be pleased if you would draw this to the attention of Corporal McAskill."[218]

This exhortation was repeated several times, but no efforts were made to force the unemployed men to move by threat of removing their relief.

The relief system of the time showed itself to be adaptable, and the administrators were willing to understand the plight of younger working men. The relief system became a multi-purpose social program, ministering to whomever was considered an appropriate client. Despite the prevalence of negative opinions about the unemployed, which blamed them for their part in the Depression's economic collapse, the workers in this area were exonerated for their part in the economic shut-down, which made them appropriate clients for this government programme of aid.

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[217]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 10, 1 of 2.
[218]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 1 of 2.

## Attitudes to Relief: Clients and Community

### Merchants and Clients

The Gold Commissioners invited the merchants to become part of the welfare system, caring for the needs of the client, rather than to treat them as customers whose orders would be paid for in full. Merchants were expected to "do all that they could for this old man in this connection." Mr. Taddie, a merchant in Granville, wrote to the Gold Commissioner, acknowledging his role: "I take from the conversation we had over the telephone last December 1928, That I was to look after M-78 during the winter. I have done so, you will find that M-78 has been well looked after, many things I have done for him and are not charged."[219]

It was in the interests of the merchants to befriend people in need, as clients in the Yukon welfare system had a choice of the store from which they would receive their goods. This choice was only available, of course, in areas where there were two or more merchants. Approximately fifty percent of the clients lived in such areas. Merchants were also capable of influencing who would have work on the Government road projects in summer, suggesting different individuals to the Gold Commissioner, who were in the area and needy, but could still do the work. Mr. Taddie suggested of one customer/client, "If you could put him to work on the Glaciers on Upper Dominion this Spring he will give good satisfaction because he understands the work. Hoping this meets with your approval."[220] This combination of purposes saved the Government money as it had to pay someone to work on the road and it could keep some of its clients seasonally off relief, and back on to their own earning power. The Government paid $7 per day for that labour, so clients could take care of residual needs such as new clothing or other goods.

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[219]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 1 of 2.
[220]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 1 of 2.

Self-interest on the part of merchants cannot be assumed in all cases. Many of the R.C.M.P. reports state that a particular merchant would give food at very near cost price, for a particular applicant, as they have respect for them, have known them for a length of time, or are friends. This lowering of price for some clients allowed them to live better on the same relief money; this was a definite gesture of friendship as it removed whatever profit the storekeeper could possibly make on the goods sold to that client. Mr. A.T. Taddie is often referred to in these cases, as he offered food at a reduced rate to the coloured laundress, F-20, before her death,[221] also he employed M-72 briefly each year, to allow him to earn enough money to buy his winter supplies.[222] Taddie's largesse was expansive: in 1927 gave M-70 "food and wood this winter free of cost."[223] Mr. Matthew Watson also befriended an old man, M -236, giving him light employment caring for some mink on his mink ranch, a cabin to live in and free food for some years, before asking the man to apply for relief so Watson could have payment for the food.[224]

Not all merchants encountered in these records were honest. M-34 entrusted his cabin, all of his goods, and $300.00 in cash to a coal merchant from Dawson when he was sent to prison in New Westminister, B.C., to serve his three year term for indecent assault. When M-34 returned to Dawson he found that his goods were sold, his cabin occupied by another person and his money was gone. Following an R.C.M.P. investigation, it was learned that Mr. Earnest Schink, the coal merchant, had become involved in a rum-running operation to the United States, using M-34's money as a stake hold; Mr. Schink was caught and imprisoned by American authorities, leaving M-34 with nothing on his return from prison.[225]

Another relief client, U-42, complained about the value of goods he received in his monthly allotment from the store: "I only received a little over fifteen dollars worth last

[221]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 1 of 2.
[222]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 2 of 2.
[223]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 1 of 2.
[224]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 8, 1 of 3.
[225]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 5, 2 of 2.

month.". The client enclosed his bill, and left Mr. Jeckell to look into it, and settle the matter with the merchant. Again it is obvious that some irregular work was not prohibited, as his next sentence reads: "Of course I received a cheque for $60.00 for cutting brush. That will have to go for winter clothing, and medicine."[226]

The primary form of cheating involved the merchant and client conspiring together to supply goods which were beyond the list of Government approved staples. Staple goods were not defined until the late 1920's, a copy of the list is to be found in Appendix 1. The client had to sign a bill which listed what goods were received, at what prices. The prices charged had to agree with the bid the merchant had submitted in the tender to supply the indigent person. The form of cheating done involved multiple bills; a false one which listed staple goods such as flour, brown beans, lard, matches, coal oil, bacon, etc., and was to the sum of twenty dollars, to submit to the Government. The second bill was of the actual goods, which were more exotic items, such as: tinned pineapple, ovaltine, lemons, gelatine, walnuts, icing sugar, mincemeat, essence [food flavouring], pelchards [fish], tinned clams, green tea, two fresh apples, and a pineapple. The merchant's response to the incident was that F-10 had been ill, and these substitute goods were to help build up her strength again. The goods supplied to F-10 cost $1.55 more than the bills sent in to the Government, the merchant absorbing the loss. It is also useful to note that the majority of these luxury goods were issued in December, and were for Christmas baking. [227] It is also a reflection on the record keeping abilities of the Government, that if the merchant, Mr. Spence, had not complained to the Gold Commissioner about some of his indigent clients moving their custom to other merchants, this affair would not have been revealed. John D. Spence and Company were not the only merchants who were less than accurate about the bills they sent in to the Government. The Northern Commercial Company branch in Dawson also exchanged one item on a client's Government bill for another. In

[226]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 6, 1 of 2.
[227]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.

this case five sacks of corn meal were charged, but "M-34 has admitted that he never received any corn meal at all, but that you handed him $5.00 in cash." In this case the client continued to deal with the same merchant, but the merchant was warned "I would ask that the goods supplied be confined to proper supplies, and that you furnish an explanation concerning the five sacks of corn meal with which you have charged us on the 28th of March."[228]

Methods of cheating became more sophisticated in order to foil the more rigid relief practices instituted to remove the possibility of cheating. In the 1920's clients had to come to the store from which they received their relief, and sign on the itemized bill that they had received those goods. This was further tightened in the late 1930's by requiring the R.C.M.P. officer in charge of relief in each detachment to look over the bills, to see that goods were not being charged at too high a rate. A benchmark for him to test this against came in the 1930's when the companies had to write an itemized list of what they would charge for goods if the client chose their store from which to receive their goods.

One man complained to the Federal minister of Labour, Mr. Rogers, that he was being cheated by his relief supplier in October 1937; his complaint revealed a rather complicated system of cheating. The complaint made its way back from Ottawa to the Gold Commissioner. The complaint included an R.C.M.P. copy of M-302's handwritten original complaint, with a postscript reading "Excuse this writing for I am nearly blind," so the rendition is not exact. The copy reads:

> "I am enclosing 2 bills of the N. C. Company to show you how they are profiteering. Since I had my relief reinstated and ? they have been producing vouchers first of every month before I got my provisions I was signing for what I was not receiving. Mr. Hamilton, the manager for the company, said it was too long to wait a month for the money before it was due and he said that he had a contract to supply the relief rations. So I went to see the sergeant and he informed me that he had no contract at all and he transferred me to Tailer and Geary's ? Store to get my relief. After this if I only could get the Old Men's Pension I could do better than let them profiteer. On $20.00 I get about $15.00 instead of $20.00."[229]

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[228]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.
[229]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 11, 1 of 4.

As the man was nearly blind, he would sign the bill which was given him when he went in for his goods; the bill would not be for the goods given him, but for a lesser amount of goods. It is unclear whether the bill sent in to the government was signed by the merchant posing as the client, and the false bill actually signed by the client was destroyed. The Gold Commissioner wrote to the R.C.M.P. officer in charge of the division, and reprimanded the R.C.M.P. detachment officer for his negligence: "when I was in Whitehorse in July last I discussed with Sergeant Kingston the question of accounts for relief furnished, and I particularly impressed on him the necessity of seeing that the relief accounts forwarded to the Yukon Territorial Government listed the exact supplies furnished each indigent. Apparently my directions to him respecting this were not followed."[230] It is true that this particular form of cheating worked due the client's near blindness, but the conviction held by the client that being a cash customer would give him better goods, and better value for money is consistent throughout the records.

**Client Demands:**

The Comptroller of the Territory summarized the care of indigents in 1933 as including only "provisions, fuel where necessary, shelter, and also medicines and medical attention," but clients did demand more.[231] Clients were active on their own behalf, asking for particular goods, from particular merchants from the outset of this relief system, although this choice was unevenly practiced in the early years, as some areas had only one merchant. In 1918 the R.C.M.P. officer visited U-10 and:

> "found him running short of grub. he has sufficient flour to last him another month, and would like to have Caribou supplied to him this month instead of flour...since he has no meat. he also wanted to know if he could have the next order for assistance made out to the Northern Commercial Company, and he could go there himself and

[230]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 11, 1 of 4.
[231]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 2 of 2.

> order what he wanted, as he have been supplied in the orders already received, stuff which he can not eat such as beans, etc."[232]

Some asked for more than the standard $20.00 worth of goods for the month, particularly when children were involved. F-34's constant and vociferous letters won herself $25.00 worth of goods per month for herself and her child's support. Her level of advocacy on her family's behalf was singular; in the records, women's letters tended to be written in a penitent style, rather than F-34's strident and criticizing manner. F-34's effectiveness was striking. A neighbour of the U-31 children wrote on behalf of the children's grandparents, "the grandparents are asking if they can either get the $5.00 in cash or an order for clothing for the children. They state that if cash is given they will use it only in the purchase of clothing for the children."[233] The stereotypes about Indians' use of money required them to protest their good motivations in order to receive any money. Their illiteracy which forced them to rely on the good offices of a neighbour contrasts with M-241's clear prose. Literacy was an asset in getting what you wanted from the Territorial Government, but the acceptance of widespread illiteracy did make it easy for those who could not write to ask for help in composing their requests. M-241 supplied a number of reasons for his request when he wrote to the Gold Commissioner that "it would greatly accommodate me if you can manage to let me have three months groceries in one batch," "as I live a mile from the main road making it very uncertain for me to meet Jackson when I want to besides when the winter is breaking up the road to Bonanza is hard to navigate...."[234] Requests such as his were relatively easy for the Government to agree to, as it did not entail the expenditure of any more funds, but simply a rearrangement of delivery.

On some occasions more particular requests were honoured, such as transporting an individual out to reside with relatives. The price of passage, even as far as eastern Canada

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[232]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 2 of 2.
[233]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 4, 2 of 2.
[234]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 8, 3 of 3.

was under $200.00 at the time, so transportation was economically effective if it could save payment of relief for even ten months. Other client requests were for items which the Government had, such as a cabin in which to live. The Government could provide that from the supply of cabins seized for delinquent taxes. U-36 wrote, "I wish to know if you can let me occupy of Gov Cabins seized for taxes. I thought I could better my living conditions by living here [Ogilvie Bridge] and save Govt the cost of wood but am not allowed enough to live on $110.00 for nine months I have only about 25lbs left + some Rice & Beans of my own purchase early last Spring at Stewart Besides my legs are in bad shape a verry little exertion am Done for."[235] Relief recipients also had delinquent tax paid for. One of the few areas in which the Government did not invest in its clients was in private debts incurred by a person before entering the welfare system; these were never paid, as the Government had no legal authority to do so. These debts were usually the cause of a client being cut off from credit at a store; being put on relief allowed the client access to store-bought goods again without the necessity of paying the debt.

As well as allowing clients access to store-bought goods, the relief system also used the bounty of the land. One item supplied to the poor in the early period of the relief system was caribou. The R.C.M.P. would have an officer shoot the animals while out on patrol and the Government relief fund paid for the skinning, quartering and storage of the meat until delivered to individuals in need. Not all of the recipients of caribou were regularly in receipt of other assistance. In the winter of 1918-1919, the relief lists show 43 different recipients, only two obviously women. The caribou distribution list for that year showed only 54% of caribou recipients were on relief.[236] In the winter of 1924-1925 caribou was shot and delivered to 47 people: 16 women and 31 men, 29 % of whom were in receipt of relief in some other form in the year. Of the women to whom meat was given, only 3 seem to have been in regular receipt of relief. [237] The high number of

[235]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 8, 3 of 3.
[236]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 2 of 2, April 7-September 16, 1918.
[237]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 2, 1 of 2.

married women in receipt of caribou may have been due to the absence of their husbands on their traplines.

By 1933 this practice of supplying meat to the poor appears to have ceased, despite its benefits. The free meat was missed at least by the residents of the Fortymile District. Nine residents of that area petitioned Mr. Frank Osborne for a free hunter's license for one volunteer in their area "so that he can procure and supply meat to certain of the citizens of Fortymile without charge." Mr. Jeckell, the Comptroller, said of the situation, "I find that there are certain of the residents of Fortymile destitute, and others old and unable to hunt, and also in straitened circumstances." He issued the license free of charge, with the provision that the meat was not to be sold, but was to be used by "the Licensee or residents of Fortymile."[238]

Three clients on one occasion complained through their Yukon Councilor about the treatment they had received at the hands of the local R.C.M.P. officer. They said he had refused them relief saying openly in the street, "they will get none as long as he has anything to do with it." Upon further investigation by the Gold Commissioner it was found that at least one of the clients' paperwork for relief was in fact being processed at the time they alleged R.C.M.P. interference, and had been approved.[239]

M-257 alleged that he and his wife were refused relief because she spoke out against the R.C.M.P. officer. M-257 wrote:

> "they are giving relief here in Keno 20 dollars per man in grub I went over to the police who is handling it here he is the same one who abused Ruth Ferguson last winter you remember, I asked if there was any chance for me to get that assistance and he said my wife had been talking about him and he asked if I wanted assistance also for my wife I said yes and that is three weeks ago he gives it to anyone who asks but me I know he has given it to a number since I asked he is doing this because my wife told the trooth about him last winter when Ruth had him up although Dempster [the R.C.M.P. Inspector] didn't do anything about it that Policeman called my wife all kinds of vile names right out on the street because she was a friend of Ruths he says she reported him to Dawson which she never did as Dempster told him. now George

[238]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 1 of 2.
[239]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 1 of 2.

> will you see about this for me as I shure need it as I wouldnt ask for it have been waiting for you to come up so I could see you...."[240]

Black sent the letter on to Mr. Jeckell, the Comptroller, and said that "I have shown the letter to Inspector Dempster, so that he may investigate the case when in the district in order that appropriate action maybe taken."[241] Allegations of this kind were taken seriously by the higher administrators of relief, and investigations were made. While cultural biases were always part of the system, due to the subjective nature of intake reports, personal grudges were not supposed to influence the giving of relief.

**Client Attitude:**

Clients had a variety of feelings about the system upon which they depended. The three examples following cover the range of feelings expressed in correspondence within the system. An R.C.M.P. officer visited U-17 to explain that his amount of monthly relief was to be reduced, to be the same amount as others on relief. He wrote "There is no doubt in my mind that he understood me when I told him of the new manner in which he was to be treated, but to my mind, he thought if he could raise a big enough holler to different people in the habit of visiting him and have these same people in turn complain or take up his case to the Yukon Government that he would be put on his former relief role, i.e. thirty-five dollars per month, cash."[242] The relief system administrators simply ignored U-17's outbursts, and asked the R.C.M.P. to send supplies to him when they saw him in need.[243] M-125 was the subject of a February 1925 indigent report from Granville. The R.C.M.P. wrote "Kentuck did not specify the different amounts either in lbs. dozens, etc. etc. he simply said to leave it to you and he would take what you thought advisable, and

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[240]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 1 of 2.
[241]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 9, 1 of 2.
[242]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.
[243]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 2 of 2.

be thankful."[244] This downcast and humble attitude was not predominant, but was present throughout the period of study. With it came the acknowledgment that the R.C.M.P. often saved people who were ill and starving, or simply starving; gratitude on the part of the people allowed the R.C.M.P. to do this work more easily than if the police were viewed simply as law enforcers, rather than potentially life saving members of the community. At the opposite end of the spectrum was the opinion of U-36. With the possibility of an Old Age Pension emerged in 1931, he pushed for that in lieu of relief. The possibility of a different system allowed his criticisms to have voice. U-36 wrote that it was "kind of embarrassing for old cripples to have to go every month and kiss that bunch," possibly meaning storekeepers, R.C.M.P. and government clerks, in order to receive their groceries.[245] The resentment of needing assistance was present throughout the period of study. Amongst the clients there was a latent level of anger at the body failing to let the person provide for themselves. The public aspect of receiving relief, with the store clerk checking the bill, and the R.C.M.P. scrutinizing it, was stigmatizing. While relief was given, internalized attitudes about 'it being better to give than receive' were clearly present in the minds of some of the clients.

**Neighbours: To Help or Not to Help**

Everyday people helped each other out to a considerable degree in the Yukon. However, when neighbours' limits of care were reached, they unerringly asked for the Government to help. U-7 was such a recipient of help. The R.C.M.P. wrote "This man is over eighty and has been in a bad way all winter. His neighbours looked after him all winter but they are now going out for the summer work, consequently U-7 would have been left on his own."[246] Other neighbours shared what food they had with those less

[244]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 1 of 2.
[245]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 8, 2 of 3.
[246]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 1 of 2.

fortunate in prospecting. U-22 had "been existing on flour and beans for the last three weeks, which was given to him by the miners on the creek. Mr. U-22 has no money and is unable to obtain any credit at the stores in Dawson. Several of the miners have asked me to inquire if it is possible Mr. U-22 to obtain food from the Government, as they are not in any position to give him any assistance."[247]

In 1919, neighbours in the Black Hills area had two entirely different attitudes towards two neighbours they helped, M-48, and U-22. They said M-48 was "too lazy to work and had done nothing all year. They had been supplying him with the necessities of life for two years and were becoming tired of supporting a man who was too lazy to support himself." M-48 was threatened by his neighbour Mr. McTaggart "that if he didn't get something to eat soon he would have to shoot himself." Negative local opinion of M-48 may also have arisen from the fact that he was German, and had been reporting to the R.C.M.P. detachment as an Alien Enemy regularly throughout World War One. Neighbours' opinions were more supportive of the other Government applicant. He was 61 years of age, and paralyzed in one arm. The R.C.M.P. report reads, "U-22 has resided on this creek for eleven years and the other residents state that they have had to help him considerably owing to his physical disabilities."

F-9B was the subject of concerted efforts by her friends in 1926, who tried to get relief for her, as she was "too proud to ask for help." She had fallen on the sidewalk outside the Government Administration Building, and broken her shoulder, as well as suffering from some internal trouble from which she bled. Mr. Buckholtz said that she was a member of the Yukon Order of Pioneers, and her deceased husband had been a Mason. However, neither organization did anything for her, and it fell to the Government to aid her, despite her plan to sue the city for damages in the fall. The attitude of her one female friend who wrote on her behalf suggests a different set of moral standards than the male officials were applying, "You owe me no thanks for the little I have been able to do for F-9. She is a

[247]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 1, 1 of 2.

woman, I have known her a good while, I have always liked her, and I am not her judge."[248]

Different standards concerning women and welfare also seem evident in the life of F-19. After a short illness which prevented her from going to the store to receive the remainder of her monthly grocery order, F-19 wrote to the Gold Commissioner begging him to let her have the remainder, as it was after the end of the month. She said "While I was sick I had to loan some things from my neighbours. Please, let me have the balance so that I can repay them." This suggests the bank to which poor women belonged, the female lending networks, such as those suggested in work on the East End of London.[249] Out of what little poor women had, they lent it to others, so that if later in a period of need, they would have a range of people to which they could go, before asking for help from outside agencies, of the church or the state.

**Conclusion**

The welfare system of the Yukon assisted a large number of clients. The majority of these clients were men, and the majority of these clients, seventy-five to eighty-five percent, were over the age of sixty. Almost all of the clients were without co-resident family. In the beginning of the intake procedures, 49% of clients had come to the Yukon in 1898 or earlier; this percentage declined as this population died. The prevalence of the pioneer as a client suggests that the aim of the programme was to support these elders in a dignified manner in their later years, since to allow them to be treated poorly would reflect poorly on the Yukon's image.

The system dealt less well with clients who were not either of these two things, white and male, or elderly, and could not be fit into the sanctifying role of pioneer. With men,

[248]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 3, 1 of 2.
[249]Ellen Ross, "Survival Networks: Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London Before World War I," *History Workshop Journal* Issue 15, (Spring 1983).

due to the double standard of morality, sexual indiscretions could be overlooked; with women, they were not. Men could be channeled into Government road work in the summers, if they were fit enough. They had the opportunity to demonstrate that they would work when they could, and thus did not receive welfare out of laziness. Women had less opportunity to work and therefore were more open to charges of laziness. Clients who were white, or preferably familiar with the British system of Government, and were literate fared best in this regime. To those for whom that system and language were foreign, application and acceptance were more difficult. Women who were less morally proper, people who were half native and those who were non-white, non-western European all suffered a more invasive and controlling form of aid. While relief may not have been equally dispensed, however, real assistance was given. The stories of the clients in this chapter, lead one to conclude that their needs were real and acute, and that they were generally given "what [t]he[y] were most in need of," with need being defined by the times. This stands in contrast with the unknown needs of members of Yukon society who were not accepted into this program of aid, as these records only detail the circumstances of clients accepted for public aid.

## Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This examination of the Yukon's welfare programme has made new information available to the historian and to the general reader. Welfare has revealed close relationships between community members in the north. The most important information which has come to light is the revelation of working class Canadians' everyday life and struggles to survive. These characters have been the source of drama in this tale; it is their stories to which I am drawn. While the record is also revelatory of attitudes to welfare recipients held by those with the powers to aid them, the motivations of the government on a larger structural level can only be speculated upon. The Government agents have not been revealed in the same individual depth as the recipients. Currents of thought about the poor, expressed in documents, and decisions made by the administrators of welfare do all roughly copy the administrators' views of the strength or weakness of individual claims for public aid. This thesis has attempted to answer six basic questions, along the lines of who, how and why on the subject of Territorial Relief. This chapter provides some conclusions to the study as a whole.

The first and primary question asked by this thesis was 'What was the programme described in the records labeled "Welfare"? The welfare programme of the Yukon Territory was a multi-purpose social service programme. From the Gold Rush forward into the Twentieth Century the programme assisted prospectors by replacing the gear by which they earned their livelihood. By the beginning of the study in 1917, some clients were given more regular aid, in the form of monthly grocery orders at local stores, to help them survive lean times. As the programme continued, the short term occasional aid became longer term consistent aid, in the form of twenty dollars per month in groceries, plus wood in winter.

The programme was a multi-purpose social programme, because it had no legislatively defined parameters, and was adapted to service whatever the current needs of the

Administration. This aid was primarily channeled into the support of clients who in other provinces would have been in receipt of the Old Age Pension by the late 1920's. The Territorial Government also used the programme as unemployment insurance for those most affected by structural unemployment.

The second question posed by this thesis focused on the context within which relief occurred: what were the circumstances that created need? As the new social history analyzes how large social forces created individuals' need, so too does this thesis.[250] The answer is complex and falls into five areas. First, the economy of the Yukon was seasonal. In the period without work, the nine months of winter, sometimes individuals' savings ran out. Direct relief or a relief loan was given, sustaining the worker until wages from the next active working/paying season were received. The economy was also highly gendered. This affected both men and women in particular ways. Women's work in the domestic and service industries all over North America paid close to a starvation wage, and the Yukon was no exception. This counters part of the 'scarcity theory' of women's worth present in so much of literature on the frontier, where as with any other economic commodity, women's value is supposed to rise with its rarity.[251] While there were fewer women than men in the Yukon, women's work still paid poorly. As the Yukon had a primary resource economy, there was little work available for women outside the home. Moreover, even for men, work performed in the Yukon was almost all heavy physical labour. This required healthy bodies; very elderly men were expected to continue to perform these tasks. When this was no longer possible, the poorly developed service economy could absorb only a few of these men, and even then only on a 'jobbing' basis rather than on a more secure arrangement.

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[250]Charles Tilly, "Family History, Social History and Social Change" in Family History at the Crossroads: A Journal of Family History Reader, Ed. Tamara Hareven and Andrejs Plakans, Princeton University Press, 1987, pp 319-322.

[251]Adele Perry, M.A. candidate, York University, from a lecture given at the B.C. Gender History and Beyond Conference, 1994, Victoria, B.C., referring to the wholesale importation of the theories of Adam Smith on commodities to historical commentary on colonial areas experiencing gender imbalance.

The third element which created need for assistance was time. Most of the Yukon's non-native population had arrived in the Gold Rush period. This was an adult and largely male population, responding to the lure of gold. This population fragmented after the Gold Rush ended; some left, some stayed. Of those who stayed, few started families. These men grew old outside of the nuclear family. Without a family to screen their infirmities from the public, the need for someone to care for and support them in their later years was very clear. The heavily slanted age profile in the population created a need for a support system. The absence of Territorially resident kin allowed for the response to be a public aid programme, without challenging widely held notions that elder care was primarily a family responsibility.

Two additional items contributed to the need for public aid. One was small in scale: alcoholism and lack of self care contributed to some individuals' need, but 'legitimate' illness and age related health problems created the majority of claims on the programme. The second was larger and affected everyone in the Territory. Structural unemployment in different sectors, due to dependence on world market prices caused shut downs, i.e. at Keno and in the area of silver mining. Similarly, the second northern industry's fortunes rose and fell sporadically; the fur industry was dependent on shifts in fashion. This can be seen in the silver fox pelt's rise and fall in popularity in the 1920's. Decline in some species also affected those who made some of their yearly income from fur. Fur trapping was also important as it was a winter industry, providing income when little else was available.

The third major question answered by this thesis is 'who was helped?' As with any public programme of aid, it is also important to ask who was not helped; in this case study, one cannot answer that question as the surviving documents are all ones which were generated by acceptance to the programme of public aid. Differences in how aid was provided to some members of the receiving group are significant. This study also asks what level of aid the leaders of the community would give their dependent members. In this aspect, the communities, as revealed by neighbours' actions shown in the

administrative reports, have been revealed to be generous in nature towards what Thomson would call the deserving poor, but more frugal towards minority men, and women in general. Extensive and long term aid was given by neighbours to those in need, sometimes for years before the private benefactor asked the Government to supplement or take over the provision of aid.

The welfare programme offered by the Yukon Government was unlike the Federal Government's Old Age Pension, which had a standard set of qualifications for aid, based on strict criteria. The Yukon's welfare programme had no legislated criteria; the decision to aid the applicant or not rested on information collected about their income, their means, their health and their character. The awarding of aid was a subjective decision made in layers, between the R.C.M.P. officer's report, and the administrators of the programme. The prerequisite was public demonstration of need, but the most important factor after need was the administrators' perception of general character of the person. This was determined by local knowledge of the person's behaviour, as channeled through the R.C.M.P. officer's report, which focused especially on how the applicants had responded to the adversity which made them apply for aid.

Most of those aided were the elderly. Those stricken by ill health, widows unable to support their families, and sole support older women, trying to make ends meet while working continuously, followed. Those also aided but in a more punitive fashion were women of colour, those who had "created" their own health problems, those considered mad, women who had given birth to illegitimate children and those who were unemployed. This list of most to least preferred clients emerged as a result of a labeling process which the administrators used to apply blame to the clients for their part in creating their own predicament. Those considered least at fault were aided most open-handedly, and composed most of those aided. If a person were adjudged to be at fault, aid, if given at all, would be dispensed in a humiliating manner. In this way the elderly began and remain as the most appropriate candidates for public aid, as aging was a blameless and natural

process. As the program changed in the late 1920's, to meet the demand for a local equivalent to the Old Age Pension, it was again the elderly who were considered the most appropriate starting place for national programmes of assistance to the poor.

This breakdown based on level of blame supports David Thomson's work on welfare, where he posits a welfare core of those considered blamelessly needy, and a welfare fringe, of those considered at fault, who are less likely to be aided.[252] Thompson posits that societies move between these two poles in their aid giving, and that at any time are at different places on the path between the welfare core and fringe. The blamelessness and the fragility of the elderly's attachment to the economy was revealed by their presence amongst the recipients from the programme's inception. The average age of a welfare recipient dropped when the Keno area economy collapsed. Older men were squeezed out of the waged economy, leaving only young men in receipt of work, with older men being channeled into dependence on charity.

The Yukon's welfare system had systemic biases and exhibited blindness to certain groups; some groups of people were responded to and others received no consideration. While in the United States this was primarily a split between white and black, in the Canadian north the primary racial split was between native and non-native worlds. Non-natives were the responsibility of the local government, and natives were constitutionally the responsibility of the federal government. Those in between, the *Metis*, were often cast back and forth like a ball when they asked for help, with neither government wanting to take responsibility for them. The Yukon Metis encountered in this programme's records had a different view of who was native and who was white than the legal government definition. The generosity of native people is shown in case after case, where they were willing to help those no longer labeled native, and to help non-natives, especially where the records show that whites refused to cross the cultural divide with aid. The northern Canadian natives' lack of citizenship was echoed in the plight of another

[252]David Thomson, pp 366-7.

indigenous person seen in the welfare records: the old Laplander who because of his nomadic people's habits, found that he did not have any right to return to his homeland, as he was not a citizen of the countries which his people passed.

To look at ethnic minorities' treatment separate from clients of the majority culture reveals biases Canadians on the whole do not wish to examine: the ethnocentricity of supposedly 'universal programmes'. The underlying racism of the Yukon welfare system was also revealed when it dealt with women, against whom there was already a large level of gender bias. The Yukon Government's suspicion of women of colour, both black and partly Native, was revealed in each recorded encounter with such a woman; her truthfulness was suspect, her morals investigated and even her cleanliness and thrift checked for verification of a white standard assumed to be foreign to her.

The Yukon Welfare system has also been revealed to be consistent with other jurisdictions in its treatment of women and children. Women were compartmentalized according to the ethic of family, where women who followed the sexual double standard of morality were rewarded with welfare, allowing them to stay at home and raise their children, and where 'bad' women were denied 'the rights of motherhood'. This 'family ethic' as described by Mimi Abramovitz tells men their place is in the workplace regardless of its safety or working conditions, and women that their place is in the home regardless of its safety or security[253]. A result of the family ethic seen in this study is that old men were told to work at heavy labour, such as Government road work, cutting wood, hauling wood, despite age and varying health. Any woman applicant for aid contained within her a potential for immoral behaviour, due to the fierce division of public rights to sexual behaviour inherent in the sexual double standard of morality; women client's potential for publicly embarrassing the Yukon Government, was responded to by the administrators

[253]Mimi Abramovitz, Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present. Boston: South End Press, 1988, pp 3-4.

with a concentration of staff time on observation and attempts to control the female population receiving welfare through intimidation and threats of non-support.

The treatment of dependent family members can be examined from all aspects, from the perspective of the elderly, of women, and lastly, of children. The treatment of children by the Yukon welfare system reveals two successive ideologies at work. Children were seen as full of possibility by the Victorians where their malleability was an opportunity for the 'child saving' reformers to change working class and immigrant values, and through the more scientific twentieth century ideology of juvenile delinquency, where the faults and omissions of the parents were to be compensated for by the social work intervention, resulting in a healthy adult.[254] The few children who appeared in the record of the Yukon welfare programme were usually from single parent families. All of the male single head of household families applied for welfare after maternal mortality. On the occasion when a man assumed his wife's role with the children he was chastised, and propelled back out into male waged work. A second scenario may also be the precursor to these father-led families need for welfare. The families' drop in standard of living may also comment upon working class women's role in the home as stretchers of income; perhaps without her skill need was felt more directly by the family and relief made up for her economic management of the household. Female headed families' origins were varied, from widowhood, illegitimate births, and husbands taking a 'working class divorce', abandoning their wives. On occasions where children were present, the Yukon welfare administrators overlooked the adult's transgressions, even illegal activities, in the programme's desire to help the blameless children.

The administrators of this programme made many choices, in the type of aid, whether it would be available indoor or out, who would be eligible, and how it would be carried out. I feel that Thomson's work, especially where he argues that charity is given to those

[254]Linda Gordon, Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston 1880-1960. New York, New York. Penguin Books, 1988, pp 19-23.

judged to be least at fault, best accounts for the differential giving of aid. It is clear that the administrators had their own hierarchy of preferred to least preferred client, from those unable to work for some accepted reason to those tolerated on the edge of relief, who needed help for less socially accepted reasons, such as lack of self-care, or moral lapses resulting in illegitimate motherhood. Those in the rung beyond this, but still asking for aid were given loans, so that they would feel as though they had to pay these monies back to the Government. Those in this category were almost universally men able to work, but currently unemployed. A few did pay, some years later, and in small installments of their own choosing; of the legitimate non-workers, the elderly, very few costs were recovered. The item most often paid by the client was for burial, arranged by the Government, and paid out of the person's estate. Some individuals who were assisted expressed gratitude for the programme and a positive view of their political rulers; the predominance of white pioneers within the group expressing gratitude may be due to their favourable treatment.

The administrators of the system made a choice about the range of the programme's responsibilities, in refusing a Federal-Provincial style agreement on Old Age Pensions in the late 1920's, and instead choosing to exclusively support its own aged who were resident in the Territory through welfare, rather than an old age pension where the Government would be financially responsible in part for any Canadian eligible who had lived any years in the Yukon Territory. This also suggests that there was little shame attached to receipt of aid by those blamelessly unable to work.

All of the preceding questions are good ones, but, with the effort, expense and general difficulty involved in a programme of this sort, the fifth question, 'why did the Yukon Government do this at all?' must be asked. This is a very good question, and surprisingly, the hardest to answer from this type of evidence. There are arguments which can be made about the cementing of rule with charity to the people, so acceptance of the rule as a 'natural' social order will follow. A desire to keep on the right side of those in power, who had the right from the crown to dispense charity or work to the poor of the district is at

the base of social control arguments of eighteenth century Britain.[255] A certain number of the recipients wrote letters which expressed an acceptance of this aid to allegiance theory, but that is not broad, conclusive evidence. Parallels between this British model exist with the role of the non-elected Territorial Government.

Piven and Cloward have presented a similar argument in a North American context.[256] They suggest that public charity was used "to maintain a disciplined and tractable labour force in times of prosperity and the amelioration of grievances and softening of discontent in hard times." The Yukon government may have granted the unemployed Keno miners loans in order to forestall political unrest in 1933. Yet what is fascinating is that the Gold Commissioner and R.C.M.P administration refused to enforce the demands of local politicians for loan repayment, even as the economy went into an upswing and when the miners were gainfully employed. Moreover, the individual level assistance data analyzed in this study does not show clients organizing on their own behalf, and suggests little interaction between welfare recipients, who were widely dispersed over the Territory. While individuals within the system, receiving welfare often commented that they were grateful and found the material assistance useful, this however, does not preclude the possibility that the assistance was given by the Government, in a larger structural plan to avoid public discontent. Ultimately, the nature of the data focused on here does not permit a firm conclusion concerning the relevance of the Piven-Cloward thesis in the context of the Yukon in the early twentieth century

The larger macro level motivations of the administration in providing aid for its needy population are difficult to ascertain from this level of individual level assistance data. What can be conclusively stated is that the letters between the assisted population and the members of administration offering assistance, the R.C.M.P. and government Relief

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[255]Geoffrey Gilbert, "Toward the Welfare State: Some British Views on the `Right to Subsistence,' 1768-1834," *Review of Social Economy,* Vol. XLVI (October, 1988) No. 2.

[256]Frances F. Piven and Richard A. Cloward, Regulating the Poor: The Function of Public Welfare, New York: Pantheon, 1971.

Officers, reveal a humane concern with the conditions under which the poor lived. This does not preclude that the government's goals in providing assistance included a range of repressive or pacifying goals, despite individual recipients perceptions of the provision of assistance as positive.

The final question asked by this thesis is about the results of the programme. The government did keep a significantly large number of the blamelessly aging elderly from freezing to death or dying of starvation when they could no longer support themselves.[257] In terms of this goal the program can be judged to be very successful. If one speculates that the goal of the programme was to help all of the needy, then the differential treatment of certain groups of clients was a serious fault within the system. In this regard, to be different was an impediment to receiving public aid, for a man to engage in female, nurturing behaviours, for a woman to have unmarried sexual relations, for a man to be "lazy," or to be from an ethnic background which was suspect all impeded an individual's chances of receiving relief in a non-stigmatizing manner.

This study also reveals that the residents of the Yukon felt themselves to be part of the Canadian political nation. The Yukon welfare clients, like other Canadian citizens, expressed their desire for their reward for building up the nation, and the reward they wanted was the non-stigmatizing, helping hand of the Old Age Pension.[258] The Federal-Provincial deal was that for each year an individual had lived in a Canadian Province in the last twenty years, that province would pay out one dollar a month to the individual's pension, when they reached the age of sixty-five, if they had an annual income of less than $365.00 per year. When agitation for such legislation began, inquiries about the possibility of receiving it were written by those on relief. Once the pension was enacted in some of the southern provinces, inquiries from provincial residents who had also lived

[257]The welfare system data, fragmentary as it was, shows a number of elderly clients equal to or exceeding the number of such older persons enumerated in the Census of Canada, as published in 1951.

[258]James Struthers, "Regulating the Elderly: Old Age Pensions and the formation of a pension bureaucracy in Ontario, 1929-1945, *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association,* Vol. 3,1992, pp 236-238.

some of the preceding twenty years in the Yukon trickled in to the Government of the Yukon. There was never a flood of these inquiries, but, after this taste of the consequences of joining in such legislation, the Yukon Government declined the Federal Government's offer of entrance into the pension programme in 1927. The reasoning may have run like this. The Yukon was a fine place in which to live when young and healthy, but in old age, the nine months of ice and snow, difficulties in transportation and lack of modern amenities made a move to southern Canada preferable for most of the elderly. Given this assumption on the part of the Yukon Territorial Government, their refusal of the Federal pension deal is understandable, as they feared financial liability for those who had chosen to leave. The Territorial Government, already dealing with cost overruns in the Welfare program, feared the additional financial responsibility of the pensions, and instead chose to care for its own elderly residents through its existing program of aid, welfare. This would give the Yukon administration greater control over its own liability, as acceptance or refusal of clients would be entirely at the administrator's discretion, as they were not bound by any legislation.

The provision of a welfare programme also acted in a number of unforeseen ways. The first of these was that welfare acted as an agent of class formation. The programme acted as a process of defining classes, by its function; those with the means gave, i.e. storekeepers and the government, and those without means asked and were supported as members of the community. When individuals' means to give were expended, the government was asked to continue the aid, as if it could never expend its means entirely. The breadth of this programme may in some part be seen as the beginning of the northern dependence on government programmes of action.

Another unforeseen aspect of the programme was the ways in which some of the poor used it for their own ends. The elderly used it to keep independent and live in their own homes after they could not support themselves, rather than have to go live with relatives elsewhere. Others who did want to return to distant relatives argued that the Government

would save money by transporting [deporting] them, over time as transportation within North America cost around $200.00, and was cheaper than ten months of care. Some used the programme as a way of accessing store-bought goods without having to clear their backlog of debt. Still others 'cheated' the welfare programme together with merchants, who sold them a better quality or variety of goods than those sanctioned by the programme of aid, and submitted a false bill for the more common materials. Some of this cheating gave clients less than value for their money, at other times the client was given more than value; always the government paid its allotted portion of the bill, sometimes for goods the clients did not receive. In one case a merchant was involved in cheating himself, giving the elderly customer more goods for her Christmas cheer, billing the government for the regular amount and absorbing the loss himself.

This ingenuous wrangling with the grocery orders highlights the efforts of poor to help themselves. Many of the welfare recipients did not simply sit back and accept what they were given. They were active in pursuing a better lifestyle for themselves. Many welfare clients worked, at least at the beginning of their receipt of welfare. Men worked on roads in summer, and women worked in laundries, cleaning etc. As they grew more feeble, they worked less, and finally depended entirely on welfare for their income. Many tried different ways of raising income or goods. Most kept a garden to supplement their staples, and some tried to grow a commercial crop, such as potatoes or less legal produce. After the R.C.M.P. ceased to shoot caribou for distribution to the needy in the winter, the residents of Fortymile applied to the government for a free hunter's license, to provide the same service. Some applied to the Government for the use of cabins which had been seized for taxes owing. Others rented out cabins, or land which they owned. However, the most common way off welfare was death. Almost all of the clients left the programme in this way; this is key to understanding the place of the programme in the life cycle of its clients, as akin to Old Age Pension.

The last unintended effect of this program was the provision of a source for this thesis. While the administrators and clients of this program did not know that these records would provide a glimpse into Northern life in the first half of the twentieth century, or of prevailing attitudes to the needy and their struggles, it has shed light on the interactions between the administrators and those they chose to aid. Administrators placed some applicants into a preferred category, and others into positions of lesser value. In doing this they reflected the values of the larger society, since common sense and local perceptions of individuals' worth were the key information used to determine the fate of applicants for public aid.

# Appendix 1

Appendix 1

List of Supplies Furnished Indigents.

Government of Yukon Territory.[259]

| | |
|---|---|
| Rolled Oats | Tea |
| Oat Meal | Coffee |
| Corn Meal | Cocoa |
| Flour | Baking Powder |
| Sugar | Soda |
| Cream | Yeast Cakes |
| Milk | Rice |
| Potatoes | Beans |
| Onions | Prunes |
| Pickled Pork | Figs |
| Bacon | Ev. Peaches |
| Ham | " Apples |
| Cheese (Canadian) | " Apricots |
| Lard | Butter |
| Crisco | Matches |
| Eggs | Coal Oil |
| Pepper | Candles |
| Salt | Soap. |
| Canned meats, Fish. | |

[259]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 8, 1 of 3.

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Title of Thesis / Dissertation: WHERE CHARITY ENDED: A STUDY OF WELFARE IN THE YUKON TERRITORY, 1917-1938.

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Sept 30th 1994
(Date)

due to the double standard of morality, sexual indiscretions could be overlooked; with women, they were not. Men could be channeled into Government road work in the summers, if they were fit enough. They had the opportunity to demonstrate that they would work when they could, and thus did not receive welfare out of laziness. Women had less opportunity to work and therefore were more open to charges of laziness. Clients who were white, or preferably familiar with the British system of Government, and were literate fared best in this regime. To those for whom that system and language were foreign, application and acceptance were more difficult. Women who were less morally proper, people who were half native and those who were non-white, non-western European all suffered a more invasive and controlling form of aid. While relief may not have been equally dispensed, however, real assistance was given. The stories of the clients in this chapter, lead one to conclude that their needs were real and acute, and that they were generally given "what [t]he[y] were most in need of," with need being defined by the times. This stands in contrast with the unknown needs of members of Yukon society who were not accepted into this program of aid, as these records only detail the circumstances of clients accepted for public aid.

## Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This examination of the Yukon's welfare programme has made new information available to the historian and to the general reader. Welfare has revealed close relationships between community members in the north. The most important information which has come to light is the revelation of working class Canadians' everyday life and struggles to survive. These characters have been the source of drama in this tale; it is their stories to which I am drawn. While the record is also revelatory of attitudes to welfare recipients held by those with the powers to aid them, the motivations of the government on a larger structural level can only be speculated upon. The Government agents have not been revealed in the same individual depth as the recipients. Currents of thought about the poor, expressed in documents, and decisions made by the administrators of welfare do all roughly copy the administrators' views of the strength or weakness of individual claims for public aid. This thesis has attempted to answer six basic questions, along the lines of who, how and why on the subject of Territorial Relief. This chapter provides some conclusions to the study as a whole.

The first and primary question asked by this thesis was 'What was the programme described in the records labeled "Welfare"? The welfare programme of the Yukon Territory was a multi-purpose social service programme. From the Gold Rush forward into the Twentieth Century the programme assisted prospectors by replacing the gear by which they earned their livelihood. By the beginning of the study in 1917, some clients were given more regular aid, in the form of monthly grocery orders at local stores, to help them survive lean times. As the programme continued, the short term occasional aid became longer term consistent aid, in the form of twenty dollars per month in groceries, plus wood in winter.

The programme was a multi-purpose social programme, because it had no legislatively defined parameters, and was adapted to service whatever the current needs of the

Administration. This aid was primarily channeled into the support of clients who in other provinces would have been in receipt of the Old Age Pension by the late 1920's. The Territorial Government also used the programme as unemployment insurance for those most affected by structural unemployment.

The second question posed by this thesis focused on the context within which relief occurred: what were the circumstances that created need? As the new social history analyzes how large social forces created individuals' need, so too does this thesis.[250] The answer is complex and falls into five areas. First, the economy of the Yukon was seasonal. In the period without work, the nine months of winter, sometimes individuals' savings ran out. Direct relief or a relief loan was given, sustaining the worker until wages from the next active working/paying season were received. The economy was also highly gendered. This affected both men and women in particular ways. Women's work in the domestic and service industries all over North America paid close to a starvation wage, and the Yukon was no exception. This counters part of the 'scarcity theory' of women's worth present in so much of literature on the frontier, where as with any other economic commodity, women's value is supposed to rise with its rarity.[251] While there were fewer women than men in the Yukon, women's work still paid poorly. As the Yukon had a primary resource economy, there was little work available for women outside the home. Moreover, even for men, work performed in the Yukon was almost all heavy physical labour. This required healthy bodies; very elderly men were expected to continue to perform these tasks. When this was no longer possible, the poorly developed service economy could absorb only a few of these men, and even then only on a 'jobbing' basis rather than on a more secure arrangement.

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[250]Charles Tilly, "Family History, Social History and Social Change" in Family History at the Crossroads: A Journal of Family History Reader, Ed. Tamara Hareven and Andrejs Plakans, Princeton University Press, 1987, pp 319-322.

[251]Adele Perry, M.A. candidate, York University, from a lecture given at the B.C. Gender History and Beyond Conference, 1994, Victoria, B.C., referring to the wholesale importation of the theories of Adam Smith on commodities to historical commentary on colonial areas experiencing gender imbalance.

The third element which created need for assistance was time. Most of the Yukon's non-native population had arrived in the Gold Rush period. This was an adult and largely male population, responding to the lure of gold. This population fragmented after the Gold Rush ended; some left, some stayed. Of those who stayed, few started families. These men grew old outside of the nuclear family. Without a family to screen their infirmities from the public, the need for someone to care for and support them in their later years was very clear. The heavily slanted age profile in the population created a need for a support system. The absence of Territorially resident kin allowed for the response to be a public aid programme, without challenging widely held notions that elder care was primarily a family responsibility.

Two additional items contributed to the need for public aid. One was small in scale: alcoholism and lack of self care contributed to some individuals' need, but 'legitimate' illness and age related health problems created the majority of claims on the programme. The second was larger and affected everyone in the Territory. Structural unemployment in different sectors, due to dependence on world market prices caused shut downs, i.e. at Keno and in the area of silver mining. Similarly, the second northern industry's fortunes rose and fell sporadically; the fur industry was dependent on shifts in fashion. This can be seen in the silver fox pelt's rise and fall in popularity in the 1920's. Decline in some species also affected those who made some of their yearly income from fur. Fur trapping was also important as it was a winter industry, providing income when little else was available.

The third major question answered by this thesis is 'who was helped?' As with any public programme of aid, it is also important to ask who was not helped; in this case study, one cannot answer that question as the surviving documents are all ones which were generated by acceptance to the programme of public aid. Differences in how aid was provided to some members of the receiving group are significant. This study also asks what level of aid the leaders of the community would give their dependent members. In this aspect, the communities, as revealed by neighbours' actions shown in the

administrative reports, have been revealed to be generous in nature towards what Thomson would call the deserving poor, but more frugal towards minority men, and women in general. Extensive and long term aid was given by neighbours to those in need, sometimes for years before the private benefactor asked the Government to supplement or take over the provision of aid.

The welfare programme offered by the Yukon Government was unlike the Federal Government's Old Age Pension, which had a standard set of qualifications for aid, based on strict criteria. The Yukon's welfare programme had no legislated criteria; the decision to aid the applicant or not rested on information collected about their income, their means, their health and their character. The awarding of aid was a subjective decision made in layers, between the R.C.M.P. officer's report, and the administrators of the programme. The prerequisite was public demonstration of need, but the most important factor after need was the administrators' perception of general character of the person. This was determined by local knowledge of the person's behaviour, as channeled through the R.C.M.P. officer's report, which focused especially on how the applicants had responded to the adversity which made them apply for aid.

Most of those aided were the elderly. Those stricken by ill health, widows unable to support their families, and sole support older women, trying to make ends meet while working continuously, followed. Those also aided but in a more punitive fashion were women of colour, those who had "created" their own health problems, those considered mad, women who had given birth to illegitimate children and those who were unemployed. This list of most to least preferred clients emerged as a result of a labeling process which the administrators used to apply blame to the clients for their part in creating their own predicament. Those considered least at fault were aided most open-handedly, and composed most of those aided. If a person were adjudged to be at fault, aid, if given at all, would be dispensed in a humiliating manner. In this way the elderly began and remain as the most appropriate candidates for public aid, as aging was a blameless and natural

process. As the program changed in the late 1920's, to meet the demand for a local equivalent to the Old Age Pension, it was again the elderly who were considered the most appropriate starting place for national programmes of assistance to the poor.

This breakdown based on level of blame supports David Thomson's work on welfare, where he posits a welfare core of those considered blamelessly needy, and a welfare fringe, of those considered at fault, who are less likely to be aided.[252] Thompson posits that societies move between these two poles in their aid giving, and that at any time are at different places on the path between the welfare core and fringe. The blamelessness and the fragility of the elderly's attachment to the economy was revealed by their presence amongst the recipients from the programme's inception. The average age of a welfare recipient dropped when the Keno area economy collapsed. Older men were squeezed out of the waged economy, leaving only young men in receipt of work, with older men being channeled into dependence on charity.

The Yukon's welfare system had systemic biases and exhibited blindness to certain groups; some groups of people were responded to and others received no consideration. While in the United States this was primarily a split between white and black, in the Canadian north the primary racial split was between native and non-native worlds. Non-natives were the responsibility of the local government, and natives were constitutionally the responsibility of the federal government. Those in between, the *Metis*, were often cast back and forth like a ball when they asked for help, with neither government wanting to take responsibility for them. The Yukon Metis encountered in this programme's records had a different view of who was native and who was white than the legal government definition. The generosity of native people is shown in case after case, where they were willing to help those no longer labeled native, and to help non-natives, especially where the records show that whites refused to cross the cultural divide with aid. The northern Canadian natives' lack of citizenship was echoed in the plight of another

[252]David Thomson, pp 366-7.

indigenous person seen in the welfare records: the old Laplander who because of his nomadic people's habits, found that he did not have any right to return to his homeland, as he was not a citizen of the countries which his people passed.

To look at ethnic minorities' treatment separate from clients of the majority culture reveals biases Canadians on the whole do not wish to examine: the ethnocentricity of supposedly 'universal programmes'. The underlying racism of the Yukon welfare system was also revealed when it dealt with women, against whom there was already a large level of gender bias. The Yukon Government's suspicion of women of colour, both black and partly Native, was revealed in each recorded encounter with such a woman; her truthfulness was suspect, her morals investigated and even her cleanliness and thrift checked for verification of a white standard assumed to be foreign to her.

The Yukon Welfare system has also been revealed to be consistent with other jurisdictions in its treatment of women and children. Women were compartmentalized according to the ethic of family, where women who followed the sexual double standard of morality were rewarded with welfare, allowing them to stay at home and raise their children, and where 'bad' women were denied 'the rights of motherhood'. This 'family ethic' as described by Mimi Abramovitz tells men their place is in the workplace regardless of its safety or working conditions, and women that their place is in the home regardless of its safety or security[253]. A result of the family ethic seen in this study is that old men were told to work at heavy labour, such as Government road work, cutting wood, hauling wood, despite age and varying health. Any woman applicant for aid contained within her a potential for immoral behaviour, due to the fierce division of public rights to sexual behaviour inherent in the sexual double standard of morality; women client's potential for publicly embarrassing the Yukon Government, was responded to by the administrators

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[253]Mimi Abramovitz, Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present. Boston: South End Press, 1988, pp 3-4.

with a concentration of staff time on observation and attempts to control the female population receiving welfare through intimidation and threats of non-support.

The treatment of dependent family members can be examined from all aspects, from the perspective of the elderly, of women, and lastly, of children. The treatment of children by the Yukon welfare system reveals two successive ideologies at work. Children were seen as full of possibility by the Victorians where their malleability was an opportunity for the 'child saving' reformers to change working class and immigrant values, and through the more scientific twentieth century ideology of juvenile delinquency, where the faults and omissions of the parents were to be compensated for by the social work intervention, resulting in a healthy adult.[254] The few children who appeared in the record of the Yukon welfare programme were usually from single parent families. All of the male single head of household families applied for welfare after maternal mortality. On the occasion when a man assumed his wife's role with the children he was chastised, and propelled back out into male waged work. A second scenario may also be the precursor to these father-led families need for welfare. The families' drop in standard of living may also comment upon working class women's role in the home as stretchers of income; perhaps without her skill need was felt more directly by the family and relief made up for her economic management of the household. Female headed families' origins were varied, from widowhood, illegitimate births, and husbands taking a 'working class divorce', abandoning their wives. On occasions where children were present, the Yukon welfare administrators overlooked the adult's transgressions, even illegal activities, in the programme's desire to help the blameless children.

The administrators of this programme made many choices, in the type of aid, whether it would be available indoor or out, who would be eligible, and how it would be carried out. I feel that Thomson's work, especially where he argues that charity is given to those

[254]Linda Gordon, Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston 1880-1960. New York, New York. Penguin Books, 1988, pp 19-23.

judged to be least at fault, best accounts for the differential giving of aid. It is clear that the administrators had their own hierarchy of preferred to least preferred client, from those unable to work for some accepted reason to those tolerated on the edge of relief, who needed help for less socially accepted reasons, such as lack of self-care, or moral lapses resulting in illegitimate motherhood. Those in the rung beyond this, but still asking for aid were given loans, so that they would feel as though they had to pay these monies back to the Government. Those in this category were almost universally men able to work, but currently unemployed. A few did pay, some years later, and in small installments of their own choosing; of the legitimate non-workers, the elderly, very few costs were recovered. The item most often paid by the client was for burial, arranged by the Government, and paid out of the person's estate. Some individuals who were assisted expressed gratitude for the programme and a positive view of their political rulers; the predominance of white pioneers within the group expressing gratitude may be due to their favourable treatment.

The administrators of the system made a choice about the range of the programme's responsibilities, in refusing a Federal-Provincial style agreement on Old Age Pensions in the late 1920's, and instead choosing to exclusively support its own aged who were resident in the Territory through welfare, rather than an old age pension where the Government would be financially responsible in part for any Canadian eligible who had lived any years in the Yukon Territory. This also suggests that there was little shame attached to receipt of aid by those blamelessly unable to work.

All of the preceding questions are good ones, but, with the effort, expense and general difficulty involved in a programme of this sort, the fifth question, 'why did the Yukon Government do this at all?' must be asked. This is a very good question, and surprisingly, the hardest to answer from this type of evidence. There are arguments which can be made about the cementing of rule with charity to the people, so acceptance of the rule as a 'natural' social order will follow. A desire to keep on the right side of those in power, who had the right from the crown to dispense charity or work to the poor of the district is at

the base of social control arguments of eighteenth century Britain.[255] A certain number of the recipients wrote letters which expressed an acceptance of this aid to allegiance theory, but that is not broad, conclusive evidence. Parallels between this British model exist with the role of the non-elected Territorial Government.

Piven and Cloward have presented a similar argument in a North American context.[256] They suggest that public charity was used "to maintain a disciplined and tractable labour force in times of prosperity and the amelioration of grievances and softening of discontent in hard times." The Yukon government may have granted the unemployed Keno miners loans in order to forestall political unrest in 1933. Yet what is fascinating is that the Gold Commissioner and R.C.M.P administration refused to enforce the demands of local politicians for loan repayment, even as the economy went into an upswing and when the miners were gainfully employed. Moreover, the individual level assistance data analyzed in this study does not show clients organizing on their own behalf, and suggests little interaction between welfare recipients, who were widely dispersed over the Territory. While individuals within the system, receiving welfare often commented that they were grateful and found the material assistance useful, this however, does not preclude the possibility that the assistance was given by the Government, in a larger structural plan to avoid public discontent. Ultimately, the nature of the data focused on here does not permit a firm conclusion concerning the relevance of the Piven-Cloward thesis in the context of the Yukon in the early twentieth century

The larger macro level motivations of the administration in providing aid for its needy population are difficult to ascertain from this level of individual level assistance data. What can be conclusively stated is that the letters between the assisted population and the members of administration offering assistance, the R.C.M.P. and government Relief

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[255]Geoffrey Gilbert, "Toward the Welfare State: Some British Views on the `Right to Subsistence,' 1768-1834," *Review of Social Economy,* Vol. XLVI (October, 1988) No. 2.

[256]Frances F. Piven and Richard A. Cloward, Regulating the Poor: The Function of Public Welfare, New York: Pantheon, 1971.

Officers, reveal a humane concern with the conditions under which the poor lived. This does not preclude that the government's goals in providing assistance included a range of repressive or pacifying goals, despite individual recipients perceptions of the provision of assistance as positive.

The final question asked by this thesis is about the results of the programme. The government did keep a significantly large number of the blamelessly aging elderly from freezing to death or dying of starvation when they could no longer support themselves.[257] In terms of this goal the program can be judged to be very successful. If one speculates that the goal of the programme was to help all of the needy, then the differential treatment of certain groups of clients was a serious fault within the system. In this regard, to be different was an impediment to receiving public aid, for a man to engage in female, nurturing behaviours, for a woman to have unmarried sexual relations, for a man to be "lazy," or to be from an ethnic background which was suspect all impeded an individual's chances of receiving relief in a non-stigmatizing manner.

This study also reveals that the residents of the Yukon felt themselves to be part of the Canadian political nation. The Yukon welfare clients, like other Canadian citizens, expressed their desire for their reward for building up the nation, and the reward they wanted was the non-stigmatizing, helping hand of the Old Age Pension.[258] The Federal-Provincial deal was that for each year an individual had lived in a Canadian Province in the last twenty years, that province would pay out one dollar a month to the individual's pension, when they reached the age of sixty-five, if they had an annual income of less than $365.00 per year. When agitation for such legislation began, inquiries about the possibility of receiving it were written by those on relief. Once the pension was enacted in some of the southern provinces, inquiries from provincial residents who had also lived

[257]The welfare system data, fragmentary as it was, shows a number of elderly clients equal to or exceeding the number of such older persons enumerated in the Census of Canada, as published in 1951.

[258]James Struthers, "Regulating the Elderly: Old Age Pensions and the formation of a pension bureaucracy in Ontario, 1929-1945, *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association,* Vol. 3,1992, pp 236-238.

some of the preceding twenty years in the Yukon trickled in to the Government of the Yukon. There was never a flood of these inquiries, but, after this taste of the consequences of joining in such legislation, the Yukon Government declined the Federal Government's offer of entrance into the pension programme in 1927. The reasoning may have run like this. The Yukon was a fine place in which to live when young and healthy, but in old age, the nine months of ice and snow, difficulties in transportation and lack of modern amenities made a move to southern Canada preferable for most of the elderly. Given this assumption on the part of the Yukon Territorial Government, their refusal of the Federal pension deal is understandable, as they feared financial liability for those who had chosen to leave. The Territorial Government, already dealing with cost overruns in the Welfare program, feared the additional financial responsibility of the pensions, and instead chose to care for its own elderly residents through its existing program of aid, welfare. This would give the Yukon administration greater control over its own liability, as acceptance or refusal of clients would be entirely at the administrator's discretion, as they were not bound by any legislation.

The provision of a welfare programme also acted in a number of unforeseen ways. The first of these was that welfare acted as an agent of class formation. The programme acted as a process of defining classes, by its function; those with the means gave, i.e. storekeepers and the government, and those without means asked and were supported as members of the community. When individuals' means to give were expended, the government was asked to continue the aid, as if it could never expend its means entirely. The breadth of this programme may in some part be seen as the beginning of the northern dependence on government programmes of action.

Another unforeseen aspect of the programme was the ways in which some of the poor used it for their own ends. The elderly used it to keep independent and live in their own homes after they could not support themselves, rather than have to go live with relatives elsewhere. Others who did want to return to distant relatives argued that the Government

would save money by transporting [deporting] them, over time as transportation within North America cost around $200.00, and was cheaper than ten months of care. Some used the programme as a way of accessing store-bought goods without having to clear their backlog of debt. Still others 'cheated' the welfare programme together with merchants, who sold them a better quality or variety of goods than those sanctioned by the programme of aid, and submitted a false bill for the more common materials. Some of this cheating gave clients less than value for their money, at other times the client was given more than value; always the government paid its allotted portion of the bill, sometimes for goods the clients did not receive. In one case a merchant was involved in cheating himself, giving the elderly customer more goods for her Christmas cheer, billing the government for the regular amount and absorbing the loss himself.

This ingenuous wrangling with the grocery orders highlights the efforts of poor to help themselves. Many of the welfare recipients did not simply sit back and accept what they were given. They were active in pursuing a better lifestyle for themselves. Many welfare clients worked, at least at the beginning of their receipt of welfare. Men worked on roads in summer, and women worked in laundries, cleaning etc. As they grew more feeble, they worked less, and finally depended entirely on welfare for their income. Many tried different ways of raising income or goods. Most kept a garden to supplement their staples, and some tried to grow a commercial crop, such as potatoes or less legal produce. After the R.C.M.P. ceased to shoot caribou for distribution to the needy in the winter, the residents of Fortymile applied to the government for a free hunter's license, to provide the same service. Some applied to the Government for the use of cabins which had been seized for taxes owing. Others rented out cabins, or land which they owned. However, the most common way off welfare was death. Almost all of the clients left the programme in this way; this is key to understanding the place of the programme in the life cycle of its clients, as akin to Old Age Pension.

The last unintended effect of this program was the provision of a source for this thesis. While the administrators and clients of this program did not know that these records would provide a glimpse into Northern life in the first half of the twentieth century, or of prevailing attitudes to the needy and their struggles, it has shed light on the interactions between the administrators and those they chose to aid. Administrators placed some applicants into a preferred category, and others into positions of lesser value. In doing this they reflected the values of the larger society, since common sense and local perceptions of individuals' worth were the key information used to determine the fate of applicants for public aid.

# Appendix 1

Appendix 1

List of Supplies Furnished Indigents.

Government of Yukon Territory.[259]

| | |
|---|---|
| Rolled Oats | Tea |
| Oat Meal | Coffee |
| Corn Meal | Cocoa |
| Flour | Baking Powder |
| Sugar | Soda |
| Cream | Yeast Cakes |
| Milk | Rice |
| Potatoes | Beans |
| Onions | Prunes |
| Pickled Pork | Figs |
| Bacon | Ev. Peaches |
| Ham | " Apples |
| Cheese (Canadian) | " Apricots |
| Lard | Butter |
| Crisco | Matches |
| Eggs | Coal Oil |
| Pepper | Candles |
| Salt | Soap. |
| Canned meats, Fish. | |

[259]YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 72, File 36, Part 8, 1 of 3.

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